

**Forum: Youth Assembly**

**Issue: Evaluating the excess dependency of LEDCs on MEDCs post-covid**

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## **Introduction**

MEDCs have been known to assist LEDCs often, especially in times of crisis such as a pandemic. Their lack of resources and funding causes them and their people to suffer massively if an MEDC (More Economically Developed Country) is not able to provide aid to them. It is estimated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) that 35% of the combined population of all 46 [LDCs](#) will have reached extreme levels of poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The governments of these nations themselves will not be able to support these people as they will not have enough spare financial resources as they will simultaneously try to deal with damage to their economy and GDP while also paying off loans.

Once the on-going pandemic finally is in a controlled state in which the world can return to its normal operations, the governments of LEDCs will finally be in positions where their new economic crisis can be handled as the top priorities. It is in this time span that they need to restructure their economic distribution and help focus on holstering the economy and GDP of the nation while also being able to support the population of the country to a better degree.

China is one of the MEDCs that LEDCs most commonly rely on for economic support. They have offered a lot of support to nations across the world, especially developing countries in Africa such as Angola, Ethiopia, Sudan, the Democratic Republic

of Congo (DRC), and Zambia and have amassed massive amounts of debt from them. Angola alone currently owes China \$25 Billion in debt, which accounts for a third of the debt owed to China from Africa.

The issue at hand entails the governments of LEDC nations to create solutions which can help resolve certain economic and health crisis which may have been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic without reliance upon support from MEDC nations to ensure their public can thrive in the best possible situations.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

#### **COVID-19**

The official name of the coronavirus

#### **Debt**

A sum of money which is owed to a certain party

#### **Deprivation**

The lack of something considered to be a necessity

#### **Economy**

The state of a country or region in terms of the production and consumption of goods and services and the supply of money

#### **GDP**

The total value of goods and services in an economy over a certain period of time.  
(Acronym for Gross Domestic Product)

#### **LDC**

An acronym standing for Least Developed Countries

## **LEDC**

An acronym standing for Less Economically Developed Country

## **MEDC**

An acronym standing for More Economically Developed Country

## **Pandemic**

An outbreak of a disease prevalent over a whole country or the world

## **Personnel**

People employed in an organization or engaged in an organized undertaking

## **Resource**

A stock or supply of money, materials, staff, and other assets that can be drawn on by a person or organization in order to function effectively

## **Scarcity**

An item to be in the state of having very short supply

## **UNCTAD**

An acronym standing for United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

## **Key Issues**

### **Debt**

When it comes to international debt issued from government to government, there are two forms, the first is governmental debt; in which the nation handing over the debt will issue the loan in their own national currency. The other type of international debt is sovereign

debt in which the country handing over the loan will issue the loan in the currency of the nation to which the loan is being given.

Many LEDCs heavily rely on financial support that has been provided to them by first world nations so that their governments can maintain the country in a positive state. These developing countries would then be indebted to whichever nation's government has loaned them this money. Since the nation supplying the funds know that the developing countries are dependent on the loans given to them, they charge exceedingly high interest rates causing countries who delay the total repayment of their debt which results in an even higher total debt for the LEDC.

This leads to their economies further destabilizing and not being able to pay off their debts or manage their country properly. The destabilization of the country's economy causes the value of its nation's currency to fall even further, causing it to be even harder for the nation to pay off its debt in the case that the loan was a governmental debt.

### **Lack of resources/personnel**

LEDCs are prone to having lack of resources due to them not being able to purchase them in the required quantities. This deficit may lead to lack of required establishments in times of medical crisis such as Hospitals, Vaccination Centers, and makeshift housing for hospitalized patients.

Even if an LEDC had enough required materials, they may not have enough trained personnel to help construct these buildings in the time frame required. Workers in such nations usually lack the skills or training to complete the required tasks which leads them to remaining unemployed. If a laborer does not have the necessary training which may lead to further delays in the construction of the project or defects in the building leading to structural damage in the future.

Due to a lack of trained laborers who may be able to work in the construction of vital establishments such as hospitals and police stations may not be able to be built properly or in time to serve their required purpose.

A lack of hospitals especially could be very damaging in times of health crisis such as the ongoing pandemic. Without hospitals, people would not be able to go to treat their illnesses and diseases. Hospitals are also great sources of information regarding health and safety and without them, people may not be able to receive the required information on as to how they can ensure their safety in disease ridden times as doctors may not be able to inform them. This issue would also stem into a lack of equipment to deal with illnesses.

Many LEDCs have large untapped resources but are unable to harvest or mine them. This issue can stem from a lack of trained/skilled laborers or lack of industrial machinery required to harvest the materials. The continent of Africa is home to massive amounts of various natural resources which could be vital in helping the country progress through trade and construction.

With not enough expendable economic resources, the production or trade of any required materials could be put to a standstill. A trend has been seen worldwide as the market value of products inches higher and higher as the demand for products and resources increases exponentially as they become increasingly vital in modern society. This increase in prices and a downfall in a country's economy and the value of their currency would make it even harder to mass purchase anything required without the requirement of a loan.

### **Health equipment deprivation**

One of the biggest issues facing LEDCs in times of health crisis is a lack of equipment used to keep the public safe. This equipment does not have to be very advanced and can be as simple as a mask but may prove to be essential for the public's health.

Most importantly, the equipment that every nation should have includes anything that has been identified to help control the spread of an illness such as masks and gloves, but also

equipment which can help detect symptoms of illness such as a thermometer if a symptom of the illness being combated is a high fever. Equipment to perform tests to confirm whether or not an individual has truly contracted an illness is of upmost importance.

LEDCs may also lack stock in certain medicines which could be used to subdue the side effects of an illness to make the affected people feel better and bring back some strength to their immune system so that it can fight off the illness to a better level and eradicate it in a faster manner while lowering the chances of other disease entering the body and taking advantage of a weakened immune system.

Not having these basic resources in such a crisis could lead to a massive spread of the virus as people would have no way of knowing whether they have the virus, protecting themselves from contracting the virus from someone who does have it or contracting the virus.

### **Economic Scarcity**

An LEDCs low economic resources and economy is what causes them to not be able to support their people financially and leads up to amassing debt, not being able to purchase resources in feasible/required quantities and health equipment.

Nations such as USA have started sending Stimulus checks to their citizens to help provide them with further economic support so that they are able to pay off their bills and maintain a healthy enough lifestyle in disastrous situations such as the ones the world currently faces. Doing this allows them to ensure public safety and have a happier population as they are not as stressed to pay their bills or be able to purchase basic needs such as food and clothing if they have lost their job or their salary has been reduced due to the pandemic. LEDCs are in no position to do this due to them not having enough economic resources to spare as everything is being used to help pay off debts or support the country's economy.

### **Lack of vaccines**

For many illnesses, the best way to prevent before they happen or cure them is a vaccine. The issue with most LEDCs however is they lack the equipment, knowledge, or personnel to be able to mass produce vaccines and are forced into a state where they must import them from MEDCs, or their population could be very negatively affected.

Developing countries such as India recently suffered massive waves of COVID cases as there was a lack of health equipment and while there was an exceptionally large quantity of vaccines in the country, its massive populous has caused a huge spike in active cases as people were not able to keep themselves safe. India, however, is an exception as they were able to import many vaccines from abroad but also had two domestically made COVID vaccines which they were mass producing and shipping of to their hospitals and exporting to the rest of the world.

Most LEDCs have largely suffered due to their vaccine deficit and not being able to get any vaccines without MEDCs providing them. This causes most of their population to remain unvaccinated as they simply do not have the resources to provide enough vaccines for all their citizens eligible for the doses. Nations such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Afghanistan, Egypt and Armenia have extremely low vaccination rates, with all of the nation's having less than 5% of their population full vaccinated. DRC has the lowest COVID vaccination rate in the world at 0.1% of its population vaccinated and <0.1% of it being fully vaccinated.

### **Major Parties Involved and Their Views**

#### **China**

China is considered a major party in terms of MEDCs, economically supporting LEDCs all over the world as they have issued out a total sum of \$5 Trillion in loans. They have been using these loans to slyly gain advantages over the nations they are handed out to as they gain massive amounts of interest and offer nations indebted to them other, cynical, ways to help pay off their debts for their own political gain.

With these loans, China has been able to progress many LEDCs into the modern world but has also added a lot of pressure onto their governments to pay back the loan which gets difficult while trying to maintain growth in the country as they do not have ample resources. The headquarters of the African Union (AU) is one prime example of this as China paid for the construction of the 1,210,000 sq ft base of operations at a cost of \$200 Million while also paying the laborers.

China has also given out gifts to LEDCs such as massive buildings which have been completely modernized and fitted into the 21<sup>st</sup> century which no LEDC could have ever afforded.

The nation has been one of the reasons that LEDCs have been able to develop further but also one of the main driving factors as to why they are not able to sustain themselves due to the pressure of the loan and not being able to afford to pay off the interest.

### **Angola**

Angola is a nation heavily in debt and has relied on massive loans throughout its history. Currently the small African nation is indebted \$25 billion to China alone. This loan has only further added to the nation's debt which currently sits at a staggering 120% of its GDP.

The expenditure of the nation is exceedingly high right now as the country is rapidly developing and improving its internal situation while trying to pay off its debts at the same time.

### **Nigeria**

A nation on the rise, Nigeria has been slowly developing itself into a modern nation and to keep up with the world, it has required colossal amounts of debt. In 2021, Nigeria ranked 5<sup>th</sup> highest on the debt exposure scale putting it in a bad position.



Its government used 97% of revenue made to help pay off owed debt in 2020. The country currently owes various nations across the world a grand total of \$151 Billion, with the number rising per year and not seeming to stop anywhere in the near future.

### **Afghanistan**

Afghanistan is a nation which has been struggling with the procurement of Health Equipment. Hospitals have astonishingly low amounts of equipment to deal with the smallest of viruses, let alone a pandemic. The Afghan people themselves do not have basic items to take care of their sick at home without having to go to a hospital.

Reportedly, in 2018, hospitals in Afghanistan had an average of 5 items pertaining to health equipment which could be used as basic infection prevention equipment. Having such little quantities of the most vital resources can lead to widespread infection, and in times of COVID, it can put a country into a crisis situation.

### **Peru**

Since the year 2001, the government of Peru has taken out loans totaling to \$2,850,000,000. This debt total is the largest by any nation over the 20-year span being observed. It is evident as to how reliant Peru is to MEDCs as it could be one of the most over reliant LEDC states in recent history.

The amount they pay yearly is increasing at a drastic rate and they will be paying a total of 102 billion US dollars in the year 2026. At its current stage, in the year of 2021 Peru will be paying 76 billion US dollars. The increasing trend shows that over the next 5 years, Peru will have to pay 1/3 extra of its current external debt.

Even with this massive debt, the Peruvian economy has been steadily growing and the country is developing at a very rapid rate. Its government has managed well how to pay off the debt while still progressing in the country and making massive economic strides which will help stabilize the country and bring it out of its developing state.

## India

India is a country in an awkward state as they thrive on their economic prosperity but have heavily relied on loans in the past. They are known to have one of the best rising economies in the world but are still looked at as an LEDC or developing nation due to negative stigma around its population being poor.

India plays a role on both sides as they can be heavily dependent on MEDCs such as USA to assist them but are also very well known for helping other nations out with resources and finance. During the height of the COVID-19 outbreak, India was in a very bad position and reliant on MEDCs for help and financial support but when things settled down in the country, they became one of the biggest vaccine producers and distributors to the rest of the world. Sadly, a new wave hit India again putting it into a state of peril as they were not able to keep the population fully safe and were forced into a state of importing extra vaccines as opposed to their previous stance.

India is very medically advanced which allowed them to maintain the nation in a somewhat stable situation even though the amount of COVID cases were astronomically high as compared to other average nations.

### Development of Issue/Timeline

Date	Event	Outcome
2012	China gifts \$200 Million building to AU to use as headquarters in Ethiopia	China gets secretly repaid by the AU in various undisclosed forms
26/December/2013	Ebola virus outbreak in Africa, vaccine not able to be made in Africa due to lack of knowledge and	The people of the continent of Africa suffer as a massive health crisis starts and over 11,000 people die waiting

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	supplies. MEDCs not able to help fast enough to produce vaccines.	for MEDCs to produce the vaccines.
<b>30/March/2018</b>	China announces they will gift the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) a \$32 Million Headquarters	China uses gift to create relations with ECOWAS which can be used for future intentions.
<b>2018</b>	Afghanistan reports astonishingly low equipment rate in hospitals to deal with basic illness.	Public of Afghanistan suffers as dealing with illness becomes near impossible.
<b>16/June/2020</b>	Angola gives China access to oil fields seeking debt relief	China gains access to land and valuable resources in Angola, completing the Trojan Horse play
<b>November/2020</b>	China sends out \$2.1 Billion in foreign aid to various LEDCs	LEDCs feel pressure taken off as they are able to somewhat stabilize their nations in times of crisis.
<b>May/2021</b>	India to start importing Russian COVID vaccine to help immunize large population.	More of India's population gets vaccinated and Russia benefits financially.

<b>June/2021</b>	US rapidly slows down export of vaccines due to issues with trade restrictions	LEDCs lose one of the biggest sources for vaccines and no longer have access to most trusted vaccine, Pfizer.
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## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

### Loans

Financial loans were thought in the past to be ways for MEDCs to greatly support LEDCs however since the MEDCs started charging ridiculous amounts of interest on top of their loans and financial production would still be slower in the LEDC, the country was more hurt by these loans as now they were not able to use their own generated money to improve their country and take it to new heights as it was stuck between choosing its country's improvement or paying off the loan. Usually, a nation would choose to pay off the loan instead as it would cause fewer problems in the future and ensure a smaller amount to be paid off.

Loans have been able to help certain nations in whatever matter they have acquired the loan for but it is much harder for the loan to be successfully utilized in an LEDC and then be paid off in a small timespan to prevent the interest to cause higher debt as their governments might not be able to handle or distribute the money as well to the necessary organizations and operations within their country and still pay off the debt in a sizeable enough amount to make an impact on the overall debt.

### Trade

Trading with other nations is a terrific way to increase a country's economy and bring prosperity to a nation struggling financially. The key issue is having a scarce resource in

your country to trade with the rest of the world so that you can trade in copious quantities. Once the resource is acquired, it is an easy path to success.

Ties are built with other nations through trade, which can prove to be useful in the future and the economy will start to prosper as a lot more economic transactions are taking place in the country. A lot of money can be made through the purchase of valuable items by other countries.

This attempted solution is more indirect and has never been targeted as a way to help boost the economy of a LEDC purposefully. MEDCs usually do not target trade as a conventional method to help LEDCs as it is more experimental and does not guarantee any rewards yielded that could be of substantial use to the MEDC.

### **Gifting of essential buildings/resources**

Many MEDCs have had essential buildings such as hospitals, airports, police stations and many more built inside LEDCs as a gift to the country. It is unclear on most occasions as to what the LEDC gains/tries to gain from the situation but usually they have it built and then asked to be paid back in full over a certain period agreed upon between the parties involved.

The UAE has a very well-known case of this as they have had airports built in Pakistan and several other buildings across the GCC and South Asia. China is also notorious for the \$200 Million building they gifted to the African Union which was utilized as its new headquarters in 2012. Countless other buildings have been built and paid for by China across the continent.

This method has some issues as it can be used to put the nation receiving the gift into a state of illusion and into the control of the gifting nation as it may be used as a Trojan Horse. China is a key example of this as they have approached African nations quite often and proposed to build them hospitals, roads, or many other essential establishments as a gift and then soon after ask the LEDC to repay them for their kindness in an unconventional

method. On rare occasions they retort to the basic repayment as if they provided a loan but usually, they would use more twisted methods to gain something that will benefit their government more than extra money in the form of interest would do.

### **Providing personnel**

Essential personnel are sent on loan to LEDCs on occasion to help them fill out jobs while they look for internal candidates or are used to teach their own personnel and workers skills and information which could be especially useful in their field of work. Doctors and teachers could be sent to help teach the locals filling their roles better or more effective ways to fulfill their requirements pertaining to their jobs while laborers could be sent to help in the construction of vital establishments.

This solution is usually not handled by the government unless government employees are the one in question to be sent to aid the LEDCs. When people working in the private sector are sent, they are usually loaned over from either the company for which they work or an organization which has created an operation to send over these people to help the LEDCs.

Through these methods, the loaning of personnel can be done more officially and on a larger scale creating a larger impact on the LEDC, however individuals may choose to go to the LEDCs themselves to provide any level of assistance required.

### **Possible Solutions**

#### **Lower interest rates**

One of the biggest issues LEDCs face when trying to economically develop is a loan with high interest rates. These rates applied to the large sums given out in the loan total to a massive amount of money owed, something a developing nation might not be able to pay off. By lowering interest rates, it makes it much easier for developing countries to be able to pay off loans, and they will be able to do so in smaller time periods.

This simple but effective solution would save the LEDC a lot of time in paying of their debt and further resulting in less debt as the interest rate would have caused the total owed sum to have slowly increased over time, leading to the LEDC taking even longer to pay off the debt and repeating the cycle until a point where there is no way for the LEDC to escape the hole they dug for themselves.

To take a further step away from MEDCs, LEDCs can go to large worldwide banks or organizations such as the World Bank for their loans as this would ensure the loan cannot be used for any hidden agenda as the bank would have nothing to gain politically by trying to take advantage over a developing nation.

### **Procurement of better health equipment**

Most LEDCs largely suffered in controlling the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic at its peak due to them not having the required resources to be able to control the spread. These nations lacked masks, hand sanitizer, thermometers and many other such pertinent equipment.

The governments of LEDCs need to prioritize the purchase of basic health equipment to sell to the public and hospitals at low rates so that in case of emergencies and pandemics they are better equipped to handle the situation. More of their budget needs to be redirected to the health department so that they can obtain copious quantities of these items in storage to hand out to the public if and when needed.

Their governments also need to help better equip the public hospitals with more stock of basic equipment to treat smaller diseases and illnesses which could be contracted so that they do not have a significant impact on a person's body while also providing more advanced equipment to deal with dangerous diseases.

The procurement of any and all equipment regarding health and safety needed can be provided to the LEDC through a partnership/deal with a company which manufactures the products required instead of having to go through an MEDC which may try to use the deal

to gain some sort of benefit for their own country and again make the LEDC reliant on the MEDC for the health and safety of its people.

Going directly to a company instead of to the government of an MEDC allows the LEDC's government to handle a large-scale purchase as a onetime deal and not have as much pressure on their backs thinking of how they will handle their economy while balancing out payments for a loan. If a renewal of a previously made deal is required by the LEDC they can simply approach the company and get the same terms again to ensure minimal hassle and wastage of time.

Terrorism in LEDCs is a factor which can largely impact the supply of medical resources as more resources have to be used to tend to the wounded from acts of terrorism. Acts of terrorism can also inflict damage onto the infrastructure of an area including roads and transport routes leading to delays in procurement of medical resources if any routes are inaccessible.

### **Building factories for health equipment**

If the LEDC is able to establish good connections with a company, they may be in a position to convince them to start production of their products within their country in new factories built by the government for them. This allows the LEDC to have immediate access to greenlight the production of these products in crisis situations and then mass produce them and send it out to the public so that a potential health crisis could be averted.

This would also lead to economic gain for the LEDC as their economy would be on the rise with more economic transactions being done and goods being made. They could then further use these items to instigate trade with other nations who may be in need of such items which would lead to even further economic growth.

It would be a setback at first to have to build and pay for the factory, but it would just be a further incentive for the company to establish a base in the LEDC and would be hard for any company to turn down. The company would now be making more money as they have



a larger inventory to sell and at a lower cost as they would not have to pay for the construction of the factories. They would also have further franchised globally causing their own market to substantially increase and have their value be much higher. All parties involved stand something to gain which could help further develop them, making this an ideal situation.

### **Reliance on other LEDCs**

A solution which has a foundation of reliance seems redundant, however, if LEDCs can learn to be somewhat reliant on each other for help in matters of resources and equipment instead of MEDCs. This can help lead to LEDCs losing their reliance on MEDCs and help all nations involved to prosper.

Being able to go to LEDCs to help solve their problems would be much more beneficial for both countries as it would help the economic growth of one nation and would help the other develop itself with whatever the resources were required for. To ensure the overreliance on MEDCs is removed becomes the main objective of all LEDCs and going to each other for support would just bolster both of their governments into the modern world while also helping their economies and financial growth.

This solution could also help bring LEDCs closer together and create stronger bonds between their governments, creating a professional relationship which would only lead to prosperity for both nations for the future.

### **Creating markets**

If an LEDC has access to a valuable resource/a resource with an exceedingly small area in which it exists, in a high enough quantity, it should further start pushing the trade of that item internationally. Considering how valuable a resource could be, in a mass sale of said resource, it would bring a lot of economic prosperity to the nation and severely help boost its economy.

Any form of trade is guaranteed to bring some sort of economic growth to a nation and could also help create/strengthen relations with foreign nations. Better foreign relations could help an LEDC bring in more resources to further their economic development while ensuring they are not being over reliant as they will also be assisting the other nation in some way, shape or form.

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## Appendix

- I. <https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list>
- II. <https://www.economicsobservatory.com/are-there-differences-in-africas-responses-to-ebola-and-covid-19>