ECOSOC

Setting up protocols to support the infrastructural growth in underdeveloped countries to promote more and improved trading possibilities.

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Position: Deputy Chair

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Introducing Your Chairs

Main Chair

Greetings, dear delegates! I'm Theo Sirota, currently a high school student at Bratislava, Slovakia and one of your two chairs. My interests reach far and wide, ranging from international relations and IT to event planning and economics. In the past couple of years, I've had the pleasure of attending ten model conferences, chairing thrice. While I generally prefer Model European Parliament session, I loved every MUN I've been a part of, and I hope to recreate this sentiment in you as well.

Deputy Chair

Dear delegates, my name is Danyal Mohammed and I'll be your deputy chair. I'm currently a student at the British School in the Netherlands in my final year of my GCSEs. I've attended 5 conferences as a delegate and one conference as a chair. I'm excited to make FAMUN my 7th conference and second chairing experience in MUN. I can't wait to engage in productive debate in February and I look forward to meeting you all!

An Introduction to the Topic

Underdeveloped countries are overlooked regarding their opportunities in trading. This is why protocols should be set up to ensure that this vital aspect in growing an economy is fulfilled. Trading is very important, in fact about 20-25% of a given country's GDP derives from trading. For this reason, trading can be considered a major factor when discussing the growth of economies. This idea is clearly outlined in the quote by Anna Lindh, "[...] nonetheless, developing countries must be able to reap the benefits of international trade". By this notion, it is understood that LEDCs (see Figure 1) around the world must be able to harness the economic power of trade (broken down into rail, road and ocean) by establishing protocols linked to its infrastructure.

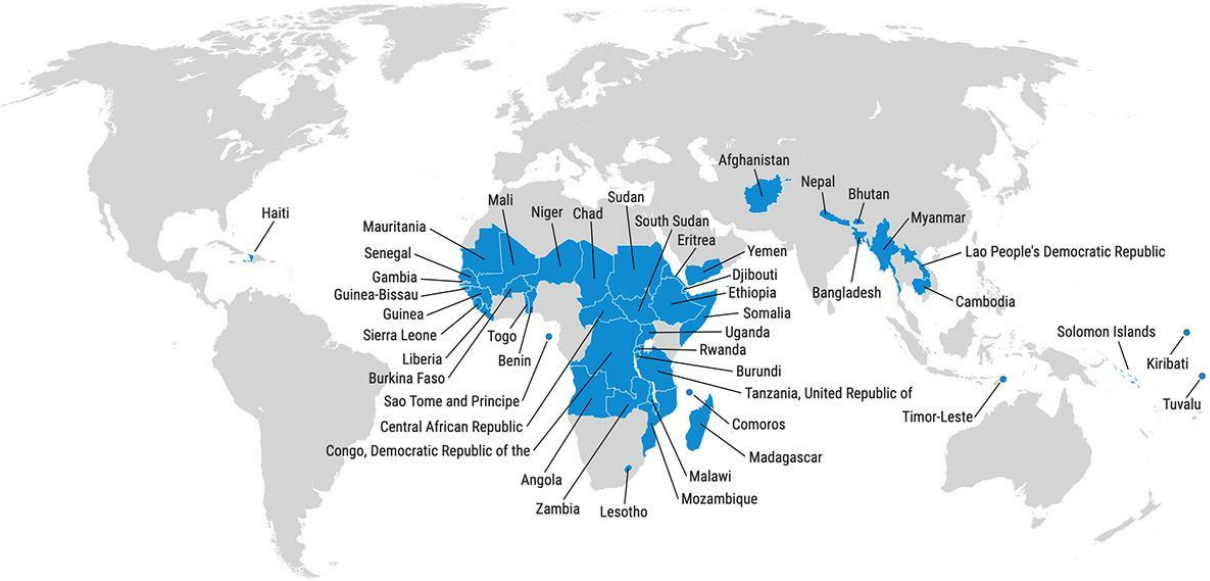


Figure 1: Map of the world LEDCs (underdeveloped countries)

Definition of Key Terms

LEDC – Less Economically Developed Country. A formal term used to refer to a country which less economically developed.

MEDC – More Economically Developed Country. A formal term used to refer to a country which is more economically developed.

GDP – Gross Domestic Product. A measure of the size of a country's economy, normally measured in USD.

Protocol – A rule which describes how an activity should be performed.

Freight – A term given to goods transported in bulk/cargo. Different types include rail, road and ocean.

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation.

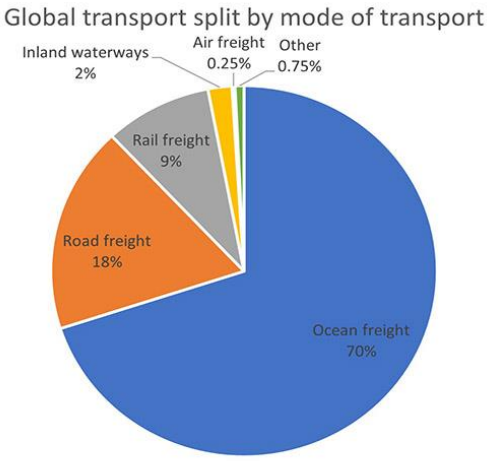
Sultanate – Islamic political structure present across history. European equivalent of a Kingdom.

Locomotive – Powered vehicle used to pull things across rail tracks. Can be powered by steam, electricity or a combustible material.

A General Overview of the Issue

Trade via ocean freight

When faced with the issue of setting up protocols to promote infrastructural growth in underdeveloped countries, it is important to understand what is meant by infrastructural growth and what type thereof in abundant in LEDCs and which types contribute to increased trading possibilities. One example of infrastructure which aids trade in LEDCs is anything ocean freight related. As seen in Graph 1, ocean freight accounts for 70% of global trade and therefore infrastructural development in that field will lead to better trading opportunities. But what types of infrastructural growth will aid this most positively? This is known as port infrastructure and examples include shore extensions, offshore ports and building robust solutions for future vessel types not to mention that increasing infrastructure can promote port operations and waterborne logistics. However, the fact that only around 50% of the UN's LEDCs (refer to Figure 1) are on a coast makes trade via ocean freight impossible for around half of the LEDCs.



Graph 1: Distribution of modes of transport in trade (2022)

Trade via road freight

Another key form of transport in trading includes road freight. Although this solution is seen as old-fashioned and not future proof, it serves as 18% of global trade as seen in Graph 1 and is generally a cheaper option. It is very efficient for short distances and therefore functions very well within national boundaries. However, the efficiency of this form of transport suffers internationally and along long distances due to high toll charges, petrol stops and traffic. Promoting infrastructure for this category of transport includes the construction and maintenance of bridges, tunnels and the road itself. Other types of infrastructure could be the construction of more petrol stations and more efficient vehicle recovery/ breakdown services.

Trade via rail freight

The final form of transport in trade that can be considered beneficial to LEDCs is trade via rail freight. Although only consisting of about 9% of global trade, trade via rail freight can be very beneficial to LEDCs, especially those located in Africa. Due to its continental nature, Africa (which is home to 74% of LEDCs) is perfect

for a sophisticated rail network which it now lacks (see Figure 2). Such a network could provide a less costly and more efficient alternative to road freight or ocean freight. This is because it can connect all counties on a land

mass, unlike ocean freight. It is also much cheaper and more reliable than road freight since fewer tolls/ faire need to be paid. Rail freight also has the option to be much more eco-friendly than alternatives. However, there is another side to the coin, rail freight carries much less capacity than ocean freight leading to a slower rate of trade. On top of that, railroads set up in rural places often succumb to damage. Therefore, protocols must be put into place to promote the maintenance and expansion of railways. In the maintenance of the infrastructure sector, efficient services include: rail grinding; rail replacement; tamping; track stabilisation; ballast injection and sleeper replacements.

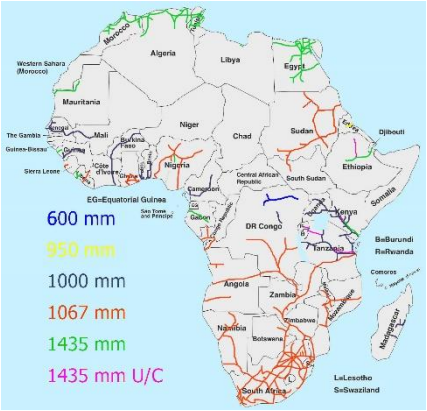


Figure 2: Map of existing rail networks in Africa

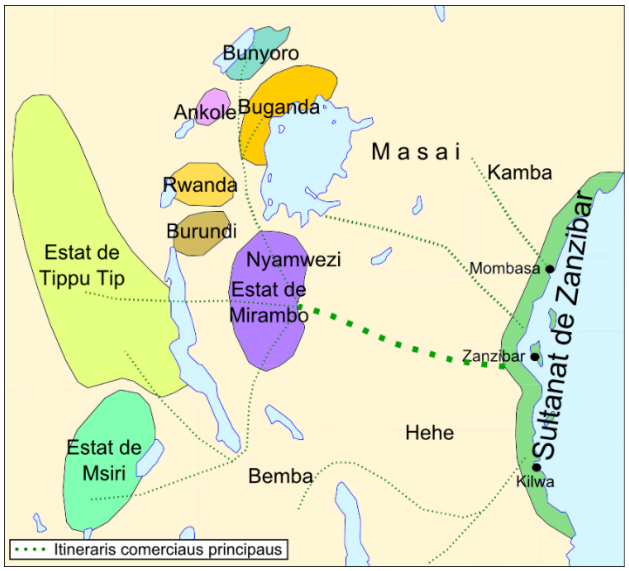
Conclusion

To conclude, each form of transport in trade can be beneficial for the LEDCs in their ways. However, it is more efficient to implement these simultaneously as they work best in unison. In a format where coastal LEDCs can grow their economies through ocean freight by implementing protocols to support it and inland or landlocked LEDCs can do the same just with rail and road freight. In this format, countries can work together to achieve economic growth.

Historical Background

Sultanate of Zanzibar

Figure 3: Inland trade conducted by the Sultanate of Zanzibar



The history of the establishment of protocols in LEDCs to aid the infrastructural growth of infrastructure leading to economic growth is worth recalling here. Firstly, the history of the use of ports in Africa (which is a continent exceptionally high in LEDCs) is very rich. To begin, the East African coastline which now houses LEDCs like Tanzania and Mozambique was known as the "Golden Coast" in the 16th and 17th centuries under the pollical structure known as the Sultanate of Zanzibar. They would trade mostly with the Arabian Peninsula by ship (modern ocean freight) but extended as far across the Indian ocean as Malaysia, and then would further expand their economic opportunities by trading inland with various tribal kingdoms as seen in Figure 3, named Rwanda, Burundi and Buganda whose modern-day equivalents are the LEDC counties of Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda. This form of cooperation created growth and prosperity in the past and paints a possible blueprint for the future.

The Silk Road

The Silk Road was a historic trade route that was present across the Asian continent it is the equivalent of modern-day road freight since it was often travelled across using caravans. It had trade routes starting in China/ Mongolia and ending in the Indian Subcontinent and the Middle East. The usage of the route would span over 1000 years throughout which the trade of many different commodities from different cultures around the world was enabled. The road ran through many modern LEDCs like Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

The arrival of locomotives

The use of locomotives became very popular after the discovery of energy generation via steam-powered systems in the late 18th century. With the establishment of locomotives, a new type of trade emerged which is referred to in the modern day as rail freight. This was a key step in trade and subsequently led to major economic growth as new towns and settlements were being born due solely on the fact that there were train tracks in the area. The locomotive was a massive factor in the success of the industrial revolution which could be considered the greatest period of economic growth and prosperity in written history.

Major Parties Involved

Countries' Governments

Countries' Governments play a key role in the financing and logistics in the construction and maintenance of infrastructure, especially trade related infrastructure. They are the political bodies that often finance the whole ordeal generally with taxpayers' money, which is often abundant in many LEDCs due to corruption. On the topic of trade infrastructure, in Spain, governmental initiatives like the Puertos4.0 Fund help raise money for the maintenance of shipping ports due to their very high running costs. Despite the heavy tolls, there are many examples of well-functioning government-owned shipping ports like the port of Rotterdam which is owned 30% by the Dutch government and 70% by the Municipality of Rotterdam (a governmental establishment). This port profits about 845 million dollars annually. More importantly, it accommodates about 1300 employees which provides the port with adequate repairs.

External companies and private establishments

Companies around the globe also finance trade-related infrastructure. However, this is not a cheap job. For example, shipping ports in Spain are estimated to have an annual maintenance cost of over 100 million euros. As mentioned previously, an initiative was set up to help fund this endeavour with the help of the public and loans from companies. Another example of private railroads is in the

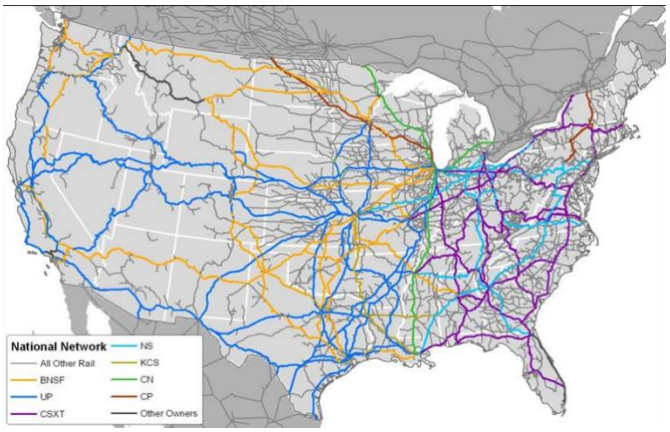
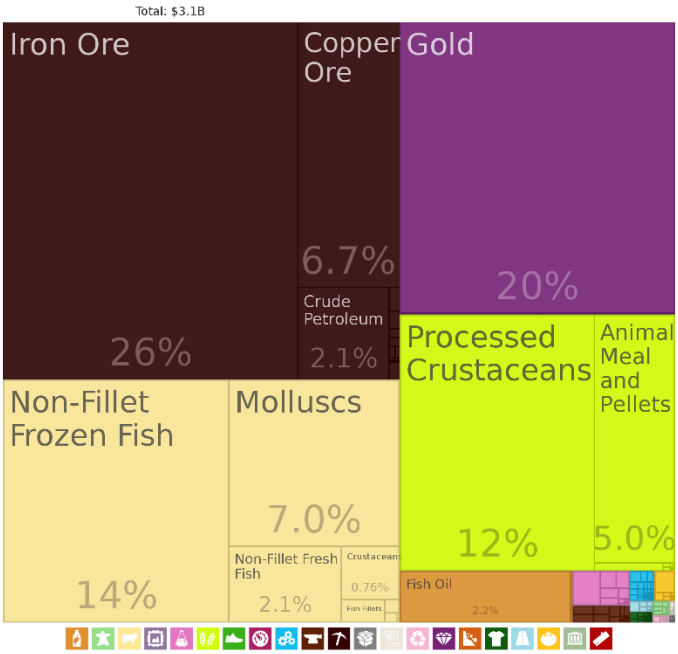


Figure 4: Rail roads in the United States of America

United States of America where the majority (1500 miles) of their railroads are owned by 10 different private companies, all of which pay for maintenance privately will little government support. The majority of freight in the United States is transported by trail due to its robust and reliable nature across long continental distances.

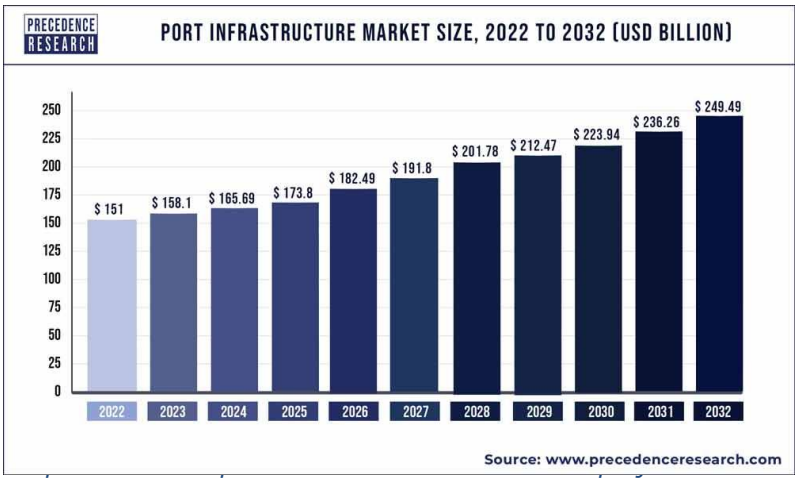
Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

When it comes to past attempts and solutions to the issue of setting up protocols supporting infrastructural growth in underdeveloped countries and promoting further, more improved trading possibilities, a few key attempts have arisen. Rail infrastructure warrants a special mention here. In Mauritania (an LEDC), there is a railway that spans from the iron-rich mid-western Sahara to the ports on the coastline spanning 704 kilometres. It is often referred to as the "backbone of Africa".



Graph 2: Mauritania exports

It carries iron ore on a 13-hour trip in heat exceeding 40 degrees Celsius. This is truly a testimony to the resilience and reliability of trade via rail freight. As a result of this railroad, 26% of Mauritania's exports consist of iron ore (refer to Graph 2), their largest export. This reflects the effects that an improved rail network can have on a country's economy, especially in LEDCs. Likewise, ports have played a key role in many LEDC's histories, especially those in Africa, and each respective country is eager to develop their ports to the standard of an MEDC. Between 2004 and 2019, roughly 50 billion dollars have been invested into building ports in Africa which was roughly 13 times more than the previous 15 years. They currently engage in a "port race" which is very undiplomatic in nature. Despite this, the port infrastructure market is growing exponentially as it has grown by 7.1 billion dollars (as seen in Graph 3) globally in the last year and is due to double in size in the next 10-15 years.



Possible Solutions for the Issue

Accounting for situation of LEDCs

The possible solutions for the issue is setting up protocols to support infrastructural growth in underdeveloped countries, thus promoting more and improved trading possibilities are quite varied. Firstly, the severity of the county's situation must be taken into hand. If an LEDC is suffering from corruption other economic problems, there is little point in setting up protocols that are funded by the government since available funds will be scarce. To combat this, funding could come from a range of sources like willing multinational companies which can provide loans and workers to enable much needed economic growth. Similarly, private companies and NGOs could be established as seen in the United States, where the majority of their railroads are owned and mostly maintained by private companies (see Figure 4). In these arrangements, LEDCs with less functioning governments will profit the greatest.

Promoting diplomatic ties

It is also very important to ensure that all LEDCs and other countries of the First World (MEDCs) work together on this project to reach their maximum potential outcome. As mentioned previously, LEDCs in Africa have considered the construction and maintenance of shipping ports a "port race". This diplomatic attitude is the opposite of ideal diplomacy. In an ideal world, a Schengen Zone approach would be best where all countries can move their tradeable resources through neighbouring countries to ensure ease of transport. Such a protocol could be managed by bigger organizations like the African Union or a new economic structure to grow the economies of LEDCs backed by the United Nations.

The nature of protocols

It is important to consider that not all modes of trade transport (rail, road, and ocean freight) are perfect; they all have their respective advantages and disadvantages. When used together, however, they work spectacularly as seen in Mauritania with the railroad and ports. Establishing protocols that ensure arrangements like this will lead to a more economically reliable and efficient system, which will in turn lead to great economic growth for the country in question.

Timeline of Key Events

Before the year 0 CE	The establishment of the silk road as a major trade route in the Asian and European continents.
15th – 17th century CE	The height of the Sultanate of Zanzibar. A period if which great economic prosperity was seen the now LEDC prominent region.
18th – 19th century	The arrival of locomotives and the industry of freight rail and its relevant infrastructure.
1950s – 1970s	The years in which many LEDCs got their independence from their colonisers.
2004 - 2019	The years of the known “port race” among many African countries many of which were LEDCs. A very undiplomatic event.
2030s	The period in which the port infrastructure market will double in size compared to its current size.

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