



UNITED NATIONS  
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

# Factsheet: Least developed countries (LDCs)

## Highlights from the International Yearbook of Industrial Statistics 2023

Given their population and area, least developed countries (LDCs) have a limited contribution to global gross domestic product (GDP), manufacturing exports and manufacturing value added (MVA), underscoring the challenges they face in integrating more deeply into the global economy. Despite their [minimal share to global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions](#), they are among the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

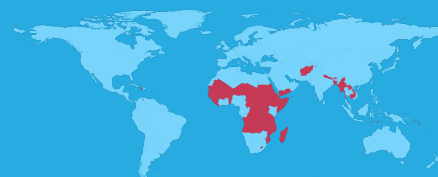
The growth of MVA in LDCs in 2021–2022 showcases their [swift recovery from the COVID-19 crisis](#). This group is expected to outpace global manufacturing growth also in 2023. This is a positive sign for the manufacturing sector in LDCs, reflecting adaptability and resilience in the face of global economic disruptions. The manufacturing sector in LDCs is primarily dominated by low-technology industries, such as the manufacture of wearing apparel, food products and non-metallic mineral products and others, reaching 84 per cent of total MVA. Pharmaceuticals is their only significant higher-technology industry (11.2 per cent). African LDCs have seen a significant drop in their share in LDCs' MVA, from more than half in 2000 to about a third in 2022. In contrast, the share of Asian economies in LDCs has continuously increased since the early 2000s.

The Competitive Industrial Performance (CIP) Index underscores the [diverse trajectories of industrial competitiveness in LDCs](#). Bangladesh, Cambodia and Senegal remained fixed as the most competitive industries in LDCs. Some economies, such as the People's Democratic Republic of Lao and Nepal, recorded sustained improvements, while other experienced volatile results or an overall decline in the global ranking.

The SDG 9 Industry Index reflects the different challenges faced by LDCs in achieving sustainable industrial development. While countries like [Bangladesh, Myanmar and Senegal achieved commendable progress](#), other economies recorded a significant drop.

In recent years, the growth rate of female manufacturing employment was generally higher than for men. African LDCs generally showed higher and more stable growth rates of manufacturing employment. In terms of manufacturing trade, all LDCs recorded a [negative trade balance](#), indicating their status as net manufacturing importers. However, African LDCs consistently exhibit a higher deficit than their counterparts in Asia.

In summary, available indicators reveal that LDCs have made only limited progress in structural transformation and industrialization. They are also [lagging behind in achieving SDG 9](#). Robust industrial development and a transformation towards higher-productivity activities remain the most important strategies for creating sustained growth opportunities.



### OVERVIEW

- » MVA share in GDP: 14.0%
- » MVA growth rate: 7.4%
- » Manufacturing share in employment: 7.7%
- » Manufacturing employment
  - ♀: 43%
  - ♂: 57%



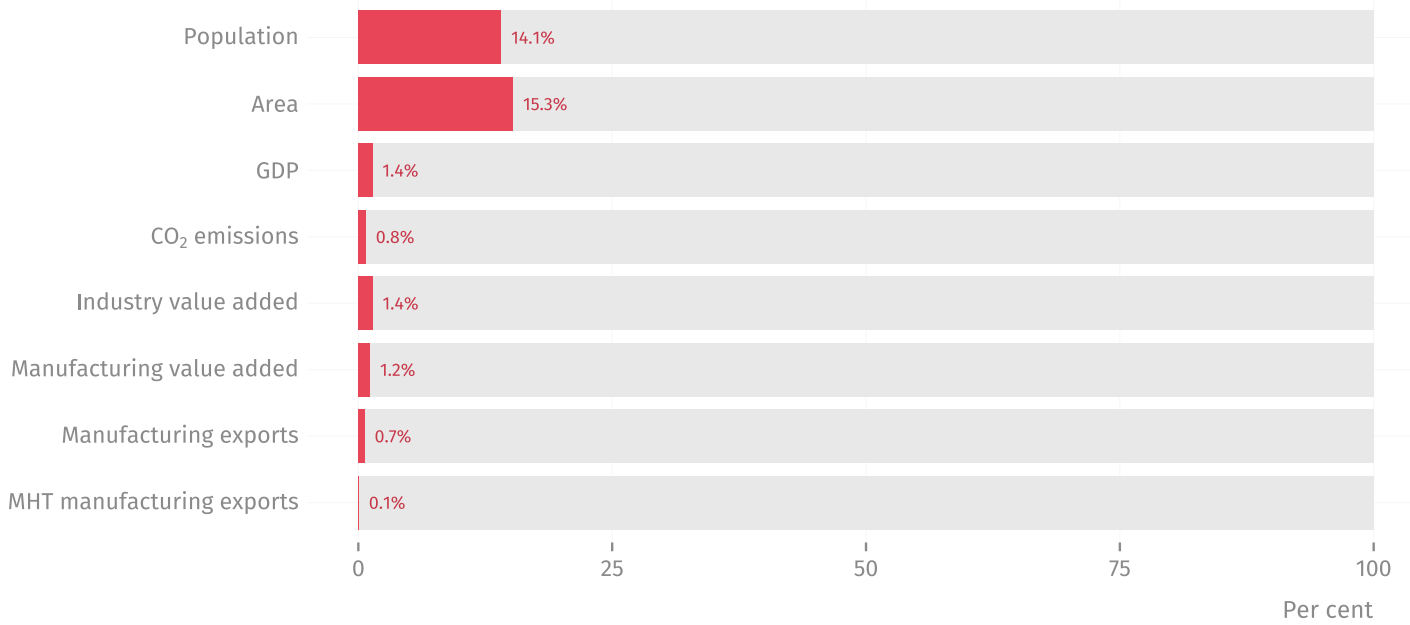
### MAIN INDUSTRIES

- » Wearing apparel
- » Food products
- » Pharmaceuticals



### INDUSTRIAL PERFORMANCE

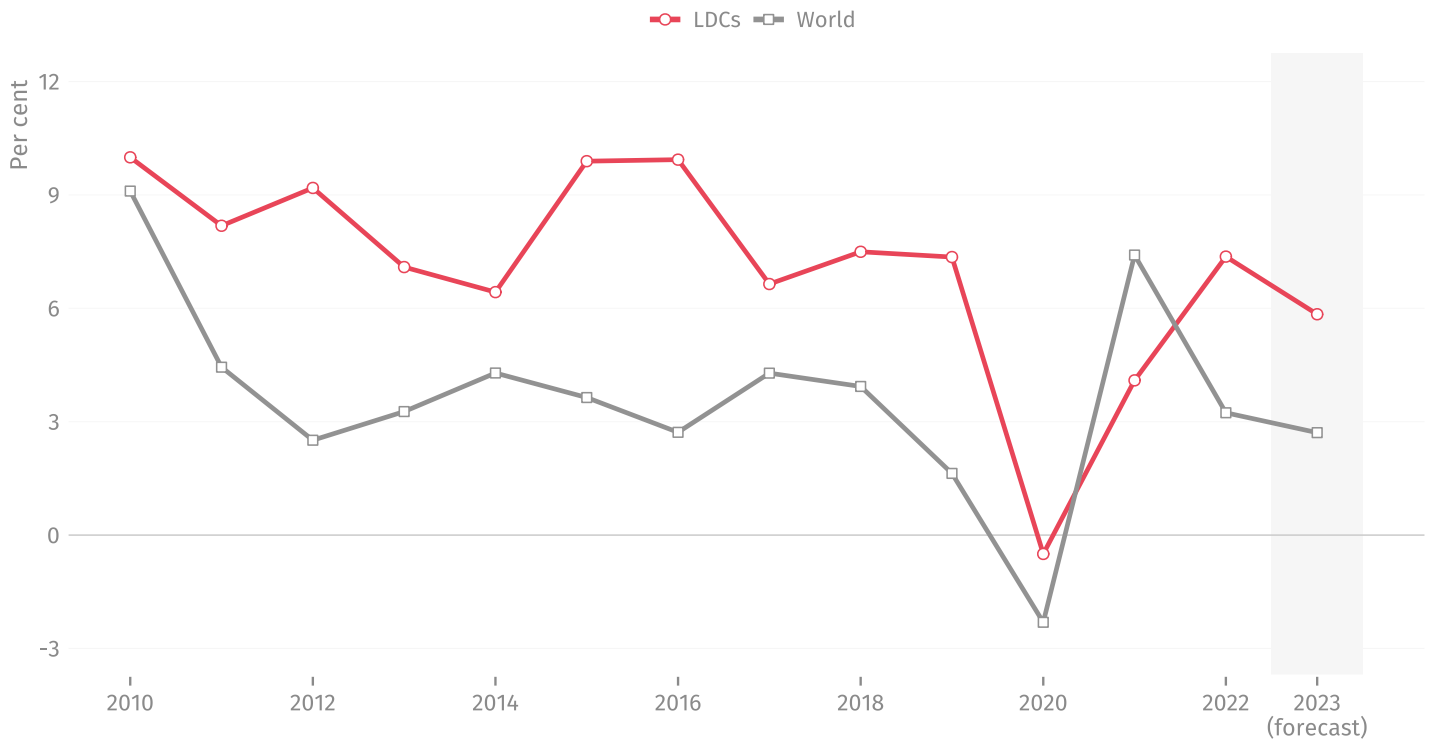
- » CIP Index average rank: 88<sup>th</sup>
- » SDG Industry Index:



**Figure 1 |** Share of LDCs in the world economy, 2022

Source: UNIDO calculations based on data from [1; 2; 3; 4]

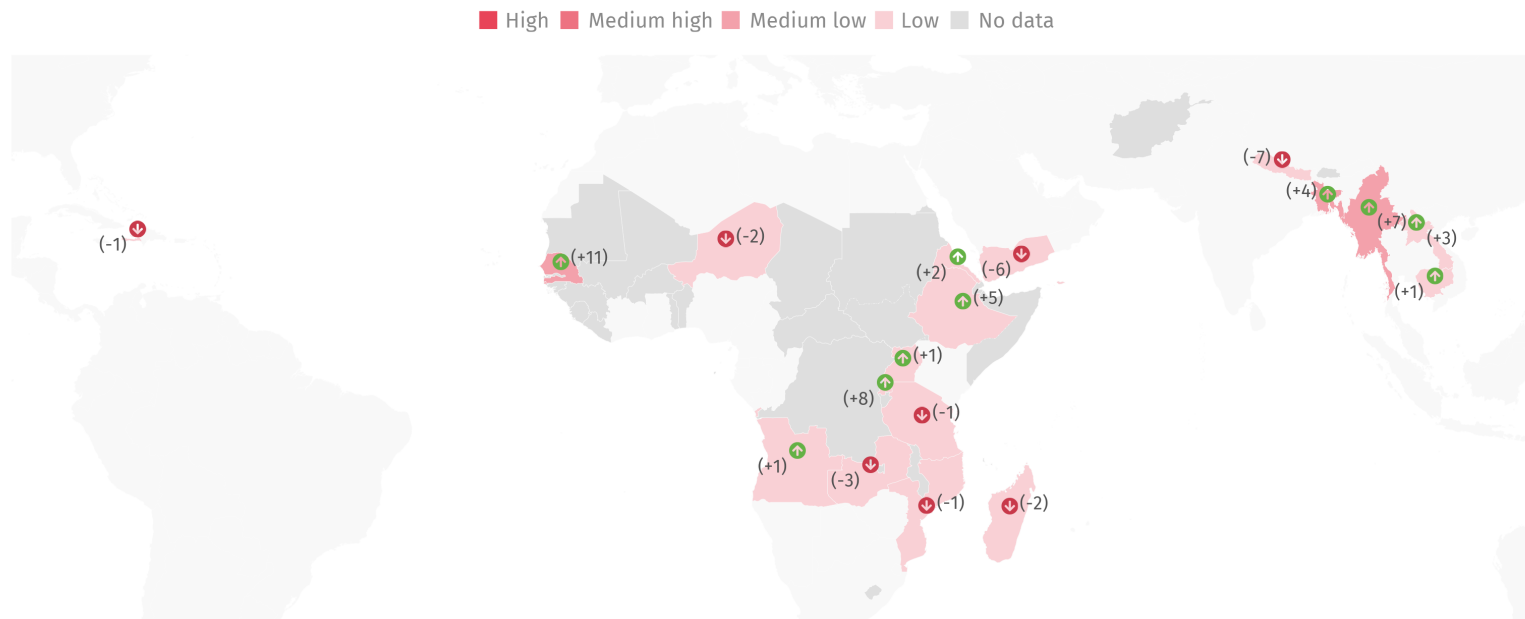
Note: Figures for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are for 2020. CO<sub>2</sub> = carbon dioxide; MHT = medium-high and high technology industries.



**Figure 2 |** Manufacturing value added growth rate

Source: [1]

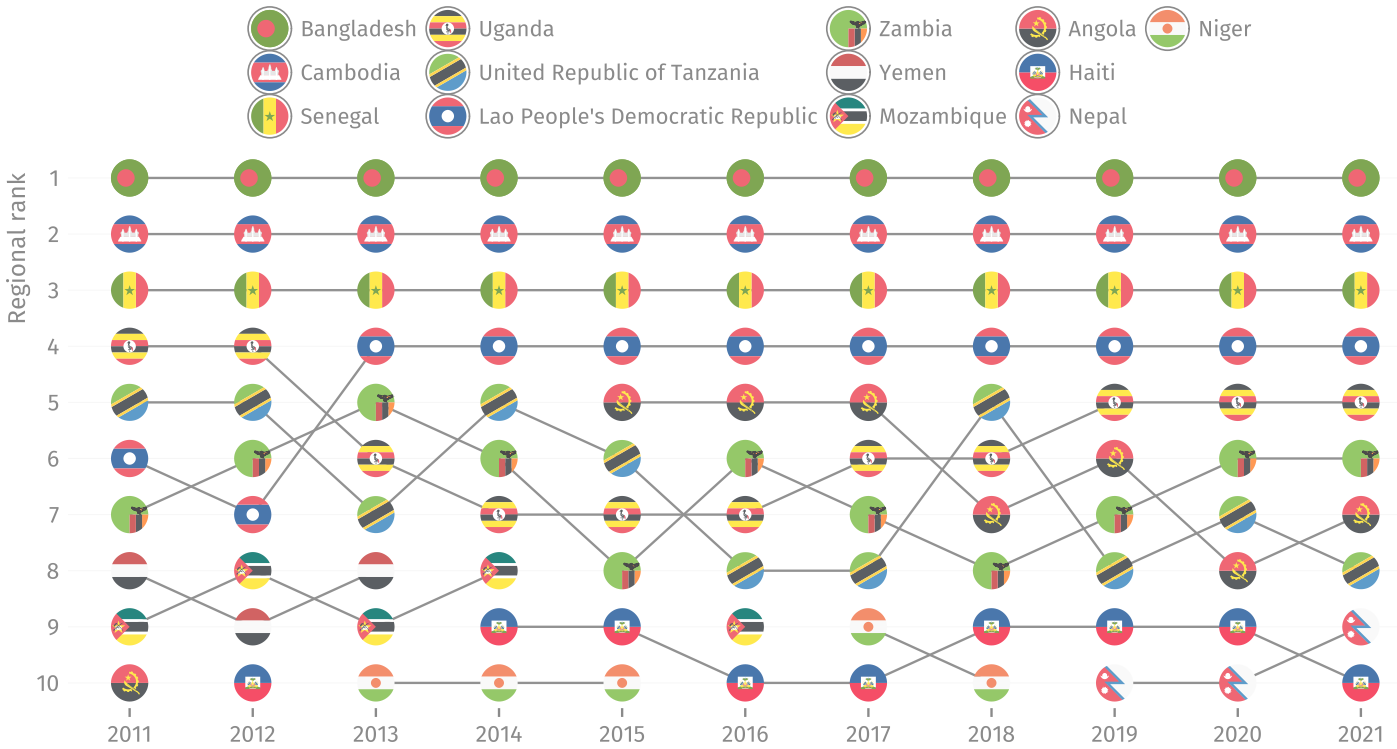
Note: Growth rates are calculated over the values in constant 2015 USD.



**Figure 3 |** SDG 9 Industry Index global ranking in LDCs, 2020

Source: [2]

Note: The map shows two indicators related to the global ranking of the SDG 9 Industry Index: (1) the fill color indicates the quartile in 2020, and (2) the icon and the text in parentheses show the change recorded in the ranking between 2015 and 2020.

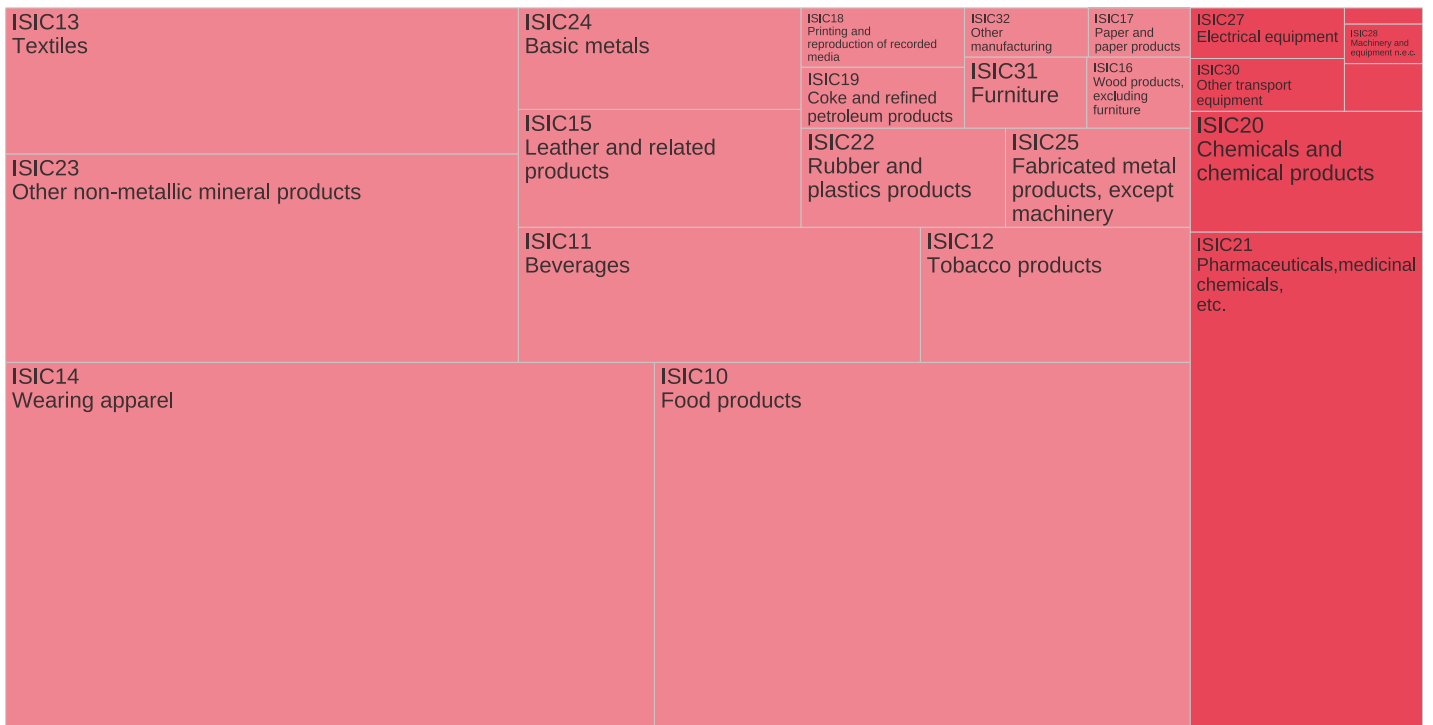


**Figure 4 |** Top ten economies in the Competitive Industrial Performance (CIP) Index, LDCs

Source: [3]

Note: This graph shows the ranking of countries in the region and not the global CIP ranks.

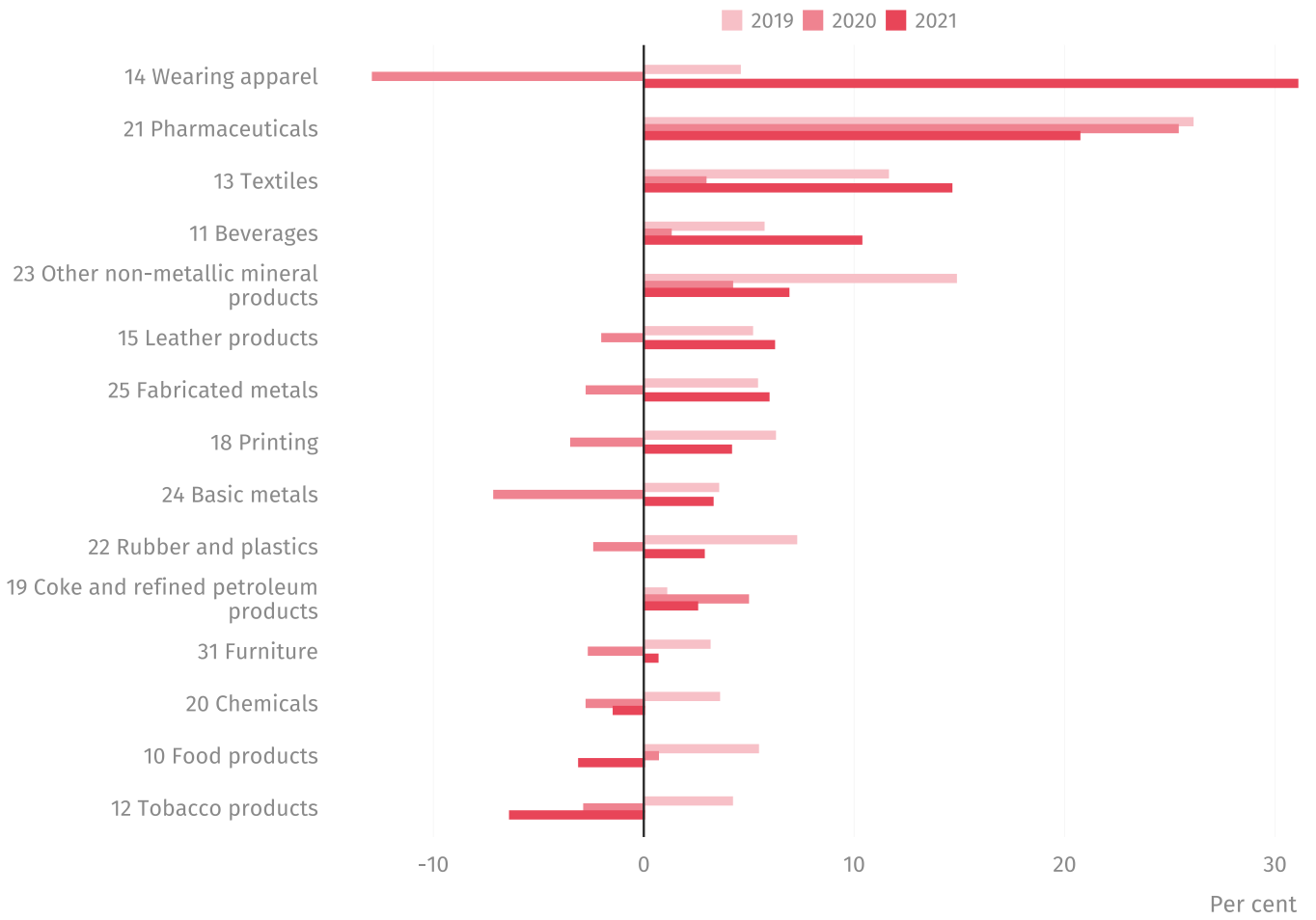
■ Medium-high and high technology industries ■ Other manufacturing industries



**Figure 5 |** Distribution of manufacturing value added by industry in LDCs, 2021

Source: [5]

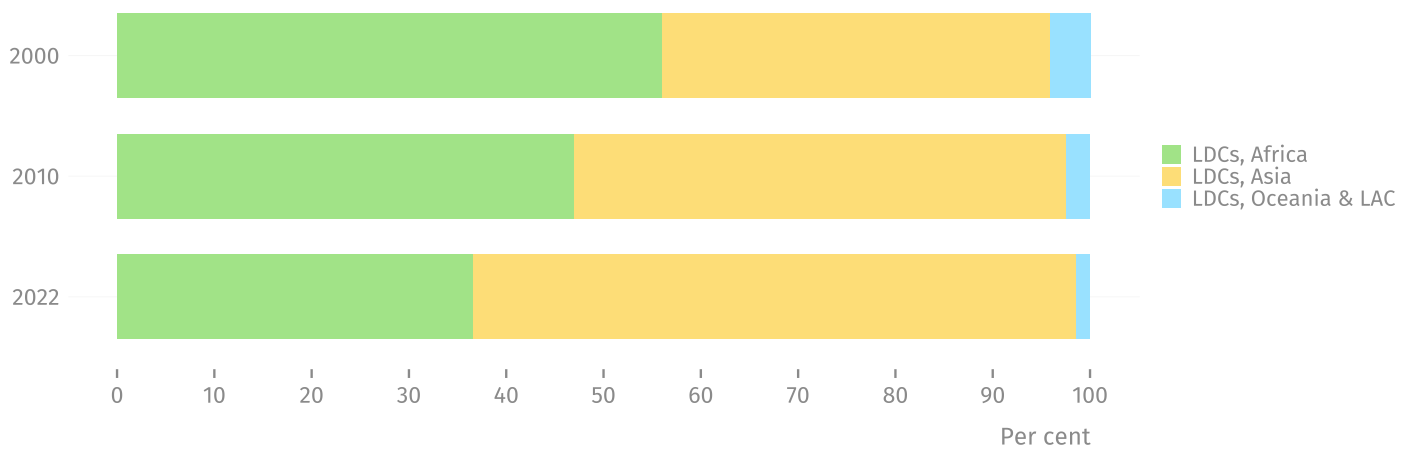
Note: The chart presents the most recent structure of regional manufacturing by industrial activity; the colours distinguish manufacturing industries according to technological intensity.



**Figure 6 |** Growth rate of value added by manufacturing industry, LDCs

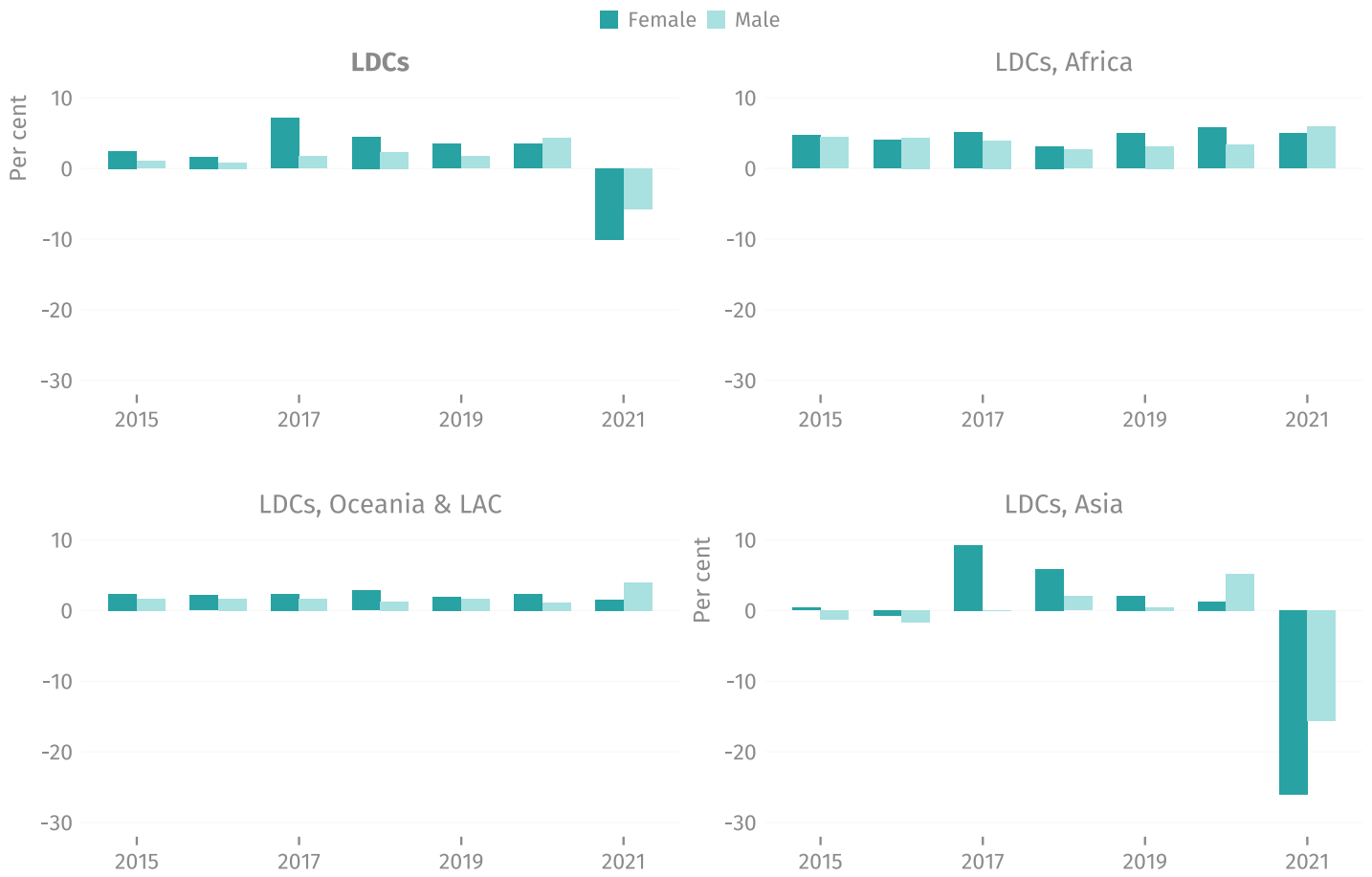
Source: [6]

Note: The bars are ordered by growth rate in 2021.

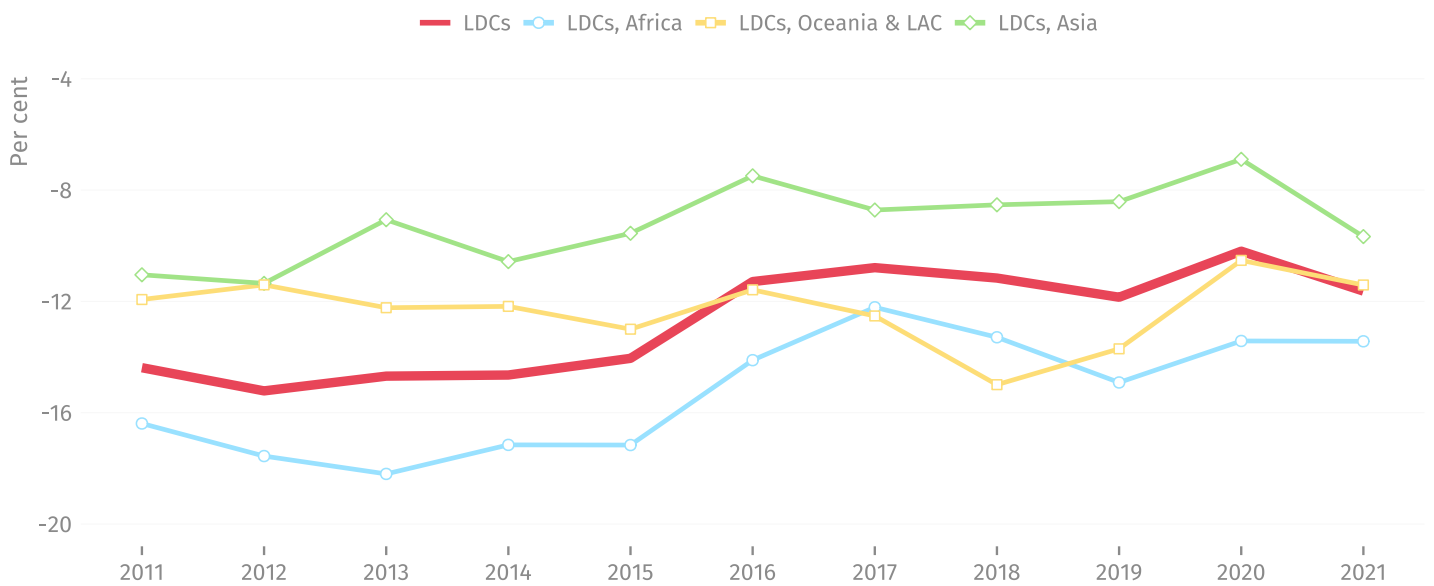


**Figure 7 |** Share of manufacturing value added in LDCs, by subregion

Source: [5]



**Figure 8** | Growth rate of manufacturing employment in LDCs, by sex and subregion  
Source: [7]



**Figure 9** | Trade balance in manufacturing goods as a share of GDP, LDCs  
Source: [1; 8]

**Table 1 | Industrial indicators by country/area, latest available year**

	MVA per capita 2022 (2015 US\$)	MVA growth rate 2022 (%)	MVA share in GDP 2022 (%)	MHT share in MVA 2020 (%)	Industry value added share in GDP 2022 (%)	Manuf. share in exports 2022 (%)	MHT share in manuf. exports 2022 (%)	Manuf. trade balance 2021 (% GDP)	Manuf. share in employment 2021 (%)	Manuf. CO <sub>2</sub> intensity 2020 (kg/US\$)	CIP Index 2021 (rank)
Afghanistan	25	-4.6	7.2	8.5	11.7	7.2	14.7	-29.7	6.4	...	148
Angola	229	4.8	7.5	3.4	23.1	3.2	15.2	-12.4	2.1	0.14	127
Bangladesh	509	10.8	23.9	7.8	27.1	96.8	1.7	-5.1	14.4	0.23	64
Benin	117	3.0	9.3	...	10.3	22.8	16.9	-13.6	16.4	0.34	...
Bhutan	190	4.4	6.6	...	25.1	52.9	72.2	-21.7	6.8	...	...
Burkina Faso	78	4.8	10.6	...	25.4	7.3	16.2	-18.6	15.4	...	...
Burundi	28	0.3	10.4	2.8	11.6	30.1	8.6	-21.4	1.2	...	147
Cambodia	233	7.6	15.7	0.3	18.3	84.6	11.3	-25.1	16.5	0.26	83
Central African Republic	68	1.5	18.7	9.2	19.4	70.6	24.7	-13.1	...	...	145
Chad	85	6.2	10.0	...	45.7	3.1	37.1	-10.5	7.0	...	...
Comoros	88	1.8	6.0	...	6.9	51.8	49.1	-18.7	5.9	...	...
Congo, Dem. Rep. of	80	7.0	15.1	...	46.2	48.8	16.9	7.1	5.8	0.00	...
Djibouti	99	2.7	3.2	...	8.5	71.9	29.8	-34.1	0.2	...	...
Eritrea	39	3.6	6.1	9.7	16.0	63.1	2.0	-6.8	...	0.16	149
Ethiopia	46	7.6	5.6	16.1	6.9	16.6	35.2	-12.7	3.2	1.04	143
Gambia	13	0.6	1.9	3.9	4.5	55.5	9.1	-24.5	1.3	...	150
Guinea	110	4.0	11.1	...	29.1	43.8	2.5	2.9	2.8	...	...
Guinea-Bissau	63	2.7	9.3	...	10.1	0.5	23.3	-21.7	6.7	...	...
Haiti	203	-1.4	16.9	5.3	19.1	87.2	4.5	-11.0	1.4	0.25	134
Kiribati	58	0.7	4.1	...	5.5	41.0	90.5	-60.3	4.0	...	...
Lao People's Dem. Rep	234	5.4	8.7	3.8	28.5	41.1	24.3	-9.4	5.1	0.39	109
Lesotho	191	4.3	19.4	...	32.3	91.7	6.8	-23.1	22.6	...	...
Liberia	23	-1.0	4.4	...	7.5	53.7	39.8	-22.5	1.7	...	...
Madagascar	37	4.3	8.2	3.3	11.4	38.2	3.6	-16.6	6.7	0.00	137
Malawi	69	3.7	12.4	11.3	16.3	24.3	20.0	-19.5	3.8	...	142
Mali	138	5.7	16.6	...	17.5	5.3	47.0	-26.6	6.5	...	...
Mauritania	101	3.5	6.1	...	13.3	47.0	1.4	-11.1	6.5	...	...
Mozambique	45	3.5	7.8	10.9	16.7	22.1	8.9	-38.7	4.1	0.10	135
Myanmar	258	2.7	22.5	23.7	28.3	48.9	8.2	-11.0	12.2	0.16	...
Nepal	51	5.9	4.9	8.6	7.4	86.3	6.9	-31.3	14.5	3.04	130
Niger	43	10.2	7.8	17.7	16.9	22.9	33.9	-15.5	20.1	0.20	138
Rwanda	72	8.4	7.7	6.9	10.1	41.2	10.2	-14.7	4.0	0.34	136
Sao Tome and Principe	108	1.2	6.4	...	9.0	61.0	38.8	-22.9	6.4	...	...
Senegal	234	2.8	16.1	26.8	20.7	57.0	12.3	-17.4	12.9	0.36	102
Sierra Leone	10	0.8	1.6	...	4.2	90.1	12.1	-20.3	4.1	...	...
Solomon Islands	178	-7.1	9.4	...	11.4	88.3	1.1	-8.3	5.5	...	...
Somalia	9	3.5	2.2	...	2.8	25.3	16.5	-12.7	10.7	...	...
South Sudan	11	-2.8	1.9	...	44.2	1.2	13.5	-21.3	...	0.18	...
Sudan	127	-1.7	6.7	...	12.5	4.9	26.6	-23.1	7.7	0.22	...

**Table 1 |** Industrial indicators by country/area, latest available year (*continued*)

	MVA per capita 2022 (2015 US\$)	MVA growth rate 2022 (%)	MVA share in GDP 2022 (%)	MHT share in MVA 2020 (%)	Industry value added share in GDP 2022 (%)	Manuf. share in exports 2022 (%)	MHT share in manuf. exports 2022 (%)	Manuf. trade balance 2021 (% GDP)	Manuf. share in employment 2021 (%)	Manuf. CO <sub>2</sub> intensity 2020 (kg/US\$)	CIP Index 2021 (rank)
Timor-Leste	28	3.2	1.7	...	87.0	38.5	39.1	-24.1	5.6	...	...
Togo	113	9.2	12.7	...	18.3	62.2	23.6	-16.6	15.3	0.17	...
Tuvalu	9	-0.5	0.2	...	1.5	23.7	84.0	-34.5	9.3	...	...
Uganda	143	7.2	16.8	11.1	22.4	24.4	20.7	-12.5	4.3	0.19	123
Tanzania	92	5.2	8.3	7.0	14.4	23.3	19.7	-11.4	4.4	0.38	129
Yemen	55	2.2	9.6	2.1	15.4	20.2	32.4	-36.7	5.5	0.58	150
Zambia	99	4.0	7.9	9.7	24.5	21.0	20.7	-18.6	5.8	0.32	126

Source: [1-3; 8]

Note: Manufacturing value added per capita figures are in constant 2015 US dollars. Figures based on national accounts variables for 2023 are UNIDO estimates. CO<sub>2</sub> intensity is calculated as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in kilograms per unit of manufacturing value added in constant 2015 US dollars. With the objective of maximizing data availability, the latest observed value for manufacturing share in employment is used. Manuf. = manufacturing



**Table 2 |** Industrial indicators by country/area group, latest available year

	MVA per capita 2022 (2015 US\$)	MVA growth rate 2022 (%)	MVA share in GDP 2022 (%)	MHT share in MVA 2020 (%)	Industry value added share in GDP 2022 (%)	Manuf. share in exports 2022 (%)	MHT share in manuf. exports 2022 (%)	Manuf. trade balance 2021 (% GDP)	Manuf. share in employ-ment 2021 (%)	Manuf. CO <sub>2</sub> intensity 2020 (kg/US\$)
World	1,879	3.2	16.8	45.1	21.4	76.5	59.2	-0.2	13.6	0.44
Least developed countries (LDCs)	160	7.4	14.0	10.6	21.6	45.8	9.2	-11.6	7.7	0.28
<b>Geographical regions</b>										
LDCs, Africa	87	4.8	9.1	11.5	18.9	24.8	16.1	-13.4	5.7	0.28
LDCs, Asia	312	9.1	20.6	10.4	25.1	80.1	5.8	-9.7	13.4	0.27
<b>Other groups</b>										
Small Island LDCs (SIDS and LDCs)	162	-1.3	13.3	5.3	24.1	68.6	9.1	-13.6	7.1	0.25

Source: [1; 2]

Note: Manufacturing value added per capita figures are in constant 2015 US dollars. Figures based on national accounts variables for 2023 are UNIDO estimates. CO<sub>2</sub> intensity is calculated as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in kilograms per unit of manufacturing value added in constant 2015 US dollars. With the objective of maximizing data availability, the latest observed values for manufacturing share in employment are used to calculate the group aggregates. Manuf. = manufacturing

**Table 3 |** Countries/areas in Least developed countries (LDCs)

<b>LDCs, Africa</b>	Guinea	Sierra Leone	<b>LDCs, Asia</b>
Angola	Guinea-Bissau	Somalia	Afghanistan
Benin	Lesotho	South Sudan	Bangladesh
Burkina Faso	Liberia	Sudan	Bhutan
Burundi	Madagascar	Togo	Cambodia
Central African Republic	Malawi	Uganda	Lao People's Dem. Rep
Chad	Mali	Tanzania	Myanmar
Comoros	Mauritania	Zambia	Nepal
Congo, Dem. Rep. of	Mozambique	<b>LDCs, Oceania and LAC</b>	Timor-Leste
Djibouti	Niger	Haiti	Yemen
Eritrea	Rwanda	Kiribati	
Ethiopia	Sao Tome and Principe	Solomon Islands	
Gambia	Senegal	Tuvalu	

## Other groups

**Table 4 |** List of countries/areas included in Small Island LDCs (SIDS and LDCs)

<b>Small Island LDCs (SIDS and LDCs)</b>			
Comoros	Haiti	Sao Tome and Principe	Timor-Leste
Guinea-Bissau	Kiribati	Solomon Islands	Tuvalu

## References

- [1] United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). *National Accounts Database*. Available at <https://stat.unido.org> (accessed on Nov. 2023). Vienna, 2023 (cited on pages 2, 6, 8, 9).
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- [6] United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). *Quarterly IIP Database*. Available at <https://stat.unido.org> (accessed on Nov. 2023). Vienna, 2023 (cited on page 5).
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