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## **Stronger cross-border economic ties will boost Africa, UN report finds**



UNDP Administrator Helen Clark

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Greater cross-border investments within Africa and more policies that serve the interests of the poor could boost the continent's overall standard of living by as much as 10 per cent by the end of the decade, according to a United Nations report released today.

The [report](#), prepared by the UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)) and released to coincide with the Fourth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in Istanbul, Turkey, calls for more integrated investment in basic infrastructure such as roads and power, as well as better access to public services.

UNDP Administrator Helen Clark [said](#) there was a clear link between regional integration and higher economic growth.

“Ambitious and well-designed integration agendas can advance both inclusive growth and human development – enabling African LDCs to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals ([MDGs](#)),” she said, referring to the series of social and economic targets with an internationally agreed 2015 deadline.

The report states greater economic integration will only happen if there is strong political support and committed leadership from African governments.

Thirty-three of the 48 countries classified as LDCs are in sub-Saharan Africa, and within them live 500 million people, or roughly half of the continent's total population. But those same countries are responsible for less than a quarter of Africa's gross domestic product (GDP).

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