



PERMANENT MISSION OF NEPAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement by Hon. Mr. Upendra Yadav, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal,
at the High-level plenary meeting devoted to the mid-term review of the
Almaty Programme of Action**

Sixty-third Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 2-3 October 2008

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. The Almaty Programme of Action, agreed upon five years ago, remains a sound framework for partnership among the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), transit developing countries, and the developed partners to overcome the special problems of the LLDCs, which face difficulty due to lack access to the sea and to global markets. As we meet here for the midterm review of its implementation, we need to do more to ensure effective implementation of all activities under the programme of action.

2. The report of the Secretary General shows that both landlocked and transit developing countries have made some progress in implementing specific actions agreed in the Almaty Program of Action. They have made policy reforms and given priority to transit transport issues. They have engaged in a much stronger development partnership with respect to transport infrastructure development and trade facilitation, as well as aid, debt relief and market access. This has enabled the LLDCs as a group to register a high annual growth rate. But the segregated data shows that different countries are in different stages of achieving implementation. And

those landlocked countries emerging from conflict need special attention and support.

Mr. President,

3. My delegation is of the view that we should make a realistic assessment of the progress made, lessons learned and problems encountered in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and agree on measures to ensure accelerate its timely implementation. While doing this, we should focus our attention on bridging the gaps in the implementation of the agreed commitments. We should also take into account new challenges posed by climate change, global food and energy crises as well as other external shocks of various kinds.

Mr. President,

4. LLDCs have been unfairly marginalized in the global market due to their geographical disadvantages. They suffer from inadequate infrastructure development, congested transit transport system, institutional bottlenecks, and trade capacity constraints. As a result, their competitive efficiency remains weak and vulnerable. Therefore, while reaffirming their right of access to and from the sea and freedom of transit by all means of transport, special programs need to be developed to upgrade the necessary facilities to ensure these rights.

5. Increased official development assistance is critical for these countries to finance the development of their infrastructure. We urge the donor community to increase aid to support trade-related public investment in accordance with the national development needs and priorities of the LLDCs.

6. International trade and trade facilitation aspects are equally significant to the LLDCs to improve and promote trade as an engine for growth. Poor road and transport conditions, dependence on primary commodity export, high transit transport cost, and numerous procedural constraints and delays continue to seriously undermine the trade efficiency of the landlocked countries. We welcome the Aid for Trade Initiative and stress on the effective utilization and higher level of allocation of resources for this practical initiative in developing trade logistics, trade diversification strategies as well as in addressing trade adjustment costs.

7. In spite of global efforts, data suggests that a total of 31 landlocked countries have a mere 0.61 percent share in world export, and 0.57 percent share in world import. Given this insignificant participation in international trade, LLDCs are entitled to special and adequate measures and preferential treatment under the multilateral trading system so as to assure them of

fairness and predictability while they explore competitive trading opportunities. Therefore, international community should support the LLDCs financially and technologically, in a more predictable and sustainable manner.

Mr. President,

8. Nepal is fully committed to take all necessary measures at the national level to implement the Almaty Programme of Action. At present, Nepal has been undergoing a process of great political and economic transformation. Our new social and economic programmes are designed to accelerate our socio-economic progress. We also need to undertake post-conflict reconstruction program. As such, we have focused on increasing agricultural productivity, building rural infrastructure, increasing road connectivity and creating a high-growth industrial environment. The government on its part is implementing various reforms in industrial and trade policies and transport and customs procedures.

9. We need strong partnership and we need adequate resources. At this critical juncture, we call for continued and enhanced support from all our development partners to enable us to fully implement the Almaty Program of Action within the stipulated time frame.

Thank you, Mr. President.