

# REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



Permanent Mission of Zambia to the United Nations, 237 East 52nd Street, New York, NY 10022  
Tex: (212) 888-5770 Fax: (212) 888-5213 E-mail: zambia@un.int

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## STATEMENT

BY

HON. DORA SILIYA, MP,  
MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT  
ZAMBIA DELEGATION TO THE 63<sup>RD</sup> REGULAR SESSION OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON

THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING  
DEVOTED TO THE MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE  
ALMATY PROGRAMME OF ACTION

New York  
2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2008

**Mr. President,**

My delegation wishes to congratulate the Secretary General for convening this High Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Almaty Programme of Action. This review, as speakers before me have already alluded to, provides us with yet another platform to address the immediate and long term challenges being faced by Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs).

According to available statistics, Sub-Saharan Africa enjoyed a positive and stable balance of trade during the years 2006 and 2007, with exports contributing an average of 40% to GDP while imports contributed 36% in 2006 and 38.8% in 2007.

Similarly, in terms of ICT development, in 2006, the internet penetration of the populations in Africa stood at 4.7%. In Asia and North America, this stood at 13.7% and 38.7% respectively. Specifically for the Landlocked Developing Countries, the internet penetration in 2006 stood at 2.9%. Clearly, these statistics indicate that Africa's ICT development is the lowest in the world, representing only 3.4% of the world internet penetration.

In the case of Zambia, statistics on growth are very favourable, with the GDP currently at US\$10.9 billion, reflecting a 5.5% growth rate and a GDP per capita of US\$ 920. However, the available transport and communication infrastructure cannot sustain this growth in the long term. You may wish to know, Mr. President that studies have shown that a 10% increase in mobile phone penetration can contribute as much as 2.6% to GDP growth.

**Mr. President,**

The Zambia Government realises the important role communication and transport infrastructure play in sustaining economic growth for long term wealth and job creation. Our immediate challenge is a failure to quickly and adequately respond to the unprecedented levels of economic activity. For example, on our North-South Corridor there has been a tremendous increase in cargo transportation causing a burden on the treasury for road maintenance. This burden on the treasury is exacerbated by a rundown 1200km rail network running alongside the main road network on this corridor. An estimated US\$100 million is required to rehabilitate the railway line in the North-South corridor and another US\$179 million for the Dar-es-Salaam Corridor which is the TAZARA Railway Line linking Zambia to Tanzania and ultimately to the port on the East coast of Africa.

As a landlocked country we are also immediately challenged by lack of adequate and efficient border facilities thereby adversely affecting trade facilitation. A good example is again on our North-South Corridor where at any given time over 200 trucks are waiting to be cleared to carry cargo from

countries south of Zambia to the Democratic Republic of Congo and on their return trips, these trucks are heavy laden with tonnes of copper.

**Mr President,**

Our long term challenges are numerous but not insurmountable. We believe that at this review of the Almaty Programme of Action, clear guidelines and support must be formulated to assist landlocked and transit developing countries to develop integrated multi-modal transport systems. For example, in Zambia we are currently seeking financing to undertake feasibility studies for rail links from TAZARA to the port of Mpulungu on Lake Tanganyika and also to Lions Den in Zimbabwe to link Zambia to the port of Beira in Mozambique using the shortest possible route.

In our effort to continue to facilitate trade and reduce the cost of doing business, we have so far laid 1750 km of optic fibre at a cost of US\$48 million. Our aim is to lay 10 000km of optic fibre nationwide by 2015.

As a landlocked country surrounded by eight (8) neighbours, we realise that we have to work with the region to enhance connectivity and maximise returns on investment in communication and transport infrastructure. A recent study estimates the required immediate investment in infrastructure in east and southern Africa at US\$40billion annually. This investment will go towards communication, transport and energy development.

In spite of our efforts to provide the necessary infrastructure to facilitate trade, non-oil producing landlocked developing countries, such as Zambia, will continue to be challenged by the high transport costs, in some cases as much as an extra 50%, due to high world oil prices.

**Mr. President,**

It is critically important that we address the software issues including institutional and administrative constraints that continue to challenge our progress. Clear policy implementation must also be supported by an enabling legal and regulatory environment.

The very issues we are discussing today, which are, communication and transport, have brought the world communities much closer than ever before and this is well captured in the book, "The World is Flat" by Thomas L. Friedman. This is why it is imperative that our cooperating partners continue to provide all necessary assistance. For example, in our 2030 vision for Zambia, we see our landlocked geographical position as yet another possibility for communication and transport connectivity in the region and beyond. Developed infrastructure leads to efficiency, thereby, creating gains for everyone, including our cooperating partners.

Let me conclude by stating Zambia's hope that at the next review of the Almaty Programme of Action, more positive reports in all aspects of implementation will be shared among members of the Programme. This will be possible not only through national efforts such as good planning aligned to the budget process but also through the fulfilment of commitments by cooperating partners.

I thank you.