

# Midterm Review of Implementation of Almaty Programme of Action Newsletter



Office of the High Representative for  
Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries  
and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS)



October/November 2007

# Landlocked Developing Countries

## BACKGROUND

Lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets and high transit costs continue to impose serious constraints on the overall socio-economic development of landlocked developing countries. Their sea borne trade unavoidably depends on transit through other countries. Additional border crossings and long distance from the market substantially increase the total expenses for the transport services.

The economic performance of landlocked developing countries reflects the direct and indirect impact of geographical situation on key economic variables. Landlocked developing countries are generally among the poorest of the developing countries, with the weakest growth rates, and are typically heavily dependent on a very limited number of commodities for their export earnings. Moreover, of 31 landlocked developing countries, 16 are classified as least developed.

The remoteness from major world markets is the principal reason why many landlocked developing countries have not been very successful in mitigating consequences caused by their geographical handicap as compared to landlocked countries in Europe. The latter are surrounded by major developed markets and their seaborne trade accounts for a relatively small part of their external trade. Their export is mainly high value added products and their distance from the seaport is relatively short.

The distances involved in most cases of landlocked developing countries are, instead, excessive. Kazakhstan has the longest distance from the sea (3,750 km), followed by Afghanistan, Chad, Niger, Zambia and Zimbabwe with distances from the nearest seacoast of more than 2,000 km.

Transit time for goods of landlocked developing countries is extremely long not only because of the long distance from the sea port, but also because of inadequate road and railway conditions, cumbersome border crossing procedures and inefficiency of transit transport systems.

In most cases, their transit neighbours are themselves developing countries, often of broadly similar economic structure and beset by similar scarcity of resources. The recorded trade between landlocked and transit developing countries tends to be relatively insignificant. Generally, the transit developing countries are in no position to offer transport systems of high technical and administrative standards to which their landlocked neighbours might link themselves effectively by the development of their own internal transport systems.

To complete the numerous procedural stages, worldwide importing and exporting requires 39.9 and 31.9 days, respectively. These figures rise to 65.8 and 51.6 days for landlocked developing countries. In contrast to transit developing countries, landlocked developing countries take an additional 22.9 days for goods to be imported and 28.6 additional days for goods to be exported.

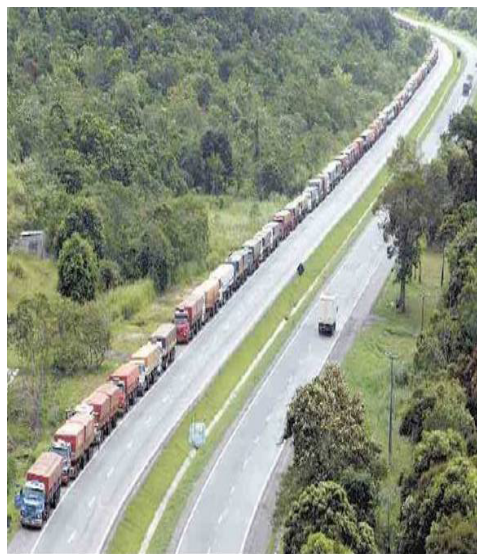
The development of transport infrastructure varies from region to region. Road transportation remains the dominant mode of transport in Africa, accounting for 90 per cent of interurban transport. Less than one third of Africa's 2 million kilometers of roads are asphalted, amounting to 6.48 km per 100 km<sup>2</sup> compared to 12 km per 100 km<sup>2</sup> in Latin America and 18 per 100 km<sup>2</sup> in Asia. For example, only 0.8 per cent of road in Chad is paved, 3.5 per cent in Mongolia, 6 per cent in Bolivia and 18 per cent in Mali.

In terms of telecommunication infrastructure, on average in 2003 there were 5.1 main phone lines per 100 inhabitants in landlocked developing countries. Afghanistan, Chad, the Central African Republic, Niger and Uganda had as low as 0.2 main telephone lines per 100 inhabitants.

Physical infrastructure, or ports and inland transport, accounts for only a quarter of the delays, while non-physical factors accounted for 75 per cent of total delays (the latter figure combines pre-arrival documents, 59 per cent and customs and inspection, 16 per cent). Indeed, high transport costs facing landlocked developing countries have become a far more restrictive barrier to trade for these countries than tariffs. Tariffs applied by Canada, the European Union, Japan and the United States range from 3 per cent to 7 per cent on goods originated from most landlocked developing countries.

However, landlocked developing countries on average pay almost three times higher for transport services than these tariffs only. Only the least developed countries among the landlocked developing countries benefit from recent initiatives to provide quota-free, duty-free market access for their goods.

There is a clear correlation between distance and transport costs. High transport costs erode the competitive edge and trade volume of landlocked developing countries.



Line of trucks, more than 100 km long enroute to access the Paranagua Port, Brazil.

The trade reducing effect is strongest for transport intensive activities that are dependent on exports or imported intermediate goods for production. Most landlocked developing countries are commodity exporters. According to UNCTAD estimates based on the IMF balance of payment statistics, on average landlocked developing countries spent almost two times more of their export earnings for the payment of transport and insurance services than the average for developing countries and three times more than the average of developed economies.

## The Almaty Programme of Action

The International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 25-29 August 2003.

The Almaty Ministerial Conference was the first of its kind and provided the international community with a unique opportunity to galvanize international solidarity and partnership to assist landlocked developing countries to effectively participate in the international trading system, through, among other things, establishing transit systems.

The Ministerial Conference adopted the Almaty Programme of Action: “Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework For Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries” and the Almaty Ministerial Declaration.

The Almaty Declaration and Programme of Action reflected the strong commitment of the international community to address the special needs and problems of landlocked developing countries, as called for in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

The overarching goal of the Almaty Programme of Action is to forge partnerships to overcome the specific problems of the landlocked developing countries that result from their lack of territorial access to the sea and their remoteness and isolation from world markets. That situation has contributed to their relative poverty, substantially inflating transportation costs and undermining their effective participation in international trade.

The Almaty Programme of Action establishes a new global framework for developing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries, taking into account the interests of both landlocked and transit developing countries.

The main innovative feature of the Almaty Programme of Action is the focus on action-oriented specific measures to be undertaken by both landlocked and transit developing countries with the support of their development partners, the implementation of which would be measurable and feasible.



The Programme aims to:

- a. secure access to and from the sea by all means of transport;
- b. reduce costs and improve services so as to increase the competitiveness of their exports;
- c. reduce the delivered costs of imports;
- d. address problems of delays and uncertainties in trade routes;
- e. develop adequate national networks;
- f. reduce loss, damage and deterioration enroute;
- g. open the way for export expansion; and
- h. improve the safety of road transport and the security of people along the corridors.

### **Five Priorities in the Almaty Programme of Action**

- ◇ Policy Improvements - reducing customs bureaucracy and fees, designed to cut costs and travel days for landlocked countries' exports.
- ◇ Improved rail, road, air and pipeline infra-structure - projects will reflect local transport modes; in Africa, road is the predominant mode of transport; in South Asia, rail is more common.
- ◇ International trade measures - to give preferential treatment to landlocked countries' goods, making them more competitive.
- ◇ Technical and financial international assistance - donor countries will lend know-how and money to landlocked and transit countries for infrastructure and policy improvements.
- ◇ Monitoring and follow-up on agreements -measurable criteria, such as travel days and costs, will be used, and an annual review before the General Assembly is possible.

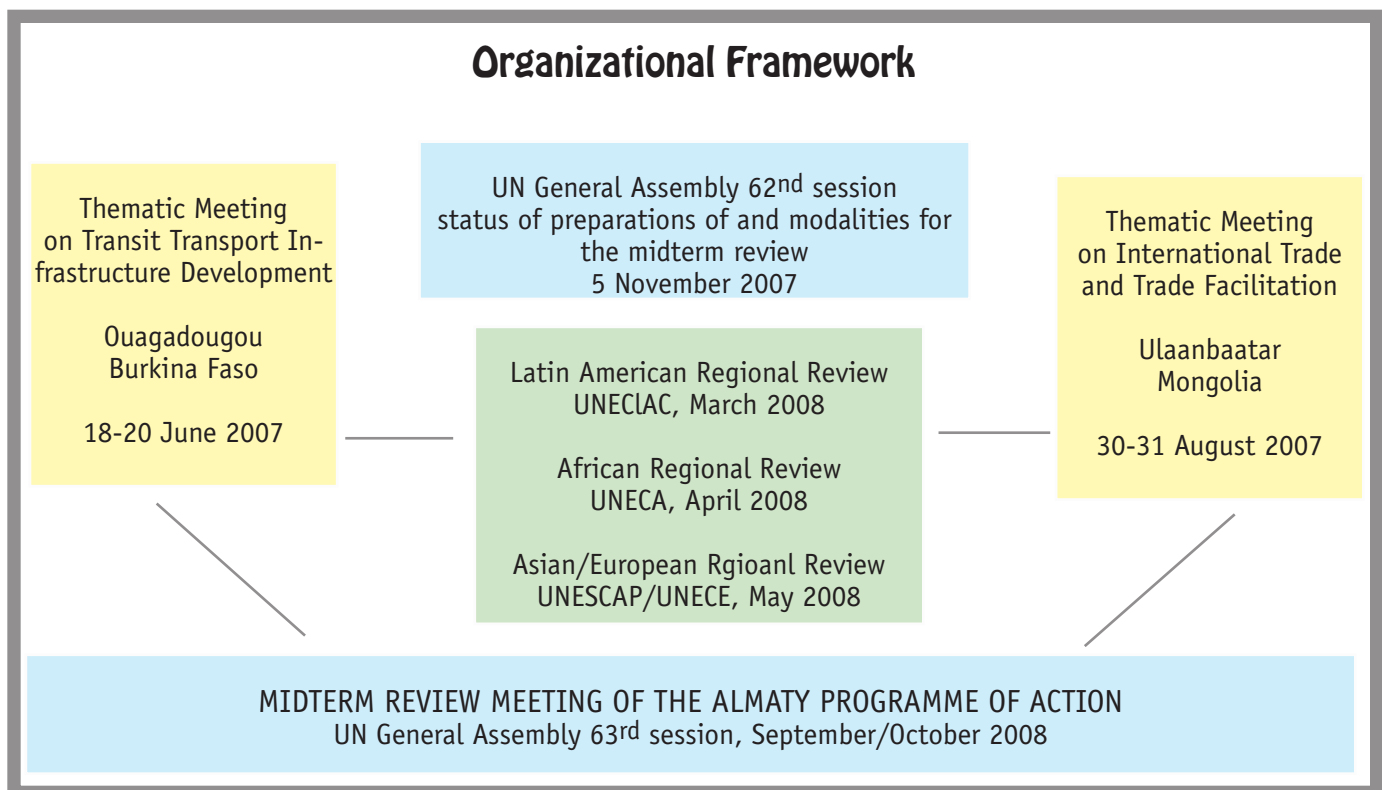
## The Midterm Review of the Almaty Programme of Action

The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/212, decided to hold a midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2008. The midterm review is to be preceded by regional and substantive preparations in a most effective, well-structured and broadly participatory manner. Also, intergovernmental mechanisms at the global and regional levels, including those of United Nations regional commissions, as well as relevant substantive material and statistical data, will be effectively utilized in the review process.

The UN-OHRLLS was requested by the General Assembly to coordinate the preparatory process. The United Nations system organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Development Programme, the regional commissions and relevant international and regional organizations were also requested, within their respective mandates, to provide necessary support to the review process.

The midterm review will provide the international community with a unique opportunity to assess the progress made in establishing efficient transit transport systems in the landlocked regions around the world. It should be seen as a joint undertaking and common rallying point for Governments of landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries and donor countries, as well as the World Bank, regional development banks, UN System Organizations, WCO, ITU and other regional and relevant sub-regional and professional organizations and the private sector, with the single purpose of accelerating the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. Active involvement of all stakeholders in the review process is key to arriving at a meaningful outcome.

UN-OHRLLS has been providing overall coordination, advocacy and mobilization of political and financial support for the midterm review.



*“The midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action is an important exercise aimed at determining, among other things, what has been achieved so far, what could have been done better and how the second half of the implementation period can be effectively utilized to advance on the ultimate goal of assisting landlocked developing countries”.*

*Secretary General Report  
A/62/225  
August 13 2007*

## **Thematic and Regional Preparations**

To launch the preparatory process, the UN-OHRLLS prepared the organizational framework for the midterm review in consultation with the main stakeholders.

Two substantive/thematic meetings were held in 2007 with a view to provide main substantive inputs to the midterm review. These two meetings addressed the physical and non-physical aspects of the transit trade of landlocked developing countries: (1) thematic meeting on transit transport infrastructure development (Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 18-20 June 2007) and (2) thematic meeting on international trade and trade facilitation (Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 30-31 August 2007). Both meetings adopted their respective Chairman’s summary as outcomes.

Three regional reviews are being planned in the first half of 2008. UNECA, UNESCAP, UNECE and UNECLAC should play a lead role in conducting the regional reviews. These could be built in the regular sessions of the regional commissions. Their outcome should focus on the assessment of transit transport systems in the respective regions and should include, preferably, a list of deliverables necessary for establishing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked developing countries.

## **(1) Thematic Meeting on Transit Transport Infrastructure Development Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 18-20 June 2007**

The first Thematic Meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Alain B. Yoda, Minister of State, Minister of Health, Representative of H.E. the Prime Minister, Head of the Government of Burkina Faso. The Ministers of Economy and Finance, Transports, Infrastructure and Environment of Burkina Faso also attended, together with the Minister of Industry and Trade of Mali, Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, the Under-Secretary General and High Representative and the Deputy Executive Secretary of UNECA.

The discussions among representatives of landlocked and transit developing countries, as well as the donor community and the relevant UN and other international organizations (such as UNECA, UNESCAP, the African Development Bank and the World Bank), focused on the major challenges faced by LLDCs in the area of transit transport infrastructure development and maintenance, which is Priority Two of the Almaty Programme of Action, and on what future actions were needed to further strengthen the global partnership for establishing efficient transit transport systems.

Keynote Remarks were given by Professor Jeffrey Sachs, Director, The Earth Institute at Columbia University, New York through videoconference, where he emphasized the need for a major increase in the funds available to support crucial transport infrastructure development projects in all landlocked regions. In cooperation with the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation of UNDP, a special session on the sub-regional dimension of transit transport infrastructure development was also held to highlight the important role of regional and subregional organizations in promoting cooperative cross-border projects in the transit transport area.

Representatives from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, West African Economic and Monetary Union, Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa, MERCOSUR, Economic Community for Central African States, TRACECA, East African Community, Transit Transport Coordination Authority of the Northern Corridor and the African Union contributed their experiences and perspectives. Furthermore, a special presentation was made by the Executive Director of the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships of the United States on the crucial role of public-private partnerships.

The Meeting adopted the Chairman's Summary as its outcome on 20 June 2007. The latter contains sections on: assessment of the current situation in landlocked developing countries; mobilization of financial resources for transit transport infrastructure development; subregional and regional cooperation; enabling environment and role of international financial and development institutions and international organizations.

It discusses the need to mobilize financial resources and to establish an enabling environment for transit transport infrastructure development, the role of subregional cooperation and that of international financial and development institutions and international organizations.

It was recognized that inadequate infrastructure in rail transport, road transport, ports, inland waterways, pipelines, air transport and information and communications technology, and missing links, few harmonized rules and procedures and little cross-border investment and private sector participation are major problems faced by landlocked developing countries.

The outcome document emphasized that national budgets need to give priority to transit transport infrastructure development, including the allocation of necessary resources for maintenance and rehabilitation. Given the low return of infrastructure investment, assistance continues to remain the major source of funding for infrastructure development in landlocked developing countries. While welcoming the increase in official development assistance to landlocked developing countries, the meeting expressed concern about the small share of assistance allocated to transport, storage and communications infrastructure development, which declined from 6.3 per cent in 2003 to 3.7 per cent in 2004.



Thematic Meeting on Transit Transport Infrastructure Development. Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 18-20 June 2007

The meeting called on the international financial and international financial development institutions and donor countries to increase their financial assistance for transit transport infrastructure development in landlocked and transit developing countries. The importance of subregional and regional cooperation for transit transport infrastructure development was also stressed, along with the role of regional integration organizations. In this regard, regional integration communities and corridor management committees need both financial and technical assistance.

A number of priorities for action were identified, including:

- the maintenance and strengthening of the existing transit facilities through appropriate maintenance,
- the interconnection of highway missing links connecting landlocked developing countries;
- the improvement of traffic free flow, and
- the sustainability of transport infrastructure through more reliable and focused international financial support.

## **(2) Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 30-31 August 2007**

More than 150 participants from landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and donor community attended in total. The Mongolian Government, as host country, participated at the highest level. The Prime Minister gave an opening statement, while the Minister of Industry and Trade acted as Chairman.

The objective of the thematic meeting was to review and assess the progress made in the implementation of priority three of the Almaty Programme of Action, on international trade and trade facilitation. Experts from UN System and major international and regional organizations and financial institutions presented their organization's programmes and activities in support of the LLDCs in the area of international trade and trade facilitation. LLDCs, transit developing countries and donors presented their national experiences and efforts in the same area.

The Meeting deliberated on future actions needed to enhance the LLDCs' participation in the international trading system while further strengthening the global partnership for establishing efficient transit transport systems. A Chairman's Summary was adopted on 31 August 2007. The Summary provides an assessment of the current situation in terms of LLDCs' and transit countries' participation in the international trading system, highlighting in particular the numerous bottlenecks related to trade facilitation that persist in LLDCs, such as:

- the excessive number of documents required for export/import,
- multiplication of scheduled and unscheduled roadblocks,
- lack of adjacent border controls,
- complicated and non-standardized procedures for customs clearance and inspections,
- insufficient application of ICT, leading to poor or total lack of computerization of customs procedures,

- non-transparency of trade and customs laws, regulations and procedures,
- lack of institutional capacities and trained human resources, and
- low level of adherence to international conventions on transit transport.

The crucial importance of trade and transport facilitation measures in landlocked and transit developing countries was underscored as a means to overcome the above-mentioned constraints. The objectives to be pursued in the trade facilitation negotiations at the WTO were identified, including:

- the integration of special and differential treatment for LLDCs as part of the clarification and improvement of Articles V, VIII and X;
- the adoption of commitments that are commensurate with the capacity of landlocked and transit developing countries for implementation; and
- the adoption of commitments by developed countries on the provision of technical assistance and capacity building.

it was stressed that special and differential treatment for the landlocked countries must be sought in all relevant areas under negotiation to guarantee greater flexibilities to pursue those policy options that are most appropriate to accelerate the LLDCs' integration into the multilateral trading system. The need for targeted technical assistance in support of the acceding LLDCs during all stages of the process was also underscored.



Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 30-31 August 2007

The Mongolia Meeting outcome document lays down the actions to be taken by the LLDCs, in cooperation with their transit neighbours, to enhance trade facilitation, such as:

- simplification and harmonization of customs procedures (including adherence to the Revised Kyoto Convention of the World Customs Organization);
- transparency with regard to all relevant information pertaining to customs law, customs formalities, other trade-related legal texts, administrative arrangements and requirements;
- enhanced cooperation with other border agencies as essential step for the operation of an effective and expeditious clearance of goods at the border;
- establishment of coordinated and adjacent border control posts or, even better a one-stop border;
- harmonization at the regional or subregional level of regulations concerning truck size and weight, third party motor, insurance, driver's license and other transit trade documentation;
- effective implementation of existing regional and subregional agreements on trade facilitation, while avoiding proliferation of rules and regulations in the area of transit transport and trade in the same region.

The international community was encouraged to provide coordinated and coherent financial and technical assistance to landlocked and transit developing countries, in the form of grants or concessional loans, for the effective implementation of trade facilitation measures and the further implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. It was stressed that technical assistance, especially in the area of trade facilitation, should be demand-driven and take into account the differences in the level of development, economic and trade capacity, subregional integration and geographical location of the beneficiary landlocked and transit developing countries.

## **The Meeting of Trade Ministers of LLDCs, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 28-29 August 2007**

Organized by UN-OHRLLS in close cooperation with UNDP and the Government of Mongolia, the ministerial meeting focused on the major challenges faced by LLDCs in the context of international trade, including in particular their participation in the Doha Round of trade negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO). The LLDC Trade Ministers analyzed the reasons why developing countries in general have shared the benefits of increased flows of trade and investment, whereas the LLDCs, as a group, have remained marginalized from world trade.

Under the right conditions, international trade can be a powerful engine of growth and an important catalyst for human development, in particular through its impact on incomes and employment thereby lifting many out of poverty. However, lack of territorial access to the sea, isolation, remoteness from world markets, dependency on the availability of a trade corridor and transit systems, as well as high transit transport costs impose serious constraints on the competitiveness of LLDCs which, in turn, significantly limits investment in-flows, integration in the world economy as well as overall socio-economic development.

Building on their 2005 Asuncion Platform as their common agenda in the ongoing Doha negotiations, the LLDC Trade Ministers further strengthened the unity behind their concerted action in the WTO context by restating the need to work in close coordination and cooperation in their efforts to draw the attention of the international community to their special problems and needs and to seek the adoption of internationally agreed policies and measures addressing their particular vulnerabilities. They adopted the "Ulaanbaatar Declaration" on 29 August 2007. The major highlights are as follows:

- Call on all WTO Members, particularly the major trading partners, to engage in constructive negotiations for a successful conclusion of the Doha Round, by agreeing to full modalities in the agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA) negotiations and achieving commensurate progress in other areas of the negotiations.
- LLDCs shall encourage WTO Members to take into account their special needs, through reduction commitments on export products of particular interest to the LLDCs and through other flexibilities with the view to helping them diversify their exports.
- LLDCs shall actively participate in the services negotiations and present their case appropriately, including by seeking and promoting initiatives intended to provide LLDCs with technical assistance targeted at improving the competitiveness of their services sectors.
- LLDCs shall continue to engage in the negotiations on Trade Facilitation, with a view to attaining, as a final outcome, an instrument containing globally binding commitments to ensure the freedom of transit, the removal of transit transport impediments that undermine the LLDCs' trade competitiveness, so as to expedite the movement, release and clearance of goods, especially those in transit.
  - » Call on bilateral and multilateral donors to provide LLDCs and their transit partners with technical assistance to identify their trade facilitation needs and priorities, so as to enable their full and effective participation in the ongoing negotiations and the effective and speedy implementation of the adopted measures.
  - » LLDCs shall promote the creation of national fora, in which all involved parties could engage in a constructive dialogue on trade facilitation needs, priorities and problems.



Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries on Trade and Trade Facilitation. August 28-29, 2007, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

- LLDCs shall explore areas where Special & Differential Treatment in different negotiating groups and other relevant WTO fora would be appropriate to address specific problems faced by LLDCs.
- WTO-LLDC Members shall continue to assist LLDCs in the process of accession to the WTO during their working party negotiations and advocate fair treatment regarding commitments to be made by the acceding LLDCs. [8 LLDCs are currently in this process]
- WTO-LLDC Members shall vigorously seek to ensure that their trade problems are effectively understood by other WTO Members and are prominently reflected in the Aid for Trade agenda.
- » In the context of the Aid for Trade architecture, LLDCs shall pursue the goal of obtaining targeted assistance in areas such as capacity building for the formulation of trade policies, participation in trade negotiations, implementation of international agreements and, particularly, in strengthening of productive capacities with a view to increasing the competitiveness of LLDCs' products in export markets.
- LLDCs shall fully engage in the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action

## **The Seventh Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)**

### **Communiqué New York, 28 September 2007**

We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Landlocked Developing Countries, having met in New York, on 28 September 2007 in the sideline of the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the General Assembly of the United Nations,

*Expressing* the concern that landlocked developing countries continue to be marginalized from international trade, thus preventing them from reaping the benefits of globalization and using trade as an instrument for achieving their development objectives, due to their lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, dependence on transit services and policies of their transit neighbors coupled with inadequate transit transport infrastructure facilities and cumbersome transit and border crossing procedures;

*Recalling* the Almaty Declaration and the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries ;

*Recalling* the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted on 8 September 2000 in which Heads of State and Government recognized the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries and urged both bilateral and multilateral donors to increase financial and technical assistance to this group of countries to meet their particular development needs and to help them overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems;

*Recalling* the outcome of the 2005 World Summit in which the special needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries were reaffirmed along with reiterated commitments of the world leaders to urgently address those challenges by effectively implementing the Almaty Programme of Action;

*Recalling* also the Asuncion Platform for the Doha Development Round, adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries Responsible for Trade, Asuncion, Paraguay, 10 August 2005, and the Ulaanbaatar Declaration, adopted by the Meeting of the Trade Ministers of LLDCs, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 28-29 August 2007;

*Recalling* also the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the ECOSOC substantive session 2007 that calls for the full, timely and effective achievement of the goals and targets of the Almaty Programme of Action to address the special needs of the landlocked developing countries,

*Further recalling* the General Assembly resolution 61/212 on the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action, Have adopted the following communiqué:

1. We re-emphasize that the effective integration of landlocked developing countries into the global economy and timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals will be achieved through genuine partnerships between landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners, as well as between public and private sectors, at the national, bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels and through full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

2. Landlocked developing countries are committed to continue implementing reforms addressing the given priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action while prioritizing the development of efficient transit transport systems within the national budget and overall economic development strategies. We are further dedicated to strengthen the commitment of national organizations for their full support and cooperation in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

3. We continue to attach the utmost importance to the effective cooperation and collaboration with our transit neighbours as landlocked developing countries depend on their transit facilities for access to and from the sea. Landlocked developing countries are strongly committed to work in close cooperation and coordination with our transit neighbors in the search of practical solutions to addressing special needs of landlocked developing countries. The importance of south-south cooperation was further emphasized as transit transport cooperation squarely falls under its purview. In this context, regional economic groupings and transit agreements, as well as bilateral agreements, play a critical role in promoting transit transport cooperation. We are committed to the effective implementation of these agreements.

4. We urge our development partners to provide greater financial assistance on a priority basis in the development of transit transport facilities, including completion of missing links to connect landlocked developing countries with the regional network and in undertaking far-reaching trade facilitation measures to improve the efficiency of the use of existing transit facilities. The assistance should be provided in grants and most concessional form urgently. We also urge the international community to accord greater market access and preferential treatment to exports of landlocked developing countries to mitigate high trade transaction costs caused by their geographical handicaps. Special consideration should also be given to landlocked developing countries in the context of the aid for trade initiative and the WTO negotiations on trade facilitation.

5. We recognize that climate change presents daunting challenges for the socio-economic development of the landlocked developing countries. Landlocked developing countries are particularly prone to desertification, drought and increased occurrence of weather extremes. We agree to have a coordinated position to reflect their concerns at the forthcoming international for a, such as the next United Nations Climate Change Conference to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2007.

6. We emphasise the importance of the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. It is an important exercise to review the progress made so far in implementing its various provisions, the constraints encountered and the lessons learned in the past five years, as well as how the second half of the implementation period could be effectively utilized to advance on the ultimate goals to assist landlocked developing countries. Therefore, the international community should give particular importance to the process and ensure active participation.

7. We fully support the roadmap prepared and being implemented by the UN-OHRLLS, in close cooperation with the relevant UN organizations, as the overall organizational strategy for the timely preparation for the midterm review. We endorse the outcome of the thematic meeting on transit transport infrastructure development, held from 18 to 20 June 2007 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and the outcome of the thematic meeting on trade and trade facilitation, held on 30 and 31 August 2007 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

8. We emphasize the importance of the regional reviews on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, to be held in the first half of 2008. The existing intergovernmental mechanism of the UN Regional Commissions should be effectively utilized for this purpose. We encourage the landlocked developing countries, the transit developing countries and their development partners, as well as the relevant regional and subregional organizations and the regional development banks to actively participate in the regional review meetings. The relevant UN Regional Commissions are requested to provide necessary preparations for these meetings in close cooperation and collaboration with the UN-OHRLLS.

9. We welcome the proposal made by the Government of Mongolia to set up in Ulaanbaatar an international think-tank to enhance the analytical capability of landlocked developing countries needed for maximizing the efficiency of our coordinated efforts for the effective implementation of the internationally agreed provisions, particularly the Almaty Program of Action and the Millennium Development Goals. For this purpose, LLDCs urge the international organizations and donor countries to assist them in achieving this endeavor.

10. Landlocked developing countries are committed to take active participation in the preparatory meetings leading to the midterm review in 2008. The governments of landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and donor countries are invited to participate in the midterm review at the high political level. The midterm review should result in an action oriented political commitment aimed at further galvanizing genuine partnerships among landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and their development partners, as well as public-private sector partnership at the global, regional, bilateral and national levels to facilitate efforts of landlocked developing countries in their effective participation in the world economy and achievement of MDGs.

11. The midterm review should be organized for two days during the plenary meeting of the 63rd session of the General Assembly at the ministerial level. High-level parallel events, round table meetings, announcements of important initiatives, commercial deals, conclusion of international instruments and demonstration of use of information technology and best practices in trade facilitation should be organized during the midterm review to raise the profile of the review.

12. United Nations system organizations and other international organizations, particularly the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Regional Commissions, the United Nations Development Programme, Regional Development Banks, World Customs Organization, the World Bank and other international and regional organizations should make tangible contributions to the effective preparation for and organization of the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action.

13. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly in its resolution 61/212, is requested to continue to provide necessary preparations for the midterm review and coordinate and mobilize system-wide efforts within the United Nations for the successful organization of the midterm review.

14. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to undertake the necessary measures to provide UN-OHRLLS with the necessary resources to enable it to carry out its task related to the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action and other related mandates given by the General Assembly.

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## **Tentative Calendar of LLDC-related events**

**2007**

### **October**

11 October

AITIC and UN-OHRLLS Forum: Debriefing on the current state of the Doha Negotiations for Landlocked Developing Countries  
(Co-organized by UN-OHRLLS and the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation)  
Conference Room 9, United Nations, New York

23-24 October

OSCE Conference on the development of Trans-Asian and Eurasian transit transport cooperation,  
(Organized by OSCE, in cooperation with UN-OHRLLS, UNECE, UNESCAP)  
Dushanbe, Tajikistan

### **November**

5 November

Second Committee of the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the UN General Assembly  
Item 59(b): Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation  
Conference Room 2, United Nations, New York

**2008**

### **March**

Latin America Regional Review in cooperation with UNECLAC

### **April**

African Regional Review in cooperation with UNECA

### **May**

Asia/European Regional Review in cooperation with UNESCAP and UNECE

### **September/October**

Midterm Review Meeting of the Almaty Programme of Action  
63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly

## Landlocked Developing Countries

## Transit Developing Countries



\* also LDCs

\* also LDCs

## UN-OHRLLS mandate

The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and the Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2001 through its resolution 56/227 with functions recommended by the Secretary-General in his report A/56/645.

The key functions of the Office of the High Representative in accordance with the Secretary-General's report A/56/645 are:

(a) To assist the Secretary-General in ensuring the full mobilization and coordination of all parts of the United Nations system, with a view to facilitating the coordinated implementation of and coherence in the follow-up and monitoring of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries at the country, regional and global levels;

(b) To provide coordinated support to the Economic and Social Council as well as the General Assembly in assessing progress and in conducting the annual review of the implementation of the Programme of Action;

(c) To ensure full and effective implementation the Almaty Declaration and Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within the Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries;

(d) To support, as appropriate, the coordinated follow-up of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;

(e) To undertake appropriate advocacy work in favour of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States in partnership with the relevant parts of the United Nations as well as with the civil society, media, academia and foundations;

(f) To assist in mobilizing international support and resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries and other programmes and initiatives for landlocked developing countries and small island developing States;

(g) To provide appropriate support to group consultations of Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States;

(h) To enhance its cooperation and coordination with organizations within the United Nations system, particularly those engaged in operational activities on the ground in landlocked and transit developing countries, to ensure effective implementation of the Programme of Action. The Office of the High Representative will continue to carry out advocacy work to mobilize international awareness and focus attention on the implementation of the present Programme of Action;

(i) To ensure that the Conference is effectively followed up, within our mandate and in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.



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Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

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