



**Thematic Meeting on Transit Transport Infrastructure Development
in preparation for the Mid-term Review
of the Almaty Programme of Action**
Ouagadougou, 18-20 June 2007
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the Meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
4. Exchange of views on the state of transit transport infrastructure in landlocked and transit developing countries and related matters: achievements and future plans.
5. Adoption of the final outcome and closing of the Meeting.

Annotations

Item 1

Opening of the Meeting

1. The opening ceremony of the thematic meeting will be attended by the leaders of the host country, the Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries and senior officials of the United Nations Secretariat.

Item 2

Election of officers

2. The Meeting may wish to elect, from among the representatives of landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and developed countries, a Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen.

Item 3

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

3. The Meeting is invited to adopt the agenda as set out above. The provisional organization of work is contained in the annex.

Documentation

- Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs and Problems of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries (2003) (A/CONF.202/3)
- Report of the Secretary-General on the progress in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (A/61/302 of 8 September 2006)
- General Assembly resolution 61/212 entitled “Groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries” (12 March 2007)

Background documents

- Documentation by UN-OHRLLS:
 - “Geography Against Development: A Case for Landlocked Developing Countries” (2006)
 - Draft set of indicators to monitor the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action
- Reports by the UNCTAD secretariat:
 - “Transport Infrastructure for Transit Trade of the Landlocked Countries in West and Central Africa: An Overview” (2007) (UNCTAD/LDC/2007/1)
 - “Improving Transit Transport in East Africa: Challenges and Opportunities” (2007) (UNCTAD/LDC/2007/2)
- Report by UNECA:
 - African Action Plan (ECA/TRID/Transp/05/03ACPL of 17 July 2003, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)
- Reports by UNESCAP:
 - “Progress Report on Implementation of Commission Resolution 61/11: Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action (2007) (E/ESCAP/SB/LDC(8)/4)
- Paper by the World Bank:
 - “Best Practices in Management of International Trade Corridors” (2006) (Transport Paper Series TP-13)

- Report by the Asian Development Bank:
 - “Connecting Central Asia: A Road Map for Regional Cooperation” (2006)
- Report by the Inter-American Development Bank:
 - “Building a New Continent: A Regional Approach to Strengthening South American Infrastructure” IIRSA (2006)

Item 4

Exchange of views on the state of transit transport infrastructure in landlocked and transit developing countries and related matters: achievements and future plans

4. The weak economic performance of landlocked developing countries reflects the direct and indirect impact of geographical factors on key macroeconomic variables. Their seaborne trade unavoidably depends on transit through other countries. Additional border crossings and excessive distances to major markets, coupled with cumbersome procedures and inadequate infrastructure, substantially increase the total expense for transport services. Distance to ports is deemed to be the major variable determining transportation costs, particularly since the costs related to land transport are about 5-7 times greater than sea transport.

5. High transport costs undermine the competitiveness of landlocked developing countries in the international market as well as their ability to produce at lower costs. Transport costs present a tremendous trade reducing effect. Reduced trade flows directly and negatively impact GDP. High transport costs reduce the purchasing power and consumption levels of national residents, affect the activities of producers relying on imported factors and are likely to spur inflation. High costs related to unfavourable geographical locations decrease the rate of capital return required by investors to finance a project within a country.

6. To address these issues, the General Assembly convened in 2003 the United Nations Conference which 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. The over-arching goal of the Almaty Programme of Action is to forge partnerships to overcome the special problems of landlocked developing countries caused by their lack of territorial access to the sea and their remoteness and isolation from world markets. The Almaty Programme of Action stipulates specific measures to establish efficient transit transport systems, recognizing the link between transport and international trade and economic growth. These specific actions are to be implemented in five priority areas, namely: (1) fundamental transit policy issues, (2) infrastructure development and maintenance, (3) international trade and trade facilitation, (4) international support measures, and (5) implementation and review. The Almaty Programme of Action aims to: (a) secure access to and from the sea by all means of transport according to applicable rules of international law; (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 en route; and (g) open the way for export expansion.

7. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/212, decided to hold a mid-term review in 2008 of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. The mid-term review shall be preceded by regional and substantive preparations in a most effective, well-structured and broad 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, should 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.

8. The Ouagadougou Meeting on transit transport infrastructure development is the first of two thematic meetings being organized in 2007. The second thematic meeting will focus on international trade and trade facilitation and will be held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 30 and 31 August 2007. The outcomes of these thematic meetings will serve as substantive inputs to the 2008 mid-term review.

9. The Almaty Programme of Action recognized that inadequate infrastructure is a major obstacle to establishing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries. The Almaty Programme of Action identified specific actions in rail transport, road transport, ports, inland waterways, pipelines, air transport and communications. Efficient transport and communications infrastructure and services are a vital prerequisite for the development of landlocked developing countries and their effective integration into the international trading system and the world economy. Interregional and overseas transport and communications facilitate the expansion of trade because trade is only possible if people and goods can physically reach the production and consumption area at a competitive cost. The deterioration of transport infrastructure is one of the main problems that affects both landlocked and transit developing countries. Communications facilities are required to facilitate advance knowledge of transport service availabilities and to ensure smooth and speedy transit.

10. 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 kilometres (km) of roads are asphalted, amounting to 6.84 km per 100 km² compared to 12 km per 100 km² in Latin America and 18 per 100 km² in Asia. The African rail network is an estimated 89,380 km long, with a density of 2.96 km per 1,000 km². The interconnections of the rail network are poor, especially in Central and Western Africa, and the availability of rolling stock is still very low compared to other regions. African railway networks are still not interconnected. The total length of the Asian Highways network is 140,000 km, although the quality of the network varies considerably among countries. The total network of the Asian railroad is estimated at 355,000 km.

11. As part of its efforts to monitor the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the UN-OHRLLS has developed a set of indicators, including on transport and communications infrastructure. The preliminary data shows that the total road networks of landlocked developing countries constituted 1,040,000 km in 2004, up from about 974,000 km in 2003. In general, the quality of road networks in landlocked developing countries is poor. 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. The combined rail networks of all landlocked developing countries amount to roughly 40,000 km. The air cargo of landlocked developing countries has reached 351.3 million tons per km. In terms of telecommunication infrastructure, on average in 2003 there were 5.1 main phone lines per 100 inhabitants for landlocked developing countries. Afghanistan, Chad, the Central African Republic, Niger and Uganda had as low as 0.2 main telephone lines per 100 inhabitants. Landlocked developing countries also lag behind in the application of the mobile phone technology, with an average of 6.8 mobile phone subscribers per 100 inhabitants in 2003. The growing digital divide is also a major concern for landlocked developing countries. Whereas landlocked developing countries had 15.1 personal computers per 1000 inhabitants in 2003, the world mean was 100.8.

12. Addressing the need to develop reliable transit transport infrastructure involves considerable investment, establishment of public-private sector partnerships, capacity-building, and new policies and institutional reform. Coordinating infrastructure in one country is already a huge task: doing it across borders is even more difficult. High transport costs caused by infrastructure deficiencies, delays, fees or procedures encountered in the transit country make the land leg of the shipping of goods to and from landlocked countries very costly. For most landlocked countries, high transport costs remain the single most important obstacle to their equitable access to global markets and competition with other countries.

13. Practical solutions to many of the problems faced by landlocked countries range from comprehensive approaches to transit corridors to overall regional integration efforts. Addressing the needs of landlocked countries requires considerable investment, establishment of public-private partnerships, capacity-building, legal and regulatory reforms, institutional and administrative overhauls, including in-depth analysis of each landlocked country's foreign trade composition and its transport constraints. The regional integration organizations have been making serious efforts in recent years to expand their transport and communications infrastructure and improve their services to ensure sustainable development. In this regard, a number of far-reaching agreements have been signed to plan and set a standard for regional transport infrastructure development. In addition, identified missing links have been identified in regional transport networks and many policy reforms have been conducted to simplify and streamline the procedures and to attract private sector and to establish road funds etc. However, due to lack of appropriate policy frameworks in the sector and problems associated with institutional structures, the growth and efficiency of the sector remain far from satisfactory.

14. Cooperation across borders with transit countries is crucial for the establishment of efficient transit transport systems. Transits will be easier and less costly for both landlocked and transit countries if they are implemented in an integrated environment. If administrative or customs delays are minimized and investment decisions taken in a

common perspective, the welfare of landlocked and transit countries is increased and transport costs are lowered. Improvements in transport and transit facilities and an increased traffic volume will eventually benefit coastal as well as landlocked countries.

15. The Almaty Programme of Action recognized that the cost implications of meeting the requirements in establishing and maintaining efficient transit transport systems are of such a magnitude that landlocked and transit developing countries cannot accomplish such a formidable task on their own. Development partners should thus play an important role in supporting transit transport development programmes. Official development assistance remains the main source of external finance for landlocked developing countries. In 2005, total ODA received by landlocked developing countries from OECD countries increased to US\$ 14.7 billion from US\$ 13.8 billion in 2004, although, in 2005, only about 3.7 per cent of the total ODA was allocated to the transport, storage and communications infrastructure development, down from 6.3 per cent in 2003.

16. The thematic meeting on transit transport infrastructure will bring together ministers and senior officials responsible for transport infrastructure from landlocked and transit developing countries, representatives of donor countries, United Nations system organizations, international financial institutions and relevant regional and subregional organizations, with a view to reviewing and assessing the progress made in the implementation of priority two of the Almaty Programme of Action on transit transport infrastructure development and maintenance. The representatives of landlocked and transit developing countries are expected to prepare a statement on national efforts in this area. The Meeting is also expected to deliberate on future actions needed to further strengthen the global partnership for establishing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries.

Item 5

Adoption of the final outcome and closing of the Meeting

17. The Meeting is expected to adopt a document on priority areas for cooperation in transit transport infrastructure development, which will be used as substantive contribution to the mid-term review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action to be held in 2008.

Annex

PROVISIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Monday 18 June 2007	
<p>Venue of the meeting: Ouaga 2000 International Conférence Centre (Cité Ouaga 2000, Avenue Zagré Pascal, Côté Est Hôtel SOFITEL)</p> <p><i>(9:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.)</i></p> <p><u>Registration of participants</u></p> <p><i>(10 a.m. – 11 a.m.)</i></p> <p><u>Item 1:</u></p> <p>Opening of the Meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Opening statement by the President of Burkina Faso (TBC)- Statement by the President of Mali, Chairman of the LLDCs Group (TBC)- Statement by the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States- Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa <p><i>11 a.m. – 1 p.m.</i></p> <p><u>Item 2:</u></p> <p>Election of officers</p> <p><u>Item 3:</u></p> <p>Adoption of the agenda</p>	<p><u>Item 4:</u></p> <p>Exchange of views on the state of transit transport infrastructure in landlocked and transit developing countries and related matters - statements by heads of delegation and international and regional organizations</p> <p><i>3 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.</i></p> <p><u>Item 4 (continued):</u></p> <p>Exchange of views on the state of transit transport infrastructure in landlocked and transit developing countries and related matters - statements by heads of delegation and international and regional organizations</p>

Tuesday 19 June 2007	
<p><i>10 a.m. – 1 p.m.</i></p> <p><u>Item 4 (continued):</u></p> <p>Special session on regional and subregional dimension of transit transport infrastructure development (co-organized with the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation) - presentations by representatives of international, regional and subregional organizations</p>	<p><i>3 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.</i></p> <p><u>Item 4 (continued):</u></p> <p>Special session</p>
Wednesday 20 June 2007	
<p><i>10 a.m. – 1 p.m.</i></p> <p><u>Item 4 (continued):</u></p> <p>Exchange of views on the state of transit transport infrastructure in landlocked and transit developing countries and related matters - statements by heads of delegation and international and regional organizations</p>	<p><i>3 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.</i></p> <p><u>Item 5:</u></p> <p>Adoption of the final outcome Closing of the Meeting</p>