



# PRESS RELEASE



UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,  
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

**UN Under-Secretary-General Calls for Establishing  
Efficient Transit Transport Systems in Africa**

**Ministerial Conference in Addis Ababa Focuses  
on Resolving Transport Issues in Landlocked Developing Countries**

**Addis Ababa, 6 April 2005:** Addressing the Conference of Ministers of Transport and Infrastructure of Africa in Addis Ababa today, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Anwarul K. Chowdhury, called for resolving transport issues facing Landlocked Developing Countries, especially Africa. “Half of the world’s 31 Landlocked Developing Countries are in Africa. Their situation is aggravated because of inadequate infrastructure development. Establishment of efficient transit transport systems is a very urgent issue for this vast continent,” he said.

“Without resolving transport issues of Africa,” Mr. Chowdhury emphasized, “our attention to other areas of development would not be purposeful.”

Expressing concern, Mr. Chowdhury said that Africa had the highest freight-to-export ratio. “Ten of the 15 Landlocked Developing Countries in Africa – Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Uganda – spent up to 40 per cent of their export earnings for transportation and insurance services.”

“This is a huge burden and priority should be given to easing this burden,” he added.

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Referring to the High-Level Meeting held in Kazakhstan last week on the Role of International, Regional and Sub-regional Organizations in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, Mr. Chowdhury said that the multilateral organizations had agreed to continue consultations on the establishment of a coordinated technical programme to maximize the benefits of their support for landlocked and transit developing countries.

“We moved a step closer in our efforts to have broadly acceptable indicators to measure progress for establishing efficient transit transport systems.”

Mr. Chowdhury encouraged African countries, particularly landlocked and transit countries, to take advantage of the technical cooperation in the area of trade facilitation offered in the framework agreement of the World Trade Organization. “The internationally binding rules on trade facilitation and transit will certainly facilitate the speedy movement and clearance of goods to further reduce trade transaction costs,” he indicated.

Mr. Chowdhury suggested to the Ministers at the Conference the possibility of organizing a High-Level event on African transport needs and relevant indicators for measuring progress. “As the highest office at the United Nations with the mandate to enhance the mobilization and galvanization of international support for the weakest segment of the international community, Africa has been a priority for action for the Office of the High Representative,” he concluded.

**Press Contact:** Nosh Nalavala, Media Officer, United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (917) 367-2471, e-mail: [nalavala@un.org](mailto:nalavala@un.org).

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