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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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**LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

(Item 5 of the provisional agenda)

**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL BODY ON LEAST DEVELOPED AND LANDLOCKED  
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ON ITS EIGHTH SESSION**

*Note by the secretariat*

**SUMMARY**

The Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries deliberated on issues relating to intercountry energy cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development and to widen access to energy services in least developed and landlocked developing countries and on international migration and development in least developed and landlocked developing countries: Challenges and opportunities as the principal items on its agenda. The Special Body adopted a set of specific recommendations for action on those issues at the national, subregional and regional levels. With regard to intercountry cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development and to widen access to energy services in least developed and landlocked developing countries, the Special Body noted that a number of opportunities exist for least developed and landlocked developing countries to work together in order to supplement their national efforts to improve energy security and energy services. With regard to international migration and development in least developed and landlocked developing countries, the Special Body noted that international migration provides both challenges and opportunities for sending and receiving countries. To maximize the potential development benefits of international migration for all stakeholders, increased dialogue between countries is encouraged at the regional level and at the national level, migration management policies and practices should be enhanced. The Special Body also noted the progress on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. In line with General Assembly resolution 61/212 of 20 December 2006, it recommended to conduct the mid-term review at the regional level.

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## I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE COMMISSION OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

1. During its deliberations on items 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the agenda,<sup>1</sup> the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries had before it document E/ESCAP/SB/LDC(8)/1: Intercountry energy cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development and to widen access to energy services in least developed and landlocked developing countries, document E/ESCAP/SB/LDC(8)/2: International migration and development in least developed and landlocked developing countries: challenges and opportunities, document E/ESCAP/LDC(8)/3: Activities of the Commission in 2006 for the benefit of least developed and landlocked developing countries, and document E/ESCAP/LDC(8)/4: Progress report on the implementation of Commission resolution 61/11: implementation of 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 Special Body commended the secretariat on the quality of those documents, which had provided it with a solid basis for its deliberations, and endorsed the recommendations contained therein. The Special Body endorsed the conclusions and recommendations contained in documents E/ESCAP/SB/LDC(8)/1 and E/ESCAP/SB/LDC(8)/2.

### **A. Intercountry energy cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development and to widen access to energy services in least developed and landlocked developing countries**

2. The Special Body emphasized that the availability of energy was key to economic development and poverty reduction and essential for meeting internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. In that context, it noted the need for widening access to energy services using all viable sources of energy.

3. Noting that continuing economic growth in many of their countries would raise demand for energy, the Special Body expressed concern regarding the security of energy supplies, particularly worsened by the high and volatile energy prices that were affecting least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. That also affected the capacity of the countries to cope with the challenges faced by them.

#### **1. Action at the national level**

4. The Special Body noted that the most important challenge faced by least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States was to have an effective energy policy to address the challenges to energy security and to widen the access of the poor to energy services. In that respect, the Special Body acknowledged the need for coordinated planning and development.

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<sup>1</sup> For the agenda as adopted, see para. 61.

5. The Special Body also noted that conventional energy resources in many least developed countries and some landlocked developing countries as well as small island developing States were limited, and efforts to diversify to other sources of energy, in particular renewable energy resources, were to be intensified. At the same time, efficiency in energy production and use needed to be enhanced.

6. Appreciating the energy outlook that energy demand would grow very fast and that the investment needs would be enormous, the Special Body noted that financing would remain a formidable challenge. In that context, innovative options, such as public-private partnerships, could be pursued in addition to multilateral fundings. Public-private partnerships, in particular, had been emerging as a viable option for investment in the energy sector.

## **2. Action at the subregional and regional levels**

7. Noting the extreme importance of and expressing its full support for intercountry cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development and to widen access to energy services, the Special Body recognized that a number of opportunities existed for least developed and landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to work together in order to supplement their national efforts to improve energy security and energy services. However, some challenges must be overcome through closer cooperation among those countries and with the assistance of regional agencies, United Nations bodies and international organizations.

8. In noting that some countries had made significant progress in developing and diffusing renewable energy technologies, such as mini- and micro-hydropower, biomass, bio-fuel and solar energy technologies, the Special Body underlined that regional and subregional cooperation could supplement national efforts in developing energy infrastructure for sustainable development through the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

9. The Special Body recognized the need to hold regular policy dialogues among least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States on energy security and recommended that the secretariat to play a catalytic and facilitating role towards the establishment of a cooperation framework on energy security. It also stated the need for a special programme on energy-related infrastructure with a view to strengthening national capacity for coordinated energy sector planning and development.

10. The Special Body recommended building synergies with other regional and subregional initiatives, including the broader trans-Asian energy cooperation pursued by ESCAP following the sixty-second session of the Commission, that could also benefit least developed and landlocked developing countries.

11. The Special Body recommended that the secretariat undertake policy studies on how to accelerate cooperation among the least developed and landlocked developing countries and with other countries in the sharing of experiences in renewable energy development, and the promotion of energy exchange, trade and transit.

**B. International migration and development in least developed and landlocked developing countries: challenges and opportunities**

12. The Special Body recognized that international migration provided both challenges and opportunities for both sending and receiving countries. On the basis of discussions as well as empirical evidence, at both the macro and micro levels, it was recognized that international migration could contribute to economic development and poverty reduction in many least developed and landlocked developing countries in the Asian and Pacific region.

13. Although migration itself is not a substitute for development, the Special Body stressed that it should be integrated into development strategies in order to maximize the potential benefits.

14. The Special Body noted that international migration had been increasingly viewed as a means of enhancing the transfer of skills, knowledge, technology and capital to countries of origin. Through collaborative initiatives, international migration could be harnessed to reduce poverty and contribute to overall socio-economic development.

15. The Special Body stressed the need to manage and regulate migration, which could reduce the social and security concerns of both sending and receiving countries as well as contribute to development and reduce the vulnerability of migrants.

16. The Special Body emphasized the need for a comprehensive migration policy to manage migration effectively, which would be greatly beneficial for migrants as well as sending and receiving countries.

17. The Special Body noted a strong correlation between remittances and poverty, which contributed to development and poverty eradication.

18. The Special Body emphasized that remittances were likely to be used first and foremost to fulfill the basic needs of the families of migrants. Only after basic consumption needs were fulfilled could remittances be used for national development efforts.

**1. Action at the national level**

19. The Special Body noted that remittances were an important source of income. However, the transaction cost of remittances needed to be reduced and as much information as possible about remittances needed to be disseminated to all migrants.

20. The Special Body noted that, at the individual level, the remittances of the migrant worker could be considered as collateral to obtain credit for small-scale investment purposes.

21. The Special Body stressed the value of Governments providing migrant workers with education, training and information to enhance the skills of migrants and improve the employability of migrants. In that regard, it commended the initiative of Australia to establish an Australia-Pacific technical college as a step forward.

22. The Special Body agreed that international migration could contribute to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. Therefore, it should be incorporated into national development and poverty reduction strategy papers.

23. The Special Body noted that policy-relevant research on international migration should be carried out to examine the complex relationship between migration and development, and the costs and benefits of migration.

## **2. Action at the regional and international levels**

24. Since international migration is a transnational and complex issue, the Special Body recommended a continued regional dialogue on international migration and development, with special focus on the concerns of the least developed and landlocked developing countries.

25. The Special Body requested the secretariat to convene a high level intergovernmental meeting of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States on international migration and development in close coordination with related international organizations on migration, preferably in 2008.

26. As the safety and well-being of migrants in destination countries were of major concern to countries of origin, the Special Body emphasized the importance of protecting the rights of migrant workers.

27. The Special Body noted the importance of the viewpoint of human security, which aims at protection and capacity-building for each individual.

## **II. PROCEEDINGS OF THE SPECIAL BODY AT ITS EIGHTH SESSION**

### **A. Intercountry energy cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development and to widen access to energy services in least developed and landlocked developing countries**

28. The Special Body noted that economic growth in the Asian and Pacific region had been impressive in recent years, and that the trend had also been observed in many least developed and landlocked developing countries. Due to the strong economic growth and considerable unmet energy demand from the poor, energy demand growth was likely to remain high in the near future.

29. Noting that per capita energy consumption in least developed countries was considerably low and consequently the access of the poor to energy services, particularly in rural areas, was limited, some delegations called for effective measures, including the promotion of alternative energy supplies, the improvement of energy infrastructure and the efficient use of energy.

30. The Special Body stated that energy security continued to be a major concern in the Asian and Pacific region worsened by the high and volatile oil/energy price. That had placed considerable pressure on the oil-importing least developed and landlocked developing countries of the region. Some delegations expressed their concern on how to ensure adequate, reliable and affordable supply of and access to energy for economic development. In that context, the Special Body noted that the most important challenge faced by least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States was to have or improve energy policy to address the challenges to energy security and in widening the access of the poor to energy services. In that respect, it acknowledged the need for coordinated planning and development.

31. The Special Body recognized the enormous opportunities that exist to plan for sustainable development of energy resources in least developed and landlocked developing countries. While major policy decisions are taken at the national level, national policies also include cooperation among countries through various subregional initiatives that support or supplement national efforts.

32. Some delegations noted that conventional energy resources in many least developed countries and some landlocked developing countries as well as small island developing States were limited. As some countries have excess energy resources and others are highly dependent on imported energy, intercountry cooperation could facilitate the development and the sharing of regional/subregional resources for mutual benefit. Regional/subregional cooperation could also benefit all in sharing knowledge, research outcomes and technology development/diffusion through cooperation among developing countries. Some concerns were also expressed regarding the negative impact of fossil energy production and use on the environment.

33. Appreciating the outlook that energy demand would grow very rapidly and that the investment needs would be enormous, the Special Body noted that financing would remain a formidable challenge, innovative options, such as public-private partnerships, could be pursued. Public-private partnerships, in particular, had been emerging as a viable option for investment in the energy sector.

34. Noting the extreme importance of and expressing its full support to intercountry cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development and to widen access to energy services, the Special Body recognized that a number of opportunities existed for least developed and landlocked developing countries and small island developing States to work together in order to supplement their national efforts to improve energy security and energy services. However, some challenges must be overcome through closer cooperation among those countries and with the assistance of regional agencies, United Nations bodies and international organizations.

35. Some delegations stated that cooperation could take many forms, ranging from technology transfer and knowledge sharing to energy exchange, trade and transit and policy coordination. It could help promote a coordinated planning and development approach for the mutual benefit of exchange, trade and transit, which could lead to the integration of energy infrastructure. Moreover, given the

abundance of renewable energy in all of the least developed and landlocked developing countries, regional and subregional cooperation could contribute to the accelerated development of these resources through the sharing of experiences, technology and research outcomes.

36. In noting that some countries had made significant progress in developing and using renewable energy technologies, such as mini- and micro-hydropower, biomass, bio-fuel and solar energy technologies, some delegations underlined that regional and subregional cooperation could supplement national efforts in developing energy infrastructure for sustainable development through the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

37. The Special Body recognized the need to hold regular policy dialogues among least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States on energy security and recommended that the secretariat play a catalytic role towards the establishment of a cooperation framework on energy security. Such a cooperation framework could take a coordinated planning and development approach for energy exchange, trade and transit leading, to the integration of energy infrastructure. In that context the Special Body noted the need for enhancing cooperation with other regional and subregional cooperation efforts, such as those initiated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia and the Economic Cooperation Organization.

38. The Special Body recommended building synergies with other regional initiatives, including the broader trans-Asian energy cooperation pursued by ESCAP following the sixty-second session of the Commission that could also benefit least developed and landlocked developing countries. In that context, it recommended that the secretariat undertake policy studies on how to accelerate cooperation among least developed and landlocked developing countries and with other countries in the sharing of experiences in renewable energy development and the promotion of energy exchange, trade and transit.

39. The Special Body stated that there was a need for a special programme on energy-related infrastructure with a view to strengthening national capacity for coordinated energy sector planning in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

#### **B. International migration and development in least developed and landlocked developing countries: challenges and opportunities**

40. Although cross-border population movement in search of better opportunity was a longstanding characteristic of societies in Asia and the Pacific, international migration in the region continued to grow in scope and complexity. A growing number of countries were involved in the migration process as both sending and receiving countries. The estimated number of international migrants in the world had exceeded 190 million in 2005. One third, or about 58 million, of these migrants were from the Asia-Pacific region, 53 million of them were from Asia and 5 million were from the Pacific.



41. International migration in least developed and landlocked developing countries in Asia and the Pacific took a variety of forms. While a large number of people from those countries continued to seek long-term or permanent settlement in traditional countries of immigration, temporary cross-border mobility of people within the region had risen rapidly. The emerging dynamics of labour migration in the region had involved a growing number of least developed and landlocked developing countries, mostly as sources of migrant workers. Many least developed and landlocked developing countries in the region were also witnessing the influx of a growing number of migrants with irregular status, which is a major source of concern for Governments. Furthermore, in some countries, conflicts and natural disasters have displaced thousands of civilians both inside and outside the country. Hence, international migration has become part of the economic and social fabric of least developed and landlocked developing countries in Asia and the Pacific.

42. Given their small economies and limited development prospects, many least developed and landlocked developing countries had experienced net outmigration of their nationals. While such outflows of people raised concern about the loss of skilled individuals who could otherwise be contributing to the domestic economy, the contribution of international migration towards poverty alleviation and overall socio-economic development had also been duly recognized. International migration is increasingly being viewed as a tool that could contribute to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

### **C. Activities of the Commission in 2006 for the benefit of least developed and landlocked developing countries**

43. The Special Body expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for the various activities implemented for the benefit of least developed and landlocked developing countries. It noted that, for the least developed countries, these activities were in line with the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,<sup>2</sup> while for the landlocked developing countries, they were in line with the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs for Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked Developing Countries.<sup>3</sup>

44. The Special Body noted the importance of developing countries sharing their development experiences among themselves. In that context, Thailand informed the Special Body of the types of its technical cooperation activities and its willingness to collaborate with the least developed and landlocked developing countries in future technical cooperation activities.

45. The Special Body recorded its appreciation to all the donors and agencies that had worked with the secretariat in delivering technical assistance activities for the benefit of least developed and landlocked developing countries.

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<sup>2</sup> A/CONF.191/13, chap. II.

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003 (A/CONF.202/3), annex I.*

#### **D. Other matters**

46. The secretariat briefed the Special Body on the progress in the implementation of resolution 61/11 of 18 May 2005 on the implementation of 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. It drew the attention of the Special Body to General Assembly resolution 61/212 of 20 December 2006 on groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcomes of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation. In that resolution, the Assembly had decided to hold a meeting on the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2008. The secretariat also drew the attention of the Special Body to the planned regional and international meetings leading up to the midterm review.

47. The Special Body expressed its satisfaction with the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and requested that the Commission play a leading role in the regional preparation for its mid-term review. It noted that, in preparation for the global review of the Almaty Programme of Action, Mongolia would host the thematic meeting on international trade and trade facilitation in Ulaanbaatar from 28 to 31 August 2007. Given the limited capacity of some countries to conduct national assessments of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, it was suggested that the secretariat consider conducting joint missions with other United Nations bodies and agencies, to review the implementation at the national level.

48. The Special Body observed that many trade-related challenges remained. Since trade was vital to both national development and regional integration, it requested the secretariat to assist countries in strengthening capacities to respond to their challenges. The need for the Commission to coordinate the implementation of regional activities with other United Nations bodies, in line with their comparative advantages, was also highlighted.

49. Noting the importance of the issues of energy security and access to energy services, international migration and development, and the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the Special Body expressed its support and called upon other countries to also support the draft resolutions tabled for adoption by the Commission.

### **III. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION**

#### **A. Opening of the session**

50. The eighth session of the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 15 and 16 May 2007.

51. In his opening address, the Executive Secretary expressed his gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting the eighth session of the Special Body as well as generously sponsoring the

participation of representatives from all 14 least developed countries of the Asia-Pacific region to the meeting.

52. On intercountry energy cooperation, the Executive Secretary pointed out that energy security was a major concern in the Asia-Pacific region, given the increasing energy demand in the region as well as the recent global high and volatile oil prices. He noted that the high oil prices had placed considerable pressure on the oil-importing least developed and landlocked developing countries. They had also affected the oil-exporting landlocked developing countries, as unpredictable export revenues had serious implication for the sustainability of economic growth in least developed and landlocked developing countries.

53. On international migration, the Executive Secretary pointed out that it had become an important part of development and also an important source of income for poor workers in many least developed and landlocked developing countries. He noted that international migration in least developed and landlocked developing countries in Asia and the Pacific took a variety of forms and there were a number of issues to be looked at. Not only did a large number of people from those countries emigrate to the traditional countries of immigration, but a growing number of least developed and landlocked countries themselves were witnessing the influx of a growing number of migrants. Conflicts and natural disasters had displaced thousands of civilians both inside and outside countries.

54. The Executive Secretary also briefly touched on the Almaty Programme of Action, a comprehensive action plan addressing transit issues for landlocked and transit developing countries which was endorsed in 2003. He pointed out that the General Assembly in its resolution 61/212 of 20 December 2006 had recently mandated the Organization to conduct a midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2008. The General Assembly had also requested the regional commissions to conduct a midterm review at the regional level on the progress and implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. He then informed the Special Body that the secretariat had already initiated the process of that review.

55. In his keynote address, Mr. Seryk N. Akhmetov, Minister of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan extended his welcome to participants at the Special Body meeting. He reiterated the special needs of landlocked developing countries. In that context, he pointed out that his country was committed to a prompt implementation of the roadmap concerning the Almaty Programme of Action and to a proactive participation of landlocked developing countries in the development of their transport capacities.

56. He noted that globalization and the liberalization of national economies had resulted in a significant increase in trade and transport traffic between Asia and Europe. He also noted the importance placed by his country on the SPECA programme for the Central Asian region.

57. He then pointed out that international and regional cooperation was giving special significance in the context of ensuring sustainable development and that energy was extremely important in poverty reduction and economic development. He noted that Central Asia had considerable potential for developing energy cooperation for building regional energy infrastructure.

58. He pointed out that migration issues were playing a significant role in the economic development of both developing and developed countries. He noted that his country supported the recommendations of the international development agencies regarding the creation of preferential market conditions for least developed and landlocked developing countries for movement on international migrants. He noted that, if the conditions were created for the movement of those individuals through official channels, that would help to reduce the scale of illegal migration and to facilitate the integration and inclusion of those workers in the destination countries.

### **B. Attendance**

59. The session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission: Afghanistan Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, United States of America and Vanuatu. Representatives of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB), International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, The International Union of Railways (UIC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the World Bank also attended the meeting.

### **C. Election of officers**

60. The Special Body elected Hon. Jalil Shams (Afghanistan) and Mr. Swoyambhu Man Amatya (Nepal) Chairpersons, Mr. Naoyasu Murayama (Japan) and Mr. Umardin A. Mutalib (Malaysia) Vice-Chairpersons and Ms. Oyu Vasha (Mongolia) Rapporteur.

### **D. Agenda**

61. The Special Body adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Intercountry energy cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development and to widen access to energy services in least developed and landlocked developing countries.

5. International migration and development in least developed and landlocked developing countries: challenges and opportunities.
6. Activities of the Commission in 2006 for the benefit of least developed and landlocked developing countries.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report.

**E. Adoption of the report**

62. The Special Body adopted the report on its eighth session on 16 May 2007.

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