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DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

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**SUMMARY OF PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO COUNTRIES WITH  
SPECIAL NEEDS**

*Note by the secretariat*

**SUMMARY**

The present document summarizes the progress made in the implementation of Commission resolutions relating to countries with special needs, namely resolution 63/5 of 23 May 2007 on the midterm review of 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, resolution 63/6 of 23 May 2007 on the implementation of intercountry energy cooperation to enhance energy security for sustainable development with a view to widening access to energy services in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, and resolution 63/7 of 23 May 2007 on international migration and development for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved and provide comments and further guidance to the secretariat for effective implementation of the resolutions.

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### Introduction

1. The present document provides a summary of the progress in the implementation of three resolutions relating to countries with special needs.

#### **I. RESOLUTION 63/5 ON THE MIDTERM REVIEW OF 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**

2. In its resolution 63/5, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to provide the necessary support to the preparatory process for the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.<sup>1</sup>

3. Accordingly, the Regional Preparatory Expert Group Meeting of Euro-Asian Landlocked Developing and Transit Countries for the Mid-Term Review of the Almaty Programme of Action was held on 22 and 23 April 2008 in Bangkok. It was jointly organized by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe

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<sup>1</sup> 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 (*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*).

(ECE) in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

4. The meeting was attended by 43 participants from landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as relevant international and regional organizations. The progress was assessed along the five priorities in the Almaty Programme of Action, based on work undertaken by ESCAP and ECE and through presentations from participating countries.

5. The meeting acknowledged that much work had been undertaken towards the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action at the national, subregional and regional levels by landlocked and transit developing countries with the support of ESCAP, ECE, relevant international and regional organizations and other development partners, as well as the encouragement of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. The meeting also recognized the continuing challenges faced by landlocked countries vis-à-vis integration with the global economy and the need to expedite and strengthen the process of implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, and thus participants agreed to the outcomes related to the five priority areas.<sup>2</sup> However, only selected priorities are addressed in this document.

## **A. Priority I: Fundamental transit policy issues**

### **1. The regulatory framework in transport and transit**

6. Harmonizing the legal regimes relating to international transport is a prerequisite for enhancing the efficiency of international transport. At the international level, the Commission in its resolution 48/11 of 23 April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures recommended that countries in the Asia-Pacific region consider acceding to seven major international conventions facilitating transport. The status of accession by the landlocked developing countries in the region to these seven conventions is reflected in table 1.

7. At the subregional level, the secretariat of ESCAP, in cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), is providing technical and financial support for the negotiation of an agreement among the SCO member States, four of which are landlocked countries, on the facilitation of international road transport. The framework agreement was adopted in June 2008, and the secretariat will provide further assistance in the negotiation of annexes to it.

8. The secretariat also provided technical assistance to the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries in the negotiation and implementation of annexes and protocols to the Agreement for the Facilitation of the Cross-border Transport of Goods and People in the Greater Mekong Subregion,<sup>3</sup> which was initiated and supported by ADB. Activities undertaken included studies on the pricing of customs documents for the East-West Economic Corridor and the North-South Economic Corridor in 2007 and 2008, and assistance in preparing for the implementation of the agreement.

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<sup>2</sup> See [http://unescap.org/LDCCU/index .asp](http://unescap.org/LDCCU/index.asp).

<sup>3</sup> Available online at: [www.adb.org/GMS/agreements.asp](http://www.adb.org/GMS/agreements.asp).

**Table 1. Status of accession by landlocked developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region to the conventions listed in Commission resolution 48/11, as of 14 January 2009**

Country	Convention on Road Traffic (1968)	Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968)	Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (1975)	Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles (1956)	Customs Convention on Containers (1972)	International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982)	Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) (1956)
Afghanistan			x	x			
Armenia	x		x		x	x	x
Azerbaijan	x		x	x	x	x	x
Bhutan							
Kazakhstan	x	x	x		x	x	x
Kyrgyzstan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Lao People's Democratic Republic						x	
Mongolia	x	x	x			x	x
Nepal							
Tajikistan	x	x	x				x
Turkmenistan	x	x	x				x
Uzbekistan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

*Source:* United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, [www.unece.org/trans/conventn/legalinst.html](http://www.unece.org/trans/conventn/legalinst.html); <http://treaties.un.org/Pages/Treaties.aspx?id=11&subid=A&lang=en>

*Notes:* x – Contracting Party

9. The secretariat, in cooperation with ADB, undertook a study on transit traffic charges for the countries of the subregion, which resulted in the signing of a protocol to the Agreement for the Facilitation of the Cross-border Transport of Goods and People in the Greater Mekong Subregion. The secretariat, in cooperation with ADB provided advisory services to Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic on determining the level of such transit charges.

10. According to the Programme of Action, the existing institutional mechanisms required to monitor and promote the implementation of these international legal instruments need to be strengthened. Greater awareness and full understanding of international legal obligations is important for their effective implementation. To facilitate such capacity-building efforts for the policymakers and administrators involved, training workshops and advisory services have been conducted in many landlocked developing countries including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia and Tajikistan and transit developing countries such as Cambodia, Georgia and Pakistan.

## **2. Integrated approach to trade and transport facilitation**

11. The secretariat undertook an integrated project on institutional capacity-building for facilitation of international trade and transport in landlocked and transit

countries. The project produced tangible outputs, including: (a) a study on trade and transport facilitation mechanisms, (b) a study on the application of information and communications technology in trade facilitation, (c) the application of the Trade Facilitation Framework of ESCAP which helps to assess the level of trade facilitation in a country, (d) a study on legal frameworks for trade and transport facilitation, (e) application of the time/cost-distance methodology of ESCAP on selected transport routes, and (f) an online database on trade and transport facilitation.

12. The secretariat published a study on *National Coordination Mechanisms for Trade and Transport Facilitation in the ESCAP Region*.<sup>4</sup> The aims of the study were to provide: (i) global and regional overviews of activities undertaken with regard to national trade and transport facilitation coordination; (ii) good practices in establishing new mechanisms and strengthening existing coordination mechanisms; and (iii) guidelines and recommendations for the establishment or strengthening of national coordination mechanisms for trade and transport facilitation in the region. National trade and transport facilitation committees have been established or strengthened in Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia.<sup>5</sup> The secretariat provided advisory services to the national committee of Kyrgyzstan in June and July 2008.

### **3. Route analysis and time/cost-distance methodology**

13. The elimination of non-physical barriers to transit transport is a priority concern that is addressed in the Almaty Programme of Action. The ESCAP time/cost-distance methodology, with its simple and effective ability to take snapshots of transport time and costs over a period of time, has been recognized as a useful tool for identifying, isolating and addressing physical and non-physical barriers to assist in transport route/corridor analysis. It can also be used as an indicator for assessing the progress made in transit transport. In 2007, the methodology and related templates for transit route analysis were improved to increase ease of use and incorporate the needs of recipient countries. The secretariat developed a new user-friendly toolkit containing additional analytical functions in order to facilitate comparative analysis of time and cost of transport, movement and stops, including border crossings.

14. The toolkit and user templates were translated into Arabic, French and Russian to allow a broader geographical scope of application, and distributed to countries agreeing to apply the model, such as Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as international organizations and international financing institutions, including the International Road Transport Union, ADB, and the World Bank. The following countries have completed or are in the process of applying the methodology: the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Thailand.

15. Upon request from the Mongolian National Committee for Trade and Transport Facilitation, the secretariat recently conducted a customized training workshop on the use and application of the model in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 24 October 2008. ADB and the secretariat held a joint Workshop on the Performance Measurement of GMS Economic Corridors in Bangkok on 18 and 19 November 2008 to explore the ways to use the model for monitoring the efficiency of transport along the economic corridors of the Greater Mekong Subregion.

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<sup>4</sup> ESCAP, *National Coordination Mechanisms for Trade and Transport Facilitation in the ESCAP Region* (ESCAP, Bangkok, 2007).

<sup>5</sup> The Mongolian National Committee for Trade and Transport Facilitation (NCTTF) was restructured in 2006 as recommended by ESCAP. The Kyrgyzstan NCTTF was established in 2007 as a result of the ESCAP workshop in May 2006 and the follow-up ECE-ESCAP workshop in December 2006.

## **B. Priority II: Infrastructure development and maintenance**

### **1. Intermodal Transport and Logistics**

16. The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network<sup>6</sup> entered into force on 4 July 2005. By the end of 2008, the Agreement had been signed by 28 countries, and 23 countries,<sup>7</sup> including 10 landlocked developing countries, are Parties to it.

17. The Agreement has made it easier to secure grants and loans to upgrade the Asian Highway routes. The upgrading and development of the Asian Highway has been recognized as a priority in national highway planning and incorporated into national plans in many ESCAP countries, including such landlocked developing countries as Bhutan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal and Uzbekistan. The Asian Highway network and its technical design standards have been extensively used in formulating subregional transport corridors, including those linking landlocked countries in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Programme.

18. The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network<sup>8</sup> was opened for signature during the Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in November 2006. By the end of 2008, the Agreement had been signed by 22 member States, and seven countries,<sup>9</sup> including two landlocked developing countries, had ratified, approved or accepted it. The Agreement is likely to come into force in 2009 with one more country consenting to be bound by it.

19. In parallel with the formulation and formalization of the Trans-Asian Railway network, the ESCAP secretariat has promoted the operational integration of railway networks by implementing a series of demonstration runs of container block trains. The demonstration runs have shown encouraging results, most notably an increase in international container block train services launched by the region's railways. For example, the number of container block trains operated on the international routes to and from Kazakhstan increased from 232 trains in 2004 to 1,006 in 2007 and 508 from January to April 2008.

20. The secretariat has assisted landlocked and transit developing countries in developing capacities to deal effectively with their transit transport requirements. This was accomplished by working together with ECE in identifying Euro-Asian Transport Linkages as a component of the Development Account project "Capacity-building in developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages", completed in 2007. Results of the project included the identification of main Euro-Asian inland transport routes, prioritization of a number of infrastructure projects, development of a GIS database, analysis of non-physical obstacles, organization of national capacity-building workshops, and elaboration of a joint ECE-ESCAP study containing conclusions and recommendations.

21. The secretariat is also cooperating with ECE on the Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing, established under the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), all member States of which

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<sup>6</sup> See Commission resolution 60/4 of 28 April 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Georgia, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

<sup>8</sup> Commission resolution 62/4 of 12 April 2006, annex.

<sup>9</sup> Cambodia, India, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Thailand.

are landlocked, to work on a number of issues related to the development of transport infrastructure and transport facilitation in accordance with the Almaty Programme of Action. In particular, within the framework of the working group, bilateral consultations between SPECA member States are being held to identify and address various border- crossing issues.

22. The development of inland intermodal interfaces, such as dry ports and inland container depots, is an important element for the realization of an international, integrated, intermodal transport network and logistics system. The secretariat has undertaken the project on the “Promotion of Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway: Intermodal Interfaces as Focus for Development”. The project reviews intermodal facilities and operational practices at selected intermodal interfaces including border crossing points and provides guidelines for landlocked developing countries to develop intermodal interfaces not only as nodes that efficiently connect with the coastal areas but also centres for economic development.

23. The secretariat is also undertaking a study to evaluate the development of dry ports and a comprehensive review on the main dry ports in Asia with a view to providing an in-depth insight and user-friendly guidelines to planning and operating dry ports.

24. ESCAP, in collaboration with the Korea Maritime Institute has developed the Integrated Transport Planning Model, which can be used to provide detailed forecasts of the structure of container transport, with a particular attention to intermodal linkages between landlocked and transit developing countries in the region.

25. The secretariat is promoting the development and operationalization of priority intermodal corridors along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks. Under the project on “Operationalization of international intermodal transport corridors in North-East and Central Asia”, six priority international intermodal transport corridors have been identified for comparative analysis. The project will further facilitate the adoption and implementation of specific measures, such as organizing steering committee meetings to develop and operationalize the corridors through the organization of demonstration runs along selected corridors in 2009.

26. Convinced that the establishment of regional transport corridors and the adoption of common rules and standards, where appropriate, should play a major role in transit transport facilitation, in December 2007 ESCAP and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) finalized a two-year joint project entitled “Capacity-Building in Trade and Transport Facilitation for Land Locked and Transit Developing Countries” which analysed specific transport corridors between the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Thailand. The project enabled the countries concerned to improve the efficiency of trade and transport facilitation through the establishment of local trade and transport facilitation clusters. A web-based transit monitoring system is being established with assistance from ESCAP, as a follow-up to the project.

27. To facilitate the exchange of experiences and the sharing of industry best practices at the regional level among countries such as Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam, the secretariat organized annual meetings of freight forwarders associations, largely from landlocked and transit countries, in 2007 in Bangkok and 2008 in New Delhi, thereby enabling chief executives, members of these national associations, other professional transport bodies and logistics providers to engage in meaningful discussion and identify collaborative areas of action.

28. The Programme of Action calls for efforts to promote integrated training programmes encompassing all levels, in both the public and the private sectors. It also stresses the need for further development of capacities for multimodal transport operations. To facilitate this, the secretariat has assisted and will continue to assist member countries in enhancing national competencies and skills within the transport industry, through its training programme on freight forwarding, multimodal transport and logistics. Advisory services and technical assistance for such capacity-building was provided to Cambodia in January 2008. The secretariat provided substantive assistance to the workshop on multimodal transport held by the Economic Cooperation Organization in Astana, Kazakhstan, on 21 and 22 August 2008.

## **2. The way forward**

29. While progress has been made by landlocked and transit developing countries in developing transport infrastructure networks, further work needs to be done in order to complete the missing links, improve the infrastructure, promote intermodal transport and develop integrated transport corridors and logistics services. For this reason the secretariat will:

(a) Continue to develop, upgrade and maintain the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks by working with bilateral and multilateral donors as well as funding agencies and by enhancing institutional capabilities for the mobilization of additional funding from traditional and non-traditional sources, including public-private partnerships;

(b) Operationalize the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks through the organization of truck caravans along the highway routes and demonstration runs of container block trains along the railway routes;

(c) Continue to assist landlocked and transit developing countries, in collaboration with ECE, in promoting the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages project by enhancing capacities to deal effectively with their transit transport requirements;

(d) Continue to provide support, in collaboration with ECE, to the Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing of SPECA for the development and operationalization of the road and rail networks in the subregion;

(e) Promote the intermodal transport corridor concept and assist countries in formalizing cooperation for efficient operation of such corridors;

(f) Provide assistance for the development of intermodal interfaces, such as dry ports and inland container depots, and for clustering economic activities around the intermodal interfaces to bring development inland;

(g) Assist countries with the implementation of international legal instruments and/or subregional transport facilitation agreements where appropriate, including assistance in the negotiation of annexes to the Agreement on Facilitation of International Road Transport between SCO member States;

(h) Continue to provide assistance to member countries in establishing and strengthening national trade and transport facilitation mechanisms, analysing transport routes along specific corridors using the ESCAP time/cost-distance methodology, and strengthening the institutional and human capacities within the freight forwarding and logistics industry.



### **C. Priority III: International trade and trade facilitation**

#### **1. Main findings of the mid-term review of the Almaty Programme of Action in the area of trade facilitation**

30. Trade facilitation has received great attention from landlocked developing countries, with various trade facilitation initiatives being undertaken at the national and regional levels. At present, a number of landlocked countries are involved in trade facilitation programmes within the framework of SPECA, CAREC in Central Asia, the Greater Mekong Subregion Program of ADB in South-East Asia and SAARC in South Asia. In addition, trade facilitation has become a complimentary part of the global and regional trade liberalization process of the World Trade Organization, regional trade agreement (RTA) and free trade agreement (FTA). While the WTO negotiations on trade facilitation have made commendable progress, trade facilitation provisions are increasingly integrated into RTAs and FTAs. For example, the ASEAN Free Trade Area and the South Asian Free Trade Area include a set of trade facilitation provisions covering, more or less, customs procedures, technical standards, trade logistics, trade finance and transit.

31. However, the trading environment is still problematic in most landlocked developing countries. Enterprises in Asian landlocked developing countries have to spend a huge amount of time to deal with export procedures and documents. Inadequate trade logistics and burdensome transit procedures and documents render cross-border trade in landlocked developing countries difficult, costly and time-consuming. According to 2009 data from the World Bank Doing Business project,<sup>10</sup> the average cost to export and time spent for going through export procedures in Central Asia are almost three times those of East Asia. In some landlocked countries in Central Asia, firms need to spend more than 80 days to complete export procedures and formalities. To improve the trading environment, landlocked countries need to improve the quality of logistics, increase the efficiency of customs and transport administration, strengthen cooperation between landlocked and transit countries, introduce as much as possible IT-based trade facilitation initiatives to facilitate the cross-border flow of goods and people.

32. It is recognized that cumbersome customs procedures, excessive documentary requirements, and inadequate institutions and infrastructure create major delays and obstruct the integration of landlocked countries into international and regional trade. While the majority of landlocked developing countries and transit countries have implemented trade facilitation reforms aimed at simplifying trade regulations, procedures and documents, more efforts need to be focused on the following four areas:

(a) Harmonizing regulatory requirements, procedures and documentation for imports, exports and transit with international conventions and standards, such as the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (as amended) of the World Customs Organization, also known as the revised Kyoto Convention;<sup>11</sup> the United Nations Layout Key for Trade Documents (ISO DP 6422); and the United Nations Trade Data Elements Directory (ISO 7372);

(b) Creating or reinforcing an effective institutional framework for the implementation of trade facilitation measures;

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<sup>10</sup> See [www.doingbusiness.org/economyrankings](http://www.doingbusiness.org/economyrankings).

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 950; No. 13561, as revised by the protocol of 26 June 1999.

(c) Modernizing customs information systems and shifting to risk assessment and advance cargo information;

(d) Enhancing cooperation between neighbouring countries through harmonized trade regulations and joint border-crossing posts, where feasible, or at least harmonizing the working hours of adjacent border crossing posts as articulated in the ECE International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods.<sup>12</sup>

33. To ensure that landlocked developing and transit countries progress in these four areas, ESCAP and ECE, in collaboration with other international organizations and partners, will continue to provide capacity-building support based, among other things, on the United Nations Development Account (UNDA), fifth and sixth tranches, and other extrabudgetary projects undertaken with international or regional partners. Capacity-building will include the following activities:

(a) Assistance in negotiating trade facilitation in the context of WTO;

(b) Building a public-private cooperation mechanism for the effective implementation of trade facilitation measures, taking into account United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business Recommendation No. 4<sup>13</sup> on National Trade Facilitation Bodies, the ESCAP Study on National Coordination Mechanisms for Trade and Transport Facilitation in the UNESCAP Region<sup>14</sup> and other relevant ESCAP and ECE studies and tools;

(c) Assistance with accession to and implementation of international conventions and the use of standards and best practices in trade and transport facilitation, in particular those developed by the United Nations, including the use of the ECE and United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business standards and recommendations on the establishment of single-window systems for export and import clearance and trade data harmonization;

(d) Organization of the upcoming Asia-Pacific forum on trade facilitation that encompasses expert networks to, inter alia, introduce and use electronic trade documentation aligned with United Nations standards.

## **2. Activities undertaken so far in response to resolution 63/5**

34. ESCAP, in cooperation with ECE, implemented the UNDA Project. Under this project, a set of seminars, workshops and training courses were organized, to increase the capacity of SPECA member States in formulating and implementing trade facilitation measures.

35. Under the fourth Tranche of UNDA, a workshop on “United Nations Electronic Documents (UNeDocs) for Single Window Facilities in Asia and the Pacific” was held in Bangkok on 10 and 11 December 2007. The workshop was attended by 23 countries, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The objective of the workshop was to enhance the capacities of the government and customs officials, trade facilitators, businessmen and academics to identify opportunities for economic development through the implementation of a system of electronic documents for export and import.

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<sup>12</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1409, No. 23583.

<sup>13</sup> E/ECE/TRADE/242.

<sup>14</sup> United Nations publication, Sales No. E.08.II.F.11.

36. Under the fifth Tranche of UNDA, a seminar on an “Integrated Approach to Trade Facilitation and Public-Private Partnerships” was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan from 25 to 27 June 2007. The participating countries included Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Two seminars were jointly organized by ESCAP and ECE in 2008 respectively in Baku and in Bishkek. The seminar in Baku was held from 5 to 7 May and focused on single window systems and data harmonization, while the one in Bishkek, held from 3 to 5 November had a focus on electronic trade documents for SPECA countries. Both seminars contributed to the enhancement of knowledge on the use of international standards, best practices and tools for the exchange of trade data among trade and customs experts from the Central Asian countries.

37. The sixth Tranche of UNDA will be launched in 2009 with the organization of a series of workshops and seminars. The objective is to enhance the institutional and human capacities of landlocked and transit least developed countries and countries in transition to develop a single window facility. Under the sixth Tranche, a United Nations network of experts for paperless trade in Asia and the Pacific will be created to build up a regional pool of technical expertise that can support the implementation of paperless trade and single window systems in the region.

**II. RESOLUTION 63/6 ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERCOUNTRY ENERGY COOPERATION TO ENHANCE ENERGY SECURITY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH A VIEW TO WIDENING ACCESS TO ENERGY SERVICES IN LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

38. The underlying requirements of this resolution include policy dialogue and capacity-building, the exchange of information and experience, the transfer of renewable energy technologies, the mobilization of financing and investment and synergizing regional cooperation.

39. The expected outcomes of this resolution will be a strengthened capacity among policymakers to develop and implement effective policies and programmes to support sustainable and inclusive energy development, along with improved technical cooperation and an extensive network of centres of excellence.

**A. The implementation strategy**

40. Accordingly, the secretariat has formulated a plan for the implementation of this resolution that centres around three key strategies:

(a) Enhancing policy dialogue and capacity-building to create an enabling environment for improved energy access to the poor and increased use of renewable energy;

(b) Strengthening regional and subregional cooperation with a focus on forming South-South cooperation;

(c) Mobilizing investment and financing for demonstration projects and capacity-building activities.

## **B. Specific arrangements**

### **1. Policy dialogues and capacity-building**

41. Based on the results of the 2008 theme study, *Energy Security and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific*, the secretariat held a policy dialogue on biofuels in China on 25 to 26 September 2008, involving a number of countries with biofuel programmes. The participants emphasized that sustainable development should be the guiding principle and a set of standards and criteria need to be put in place as safeguards to ensure biofuel development be carried out in an economically viable, environmentally benign and socially responsible manner.

42. The secretariat conducted a workshop on energy efficiency in Central Asia, including SPECA countries, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 18 to 21 November 2008. The workshop was designed to identify challenges to energy efficiency and to develop, based on international best practices and experience, policy options and implementation tools to address those challenges through a long-term cooperation programme for this subregion. Recommendations from the meeting include further work on developing a network of energy efficiency centres in Central Asian countries and developing a programme on the energy efficiency of buildings.

43. The secretariat views the International Renewable Energy Conference, to be held in India in 2010, as an excellent opportunity for ESCAP to facilitate consensus building among member States and other stakeholders regarding the implementation of Commission resolutions 63/6 and 64/3 on Promoting renewables for energy security and sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific adopted at the sixty-fourth Commission session. The secretariat started consultations with the Government of India through its Embassy in Bangkok and the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) in Delhi. It is proposed that ESCAP provide substantive assistance in the preparation and organization of the Conference. This assistance could focus on (a) enhanced access to affordable services for rural development, (b) development and transfer of appropriate technologies to strengthen the capacity of national renewable energy industries and institutions in developing countries, and (c) promotion of South-South and South-South-North triangle cooperation and partnerships. It is anticipated that communication and collaboration with the Indian authorities will speed up as conference preparation starts in 2009.

44. The secretariat also worked with the non-governmental organization ENERGIA, to undertake an e-forum and meeting on networking towards gender and poverty-sensitive energy policies. A large component of the background papers and discussions within the forum relate to access to energy services. The e-forum and the meeting held on 3 and 4 November 2008 included participants from least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, along with other developing countries.

### **2. Strengthening regional and subregional cooperation**

45. To strengthen regional cooperation, the secretariat is undertaking a number of activities. For example, the secretariat has actively worked with ASEAN energy officials and experts in the context of preparing for the upcoming UN-ASEAN summit and to support its efforts to integrate the energy market of South-East Asia. On several occasions, the secretariat presented ESCAP's perspectives and policy advice, which have been well received.

46. Given that the relatively high cost of renewable energy technologies is a bottleneck to their wider use, South-South cooperation is thought to be critical for

reducing their cost and increasing affordability, which would in return result in their wider adoption. Several developing countries in Asia have succeeded in developing and deploying appropriate technologies, such as small-hydro, biogas, solar water heating and wind power at a cost much lower than in developed countries. In the light of this, the secretariat has started consultations with relevant institutions in India and China, as the source of technology and expertise, and the Pacific island countries, as recipients, to establish a South-South cooperation mechanism.

47. The ESCAP secretariat will continue to coordinate and synergize activities towards energy security with its regional institutions, such as the Asian and Pacific Centre for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (APCAEM) and APCTT, as well as with national organizations. In addition, the secretariat is in close contact with institutions that are active in energy for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. Included are: the Energy and Resource Institute (TERI) in India, Energy Research Institute and the Hangzhou International Centre for Small Hydro Power in China, the ASEAN Centre for Energy, SAARC Energy Centre, ECO, Project Working Group on Water and Energy Resources under SPECA, and Secretariat of the Pacific Islands Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC). It is the secretariat's objective that the implementation of Commission resolution 63/6 will result in not only strengthened regional cooperation but also a broad network of centres of excellence which could put energy cooperation on a sustainable track.

### **3. Mobilizing funds and financial resources**

48. The secretariat's regular budget has limited funds earmarked for the implementation of resolutions. The secretariat has therefore exerted considerable efforts developing viable project proposals and raising funds that are necessary to fulfil its mandate under the resolution.

49. A concept note on "Enhancing energy security and improving access to energy services through development of renewable energy policies and public-private partnerships (PPPs)" has been submitted to the seventh tranche of the United Nations Development Account. The note attaches great importance to vulnerable groups of countries and attempts to harness the PPP approach to attract financing and investment in energy access. This proposal was agreed to by all of the regional commissions, and ESCAP was selected to lead the submission and implementation of the project once it is approved.

50. The secretariat has also been in consultation with other potential partners including the Korean Energy Management Company (KEMCO), Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (DFID), ADB and the United Nations Foundation, for possible collaboration on energy efficiency, renewable energy and climate change projects. Eight project concept notes or proposals have been prepared. Should these proposals be approved by the donors, they will provide the opportunities to assist member States concerned in enhancing their capacity to address energy security in the context of sustainable development.

51. In summary, the secretariat has developed a clear vision and strategy and laid a solid foundation to implement resolution 63/6. Despite the difficulties and constraints faced, no effort will be spared to fulfil the mandate in order to address challenges to sustainable energy security effectively.

### **III. RESOLUTION 63/7 ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT FOR LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES**

52. The secretariat of ESCAP, together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), has taken the lead in a situation analysis of international migration, being undertaken by the Regional Thematic Working Group on International Migration, including Human Trafficking. The outcome of the analysis was published as a *Situation Report*.<sup>15</sup> The report provides a comprehensive overview on migration trends in 16 countries in East and South-East Asia and provides deeper analysis in thematic chapters on issues of concern to the region, such as labour migration, remittances, gender, migration and development and others. Among the countries covered in the report, five are least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, namely Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Myanmar and Timor-Leste. The objectives of the report are (a) to produce a report that will enhance the understanding of migration issues in East and South-East Asia, (b) to assist policymakers and practitioners by making available a comprehensive reference book on international migration in the subregions and (c) to identify knowledge gaps in the field of international migration in the region.

53. As a preparatory activity leading up to the publication of the *Situation Report*, ESCAP held a workshop entitled "Policy Dialogue on International Migration and Development in East and South-East Asia" in Bangkok on 8 and 9 November 2007. Resource persons delivered lectures on a wide range of migration issues. In addition, country overviews of the migration situation were presented. Attended by government officials from 12 countries from East and South-East Asia, including Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Myanmar, the workshop helped enhance understanding of migration issues and to promote constructive dialogue and provided an effective venue for the exchange of good practices.

54. The social dimension of international migration, despite its importance, often receives little attention in the migration debate. Often it is also overlooked by the policy framework. Hence, the secretariat produced a report entitled: "Looking into Pandora's Box: The Social Implications of International Migration in Asia". The report was published as part of the *Asia-Pacific Population and Social Studies* (ST/ESCAP/2512) series in September 2008. The study highlighted the increasing scale of female migration and migration of highly skilled professionals in the region. It also addressed critical issues, such as the protection of the rights of migrants and the provision of access to basic social services, with a view to addressing the concerns of countries of origin and destination.

55. In order to bring together the most up-to-date knowledge on international migration from a regional perspective, ESCAP in collaboration with the United Nations Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, held the Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok on 20 and 21 September 2008. The meeting brought together 20 experts from government, academia, United Nations agencies and civil society, who discussed migration trends and patterns, as well as the linkages between international migration and development. Participants stressed the need for further improvement in statistics on migration and discussed possibilities for obtaining better and more reliable data. Moreover, participants shared experiences on the costs and

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<sup>15</sup> IOM, *Situation Report on International Migration in East and South-East Asia* (Bangkok, IOM, 2008) (available online at [www.IOM.int](http://www.IOM.int)).

benefits of international migration and discussed policy options on how to mitigate the cost of international migration. The experts also shared their expertise at the subsequent High-level Meeting on International Migration and Development.

56. The Asia-Pacific High-level Meeting on International Migration and Development, which was requested in Commission resolution 63/7, was convened in Bangkok on 22 and 23 September 2008. It was attended by 53 government-nominated participants from 22 countries of the Asia-Pacific region. Among the participating countries were nine countries with special needs (least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States).<sup>16</sup> The meeting was jointly organized by ESCAP, the Government of Thailand, the United Nations Population Division and IOM. The meeting provided a forum for ESCAP members and associate members to exchange experiences on migration management and to have a dialogue on the nexus between migration and development. The meeting also served as a regional preparatory meeting to the Second Global Forum on Migration and Development, held in Manila from 27 to 30 October 2008.

57. During the Meeting, four round-table discussions were held that focused upon (1) remittances for development; (2) social dimensions of international migration; (3) international migration in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; and (4) data and research on migration.

58. In the round table on international migration in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, discussion evolved round the following:

(a) The possibility of skill loss due to migration, which may be a risk especially in small countries and the possible role of return migrants and their potential for skill transfers. In this connection, participants noted that small countries should strengthen their linkages with their migration communities abroad in order to attract their skills and investment at home;

(b) The positive and negative effects of remittances at the household and community levels;

(c) Participants acknowledged that least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States have specific challenges to address when it comes to development, including those associated with their geography and, in some cases, limited opportunities for development;

(d) Further, participants recognized the importance of the social costs of migration, in particular its impact on children, women and the health of migrants, and stressed the need to advance the benefits of migration to foster the development of more inclusive and integrated societies;

(e) The need for official development assistance was also discussed. Some participants noted that the priorities of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States should receive much closer attention by aid donors and international agencies to ensure more sustainable development outcomes and that migration becomes a matter of choice rather than a necessity. In this regard, participants pointed out that more innovative agreements

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<sup>16</sup> Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Fiji, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Nepal, Samoa, Solomon Islands.

between countries of origin and destination concerning labour migration would help to ensure a positive impact from migration in the countries of origin.

59. Countries participating in the meeting recognized the need to better ensure the rights and welfare of migrants. Some countries of origin also shared their experience in providing better protection for the migrant workers already living in the country of employment. Concern was also expressed about the large volume of irregular migration occurring in the region. It was noted that international migration was an intrinsic part of development, resulting from economic and demographic disparities existing between countries. It was also reiterated that international migration is a growing phenomenon and has become a structural element of societies and economies in Asia and the Pacific. The participants adopted the Chairman's Summary, which is available at <http://www.unescap.org/esid/meetings/Migration/index.asp>.

60. In order to closely monitor migration outflows from countries in the Asia-Pacific region, the secretariat established a database on labour migration outflows from selected countries in the region, including Bangladesh and Myanmar. The database comprises the official statistics made available from respective countries. It includes annual migrant outflows and to the extent possible the data disaggregated by destination country, sex and skill level of migrants. The database will be regularly updated depending on data availability and also seeks to track labour outflows by skill level for selected countries.

61. Together with other regional commissions, ESCAP will launch a Development Account project entitled "Strengthening national capacities to deal with international migration", in 2009. The project aims at strengthening national capacities by improving the quality and availability of data on international migration, by increasing institutional and human capacities to design and implement migration policies, and by promoting cooperation through an effective intraregional and interregional network for the exchange of information, studies, experiences and best practices among countries in the region.

#### **IV. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

62. The Commission may wish to review the progress achieved and to provide comments and further guidance to enhance the effective implementation of the resolutions listed in the present document.

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