

**Economic and Social Council**Distr.: General
28 April 2011

Original: English

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**Sixty-seventh session**

Bangkok, 19-25 May 2011

Item 2(a) of the provisional agenda

Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked**Developing Countries: Addressing development gaps,
including the implementation of the Almaty Programme
of Action****Note verbale dated 25 April 2011 from the Embassy of
Mongolia in Thailand addressed to the secretariat of the
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

The Embassy of Mongolia in the Kingdom of Thailand presents its compliments to the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and, in reference to the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and other Development Gaps Faced by the Landlocked Developing Countries, which was organized jointly by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Government of Mongolia, and held in Ulaanbaatar from 12 to 14 April 2011, has the honour to transmit to the secretariat the text of the Ulaanbaatar Declaration, the outcome document of the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue.

The Embassy of Mongolia further has the honour to request that the Ulaanbaatar Declaration be brought to the attention of the Commission at its sixty-seventh session during its consideration of item 2(a) of the provisional agenda.

Annex to the note verbale dated 25 April 2011 from the Embassy of Mongolia in Thailand addressed to the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

14 April 2011

Ulaanbaatar Declaration

Adopted by the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and other Development Gaps Faced by the Landlocked Developing Countries

held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, 12-14 April 2011

1. We, Ministers and officials from landlocked developing countries and development partners, meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 12 to 14 April 2011,
2. *Recalling* General Assembly resolution 58/201 of 23 December 2003 on 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,¹ and that the primary responsibility for establishing effective transit systems rests with the landlocked and transit developing countries,²
3. *Recalling also* Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific resolutions 63/9 of 23 May 2007 on the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011), 64/4 of 30 April 2008 on the implementation of the Seoul Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, 66/4 of 19 May 2010 on the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia, and 66/5 of 19 May 2010 on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific,
4. *Acknowledging* the important contributions of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network³ and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network⁴ in promoting the development of transport infrastructure in landlocked developing countries,

¹ *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.*

² As recognized by the General Assembly in its resolution 65/172 of 20 December 2010.

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, No. 46171.

5. *Recalling* the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals,⁵ which was held from 20 to 22 September 2010,
6. *Emphasizing* the need for continued international support for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals by the landlocked developing countries,
7. *Recognizing* that the greatest challenge facing the landlocked developing countries is to promote inclusive and sustainable growth for reducing poverty and improving the quality of life of the people,
8. *Expressing concern* about the re-emergence of rising food and energy prices and the special vulnerabilities of landlocked developing countries to such price rises,
9. *Stressing* that regional cooperation and integration initiatives can effectively facilitate the participation of landlocked and transit developing countries in the global economy,
10. *Reaffirming* our belief in the multilateral trading system for achieving a non-discriminatory, rules-based and predictable trade environment which provides every country with the opportunity to participate effectively in global trade,
11. *Realizing* that the landlocked developing countries stand to gain from the Aid for Trade Initiative in their efforts to benefit from international trade by building supply-side capacity and diversifying their economies,
12. *Recognizing* that non-physical barriers, such as customs clearance and border-crossing procedures, as well as cumbersome procedures and excessive paperwork behind the border, continue to be a major impediment for landlocked developing countries to make connections among themselves and with other regions,
13. *Stressing* the enormous capacity-building needs of the landlocked developing countries in the area of trade and transport facilitation,
14. *Re-emphasizing* that the interest and concerns of landlocked and transit developing countries should be taken fully into account while establishing transit transport systems,
15. *Urging* development partners to adopt a constructive and inclusive approach in the implementation of regional transit projects,
16. *Reiterating* that public-private partnerships are an effective means to complement the efforts of Governments in the development and provision of infrastructure facilities and services,
17. *Welcoming* the initiative of the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in launching the Young Leadership Programme in the secretariat in order to contribute to capacity development for the landlocked developing countries in training their young leaders to engage effectively in multilateral forums, negotiations and processes for the landlocked developing countries,

⁵ See General Assembly resolution 65/1.

18. *Recalling* that the final review of the Almaty Programme of Action is scheduled for 2013,

We, the Ministers and officials,

Millennium Development Goals and other development challenges

19. *Express our concern* that there is wide divergence in performance across countries and, with respect to the overall status of the landlocked developing countries in Asia and the Pacific, progress in reaching the Millennium Development Goals has been uneven. Moreover, even in countries where good progress has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, there are often glaring disparities between rural and urban areas, between the rich and the poor, between women and men and between girls and boys. We therefore call on our bilateral and multilateral partners, as well as on relevant international organizations, to assist landlocked developing countries in their efforts towards meeting the targets of the Millennium Development Goals;

20. *Note* that poverty remains a rural phenomenon in landlocked developing countries; hence, policies that promote employment and income opportunities and improve access to basic social services are essential in reducing poverty and rural-urban imbalances. Investing in agriculture and rural activities is a top priority for these countries because of the expected rise in demand for food and feed resulting from rapid growth in incomes and populations. Achieving the above-mentioned objectives becomes more critical in the face of increasingly unpredictable extreme weather events in the landlocked developing countries resulting from the impacts of climate change. We therefore call upon our development partners to assist landlocked developing countries, especially by investing in the agricultural sector to improve productivity;

21. *Note also* the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness as conceived by Bhutan, which provides a framework for holistic and sustainable development, and welcome the proposal made by Bhutan at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals in September 2010 for the inclusion of happiness as “the ninth voluntary Millennium Development Goal”;

Enhancing market access and trade opportunities, including trade facilitation

22. *Call upon* both developed and developing countries to show greater commitment and flexibility in bringing to a successful conclusion the Doha round of trade negotiations in line with the letter and the spirit of the Doha Development Agenda and with provisions that are consistent with the trade, development and financial needs of developing countries, especially the landlocked developing countries;

23. *Reaffirm* our commitment to implementing trade facilitation measures in earnest. The removal of existing impediments to trade and transit that significantly undermine the competitiveness of landlocked developing countries and the expediting of the movement, release and clearance of goods, especially those in transit, are areas where action is needed urgently;

24. *Urge* our development partners, in view of the enormous capacity-building needs that exist in the area of trade facilitation, to provide generous technical assistance and capacity-building support in order to help landlocked

developing countries improve their ability to participate in international trade effectively. We commend the establishment by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific or “UNNExT”, a community of knowledge and practice established to facilitate the sharing of experiences and empower local experts from developing countries to implement trade facilitation measures;

25. *Call upon* our development partners to provide landlocked developing countries with additional, predictable, adequate and targeted assistance in the areas of capacity-building for the formulation of related policies, the implementation of trade facilitation measures, the participation in trade negotiations and particularly in the strengthening of their productive capacities, with a view to enhancing the competitiveness of landlocked developing countries in international markets. In their efforts to benefit from international trade by building supply-side capacity and diversifying their economies, landlocked developing countries stand to gain from the Aid for Trade Initiative;

26. *Urge* international partners of landlocked developing countries to implement the Aid for Trade Initiative at the earliest possible date, and stress the need to provide such aid independently of the final outcome of the ongoing Doha round of trade negotiations;

27. *Request* the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in close collaboration with national, regional and international partners:

(a) To continue assisting the landlocked developing countries with advisory services and capacity-building support in trade and transit policy formulation, trade and transit negotiations and trade and transport facilitation, including the development of single-window and paperless trading systems;

(b) To continue also to provide a platform for regional, subregional and intra-subregional dialogue and knowledge-sharing under the United Nations Network of Experts for Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific;

Enhancing transit transport connectivity

28. *Stress* the important role of dry ports in facilitating the provision of efficient intermodal transport and logistics services and in serving as a catalyst for development where various economic and business activities are clustered;

29. *Recognize* that there are still several areas where joint actions are needed to enhance transit transport connectivity in terms of facilitating the access of landlocked developing countries to seaports;

30. *Emphasize* that, by adopting and enforcing relevant legal frameworks, the international community needs to guarantee that landlocked developing countries have the right of free access to international waters;

31. *Resolve* that, in order to improve the connectivity of landlocked and transit developing countries, our respective government authorities will develop and implement transport policies:

(a) To upgrade and promote the development of the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian Railway networks, as well as to develop dry ports;

(b) To remove physical and non-physical barriers to the smooth and efficient movement of goods by all means of transport across borders;

32. *Request* the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, the relevant offices of the United Nations Secretariat, international and regional financial institutions, other organizations and bilateral donors, to assist landlocked and transit developing countries in their efforts:

(a) To accede to, ratify, accept or approve the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and/or the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network;

(b) To negotiate and accede to international transit transport conventions and agreements and incorporate into national legislation, as appropriate, the requirements of international conventions on transport facilitation to which the countries are Parties;

(c) To accelerate the formulation and implementation of regional and subregional agreements on transport facilitation and assist in facilitating the transit of landlocked developing countries to neighbouring countries;

(d) To participate actively in negotiating an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports;

(e) To promote public-private partnerships in infrastructure development through:

(i) Regional and interregional cooperation in capacity-building;

(ii) Regional networking aimed at promoting the exchange of experiences and information;

(f) To encourage transit countries to accede to the relevant United Nations legal instruments to facilitate trade;

(g) To reaffirm the right of landlocked developing countries to freedom of transit through the territories of transit countries by all means of transport so that they would have access to the sea in accordance with the norms of international law;

South-South and triangular cooperation

33. *Note* the importance of General Assembly resolution 64/214 of 21 December 2009 on groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation and Commission resolution 65/6 of 29 April 2009 on the support for the establishment of an international think tank of landlocked developing countries, and express strong support for the necessary steps taken by the Government of Mongolia to operationalize the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, which was established under a multilateral agreement opened for signature for the 31 landlocked developing countries from 1 November 2010 to 31 October 2011;²

34. *Invite* donor countries, relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, international and regional financial institutions and organizations, as well as the private sector and academic institutions, to support the landlocked developing countries in realizing the start-up of operations of that think tank;

35. *Commend* the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for its efforts to foster South-South cooperation in the region through the continuous provision of assistance and services to the landlocked developing countries and to implement the Almaty Programme of Action, which constitutes a fundamental framework for a strong global partnership and South-South cooperation;

36. *Request* the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, in collaboration with regional and global partners, as appropriate:

(a) To strengthen triangular cooperation by building partnerships with middle-income developing countries in Asia and the Pacific for capacity-building, technical assistance and the replication of best practices in landlocked developing countries;

(b) To coordinate with multilateral and regional funding agencies and bilateral donors, with a view to enhancing financial and technology flows for the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in the five priority areas agreed under the Programme;

(c) To strengthen the leadership of the Commission in ensuring the full mobilization and coordination of additional international support measures and action to implement the Almaty Programme of Action, which, among other things, forms a basis for South-South cooperation to assist landlocked developing countries by establishing efficient transit transport systems in both landlocked and transit developing countries;

37. *Request strongly* that the international community take practical and necessary measures in earnest to help landlocked developing countries overcome the challenges that they face;

Final review of the Almaty Programme of Action

38. *Request* the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and relevant international organizations to provide landlocked developing countries with the assistance necessary during the final review of the Almaty Programme of Action, which is scheduled for 2013.

Acknowledgment

We, the Ministers and officials from landlocked developing countries, meeting in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, from 12 to 14 April 2011, express our appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Sukhbaatar Batbold, the Honourable Prime Minister of Mongolia, for his inspiring keynote speech and thank the authorities and the people of Mongolia for hosting this event.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for their unwavering support and steadfast commitment to the cause of the landlocked developing countries and offer our full support for their current and future activities.