



Landlocked Developing Countries

Facts and Figures

2006



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Statistical notes



The following data and statistical sources were used:

General Information

- UNCTAD (2005). UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2005.

Economic & Social Development

- UNCTAD (2005). UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2005.
- UNDP (2005). Human Development Report 2005.

External Trade

- UNCTAD (2005). UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2005.

Investments External Debt & Aid

- UNCTAD (2005). UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2005.
- World Bank (2005). World Development Indicators 2005.

Infrastructure

- World Bank (2005). World Development Indicators 2005.

Introduction



Landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) are widely dispersed around the globe: 15 are located in Africa, 12 in Asia, 2 in Latin America and 2 in Central and Eastern Europe. Despite their location on four different continents, all 31 LLDCs share common problems of geographical remoteness and dependence on trade and transport systems in neighbouring and coastal countries. The location of LLDCs in the interior of continents requires their export and import goods to travel hundreds, if not thousands of kilometers to and from the closest maritime ports. However, transit dependence increases transactions costs and reduces competitiveness in world market. This discourages investors and diminishes the capacity of LLDCs' to reap benefits from the international division of labour.

Not surprisingly, most landlocked developing countries are very poor. Most of them are far from reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) related to primary education, infant mortality, access to safe water and the primary goal of poverty eradication. In fact, several landlocked developing countries are even moving further away from reaching these objectives.

For landlocked developing countries, promoting efficient transit systems in order to lower trade transaction and transport costs, in particular, is an important objective. However, the building of supply capacities for goods and services that are not sensitive to distance and a stronger regional trade expansion are also major prerequisites for a more beneficial integration of these countries into the international trading system.

The international community has focused on the specific development constraints of LLDCs for many decades. The United Nations Millennium Declaration urged their development partners to increase financial and technical assistance to LLDCs to help them overcome the impediments of geography. This call was echoed at major United Nations conferences in Brussels, Monterrey, Johannesburg and, particularly in Almaty, which was solely dedicated to the problems of landlocked and transit developing countries.

The 2003 Almaty International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation helped forge a global partnership to tackle the economic marginalization of LLDCs. UNCTAD is fully committed to shoulder its obligations for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, including its mid-term review process.

This publication presents key economic, social and trade information on all 31 LLDCs. It helps to understand the development challenge faced by these countries and underlines the need for international assistance to them.

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