

Annex I

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

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted by heads of State and Government on 8 September 2000, laid out a set of development goals which call for the creation of an environment at national and international levels conducive to development, among other things. It recognized the special needs and problems of the landlocked developing countries, which were also addressed by recent major United Nations conferences such as the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Brussels, 2001), the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, 2002) and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002). The International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation has been convened pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/180, entitled "Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries", to review the current situation of transit transport systems, including the implementation of the Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation of 1995, and to formulate, inter alia, appropriate policy measures and action-oriented programmes aimed at developing efficient transit transport systems.

2. Landlocked developing countries, as a group, are among the poorest of developing countries, with limited capacities and dependence on a very limited number of commodities for their export earnings. In addition, throughout the 1990s the growth rate of the landlocked developing countries has been in general negative or very slow. Lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets have contributed to their relative poverty, substantially inflating transportation costs and lowering their effective participation in international trade. The trade-reducing effect is strongest for transport-intensive activities. Most, if not all, landlocked developing countries are commodity exporters. The very high transport costs which they must bear constrain export development since that burden limits the range of potential exports and markets in which goods can be competitively and profitably traded. The price of imports tends to soar because of high transit transport costs.

3. In most cases, the transit neighbours of landlocked developing countries are themselves developing countries, often of broadly similar economic structure and beset by similar scarcities of resources. The least developed transit countries are in an especially difficult situation. Also transit developing countries bear additional burdens, deriving from transit transport and its financial, infrastructural and social impacts. Transit developing countries are themselves in need of improvement of technical and administrative arrangements in their transport and customs and administrative systems to which their landlocked neighbours are expected to link.

II. Partnerships

4. Efficient transit transport systems can be established through genuine partnerships between landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners at the national, bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels and through partnership between public and private sectors. Partnerships should be based on the mutual benefits deriving from the specific actions that major stakeholders have agreed to undertake in the present programme of action in order to

establish efficient transit transport systems. The international community, including financial and development institutions and donor countries, should provide financial and technical support to help those countries to deal effectively with their transit transport problems and requirements.

5. The efficiency of transit transport systems will depend on the promotion of an enabling administrative legal and macroeconomic environment in both landlocked and transit developing countries for effective policy-making and resource mobilization and on cooperative arrangements between landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours. An effective strategy to improve transit transport systems requires actions at the regional, subregional and bilateral levels for the effective solution of transit problems, which would improve transit transport safety and enable significant economies of scale, particularly relevant for landlocked developing countries. This cooperation must be promoted on the basis of the mutual interest of both landlocked and transit developing countries.

6. The role of the private sector must be taken into account. The private sector, as a service provider and as a user of transit transport services, is an important stakeholder in society and should be a main contributor to the development of infrastructure and productive capacity in both landlocked and transit developing countries.

7. The costs of establishing and maintaining an efficient transit transport system often pose a daunting challenge to the landlocked and transit developing countries. Their development partners can play an important role in supporting and assisting them in their efforts to establish efficient transit transport systems.

8. The interests and concerns of landlocked and transit developing countries should be taken fully into account while establishing transit transport systems. In this regard, the interests and concerns of landlocked and transit developing countries should be considered complementary and mutually reinforcing.

9. Regional and subregional cooperation or integration can play an important role in successfully addressing the specific problems of transit transport from, in and through developing countries. Regional cooperation or integration initiatives can also facilitate the participation of landlocked and transit developing countries in the global economy, better sharing its benefits and containing its negative effects. In this context, support from all existing sources, where requested, for mechanisms of regional and subregional dialogue and regional integration among landlocked and transit developing countries, is important.

III. Objectives

10. The objective of the present Programme of Action is to address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and establish a new global framework for action for developing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries, taking into account the interests of both landlocked and transit developing countries. The Programme of Action thus aims to: (a) secure access to and from the sea by all means of transport according to applicable rules of international law; (b) reduce costs and improve services so as to increase the competitiveness of their exports; (c) reduce the delivered costs of imports; (d) address problems of delays and uncertainties in trade routes; (e) develop

adequate national networks; (f) reduce loss, damage and deterioration en route; (g) open the way for export expansion; (h) improve safety of road transport and security of people along the corridors.

IV. Priorities

Priority 1

Fundamental transit policy issues

11. It is important for landlocked and transit developing countries to review and revise their regulatory frameworks, where necessary, to allow a greater participation of the private sector; to introduce reform measures to make providers of transport services more responsive to user demands; to increase transparency of transit and border regulations; to establish streamlined administrative procedures; to further simplify border control and procedures; to promote the use of information technology; and to strengthen training programmes in the sector. Transport strategies and programmes, particularly where they involve regulation of transport operations or construction of major new infrastructure, need to take full account of environmental aspects and development needs to ensure sustainable development at local and global levels. These should be an integral part of a policy reform programme and of a poverty reduction strategy.

12. International conventions on transport and transit, as well as regional and bilateral agreements, ratified by landlocked and transit developing countries are the main vehicles by which the harmonization, simplification and standardization of rules and documentation can be achieved.

13. At the international level, development partners, in particular the multilateral aid agencies, should give high priority to sustainable transportation project financing. New infrastructure investment, including through public/private partnerships involving official development assistance and private sector investment, including foreign direct investment, would also be very important for the development of transit transport systems.

14. The following specific actions are required:

(a) An integrated approach to trade and transport sector development is needed that takes into account social and economic aspects, as well as fiscal, policy, regulatory, procedural and institutional considerations;

(b) Landlocked and transit developing countries need to give a high priority to developing and modernizing existing facilities and to increasing the commercial orientation of transport and infrastructure by eliminating non-physical barriers to transit transport;

(c) Reform in the transport sector should be actively pursued, with the greater involvement of, and partnership with, the private sector;

(d) There is a need to promote public/private sector dialogue and cooperation, with the assistance of development partners, as appropriate;

(e) 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 that regard, the role of the regional commissions and subregional organizations should be further strengthened. In this context, the regional commissions and subregional organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America need further assistance from the international community;

(f) The existing institutional mechanisms at the policy and operational levels to monitor and promote the implementation of agreements and arrangements involving landlocked and transit developing countries should be further strengthened;

(g) Efforts should be made to promote integrated training programmes encompassing all levels, from the top management to low-level operators, in both the public and private sectors.

Priority 2

Infrastructure development and maintenance

15. Inadequate infrastructure is a major obstacle to establishing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries. The deterioration of transport infrastructure is a general problem that affects both. Communications facilities are required to facilitate advance knowledge of transport service availabilities and to ensure smooth and speedy transit. Addressing these needs will involve considerable investment, setting up of public-private partnerships, capacity-building, and new policies and institutional reform, where necessary. The share of national resources and official development assistance allocated to infrastructure development in many landlocked and transit developing countries is limited. Also, the challenge of establishing adequate infrastructure facilities and of remedying the deterioration of existing transport infrastructure in both landlocked and transit developing countries could go beyond the public sector. In particular, the financial and technical support of donors, international financial institutions and development assistance agencies remains critical. The private sector could also play an important role.

16. A prerequisite for successfully attracting private investment in infrastructure projects is a sound regulatory and institutional framework. Regional and subregional economic cooperation or integration can help to overcome problems of market size in landlocked and transit developing countries, especially in the least developed among them, and attract the private sector to invest in infrastructure development. In this context, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an important initiative, as most landlocked and transit developing countries are in this continent, and may well boost the creation of subregional and regional infrastructure. The interests and concerns of landlocked developing countries should be taken into careful consideration in the implementation of the trans-African highways, Asian highway, trans-Asian railway and international North-South corridor projects, as well as the Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America (IIRSA) and the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA).

17. The following specific actions are required:

(a) Landlocked and transit developing countries should allocate a greater share of public investment to the development of infrastructure supported by, as

appropriate, financial assistance and investment from donors, international financial institutions and development assistance agencies;

(b) Landlocked and transit developing countries should make every effort to provide a conducive environment for using all transport modes in transit transport services in order to encourage competition among different transport modes, particularly road and rail transport. At the same time, capacities and legal regimes for multimodal transport operations should be further developed;

(c) Particular attention should be given to constructing “missing links” in the regional and subregional transport network;

(d) Private-sector participation should be encouraged, also by development partners, in transit transport infrastructure development, through co-financing, Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT), and playing a catalytic role in attracting foreign direct investment, as well as facilitating increased access to bond markets;

(e) Private-public partnership platforms along trade and transport corridors should be promoted through the development and extensive use of common information and communication technology-based management and monitoring systems.

A. Rail transport

18. Railways have an important role to play in the transit transport corridor systems linking ocean ports with landlocked developing countries. Major concerns are the persistent problem of limited availability of equipment, including locomotives and wagons, and poor maintenance standards. There are also additional problems associated with establishing inter-railway agreements.

19. The following specific actions are required:

(a) The possibility of establishing new railway connections and rehabilitation programmes for existing railway facilities as a matter of priority, in conjunction with new technological improvements and innovations, should be examined at the bilateral, subregional and regional levels;

(b) Landlocked and transit developing countries should, as a matter of priority, improve the maintenance of track and rolling stock, purchase new rolling stock and expand the railway network, where justified by traffic volume;

(c) Landlocked and transit developing countries should also pay special attention to the benefits of the harmonization of gauges, where feasible, the development of reloading capacities, the expansion of training programmes and inter-railway staff exchange programmes;

(d) Governments are encouraged to consider adhering to relevant international conventions related to rail and combined transport, which provide internationally accepted rules for an efficient and safe environment of inter-country rail and combined transport operations, as well as ensuring the institutional development to implement them.

B. Road transport

20. Road transport is an increasingly important mode of transport for the imports and exports of landlocked developing countries. In particular, road transport is the main mode of transit transport in Africa. For the expansion of roads, transit infrastructure sizeable resource allocations are required. The key problem areas, particularly with regard to international road transport, are the worsening road safety due to inadequate calibration, absence of social infrastructure along the transit corridors and particularly the ageing of transport means and poor maintenance, which are closely associated with the practice of overloading vehicles.

21. The following specific actions are required:

(a) The subregional and regional infrastructure development plans should give high priority to transit corridors linking landlocked developing countries to the transport network in transit developing countries, as well as to the regional network;

(b) Landlocked and transit developing countries should consider taking the necessary initiatives to accede to and implement relevant international conventions related to road transport;

(c) At the bilateral, subregional and regional levels, consideration should be given to taking measures to gradually liberalize road transport services, taking into account specific circumstances in landlocked and transit developing countries, and to facilitating road operational planning and management, through expansion of the databases on road transit and review of the quota system and transit and transportation costs and of other measures such as roadblocks and custom supervised convoys.

C. Ports

22. The efficiency of port operations depends on adequate infrastructure and good management. Many seaports are a critical bottleneck in the transit systems because of a range of physical inadequacies and operational constraints. Problems of quality of handling and storage facilities for transit cargo, cumbersome procedures for the clearing and release of cargo, congestion and the shortage of skilled manpower, are particularly relevant.

23. The following specific actions are required:

(a) Landlocked and transit developing countries should seek cooperative arrangements to improve port facilities and services for transit goods, including the modernization of existing terminals, the establishment of new ones and the simplification of procedures where appropriate;

(b) Expand the capacity to handle transit trade, also allowing private terminal operations to promote competition and encourage efficiency;

(c) A greater cooperation and coordination should be promoted between public and private institutions dealing with transit traffic in ports (customs administration, security personnel, port authorities, commercial banks, clearing and forwarding agents, insurance companies);

(d) The establishment of dry ports in landlocked and transit developing countries should be promoted;

(e) Training programmes for port workers should be expanded to enable them to adapt to new technologies and procedures.

D. Inland waterways

24. Inland waterways provide transit services to some landlocked developing countries. The efficiency of transit services along such waterways requires better infrastructure, appropriate legal frameworks to govern river/lake navigational operations and more effective environmental and safety measures.

25. The following specific actions are required:

(a) Further efforts should be undertaken to rehabilitate and expand the lake/river infrastructure facilities along the corridors linking landlocked developing countries to ocean ports;

(b) Consideration should be given to the establishment of legal and other arrangements for collaborative actions at the subregional level and to promote more efficient river/lake transit systems;

(c) The development of new waterways, where possible, should be explored. Also, the maintenance and expansion of existing waterways should be encouraged, when appropriate, with the assistance of financial institutions.

E. Pipelines

26. Pipelines provide a cost-effective means of transport for both oil and natural gas. The planning and construction of pipelines require close cooperation between landlocked and transit developing countries. The substantive investments that are required for the construction of pipelines necessitate capital investment from the private sector as well.

27. The following specific action is required: landlocked and transit developing countries should cooperate and coordinate to construct pipelines along the most cost-effective and most suitable or shortest routes, taking into account the interests of parties concerned.

F. Air transport

28. Air transport offers landlocked developing countries a means of avoiding the transit problems associated with overland and overseas freight movements. However, only very high-value and low-bulk commodities can support the costs of airfreight rates.

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