



UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA



UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE  
FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED  
COUNTRIES,  
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING  
STATES

**AIDE-MEMOIRE**

**African Regional Review Meeting 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**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
16-18 July 2013**

## **1. Background and justification**

Lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets and high transit costs continue to impose serious constraints on the overall socio-economic development of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). For instance, their sea borne trade unavoidably depends on transit through other countries. Furthermore, additional border crossings and long distance from the market substantially increase their total expenses for transport services.

It is against this background that the Almaty Programme of Action (APoA) was adopted at the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 28 and 29 August 2003. The aim of the APoA is to address the special needs of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) within a global framework for transit transport cooperation for landlocked and transit developing countries. The overarching goal of the APoA, endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in its Resolution A/58/Res/201, is to forge partnerships to overcome the special problems of landlocked developing countries. The APoA identifies specific actions in five priority areas to establish efficient transport systems, namely: (i) fundamental transit policy issues; (ii) infrastructure development and maintenance; (iii) international trade and trade facilitation; (iv) international support measures; and (v) implementation and review.

In accordance to UN General Assembly Resolution 61/212, a midterm review meeting of the APoA was held in 2008 in New York, preceded by regional preparatory meetings. In that regard, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) organized the African Review meeting from 17 to 20 June 2008 in Addis Ababa. The objectives of the meeting were to: review the implementation of the APoA in Africa; examine the overall economic development of African landlocked countries since the adoption of the APoA; and assess progress in the establishment of efficient transit transport systems on the continent. The meeting made several recommendations on how to accelerate the implementation of the programme in the region that fed into deliberations at the global midterm review meeting.

Although significant progress has been made in several areas of APoA, LLDCs continue to face major challenges and development gaps. As is well known, the

global as well as regional socio-economic climate has dramatically changed since the midterm review of the APoA was undertaken in 2008.

Accordingly, the UN General Assembly, in its Resolution 66/214, decided to convene a comprehensive ten-year review conference on the implementation of the APoA in 2014. The conference is to be preceded, by regional and global as well as thematic preparations in a broad participatory manner. The Resolution underlines that intergovernmental mechanisms at the global as well as regional levels, including those of the UN regional commissions, as well as relevant substantive material and statistical data should be effectively utilized for the review process. The ten-year review will provide an opportunity for: (i) assessing progress made in establishing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked developing countries since the adoption of the APoA in August 2003, and particularly after the midterm review of 2008; and (ii) agreeing on actions needed to sustain achievements and address challenges in overcoming the special problems of landlocked developing countries around the world.

At the global level, substantive preparations for the comprehensive ten-year review conference have already commenced. Some high-level and pre-conference meetings have been organized. A high level thematic meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade was held in September 2012 in Almaty, Kazakhstan to review and assess the progress made in the implementation of priority 3 of the Almaty Programme of Action and identify future actions needed to enhance the participation of LLDCs including the Euro-Asian LLDCs in the international trading system.

The regional review meeting by the Euro-Asia Region was convened 5-7 March 2013. It was hosted by the Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic and organized in cooperation with the OHRLLS, ESCAP, and UNECE.

It is against this background that ECA and OHRLLS, in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), are organizing the African Review meeting from 16 to 18 July 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. As part of preparations for the meeting, ECA is preparing a report on the status of implementation of the APoA in Africa. The regional review will provide crucial inputs relating to the regional perspectives on the implementation of the APoA and the special needs of LLDCs in Africa.

## **2. Objectives**

The objectives of the meeting are to:

1. Review and take stock of the implementation of the APoA in Africa including identification of the major achievements, constraints experienced, emerging challenges and the opportunities presented;
2. Examine the overall economic development of African landlocked countries – particularly in the area of trade, since the adoption of the APoA, with emphasis on the period after the midterm review;
3. Assess progress in establishing efficient transit transport systems on the continent; and
4. Formulate appropriate policy measures and action-oriented recommendations aimed at sustaining achievements in overcoming the special problems of landlocked developing countries.

Recommendations from the meeting will form substantive input that will feed into deliberations at the global 10-year review conference of the APoA to be held in 2014.

## **3. Expected Outputs**

The meeting has the following expected outputs:

- Outcome document
- Meeting Report
- Final report on the status of implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in Africa

## **4. Expected Outcome**

The meeting has the following expected outcomes:

- African countries and organizations better informed on the challenges in implementing the APoA as well as the achievements of the programme;
- Key policy recommendations and actions required to address the specific needs of the LLDCs in the region are identified for input into the global substantive preparations; and
- African countries and organizations better prepared to participate effectively at the comprehensive ten-year review conference on the implementation of the APoA to be held in 2014.

## **5. Participation**

The meeting will bring together all the relevant stakeholders in transit transport cooperation, including government ministries responsible for (i) transport and (ii) trade from landlocked developing countries; representatives of transit developing countries and developed countries, major continental organizations (AUC, NPCA, AfDB), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), transport corridor organizations; UN system organizations, international financial and other relevant development institutions; the private sector; and academia.

## **6. Format**

The meeting will be organized in interactive plenary sessions, consisting of presentations and discussions. The presentations and discussions will focus on the report on the status of implementation of the APoA in Africa, and the priority areas of the programme, namely:

- Fundamental transit policy issues;
- Infrastructure development and maintenance;
- International trade and trade facilitation;
- International support measures; and
- Implementation and review

Representatives of member States and organizations will have the opportunity to present their experiences – challenges and achievements - in trade and transit transport issues.

## **7. Date and Venue**

The meeting will be held on 16-18 July 2013. It will be preceded by an Experts Group Meeting (EGM) on assessing the status of implementation of trade and transport facilitation instruments and measures in Africa which will be held on 15 July 2013.

## **8. Documentation**

- i. Background report on the progress in the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in the Africa Region
- ii. Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs and Problems of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries

- iii. Report of the Secretary-General on the progress in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action
- iv. General Assembly resolution 66/214
- v. General Assembly resolution 67/222
- vi. The outcome document of the Pre-Conference Global Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 13-14 September 2012
- vii. Report of the Brainstorming Meeting on the Priorities for a New Development Agenda for the Landlocked Developing Countries held 20 -21 March 2013 in New York.
- viii. OHRLLS study “The Development Economics of Landlockedness: Understanding the development costs of being landlocked”

## **9. Contacts**

Ms. Marie-Therese Guiebo, Tel: +251 11 544 5352, Fax: +251 11 551 3005, E-mail: [mguiebo@unece.org](mailto:mguiebo@unece.org)

Mr. Robert Lisinge of ECA: Tel: +251 11 5443 443, Fax: +251 11 551 3005, Email: [rlisinge@unece.org](mailto:rlisinge@unece.org)

Ms. Gladys Mutangadura, UN-OHRLLS - New York, Tel: 1-212-963-3316, Fax 917-367-3415; email [mutangadura@un.org](mailto:mutangadura@un.org)