

Comprehensive 10 Year Review Conference on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action

World Bank – UN-OHRLLS Pre-conference event on Transport Development and Trade Facilitation

Concept Note

Introduction

Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) face special challenges that are linked to their geography, including remoteness from major international markets, inadequate transport infrastructure and high transport and transaction costs, which affect their competitiveness. As a consequence, many LLDCs find themselves marginalized from the world economy, cut-off from the global flows of knowledge, technology, capital and innovations, and unable to benefit substantially from external trade. The development challenges that they face owing to their geographical disadvantage of having no territorial access to the sea permeates every aspect of the development process, including economic growth, poverty reduction, inclusiveness and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Almaty Programme of Action that was adopted at the First United Nations Conference held in 2003 in Almaty, Kazakhstan aims at ensuring fuller and more effective integration of the LLDCs into the global economy through (a) securing access to and from the sea by all means of transport; (b) reducing costs and improving services so as to increase the competitiveness of their exports; (c) reducing the delivered costs of imports; (d) addressing problems of delays and uncertainties in trade routes; (e) developing adequate national networks; (f) reducing loss, damage and deterioration en route; (g) opening the way for export expansion; and (h) improving the safety of road transport and the security of people along the corridors.

Proper implementation of specific actions to be undertaken by all relevant stakeholders in the five priority areas of fundamental transit policy issues, infrastructure development and maintenance, international trade and trade facilitation, international support measures and implementation and review is highly dependent on transport as a development enabler.

Under the priority areas fundamental transit policy issues, and international trade and trade facilitation, the APoA identified policy reforms, legal and regulatory measures and actions to improve transport and trade facilitation that are important for decreasing the trading costs for LLDCs. The main directions include (a) introducing reform measures to make providers of transport services more responsive to user demands; (b) increasing transparency of transit and border regulations; (c) establishing streamlined administrative procedures; (d) further simplifying border control and procedures; (e) promoting the use of information technology; and (f) strengthening training programmes in the sector. The APoA also underlined the importance of international conventions on transport and transit, as well as regional and bilateral agreements as main vehicles by which the harmonization, simplification and standardization of rules and documentation can be achieved.

Specific actions include (a) an integrated approach to trade and transport sector development; (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) pursuing reform in the transport sector, with the greater involvement of, and partnership with, the private sector; (d) promoting public/private sector dialogue and cooperation, with the assistance of development partners, as appropriate; (e) establishing regional transport corridors and adopting common rules and standards; (f) strengthening 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; (g) promoting integrated training programmes encompassing all levels, from the top management to low-level operators, in both the public and private sectors.

Under the priority area infrastructure development and maintenance, the Almaty Programme of Action (APoA) identified specific actions required to improve the road and rail transport, ports, inland waterways, pipelines, air transport and communications needed for achieving the effective integration of the LLDCs into the international trading system and the world economy. Some of the actions involve considerable investment to develop and upgrade the transport infrastructure and complete missing links, establishment of public-private sector partnerships, capacity building, and establishment of new policies and institutional reform. At the regional level actions included adopting comprehensive approaches to develop and maintain transit corridors and development and effective implementation of regional agreements on the regional transport and communications infrastructure.

As the first development decade for the LLDCs has drawn to a close, the General Assembly adopted resolution 66/214, in which it decided to hold a comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the APoA in 2014. In preparation for this conference it is important to undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the progress that has been made in developing transit infrastructure and improving trade facilitation. It is important to review what has been done; the progress that has been made in improving the connectivity of LLDCs to the world markets and to facilitate their trade; the major achievements and constraints encountered; and identify recommendations on actions and initiatives needed in the next development agenda of the LLDCs.

It is in this context, that the World Bank and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN OHRLLS), are organizing, a pre-conference event on Transport Development and Trade Facilitation to be held on 13 June 2013 in Washington DC.

Objectives of the meeting

- Review the progress that has been made in improving transport infrastructure and services, and trade facilitation in assisting LLDCs to easily access international markets;
- Identify the major achievements, lessons learnt and best practices;
- Identify the constraints and outstanding gaps that need to be addressed in the future; and
- Suggest priorities on transport development and trade facilitation for a new development agenda for LLDCs.

Outputs

The thematic meeting on transport development and trade facilitation will identify priority areas for cooperation for further developing transit transport infrastructure, improving transport services and trade facilitation required to support the establishment of efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries in the next decade. The output will contribute to the substantive preparations of the ten-year review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

Participation

The thematic meeting on Transport Development and Trade Facilitation will bring together senior officials responsible for transport and trade facilitation from landlocked and transit developing countries, experts from international financial institutions and relevant regional and subregional organizations, representatives of donor countries, the private sector, and United Nations system organizations.

Contacts

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