

## Statement by

**H.E. Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith, Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations, Chair of the Group of LLDCs at the preparatory event for the Comprehensive Ten Year Review Conference on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action  
“Transport Development and Trade Facilitation”  
Washington, D.C., World Bank HQ, 13 June 2013**

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- H.E. Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States,
- Mrs. Zoubida Allaoua, World Bank Acting Vice-President for Sustainable Development,
- Excellencies,
- Dear Colleagues,
- Distinguished participants,
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all, let me express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the World Bank and the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS for co-organizing the pre-conference event on "Transport Development and Trade Facilitation", which is timely as we are preparing for the comprehensive ten-year review conference on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, especially drawing substantive inputs for a successor programme of action for LLDCs for the coming decade.

It gives me a great pleasure and honor to address this very important meeting, in my capacity as Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries.

As you know, the Almaty Programme of Action is the first UN framework aimed at addressing the special needs and challenges faced by the LLDCs in achieving their development goals by setting out actions to be undertaken by LLDCs, transit developing countries and development partners in five priority areas. Over the past decade, although considerable progress has been made in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action especially in the establishment of our efficient transit transport systems, our Group is of the view that much more work needs to be done in order to address our special needs as well as the many challenges of the World today. This is due to the fact that our economies remain highly vulnerable to internal and external shocks, owing to limited export diversification, limited productive capacities, lack of export competitiveness and high transport and transit costs.

In pursuing the cause of LLDCs, it is vital to stress that given the very unique geographical challenge of the Group, it is really difficult if not impossible to address our special needs and challenges only by ourselves. We therefore strongly believe that the solution to this unique challenge is that we need to have effective and enhanced cooperation of the international community, particularly the genuine partnership between LLDCs and their transit neighbors with

appropriate, substantial and better coordinated technical and financial assistance from development partners and multilateral and regional financial and development institutions.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

While entering into the final year of its implementation, the Group of LLDCs attaches great importance to the preparations for the comprehensive ten-year review conference on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action to be held in 2014. We therefore very much value the organization of pre-conference events on relevant themes and topics like this one. We hope that this exercise can make important substantive contributions to our ongoing efforts in this regard.

In addition, Our Group strongly believes that the 2014 review conference provides a unique opportunity for the landlocked and transit developing countries, the development partners, international financial and development institutions and other relevant stakeholders to comprehensively and critically review the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in order to identify best practices, critical gaps in its implementation as well as effective policies, support measures and the means to address them at the international, regional, sub-regional and national level. Equally important is to reaffirm the commitment of the international community to addressing the special development needs of and challenges faced by the LLDCs in the light of new and emerging challenges, partnership and opportunities by adopting a renewed development partnership framework for the next decade.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

After the very comprehensive and insightful presentation by Under-Secretary-General Acharya on topic of today meeting "*Transport Development and Trade Facilitation*", I don't have much to add apart from a few points to stress that this subject matter is critically crucial for the landlocked developing countries to ensure their smooth pursuit of national socio-economic development and overall sustainable development in the long run. Also, on transport development, I do support his view that transport is an enabler of development not only in terms of inclusive and equitable economic growth and the well-being of the people, but also the integration into regional and global economies. To this end, it is vital to develop sustainable, efficient, reliable transport systems and to ensure seamless connectivity inside a landlocked developing country itself and beyond its border. Without quality transport infrastructure and relevant facilities, we will not be able to attract more foreign direct investment in our countries.

With regard to trade facilitation, we welcome with appreciation progress made thus far. I particularly recognise some of the great initiatives that have been implemented including the use of the single window concept, one stop border controls, modernization and the increased use of ICTs for customs clearance, the establishment of dry ports and inter-modal transit transport systems, and enhancing the reliability of logistics and supply chains - to mention just a few. I am also pleased to note that according to the World Bank's Doing Business Report 2012, the reduction in the average number of documents that landlocked developing countries take to export as well as the average time taken to complete both export and import formalities. However, we should and we can do more about trade facilitation such as harmonization of policies, simplification and standardization of rules, documentation, and border crossing and customs procedures.

Now that the main question is how to realise all commitments made in relation to addressing the special development needs of and challenges faced by the LLDCs and how financial institutions like the World Bank can help in this regard. Our view is that we need first of all enhanced human and institutional capacity as well as technical assistance and financing for development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As part of preparations for the 2014 review conference, I wish to inform the meeting that given the final stage of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the LLDCs Group is planning to convene its 12th Annual Ministerial Meeting during the general debate of the 68th session of the General Assembly in September, which will be organized in a slightly different manner this time, hopefully with high-level participation of LLDCs, transit developing countries and development partners, including UN and other international agencies in a more interactive panel discussion. In this connection, I would like to verbally invite the World Bank and others to actively participate in our September meeting. Formal invitations will be sent to you later.

I look forward to constructive deliberations and substantive inputs and contributions during this meeting, feeding into the global preparations for and outcome document of the 2014 review conference in order to help support LLDCs' efforts to promote long term sustainable development.

I thank you for your kind attention.