Ministers,
Excellences,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure for me to attend this important Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries. Let me take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the government of Kazakhstan for hosting this event here in Almaty. Also, I would like to mention that the next year we will mark the 10th anniversary of the Almaty Declaration and Programme of Actions. This will be an important and significant event for us taking into account the difficult times that our economies are experiencing now.

Statistics show that world trade continued to recover in 2011, albeit at a much slower pace than in 2010. After a strong rebound of more than 14 per cent in 2010, the volume of world exports in goods decelerated visibly, to 7 per cent, in 2011. The level of total world exports had fully recovered to its pre-crisis peak by the end of 2010, but it is estimated to be still below the long-term trend level by the end of 2011. In the outlook, the volume growth of world trade is expected to moderate to about 5.0 per cent in 2012-2013. The dichotomy between a robust growth in trade in emerging economies and a weak one in developed economies will continue.

Developing countries and economies in transition are expected to continue to stoke the engine of the world economy, growing on average by 5.6 per cent in 2012 and 5.9 per cent in 2013 in the baseline outlook. Even as economic ties among developing countries strengthen, they remain vulnerable to economic conditions in the developed economies. From the second quarter of 2011, economic growth in most developing countries and economies in transition started to slow notably to a pace of 5.9 % per year.

In these unfavorable conditions, unlocking the trade potential of Landlocked Developing Countries, with the current share of global trade of 1 %, may be an important mechanism for their integration in the world economy and create economic growth.

With this in mind, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me share with you some information on the experiences and successes of the Republic of Moldova regarding the efforts made by the Government of our country in order to promote and protect our national economic and commercial interests.

The Republic Moldova is a member of WTO since 2001. During and after the WTO accession process, there were taken a number of measures in the field of trade facilitation: the legislative and normative acts of the Republic of Moldova have been modified and supplemented in accordance with the WTO agreements in the areas such as intellectual property, services, standardization and certification, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, trade related investment measures, customs valuation of goods, rules of origin of goods, import licensing, anti-dumping measures,
countervailing and safeguard measures. The conditions for sale, supply, purchase, transportation, distribution and use of imported products, are not less favorable as for similar domestic products. Also, imported products cannot be subject, directly or indirectly, to internal taxes or other internal taxes higher than those applied, directly or indirectly, to local products.

In the same context it is necessary to mention that the Republic of Moldova joined the new Free Trade Agreement of the CIS signed on October 18, 2011 and the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA 2006). In order to facilitate intraregional trade and economic cooperation, these agreements provide the cancellation of the import and export customs duties, quantitative restrictions and other charges having equivalent effect on trade of most industrial and agro products, eliminate barriers and distortions of trade and facilitate the transit movement of goods in cross-border movement of goods and services.

Currently, Moldova benefits from a privileged trade with the European Union (GSP +). Also, Moldova is currently in the process of negotiating a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with EU. On January 18, 2012, in Chisinau took place round "0" of technical consultations to start negotiations on the establishment DCFTA between Moldova and the European Commission. On 20-22 March 2012, the EU and Moldova conducted the 1st Round of negotiations on the DCFTA in Chisinau. The 2nd round of negotiations, 11-15 June, was focused mainly on the legal texts on each area of the DCFTA. As a matter of fact, this week, between 11-15 of September the 3rd round will be conducted in Chisinau.

Thus was made a series of activities aimed at introduction of international norms and standards in customs matters. Since 2009, the International Convention on the harmonization of frontier controls of goods (Geneva, October 21, 1982) and the Convention on Temporary Admission (Istanbul, June 26, 1990) entered into force for the Republic of Moldova.

Since 2008, the "single window" (one-stop shop) was implemented at the auto crossing points of the state border, and in 2009 the new information system "BORDER" was implemented at the customs border posts, designed to exchange information on-line between participating in the "single window".

The duration of clearance is monitored monthly in accordance with the methodology developed under the World Customs Organization standards. In November 2009 the new version of ASYCUDA World Customs Integrated Information System was launched. This system automatically processes all customs documents, allowing implementation of new simplified customs procedures, automation of information exchange control services on a one-stop shop, selectivity principle to streamline customs control through automated risk analysis.

In 2010 the Integrated Customs Tariff of the Republic of Moldova was developed and implemented. It provides the opportunity for both businesses, customs brokers and customs officers, to be accurately informed on all instruments and non-tariff on imports and exports goods. In 2010, the trusted trader status (Authorized Economic Operator) was introduced. It provides businesses with a high degree of credibility that meet predetermined requirements, benefiting from customs facilities by reducing the number and duration of documentary and physical checks.

From May 2011, the "ASYCUDA World / TIR system" was implemented. It ensures the exchange of information between the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the relevant customs procedures TIR. New system ensures efficiency in risk management, sending / receiving automated data, speeding up customs operations related to carriers holding TIR Carnets and increasing security for the whole system of transit of goods across the country.
In August 2011 the local clearance procedure was implemented, which allows entry of goods into a customs required at places of loading or unloading thereof by the holder of commercial operation. Also recently the procedure for adjusting the Commodity Nomenclature of Moldova and the Customs Tariff of the EU Combined Nomenclature launched. Thus, for the Republic of Moldova Combined Nomenclature will take effect starting January 1, 2013. Finally, Moldova is currently under development of a new modernized Customs Code according to European Union, which will be connected to the EU Customs Code and international principles of the Kyoto Convention on Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures.

Still, there are many actions to be taken in order to assure greater fluidity and efficiency of external trade of the Republic of Moldova.

At the moment as a result of variety of policies implemented by the Government, exports of goods in the first quarter of 2012 amounted 1,04 billion USD (1041.8 million USD), and increased by 4.6% compared to the same period of 2011. Despite the economic conditions EU remains the most important trade partner of the Republic of Moldova. Hereby, Moldovan exports to the EU hold a share of 48.8% in total exports (49.6% in January-June 2011), increased by 2.9% and amounted 508.0 million USD, while EU exports to the Republic of Moldova increased by less 1% amounting 1 billion USD, with a share of 43.3% in total imports (44.5% in January-June 2011).

It is worth mentioning that, the Republic of Moldova promotes consistent policy-oriented to new solvent and predictable markets. Hereby, the process of elaboration of legal basis is ongoing and all the adopted legislative acts are harmonized with international legal framework and, in particular, with the European Union. This process will continue, given the fact that harmonization is one of the basic conditions for Moldova in order to successfully expand its trade relations and integrate in the Europe and international economic circuit.

In the context of the above mentioned, I want to express the commitment of the Republic of Moldova to make every effort to facilitate international trade through cooperation and negotiation.

I wish the greatest success to this Meeting and thank you for your attention!