



United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

(UN-OHRLLS)

**Report of the Third Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting
on the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive 10-Year
Review Conference on the Almaty Programme of Action**

United Nations, New York

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A. Introduction

This is a report of the Third Inter-Agency Consultative Group (IACG) Meeting on the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive 10-Year Review Conference on the Almaty Programme of Action that was held in New York on the 10th of June 2013. The meeting was organized by the United Nations Office of the High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS). The objective of the IACG was to provide a forum for consultation and information-sharing among United Nations system and other international organizations on the preparations for the Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action (APoA). The meeting discussed preparations for the 2014 comprehensive ten-year review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action and gathered commitments and updates from inter-agency partners regarding the organization of pre-conference events and regional review meetings, publications and concrete deliverables for the Conference, as well as contributions to the private sector track of the Conference.

The meeting was convened by UN-OHRLLS, and opened by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Secretary-General of the Second UN Conference on LLDCs, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and Ambassador Saleumxay Kommasith, the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations and the Global Chair of the LLDC Group. More than 40 participants from 25 United Nations System and other international organizations were in attendance. List of participants is shown in Annex I. The meeting followed the programme of work presented in annex II.

B. Opening Session

Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya and Ambassador Saleumxay Kommasith delivered statements in the opening session.

In his statement, **Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya** noted that there had been some encouraging progress in implementing the Almaty Programme of Action since 2003. Efforts have been made towards establishing secure and efficient transit transport systems and enhanced trade facilitation. He noted that the Almaty Programme has also managed to increase global attention to the pressing development challenges faced by the LLDCs and international support to LLDCs in the form of Official Development Assistance, Aid for Trade, South-South co-operation, debt relief, technical and capacity building assistance has increased over the review period. He highlighted that some LLDCs have become important destinations of trade and investment. FDI flows to LLDCs have reached a record-high of \$35 billion in 2011 and LLDCs share in world exports has more than doubled between 2003 and 2011, even though it still remains at just 1.22 per cent.

Despite the progress made, the High Representative remarked that LLDCs continue to face deep structural difficulties, remain amongst some of the poorest countries in the world and continue to face high transport and trade transactions costs. He stressed the

importance of the ten-year review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action that will take place in 2014, at a time when the international community is consulting on the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals. The timing for the Conference thus increases its profile and presents an opportunity to link to it to the post-2015 process.

In addition, the High Representative stated that the review Conference presents an opportunity to formulate and adopt a renewed ambitious, strengthened and actionable international development framework that can adequately support LLDCs to build their capacities to tackle the persistent development needs that are linked to high transport and trade transaction costs, as well as to address new and emerging issues such as the global economic crisis, climate change, land degradation, desertification and deforestation and food crises. He noted that the new crises were affecting the development prospects of the LLDCs – countries that have the least capacity to respond.

Mr. Acharya expressed his appreciation to the organizations that have been instrumental in contributing to the progress achieved in the implementation of the APoA up to now. He briefed the meeting on the Euro-Asia Regional Review Meeting, which was jointly organized by ESCAP, ECE, UN-OHRLS and the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in March this year. In order to ensure a successful outcome, Mr. Acharya invited the organizations to participate fully during the African Regional Review Meeting that will take place in July 2013.

He also informed the meeting on the pre-conference events, including the Brainstorming Meeting on the priorities for new development agenda for the LLDCs and the Global Services Summit organized by UNCTAD in Beijing in May. He noted that the latter provided an opportunity for discussions on how to promote the services sector in the LLDCs, with presentations made by a number of LLDCs. He informed attendees that the meeting resolved to launch a project that would build the capacities of LLDCs with regards to improving their services statistics.

The High Representative expressed gratitude to all agencies that have been contributing to the organization of regional review meetings and pre-conference events. He stated that the aim of the meeting was to update on the status of the preparations for the regional review meetings and pre-conference thematic events, on studies being undertaken, preparatory process under the private sector track, as well as discuss possible deliverables for the Conference.

Mr. Acharya stressed the importance of the Conference, saying that it provides an important platform for organizations to launch special initiatives and deliverables in favor of LLDCs. These deliverables could serve as templates for countries to build better infrastructure and build resilience and capacities to meaningfully integrate into international markets.

In his statement, **H.E. Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith** stressed that although considerable progress has been made in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action over

the past decade, especially in the establishment of efficient transit transport systems, there remains much more work to be done in order to address LLDCs' special needs, as well as the many challenges of the world today.

The Chair of the LLDC Group noted that LLDC economies remain highly vulnerable to internal and external shocks due to limited export diversification, limited productive capacities, lack of export competitiveness and high transport and transit costs, as well as being negatively affected by rising food and energy costs, climate change, desertification, land degradation and drought. He stressed that LLDCs need to take new challenges and opportunities into due consideration in the course of the review and preparations for creation of a new development partnership framework.

Mr. Kommasith briefed the meeting that the LLDC 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 not only to comprehensively and critically assess the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in terms of best practices and implementation gaps, but also to identify effective international, regional, sub-regional and domestic policies and support measures in the area of international trade and transit transport cooperation and the means to address them. He stressed that the renewed partnership should not simply be reflected at the political level but also in the actual implementation on the ground. He stressed that the LLDC Group recognizes the crucial role played by the private sector in international trade and infrastructure development.

Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith highlighted that the pre-conference events organized so far by UN-OHRLLS and the UN system and other organizations have been very useful. He noted that the Euro-Asia Regional review meeting of the Almaty Programme held in Laos last March adopted the outcome document called "Vientiane Consensus". He urged all agencies to assist the LLDC Group in developing the new development agenda by proposing specific inputs and deliverables based on their specific support and expertise.

He also informed the meeting that the LLDC Group is planning to convene its 12th annual Ministerial Meeting during the general debate of the 68th session of the General Assembly in September. Given the final stage of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the Ministerial Meeting will be organized slightly differently this time, including high-level participation of UN and other international agencies and he invited the organizations to attend the meeting at the highest level possible.

C. Consultations on the substantive and organizational preparations for the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action

In this session, Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, Director of UN-OHRLLS provided an overview of the status of the preparatory process, Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief in UN-OHRLLS, provided an update on the substantive preparations and pre-conference events by UN-OHRLLS, followed by interventions by the UN Regional Commissions and other participating organizations regarding the preparations of regional review meetings and other pre-conference events.

Current status of the preparations for the Conference by UN-OHRLLS

In her presentation, **Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox** briefed the meeting on the aims of the 3-day comprehensive review Conference that will take place in 2014:

- i) Undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action
- ii) Identify effective international, regional, sub regional and national policies in the area of international trade and transit transport cooperation and review the current situation of transit transport systems in the light of new and challenges and opportunities
- iii) Reaffirm the global commitment to addressing the special development needs of and the challenges faced by the LLDCs
- iv) Mobilize international support and action by and in favor of the LLDCs and formulate and adopt a renewed development framework for the next decade

The Director noted that the preparatory work for the Conference is being undertaken along three main tracks, namely: the intergovernmental track; the Inter-Agency track; and the Private Sector track. As part of the inter-governmental track, regarding national reviews on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, she informed that her Office had received 13 national reports so far, from Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Kazakhstan, Laos, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Paraguay, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

She pointed out that, as part of the intergovernmental track, the Regional Commissions, in close coordination and cooperation with UN-OHRLLS are requested to organize preparatory review meetings at the regional level in 2013. She stated that the aim of the reviews is to undertake assessments of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in the regions and provide an important opportunity for sharing experiences and lessons learned on challenges faced by LLDCs. As such, the regional reviews will provide crucial regional perspectives and needs that will feed into the global review process. She noted that the outcomes of the regional reviews will then feed into the global meetings, starting in 2014 through two sessions of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee.

Under the Inter-Agency Track, she noted that two meetings of the Group were held in 2012, one in New York and another in Geneva. She indicated that the current meeting was dedicated to hearing updates from the agencies on their activities and contributions to the preparatory process, from pre-conference events to possible concrete deliverables for the Conference. She informed the meeting that an updated list of the pre-conference events had been shared.

Lastly, the Director informed the audience that the Private Sector Track was being coordinated by UN-OHRLLS in close collaboration with interested partners. This track will culminate in a Global Investment and Business Partnership Forum for the LLDCs.

The UN-OHRLLS Director informed the Meeting that consultations with potential host countries were still underway.

Presentations by IACG partners on regional review meetings

The representatives of UN ESCAP, Ms. Nobuko Kajiura and Mr. Sandeep Raj Jain, updated the meeting on the Euro-Asian regional review meeting ESCAP organized in partnership with UNECE, UN-OHRLLS and the Government of Laos. The meeting brought together some 120 participants, including ministers and senior government officials, representatives of UN system, other international organizations, the civil society and the private sector.

They informed the meeting that the “Vientiane Consensus” was adopted by the Commission as resolution number 69/2. The document noted that significant progress had been achieved by landlocked and transit developing countries in implementing the APoA, but that much remains to be done. UNESCAP representatives identified 5 key broad priorities of the Vientiane Consensus for the new development agenda for the LLDCs: i) Importance of focusing on job-creation and equitable growth, as part of the inclusive and sustainable development strategy of LLDCs, ii) Diversification to value-added products to reduce vulnerability to commodity prices, iii) Focus on providing a stable macroeconomic, trade and investment regime to mobilize domestic as well as foreign private investments and public-private partnerships (PPP) for closing the infrastructure gaps and for building productive capacities, iv) Deepening regional integration, and v) Encouraging the international community to renew its commitment to continued support to LLDCs in addressing their challenges.

ESCAP representative noted that they were considering organizing a joint side event with UN-OHRLLS and UNECE during the Conference.

The UN ECA representative, Mr. Tama Robert Lisinge, indicated that ECA in collaboration with UN-OHRLLS and the African Union Commission, was organizing the Africa Regional Review Meeting from 16-18 July in Addis Ababa, with a pre-event in the form of an expert group meeting on assessing the status of implementing trade and transport facilitation instruments and measures in Africa on 15 July. He informed the meeting that invitations have been sent to 80 participants who include ministers of

transport and trade of LLDCs and transit, RECs, main corridor organizations and the private sector. He noted that the meeting is expected to inform participants on challenges and achievements of implementing the Almaty Programme of Action in Africa and come up with actions to address the challenges. He informed the meeting that the main background document, a report on the status of implementation of APoA is being finalized.

Representative of UN ECLAC, Mr. Ricardo Sanchez, informed the meeting that ECLAC is preparing the Latin America regional meeting, which is expected to take place in Asuncion, Paraguay and they were in talks with the Paraguayan Government regarding the possible dates and venue. He noted that the elaboration of the regional report has progressed and first draft should be available by the end of July. The report will include assessment, for both landlocked and transit developing countries, of social and economic development, transport policy issues, transit transport infrastructure, development of legal frameworks for simplifying customs and border issues international trade and trade facilitation, and private sector. Mr. Sanchez also indicated that ECLAC is working closely with Bolivia to complete its national reports.

Representative of UN WTO, Mr. Kazi Rahman highlighted the importance of the tourism sector for LLDCs and suggested to ECA and ECLAC colleagues to include a section on tourism in the outcome documents of the Latin American and African regional meetings, as was the case with Vientiane Consensus. ECLAC representative noted that there is no section on tourism in the Latin American regional report at the moment, but they can try to incorporate this issue in the final report. Mr. Rahman expressed his willingness to provide relevant information on LLDCs in the two regions.

Presentations by UN-OHRLLS and IACG partners on pre-conference events and other activities in favour of LLDCs

Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, UN-OHRLLS briefed the meeting on pre-conference events that UN-OHRLLS is organizing, in some cases jointly with other organizations. He noted the first pre-conference event, a thematic meeting on International Trade, Aid for Trade and Trade Facilitation in Almaty in September 2012 was attended by 150-200 participants from UN agencies and international organization and ministers from LLDCs and resulted in comprehensive outcome document which has been adopted by the GA.

He informed the meeting that a Brainstorming Meeting on Priorities for New Development Agenda for LLDCs organized by UN-OHRLLS took place on 20 and 21 of March 2013 and was attended by more than 70 participants that included Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives, and delegates from LLDCs, transit developing and donor countries, and experts from United Nations System organizations, as well as international and regional organizations, the private sector, and other stakeholders. He noted that the meeting discussed the key development challenges and needs of the LLDCs, shared ideas, lessons and best practices on how to address the challenges. The meeting yielded very important suggestions and recommendations for a new development agenda for the

LLDCs. Among them, were the importance of diversification of economies and exports, the need to build up the productive capacities, addressing vulnerability of LLDCs, need for intensification of regional integration, the importance of the private sector development and the need to look at trade and transport issues in a more holistic way. Mr. Erdenebileg informed the meeting that a summary report has been shared and is also available on UN-OHRLLS website.

Next, Mr. Erdenebileg indicated that UN-OHRLLS and the World Bank were organizing an event on Transport Development and Trade Facilitation on 13 June 2013 in Washington D.C. The event would review the progress that has been made in improving transport infrastructure and trade facilitation towards assisting LLDCs to easily access international markets; how efficiently they use the existing trade facilitation facilities; and suggest priorities on transport development and trade facilitation for a new development agenda for LLDCs.

He informed that an event on Enhancing International support Measures for LLDCs was being organized jointly by UN-OHRLLS and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and other partners. The event would tentatively take place on 14-15 November 2013 in Vienna, with the main objective to substantively address all issues related to international support measures, including external financial resources, for LLDCs' development, and in particular for transit transport development and maintenance and enhancing trade facilitation.

Mr. Erdenebileg also noted that UN-OHRLLS was organizing a number of events, including ECOSOC side event on Renewing Global Partnerships for Connecting LLDCs to the World Markets on 3 July 2013 as well as events during the high level segment of the GA, to raise the profile of the LLDCs and awareness of the importance of the Conference. He informed that UN-OHRLLS was also organizing a retreat for Member States to consult on specific development challenges for LLDCs and what would be the key elements of the outcome document of the conference. He highlighted that few key agencies would be invited to brief the retreat.

The representative of UN ECE, Ms. Eva Molnar, briefed the meeting that a Ministerial meeting on the Euro-Asia transport linkages took place in February 2013, during which more than 14 ministers participated and signed a declaration to improve connections between the two regions. She noted that 11 LLDCs have acceded to the Harmonization Convention and ECE and UN-OHRLLS sent joint letters as a follow up on Vientiane meeting that called on LLDCs to accede to the convention. She also informed the meeting that the second phase of the Euro-Asia transport linkages project is starting. The Arica regional review could also be an opportunity to sensitize African countries on the importance of implementing the conventions.

Ms. Molnar also noted that Road and Rail Financing Conference also took place in February 2013. The Conference highlighted that over the past years a lot of attention has been given to investment planning for infrastructure projects, however governments need

to think of more innovative ways to fund these plans. She informed the meeting that PPPs are a good way to bridge the gap, but only 2-3 per cent of global investment is in PPPs.

Ms. Molnar also informed the meeting that as a follow-up to the Road and Rail Financing Conference, ECE will organize a workshop on transport infrastructure development finance on 10 September 2013 with the support of IFIs. The aim is to look into specific projects and coordinate with regional organizations and IFIs to work together on how to encourage IFIs to provide financing and to improve transport links between Europe and Asia.

ECE also indicated that countries need to find innovative ways to finance these infrastructure plans. PPPs are a good way to bridge the gap. On the other hand, she mentioned the problem of pollution and that faster technological change is needed to limit local pollution. She informed the meeting that ECE completed the development of a model to develop scenarios of future transport services and associated emissions that they would produce. The model could be relevant for LLDCs, stating that it was free of charge and available on the ECE website.

Ms. Molnar indicated that ECE and OSCE published in 2012 trade and transport facilitation handbook and that ECE was now preparing a number of workshops based on this material. She noted that ECE designed an interactive e-training tool on how to use and implement the single window, and produced a series of country reviews (which is completed for Kazakhstan and under way for Tajikistan). She also noted there would be an Expert Group Meeting at the end of June on railways where Governments will agree on a framework on railways.

A representative of **UNCTAD**, Mr. José María Rubiato briefed the meeting on the upcoming 3-day Expert Meeting on transport logistics to be held in Geneva, on 22-24 October 2013. The event will be an opportunity for representatives from LLDCs, transit countries and experts on transit transport and trade logistics to address innovative solutions developed over the last decade regarding transit transport and trade facilitation for LLDCs. Mr. Rubiato, invited participants to save the dates and make every effort to be part of the debate in Geneva.

Mr. Rubiato informed participants that the contribution of UNCTAD on issues relating to transit transport and trade facilitation will consist of the mentioned Expert Meeting in October, the document titled “The way to the ocean” recently published and of a special chapter of the 2013 issue of the annual UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport devoted to the question of LLDCs and their access to sea shipping services.

Mr. Ralf Peters of UNCTAD briefed the meeting on the Global Services Forum organized by UNCTAD with the government of China and Ministry of Commerce, which took place in Beijing at the end of May and gathered representatives from government, business world and academia, including 5 heads of state and 20 ministers of trade. He noted that one session focused on services is of particular importance to LLDCs, such as transport and logistics services, and that Ministers of Uganda, Lesotho, Paraguay and Mr.

Acharya highlighted the particular importance of services for LLDCs. He enhanced the fact that transport costs are less important in the services sector, however, services account for only 11% of exports from LLDCs while they represent 20% in other countries. There is a significant lack of productive capacity among LLDCs.

He also informed the meeting that “UNCTAD services policy review”, which allows countries to conduct review on services and to develop and coordinate national policies on services, have been conducted for 4 LLDCs. He stressed the difficulty to analyze the sector because of the lack of data on trade in services and noted a proposed project which will be implemented with other organizations, regional commissions and UN-OHRLLS to define and implement tailored plans in LDCs and LLDCs to improve their statistical capacity to produce data on trade and services, by mutual transfer of knowledge.

Mr. Gunter Fischer of UNCTAD briefed the meeting that the preparations for the World Investment Forum 2014 are on track and a decision on date and venue will be made by the end of June 2013. He noted that there will be dedicated events to LLDCs and that UNCTAD is trying to organize a new approach in order to show to the world the investment opportunities that LLDCs could bring. He concluded by acknowledging the launch of electronic investment guides for Rwanda and Burundi.

The representative of **UNIDO**, Mr. Conde Bashir, indicated that UNIDO is organizing a pre-conference event on Enhancing productive capacities of LLDCs jointly with UN-OHRLLS and UNCTAD which will take place on the margin of the fifteenth session of the UNIDO’s General Conference in Lima, Peru on 29-30 November 2013. A joint issues note will be produced soon. During the General Conference, UNIDO will be able to present a new industrial development report which includes a special section on LLDCs. He also added that UNIDO is working closely with UN-OHRLLS to implement the Almaty Programme of Action; UNIDO focuses on trade capacity building by enhancing the capacity of developing countries especially LLDCs to participate in global trade.

Mr. Andrey Kuleshov, senior project manager at the **CFC**, informed the meeting that the high-level event on commodities for LLDCs will take place at the margins of the ten-year review Conference as one of the global initiatives in support of LLDCs. He also informed the meeting that in April 2013, the Executive Board of the CFC approved the proposal to finance case studies of successful development of commodity based value chains in LLDCs. The case studies will provide ideas for concrete directions for investment as deliverables for the future programme for LLDCs. The outcomes of the studies will be presented at the High Level Event on commodities for LLDCs to obtain feedback from policy makers and other stakeholders.

Mr. Kuleshov noted that a significant majority of LLDCs are commodity dependent and expressed his hope that the forthcoming Global Review of Aid for Trade with the theme "Connecting to Value-Chains" will provide LLDCs and other weaker economies opportunities to enable them to effectively participate in commodity- based value chains - both regionally and globally.

Mr. Kuleshov informed on a new initiative launched by Agricultural Commodity Exchange for Africa called "Inform a farmer" which targets mobilization of private financing enhancing the transparency of information on maize availability and trade in Malawi and Zambia. He noted that within a month of its launch the initiative is reaching over 1300 farmers and importantly, it is growing at minimal cost, with essentially zero donor financing, building private sector support based on earlier development initiatives.

He then indicated that the CFC and UNCTAD are continuing their collaboration to reinvigorate the momentum of the commodity sector as positive force for development in landlocked countries. In the context of preparations for the Review, the CFC looks for practical ideas which could work effectively in landlocked Commodity Dependent Developing Countries (CDDCs). Mr. Andrey Kuleshov expressed hope for closer collaboration with UN-OHRLLS in the preparations towards the Review Conference.

A representative of **UNCCD** noted that UNCCD has contributed to a study on the "Implications of climate change, desertification and land degradation for LLDCs" which is in the final stage of completion. UNCCD has provided a range of inputs on the impact of land degradation and desertification on LLDCs, where most of the world's poor, hungry and malnourished reside and who are heavily dependent on a fragile natural base – i.e. land -for their development. UNCCD has suggested that since LLDCs are primarily producers of agricultural products and are among the worst affected by land degradation and desertification, it is now crucial for them that we move to a land degradation neutral world and that Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought issues be mainstreamed in the new Programme of Action.

In collaboration with UNFCCC and UN-OHRLLS, UNCCD is working towards a preconference event, on the margins of the forthcoming UNCCD COP 11 to be held in Namibia from 16-27 September 2013. Preparations for this side event are at an advanced stage of planning. The side event will profile the conclusions and recommendation of the study and the expectation is that taking advantage of the presence of Ministers at COP 11, there can be a substantive discussion on the implications of climate change, desertification and land degradation for LLDCs and that concrete recommendations and suggestions can emanate which will contribute to further consideration of these issues at the ten-year Review Conference.

Ms. Olga Frolova, the representative of **International Road Transport Union (IRU)**, informed the meeting that IRU has just established a permanent delegation to the United Nations in New York, headed by IRU Under Secretary General Mr. Rounov. She briefed the meeting that IRU will organize a high level Conference on Road Transport jointly with the government of Tajikistan and Intergovernmental Commission TRACECA on 17-19 September 2013 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. She noted that the Conference will be dedicated to issues of development of road transport and transit potential of Central Asian states and expressed her organization's wish that UN-OHRLLS participates in the Conference. She expressed IRU's commitment to the implementation of APoA and informed the meeting that IRU will participate in most preparatory meetings.

The representative of **International Telecommunications Union (ITU)**, Ms. Kadiatou Sall-Beye informed the meeting that ITU has been involved in the implementation of the APoA since the endorsement of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 58/201 and has since advocated the cause of the LLDCs through different means such as raising awareness on the poor state of their telecommunications, assisting in channeling resources to their telecommunication sector, bridging the digital divide, and leveraging the power of ICTs and Broadband as critical driver of all three pillars of sustainable development. ITU's commitments in regard to the LLDCs have been incorporated into its work under all five priority areas of the APoA and is being mainstreamed into the Hyderabad Action Plan.

Ms. Sall-Beye informed the meeting on pre-Conference Event organized jointly with UN-OHRLLS entitled "Information and Communication Infrastructure and Technology Development for the Landlocked Developing Countries" (LLDCs) that will take place at a date to be decided soon. She informed the meeting that the aim of the event will be to review the progress that has been made in improving the ICT infrastructure and in increasing the connectivity of LLDCs; identify the major achievements and lessons learnt as well as constraints and gaps for the development of ICTs in LLDCs; identify the role of the private and public sectors in improving ICT infrastructure and services; and suggest priorities to bridge the ICT infrastructure gaps in LLDCs that can be included in a new development agenda for LLDCs. The identified recommendations should help LLDCs to overcome their inherent geographical pitfalls and support their efforts to eradicate poverty, sustain economic growth for a better integration into the global economy through Information Communication and Technologies for Development.

She highlighted that LLDCs lack adequate transport and ICT infrastructure, yet ICT is important for improving the connectivity of LLDCs to international markets, for facilitating trade transactions, boosting enterprises competitiveness and for speeding up customs and border crossing procedures. Other challenges that LLDCs face include limited broadband internet access, higher broadband costs as a share of gross national income than coastal countries, costly use of satellite communication, vulnerability to severe negative impacts of climate change, droughts and other natural disasters. ICTs are very important in enhancing the preparedness of the LLDCs for early warning and disaster management.

The **UN ESCAP** representative added that ESCAP negotiated the agreement on Asian Highway Network as well as intergovernmental agreement on dry ports which will be open signatures during the Asian Transport Ministers forum this year. He informed the meeting that dry ports are crucially important for LLDCs and they will benefit from becoming a party to the agreement. He posed the question for consideration of how these developments can fit into the global review process?

The Representative of **OSAA**, Mr. Kei Tagawa expressed OSAA's support to UN-OHRLLS in the preparation for the Conference, just as was the case for the Istanbul conference on LDCs. He will consult with management to identify which events OSAA will contribute to and participate in.

The representative of UN WTO, Mr. Kazi Rahman, noted that while LLDCs experienced 5-7% of annual growth between 2003-2010, that growth was neither steady nor broad based. He emphasized that services and tourism offer opportunities to sustained growth, creation of jobs, linkages to other growth sectors, value addition and diversification of LLDCs economies. He noted that tourism is a trillion dollar business and the number of tourists surpassed 1 billion by end 2012. That is 1 billion opportunities. He highlighted that the resilience of the tourism sector was shown during the global crisis and with a growing middle class, regional and sub-regional tourism is also gaining momentum. He stressed that it is important for LLDCs to tap into these trends.

Mr. Rahman noted that UN WTO has been cooperating with most of the LLDCs by strengthening cooperation with them to help them take advantage of tourism opportunities and by assisting them in connecting to global, regional and subregional tourism markets. He expressed his hope that the outcome of the review conference appropriately includes the recommendations of the Vientiane consensus and outcomes of other regional meetings with regards to tourism.

D. Consultations on possible deliverables for the Conference

In this session, representatives of relevant agencies made presentations regarding the specific deliverables of their organizations towards the Conference.

On behalf of UNOSSC, Christopher Paek briefed the group on current progress to form a 'South-South Facility for the Landlocked Developing Countries' which is a concrete response to the mandates set forth by the Almaty Programme of Action. He noted that the objectives of the South-South Facility for the LLDCs are to boost productive capacities of the LLDCs by facilitating the transfer of technologies, sourced from the Global South, from providers to recipient LLDCs; and to widely disseminate information regarding sourced technology solutions, best practices, and successful models of South to South technology transfer.

He briefed the meeting that the operational mechanism of technology transfer will be the South-South Global Assets and Technology Exchange, or SS-GATE, which is an independent, not-for-profit entity launched by UNOSSC in 2008 that acts as a global platform that facilitates technology transfer between entities in developing countries by matching the technology and related financing demand with supply. The SS-GATE system has a network of 40 country centers in 32 countries, of which 7 are in LLDCs, which actively source viable, context-appropriate technologies and act as on-the-ground brokers between parties when deals are being made.

He explained that the South-South Facility is aimed to capitalize on the existing infrastructure and technology transfer methodology of the SS-GATE and tailor it to target the LLDCs. Five pilot LLDCs will be proposed and corresponding neighboring transit countries selected to champion the initiative. Mr. Paek highlighted that the initial

experiences in the pilot phase will inform a decision to adapt, scale-up and replicate successful activities across the rest of the LLDCs. He informed the meeting that a concept note is being finalized and that the target to launch the South-South Facility is the last week of October of this year during the Global South-South Development Expo in Nairobi, Kenya (hosted this year by UNEP 28 October-1 November 2013).

Mr. Massimiliano Riva, the **UNDP** representative, indicated that UNDP has assisted LLDCs in overcoming the challenges outlined in the APoA by enhancing its provision on trade and technical capacity. In the last decade UNDP has provided support in a growing number of LLDCs on various aspects of the Integrated Framework (lately Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF)) and Aid for Trade, thereby also contributing to inclusive and pro-poor growth policies and in the context of the scaling-up of the MDGs. He added that in the context of the EIF, UNDP is supporting in 2013 the realization of Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies (DTIS) in Chad, Central Africa Republic and South Sudan which will identify the main constraints to trade expansion and made recommendations for overcoming them.

Under the resource mobilization track of the Almaty Programme, Mr. Riva noted that UNDP had engaged in the implementation of the Wider Europe Aid for Trade Initiative for Central Asia, South Caucasus and Western Europe, funded by Finland and discussions are ongoing with the donor on the initiative.

He further indicated that UNDP has provided support to the inception and establishment of the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries (ITT-LLDC). In this context UNDP was requested to produce working papers to kick off substantial discussions on the priority themes identified by LLDC Group, namely on: 1: Multilateral trade negotiations and LLDCs; 2: Enhancing connectivity through better transit transport agreements in LLDCs; 3: WTO Doha Round's Trade Facilitation Negotiations: Best Outcome Scenario for the LLDCs. He informed that terms of reference are available and UNDP has partnered with UNCTAD to produce the papers and resource mobilization efforts are on-going to allow launching of the studies as soon as feasible.

Finally, Mr. Massimiliano Riva indicated that regarding the preparatory process leading to the comprehensive 10-year review of the APOA in 2014, UNDP supports the efforts led by UN-OHRLLS and stands ready to provide intellectual contributions and substantive support to the preparatory process.

The **WTO** representative, Mr. Raul Torres, indicated that there is a shared sense by WTO members that trade facilitation agreement could be a concrete deliverable for the Bali Ministerial Conference in December 2013 and the pace of work has accelerated in the last few months in the negotiating group on trade facilitation. He informed that during a meeting on 24 May a further batch of square brackets was eliminated from the text and convergence was produced on other parts of the text. He noted that a Trade Facilitation Agreement has the potential to address many of the fundamental transit policy issues that affect LLDC exports and it is therefore of very important for LLDCs to participate

actively in the negotiations and push for adoption of a Trade Facilitation Agreement with binding and ambitious provisions.

He stated that the provisions for in the most recent draft consolidated text on trade facilitation, once agreed, would:

- i) reinforce the principle of freedom of transit contemplated in Article V of GATT 1994
- ii) strengthen the principle of non-discrimination as it applies to goods in transit in matters concerning charges, transport measures, regulations and formalities and would ensure that these do not constitute disguised restrictions to trade
- iii) ensure that charges applied are reasonable and calculated based on the actual cost of services rendered and ensure that good in transit may not be subject to the payment of customs duties and technical standards
- iv) ask for the implementation of certain trade facilitation measures for goods in transits such as separate infrastructure for traffic in transit and advance fling and processing of documentation; while prohibiting measures that hinder the flow of goods such as further controls while in transit and the use of convoys.
- v) would also set out provisions concerning transparency for rules regulations and procedures, as well as, co-operation and coordination on these matters.

Mr. Torres also brought attention to section 2 of the potential agreement which provides flexibilities for developing countries to implement the binding trade facilitation commitments. The measures will be sorted into three categories (A, B and C) according to the capacity of developing countries to implement them, coupled with technical assistance based on actual needs of individual countries. In parallel, Mr. Torres noted that many developing countries and LDCs are conducting new needs assessments that will be the basis to develop the partnerships with bilateral and multilateral development partners to access resources for building capacity to implement the new commitments. He stressed that the challenge is to ensure that these flexibilities are used constructively to progress with the implementation of the trade facilitation provisions.

With regards to Aid for Trade, Mr. Raul Torres indicated that WTO is organizing the fourth global review of Aid for Trade entitled “connecting to value chains” from 8-10 July, 2013 in Geneva. He said that the aim of the review is to examine how to use development assistance to connect developing country and LDCs firms to international value chains. He noted also that the role of the private sector as a catalyst for Aid for Trade is likely to grow in the future. He noted that the WTO and the OECD have continued to collaborate on all aspects of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) pillar of the Aid-for-Trade agenda and that WTO has continued its resource mobilisation efforts.

In addition, he emphasized that trade in services is another area where LLDCs need to focus. While WTO members are working towards reducing the barriers to services trade as part of the Doha round, they have also adopted the LDCs services waiver, which will particularly benefit the 17 LLDCs that are also LDCs. However, he noted that a successful implementation of this mechanism will require proactive engagement from

LLDCs that are LDCs, by identifying the sectors and modes of supply of export interest to them and the areas of preferences that could be sought from other countries.

The representative of **International Trade Centre (ITC)**, Mr. Siba Das, highlighted that ITC, a joint agency of the United Nations and WTO, is a 100% aid for trade organization and is collaborating with WTO on the success of the global Aid for Trade Review. ITC's aid for trade capacities, including capacities for trade in services and trade facilitation, were at the disposal of LLDCs. Were a trade facilitation agreement to become a Bali deliverable, ITC support could be drawn upon to support implementation. Mr. Das also noted that ITC continues to carry out research on non-tariff barriers -- an issue of great concern for LLDCs. He indicated that surveys conducted in 5 LLDCs show that the countries are negatively affected by the burdensome effect of NTMs. Emphasis on NTMs, he recommended, should be reflected in the outcome document of the Conference. It may be desirable in this regard to take account of two things. NTMs are not always the product of public policy but emanated rather from private sector decisions. And, most of all, the private sector in LLDCs needs capacity development support to meet NTM-related challenges.

Ms. Olga Frolova of **IRU** stated that among the deliverables, IRU is currently working with UN-OHRLLS on preparation of analytical study on challenges and prospects for development of road transport in LLDCs, outcome of which will be valuable input for the conference. She also noted that her organization organized during the Euro-Asian regional meeting held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 5-7 March 2013 a special panel on road transport development with participation of IRU member-associations from Eurasia.

Mr. Andrey Kuleshov of **CFC** proposed that as CFC and UNCTAD will be looking at needs and best practices of LLDCs in addressing their commodity related challenges, they will be looking to i) produce recommendations on practical measures to facilitate investment in critical parts of commodity value chains to generate income which LLDCs could invest in their productivity growth and diversification; ii) produce case studies of best practices in mitigating commodity related vulnerabilities of LLDCs; iii) engagement of private sector and international financiers in securing a sustainable, equitable and inclusive development of commodity value chains.

E. Consultations on the private sector track

In this session, **Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg**, Chief, UN-OHRLLS briefed the meeting on the status of the private sector track, followed by input from the International Chamber of Commerce representative. This was followed by a brief discussion.

Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Chief, UN-OHRLLS informed the meeting that the objective of the private sector track for the Conference is to ensure that specific arrangements are set in place to involve and engage private sector representatives during all stages of the preparatory process and at the Conference. He noted that the views and

proposals of the private sector will contribute to the formulation of innovative strategies and policy recommendations that will form the new development framework.

He briefed the meeting that the private sector will be engaged to participate at all levels of the preparatory process and the Conference itself, including in the pre-conference events and regional review meetings as well as having meaningful opportunity to contribute to the outcome document.

He highlighted that the private sector participated and shared their views in the brainstorming meeting and that the 2014 World Investment Forum organized by UNCTAD will have a special session on LLDCs, engaging high-level representatives of the private sector and the investment-development community.

Mr. Erdenebileg also explained that UN-OHRLLS is working with World Bank towards preparing a compilation report on LLDCs, especially on how to make business easier in the private sector, based on the Doing Business and Logistics performance indicators. This will be one of the background documents for the private sector track.

He stated that the private sector track will culminate in a Global Investment and Business Partnership Forum that will be held during the Conference. He informed the meeting that World Bank, UNCTAD, regional commissions and other organizations will be contributing to the private sector track.

Mr. Erdenebileg informed the meeting that UN-OHRLLS has been working closely with ICC who are leading the efforts on the private sector track preparations and in setting up a Private Sector Steering Committee.

Ms. Louise Kantrow, the Permanent Representative of the **International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)** to the UN, stated that ICC met with UN-OHRLLS and determined that ICC could play a role in bringing the voices of the private sector to the conference and involving them at early stages in the preparatory process. She informed the meeting that ICC developed a list of landlocked and transit developing countries to approach to be a part of a Private Sector Steering Committee for the private sector track. She explained that invitations were sent out to 24 contact, of which 9 confirmed so far, namely Uganda, Ethiopia, Nepal, Bolivia, Laos, African business roundtable, Togo, Kenya and Zimbabwe and that Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Moldova are having consultations with ICC on the details.

Ms. Kantrow stated that the aim is to work closely with these representatives, informing them about their involvement in the intergovernmental process, reviewing the elements of the zero draft of the outcome document and indicating meaningful opportunities for them to add their inputs and comments to the process and policy discussions. She noted that a first conference call of the Steering Committee will be organized in the coming weeks. She also noted that ICC has significant experience of bringing delegations to regional meetings by briefing them and advocating for them. Ms. Kantrow stated that the next step

will be to work with other organizations and begin planning private sector events and activities around the conference.

In response, Mr. Kuleshov of the **CFC** pointed out the challenge of balancing i) the impact of mitigating regulatory measures protecting LLDCs from the impact of financial speculation, and ii) the need to maintain the involvement of major international financiers in LLDCs. He noted that the outcomes of a recent Public-Private meeting on Commodity Market Volatility raised concern that regulatory pressure on financial sector may impact future availability of private sector finance in developing countries, including the LLDCs.

He stressed the difficulty of bringing in the private financial sector to meetings is very difficult and that due to the sensitivities involved, communication through independent industry associations is essential in strengthening the private sector involvement in development. He noted that a positive outcome that came from the meeting is that there is a designated point of contact that will be willing to participate in the kind of events under the private sector track.

F. Closing and way forward

In closing, Mr. Erdenebileg of UN-OHRLLS, thanked all for their participation and expressed his hope for closer future collaboration in the lead up to the Conference. He urged all to continue to work collaboratively on the preparatory process through utilizing the special strengths of each respective organizations to undertake detailed analyses of the specificities of the LLDCs, organize pre-conference events and work on concrete deliverables for the LLDCs.

The meeting agreed on the following as a way forward.

1. UN-OHRLLS would circulate the updated list of pre-conference events and the report of the meeting.
2. UN-OHRLLS would work closely with all inter-agency partners, seek further inputs and share when available the draft outcome document for comments.
3. Partners would be informed on the date of the next inter-agency meeting to be held in the last quarter of 2013.
4. Member organizations of the inter-agency group are invited to have internal consultations on possible deliverables that would be announced at the Conference. The initial list of deliverables will be discussed at the next inter-agency meeting, as well as an initial list of parallel events to be held during the Conference.

Annex I: List of Participants

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Annex II: Programme of Work

Third Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting on the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive 10-Year Review Conference on the Almaty Programme of Action

10 June 2013

Conference Room S-2726 and S-2727, United Nations Secretariat Building,
New York

Programme of Work

10:00 – 10:30	Opening session <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Opening remarks by Mr. Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States- Remarks by H.E. Mr Saleumxay Kommasith, Permanent Representative of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic to the United Nations and Chairman of the group of LLDCs
10:30 – 13:00	Consultations on the substantive and organizational preparations for the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentation on the current status of the preparations (Director, OHRLLS)- Presentations on the regional review meetings:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. UN-ESCAP and UN-ECE and Euro-Asia Regional review (video link)2. UN-ECA on Africa Regional review (video link)3. UN-ECLAC on Latin America Regional review (video link)- Briefing on pre-conference thematic events by OHRLLS and lead agencies:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update on substantive preparations and pre-conference events by OHRLLS (Chief, OHRLLS): Brainstorming Meeting; ECOSOC side-event on Renewing Global Partnerships for Connecting LLDCs to the World Markets; Transport Development and Trade Facilitation organized with the World Bank; Enhancing International Support Measures for LLDCs organized with OSCE2. UN-ECA (video link) on Expert Group Meeting on assessing the status of implementation of trade and transport facilitation instruments and measures in Africa, organized with OHRLLS3. UN-ECE (video link) on Road and Rail Financing Conference and Second Ministerial Conference on Euro-Asian Transport Links4. UNCTAD (video link) on Global Services Forum, Expert Group Meeting on Transport and Logistics Innovation for LLDCs and World Investment Forum 20145. UNIDO (video link) on Enhancing Productive Capacities of LLDCs, organized with OHRLLS and UNCTAD

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6. CFC on High Level Event on Commodities, organized with UNCTAD 7. UNCCD on Implications of Climate Change, Desertification and Land Degradation on LLDCs, organized with UNFCCC and OHRLLS 8. IRU on High-level Conference on Road Transport 9. ITU on Information and Communication Infrastructure and Technology Development for the LLDCs, organized with OHRLLS <p>Contributions and comments by other participating organizations</p>
13:00 – 15:00	Lunch break
15:00 – 16:00	<p>Consultations on possible deliverables for the Conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Briefing on concrete deliverables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UN South-South Cooperation Unit 2. IRU 3. UNDP 4. WTO 5. Other organizations - Discussion
16:00 – 17:00	<p>Consultations on the Private Sector Track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation on the current status of the private sector track by UN-OHRLLS - Contributions by ICC, IRU and other participating organizations - Discussion
17:00 – 17:30	<p>Summary of the consultations and recommendations on way forward</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concluding remarks by UN-OHRLLS