



**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 Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting
“Launching the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive
Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of
Action”**

United Nations Headquarters

New York

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Summary

This is a report of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting (IACG) held on 10 February, 2012 in New York to launch the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action. The meeting was organized by United Nations Office of the High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 66/214, in which it decided to hold a comprehensive ten-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014. The Resolution indicated that the Conference would: undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action by the landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours, and all the relevant development partners; share best practices and lessons learned; identify obstacles and constraints encountered; analyze emerging challenges and opportunities facing the landlocked developing countries; as well as identify effective international, regional and domestic policies, actions and initiatives needed to support Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in the next decade.

The Meeting involved delivery of statements, presentation of the concept note and roadmap of the conference and of the suggested pre-conference events and detailed plenary discussion. The Meeting noted that there had been some encouraging progress in the implementation of the Almaty Programme since 2003 such as improved cooperation between LLDCs and transit countries to harmonize transport and transit policies, laws, and procedures; improved transport, and communication infrastructure, and implementation of trade facilitation initiatives such as one stop border controls, the use of ICTs for customs clearance; and dry ports. The Meeting also noted that despite the notable progress made, LLDCs were still confronted with challenges related to difficulties in accessing seaports such as missing links in the transit transport infrastructure and high trade costs.

Participants also pointed out that new challenges had emerged over the period that the Almaty Programme had been implemented including: increased dependency on natural resource based commodities, rising food and energy costs, climate change and increased desertification and land degradation. In addition, LLDCs had shown that they were very vulnerable to external shocks such as financial and economic crisis and had limited resilience. Participants also noted that the new international environment was now characterized by increased austerity measures. They also underscored the importance of the service industry, and the growing importance of south-south cooperation. The Meeting emphasized that the Ten-Year Review should take into account these new developments in order to develop a new agenda that would be more responsive to the needs of LLDCs.

Participants expressed their willingness to contribute to the preparatory process and agreed to submit in writing details of their contributions – ideas, initiatives, studies, reports/publications, pre-conference events, side events or concrete deliverables which address the needs of the LLDCs. They also agreed to send detailed comments on the concept note, roadmap and the list of pre-conference events.

A. Introduction

The United Nations Office of the High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) organized the Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting (IACG) “Launching the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action”, on 10 February, 2012 in New York. The objective of the IACG was to provide a forum for consultation and information sharing among United Nations system organizations and other international institutions, on the preparations for the Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries. His Excellency Jose Antonio Dos Santos, Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations, the Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, and H.E. Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations participated in the opening session. The meeting was attended by about fifty participants from twenty six different institutions as shown in the participant list in annex 1. The meeting adopted the programme of work presented in annex 2.

B. Opening Session

Three statements were presented in the opening session including by Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr. Jose Antonio Dos Santos, Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations, and Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, and Remarks by H.E. Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations.

In his statement, Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra indicated that there had been some encouraging progress in the implementation of the Almaty Programme since 2003. He noted that increasingly, both landlocked and transit developing countries had engaged in important policy reforms with a view to remove physical and non-physical barriers to their effective participation in international trade. Progress was made in developing agreements between Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and their neighbouring countries to harmonise transport and transit policies, laws, procedures and practices with transit countries. Major efforts had been made to improve the transport, communication and energy infrastructure and to foster the maintenance of the existing infrastructure at national, sub-regional and regional levels. Border facilities and procedures had been streamlined and harmonized leading to increased efficiency and fewer delays. He indicated that trade facilitation initiatives such as one stop border controls; a yellow or white card motor vehicle insurance schemes; and common visa sticker for drivers; the use of ICTs for customs clearance; and dry ports, were being implemented. These initiatives were making it easier for LLDCs to use neighbouring countries' ports and roads.

The High Representative expressed his great appreciation to all the organizations present as they had been instrumental in contributing to the progress achieved in the implementation of the Almaty Programme. He informed the meeting that flows of Official Development Assistance from traditional donors had continued to increase from \$13.8 billion in 2004 to \$24.8 billion in 2009. Similarly, there had been a continued increase in Aid for Trade commitments to LLDCs, which had risen from \$4.1 billion in 2005 to \$7.8 billion in 2009. The LLDCs had experienced decreases in their debt as a result of debt relief delivered under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. He further noted that Foreign Direct Investment flows to LLDCs had increased since 2003, however they had decreased in 2009 due to the global financial and economic crisis. He also pointed out that LLDCs have also benefitted from support through South-South cooperation.

With respect to trade, Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra stated that the proportion of merchandise exports of LLDCs to total world exports had increased to 0.96 percent in 2008 from 0.47 percent in 2003. It however fell to 0.75 percent in 2009 because of the global financial and economic crisis. He underscored with disappointment the fact that the proportion of their merchandise exports to total world exports had remained below one percent.

On the social and economic front, the High Representative highlighted that LLDCs as a group had experienced improved real GDP growth from 4.3% in 2003 to 5.8% in 2008 but this however fell to 3.6 percent in 2009 due to the global financial and economic crisis. He indicated that there had been some recovery in economic growth for the LLDCs which was estimated to be around 6.7 percent in 2010 and 5.5 in 2011 though the growth did not seem to be steady. On the social front, he pointed out that gains had been recorded in several MDGs, including primary education, gender equality, combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and increasing the proportion of people with access to improved water source. However, achieving food security, eradicating poverty and reducing child and maternal mortality remain major social development challenges.

The High Representative noted that despite the progress in implementing the Almaty Programme of Action, there remain challenges to overcome including: closing the missing links in the transit transport infrastructure; limited progress in the Doha Round of trade negotiations; limited structural transformation and economic diversification; weak productive capacities; and high vulnerability to trade shocks due to commodity price volatility and other external shocks. Other challenges that he noted include rising food and fuel costs, climate change, land degradation and desertification.

He indicated that the General Assembly had adopted resolution 66/214, in which it decided to hold in 2014 a comprehensive ten-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action. He highlighted that the Conference would undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action by the LLDCs and their transit neighbours and the development partners, the UN system, other international, regional and sub-regional organizations and the international community. The conference would share best practices and lessons learned, identify obstacles and constraints encountered as well as actions and initiatives needed to overcome them. The Conference would also analyze emerging challenges and opportunities facing the LLDCs with a view to identify effective international and domestic policies.

He informed the meeting that the preparations of the Conference would be done under three tracks including: the intergovernmental track; the UN system and other international organizations and regional organizations track; and the Private Sector track. He called all partners to make contributions in the following major areas:

- (1) Partners to propose pre-conference events that their organisations would be interested in organising and sponsoring on priority themes of relevance to LLDCs.
- (2) UN Resident Coordinators system, Regional Commissions and all relevant partners to support the substantive reviews at national, sub-regional and regional levels as mandated by the General Assembly.
- (3) Partners to make substantive contributions to the Ten Year Review Conference through preparations of studies and reports in the thematic areas relevant to their work including those that would be used as background documents for the pre-conference events.
- (4) Partners to propose side events that the partners would be interested in organising during the conference itself in 2014.
- (5) Partners to announce concrete deliverables such as innovative projects or the conclusion of relevant bilateral or multi lateral agreements, and to showcase effective technical or financial assistance programmes that could support the LLDCs in the new agenda/decade.

(6) Organisations to designate a focal point for the Ten-Year Review Conference, who would have the overall responsibilities for planning, mobilizing and coordinating the efforts of their organization to the substantive and organizational preparations of the Conference.

In his statement, His Excellency Mr. Jose Antonio Dos Santos reminded the meeting that the LLDCs were still facing challenges related to difficulties in accessing seaports that they faced in 2003 such as poor infrastructure, and high trade costs. He also indicated that in addition to these challenges LLDCs were now facing new challenges that include rising food and energy prices and climate change. He stressed that these new challenges were undermining sustainable economic growth in their countries and exacerbating vulnerability.

Mr. Dos Santos highlighted that the Group of LLDCs attached great importance to the comprehensive Ten-Year Review conference to be held in 2014. He emphasized that the review conference should assess the implementation of the Almaty Programme, identify the best practices and weaknesses and build an action oriented strategic framework for the next decade. He underscored the fact that the new Programme of Action should address new issues such as climate change. He also underlined that the success of the conference would depend on the three tracks – intergovernmental, UN system and other specialized agencies, and the private sector.

The Ambassador reminded the meeting that Official Development Assistance remained essential, and made clear that both the quantity and quality of ODA would have to be improved significantly. He also pointed out that ODA and Aid for Trade initiatives were different from each other and that financing or implementation of one initiative should not be allowed to undermine the other.

His Excellency reiterated that the role of the UN system and other specialized agencies was crucial to supporting LLDCs to overcome the disadvantages caused by their lack of seacoasts, promote economic growth and eradicate poverty.

In her remarks, Her Excellency Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations indicated that although progress had been achieved in implementing the Almaty Programme of Action, there remained challenges that need to be dealt with. She stressed that her Government was committed to supporting the LLDCs to advance the implementation of the APoA. In this regard, she indicated that in support of the preparatory process for the Ten-Year Review, her Government would host, in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative, the 4th Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries, and the High-Level Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade in Kazakhstan from 10-12 September 2012 – the dates were yet to be confirmed.

Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova pointed out that the two meetings would review the accomplishments made since the meeting held in Ezulwini, Swaziland in 2009. She expressed her hope that the meetings will come out with valuable inputs for the draft Outcome Document of the 2014 Review Conference. She indicated that the preparations for the two meetings will follow a three-track strategy of action through the intergovernmental, UN system and private sector processes. She expressed her gratitude to all the United Nations agencies and international organizations for the support that they provide and hoped that it will continue.

Her Excellency informed the Meeting about the achievements that Kazakhstan had made since the first United Nations Conference that was held in 2003 in Almaty. These include among many: the Transport Strategy that had been adopted and was being implemented until 2015; the National Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development (2010-14) that envisaged establishment of a transportation link between Europe and Asia with highway and railroad

infrastructure development; and a Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan that had resulted in more than 25% trade growth.

She concluded her remarks by inviting all participants to the two meetings and urged them to consider holding side events related to the review process.

During the opening session, Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, Senior Special Advisor to the President in the Office of the President of the General Assembly, took the opportunity to share his thoughts. He stated that the President of the General Assembly was very supportive of and has been very vocal in favour of countries in special needs. He indicated that the President would be willing and ready to provide support and leadership for the preparation and convening of the Ten-Year Review conference to be held in 2014. He assured participants not to hesitate calling upon the President's support whenever it was needed in the preparatory process.

C. The draft conceptual framework and Roadmap of the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action including suggested pre-conference events

Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Acting Director of UN-OHRLLS presented the concept note and roadmap of the conference and of the preliminary list of suggested pre-conference events. He emphasized that major changes had occurred since the APoA had been formulated and adopted in 2003 and these new developments need to be taken into account when designing a new programme of action. For example, he indicated that most LLDCs were becoming sources of energy and other natural resource based commodities which made them more vulnerable to commodity price volatility. Other new developments that were affecting LLDCs were climate change and austerity measures. He stressed that the review should take into account these new elements in order to develop a new agenda that would be more responsive to the needs of LLDCs.

Mr. Erdenebileg highlighted that the objectives of the Conference would include the following:

- 1) Comprehensively and critically assess the implementation of the APoA, with a view to identify effective international and domestic policies in light of the outcome of a comprehensive appraisal, as well as new and emerging challenges and opportunities and the means to address them, and develop a new common action-oriented strategic framework for the next decade;
- 2) Reaffirm the global commitment to addressing the special needs of the LLDCs, in particular those related to infrastructure development, transit and trade facilitation, and policy framework, in order to reduce prohibitive transit costs and enable those countries to fully participate in the global trade;
- 3) Mobilize additional international support measures in favour of the LLDCs, and in this regard, formulate and adopt a renewed partnership between the LLDCs, transit developing countries and their development partners.
- 4) Develop a more efficient monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the successful implementation of the new programme of action by an effective functioning of existing arrangements at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels.

He also put forward some key issues to be considered in the conference such as:

- 1) Harnessing international trade, trade facilitation and aid for trade
- 2) Boosting the private sector and increasing Foreign Direct Investment
- 3) Promoting regional and south-south cooperation
- 4) Bridging Infrastructure gaps

- 5) Harmonization and strengthening of the regulatory and legal framework pertaining to international transport and transit
- 6) Emerging issues including vulnerabilities to external shocks, climate change and food and fuel prices and economic and financial downturn.
- 7) Building productive capacity of the LLDCs
- 8) Reducing economic and social disparities

In presenting the roadmap, Mr Erdenebileg emphasized that the whole preparatory process should be transparent and inclusive, promoting dialogue with all stakeholders (Governments, UN System Organizations, international and regional development and financial institutions, private sector, academia, business community). He reiterated that the preparatory process would involve three tracks: Intergovernmental Track; United Nations and other international and regional organizations Track and the Private Sector Track. He underscored that LLDCs and transit developing countries should be involved in the preparatory phase and the conference itself.

He pointed out that the global review of the conference would be preceded by national, sub-regional and regional preparations. At the national level, LLDCs would be required to submit reports on the implementation of the APoA that would contribute to the enrichment of sub-regional and regional reports. At the sub-regional level, consultations would involve mostly regional economic communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Sub-regional meetings would be organized, where possible, with the ultimate objective of undertaking necessary consultations and coordination between LLDCs and their neighbouring transit countries, assess progress on transit transport issues, identify key challenges and recommend appropriate corrective measures.

At the regional level, the United Nations Regional Commissions would take the lead in the process of preparing and convening the Regional Reviews. The reviews would feed into the global preparations and outcome document. At the global level, the preparatory process would involve all the three tracks and would include a series of preconference events that will be held in the lead up to the Ten-Year Review conference. The United Nations, with the collaboration of all the other stakeholders, would undertake an intensive, focused and sustained advocacy strategy to raise awareness on the critical challenges faced by LLDCs and the need for appropriate international support measures.

Mr Erdenebileg indicated that at the conference in 2014 parallel thematic roundtables and side events would be organized. A parallel event – the Investment Forum – would be organized in the context of the private sector track. In addition an exhibition would also be organized.

Mr Erdenebileg presented the draft preliminary list of proposed thematic pre-conference events shown in table 1.

Table 1. Draft Preliminary List of Proposed Thematic Pre-Conference Events

<p>(1) International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid For Trade</p> <p>to be preceded by a Meeting of LLDC Ministers in charge of Trade</p>	<p><u>UN-OHRLLS</u> UNCTAD, World Bank, UNDP, WTO, UN regional commissions, WCO, ITC ...</p>	<p>Almaty, Kazakhstan, September 2012</p>
<p>(2) Implications of climate change, desertification and land degradation on LLDCs: adaptation and mitigation measures</p>	<p><u>UNFCCC, UNCCD, UN-OHRLLS</u> World Bank, UNDP ...</p>	<p>TBD – February 2013</p>

(3) Assessing the vulnerability of LLDCs to external shocks and developing vulnerability indicators for early warning purposes in LLDCs	<u>UN-OHRLLS</u> DESA, UNCTAD, UNDP, World Bank ...	TBD – 2013/14
(4) Infrastructure Development and Maintenance: Enhancing the role of the private sector	<u>World Bank</u> Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Inter American Development Bank, OHRLLS, UN regional commissions, IRU ...	TBD – <i>March-April 2013</i>
(5) Strengthening the legal framework for more efficient transit cooperation	<u>ECE, ECA, IRU, UN Office of Legal Affairs, OHRLLS</u> UNCTAD, World Bank, WCO ...	TBD – <i>June 2013</i>
(6) Enhancing productive capacities of LLDCs	<u>UNIDO</u> UNCTAD, ITU, ITC, OHRLLS ...	TBD – <i>September 2013</i>
(7) South-South Cooperation in transit transport	UNDP SU/SSC UNCTAD, OHRLLS ...	TBD – <i>November 2013</i>
(8) Enhancing international support measures for LLDCs	UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD World Bank, Regional Development Banks, UN regional commissions, UNDP ...	TBD – <i>January 2014</i>
(9) High level event on Commodities Turning Commodity Dependence into Sustainable, Inclusive and Equitable Economic Growth for the LLDCs	<u>CFC, UNCTAD</u> OHRLLS ...	TBD – <i>March 2014</i>
(10) Investment Forum for LLDCs	<u>UNCTAD, World Bank/IFC</u> OHRLLS, Private Sector, Global Compact ...	TBD – <i>April 2014</i>
(11) Brainstorming Meeting to provide input into the identification of priorities of the New Programme of Action for LLDCs	<u>OHRLLS</u> UNCTAD, WB, ECA, ESCAP, UNDP, WTO, WCO, ITU, IRU, DESA, UN-Women, Academia, Private Sector, Resource Persons, Selected Experts from Member countries.	November / December 2012

Note: TBD – to be determined

In his closing remarks, Mr. Erdenebileg asked the participants to provide comments on the concept note, roadmap, and on the list of the pre-conference events. He also asked participants to indicate the areas in which they would like to provide their contributions.

D. Presentations by Partner Organizations

A representative of the UNECE, Mrs Eva Molnar indicated that they were organizing a ministerial conference in 2012; and in collaboration with OSCE, they had finalized the handbook on *Best Practices at Border Crossings: A trade and transport facilitation perspective* which can be used as a resource for the preconference events and the conference. She requested if the venue of the meeting was known and if resources will be made available for Regional reviews. She expressed their readiness to support the review process.

A representative of the **WTO**, Mr. Raul Torres highlighted that in the recently held Eighth Ministerial Conference of WTO, it had become clear that the Doha Development Agenda was unlikely to be completed as a single undertaking in 2012. Nevertheless, members had expressed their willingness to explore an early harvest on some issues depending on how the negotiations unfold. One of the issues highlighted as a good candidate for early harvest was trade facilitation, which was of particular importance for LLDCs. He also indicated that WTO was organizing a symposium on trade facilitation to be held in July 2012 and the outcome of the symposium can be used as background into the proposed meetings to be held in Kazakhstan in September 2012. He also pointed out that the next global review of Aid for Trade will be held in July 2013 and can be used as input into the review conference in 2014. He expressed their commitment to support the review process

A representative of the **UNESCAP**, Mr. Syed Nuruzzaman indicated that they had already started the preparations with the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the implementation of the *Almaty Programme of Action* and other development gaps faced by the Landlocked Developing Countries that was held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in April 2011. He specified that they will contribute towards the Review conference through studies, reports and the regional review meeting.

A representative of the **UNFCCC**, Mr. Motsomi Maletjane underscored that the Convention places special recognition to LLDCs in that they have special vulnerability to climate change. He indicated that the UNFCCC Secretariat has solid experience in supporting least developed countries to adapt to climate change, 15 of which are LLDCs, and that they will build on this to contribute towards the review. He further expressed that there exists an opportunity under the newly established national adaptation plans (NAPs) process, covering all developing countries, to tailor guidelines for formulating and implementing NAPs to the special needs of the LLDCs. He expressed their commitment and readiness to support the review process.

A representative of the **UNECA**, Ms. Marie Therese Guiebo, expressed the willingness and readiness of her organization to support the Ten-Year Review process and indicated that they were proposing a pre-conference event on strengthening the legal framework for road transport in Africa.

A representative of the **African Union Commission (AUC)**, Dr. Maurice Niaty-Mouamba indicated that the recently held African Union summit had mandated them to support African countries to establish an intergovernmental agreement on the Trans-African Highway and in this regard they were ready to work on the pre-conference event on strengthening the legal framework for road transport in Africa.

A representative of the **UNECLAC**, Mr. Ricardo Sanchez expressed the readiness of his organisation to support the review process. He indicated that UNECLAC would like to be part of the following pre-conference events: Infrastructure Development and Maintenance: Enhancing the role of the private sector; and Enhancing international support measures for LLDCs.

A representative of the **UNCTAD**, Mr Gunter Fischer emphasized that the new programme of action should take into account the broader problems of LLDCs including other economic and social problems such as climate change that is affecting usability of ports. UNCTAD stressed that the new development agenda for LLDCs should also put emphasis on south-south and triangular cooperation, FDI and the services sector. He expressed the willingness of his organization in supporting the review process and indicated that UNCTAD will produce technical written materials to be used for the review. He also enquired on the availability of resources to support the preparatory process.

A representative of the **UNDP**, Mr Paul Ladd explained that UNDP's current trade capacity development work is geared towards accelerating the integration of the Almaty Programme of Action priorities into relevant areas of work, including in the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and Aid for Trade initiatives. He also stressed that UNDP stands ready to assist in the preparatory process leading to the comprehensive 10-year review of the APOA in 2014, including assisting in the follow up to the completion of national reports over 2012. He indicated that they would consider, following internal consultations, collaborating on the following pre-conference events: International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid For Trade; Implications of climate change, desertification and land degradation on LLDCs: adaptation and mitigation measures; and Assessing the vulnerability of LLDCs to external shocks and developing vulnerability indicators for early warning purposes in LLDCs. He stressed the importance of undertaking a thorough appraisal of the implementation of the APoA and expressed his organisation's commitment to support the process.

A representative of the **UNCCD**, Mr. Melchiade Bukuru pointed out that when the APoA was adopted, the issue of desertification was not included yet it affects the LLDCs. He stressed that most of the exports from LLDCs are agricultural and are dependent on land which is vulnerable to desertification. It was therefore very important to include the issues of desertification and land degradation in the new programme of action.

The representatives of the **World Bank**, Mr Gilles Alfandari, and Mr Jean-Francois Arvis, indicated their willingness to support the review process in different capacities including preparation of substantive work and resource persons. They indicated that their Trade cluster is already involved in work that is relevant to the review process and upon return to the headquarters; they will raise the involvement of other sectors.

A representative of the **Asian Development Bank**, Mr Alessandro Pio conveyed the readiness of his organization to support the review process. He indicated that the Bank has undertaken several relevant studies at national, sub-regional and regional levels, and had supported the integration of landlocked developing countries with the surrounding ones in both the Greater Mekong Subregion and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation initiative, and would be happy to make its experience available for the review process. He also indicated that the bank will share information on aid effectiveness and on time and transport costs in Asia. He also stressed that the service sector is important for the future development of LLDCs and that regional integration in the energy sector (for example through regional transmission lines and pipelines) can also significantly contribute to development and efficiency.

A representative of the **Common Fund for Commodities**, Mr Parvinder Singh indicated that the emerging challenges such as climate change and energy and food price volatility were affecting LLDCs. He stressed that measures to mitigate the impact of commodity price volatility needed to be put in place.

A representative of the **World Customs Organisation (WCO)**, Mr. Takashi Nakao expressed WCO's willingness to support the ten-year review process. The WCO has been supporting its members to implement trade facilitation measures which also cover transit procedures. Although some regional transit framework has been developed, some challenges in the implementation of the framework can be observed. He indicated that in this regard, the regional reviews were important and indicated the willingness of the WCO to be involved in their process.

A representative of the **International Road Union (IRU)**, Mr. Igor Rounov highlighted the projects that his organisation had and is undertaking to promote development of international road transport and trade and transport facilitation for example the "Afghan-transit" in Afghanistan; the Model Highway Initiative; electronic pre-declaration of goods in the Caucasus

and Central Asian states; Border Waiting Times Observatory; and “Transpark”. He indicated that IRU will contribute to the review process through: (1) Special Study on road transport in LLDCs; (2) Conference Perspectives of development of transport and transit in Central Asia and Caspian Region”, Ashgabat (May 2012); (3) 7th Eurasian Conference, Amman (June 2013); and (4) Special coordination meeting of international organisations and financial institutions as a side event of the Conference in 2014.

The **Economic Cooperation Organization** was represented by the Turkish Mission to the United Nations who is the current chair of the organisation. Mr Adnan Altay Altınörs, First Secretary of the Turkish Mission to the United Nations stressed that effective integration of LLDCs into the international markets is of great importance for their development. He emphasized that the comprehensive appraisal of the APoA is important for shaping the future agenda. In this regard, ECO was ready to cooperate and support the preparatory process.

The representative of the **International Trade Center (ITC)**, Ms. Helen Lassen expressed the readiness of her organisation to support the ten-year review process. She explained to the meeting the research activities that her organisation was undertaking to analyse the impact of non-tariff barriers in selected 27 developing countries that included 5 LLDCs. She indicated that the results of this work can form background material for the trade facilitation pre-conference event to be held in Kazakhstan.

The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** could not be present in the meeting but sent their contribution by email. Mr Roel Janssens, a representative of OSCE indicated that *OSCE and UNECE had prepared a Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings: a Trade and Transport Facilitation Perspective* – a resource material that can be used for the ten year review and OSCE in particular would like to organize a special Handbook side-event on the occasion of one of the next meetings taking place in the framework of the Almaty Programme of Action Review Process. The OSCE is planning to support the Government of Turkmenistan and the IRU in organizing in May 2012 an *International Conference on Perspectives for the Development of Transport and Transit in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea Region*. OSCE will continue supporting activities aimed at promoting the establishment of multimodal transport and logistics systems, including further development of Euro-Asian transport links and corridors.

Summary of the plenary discussion

Participants expressed their support to the preparatory process and to the convening of the conference in 2014. They posed questions on the venue and dates of the Conference in 2014 and the availability of resources to be utilized in support of the preparatory process in particular regional reviews and pre-conference events.

Several participants including UNECE, IRU, WTO, UNESCAP, UNECA, AUC, OSCE and UNECLAC indicated relevant events that they were already planning to organize in for 2012 and 2013 that could be included as part of the preparatory process for the Review conference. They also suggested some of their planned activities that could be held as side events during the conference in 2014. Participants including UNECE, WTO, UNESCAP, UNECA, UNECLAC, UNDP, OSCE, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, IRU, WCO, UNCTAD and ITC also highlighted relevant activities, studies, reports and handbooks that they were currently preparing that could be used as key components or resources in the preparatory process of the conference and at the conference itself. Participants agreed to submit details of the events and the resource materials to OHRLLS after the meeting.

Participants acknowledged the importance of the early conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations and stressed the importance of exploring issues that can yield early harvest to the LLDCs. They also highlighted the importance of Aid for trade and trade facilitation in supporting the economic development of LLDCs. Participants underscored the importance of south-south and triangular cooperation, foreign direct investment and economic specialization to LLDCs. They noted the importance of the service industry to boosting economic growth in LLDCs, since this sector did not have transport costs associated to it.

Participants also noted the special vulnerability of LLDCs to climate change and the negative impact that it had on LLDCs including exacerbating desertification and land degradation and the rise in sea-level that was affecting the usability of ports. They also noted that LLDCs were highly dependent on agriculture as a major source of foreign currency earnings. Agriculture in turn was dependent on land which is vulnerable to desertification. The volatility in commodity prices witnessed during the last three years particularly food commodities had an adverse impact on the food security of the countries. Measures to mitigate the impact of price volatility needed to be put in place. They indicated that given these broad range of development problems of LLDCs, it was important to recognize that there is need for a much broader/holistic approach to addressing the development problems of LLDCs. They underscored that these issues needed to be clearly addressed in the review process and in the new programme of action.

E. Briefing on the 4th Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries and the High-Level Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade to be held in Kazakhstan

Mr. Andre Nikwigize, Senior Programme Officer, UN-OHRLLS gave a short briefing on the two meetings to be held in Kazakhstan later in 2012. He provided details on the 4th Meeting of Trade Ministers of LLDCs indicating that a declaration would be adopted at the end of the meeting to provide input into the draft outcome document for the Review Conference. He highlighted the format of the High-Level Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade. He concluded his briefing by calling for the participation of all partner organisations and their substantive contributions to make the meetings a success. A concept paper on the two meetings will be circulated to participants for their inputs.

F. Summary of the consultations and closing remarks

In summarizing the presentations and discussion, the High Representative first responded to the questions posed by participants. With regard to the venue and host of the conference, he indicated that OHRLLS would be approaching a number of countries that could potentially host the conference and submit a short list to the Group of LLDCs to make a decision. With regard to financial resources to support the preparatory phase, he indicated that OHRLLS was planning to undertake a global resource mobilization activity and would use resources raised in this global campaign towards the preparatory activities. He also asked partners to financially support the process where possible.

Mr Diarra noted that the meeting had provided a clear message that there are some new issues that had emerged after the adoption of the APoA including climate change, worsening desertification and land degradation, the new international environment, the importance of the service industry, and the importance of south-south cooperation. He assured the meeting that these issues would be addressed in the review process.

He called upon the participants to submit in writing details of their contributions – ideas, initiatives, studies, reports/publications, pre-conference events, side events or concrete deliverables which addressed the needs of the LLDCs - and any other comments that they had on

the draft documents that had been presented to them. He encouraged all partners to take ownership and to be fully engaged in the process.

G. Way Forward

The meeting agreed on the following as a way forward.

1. Participants would send to OHRLLS detailed comments on the concept note, roadmap and the list of pre-conference events. They would also provide inputs and submit detailed proposals on their contributions towards the preparatory process of the conference and to the conference in 2014.
2. OHRLLS would provide on a routine basis an update to all partners on the progress being made and disseminate information on upcoming meetings.
3. Partners would be informed on the date of the next inter agency meeting to be held in the last quarter of 2012.

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ANNEX 2

Programme of Work for the Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting “Launching the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action” 10 February 2012

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| 10:00am – 10:45am | Opening of the Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Statement by Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.- Statement by H. E. Ambassador Jose Antonio Dos Santos, Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations and the Chairman of the LLDC Group.- Remarks by H.E. Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations on the 4th Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries, and the High-Level Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade to be held in Kazakhstan in September 2012. |
| 10:45am – 1:00pm | Consultations on the substantive and organizational preparations for the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action at sub-regional, regional and global levels. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentation of the draft conceptual framework and Roadmap including suggested pre-conference events by Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Acting Director, UN-OHRLLS- Contributions/Comments by participating organisations- Discussion |
| 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Lunch |
| 3:00pm - 4:00pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Briefing on the 4th Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and the High-Level Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade to be held in Kazakhstan by Mr. Andre Nikwigize, Senior Programme Officer, UN-OHRLLS.- Contributions and comments by participating organisations- Discussion |
| 4:00 pm – 5:30pm | Summary of the consultations and closing remarks and by Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative. |



**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 Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting
“Launching the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive
Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of
Action”**

United Nations Headquarters

New York

February 2012

Summary

This is a report of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting (IACG) held on 10 February, 2012 in New York to launch the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action. The meeting was organized by United Nations Office of the High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) in accordance with the General Assembly resolution 66/214, in which it decided to hold a comprehensive ten-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014. The Resolution indicated that the Conference would: undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action by the landlocked developing countries and their transit neighbours, and all the relevant development partners; share best practices and lessons learned; identify obstacles and constraints encountered; analyze emerging challenges and opportunities facing the landlocked developing countries; as well as identify effective international, regional and domestic policies, actions and initiatives needed to support Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) in the next decade.

The Meeting involved delivery of statements, presentation of the concept note and roadmap of the conference and of the suggested pre-conference events and detailed plenary discussion. The Meeting noted that there had been some encouraging progress in the implementation of the Almaty Programme since 2003 such as improved cooperation between LLDCs and transit countries to harmonize transport and transit policies, laws, and procedures; improved transport, and communication infrastructure, and implementation of trade facilitation initiatives such as one stop border controls, the use of ICTs for customs clearance; and dry ports. The Meeting also noted that despite the notable progress made, LLDCs were still confronted with challenges related to difficulties in accessing seaports such as missing links in the transit transport infrastructure and high trade costs.

Participants also pointed out that new challenges had emerged over the period that the Almaty Programme had been implemented including: increased dependency on natural resource based commodities, rising food and energy costs, climate change and increased desertification and land degradation. In addition, LLDCs had shown that they were very vulnerable to external shocks such as financial and economic crisis and had limited resilience. Participants also noted that the new international environment was now characterized by increased austerity measures. They also underscored the importance of the service industry, and the growing importance of south-south cooperation. The Meeting emphasized that the Ten-Year Review should take into account these new developments in order to develop a new agenda that would be more responsive to the needs of LLDCs.

Participants expressed their willingness to contribute to the preparatory process and agreed to submit in writing details of their contributions – ideas, initiatives, studies, reports/publications, pre-conference events, side events or concrete deliverables which address the needs of the LLDCs. They also agreed to send detailed comments on the concept note, roadmap and the list of pre-conference events.

A. Introduction

The United Nations Office of the High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) organized the Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting (IACG) “Launching the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action”, on 10 February, 2012 in New York. The objective of the IACG was to provide a forum for consultation and information sharing among United Nations system organizations and other international institutions, on the preparations for the Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action.

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries. His Excellency Jose Antonio Dos Santos, Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations, the Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, and H.E. Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations participated in the opening session. The meeting was attended by about fifty participants from twenty six different institutions as shown in the participant list in annex 1. The meeting adopted the programme of work presented in annex 2.

B. Opening Session

Three statements were presented in the opening session including by Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, Mr. Jose Antonio Dos Santos, Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations, and Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, and Remarks by H.E. Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations.

In his statement, Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra indicated that there had been some encouraging progress in the implementation of the Almaty Programme since 2003. He noted that increasingly, both landlocked and transit developing countries had engaged in important policy reforms with a view to remove physical and non-physical barriers to their effective participation in international trade. Progress was made in developing agreements between Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and their neighbouring countries to harmonise transport and transit policies, laws, procedures and practices with transit countries. Major efforts had been made to improve the transport, communication and energy infrastructure and to foster the maintenance of the existing infrastructure at national, sub-regional and regional levels. Border facilities and procedures had been streamlined and harmonized leading to increased efficiency and fewer delays. He indicated that trade facilitation initiatives such as one stop border controls; a yellow or white card motor vehicle insurance schemes; and common visa sticker for drivers; the use of ICTs for customs clearance; and dry ports, were being implemented. These initiatives were making it easier for LLDCs to use neighbouring countries' ports and roads.

The High Representative expressed his great appreciation to all the organizations present as they had been instrumental in contributing to the progress achieved in the implementation of the Almaty Programme. He informed the meeting that flows of Official Development Assistance from traditional donors had continued to increase from \$13.8 billion in 2004 to \$24.8 billion in 2009. Similarly, there had been a continued increase in Aid for Trade commitments to LLDCs, which had risen from \$4.1 billion in 2005 to \$7.8 billion in 2009. The LLDCs had experienced decreases in their debt as a result of debt relief delivered under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. He further noted that Foreign Direct Investment flows to LLDCs had increased since 2003, however they had decreased in 2009 due to the global financial and economic crisis. He also pointed out that LLDCs have also benefitted from support through South-South cooperation.

With respect to trade, Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra stated that the proportion of merchandise exports of LLDCs to total world exports had increased to 0.96 percent in 2008 from 0.47 percent in 2003. It however fell to 0.75 percent in 2009 because of the global financial and economic crisis. He underscored with disappointment the fact that the proportion of their merchandise exports to total world exports had remained below one percent.

On the social and economic front, the High Representative highlighted that LLDCs as a group had experienced improved real GDP growth from 4.3% in 2003 to 5.8% in 2008 but this however fell to 3.6 percent in 2009 due to the global financial and economic crisis. He indicated that there had been some recovery in economic growth for the LLDCs which was estimated to be around 6.7 percent in 2010 and 5.5 in 2011 though the growth did not seem to be steady. On the social front, he pointed out that gains had been recorded in several MDGs, including primary education, gender equality, combating the spread of HIV/AIDS and increasing the proportion of people with access to improved water source. However, achieving food security, eradicating poverty and reducing child and maternal mortality remain major social development challenges.

The High Representative noted that despite the progress in implementing the Almaty Programme of Action, there remain challenges to overcome including: closing the missing links in the transit transport infrastructure; limited progress in the Doha Round of trade negotiations; limited structural transformation and economic diversification; weak productive capacities; and high vulnerability to trade shocks due to commodity price volatility and other external shocks. Other challenges that he noted include rising food and fuel costs, climate change, land degradation and desertification.

He indicated that the General Assembly had adopted resolution 66/214, in which it decided to hold in 2014 a comprehensive ten-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action. He highlighted that the Conference would undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action by the LLDCs and their transit neighbours and the development partners, the UN system, other international, regional and sub-regional organizations and the international community. The conference would share best practices and lessons learned, identify obstacles and constraints encountered as well as actions and initiatives needed to overcome them. The Conference would also analyze emerging challenges and opportunities facing the LLDCs with a view to identify effective international and domestic policies.

He informed the meeting that the preparations of the Conference would be done under three tracks including: the intergovernmental track; the UN system and other international organizations and regional organizations track; and the Private Sector track. He called all partners to make contributions in the following major areas:

- (1) Partners to propose pre-conference events that their organisations would be interested in organising and sponsoring on priority themes of relevance to LLDCs.
- (2) UN Resident Coordinators system, Regional Commissions and all relevant partners to support the substantive reviews at national, sub-regional and regional levels as mandated by the General Assembly.
- (3) Partners to make substantive contributions to the Ten Year Review Conference through preparations of studies and reports in the thematic areas relevant to their work including those that would be used as background documents for the pre-conference events.
- (4) Partners to propose side events that the partners would be interested in organising during the conference itself in 2014.
- (5) Partners to announce concrete deliverables such as innovative projects or the conclusion of relevant bilateral or multi lateral agreements, and to showcase effective technical or financial assistance programmes that could support the LLDCs in the new agenda/decade.

(6) Organisations to designate a focal point for the Ten-Year Review Conference, who would have the overall responsibilities for planning, mobilizing and coordinating the efforts of their organization to the substantive and organizational preparations of the Conference.

In his statement, His Excellency Mr. Jose Antonio Dos Santos reminded the meeting that the LLDCs were still facing challenges related to difficulties in accessing seaports that they faced in 2003 such as poor infrastructure, and high trade costs. He also indicated that in addition to these challenges LLDCs were now facing new challenges that include rising food and energy prices and climate change. He stressed that these new challenges were undermining sustainable economic growth in their countries and exacerbating vulnerability.

Mr. Dos Santos highlighted that the Group of LLDCs attached great importance to the comprehensive Ten-Year Review conference to be held in 2014. He emphasized that the review conference should assess the implementation of the Almaty Programme, identify the best practices and weaknesses and build an action oriented strategic framework for the next decade. He underscored the fact that the new Programme of Action should address new issues such as climate change. He also underlined that the success of the conference would depend on the three tracks – intergovernmental, UN system and other specialized agencies, and the private sector.

The Ambassador reminded the meeting that Official Development Assistance remained essential, and made clear that both the quantity and quality of ODA would have to be improved significantly. He also pointed out that ODA and Aid for Trade initiatives were different from each other and that financing or implementation of one initiative should not be allowed to undermine the other.

His Excellency reiterated that the role of the UN system and other specialized agencies was crucial to supporting LLDCs to overcome the disadvantages caused by their lack of seacoasts, promote economic growth and eradicate poverty.

In her remarks, Her Excellency Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations indicated that although progress had been achieved in implementing the Almaty Programme of Action, there remained challenges that need to be dealt with. She stressed that her Government was committed to supporting the LLDCs to advance the implementation of the APoA. In this regard, she indicated that in support of the preparatory process for the Ten-Year Review, her Government would host, in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative, the 4th Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries, and the High-Level Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade in Kazakhstan from 10-12 September 2012 – the dates were yet to be confirmed.

Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova pointed out that the two meetings would review the accomplishments made since the meeting held in Ezulwini, Swaziland in 2009. She expressed her hope that the meetings will come out with valuable inputs for the draft Outcome Document of the 2014 Review Conference. She indicated that the preparations for the two meetings will follow a three-track strategy of action through the intergovernmental, UN system and private sector processes. She expressed her gratitude to all the United Nations agencies and international organizations for the support that they provide and hoped that it will continue.

Her Excellency informed the Meeting about the achievements that Kazakhstan had made since the first United Nations Conference that was held in 2003 in Almaty. These include among many: the Transport Strategy that had been adopted and was being implemented until 2015; the National Programme of Accelerated Industrial and Innovative Development (2010-14) that envisaged establishment of a transportation link between Europe and Asia with highway and railroad

infrastructure development; and a Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan that had resulted in more than 25% trade growth.

She concluded her remarks by inviting all participants to the two meetings and urged them to consider holding side events related to the review process.

During the opening session, Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, Senior Special Advisor to the President in the Office of the President of the General Assembly, took the opportunity to share his thoughts. He stated that the President of the General Assembly was very supportive of and has been very vocal in favour of countries in special needs. He indicated that the President would be willing and ready to provide support and leadership for the preparation and convening of the Ten-Year Review conference to be held in 2014. He assured participants not to hesitate calling upon the President's support whenever it was needed in the preparatory process.

C. The draft conceptual framework and Roadmap of the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action including suggested pre-conference events

Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Acting Director of UN-OHRLLS presented the concept note and roadmap of the conference and of the preliminary list of suggested pre-conference events. He emphasized that major changes had occurred since the APoA had been formulated and adopted in 2003 and these new developments need to be taken into account when designing a new programme of action. For example, he indicated that most LLDCs were becoming sources of energy and other natural resource based commodities which made them more vulnerable to commodity price volatility. Other new developments that were affecting LLDCs were climate change and austerity measures. He stressed that the review should take into account these new elements in order to develop a new agenda that would be more responsive to the needs of LLDCs.

Mr. Erdenebileg highlighted that the objectives of the Conference would include the following:

- 1) Comprehensively and critically assess the implementation of the APoA, with a view to identify effective international and domestic policies in light of the outcome of a comprehensive appraisal, as well as new and emerging challenges and opportunities and the means to address them, and develop a new common action-oriented strategic framework for the next decade;
- 2) Reaffirm the global commitment to addressing the special needs of the LLDCs, in particular those related to infrastructure development, transit and trade facilitation, and policy framework, in order to reduce prohibitive transit costs and enable those countries to fully participate in the global trade;
- 3) Mobilize additional international support measures in favour of the LLDCs, and in this regard, formulate and adopt a renewed partnership between the LLDCs, transit developing countries and their development partners.
- 4) Develop a more efficient monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the successful implementation of the new programme of action by an effective functioning of existing arrangements at national, sub-regional, regional and global levels.

He also put forward some key issues to be considered in the conference such as:

- 1) Harnessing international trade, trade facilitation and aid for trade
- 2) Boosting the private sector and increasing Foreign Direct Investment
- 3) Promoting regional and south-south cooperation
- 4) Bridging Infrastructure gaps

- 5) Harmonization and strengthening of the regulatory and legal framework pertaining to international transport and transit
- 6) Emerging issues including vulnerabilities to external shocks, climate change and food and fuel prices and economic and financial downturn.
- 7) Building productive capacity of the LLDCs
- 8) Reducing economic and social disparities

In presenting the roadmap, Mr Erdenebileg emphasized that the whole preparatory process should be transparent and inclusive, promoting dialogue with all stakeholders (Governments, UN System Organizations, international and regional development and financial institutions, private sector, academia, business community). He reiterated that the preparatory process would involve three tracks: Intergovernmental Track; United Nations and other international and regional organizations Track and the Private Sector Track. He underscored that LLDCs and transit developing countries should be involved in the preparatory phase and the conference itself.

He pointed out that the global review of the conference would be preceded by national, sub-regional and regional preparations. At the national level, LLDCs would be required to submit reports on the implementation of the APoA that would contribute to the enrichment of sub-regional and regional reports. At the sub-regional level, consultations would involve mostly regional economic communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Sub-regional meetings would be organized, where possible, with the ultimate objective of undertaking necessary consultations and coordination between LLDCs and their neighbouring transit countries, assess progress on transit transport issues, identify key challenges and recommend appropriate corrective measures.

At the regional level, the United Nations Regional Commissions would take the lead in the process of preparing and convening the Regional Reviews. The reviews would feed into the global preparations and outcome document. At the global level, the preparatory process would involve all the three tracks and would include a series of preconference events that will be held in the lead up to the Ten-Year Review conference. The United Nations, with the collaboration of all the other stakeholders, would undertake an intensive, focused and sustained advocacy strategy to raise awareness on the critical challenges faced by LLDCs and the need for appropriate international support measures.

Mr Erdenebileg indicated that at the conference in 2014 parallel thematic roundtables and side events would be organized. A parallel event – the Investment Forum – would be organized in the context of the private sector track. In addition an exhibition would also be organized.

Mr Erdenebileg presented the draft preliminary list of proposed thematic pre-conference events shown in table 1.

Table 1. Draft Preliminary List of Proposed Thematic Pre-Conference Events

<p>(1) International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid For Trade</p> <p>to be preceded by a Meeting of LLDC Ministers in charge of Trade</p>	<p><u>UN-OHRLLS</u> UNCTAD, World Bank, UNDP, WTO, UN regional commissions, WCO, ITC ...</p>	<p>Almaty, Kazakhstan, September 2012</p>
<p>(2) Implications of climate change, desertification and land degradation on LLDCs: adaptation and mitigation measures</p>	<p><u>UNFCCC, UNCCD, UN-OHRLLS</u> World Bank, UNDP ...</p>	<p>TBD – February 2013</p>

(3) Assessing the vulnerability of LLDCs to external shocks and developing vulnerability indicators for early warning purposes in LLDCs	<u>UN-OHRLLS</u> DESA, UNCTAD, UNDP, World Bank ...	TBD – 2013/14
(4) Infrastructure Development and Maintenance: Enhancing the role of the private sector	<u>World Bank</u> Asian Development Bank, African Development Bank, Inter American Development Bank, OHRLLS, UN regional commissions, IRU ...	TBD – <i>March-April 2013</i>
(5) Strengthening the legal framework for more efficient transit cooperation	<u>ECE, ECA, IRU, UN Office of Legal Affairs, OHRLLS</u> UNCTAD, World Bank, WCO ...	TBD – <i>June 2013</i>
(6) Enhancing productive capacities of LLDCs	<u>UNIDO</u> UNCTAD, ITU, ITC, OHRLLS ...	TBD – <i>September 2013</i>
(7) South-South Cooperation in transit transport	UNDP SU/SSC UNCTAD, OHRLLS ...	TBD – <i>November 2013</i>
(8) Enhancing international support measures for LLDCs	UN-OHRLLS, UNCTAD World Bank, Regional Development Banks, UN regional commissions, UNDP ...	TBD – <i>January 2014</i>
(9) High level event on Commodities Turning Commodity Dependence into Sustainable, Inclusive and Equitable Economic Growth for the LLDCs	<u>CFC, UNCTAD</u> OHRLLS ...	TBD – <i>March 2014</i>
(10) Investment Forum for LLDCs	<u>UNCTAD, World Bank/IFC</u> OHRLLS, Private Sector, Global Compact ...	TBD – <i>April 2014</i>
(11) Brainstorming Meeting to provide input into the identification of priorities of the New Programme of Action for LLDCs	<u>OHRLLS</u> UNCTAD, WB, ECA, ESCAP, UNDP, WTO, WCO, ITU, IRU, DESA, UN-Women, Academia, Private Sector, Resource Persons, Selected Experts from Member countries.	November / December 2012

Note: TBD – to be determined

In his closing remarks, Mr. Erdenebileg asked the participants to provide comments on the concept note, roadmap, and on the list of the pre-conference events. He also asked participants to indicate the areas in which they would like to provide their contributions.

D. Presentations by Partner Organizations

A representative of the UNECE, Mrs Eva Molnar indicated that they were organizing a ministerial conference in 2012; and in collaboration with OSCE, they had finalized the handbook on *Best Practices at Border Crossings: A trade and transport facilitation perspective* which can be used as a resource for the preconference events and the conference. She requested if the venue of the meeting was known and if resources will be made available for Regional reviews. She expressed their readiness to support the review process.

A representative of the **WTO**, Mr. Raul Torres highlighted that in the recently held Eighth Ministerial Conference of WTO, it had become clear that the Doha Development Agenda was unlikely to be completed as a single undertaking in 2012. Nevertheless, members had expressed their willingness to explore an early harvest on some issues depending on how the negotiations unfold. One of the issues highlighted as a good candidate for early harvest was trade facilitation, which was of particular importance for LLDCs. He also indicated that WTO was organizing a symposium on trade facilitation to be held in July 2012 and the outcome of the symposium can be used as background into the proposed meetings to be held in Kazakhstan in September 2012. He also pointed out that the next global review of Aid for Trade will be held in July 2013 and can be used as input into the review conference in 2014. He expressed their commitment to support the review process

A representative of the **UNESCAP**, Mr. Syed Nuruzzaman indicated that they had already started the preparations with the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the implementation of the *Almaty Programme of Action* and other development gaps faced by the Landlocked Developing Countries that was held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in April 2011. He specified that they will contribute towards the Review conference through studies, reports and the regional review meeting.

A representative of the **UNFCCC**, Mr. Motsomi Maletjane underscored that the Convention places special recognition to LLDCs in that they have special vulnerability to climate change. He indicated that the UNFCCC Secretariat has solid experience in supporting least developed countries to adapt to climate change, 15 of which are LLDCs, and that they will build on this to contribute towards the review. He further expressed that there exists an opportunity under the newly established national adaptation plans (NAPs) process, covering all developing countries, to tailor guidelines for formulating and implementing NAPs to the special needs of the LLDCs. He expressed their commitment and readiness to support the review process.

A representative of the **UNECA**, Ms. Marie Therese Guiebo, expressed the willingness and readiness of her organization to support the Ten-Year Review process and indicated that they were proposing a pre-conference event on strengthening the legal framework for road transport in Africa.

A representative of the **African Union Commission (AUC)**, Dr. Maurice Niaty-Mouamba indicated that the recently held African Union summit had mandated them to support African countries to establish an intergovernmental agreement on the Trans-African Highway and in this regard they were ready to work on the pre-conference event on strengthening the legal framework for road transport in Africa.

A representative of the **UNECLAC**, Mr. Ricardo Sanchez expressed the readiness of his organisation to support the review process. He indicated that UNECLAC would like to be part of the following pre-conference events: Infrastructure Development and Maintenance: Enhancing the role of the private sector; and Enhancing international support measures for LLDCs.

A representative of the **UNCTAD**, Mr Gunter Fischer emphasized that the new programme of action should take into account the broader problems of LLDCs including other economic and social problems such as climate change that is affecting usability of ports. UNCTAD stressed that the new development agenda for LLDCs should also put emphasis on south-south and triangular cooperation, FDI and the services sector. He expressed the willingness of his organization in supporting the review process and indicated that UNCTAD will produce technical written materials to be used for the review. He also enquired on the availability of resources to support the preparatory process.

A representative of the **UNDP**, Mr Paul Ladd explained that UNDP's current trade capacity development work is geared towards accelerating the integration of the Almaty Programme of Action priorities into relevant areas of work, including in the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) and Aid for Trade initiatives. He also stressed that UNDP stands ready to assist in the preparatory process leading to the comprehensive 10-year review of the APOA in 2014, including assisting in the follow up to the completion of national reports over 2012. He indicated that they would consider, following internal consultations, collaborating on the following pre-conference events: International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid For Trade; Implications of climate change, desertification and land degradation on LLDCs: adaptation and mitigation measures; and Assessing the vulnerability of LLDCs to external shocks and developing vulnerability indicators for early warning purposes in LLDCs. He stressed the importance of undertaking a thorough appraisal of the implementation of the APoA and expressed his organisation's commitment to support the process.

A representative of the **UNCCD**, Mr. Melchiade Bukuru pointed out that when the APoA was adopted, the issue of desertification was not included yet it affects the LLDCs. He stressed that most of the exports from LLDCs are agricultural and are dependent on land which is vulnerable to desertification. It was therefore very important to include the issues of desertification and land degradation in the new programme of action.

The representatives of the **World Bank**, Mr Gilles Alfandari, and Mr Jean-Francois Arvis, indicated their willingness to support the review process in different capacities including preparation of substantive work and resource persons. They indicated that their Trade cluster is already involved in work that is relevant to the review process and upon return to the headquarters; they will raise the involvement of other sectors.

A representative of the **Asian Development Bank**, Mr Alessandro Pio conveyed the readiness of his organization to support the review process. He indicated that the Bank has undertaken several relevant studies at national, sub-regional and regional levels, and had supported the integration of landlocked developing countries with the surrounding ones in both the Greater Mekong Subregion and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation initiative, and would be happy to make its experience available for the review process. He also indicated that the bank will share information on aid effectiveness and on time and transport costs in Asia. He also stressed that the service sector is important for the future development of LLDCs and that regional integration in the energy sector (for example through regional transmission lines and pipelines) can also significantly contribute to development and efficiency.

A representative of the **Common Fund for Commodities**, Mr Parvinder Singh indicated that the emerging challenges such as climate change and energy and food price volatility were affecting LLDCs. He stressed that measures to mitigate the impact of commodity price volatility needed to be put in place.

A representative of the **World Customs Organisation (WCO)**, Mr. Takashi Nakao expressed WCO's willingness to support the ten-year review process. The WCO has been supporting its members to implement trade facilitation measures which also cover transit procedures. Although some regional transit framework has been developed, some challenges in the implementation of the framework can be observed. He indicated that in this regard, the regional reviews were important and indicated the willingness of the WCO to be involved in their process.

A representative of the **International Road Union (IRU)**, Mr. Igor Rounov highlighted the projects that his organisation had and is undertaking to promote development of international road transport and trade and transport facilitation for example the "Afghan-transit" in Afghanistan; the Model Highway Initiative; electronic pre-declaration of goods in the Caucasus

and Central Asian states; Border Waiting Times Observatory; and “Transpark”. He indicated that IRU will contribute to the review process through: (1) Special Study on road transport in LLDCs; (2) Conference Perspectives of development of transport and transit in Central Asia and Caspian Region”, Ashgabat (May 2012); (3) 7th Eurasian Conference, Amman (June 2013); and (4) Special coordination meeting of international organisations and financial institutions as a side event of the Conference in 2014.

The **Economic Cooperation Organization** was represented by the Turkish Mission to the United Nations who is the current chair of the organisation. Mr Adnan Altay Altınörs, First Secretary of the Turkish Mission to the United Nations stressed that effective integration of LLDCs into the international markets is of great importance for their development. He emphasized that the comprehensive appraisal of the APoA is important for shaping the future agenda. In this regard, ECO was ready to cooperate and support the preparatory process.

The representative of the **International Trade Center (ITC)**, Ms. Helen Lassen expressed the readiness of her organisation to support the ten-year review process. She explained to the meeting the research activities that her organisation was undertaking to analyse the impact of non-tariff barriers in selected 27 developing countries that included 5 LLDCs. She indicated that the results of this work can form background material for the trade facilitation pre-conference event to be held in Kazakhstan.

The **Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)** could not be present in the meeting but sent their contribution by email. Mr Roel Janssens, a representative of OSCE indicated that *OSCE and UNECE had prepared a Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings: a Trade and Transport Facilitation Perspective* – a resource material that can be used for the ten year review and OSCE in particular would like to organize a special Handbook side-event on the occasion of one of the next meetings taking place in the framework of the Almaty Programme of Action Review Process. The OSCE is planning to support the Government of Turkmenistan and the IRU in organizing in May 2012 an *International Conference on Perspectives for the Development of Transport and Transit in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea Region*. OSCE will continue supporting activities aimed at promoting the establishment of multimodal transport and logistics systems, including further development of Euro-Asian transport links and corridors.

Summary of the plenary discussion

Participants expressed their support to the preparatory process and to the convening of the conference in 2014. They posed questions on the venue and dates of the Conference in 2014 and the availability of resources to be utilized in support of the preparatory process in particular regional reviews and pre-conference events.

Several participants including UNECE, IRU, WTO, UNESCAP, UNECA, AUC, OSCE and UNECLAC indicated relevant events that they were already planning to organize in for 2012 and 2013 that could be included as part of the preparatory process for the Review conference. They also suggested some of their planned activities that could be held as side events during the conference in 2014. Participants including UNECE, WTO, UNESCAP, UNECA, UNECLAC, UNDP, OSCE, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, IRU, WCO, UNCTAD and ITC also highlighted relevant activities, studies, reports and handbooks that they were currently preparing that could be used as key components or resources in the preparatory process of the conference and at the conference itself. Participants agreed to submit details of the events and the resource materials to OHRLLS after the meeting.

Participants acknowledged the importance of the early conclusion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations and stressed the importance of exploring issues that can yield early harvest to the LLDCs. They also highlighted the importance of Aid for trade and trade facilitation in supporting the economic development of LLDCs. Participants underscored the importance of south-south and triangular cooperation, foreign direct investment and economic specialization to LLDCs. They noted the importance of the service industry to boosting economic growth in LLDCs, since this sector did not have transport costs associated to it.

Participants also noted the special vulnerability of LLDCs to climate change and the negative impact that it had on LLDCs including exacerbating desertification and land degradation and the rise in sea-level that was affecting the usability of ports. They also noted that LLDCs were highly dependent on agriculture as a major source of foreign currency earnings. Agriculture in turn was dependent on land which is vulnerable to desertification. The volatility in commodity prices witnessed during the last three years particularly food commodities had an adverse impact on the food security of the countries. Measures to mitigate the impact of price volatility needed to be put in place. They indicated that given these broad range of development problems of LLDCs, it was important to recognize that there is need for a much broader/holistic approach to addressing the development problems of LLDCs. They underscored that these issues needed to be clearly addressed in the review process and in the new programme of action.

E. Briefing on the 4th Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries and the High-Level Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade to be held in Kazakhstan

Mr. Andre Nikwigize, Senior Programme Officer, UN-OHRLLS gave a short briefing on the two meetings to be held in Kazakhstan later in 2012. He provided details on the 4th Meeting of Trade Ministers of LLDCs indicating that a declaration would be adopted at the end of the meeting to provide input into the draft outcome document for the Review Conference. He highlighted the format of the High-Level Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade. He concluded his briefing by calling for the participation of all partner organisations and their substantive contributions to make the meetings a success. A concept paper on the two meetings will be circulated to participants for their inputs.

F. Summary of the consultations and closing remarks

In summarizing the presentations and discussion, the High Representative first responded to the questions posed by participants. With regard to the venue and host of the conference, he indicated that OHRLLS would be approaching a number of countries that could potentially host the conference and submit a short list to the Group of LLDCs to make a decision. With regard to financial resources to support the preparatory phase, he indicated that OHRLLS was planning to undertake a global resource mobilization activity and would use resources raised in this global campaign towards the preparatory activities. He also asked partners to financially support the process where possible.

Mr Diarra noted that the meeting had provided a clear message that there are some new issues that had emerged after the adoption of the APoA including climate change, worsening desertification and land degradation, the new international environment, the importance of the service industry, and the importance of south-south cooperation. He assured the meeting that these issues would be addressed in the review process.

He called upon the participants to submit in writing details of their contributions – ideas, initiatives, studies, reports/publications, pre-conference events, side events or concrete deliverables which addressed the needs of the LLDCs - and any other comments that they had on

the draft documents that had been presented to them. He encouraged all partners to take ownership and to be fully engaged in the process.

G. Way Forward

The meeting agreed on the following as a way forward.

1. Participants would send to OHRLLS detailed comments on the concept note, roadmap and the list of pre-conference events. They would also provide inputs and submit detailed proposals on their contributions towards the preparatory process of the conference and to the conference in 2014.
2. OHRLLS would provide on a routine basis an update to all partners on the progress being made and disseminate information on upcoming meetings.
3. Partners would be informed on the date of the next inter agency meeting to be held in the last quarter of 2012.

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ANNEX 2

Programme of Work for the Inter-Agency Consultative Group Meeting “Launching the Preparatory Process for the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action” 10 February 2012

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|-------------------|---|
| 10:00am – 10:45am | Opening of the Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Statement by Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.- Statement by H. E. Ambassador Jose Antonio Dos Santos, Permanent Representative of Paraguay to the United Nations and the Chairman of the LLDC Group.- Remarks by H.E. Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations on the 4th Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries, and the High-Level Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade to be held in Kazakhstan in September 2012. |
| 10:45am – 1:00pm | Consultations on the substantive and organizational preparations for the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action at sub-regional, regional and global levels. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Presentation of the draft conceptual framework and Roadmap including suggested pre-conference events by Mr. Sandagdorj Erdenebileg, Acting Director, UN-OHRLLS- Contributions/Comments by participating organisations- Discussion |
| 1:00pm - 3:00pm | Lunch |
| 3:00pm - 4:00pm | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Briefing on the 4th Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and the High-Level Meeting on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade to be held in Kazakhstan by Mr. Andre Nikwigize, Senior Programme Officer, UN-OHRLLS.- Contributions and comments by participating organisations- Discussion |
| 4:00 pm – 5:30pm | Summary of the consultations and closing remarks and by Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative. |