

Linking LLDCs to regional infrastructure networks

Side Event at the 2nd United Nations Conference on the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

5 November 2014

Venue: Vienna International Centre, Vienna, Austria

Tentative timeslot: Day 3, 5 November 2014, 1.15-2.45 pm (1.5 hrs)

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction

ESCAP in cooperation with ECA, ECE and ECLAC will organize the side event on *“Linking Landlocked Developing countries to regional infrastructure networks”* in Vienna, Austria on 5 November 2014 during the Second United Nations Conference on the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs). The side event will be organized as a high level panel discussion on challenges and strategies to improve LLDCs connectivity to regional infrastructure networks, including energy, ICT and transport. This is part of the UN Regional Commissions’ goal of creating transformative land-linking opportunities for LLDCs.

I. Background

1. LLDCs depend crucially on access to and existence of the regionally cohesive transport, energy and ICT infrastructure networks to gain access to the global market of goods, services, information, knowledge and innovations and to increase their participation in the global production and supply chains. Such access has become a key component of international competitiveness and therefore of the benefits LLDCs can expect from their participation in the global economy. Connectivity is also a key ingredient in building resilience to economic shocks and natural disasters, to which many LLDCs are highly vulnerable.
2. Large variations exist among LLDCs in terms of access, affordability and availability of networked infrastructure, with some countries having made significant progress and having become better connected over the past decade. However all LLDCs face similar challenges and overall, face inherently higher costs when connecting to international hubs in energy, transport and ICT.

II. Objectives

The objective of the high level panel on “*Linking Landlocked Developing countries to regional infrastructure networks*” is to discuss LLDC’s specific, but common challenges and to propose solutions for more cohesive regional transport, energy and ICT infrastructure networks. The event will review good practices that emerged during implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, assess areas where business remains unfinished and identify strategies, including the opportunities offered by innovative financing partnerships for better connectivity and regional integration initiatives. Particular attention will be given to institutional mechanisms and regulatory regimes that can most effectively promote an augmentation of existing infrastructure capacity through enhanced efficiencies.

Key Questions:

- *What are the specific but common challenges and good practices that emerged during implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.*
- *Where is the unfinished business and what investment priorities lies ahead?*
- *What is the nature of the financing gaps?*
- *What are the innovative and productive approaches and partnerships, including at the regional level, that are emerging?*
- *How can cross-sectoral synergies be harnessed to augment existing infrastructure?*

III. Format

The side event will be organized as a high level panel discussion. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP will deliver a key note address and will moderate the panel, which will be composed by high level officials from LLDCs. The panel will answer questions from the floor and via twitter.

Key note address and Moderator:

Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP

Panellists:

Heads of States and Ministers, Landlocked Developing Countries (tbc)
