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AFFAIRS, BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ON BEHALF OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE
SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES
NOVEMBER 3-5, 2014
Vienna, Austria**

On behalf of the United States and President Barack Obama, I would like to thank the Government of Austria for hosting and organizing this important conference on landlocked developing countries (LLDCs).

I would also like to commend the United Nations offices and agencies, as well as other intergovernmental organizations that have worked in partnership to develop the conference's program and content, and for leveraging your expertise into meaningful action on the ground for LLDCs.

Thanks also to representatives from the private sector and NGO community for participating in this conference. All countries – developing and developed alike – benefit from the innovative spirit, technological ingenuity, human capital, networks, and leadership of non-governmental actors on the global stage. Likewise, we recognize that the private sector, including both foreign investment and domestic enterprise capacity in landlocked countries, plays a crucial role in inclusive economic development.

The intergovernmental process that culminates this week has served to highlight the unique challenges faced by LLDCs, but also to specify the important roles that LLDCs themselves, transit countries, and development partners can play as we work together to better integrate LLDCs into the global economy. We applaud all participants for their efforts and congratulate the international community for its support for this important process.

The United States is committed to working with landlocked developing countries and their immediate neighbors to mitigate the unique geographical challenges that inhibit the sustainable development their economies.

In addition, we support the LLDCs process as a complementary effort to the Third International Conference on financing for development, the UNFCCC and the post-2015 development agenda.

The United States strongly supported the Almaty Program of Action, and since its adoption in 2003 has deployed more than \$44 billion dollars in official development assistance and other trade-related capacity building support in furtherance of Almaty's goals, with particular emphasis on helping developing countries become effective players in the global economy. In 2013 alone, United States aid to LLDCs totaled more than \$7 billion dollars.

Their relative geographic isolation means that LLDCs face higher transport and transaction costs in global trade. Institutional weaknesses and infrastructure shortcomings at the national and regional levels magnify these costs, making many landlocked developing countries less competitive as exporters and less attractive as markets.

The links between expanded trade and development have been well-documented, and the experience of the last several decades has served to reinforce the importance of trade for inclusive and sustainable growth. In the Monterrey Consensus and Doha Declaration, the international community recognized trade as an effective engine for development, and highlighted the need for trade-related capacity building (TCB) in developing countries.

Regional cooperation is one of the most effective ways to spread trade benefits widely among landlocked and transit countries. The United States has actively encouraged and supported regional cooperative programs, and we are pleased that regional cooperation ^{has been} so strongly emphasized throughout this process.

Many LLDCs are in Africa, and helping African countries remains a high priority for the United States. In 2013, United States assistance to landlocked African countries was over \$3.1 billion dollars.

At the Africa Leaders' Summit, hosted in Washington, DC in August of this year, the United States announced \$33 billion in new trade and investments to help spur African development. Concurrently, we aim to bring electricity to 60 million African homes and businesses through new commitments to our Power Africa initiative. Many of these efforts will benefit LLDCs in Africa.

In Central Asia, home to a number of LLDCs, the United States supports a range of regional economic cooperation initiatives. In ~~FY14~~^{In the past year} alone, we dedicated \$16 million to improving trade, transit and investment opportunities by helping to advance the legal and regulatory framework in each country as well as the nuts and bolts or "hardware" of reliable roads, railways, bridges, and border crossing facilities.

Working to increase regional connections among the people of Central Asia is exactly what the U.S. Government envisioned when we launched our New Silk Road initiative three years ago. The New Silk Road supports a network of economic and transit connections running across and between Central Asia, South Asia, and beyond. These initiatives are critical to promoting regional prosperity. But they also bring about a range of other benefits. Countries that trade together also tend to have greater levels of peace, tolerance and stability.

These and other commitments underscore our commitment to helping LLDCs overcome the unique challenges to their development. However, while the assistance of donor countries is important, the United States, ~~the United States~~, in retaining the spirit of Almaty, will look primarily to LLDCs and transit countries to exercise strategic leadership, prioritize effectively, and ensure the effective implementation of this conference's outcome. The United States shares the hope that through such leadership and focused efforts of all developing countries, including those that are landlocked, will move closer to lasting prosperity.

Thank you.