

**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND
SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (UN-OHRLLS)**

COORDINATED TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAMME
IN TRANSPORT AND TRADE FACILITATION

(High-level Meeting, 29-31 March 2005, Almaty, Kazakhstan)

**I. Mandate by the International Ministerial Conference on Transit Transport
Cooperation (August 2003, Almaty, Kazakhstan)**

Pursuant to UN General Assembly resolution 57/242 of 20 December 2002, the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked¹ and Transit Developing Countries² and Donor Countries and International Financial and Developing Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan in August 2003.

The Conference unanimously adopted the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries, and the Almaty Ministerial Declaration. Subsequently, the General Assembly endorsed the Almaty Programme of Action and the Almaty Ministerial Declaration at its 58th session in its resolution A/58/Res/201.

The Almaty Programme of Action is unique with its focus on action-oriented specific actions to be undertaken by both landlocked and transit developing countries with the support of their development partners. Its implementation would be feasible and measurable. The Programme is a well-balanced document reflecting the interests of both landlocked and transit developing countries to provide a win-win opportunity for them in establishing efficient transit systems. It recognized that trade and transport are inextricably linked. Transport is a key sector for international trade, for regional integration and for ensuring a balanced national development. These specific actions will be implemented in five priority areas, namely fundamental transit policy issues, infrastructure development and maintenance, international trade and trade facilitation, international support measures, and implementation and review.

The General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 59/245 adopted at its 59th session emphasized the role of the international organizations for the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. In the same resolution the General Assembly invited the organizations, including the World Bank, World Customs Organization, World Trade Organization, UNCTAD and the United Nations Regional Commissions to integrate the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in their relevant work programme.

¹ Landlocked developing countries: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Macedonia, Malawi, Mali, Moldova, Mongolia, Nepal, Niger, Paraguay, Rwanda, Swaziland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

² Transit developing countries: Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, China, Congo (Democratic Republic of), Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Senegal, Somalia, Thailand, Togo, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

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The General Assembly also called upon on these organizations to extend technical assistance to landlocked and transit developing countries in well coordinated manner in their efforts to establish efficient transit transport systems.

The Almaty Conference entrusted the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) with the mandate to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. In particular, in paragraph 51 of the Almaty Programme of Action, the Office of the High Representative was requested to, inter alia, “enhance its cooperation and coordination with organizations within the United Nations system, particularly those engaged in operational activities on the ground in landlocked and transit developing countries, to ensure effective implementation of the Programme of Action”. The General Assembly also reiterated the same mandate in its resolution 59/245.

In the framework agreement of the WTO agreed in August 2004 it was decided to include the trade facilitation in the Doha round of trade negotiations. The Framework agreement emphasized the need of developing countries for technical assistance in trade facilitation and in their participation in negotiations on trade facilitation.

II. Need for and Purpose of the Coordinated Technical Cooperation Programme

- While improvement of transport infrastructure is a long-term project, trade facilitation measures are crucial in increasing the efficiency of the use of existing facilities by simplifying the requirements, harmonizing the procedures and documentations, standardizing commercial practices, and introducing agreed codes for presentation of information elements. There is increased awareness of the need for well-coordinated, coherent and systematic technical assistance in the area of transport and trade facilitation. There is also a strong need for coordination and coherence at the national and sub-regional levels.
- Coordinated technical cooperation activities should be designed in a way to enhance synergies among participating agencies and trade facilitation efforts at the national and sub-regional levels;
- The coordinated technical cooperation activities seek to increase the benefits that landlocked and transit developing countries derive from the technical assistance in the area of transport and trade facilitation. It will also lead to coordination and coherence at the national and sub-regional levels;
- Technical assistance in the area of transport and trade facilitation should be demand driven by the landlocked and transit developing countries. Account should be taken thereby of differences in levels of development, economic and trade structure, sub-regional integration and the geographical location.
- Ownership by each landlocked and transit developing country over the technical assistance should be enhanced. In this regard, the role of the national transport and trade facilitation boards or committees should be further enhanced. The national trade facilitation boards should play a key role in determining the need for coordinated technical cooperation assistance in consultation with the participating agencies.

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III. Elements of the Coordinated Technical Cooperation Programme

Paragraph 41 of the Almaty Programme of Action lays down the following areas of priority for technical assistance:

- Promoting the implementation of agreed bilateral, sub regional, and international transit agreements and assisting Governments in elaborating the implications of acceding to the relevant international conventions;
- Encouraging the exchange of experience related to the development and management of transit transport systems in different regions;
- Promoting and implementing privatization programmes within the transport sector, where appropriate;
- Establishing training programmes, inter alia, in the area of customs, including documentation and transit procedures, freight forwarding and clearing of transit cargo, infrastructure and equipment maintenance, road safety, environmental protection in the transit transport sector, transit insurance, dry port development and management, and expanding regional databases on road transport;
- Implementation of trade facilitation projects aiming at simplifying, streamlining and standardizing import, export and customs procedures and related capacity-building of particular human resources.

IV. Steps and Implementation Progress

- Coordinated technical cooperation activities will be based on an assessment of the needs for assistance in the area of transport and trade facilitation at the national and sub-regional levels. The needs assessment will be conducted jointly by the participating agencies in close cooperation and involvement of the individual landlocked and transit developing countries, in particular their national trade facilitation and transport boards or committees;
- Based on the needs assessment or diagnostic studies, list of priority areas for technical cooperation assistance for individual sub-regions and landlocked and transit developing countries will be prepared. The list will be considered at the meeting of the Steering Group for its adoption. The priority areas for technical cooperation assistance will also be considered at the sub-regional meetings.
- Each landlocked and transit developing countries is encouraged to establish, where appropriate, or strengthen national trade and transport boards or committees involving all major stakeholders, including the private sector in accordance with paragraph 37 of the Almaty Programme of Action. The agencies will provide necessary technical assistance and guidance in this regard to landlocked and transit developing countries;
- Upon request made by the governments of individual landlocked and transit developing countries in accordance with the transport and trade facilitation needs at the

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sub-regional level, the technical assistance will be provided by the individual agencies or jointly.

IV. Coordination and Monitoring of the Implementation

- Coordination among participating agencies at the global level would be promoted through Steering Group consisting of senior officials from these agencies;
- Global Trade Facilitation Forum of the World Bank will be broadly used for providing synergies in technical cooperation programmes offered by these agencies.
- The Steering Group will meet at least once a year back-to-back to the meeting of the Global Trade Facilitation Forum. The purpose of the annual meeting is to review each country and sub-regional level coordinated technical cooperation activities. The results will be reported to the General Assembly of the United Nations through an annual report of the Secretary-General on the progress in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action;
- Regional Economic Communities will also be broadly used;
- National trade facilitation boards or committees in each landlocked and transit developing countries would carry out implementation of the specific technical cooperation activities in close coordination and involvement of the relevant ministries and agencies.

V. Financing of Coordinated Technical Cooperation Activities

- Each participating agencies shall finance from its resources those technical cooperation activities for which it has taken the responsibility during the needs assessment exercise. Each agencies may also seek additional resources to replenish its funds for the technical cooperation;
- Extra-budgetary funds will be mobilized in the Trust Fund established by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for supporting follow-up activities of the Almaty International Ministerial Conference. The resources of the Trust Fund will be used for funding the coordinated technical cooperation programme.

VI. Participating Agencies and Entities for the Coordinated Technical Cooperation Programme

- United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States;
- World Bank;
- World Trade Organization;
- World Customs Organization;
- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development;
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe;

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- United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific;
- United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean;
- United Nations Development Programme;
- International Road Transport Union.