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UN-OHRLLS

Statement by

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High Representative

and

Under-Secretary-General

**Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and
Small Island Developing States**

at

**Training Workshop for Policy Makers from LLDCs and Transit
Countries, Strengthening capacity to design and implement policies
and identify solutions that promote transport connectivity for the
achievement of the SDGs**

Euro-Asia region

30 September 2021 02:00 am NY time

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I warmly welcome you all to this training Workshop.

Today's training is part of our long-running efforts to bring countries and experts together around the important issue of transport connectivity for LLDCs in the context of achieving the SDGs.

The aim is to share best practice.

To learn from one another and to establish deliverable plans.

I am grateful to representatives of United Nations system organizations and other partners for their active involvement in supporting this important training.

I would applaud everyone here representing their countries for your commitment to enhance transport connectivity in your regions.

Distinguished participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

In his speech to the General Assembly last week, the Secretary-General said,

“The best way to advance the interests of one's own citizens is by advancing the interests of our common future.”

This is why we are here today.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires an urgent improvement to sustainable transport solutions in developing countries.

Improved transit and transport connectivity is also at the heart of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries.

If “no-one left behind” means anything at all – then surely it must mean dramatically improved transport connectivity across these nations.

We know that the transport sector has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, in both the LLDCs and transit countries.

We know too that pre-existing challenges have been exacerbated still further, such as:

High transport costs;
Cumbersome border procedures;
And inadequate transport infrastructure.

To meet these challenges, we must forge stronger cooperation between LLDCs and their neighbours.

Distinguished participants,

We must build transport systems that are resilient to the impacts of external shocks - whether it be climate change, natural disasters, public health emergencies, or global economic downturns.

Today's training will cover the importance of 'soft infrastructure' - including how to establish legal and regulatory frameworks that promote efficient transit transport.

Above all, I hope that you will share innovative solutions that are already being successfully applied. Solutions that can be adapted, scaled, or localized to yield concrete results.

Regional initiatives such as the Asia Highway Network and Trans-Asia Railway Network have improved connectivity and closed missing links.

The trilateral cooperation for the development of the China-Russia-Mongolia economic corridor is an example of neighbouring countries working together.

This will increase trade, strengthen transit cooperation, and build infrastructure. It is particularly important for Mongolia, a landlocked nation, between two giants.

There is the saying that "beautiful words put no porridge in the pot". And so, in that spirit, I can assure you that the lessons we will impart today are extremely practical.

I should state that today's training is being implemented as part of a project entitled, *Strengthening the capacity of Landlocked Developing Countries under the "Belt and Road Initiative"*.

I thank all our partners who have made this possible.

My Office is implementing this project in partnership with the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions – including:

- the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
- the Economic Commission for Africa,
- the Economic Commission for Europe,
- and the Economic Commission for Latin America & the Caribbean.

We are also collaborating with the Asian Development Bank and other partners that are with us today.

The project is funded by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Sub-Fund - of the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund, for which the Government of the People's Republic of China provided the financial contribution.

Looking ahead, the Second UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference will be held in October, from 14th to the 16th. It will be hosted by the Government of China as a hybrid format that is both virtual and in person.

There will be a dedicated session on countries in special situations and OHRLLS is organizing a virtual side event. Details will be shared with you during this workshop.

The United Nations system, and UN-OHRLLS, will continue to support your efforts to enhance transport connectivity. And to implement the Vienna Programme of Action, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We have heard a great deal about the need to build bridges in recent days – it strikes me that this event is where that metaphor meets reality.

I wish you a successful learning experience.