

Informal stock-taking meeting of the Economic and Social Council on the Second UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries

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Statement By

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Mr. President,

A lot of very correct things have been said about the importance of the Second Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries and its outcomes aimed at promoting their development. We would like to emphasize what we think is essential.

It is obvious that no matter how ambitious the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action for the Decade 2014-2024, they alone will not remove the many obstacles that the Landlocked countries still face on the road to sustainable development. What matters, in our view, is concrete action to be taken by those countries themselves and their partners in order to achieve real change in the six inter-dependent priority areas for sustainable development.

In this context, I would like to present the Russian approaches to the implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action for the Decade 2014-2024 based on the Priority Areas.

Structural Economic Reform

We believe that technical and financial assistance to landlocked countries will remain the cornerstone for structural reform in those countries. Therefore, we will continue to provide assistance to them through bilateral and multilateral channels, including on the UN indicators of ODA provision.

International Trade

Russia intends to contribute to the entry into force of the 2013 Bali Agreement on the Facilitation of Trade Procedures and the implementation of the “Trade for Development” initiative. We support the proposal to approve the Working Programme for LLDCs at the 10th Ministerial Conference of WTO this year. We are also ready to provide the necessary consultative support to those landlocked

countries that are at the stage of negotiating their accession to the WTO to accelerate the completion of that process.

Transport Transit

It is our understanding that the creation of land transport corridors that could compete with sea transportation in terms of costs and time and effectively service trade with LLDCs is a major factor of trade integration of those countries.

Following this logic, over the last few years, Russia has been financing a project on the development of Eurasian transport networks in the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE). Also in the framework of UN ECE, we have initiated the development of a unified railway law and the modernization of certain transport conventions.

In 2013, Russia played an active role in the preparation and signing of UN ESCAP agreement on “dry ports”, which marked the formation of basic configuration of transport law in the region. Together with Kazakhstan and Mongolia, we started the formulation of draft agreement on transport transit. That agreement will become the first international legal instrument in UN ESCAP that will enable a landlocked country – Mongolia - to directly access sea ports thus linking it with major trade and transport routes.

Regional Integration and Cooperation

We view economic integration as a means enabling landlocked countries to diversify their economic ties, reduce administrative trade barriers, develop productive cooperation, effectively participate in the division of labor and expand the consumer market.

You certainly know that on 1 January 2015, the Eurasian Economic Union came into being, which is the highest form of integration of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kirghizstan. It means that the region’s largest market of goods, services, and labour for approximately 175 million people. Except Russia, all the members of the new Union are landlocked. The opportunities that are opening for them in trade in the framework of a common Customs territory and the use of the Russian sea and land transport systems (first of all, Northern Sea Route, Baikal-Amur and Trans-Siberian railways, North-South Road Corridor) are expected to catalyze strong economic growth in the Member States of the Union and the countries bordering them.

Infrastructure Development

In recent years, the Eurasian Development Bank has fully deployed its work. Along with Russia, landlocked Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan and Tajikistan are members of the Bank. The Bank's portfolio contains large projects on railway transport in Kazakhstan (more than 100 million dollars) and electricity in Kirghizstan. In total, in the next ten years, the Bank plans to allocate approximately 5 billion dollars for infrastructure projects.

Anticipating possible questions, we would like to point out that the Eurasian Economic Union is open organization. We are open for all partners who are interested in real equal and mutually beneficial cooperation and are ready to take the obligations that arise from its legal and normative base. To those who are interested in cooperating with the Members of the Eurasian Union we can propose all the advantages of a common market.

In conclusion, we would like to stress Russia's commitment to interstate cooperation with the landlocked countries. We are ready to use our vast political and economic resources and expert potential for consistent implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and improving the competitiveness of landlocked countries and their full integration into the world economy.

Thank you.