



## Press Release

### **Agreement signed between United Nations and International Road Transportation Union to strengthen implementation plan of action for landlocked developing countries**

Geneva, 15 April - The United Nations Office for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) on Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the International Road Transportation Union (IRU) that would see greater cooperation between the two bodies in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) - an ambitious 10-year plan of action for the world's 32 landlocked developing countries (LLDCs).

The agreement identified avenues for possible cooperation with a view to leveraging their respective strengths to work together toward the implementation of the VPoA, namely through activities and events that will assist and promote the strengthening of legal frameworks, the improvement of transport infrastructure, easing of border crossings and development of regional corridors under the goal to facilitate transport and trade for LLDCs.

The MoU, was signed in Geneva by the UN-OHRLLS USG Gyan Chandra Acharya and the IRU President Janusz Lacny. It aims to create awareness and provide recommendations to Member States, government organisations and other stakeholders on key issues and activities related to transit and transport including improving border crossings, developing regional transport corridors and facilitating trade, focusing on LLDCs and their transit partners. It also identifies strategies to bring to the attention of Member States existing legal frameworks on transit and transport in order to provide guidance on the effective application of international conventions. A key consideration agreed to is the provision of assistance to LLDCs and transit neighbours in building capacity to improve transport operations.

Signatories to the agreement highlighted that the framework emphasises the need for a strengthened legal framework, including accession to the Convention on International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) and the ratification of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement, and other issues of transit transport to member states and relevant stakeholders.

As mandated by the United Nations General Assembly, UN-OHRLLS coordinates the follow-up, effective monitoring and reporting of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action as well as advocating the special needs and challenges these countries face on national, regional and global levels. The VPoA was adopted by Member States in Vienna, Austria in November 2014.

The IRU is the global voice of the road transport industry with a mission to facilitate road transport worldwide and ensure its sustainable development, notably through promoting and implementing UN legal instruments in the area of trade and transport facilitation, increasing professional competence through vocational training, elaborating appropriate technical standards and recommendations, promoting regional economic integration and cooperating with international organisations.

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