Concept Note

Seminar on the Importance of Key Trade and Transport Conventions

10:00-13:00, 9 May 2016
Conference Room 1, UNHQ

The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), in collaboration with UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and International Road Transport Union (IRU) is organizing a seminar to discuss how to advance the ratification and implementation of key international conventions to facilitate transit transport and trade.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda acknowledge that international trade is an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction and contributes to the promotion of sustainable development. However, high cost of trade constrain the trade potential of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). Due to their geographical location, inadequate transport and transit infrastructure and cumbersome border crossing procedures, LLDCs pay on average almost double the cost of costal countries to export and import.

Besides building physical infrastructure and connectivity, the effective implementation of a conducive legal framework is a prerequisite to reducing the high costs of trade and improving the export competitiveness of LLDCs. The Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 (VPoA) stresses the need to promote harmonization, simplification and standardization of rules and documentation, including the full and effective implementation of international conventions on transport and transit as well as bilateral, sub-regional and regional agreements. Effective co-operation of LLDCs and the transit developing countries and promotion of an enabling legal environment are mutually beneficial for making transit transport and trade efficient and effective.

Several key international conventions that offer legal and regulatory framework to facilitate transit transport and trade at the international level will be highlighted in the 2016 Treaty Event to be held at the margins of the 71st United Nations General Assembly. Such instruments include the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets, Customs Convention on Containers and Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles, among others. The ratification and effective implementation of these legal instruments remains low at the global level and among the LLDCs and transit countries.

The objective of the seminar is to raise awareness and understanding of the process, potential benefits and implications of accession to international conventions related to facilitation of transport and trade. The meeting will in particular inform participants about the key Conventions that are relevant to the LLDCs that will be featured in the 2016 Treaty Event, with a view to encourage countries to ratify and implement the legal instruments.

All Member States are invited to attend. For more information, please contact Ms. Dagmar Hertova, UN-OHRLLS, tel: 212-963-5439, email: hertova@un.org.