



Sustainable transport key to achieving development goals for the world's landlocked developing countries

Press Release

Santa Cruz, 13 October 2016 – High level officials, upon the invitation of the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, are gathering in Santa Cruz, Bolivia today to assess the progress made by the 32 landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) in achieving sustainable transport. The two day meeting is set to address ways in which efficient, reliable and sustainable transport systems can be reinforced for landlocked developing countries, which are often long distances from the sea and face disproportionately high transport and transaction costs.

The High-Level Meeting on Sustainable Transport of LLDCs is jointly organized by the Government of Bolivia, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Ministers of transport from landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries are in attendance, in addition to development partners, representatives of the UN system, regional organizations, financial institutions, private sector, civil society and the media.

“During these two days we will discuss important issues related to one of the biggest obstacles faced by our countries, the lack of infrastructure for transport, transport costs and trade for our countries,” said H.E. Evo Morales, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Discussions will focus on ways in which policy coherence can be strengthened between the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the area of transport. The event is set to identify new strategies, cooperation initiatives and policy recommendations on how to develop and further improve transit transport systems, strengthen cooperation, enhance mobilization of financing for infrastructure development and maintenance and promote sustainable transport in landlocked developing countries. Recommendations from the meeting are expected to consolidate the perspectives of the LLDCs ahead of the first global sustainable transport conference to be held from 26-27 November 2016 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

“Sustainable transport is a vital lifeline which feeds the economic and social development of landlocked developing countries,” said Gyan Chandra Acharya, Under-Secretary-General and High-Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. “It is essential that, landlocked developing countries and their transit partners establish sound and productive partnerships which can propel these countries towards sustainable prosperity for all.”

LLDCs pay twice the costs of trade compared to their transit neighbours and these costs have been increasing over time, which intensify their comparative disadvantages relative to other developing countries. Higher trade related costs, including transport continue to pose major challenges to fully integrating with the world economy. Consequently, the share of global exports from LLDCs was estimated to have been less than 1 per cent in 2015.

“Enhanced transport, mobility and connectivity are indispensable investments vital for overcoming the geographical constraints of land-lockedness, and thus linking the LLDCs to both regional and global markets,” said H.E. Brian Mushimba, Zambia’s Minister of Transport and Communications. Also speaking in his capacity as Chair of the LLDCs Group, the Minister called on all landlocked countries to ratify the Multilateral Agreement on the establishment of the International Think Tank for the LLDCs.

Closing the existing infrastructure gap in LLDCs, and transit developing countries, is central to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for the LLDCs. It will require innovative financing from all sources, including public, private, public-private partnerships, ODA, South-South and Triangular cooperation.

While challenges remain, important progress is being made by the LLDCs and their partners including through regional infrastructure activities and the development of transport corridors to address challenges arising from fragmented national transport policies. Governments and multilateral financing institutions have invested in the development and enhancement of corridors in order to stimulate regional economic development. The Trans-Asian Railway, Asian Highway network and Trans-African Highway for example connect many LLDCs to internationally recognized regional corridors.

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