Driving Trade Competitiveness and Economic Diversification and inclusion of Landlocked Countries in Global Trade through Trade Facilitation

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Perspective from ESCAP and the Asia-Pacific region

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Progress in implementing trade facilitation

Highlights from the *UN Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2019 [forthcoming at untfsurvey.org]*

- Asia-Pacific LLDCs lagging behind the regional average in implementation…
- But very diverse TF performance across LLDCs (e.g., Azerbaijan among top regional performer)
- Good progress in implementation of WTO TFA related measures (e.g., Tajikistan now has one of the very best national trade portal)
- Measures among the least implemented:
  - Conduct and publication of time release studies (i.e., TF monitoring)
  - Sectoral measures (TF measures for SMEs, TF measures for agricultural trade…)
  - Paperless trade (Single Window) and **Cross-Border Paperless Trade**
Selected Asia-Pacific initiatives aimed at enhancing trade facilitation and regional integration relevant to LLDCs

- Many promising initiatives, e.g.:  
  - Belt and Road Initiative / Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank  
  - Central Asia Regional Cooperation Initiative & South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (ADB-led)  
  - Eurasian Economic Union  

- UN ESCAP initiatives:  
  - Asian Highway Agreement / Asian Railway Agreement /Asian Dry Port Agreement  
  - Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific
Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

- A UN treaty dedicated to accelerating trade digitalization
- Open to 53 ESCAP member states, including all LLDCs
- Complementary and supportive of FULL and DIGITAL implementation of the WTO TFA
- Cross-border paperless trade expected to cut trade costs by 25%
- Designed to support countries at ALL levels of readiness
- Pilot projects and capacity building provisions
- 25 countries engaged in developing implementation roadmap
- Armenia first LLDC to sign in 2017; Azerbaijan first LLDC to accede to the treaty in 2018
- More info online at: https://www.unescap.org/resources/framework-agreement-facilitation-cross-border-paperless-trade-asia-and-pacific
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Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific

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ABSTRACT

Facilitating Cross-border Paperless Trad...