

**OPENING REMARKS BY H.E. BATMUNKH BATTSETSEG,
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MONGOLIA, AT THE
OPENING SESSION OF THE MEETING ON BEST PRACTICES IN CORRIDOR
DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT FOR THE BENEFITS OF LLDCS AND
TRANSIT COUNTRIES
(Ulaanbaatar, 29 October, 2019)**

Your Excellency F.K.Utoikamanu, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island States,

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by welcoming you all to the Meeting on Best Practices in Corridor Development and Management for the Benefits of LLDCs and Transit Countries. My special thanks goes to the United Nations Office of High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island States for co-organizing the Meeting.

The creation of economic corridors as instruments of international cooperation in transport, logistics, trade and other spheres of activity is an important area of development of neighboring countries. In this context, Mongolia has been cooperating with its two transit neighbors bilaterally and trilaterally. Over the last several years Mongolia has concluded several important bilateral and trilateral agreements, such as Intergovernmental Agreement on Road Transportation along the Asia Highway Network, Intergovernmental Agreement on the Access to and from the Sea and Transit Transportation through Chinese Territory by Mongolia and Intergovernmental Agreement between the Governments of Mongolia and the Russian Federation on Terms for Rail Freight Transit Transportation.

Today one of the main priorities of the Government of Mongolia is to implement the trilateral “Mongolia-Russia-China Economic Corridor Program”. There have been a series of the trilateral summit meetings that were designed to give the overall guidance to the implementation of the Program. The inter-agency consultations at the vice-ministerial level have been instrumental in overseeing the implementation process. These efforts are beginning to bear fruits. Between 2016 and 2018, the number of transit trains from China to Russia and Europe through the Mongolian territory has tripled.

Recognizing the important role of infrastructure in reducing high trading costs and improving competitiveness, the Government of Mongolia attaches greater attention to infrastructure development within the country. In order to develop sufficient and efficient capacities for transshipment, the Zamiin-Uud regional logistics center was established with capacity to handle 5 million tonnes per year. The construction of new rail projects, such as the Tavantolgoi-Gashuunsukhait and Tavantolgoi-Zuunbayan, is under way.

Despite the above mentioned achievements, Mongolia is still facing significant challenges. Expanding and upgrading road, railway transport and border crossing infrastructure remains to be the biggest challenge due to the magnitude of the resources required to invest in infrastructure development and maintenance. In addition, we still encounter capacity constraints to make full use of the relevant international conventions and bilateral agreements.

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a group, LLDCs need to further strengthen coordination and experience sharing among ourselves. Through concerted and coordinated efforts, we can strengthen our collective voice at the international level. In this regard, I would like to draw your kind attention to Mongolia's initiative to form a LLDCs group at the WTO. I propose to conduct consultations on this issue through our missions in Geneva.

At the same time, support and active cooperation with transit countries is of utmost importance to address the special development needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries. More work and increased attention is needed to fully and effectively implement the international conventions and bilateral agreements that offer better conditions for transit transportation of LLDCs. It is useful to conduct a joint study by landlocked developing countries and transit countries on the implementation of Vienna Programme of Action and the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The joint study may focus on finding effective and integrated solutions of cross-border trade and transit transport problems. In addition to this, we support the establishment of a high-level coordinating body between landlocked developing countries and transit countries which will be an effective way-out to facilitate smooth and efficient transit for landlocked developing countries.

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The objectives of the meeting are to provide all present here with a forum to discuss and share experience the state of institutional arrangements of existing transit transport corridors, share knowledge of successful models and best practices and provide recommendations to facilitate the development, functioning and effective management of corridors.

The meeting agenda is well structured around many important topics, such as the concept and functions of corridors, their role in international trade, experiences on the ways of collaboration between LLDCs and transit countries on development and management of corridors, legal frameworks for corridor operations, best practices of corridors and financing for corridor development. These will undoubtedly contribute to successful corridor development and management for landlocked developing countries and transit countries.

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Taking this opportunity, I wish to recognize the good work that the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries has carried out. I am confident that the International Think Tank will continue to serve an important platform for knowledge sharing, deepen collaboration and generate knowledge and develop analytical tools to utilize our common opportunities and overcome our common challenges.

With these remarks, I wish you all fruitful deliberations over the next two days.

Thank you for your kind attention.