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**Statement by  
His Excellency Dr. Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury  
Hon'ble Foreign Adviser (Foreign Minister) of Bangladesh at the High-level  
plenary meeting of the General Assembly devoted to the midterm review of  
the Almaty Programme of Action for LLDCs, 2 October 2008, 3:00-6:00pm  
General Assembly Hall**

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Mr. President,

Let me begin by commending you for holding this High-level meeting for Landlocked Developing Countries. The Secretary General and the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS deserve our praise for their substantive contributions to this event.

The challenges that landlocked countries face are enormous. The least developed landlocked countries are suffering the worst. In a highly competitive world, LLDCs face severe constraints because of their narrow export base, lack of access to the sea, distance from major international markets, inadequate transport infrastructure, and cumbersome transit procedures. They still face insurmountable challenges in integrating their economies to the world market.

LLDCs are also highly vulnerable to external shocks. Their acute vulnerabilities are painfully amplified by a number of new and emerging crises. The current food crisis, high energy prices and climate change and global warming pose a serious threat to their efforts for eradication of poverty, hunger, malnutrition, diseases, illiteracy and achievement of other socio-economic goals.

Transit neighbours of LLDCs are mostly developing or emerging economies. They too encounter similar economic challenges and scarcities of resources and infrastructure. The special needs and challenges of the LLDCs must be addressed comprehensively. Full implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action remains critically important. We concur with SG that "transit problems must address inadequate infrastructure, trade imbalance, inefficient transport organization, and weak managerial, procedural, regulatory and institutional systems". Such a comprehensive approach will offer a win-win outcome for both LLDCs and their transit neighbours.

Mr. President,

We must intensify the global efforts to establish viable and predictable transit systems for landlocked and transit countries. Construction, maintenance and improvement of their transport, storage and other transit-related facilities should be ensured. ODA remains the major source of investment in developing infrastructures in landlocked and transit countries. Development partners should provide adequate financial and technical assistance on a predictable basis to implement transit infrastructure projects in those countries.

Landlocked countries and their transit neighbours must cooperate closely and meaningfully to build efficient transit systems. South-South cooperation, including triangular as well as regional and sub-regional cooperation, has become increasingly important in this regard.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Bangladesh's unwavering support for LLDCs. We are not an immediate transit country but rather offer transit to two landlocked countries through a third country. The Government of Bangladesh has always been forthcoming in providing transit facilities to landlocked countries of this region. We are in the process of building an uninterrupted road network throughout the country. Developing multimodal transit transport arrangements involving road, railway and waterways entails huge investment. We call upon our development partners to provide adequate support in this regard.

I thank you Mr. President.