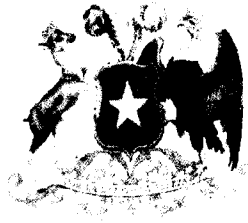


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CHILE

**Statement by Ambassador María Teresa Infante
National Director of Frontiers and Limits**

**High-level plenary meeting devoted to the midterm review
of the Almaty Programme of Action**

New York, October 2, 2008

The Government of Chile enthusiastically takes part in this event dedicated to the Midterm Review of the Almaty Programme of Action, conducted by the United Nations, and reaffirms the commitment with its objectives, convinced of the significance of the definitions adopted in the Almaty Action Plan and Declaration, of 2003.

This Plan delivered an important set of concepts and led our countries to carry out evaluations and define strategies that will provide the national policies with guiding principles related to landlocked developing countries, While achieving the objectives of the mentioned Plan, we reassert that the main purpose of the Almaty Action Programme is still in force, that is to say, creating associations regarding the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), from the standpoint of the landlocked and transit developing countries.

We believe that the components of said Goals embrace not only subjects linked to the development in a wide sense and the reduction of poverty as the framework of general reference, but also intend to create appropriate dynamics and responses at a level of international relations and across boundaries, to benefit its inhabitants, in order to expand the horizon in which landlocked and transit developing countries are placed, and contribute to overcome existing material and technical limitations.

The areas in which these relationships and dynamics are tested are diverse and demand more responsibilities on the part of States.

The Almaty Action Plan posed ambitious Goals; most of them, probably the most significant, gather around three essential aspects:

- The commitment of landlocked and transit countries to cooperate with each other, considering midterm and long term goals. Subject matters such as the search and implementation of more efficient agreements regarding transport, infrastructure, debt and market access, are not only exhausted within the context of economic relationships, but they relate in a way that might provide a guideline not only for assistance, but also for cooperation, trade and development.
- The strengthening of capacities that allow moving human and financial resources and support policies in favor of landlocked developing countries, has to always consider the relationships of the latter with transit developing countries and the capacities to create efficient coordination among them, as well as to carry out joined actions.
- The adequate priorities in the development of available internal mechanisms that are useful for this association among landlocked and transit developing countries, the integration of the business sector and initiatives coming from the private sector and civil society, as well as the use of national resources within the framework of domestic and agreed international policies, benefit the process of continued reduction of vulnerabilities and highlight the special place of the economies forming the landlocked developing countries.

This perspective is complimentary and part of the effort that other world and regional forums are making in subject matters such as human rights, gender, climate change and international trade.

The exercise of the right of access to and from and to the sea and the freedom of transit, according to international law, and implemented by international treaties, and the legitimate interests of the transit countries based on their sovereign rights, is an

important reference framework derived from contemporary international law, to which my country fully adheres.

In this context, the concept of the special needs of the landlocked developing countries, particularly the identification of those linked to matters and problems on the transit through other developing States that in turn have rights and legitimate interests, is an issue that cannot be isolated from the general processes mentioned above.

We specially appreciate the Report on the Application of the Almaty Action Programme presented by the Secretary-General, as well as the work of the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developing Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island States, which provides a balanced and wide vision on the status of these matters gathering us today.

The priorities of the Action Plan of 2003 regarding fundamental transit policy issues, infrastructure development and maintenance, international trade and trade facilitation, and international support measures are integral part of the Chilean Foreign Policy, becoming concrete issues, such as those reflected by this meeting. These priorities of the Chilean policy are enforced within the South American context and specific actions and working programs have been defined around them along with Bolivia and Paraguay. We also learn from the experience of other regions and countries, with whom we feel equally identified, with no prejudice of the singularities of the experiences gathered by the Report of the Secretary-General.

To this respect, we consider particularly important to underline that since the Almaty Action Plan was adopted, courses of action have been defined within the South American and bilateral frameworks that my country has firmly supported. In the bilateral context, I must mention the working agenda that is being developed with Bolivia – within a framework of a dialog, wide and with no exclusions, where a joined work is found among its essential components, in order to count on efficient transit transport systems, on fast and functional border controls and on cooperation in the prevention of smuggling, and to make compatible the environmental and public health securities, particularly those regarding dangerous loads and transit, and the implementation of useful legal frameworks, non-discriminatory, and the will to improve them.

Bilateral working groups are making headways between Chile and Bolivia, which have been focused to matters that allow an adequate complementation between public and private operators intervening in the transit relationships.

Regarding Paraguay, the same focus is applied. Furthermore, projects have derived from the agreements that resulted from the association between Chile and MERCOSUR over ten years ago, all of which created beneficial access to the Pacific from the whole Chile-MERCOSUR corridor, delivering alternatives to Paraguay.

On the other hand, the Government of Chile has announced the decision of granting Bolivian goods the special regime applicable to free transit in the Port of Iquique, according to the agreements in force, joining it to Arica and Antofagasta, which absorb an active movement of Bolivian cargo, besides the application of the agreement on the pipeline that connects since decades ago, Bolivia with Arica. Likewise, in 2004, a duty free warehouse to serve freights coming from and going to Paraguay has been set, fulfilling an agreement already in force, all in line with the active processes of physical integration in which these countries are participating. There is also a cooperation policy that is being carried out by the Chilean International Cooperation Agency, AGCI, which support the educational, cultural, health and poverty fight sectors.

The physical integration – where the existing progress and deficiencies regarding connectivity, the use of infrastructure, transport systems, applicable norms and border crossings are visible – has become an essential basis to understand the real world within which the affairs among our countries are handled. With respect to railways, the Chilean Government develops actions aimed to revitalize these means of communication with Bolivia, both from the infrastructure and from the border crossings point of view.

The Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America, IIRSA, which has been encouraged as of 2000, has greatly cooperated in this process and is being progressively fruitful regarding the supply of a methodology to prioritize projects, their implementation, and the appropriate consideration of the environmental sustainability in those. Chile is part of a number of corridors connecting the rest of the countries of the southern tip of South America, which are operative all year round.

It is expected to strengthen this process, supported by international, regional and subregional financial organisms, as a result of the set in motion of UNASUR, the South American Union of Nations, so that there is a convergent perspective between the objectives and commitments assumed by States at a bilateral and regional level. The strengthening of this agenda should be reflected in the implementation of the Millenium Development Goals and the Almaty Action Plan.

I would like to mention in this forum that an expression of this type has been delivered in the Presidential Agreement adopted on December 2007, to give birth to the Central Interoceanic Corridor comprising Bolivia, Brazil and Chile, and which includes Arica and Iquique as part of this process.

The Project joins the decision of working in favor of a physical integration, along with a process of economic growth based on equity in the three countries involved, and it is aimed to support the flows of exchange among their people by facilitating, with no fears, the movement of persons. The defined projects must allow improving trade within the involved areas, resulting in growth, employment, better knowledge among people and a better quality of life for them, all of which has been underlined by the President of Chile, when signing the above-mentioned Agreement.

Thus, my country has stated that although integration is a concept beginning to materialize over the construction of basic infrastructure, which is known as a sort of “corridor”, is really expressed when it leads to concrete initiatives, given that there is no effective integration away from neighboring countries. Within South America, the process considers Bolivia and Paraguay as fundamental subjects, so that the whole integration of the Almaty Action Plan must actively include them.

We also would like to highlight that these matters cannot be isolated from the context where the greatest issues of international trade, goods and services are discussed, so that landlocked developing countries can also fully participate of the benefits resulting from international agreements and market access, considering that most of them export basic products and must overcome disadvantages that might eventually come up due to their least advanced development and geographical location.

We coincide in enhancing the contribution that the multilateral trading agenda can do to the effectiveness of transit freedom, to its exercise on a non-discriminatory basis, subject to quick and transparent mechanisms, always considering the specific circumstances and the appropriate legal frameworks involved during the pass through third countries, especially regarding environmental and sanitary matters.

The task for the transit developing countries is then considerable. It opens opportunities and poses challenges that their foreign and development policies have to assume. We support reforms and concrete measures aimed to simplifying procedures and formalities, so they do not become obstacles to the relationships with the landlocked countries of the region, and represent efficient cooperation instruments in the context of the Action Plan agreed at Almaty.

International Organizations share part of the responsibility to make this plan possible. Furthermore, our governments also bear the responsibility to deliver the adequate orientation and powers in order to strengthen the capacities of the landlocked and transit developing countries during this process of association and provision of adequate infrastructure.

The horizon of 2015 is close and my country wishes to reach it with concrete responses and formulas to comply with the objectives and guidelines of the Almaty Declaration. For the above mentioned, we support the Document for the Midterm Review and the commitments derived from the policies there expressed, and we join the general agreement regarding this issue.

Thank you very much.