



PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA
MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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PRESS RELEASE

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(Translation)

**Statement by Mr. Yao Wenlong,
Minister Counselor of the Permanent Mission of China to the United
Nations on the Midterm Review of the Almaty Programme of Action
At the 63rd Session of the General Assembly**

(New York, 3 October 2008)

Mr. President,

The Chinese Delegation offers its congratulations on the successful convening of this meeting, associates itself with the statement by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and would like to express its appreciation to Under-Secretary General Mr. Diarra and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) for the enormous preparations they have made.

Since the implementation began for the Almaty Programme of Action five years ago, landlocked developing countries have, thanks to the vigorous support of the international community, including the transit developing countries, and by virtue of their own unremitting efforts, made noticeable progress in their economic and social development. The Secretary-General's report shows that between 2003 and 2006, the GDP of, foreign direct investment in and ODA for landlocked developing countries grew by an annual average of 8%, 11.55% and 21.4% respectively—higher than the averages of the developing countries as a group in the same period. This is full testimony that the Programme of Action has played an important role in promoting the economic and social development of landlocked developing countries.

What cannot be ignored, however, is the fact that there has not been a fundamental change in these countries' disadvantaged position in the world economic system, nor has there been a fundamental amelioration in regard to their special difficulties such as inefficient transport, weak infrastructure and high costs of trade. Since 2007 in particular, the three intractable problems in the fields of finance, energy and food broke onto the scene in quick succession, making the development challenges facing landlocked developing countries more acute and adding to the uncertainty of their development environment. In 2007, landlocked developing countries accounted for less than 1 per cent of international trade, constituted half of the 20 countries with the lowest Human Development Index, and represented 9 out of the 10 countries with the world's highest per-container cost for import-export trade. What's more, the recent hikes in energy prices have significantly increased the transit transport costs of landlocked developing countries. There is still a long way to go before all targets of the Programme of Action are fully met.

Mr. President,

Assisting landlocked developing countries in attaining sustainable development is a consensus of the international community. In face of the various difficulties in the world economic development, it is of great significance for us to be gathered here for the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action. We should use this midterm review as an opportunity to systematically assess the implementation of the Programme of Action, comprehensively prioritize our future cooperation, push for the follow up of relevant commitments and set out to respond to new development challenges. With this in mind, China proposes that the international community should focus its attention on the following endeavors:

1. Reaffirm the political commitments. The Programme of Action embodies the international community's firm resolve and solemn commitment to help landlocked developing countries and constitutes the specific plan of action and basic framework of cooperation for this purpose. We must take this document as the core in furthering the spirit of global partnership, honouring all commitments made under the

Programme of Action and supporting in an all-round fashion the sustainable development of these countries.

2. Actively respond to challenges. The implementation of the Program of Action should keep pace with the times. The relevant international agencies should assess in a systematic manner the impact and repercussions of the new development challenges on landlocked and transit developing countries. On its part, the international community should focus on helping these two groups of countries meet such new challenges as climate change, world economic slowdown, financial market turbulence and surge in energy prices.
3. Increase development assistance. Development assistance represents a crucial factor in the effort to help the landlocked developing countries break out of their development difficulties. The international community, the developed donor countries in particular, should reverse recent years' trend of decline rather than increase in ODA, expeditiously translate into action the developed donors' commitment to use 0.7% of their GNI as ODA, effectively increase the share of ODA dedicated to the financing of infrastructure development and other production sectors, and keep increasing the scale, sustainability and predictability of funding.
4. Augment trade preferences. Trade is an important engine for the sustainable development of landlocked developing countries. The international community should vigorously push for an early resumption of the WTO Doha Round of negotiations and an early conclusion of a package agreement that genuinely reflects the theme of development. It should continue to expand the trade facilitation and preferences in favour of land locked developing countries and, through assistance in trade and other measures, support them in their trade capacity building so that they can deeply engage in the international trade system and benefit therefrom.
5. Strengthen cooperation mechanisms. Well-coordinated cooperation mechanisms constitute the institutional guarantee for the successful implementation of the Program of Action. The international community should continue to strengthen

policy coordination and information sharing, effectively promote regional and sub-regional economic cooperation, vigorously support cooperation between the public and private sectors and explore in depth innovative financing mechanisms. Meanwhile, UN-OHRLLS should also continue to promote the cooperation and coordination between the relevant international organizations and UN agencies.

Mr. President,

China is a transit developing country and parts of its territory have landlocked features. Some of our inland provinces have worse natural conditions than some landlocked countries. China therefore has first-hand experience of the special difficulties confronting landlocked developing countries. China has always energetically supported landlocked developing countries in their development efforts, actively promoted and engaged in transit transport cooperation, continuously strengthened support measures in favour of these countries and actively honoured the commitments made under the Programme of Action. Currently, China contributes to more than 10 per cent of world economic growth, with the spillover effects providing a powerful impetus to the economic growth of the neighbouring landlocked developing countries. China is active in advancing regional economic cooperation in Central Asia, Northeast Asia and the Great Mekong sub-region—cooperation which benefits the landlocked developing countries in Asia. Through such mechanism as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, we have also continued to increase our support for the landlocked developing countries in Africa. This past week, Premier Wen Jiabao announced at the UN High-level Event on MDGs six concrete measures, undertaking to provide assistance within our capacity to fellow developing countries, including landlocked developing countries in the areas of agricultural development, response to the food crisis, personnel training, debt relief and cancellation, trade preferences, and energy. China will continue to follow the principle of “consultation on an equal footing, mutual interest and benefit, and common development”, honour in full and in depth all commitments contained in the Programme of Action and share development opportunities with landlocked developing countries in a joint effort to meet the challenges of development.

Thank you, Mr. President.