



THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by H.E. Mr. Park In-kook

Permanent Representative

High-level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Almaty Programme of Action

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Mr. President,

1. First of all, I thank you for convening this important meeting. I also wish to express my appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his insightful report (A/63/165) before us. I believe that this report will serve as a good guideline for us, because it effectively summarizes the progress made, lessons learned, and constraints encountered in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

2. Five years back in Almaty, Kazakhstan, the participants of the international conference came up with a comprehensive roadmap to galvanize international solidarity and partnership to assist landlocked developing countries. The outcome of the conference, the Almaty Declaration and Programme of Action, reflected the strong commitment of the international community to address the special needs of, and challenges faced by the landlocked developing countries, as called for in the UN Millennium Declaration. In this regards, my delegation takes note of the Secretary-General's overall assessment that over the past five years, landlocked and transit developing countries with the support of their development partners have made tangible progress in implementing the specific actions agreed upon in the Almaty Programme of Action.

Mr. President,

3. As a country which overcame the poverty trap in a few decades, the Republic of Korea sympathizes with the hardships of the landlocked developing countries and is committed to supporting their efforts to

achieve sustainable development. The new government of the Republic of Korea has posited “contributing to the international community as a trusted partner” as one of its pillars of foreign policy. To this end, we are strengthening our role in Official Development Assistance (ODA). Since 2000, our ODA has increased three times in volume, with assistance to Africa increasing three-fold in the last three years. We now plan to triple our current ODA to reach over 3 billion US dollars by the end of 2015. As ODA remains the major source for infrastructure development in landlocked countries, this rapid scale-up of our ODA volume will contribute to helping them overcome geographical impediments and pave the way for tangible economic growth and prosperity.

4. Trade has long been recognized as the engine for development. The Republic of Korea has long utilized trade as a locomotive for our economic growth. Against this backdrop, we are well aware of the pivotal role that trade can play in a country’s development. In this context, my government extends duty-free, quota-free access for least developed countries (LDCs). I presume that 16 out of 31 landlocked developing countries enjoy the program my government provides. We will also increase our contribution to the Integrated Framework for LDCs and expand our training programmes on the rules and regulations of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Mr. President,

5. Efficient transport infrastructure and services are prerequisite for the development of landlocked developing countries, which will facilitate their integration into the international trading system, and the larger global economy. However, there are still large gaps in terms of financing, which cannot be addressed without the involvement of the private sector. To galvanize the flow of private capital into infrastructure development, the Korean government hosted the Ministerial conference on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for Infrastructure Development last year. The Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Korea in 2006 was yet another effort of my government to contribute to the cause of Infrastructure Development last year. The Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Korea in 2006 was yet another effort of my government to contribute to the cause of infrastructure development.

6. The digital divide also remains a major concern for landlocked developing countries, with only 2.9 Internet users per 100 habitants in 2006. If this gap continues to widen, it may evolve into a serious obstacle that prevents landlocked developing countries from participating in the international economic system, which is increasingly dependent on information and communication technology. In this regards, the Republic of Korea is ready to do its part to bridge the digital divide by sharing our technology and know-how which has helped us enjoy the largest concentration of broadband Internet users in the world.

7. All in all, this midterm review shows that, although progress has been made, much more needs to be done to materialize the commitments pledged to the Almaty Programme of Action. The development of landlocked developing countries cannot be realized through the efforts of any single player. Rather, it requires joint efforts of the landlocked and transit developing countries, the international community and the United Nations. I can assure you, Mr. President, that the Republic of Korea, together with our development partners, will stand firmly with landlocked developing countries. We will support their noble endeavours to overcome the special problems caused by their lack of territorial access to the sea and their remoteness and isolation from world markets.

Thank you.