



Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the United Nations
360 Lexington Avenue, Suite 1502, New York, NY 10017
Tel: (212) 685-2003 • Fax: (212) 685-1561 • E-mail: namibia@un.int

STATEMENT

BY

MR PAUL SMIT
DEPUTY MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**HIGH-LEVEL MID-TERM REVIEW MEETING OF THE ALMATY
PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

New York
02 – 03 October 2008

Your Excellency, Mr Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President of the General Assembly

Your Excellency, Mr Ban Ki-moon,
Secretary-General of the United Nations

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed an honour for me to address this High-Level Mid-Term Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. This meeting affords us an opportunity to review the progress we have made since our groundbreaking meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan, five years ago. It also enables us to share experiences, lessons learned, constraints encountered in the process of implementation, possible ways of addressing them and to reaffirm our commitments to addressing the special needs of landlocked and transit developing countries.

Mr President

The Almaty Declaration places the primary responsibility for establishing effective transit systems squarely on the shoulders of landlocked and transit developing countries. In this regard, my country, Namibia, a transit developing country, in cooperation with her landlocked neighbours, has continued to register significant progress in attaining the ideals of the Programme of Action since our meeting in Almaty. Indeed, our transit transport programme started well before the adoption of the Almaty Programme of Action through the establishment of transit transport corridor institutions. The Walvis Bay Corridor Group was established in 2000 to administer and manage the Walvis Bay Corridors, which consist of the Trans Caprivi Corridor that provides road connectivity to Zambia through to Lubumbashi in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and through Botswana up to Zimbabwe; the Trans Kunene Corridor that connects Namibia with southern Angola by both rail and road; and the envisaged Windhoek-Luanda Corridor to link the two cities through northeastern Namibia and southeastern Angola by road. The Trans Kalahari Corridor Secretariat was established in 2005 to complement the Walvis Bay Corridor Group. The Secretariat is responsible for the management of the Trans

Kalahari Corridor that links Namibia to southern Botswana and on to South Africa through the Trans Kalahari highway.

Further developments in our efforts to implement the Almaty Programme of Action include the following:

- A Memorandum of Understanding on the Management and Development of the Trans Kalahari Corridors was signed in November 2003 between Namibia, Botswana and South Africa;
- Namibia has also signed an MOU with Botswana and Zambia and Zimbabwe on the Management and Development of Dry Port facilities at our harbor town of Walvis Bay for which negotiations on Lease Agreements are on-going at the moment;
- Streamlined customs procedures, harmonized axle load limits and border operating times have since been introduced on the Trans Kalahari Corridor to accelerate transit transport;
- For the port of Walvis Bay to cope with the increasing demand, considerable investment has been made in upgrading, acquisition of modern synchrolift equipment, deepening of the port, development of dry dock facilities and operational upgrades, among others;
- The port will undergo a further N\$1,3 billion (+_ US\$160 million) upgrade in 2009 to give it even more competitive world class edge;
- In partnership with Botswana and Zambia we are working towards introducing the “One-stop Border Post” concept on the Trans Caprivi and Trans Kalahari Corridors. Feasibility studies to this effect were carried out in 2007 and 2008 respectively;
- Another feasibility study on the Trans Caprivi Corridor rail line has been launched. This is aimed at facilitating rail connectivity with

Zambia following the construction during 2005 of a bridge over the Zambezi River linking the two countries;

- With the Republic of Botswana, we are in the middle of consultations and putting mechanisms in place on possibility of linking our rail heads on the Trans Kalahari Corridor based on the pledge by the World Bank's PPIAF to co-fund the feasibility study;
- Weighbridges have been installed on our corridor routes; and
- Provision has been made for the purchase of a container scanner to be located at our border with Botswana.

Permit me to register the appreciation of my Government for the cooperation and support we have been receiving from our neighboring sister countries in our effort to implement the letter and spirit of the Almaty Programme Action.

Mr President

Distinguished Delegates

Paragraph 8 and 9 of the Almaty Declaration, as elaborated in Priority Number 4 of the Almaty Programme of Action, emphasize the important role that the international community should play in providing substantial official development assistance and other resources to landlocked and transit developing countries. However, despite the progress we have made, a number of challenges, which are of financial and technical nature, remain to be addressed. These include the following:

- Limited public funding for infrastructure development and maintenance due to other pressing development needs that landlocked and transit developing countries have to address;
- Aging infrastructure and outdated technologies, especially in the rail industry;

- Limited private sector investment in transport infrastructure, which is generally perceived as a public sector domain or due to the long period required before they could produce return on investments;
- Global economic pressures impacting on input costs for investing in transport infrastructure and services, such as the high oil and steel prices; and
- Increasingly narrowing window for technical assistance opportunities, particularly with regard to middle-income countries.

Allow me however, at this juncture, to express the gratitude of my Government for the assistance we continue to receive from a few of our bilateral and multilateral development partners for infrastructure redevelopment. Indeed, my country has since 2005 been benefiting from the pilot capacity-building programme being facilitated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) within the context of the Almaty Programme of Action.

Mr President

Our commitment and political will to develop and maintain transit transport infrastructure and facilitate trade for our landlocked sister countries deserve to be complemented by financial and technical support of the international community. In order for us to proceed with the development of an alternative trade route for Southern Africa through the port of Walvis Bay, the development of infrastructure is a necessity for which we appeal for international support. Addressing the special needs of landlocked and transit developing countries can and should not be left to these countries alone because a boost in international trade will be to the benefit of all.

I thank you.