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Groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation

Letter dated 26 September 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, I have the honour to transmit herewith the ministerial communiqué adopted at the Sixth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries, held at United Nations Headquarters on 19 September 2005 (see annex).

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 55 (b).

(Signed) Aloukèo **Kittikhoun**

Annex to the letter dated 26 September 2005 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries addressed to the Secretary-General

Communiqué of the Sixth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries

New York, 19 September 2005

We, the Ministers of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), meeting here at the Headquarters of the United Nations on the sideline of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,¹ in which Heads of State and Government recognized the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries and urged both bilateral and multilateral donors to increase financial and technical assistance to this group of countries to meet their particular development needs and to help them to overcome the impediments of geography by improving their transit transport systems, and resolved to create an environment, at the national, subregional, regional and global levels alike, that is conducive to development and to the elimination of poverty,

Recalling also the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries, endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/201,

Recalling further the ministerial communiqués adopted at the annual ministerial meetings of landlocked developing countries convened in 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004,

Recalling the São Paulo Consensus adopted at UNCTAD XI, held in São Paulo, Brazil on 18 June 2004,²

Bearing in mind the decision³ adopted by the WTO General Council on 1 August 2004, which established modalities for the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round,

Expressing the concern that the landlocked developing countries are being increasingly marginalized in multilateral trade and faced with a declining market share in world trade. Transaction costs for LLDCs remain excessive due to their lack of access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets, dependence on transit services and policies of their transit neighbours, prohibitive transit costs, long customs and administrative delays at additional border crossings and ports and cumbersome procedures,

1. *Stress* that the Almaty Programme of Action provides a global framework for partnership to undertake specific actions on five priorities in order to establish efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries.

¹ See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

² TD/410.

³ WT/L/579.

2. *Call upon* our development partners and transit neighbours to fulfil their commitments regarding the effective and expeditious implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. We *urge* the United Nations system organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions and all other international, regional and subregional organizations, within their respective mandates, to support as a priority the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, including through programmes of financial and technical cooperation devoted to assisting LLDCs. We also *stress* the need to further promote South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation as well as cooperation among subregional and regional organizations in support of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

3. *Welcome* the outcome of the High-level Meeting on the Role of International, Regional and Subregional Organizations in the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, which was organized by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 29 to 31 March 2005. We strongly endorse the joint communiqué⁴ adopted by the High-level Meeting.

4. *Commend* the continued efforts made by the Government of Kazakhstan in promoting the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and express our sincere thanks to the Government and people of the Republic of Kazakhstan for their generous hospitality and support for the successful holding of this High-level Meeting.

5. *Strongly endorse* the Asunción Platform⁵ for the Doha Development Round, adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers of LLDCs Responsible for Trade, held in Asunción, Paraguay, on 9 and 10 August 2005, which constitutes a common strategy for LLDCs' effective participation in the WTO trade negotiations and beyond, on the seven issues of critical importance to them, namely, trade facilitation, small and vulnerable economies, agriculture, non-agricultural market access, special and differential treatment, accession and technical cooperation and capacity-building. In this context, the UN-OHRLLS is requested to further enhance its coordination and cooperation with relevant international organizations, including the World Bank, UNDP, UNCTAD, the United Nations regional commissions, WTO and the World Customs Organization, with a view to assisting LLDCs in the effective implementation of the Platform.

6. *Commend* the Government of Paraguay for successfully hosting the Meeting of the Ministers of LLDCs Responsible for Trade in Asunción and *welcome* the decision to entrust Paraguay as coordinator of the Group of LLDCs on issues related to trade and development to pursue the common position of the Group, as outlined in the Asunción Platform, at the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference, to be held in Hong Kong, China, and beyond.

7. *Emphasizing* the need to build effective dialogue between business communities and Governments of LLDCs aimed at facilitating more active involvement of the private sector in the process of implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, we suggest the convening in 2006 of a business forum with the participation of representatives of the business circles of LLDCs, transit

⁴ A/60/75, annex II.

⁵ A/60/308, annex.

countries and external business community, as well as representatives and experts from the United Nations and international financial organizations. We also request the UN-OHRLLS to submit to the Chairman of the Group of LLDCs its possible concrete proposals concerning the above business forum.

8. *Stress* the need for the full and effective implementation of the São Paulo Consensus adopted at UNCTAD XI in São Paulo, Brazil, on 18 June 2004, in particular LLDCs-related paragraphs 66 and 84 thereof, as well as General Assembly resolution 59/245 of 22 December 2004, by WTO and other relevant international organizations and donors in a multi-stakeholder approach.

9. *Welcome* the outcome of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, recognizing, inter alia, the special needs and challenges facing LLDCs and reaffirming the commitment of the international community to urgently address those needs and challenges through the full, timely and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and the São Paulo Consensus, and encouraging the work undertaken by United Nations regional commissions and organizations towards establishing a time-cost methodology to measure the progress in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. It also recognizes difficulties and concerns of LLDCs in their efforts to integrate their economies into the international trading system, and in this regard calls for priority to be given to the full and timely implementation of the Almaty Declaration and the Almaty Programme of Action.

10. Request the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to further mobilize and coordinate international support and resources for the effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in accordance with its mandate provided therein.

11. *Request* the Chairman of the Group of LLDCs to have the present communiqué circulated as a document of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.
