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Groups of countries in special situations: Comprehensive 10-year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action

Letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries, I have the honour to transmit to you the text of the ministerial communiqué adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of landlocked developing countries at their twelfth annual meeting, held on 30 September 2013 in the margins of the general debate of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 22 (b).

(Signed) Saleumxay **Kommasith**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 3 October 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Communiqué of the Twelfth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries

New York, 30 September 2013

We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of landlocked developing countries, having met in New York, on 30 September 2013, on the occasion of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, under the theme “Building genuine partnerships for overcoming impacts of landlockedness in the context of sustainable development”, to assess progress made in the implementation of 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 Countries¹ and address development challenges facing landlocked developing countries,

Recalling the Almaty Declaration² and the Almaty Programme of Action, adopted in Almaty in 2003,

Recalling also the United Nations Millennium Declaration,³ the outcome documents of the 2005 World Summit,⁴ the 2010 high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals⁵ and the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,⁶ held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil,

Recalling further General Assembly resolutions [56/180](#), [57/242](#), [58/201](#), [59/245](#), [60/208](#), [61/212](#), [62/204](#), [63/228](#), [64/214](#), [65/172](#), [66/214](#) and [67/222](#) related to the particular needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries to be addressed by effectively implementing the Almaty Programme of Action,

Recalling the Declaration of the high-level meeting of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly on the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action, of 3 October 2008,⁷ which stressed that the higher cost of moving goods across borders for landlocked developing countries puts their products at a competitive disadvantage and that they continue to face challenges in their efforts to establish efficient transit transport systems,

Recalling also the Asunción Platform for the Doha Development Round, adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries Responsible for Trade, held in Asunción on 10 August 2005, the Ulaanbaatar Declaration adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries Responsible for Trade, held in Ulaanbaatar on 28 and 29 August 2007, the

¹ Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation (A/CONF.202/3), annex I.

² Ibid., annex II.

³ General Assembly resolution 55/2.

⁴ General Assembly resolution 60/1.

⁵ General Assembly resolution 65/1.

⁶ General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

⁷ General Assembly resolution 63/2.

Ezulwini Declaration adopted at the Third Meeting of Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries Responsible for Trade held in Swaziland on 21 and 22 October 2009, the Ulaanbaatar Declaration⁸ adopted at the High-level Asia-Pacific Policy Dialogue on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and other development gaps faced by landlocked developing countries, held in Ulaanbaatar from 12 to 14 April 2011,

Recalling further the outcome document of the thirteenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XIII),⁹ held in April 2012, and the ministerial communiqué of landlocked developing countries adopted within the framework of UNCTAD XIII, in which States members of the World Trade Organization were urged to undertake all endeavours necessary for the advancement and successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round and increase the level of assistance in the context of the Aid for Trade initiative, as well as paying greater attention to the development of productive capacities, the development of infrastructure and the upgrading of information and communication technologies for landlocked developing countries,

Recalling the Almaty Ministerial Declaration adopted at the fourth meeting of Ministers of Trade of landlocked developing countries, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 12 September 2012, which stressed that with a view to mitigating the adverse development impact of landlockedness, comprehensive, coherent and coordinated policies are needed at all levels in the areas of investment, infrastructure (production, transport, telecommunications and energy), logistics (transport and trade facilitation) and technology, to support the efforts of landlocked developing countries,

Recalling further the outcome of the global services forum, organized by UNCTAD in Beijing, from 28 to 29 May 2013, on the theme: “Services: a new frontier for sustainable development”, that raised awareness of the importance of the services sector for the economies of developing countries and in the advancement of the development agenda as it relates to services,

Recognizing that despite commendable progress achieved by landlocked developing countries over the last decade in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the development challenges they face due to their geographical disadvantage of having no territorial access to the sea and the ensuing serious difficulties for the effective integration of their economies into the multilateral trading system permeate every aspect of the development process, including economic growth, poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals,

Expressing concern about the emergence of new and emerging challenges such as the global economic and financial crisis, rising food and energy prices, compounded by the negative impact of climate change, and land degradation, desertification and drought, which have adversely impacted the economic and social progress achieved by landlocked developing countries in recent years and have increased their vulnerability and weakened their ability to achieve their development goals,

⁸ E/ESCAP/67/22, annex.

⁹ UNCTAD/ISS/2012/1.

Recognizing also that the primary responsibility for establishing effective transit systems rests with the landlocked and transit developing countries, which need to seek to create conditions in which resources can be generated, attracted and effectively mobilized to address their development challenges, but that their efforts need to be given continued international support by their development partners and international and regional organizations in a spirit of shared responsibility, including South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation, and taking into account regional integration agreements,

Expressing support for those landlocked developing countries emerging from conflict with a view to enabling them to rehabilitate and reconstruct, as appropriate, their political, social and economic infrastructure, including through elimination, where appropriate, of any unfavourable conditions for development, and assisting them in achieving their development priorities in accordance with the goals and targets of the Almaty Programme of Action,

Acknowledging the invaluable and continued support provided by development partners, the United Nations system, international and regional organizations, bilateral partners, civil society and the private sector through official development assistance, foreign direct investment, private sector investment and remittances and the role of South-South and triangular cooperation, with a view to tackling the critical challenge of addressing the special needs of landlocked developing countries, in particular by developing adequate transport infrastructures and establishing transit transport systems,

Taking note of the annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action,¹⁰ in which he highlighted the progress made by landlocked developing countries during the period of implementation of the Programme of Action and the remaining needs and challenges, in order to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth, accelerate poverty reduction and increase the level of well-being of their people on a sustained and sustainable basis,

Welcoming General Assembly resolutions [66/214](#) and [67/222](#), in which the Assembly decided to hold a comprehensive 10-year review conference on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014, which should be preceded, where necessary, by regional, global and thematic preparations, as well as two sessions of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee in January and April 2014,

Emphasizing that the 10-year review conference should strengthen concerted global actions in support of the landlocked developing countries,

Adopt the following communiqué:

1. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the accelerated implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action through effective and genuine partnerships between landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners and between the public and private sectors at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels, as these partnerships are essential to the timely achievement of all the internationally agreed development goals,

¹⁰ A/68/157.

including the Millennium Development Goals, and full and meaningful integration of landlocked developing countries into the global economy;

2. We express our appreciation of the progress made by landlocked and transit developing countries, with the support of development partners, during the last decade in implementing the priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action, as evidenced by a number of transport and trade facilitation measures that have reduced border delays and inefficiencies; some expansion in transit transport infrastructure development; increased efforts to harmonize norms and standards in the transport sector; improvements in development assistance allocated to the transport, storage and communications sectors of landlocked developing countries; and some increase in foreign direct investment, remittances and debt relief;

3. We remain concerned, however, that, despite increased efforts in implementing the priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action and the modest economic growth achieved over the last decade, landlocked developing countries continue to face the combined adverse effects of transport costs, transit traffic difficulties, inefficient logistics services, additional and cumbersome customs procedures and inadequate transport infrastructure development, including the state of regional trade corridors, the deterioration of existing stocks, the persistence of key missing links, the lack of efficient inland transport linkages, such as between rail and port facilities, and sustainable resources for maintenance. Transport costs are still high and have on average increased, as evidenced by data from the World Bank that show that the average cost of exporting a container for landlocked developing countries increased from \$2,200 in 2006 to \$3,040 in 2013, while transit developing countries are paying only 50 per cent of this cost.¹¹ These high transport costs and trade transaction costs continue to constitute major impediments to trade competitiveness, equitable access to global markets and the beneficial integration of our economies into the world economy and the overall welfare of our people;

4. We also express concerns about the limited productive capacities with regard to increasing value addition from agriculture, manufacturing and exports of goods and services, deindustrialization and the slowing down of economic diversification, factors that undermine structural transformation, therefore further isolating landlocked developing countries and limiting their effective and meaningful participation in global value chains and international trade;

5. On the social development front, we note with concern that, although landlocked developing countries have experienced a positive trend in the human development index between 2003 and 2013 and have made tangible advances on some Millennium Development Goals, in particular primary education and reduction of HIV/AIDS prevalence rates, much more needs to be done. Poverty levels are still high and progress is also slow on reducing hunger, child and maternal mortality and improving access to water and sanitation. In addition, wide and growing income inequalities in landlocked developing countries are undermining efforts to reduce poverty and achieve development objectives;

¹¹ World Bank, "Doing business" database.

6. We are deeply concerned that landlocked developing countries continue to face new and emerging challenges, such as the global economic and financial crisis, high food and energy prices and volatility in commodity prices, compounded by the negative impacts of climate change, desertification and land degradation, including the loss of biodiversity, which have tremendously increased the burden on the economies of our countries and affected the livelihoods of our populations;

7. As we prepare for the Comprehensive 10-Year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [66/214](#), we call upon the international community, including the United Nations system, development partners, international organizations, private sector institutions and academia, to critically consider all the unique challenges that our countries face that are linked to our geography. While the transport sector is definitely important for improving trade and the greater integration of landlocked developing countries into regional and international markets, there is a need to address trade issues in a more coherent and holistic manner, ensuring that broader aspects of development are also addressed, including efforts to build productive capacity, promote value addition, diversification of the economy and exports, technology transfer, development of the services sector, information and communication technologies and improved market access. We need to aim high, for an ambitious, more comprehensive, action-oriented and new partnership framework embedded in a broader vision for the sustainable development and economic growth of landlocked developing countries for the next decade;

8. In the context of the post-2015 development agenda, including sustainable development goals and financing for sustainable development, we urge the international community and all development partners to make ambitious and enhanced commitments to address the special needs and challenges faced by landlocked developing countries, in particular by focusing on issues that are unique to those countries, instead of embracing general development challenges;

9. In view of the structural and economic challenges faced by landlocked developing countries, we urge the international community, development partners, financial institutions, the private sector and multilateral development institutions, including United Nations institutions, to scale up support to landlocked developing countries through increased financial and technical support to enable them to cope with multiple external shocks and to mitigate the impact of new and emerging challenges;

10. The concerns and special needs of landlocked developing countries deserve special attention on all international agendas, focusing on accelerated reduction of high transport and transaction costs, the establishment of efficient transit systems through increased investment in transport, energy, information and communications technology infrastructure and border crossing projects. In particular, deepening of trade, enhancement of productive capacity, diversification of exports, value addition and the strengthening of institutions should be pursued as means to achieve structural transformation;

11. We stress the importance of adopting development policies and strategies to address constraints and tap opportunities to achieve value addition,

industrialization, diversification and a reduction in the dependence on commodities of our economies. Commodity-based industrialization can provide an engine for growth for landlocked developing countries, reducing their marginalization in the global economy and enhancing their resilience to external shocks. We call upon the international community and development partners to support capacity-building in landlocked developing countries for the implementation of effective industrial policies aimed at structurally transforming their economies with an emphasis on the effective transfer of technology, research and innovation, enhanced productive capacity, value addition, the development of infrastructure, the enhancement of the services sector and the upgrading of information and communication technologies. We also recognize that the enhanced development of human skills and education, in particular in post-primary education, are of critical importance for improving the services and industrial sectors and technological innovativeness;

12. We call upon the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, in collaboration with relevant international organizations and research institutions, including national research institutes, to undertake research on the vulnerability of landlocked developing countries to external shocks, develop a set of vulnerability indicators that can be used for early warning purposes and propose appropriate sets of policy responses capable of turning challenges into opportunities;

13. We recognize that climate change, desertification, land degradation and drought pose a potentially permanent and serious threat to the economic and social development of our countries and can undermine our efforts towards the achievement of development objectives, as we are the least prepared to confront those challenges of adapting and mitigating the effects that would even further aggravate the disadvantages that our countries are facing. Our countries are vulnerable to climate change impacts on agricultural production, to the frequent occurrence of natural disasters, to land degradation and desertification, a lack of food security, the decreasing viability of inland fisheries, the availability of water, the erosion of biodiversity and risks for human health. As landlocked developing countries, recognized in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as a group requiring special measures, and as countries which are impacted by climate change in unique ways and have special needs, we emphasize that landlocked developing countries should be referred to and included in climate change negotiations and its outcome documents as a group. We should strengthen our concerted efforts in the context of the global dialogue on climate change and sustainable development. We urge our development partners to provide financial, technological and capacity-building assistance to enable landlocked developing countries to adapt to climate change and support to address desertification and land degradation;

14. We encourage relevant international organizations, including the Office of the High Representative, the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme and the regional economic commissions, to

assist landlocked developing countries to conduct studies to better understand the implications for them of climate change, desertification, land degradation and drought and to develop strategies and measures to counter their adverse effects;

15. We take note of the work of ongoing United Nations processes, such as the Open Working Group of the General Assembly on Sustainable Development Goals and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing, and underline the need to reflect the challenges and priorities of landlocked developing countries in those processes in line with the provisions contained in paragraphs 36, 133 and 182 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development entitled “The future we want”;¹²

16. We underscore the importance of trade facilitation for the growth and expansion of the external trade of landlocked developing countries and its positive impact on their economic development, in particular, in reaping the full benefits of international trade. We call upon the international community to ensure the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round, with favourable outcomes for landlocked developing countries, and underscore the importance of the early adoption of an agreement on trade facilitation with binding commitments to lowering transaction costs by reducing transport time and enhancing certainty in transborder trade, ensuring freedom of transit, strict limits on fees, charges and formalities, transparency and common standards for documentation requirements, thereby allowing for the expedited movement, release and clearance of goods. The international community should provide technical assistance and support for capacity-building to enable landlocked and transit developing countries to fully participate in and benefit from multilateral trade negotiations and effectively implement policies and regulations aimed at facilitating transport and trade;

17. We call for a development-friendly solution to the current impasse in the Doha Round of trade negotiations that could open the way for a successful and ambitious conclusion of the 10-year round. This should increase market access, generate increased trade flows and focus on the needs of landlocked developing countries. Emphasis should remain on the commitment to make operationally effective the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries; on the parallel elimination of all forms of export subsidies; and on substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Round. The final outcome should also adequately address the issue of technical assistance and capacity-building;

18. We also call upon relevant United Nations and other international organizations to provide greater support to strengthen the negotiating capacities of landlocked developing countries and their ability to implement trade facilitation measures;

19. We call for the provision of enhanced technical assistance to those landlocked developing countries that are still outside the rules-based multilateral trading system and wish to accede to the World Trade Organization (WTO). We stress the need for taking into account during the

¹² General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

accession process the individual levels of development and the special needs and problems caused by the geographical disadvantage of being landlocked and the need for all provisions on special and differential treatment reflected in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and in all WTO agreements to be granted to all acceding landlocked developing countries. Targeted technical assistance should be provided to acceding landlocked developing countries during all stages of the process;

20. We reiterate our request that development assistance provided in the context of the Aid for Trade initiative should give adequate consideration to the special needs and requirements of landlocked developing countries. Areas of targeted support should include capacity-building for the formulation of trade policies, participation in trade negotiations, implementation of trade facilitation measures, implementation of international agreements, investment into infrastructure for transport, upgrading of information and communication technologies and utilities and strengthening of productive capacities, with a view to increasing the competitiveness of the products of our countries in export markets. We attach great importance to the Aid for Trade initiative and are committed to enhancing our participation in the monitoring process to better articulate our trade needs and priorities for support;

21. We reaffirm the high priority landlocked developing countries attach to official development assistance (ODA) as a valuable means to implement priority development programmes and strategies and address the special needs and challenges faced by our countries. In that regard, we call upon development partners to increase the amount of ODA to landlocked developing countries in a transparent, predictable and sustainable manner. We call on our bilateral and multilateral development partners not only to maintain current levels of ODA to our countries, but to further raise commitments in order to support transport infrastructure development and trade facilitation projects in landlocked and transit developing countries, thereby enhancing intraregional connectivity, completing missing links and ensuring the proper functioning of strategic sea corridors; enhance trade and export diversification; support capacity-building; promote the services and tourism sectors; address the negative impacts of climate change, land degradation, desertification and drought; and build resilience to mitigate the impact of the economic and financial crisis;

22. We reaffirm the need to fulfil all ODA commitments, including commitments made by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for ODA to developing countries by 2015. We also call upon donor support through greater debt relief to help landlocked developing countries make progress towards achieving their development objectives;

23. We underscore the prominent role that foreign direct investment (FDI) plays in accelerating development and poverty reduction through employment, transfer of managerial and technological know-how and non-debt-creating flows of capital, as well as its key role in providing infrastructure for transport, telecommunications and utilities. We call on capital-exporting countries to provide greater financial assistance and support for the efforts of landlocked developing countries in seeking FDI by adopting and implementing economic,

financial and legal incentives to encourage FDI flows to them and avoiding protectionist measures which impede such flows. We underscore the importance of creating a stable, predictable and enabling investment environment for attracting increased and more diversified FDI to landlocked developing countries;

24. We also value the importance of the remittances of migrants to the achievement of the development objectives of landlocked developing countries, including capacity-building and the eradication of poverty, and we encourage international migrants from landlocked developing countries to continue supporting the development efforts of their countries of origin, bearing in mind that remittances cannot be considered as a substitute for ODA, FDI, debt relief or other public sources of development financing. We further reaffirm the need to promote conditions for cheaper, faster and safer transfer of remittances in landlocked developing countries;

25. We recognize the participation of a private sector capable of boosting diversification, stimulating job creation, driving innovation and facilitating infrastructure development that supports our development objectives in accordance with national policies. We invite relevant stakeholders to participate in the preparatory process of the Comprehensive 10-Year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action to ensure that any new programme of action of the landlocked developing countries underpins an operating environment conducive to genuine partnership, private sector growth and development. We acknowledge that public-private partnerships can play an important role in domestic and foreign resource mobilization;

26. We also recognize the importance of regional cooperation for landlocked developing countries, in particular trade integration and transit cooperation, as they can assist landlocked developing countries to better integrate into the global trading system by, inter alia, increasing the size of their markets, improving their competitiveness and enhancing regional connectivity and intraregional trade. In that regard, we reaffirm the high priority that our countries attach to the promotion of regional and subregional integration and cooperation, including the development and implementation of regional transport and infrastructure projects, regional trade and transport agreements, harmonization of customs and border procedures and rules of origin at regional levels;

27. We reaffirm the importance of strengthening South-South and triangular cooperation to support the development efforts of landlocked developing countries and enhance their participation in the global economy. We commend efforts made through South-South cooperation in the areas of transit transport cooperation between landlocked and transit developing countries and request the scaling up of those efforts that can help landlocked developing countries address the complex and severe development challenges that they face because of their geographical disadvantages. We also reiterate the position of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries that South-South cooperation is a complement to, rather than a substitute for, North-South cooperation;

28. We further recognize the growing role of the services sector in modern economies, in particular that an efficient and productive services industry will

contribute significantly to productivity growth and to the overall competitiveness of the economies of landlocked developing countries, including in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors. Furthermore, we recognize that employment gains will be most significant in reducing poverty in landlocked developing countries and will provide employment opportunities for women. In that regard, we call on international organizations, in particular UNCTAD, to support landlocked developing countries in developing their services sectors, through capacity-building programmes and the development of appropriate statistical tools;

29. We further highlight the need to focus on information and communication technology and the need to connect our countries to the international networks of data transmission, which requires capital investment for infrastructure and connection. In this regard, we call upon international cooperation to facilitate connectivity within landlocked developing countries, as well as internationally between landlocked developing countries and transit developing countries and the other parts of the world;

30. We also reaffirm the special needs and challenges faced by those landlocked developing countries emerging from conflict. In this regard, we urge the international community and the United Nations system to address those needs and challenges and take urgent and concrete action in the area of financial assistance, technical support and infrastructure development, in order for those countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals;

31. We are committed to the realization of the mandate of an international think tank for the landlocked developing countries and call on all landlocked developing countries which have not done so to accede and become party to the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, in order to bring the think tank into full operation. We commend the steps taken by the Government of Mongolia in advancing the operationalization of the international think tank, in particular for financial support and for hosting the secretariat in Ulaanbaatar. We call upon international organizations, in particular the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNCTAD, the regional economic commissions, donor countries and other leading centres of excellence, to support the operational activities of the think tank;

32. We note that the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network,¹³ which entered into force in 2005, and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network,¹⁴ which entered into force in June 2009, have helped in promoting investment for the development, maintenance and upgrading of the Asian Highway priority routes and of the Trans-Asian Railway Network which has greatly benefited the region. We therefore call upon international organizations and donor countries to support the effective implementation of the projects identified under those Intergovernmental Agreements;

33. We take note of the efforts being deployed by African landlocked developing countries to address the legal bottlenecks experienced by the

¹³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

¹⁴ E/ESCAP/TARN/rep.

African transit transport system, due to the lack of an integrated and standardized road infrastructure. In this context, we support the work undertaken by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States in consultation with the Economic Commission for Africa, the African Union Commission, the World Bank and the African Development Bank. We request the Office of the High Representative to further its efforts in the promotion of an intergovernmental agreement on African transport infrastructure, particularly for the trans-African highway;

34. We call on the Office of the High Representative to develop, in collaboration with other relevant United Nations and international organizations, including UNCTAD and the World Bank, standardized guidelines for transit transport agreements;

35. In the context of the preparatory process for the Comprehensive 10-Year Review Conference on the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, scheduled to take place in 2014, we commend the efforts deployed by the Office of the High Representative in organizing the process along three tracks, namely, the intergovernmental, inter-agency and private sector tracks, with the active involvement and participation of member countries and their transit neighbours, United Nations system organizations, international organizations, the private sector and academia. We therefore call on all relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other international organizations to provide all necessary support for the preparatory review process and to actively contribute to it and the successful holding of the Comprehensive Review Conference;

36. We welcome the progress being made in the preparatory process for the Comprehensive 10-Year Review Conference and welcome the appointment by the Secretary-General of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States as the Secretary-General of the Conference;

37. We note with appreciation the outcome of the high-level global thematic meeting on international trade, trade facilitation and Aid for Trade, held in Almaty on 13 and 14 September 2012 as part of the preparatory process for the Comprehensive 10-year Review Conference;

38. We welcome the Vientiane Consensus adopted at the Euro-Asian final regional review meeting on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, held in Vientiane from 5 to 7 March 2013,¹⁵ which, while expressing satisfaction at the significant progress achieved by landlocked and transit developing countries in implementing the Programme of Action, recognized also that landlocked developing countries are still facing a high degree of structural vulnerability and that the modest growth achieved has come under threat due to successive global crises in the areas of food, fuel and finance;

39. We also welcome the outcome of the African regional review meeting on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, held in Addis Ababa from 16 to 18 July 2013, which recommended that landlocked developing

¹⁵ E/ESCAP/69/1.

countries, with the assistance of the international community, should adopt policies aimed at structurally transforming their economies with an emphasis on research and innovation, industrialization, value addition, enhanced productive capacity, diversification and a reduction in dependency on commodities, increased technology transfer, increased agricultural productivity, expansion of the services sector and the joining of global and regional value chains;

40. We look forward to the convening of the Latin American regional review meeting on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action to be held later this year;

41. We also take note of the pre-conference events that have been held so far, including a brainstorming meeting on the priorities of a new development agenda for the landlocked developing countries held on 20 and 21 March 2013, the transport development and trade facilitation held on 13 June 2013 and the meeting on renewing global partnerships for connecting landlocked developing countries to world markets held on 3 July 2013;

42. We call on our development partners for a constructive engagement in the preparation of a successor action programme, which, in addition to transit trade and trade facilitation issues, will address the holistic development needs and challenges of landlocked developing countries; enhance productive capacities; build resilience to external shocks; promote a vibrant and competitive private sector; promote FDI that is supportive of development; provide assistance for economic restructuring and respecialization, including the promotion of exportable services; support the promotion of South-South and triangular cooperation, mitigating the effects of climate change, land degradation, desertification and drought; and support the accession of landlocked developing countries to the WTO and the conduct of multilateral trade negotiations and measures to ensure more benefits for landlocked developing countries from the Aid for Trade initiative, to name but a few of the actions needed;

43. We encourage our development partners, the international financial and development institutions and private entities, to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund established by the Secretary-General to support the activities related to the preparatory activities of the Comprehensive 10-Year Review Conference and ensure the full and effective participation of landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries, the private sector and academia in the Conference and its preparatory events;

44. We request the Office of the High Representative to continue to mobilize and coordinate international support and resources for the effective preparation and successful conduct of the Conference;

45. We stress that the comprehensive review process of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action represents an important opportunity for landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners to critically assess the implementation of the Programme of Action, in particular its best practices and weaknesses, and identify priority areas for years to come;

46. We stress that the Comprehensive 10-year Review Conference should come up with a development agenda that can enable the landlocked developing

countries to integrate into the global trading system and move closer to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, the development agenda beyond 2015 and the sustainable development goals, in the next decade. The new framework will also provide for effective arrangements for the follow-up, review and monitoring of its implementation;

47. We call upon all landlocked developing countries to engage fully in the preparation process for the 10-year review of the Almaty Programme of Action and to participate in the Conference itself at the highest level possible;

48. We call upon the international community to give particular importance to the preparatory process and ensure their active participation in the Conference;

49. We request the organizations of the United Nations system, particularly UNCTAD, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, UNDP, the regional economic commissions, other international organizations, in particular the World Bank, WTO, the Common Fund for Commodities, the International Road and Transport Union and the World Customs Organization, regional banks, regional organizations, regional economic communities, parliaments, the private sector and other stakeholders, to engage themselves to support the preparatory process of the 10-year review of the Almaty Programme of Action and the Conference itself;

50. We request the Secretary-General to undertake all necessary measures to provide the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States with the necessary resources to enable it to carry out the tasks related to the preparations for the comprehensive review of the Almaty Programme of Action and other related mandates given by the General Assembly;

51. We express our sincere recognition for the constant efforts undertaken by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, in its capacity as Chair of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries since early 2012.
