



STATEMENT BY MR. ONKAR SARUP, SECOND SECRETARY, HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA, ACCRA, ON PREPARATORY THEMATIC MEETING TO THE MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE ALMATY PROGRAMME OF ACTION: TRANSIT TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, OUAGADOUGOU ON JUNE 20, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

We are happy to participate in the first thematic meeting on transit transport infrastructure development, as part of the substantive preparations for the 2008 Five Year Mid-term Review of the Almaty Programme of Action.

The Almaty Programme of Action is a significant landmark in the recognition of the special needs and problems of landlocked developing countries in the context of their effective integration into the world economy. A critical component in addressing these special needs is the availability of efficient transit transport systems. The Almaty Programme of Action provides a global framework for developing such transit transport systems, by acknowledging that for the development of transport systems, the constraints and challenges faced by their transit developing countries in building up transit transport infrastructure must be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner.

Mr. Chairman,

Development of transit transport infrastructure is not limited to the construction and maintenance of physical infrastructure like roads, railways, airports, ports, pipelines, etc. Rather, such physical infrastructure needs to be complemented by an efficient and modern storage and transport organisation, logistics management systems, and integrated information and communication networks. An additional requirement is the seamless integration of transport infrastructure in the landlocked countries with the transit transport infrastructure of their transit developing country, as well as with any special transit transport corridor. All these efforts involve extremely high costs, with comparatively higher risks and long gestation periods. It is, therefore, very difficult for transit developing countries to develop efficient transit transport infrastructure on their own, without additional long term funding sources provided by the international community and donor countries. In addition, technical assistance for capacity building is a must. The Almaty Programme of Action provides the appropriate framework to forge partnerships between landlocked developing countries, transit

developing countries and developed country partners towards the development an efficient transit transport system.

Despite the imperative of international support in the development of transit transport infrastructure, we note with concern that actual financial resources made available by the donor countries and the international financial institutions remain paltry. The Report of the Secretary General [A/61/302] has correctly highlighted the need for greater international financial resources to transit transport infrastructure projects in landlocked developing countries, as well as in their transit developing countries. We urge the donor countries and the international financial institutions to fully implement the Almaty Programme of Action through greater financial support. We firmly believe that the key element, and, thus, the main focus, of transit transport cooperation relates to international support for landlocked and transit developing countries in the construction / establishment of transport infrastructure and transit facilities and systems.

Mr. Chairman,

Transit developing countries themselves face many development challenges. Nevertheless, they take on additional costs of providing transit transport facilities to landlocked countries even when areas in their own countries remain as remote from the sea as those of landlocked countries. The transit developing countries undertake this in a spirit of co-operation and friendship, as enshrined in the Almaty Programme of Action. As a transit developing country with landlocked developing countries as neighbours, India accords the highest priority to enhancing the friendly and historical links with its landlocked neighbours, including through cooperation on transit transport issues. Special bilateral cooperation agreements are in force for easy transit of their goods through India. India has also extended economic and technical support, as well as financial assistance, to its landlocked neighbours for infrastructure development. Moreover, India accords special focus to the overall development of its own transport and transit infrastructure. The results are evident. As per a report of the UNCTAD Secretariat, the transport costs for one of the landlocked neighbours is about one third the average for landlocked countries and half of that for developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite some improvements, high cost of international trade continues to represent a significant constraint in the development objectives of landlocked developing countries. Lack of transit transport infrastructure is a key element towards these high costs. Greater international efforts under the framework of the Almaty Programme of Action are urgently required to ensure the development of an efficient transit transport system through substantial investments in the improvement of transit transport infrastructure. We believe that the mid-term review of the Almaty Programme of Action will provide the necessary momentum to promote its full implementation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[BACK TO TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)