



STATEMENT BY MR. YOGESHWAR VARMA, AMBASSADOR OF INDIA TO MONGOLIA, ON
PREPARATORY THEMATIC MEETING TO THE MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE ALMATY
PROGRAMME OF ACTION: INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND TRADE FACILITATION, ULAAN
BHAATAR, ON AUGUST 30, 2007

Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

At the outset, I would like to express on behalf of the Government and People of India our deep appreciation to you and the Government of Mongolia for hosting this thematic meeting on Trade and Trade Facilitation as part of the substantive preparations for the 2008 Five Year Mid-term Review of the Almaty Programme of Action. India is happy to participate in this important meeting and I thank you for the wonderful hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for this event.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate H.E. Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra on his appointment as Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. We are confident that he would continue to effectively discharge the important role of this august office.

The Almaty Programme of Action remains a cornerstone of our collective efforts to recognise and effectively address the special needs and problems of landlocked developing countries in the context of their effective integration into the world economy. In this regard, the Almaty Programme of Action provides the requisite global framework for achieving this goal, by forging partnerships between landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and developed country partners. Its focus on challenges and constraints faced by transit developing countries, as well as on the role of the international community in this global partnership is particularly important.

Mr. Chairman,

Participation of Landlocked Developing Countries and Transit Developing Countries in the international trading system is crucial for their development. However, as the Almaty Programme of Action itself notes, trade and transport are inextricably linked. It is therefore of utmost importance that both these issues are addressed in an

integrated and holistic manner. In this regard, discussions during the thematic meeting on Transit Transport Infrastructure Development held earlier this year in Ouagadougou also provide useful inputs to this event.

Development of transit transport infrastructure and introduction of modern trade facilitation systems involve high costs. It is, therefore, very difficult for transit developing countries to develop these on their own, without additional long term funding sources provided by the international community and donor countries. The Almaty Programme of Action specifically stresses on the importance of international support through financial resources, technology transfer and technical assistance for implementing these objectives.

However, we note with concern that actual financial resources made available by the donor countries and the international financial institutions remain paltry. We believe that this should be a key priority and we urge the donor countries and the international financial institutions to fully implement the Almaty Programme of Action through greater financial support.

Mr. Chairman,

An enabling international environment is yet another pre-condition for promoting trade from Landlocked developing countries and Transit developing countries. Developed countries should provide enhanced market access to products of special interest to Landlocked developing countries and Transit developing countries. The overarching principle of special and differential treatment remains a categorical imperative.

The Report of the Secretary General [A/61/302] has correctly highlighted the need for increased trade facilitation and reforms for greater efficiency in transit transports. In order to facilitate trade, it is important to ensure efficient customs control as well as simplification of documentation and procedures for international trade, including for transit shipments from Landlocked developing countries. While there have been some improvements in this regard, much more remains to be done. However, it is also important to ensure that transit arrangements are not detrimental to the national security interests of any Member State. Further, such arrangements must be tailored to the unique local conditions and circumstances applicable in each case. In this regard, we attach great importance to the ongoing negotiations at the World Trade Organization on Trade Facilitation. We hope that this would provide guidance to further improve transit trade.

Mr. Chairman,

As a transit developing country with two landlocked developing countries among its neighbours, India accords the highest priority to enhancing its friendly and historical

links with its landlocked neighbours, including through the strengthening of trade relations and cooperation on transit transport issues. Special bilateral trade and transit agreements are in force for easy transit of their goods through India. Moreover, India has also extended economic and technical support, as well as financial assistance, to its landlocked neighbours for infrastructure development and capacity building. India also plays an active role in promoting regional initiatives to improve transport connectivity and trade relations.

The high cost of international trade, both due to lack of transit transport infrastructure as well as procedural bottlenecks, continues to represent a significant constraint for landlocked developing countries. We believe that the mid-term review of the Almaty Programme of Action will provide the necessary momentum to promote its full implementation towards reducing these costs.

Thank You, Mr. Chairman

[BACK TO TBALE OF CONTENTS](#)