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**Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation**  
First session  
Geneva, 22–24 October 2013

**Report of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on  
Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation  
on its first session**

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, from 22 to 24 October 2013

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## **I. Chair's summary**

1. The first session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation, whose theme was "Transport and logistics innovation towards the view of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014", was held from 22 to 24 October 2013, pursuant to the decision by the twenty-seventh special session of the Trade and Development Board and the approved terms of reference. Experts had before them document TD/B/C.I/MEM.7/2 prepared by the secretariat.
2. The meeting provided a forum to discuss some specific transport services issues faced by landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) when attempting to connect with global markets. Experts came from trade and transport ministries, customs authorities, private sector representatives, academia, and international and regional organizations.
3. Five informal sessions were held on the following themes:
  - (a) A decade of innovations in transit transport solutions;
  - (b) Technology in transit transport for LLDCs' trade;
  - (c) Corridor transit arrangements;
  - (d) Effective transport systems;
  - (e) Way forward.

### **A. Opening session**

4. The Director of the Division on Technology and Logistics recalled that, since its inception, UNCTAD had paid particular attention to problems facing LLDCs. UNCTAD's role in helping them had been further emphasized in the context of negotiations on trade facilitation carried out under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (i.e. Annex D organizations).
5. Recalling the objective of the Almaty Programme of Action and noting the substantive work carried out since its adoption and achievements to date, she emphasized that a better integration of those countries into the international trading networks required, as a matter of priority, adequate and well-functioning transport trade and facilitation systems. In compliance with General Assembly resolution 66/214 providing for a comprehensive 10-year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014, various developing partners had engaged with representatives of LLDCs and transit countries in the review process, and a number of regional review meetings had been conducted. Against this background, the Director noted that the present session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting constituted one of UNCTAD's contributions to the 10-year review process.

### **B. A decade of innovations in transit transport solutions**

6. The Director of the Transport Division of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) urged countries to adhere to relevant United Nations transport-related legal frameworks, in particular the 58 instruments dealing with land transport. It was important to ensure a basic level of harmonization for efficient cross-border movements by acceding to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982). There were no particular impediments to developing countries' accession to these legal instruments. An issue that warranted attention was the need for a specific sustainable

development goal on transport. Recalling that problems facing LLDCs were also developmental challenges, and mindful of growing sustainability imperatives, the Director urged countries, including experts at the meeting, to mobilize national authorities and negotiators to bring this issue forward to relevant international negotiating forums such as the January 2014 session of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. In this respect, one expert said that a new sustainable development goal on transport would need to reflect all modes of transport, while another sought to clarify how the experts at the meeting could help advance this objective.

7. Trade facilitation involved aspects relating to both transportation and customs. Achieving basic infrastructure and service levels, ensuring international connectedness and transit liberalization, as well as incorporating information technology (IT) and innovative management, were equally important. Enhanced cooperation at all levels and strong political will were fundamental for cross-border facilitation. As to the future of the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975), perceived short-term setbacks offered nonetheless offered an opportunity for long-term improvements of the TIR system. In the spirit of preparation for the Almaty Programme of Action, the Director of the ECE Transport Division suggested that UNCTAD and her organization might consider working together to issue a joint publication recommending the global use of the Commission's new methodology for corridor performance measurement and comparison.

8. The representative of the Permanent Mission of Paraguay to the United Nations made a presentation on his country's Transport Master Plan and National Logistics Plan. The former plan was designed to manage the development of transport infrastructure and services as well as logistics, while the latter aimed to streamline processes and increase opportunities for exporters. The ultimate objective of both plans was to cut transport costs and ensure Paraguay's competitiveness in the international market place. Both plans interacted and complemented each other through the infrastructure component as well as the services and logistics pillars. Adopting a 20-year time scale, the Transport Master Plan focused on where (infrastructure) and how (services) transportation took place, as well as on the object of transport, namely cargo (logistical pillar). Logistical problems included the concentrated cargo flows, the need to improve multimodal integration and to diversify logistical corridors as well as to mainstream Paraguay into the networks of neighbouring countries. Modernizing planning and management and addressing some institutional aspects were also important. As regards the scope of the plan, the speaker noted that cooperation and agreements with neighbouring countries were key (e.g. free storage zones and river transport agreements with Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay). In addition, projects aimed at directing investment towards ports in neighbouring transit countries were under way in conjunction with the private sector.

9. The panellist representing the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency described the legal and institutional framework behind its establishment. Aiming to promote efficient transit transport systems and global competitiveness for contracting parties, the Agency provided an innovative collaborative mechanism in the field of transit transport. The Agency was based on stakeholder and government cooperation among Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. Led by its governing body, the Agency sought to fulfil its mission by ensuring, among other things, that the Corridor was available, and its infrastructure and services were reliable; that costs were competitive; that procedures were coordinated and harmonized; and that costs and transit times were predictable.

10. Key achievements concerning the Corridor since the start of operations in 2010 included, for example, participation of the private sector in the governing body, the introduction of consultative committees and the reduction in port dwell time and road

blocks. One expert asked how freedom of transit could be reconciled with security concerns in the region, including the illegal trade of minerals and some endangered species. In reply, the panellist said that cooperation at the country level, in particular with national police, was key, as was the use of technological solutions such as e-seals. Answering questions on road network financing and level of road pavement, he said that two financing schemes were available, namely the East African Community development partners and levies on fuels. While more resources were needed for the pavement of secondary routes, the main arteries and roads that connected to the Corridor were in good paved condition.

11. In his presentation, the representative of the Ministry of Transport of Azerbaijan described his country's national transit transport strategy and its goal to position itself as an international transport hub in Central Asia. Azerbaijan's strategic geographical position had significant transit transport potential and provided favourable conditions for developing logistics services. Accordingly, the country had implemented or was currently planning a number of large-scale transport and transit-related projects such as the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars railway project and the upgrading of its railway infrastructure. An added advantage for Azerbaijan was its adherence to relevant international legal instruments such as the TIR Convention, its application of the single-window concept and its progressive application of major European directives. To increase the transit opportunities and competitiveness of the East–West international transport corridor, two global projects, namely TRACECA and Viking, were working together. Other initiatives were the construction of a new international seaport and tunnel under the Bosphorus Channel. Renewal and construction of the road network were also under way. However, “frozen conflicts” prevented the operability of some transport connections and could undermine the realization of Azerbaijan's full transit transport potential.

12. One expert emphasized the need to adopt a broader developmental perspective when considering problems faced by LLDCs and suggested that a way forward could include dedicating an international think tank to LLDCs and leveraging political will at a higher level.

### **C. Technology in transit transport for LLDCs' trade**

13. The Secretariat presented the UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA), which functioned as an integrated multifunctional and transactional system covering the entire customs clearance process and all types of customs procedures. ASYCUDA could interoperate with any external system of other national agencies, neighbouring countries or regional organizations and could operate as a customs-centric single-window system. The system was continuously being further developed – the latest version of the system was code-named “ASYCUDAWorld”. At the national level, the system could be developed according to a modular approach, including such elements as multi-agency risk management, interoperability, single window and tracking, and could be adapted to local requirements. The ASYCUDA approach was based on the training and use of local capacities to develop the system based on technical assistance and software provided by UNCTAD. These were key factors for ensuring the self-sufficiency of ASYCUDA users and their autonomous operation from external support.

14. A representative of the Centre of Excellence for Supply Chain Improvement of the University of Derby, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, made a presentation on the advantages of radio frequency identification (RFID). It was a data carrier, like for example, bar codes, for the purposes of automatically identifying and tracking by using tags emitting radio frequency attached to objects such as goods or containers and the like in the transport and logistics chain. The technology was used in a wide range of industries. Its main advantages lay in improving the visibility and traceability

of steps in the supply chain by minimizing manual intervention and errors, thereby saving costs and reducing losses. These systems had the capacity to ensure the automatic data capture of large volumes of goods.

15. An expert from the State enterprise Single Window Centre for Foreign Trade under the Ministry of Economy of Kyrgyzstan presented the single-window system for trade facilitation in his country. The single window could be defined as a facility that allowed parties involved in trade and transport to lodge, either manually or electronically, standardized information and documents with a single entry point to meet all trade requirements, for example, import-, export-, and transit-related regulatory requirements. The single-window system in that country had been gradually implemented since 2006 with a view to reducing the time and cost associated mainly with import and export procedures, introducing a standardized approach and hence eliminating repetitive and non-transparent procedures. He gave examples of the challenges of implementing the single window, including resistance by regulatory agencies, political unrest in Kyrgyzstan and the lack of the necessary IT skills by the relevant agencies. The introduction of a quality management system was being planned to fill that gap.

16. The representative of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Nicaragua gave a presentation on the International Customs Transfer for Merchandise, commonly known by its Spanish acronym, TIM. It had been adopted within the framework of the Central American Common Market, comprising the following countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua and the participation of Panama as well. TIM established procedures for international customs transit operations by land in the region, including obligations and responsibilities of carriers, as well as the use of a standardized declaration. Since 2003 a modernization effort had taken place with a view to ensuring a standardized process for exchanging electronic data of the transit declaration.

17. The following problems were identified with regard to the application of TIM:

(a) The physical infrastructure at border crossings was insufficient for the smooth flow of transport, including lack of coordination between agencies at borders;

(b) Parallel and repetitive procedures between many of the different regulatory regimes;

(c) Not all transport corridors had been integrated into TIM, resulting in additional processes;

(d) Lack of transparency and information dissemination regarding regulations and procedures.

18. With respect to the border-crossing infrastructure, one expert advocated the use of red and green corridors as a means to facilitate flows.

19. During the question-and-answer session that followed, the meeting discussed and clarified a number of aspects regarding the various presentations.

20. The representative of UNCTAD provided further information on the functions of ASYCUDA, such as the control of the movement of goods, direct trader input, e-signature, cargo management, calculation of duties and its interoperability with external systems. According to several experts, the ASYCUDA system would be put to good use by the member countries of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa, which planned to exchange customs data once the necessary telecommunication systems were in place.

21. The meeting also discussed the advantages of RFID and the technical and financial aspects of its implementation in large-scale operations such as national and regional transit. The technology required the development of an infrastructure of RFID readers being

installed in places where data should be collected. RFID could be linked with, for example, global positioning systems with a view to further enhancing tracking and data exchange possibilities.

22. The meeting took note of a proposal made by one expert to build further support for LLDCs by further enhancing the coordination with and the support by the Group of Twenty and establishing a group of friends on LLDC issues, including transport and logistics.

#### **D. Corridor transit arrangements**

23. The representative of the Transit Transportation Coordination Authority of the Northern Corridor made a presentation on the Northern Corridor, a multimodal corridor encompassing road, rail, pipeline and inland waterways transport. It was one of the busiest and most important transport routes in East and Central Africa. High costs and transport delays remained among the main challenges for international and intra-regional trade growth in the region. Some 37 per cent of the total logistics costs in landlocked Northern Corridor countries were attributable to road transport costs. Delays on the Northern Corridor were estimated at \$800 per day per truck, hence increasing the cost of doing business in the region. To tackle these challenges, the Corridor Authority had launched several initiatives:

(a) A seamless and smart transport corridor featuring the harmonization and streamlining of policies and legal framework for transport and trade facilitation and the development of opportunities for private sector investment and participation in the corridor;

(b) A one-stop border posts project, transport observatory (web-based system) to monitor corridor performance;

(c) The Revenues Authorities Documentation and Data Exchange, known by its acronym, RADDEX;

(d) Electronic single windows;

(e) Electronic cargo tracking systems;

(f) Migration to ASYCUDAWorld.

24. The speaker highlighted the need to maintain partnerships in soft and hard infrastructure development, strengthen transport and trade facilitation, promote private sector investment, develop a database on intra-regional trade, build capacities and sustain the willingness of regional organizations to harmonize their policies and regulations.

25. He described the multimodal Central Corridor, its scope and related challenges. Key challenges included a poor railway system; a poor peri-port infrastructure, which created congestion at port access roads; the need to standardize weighbridge tolerances and to develop an integrated approach to setting rules and regulations; and incidences of overloading by truckers and of multiple truck stoppages along the corridor.

26. Several trade facilitation initiatives were under way along the Central Corridor. A capacity-building project for control authorities and transit transport operators run by UNCTAD, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic Commission for Africa, was being piloted in the United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. The project entailed the application of the UNCTAD/ESCAP Cross-border and Transit Transport Process Management Toolkit, which included a cluster methodology and time/cost distance methodology to help identify and quantify bottlenecks to be addressed in transport processes and promote collaborative solutions and facilitation measures.

27. Other initiatives currently being implemented were as follows:

(a) Setting up a Central Corridor Transport Observatory to monitor electronically the performance of the corridor and to generate relevant performance indicators and reports on the Central Corridor;

(b) Building one-stop inspection stations along the Central Corridor to reduce time and cost and increase road safety;

(c) Conducting a road safety study for commercial freight along the Central Corridor through cooperation between the road transport operators and the public authorities;

(d) Developing the Tanzania Intermodal and Rail Project, which would lead to a more rational allocation of freight between road and rail modes.

28. In conclusion, the speaker stressed the importance of the Tanzanian Government's initiative, namely, the blue print "Big Results Now", providing recommendations across the supply chain of the Central Corridor. The blue print aimed, among others, to increase the capacity of the Port of Dar es Salaam to 5 million tons by 2015.

29. Several experts discussed the importance of adopting a proper institutional framework (corridor management authority) and the use of monitoring and evaluation tools (such as transport observatories) to design solutions that helped reduce transport costs and delays and improved the reliability of transport services and transit logistics. One expert highlighted the need to increase exports and promote more balanced cargo flows as a means of cutting transport costs.

30. In his presentation, a representative of the Société Navale Guinéenne introduced an initiative by the Government of Guinea to increase transit trade between Guinea and Mali. The port of Conakry was the closest port to Mali but nevertheless had a very low market share of Mali cargo. The country was improving its infrastructures (port and roads) in order to increase its transit market share. The Guinean Government was working with private investors to build a railway from Conakry to Mali before 2016. It had allocated 250 acres to shipping companies to develop transit areas for Mali cargo and a dry port on the outskirts of Conakry to avoid truck congestion, but would require assistance from international organization such as UNCTAD in setting up competitive logistics to attract Mali transit cargo.

31. A representative of the Senegalese Customs Administration made a presentation on the implementation and opening of the inter-state transit route between Dakar, Senegal, and landlocked Mali. Roughly 60 per cent of the trade of Mali passed along the Dakar–Bamako corridor and was governed by the Convention relating to Inter-States Road Transit of Goods. The Convention detailed technical standards and operational requirements such as the suspension of duties and taxes and other measures and prohibitions along the prescribed route, and on the basis of a single customs document. The Economic Community of West African States had adopted the Convention in 1982. An ad valorem guarantee fund at the rate of 0.5 per cent of cost, insurance and freight value of the goods supported the scheme.

32. In his presentation, a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Chad described his country's national situation within the Central African Economic and Monetary Community<sup>1</sup> and the Economic Community of Central African States.<sup>2</sup> To gain

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<sup>1</sup> Cameroon, Chad, Gabon, the Congo, the Central African Republic and Equatorial Guinea, with a combined population of 43 million.

<sup>2</sup> Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and Sao Tome, with a combined population of 135 million.



access to the sea, Chad transited Cameroon to access the port of Douala, a distance of 1,700 km from the capital, Ndjamena. This was the shortest and safest route, which also offered the option to use multimodal transport by utilizing railways in Cameroon (884 km) and then road transportation. The alternatives were through Nigeria (1,900 km) to the port of Lagos and further on to the ports of Cotonou (Benin) and Lomé (Togo). Some 80 per cent of Chad's exports were cotton, and 80 per cent of all imports and exports travelled by road.

33. Regional cooperation was helping to solve some of the issues among countries in Central Africa. As of 1 January 2014, the free movement of persons would become effective throughout the Central African Economic and Monetary Community. Further, a region-wide effort to install fibre optics in Chad, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea was ongoing, with plans to extend it to all members of the Community.

34. Other technological developments included the use of the Global Positioning System by carriers to track and control the movement of goods, the widespread automation of customs procedures, greater transparency on transport costs and the recoding of irregularities along corridors.

35. Revenues from hydrocarbons had made it possible for Chad to make significant investments in road infrastructure. As a result, the length of paved roads had increased from 1,600 km in 2006 to 2,200 km in 2013. In total, Chad boasted 7,000 km of roads.

## **E. Effective transport systems**

36. A representative of the Port Authority of Thailand highlighted in his presentation the progress made by Thai ports in aiming to become the maritime transportation hub for Asia in terms of level of compliance with international standards. The presentation focused in particular on the case of cargo to and from the Lao People's Democratic Republic, transiting through Thailand.

37. In another presentation, a representative of the Ministry of Commerce and Supplies of Nepal outlined measures aimed at facilitating trade and reducing costs and transit time. These included capacity-building, establishing a national trade facilitation body, standardizing protocols and streamlining procedures.

38. The ensuing discussion touched upon issues related to the single window, the role of insurance and transit corridor management institutions. In relation to the decision of the Secretariat of the ASEAN<sup>3</sup> Economic Community to achieve capital market integration in the region by 2015, the ASEAN Single Window initiative was considered central to facilitating trade.

39. Reflect upon the progress made by countries in the region in implementing the initiative, meeting participants noted that the role of insurance was crucial in its impact on time and cost of cross-border trade. Loading and unloading times of goods were often delayed because of the specifications and terms contained in the insurance policies. As the cost of such delays was often substantial, participants explored possible solutions, such as the harmonization of specifications, and discussed terms of insurance. Some participants expressed interest in considerations that a country must take into account when deciding whether or not a transit corridor management institution should be established between a landlocked country and its neighbouring transit country.

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<sup>3</sup> Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

40. In their presentations, the representatives of the Ministry of Economic Affairs of Bhutan and the Ministry of Commerce of Burundi outlined different trade facilitation initiatives being developed in their countries. For instance, both countries had in recent years undertaken major reforms in customs automation. Burundi was striving to migrate from ASYCUDA ++ to ASYCUDA World. In Bhutan, progress in implementing the Almaty Programme of Action largely depended on the international community's good will and enhanced financial and technical support for landlocked and transit developing countries. The support of UNCTAD in this process through the three pillars of its mandate remained essential.

41. In the debate that followed, some experts said that it was important to tackle transport and trade facilitation challenges regionally. Others focused on the importance of striking a balance between hardware (infrastructure) and software (capacity-building, information and communications technology) investments in trade facilitation and transport. Other experts discussed the challenges faced by landlocked countries, such as high import and export costs, lack of reliability, predictability and frequency of transport as well as a lack of solidarity and cooperation from transit countries. One delegation said that a lack of export diversification was common to many LLDCs, putting their participation in international trade at risk.

42. There was a need for capacity-building and training for all kind of stakeholders involved in international trade. The UNCTAD secretariat cited its efforts to assist LLDCs and developing countries in filling that gap. The UNCTAD secretariat outlined a project on national trade facilitation implementation plans. Several experts from Africa made suggestions regarding country cases that could be included in future UNCTAD events, such as the case of Niger and best practices developed within the East African Community.

## **F. Way forward**

43. In her presentation, the Director of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) highlighted the attention UNCTAD placed on issues relating to LLDCs. She recalled the premise of the Almaty Programme of Action: to use genuine partnerships at the national, bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels – between LLDCs and transit countries and their development partners, and between the private and public sectors – to help LLDCs overcome the challenges of being landlocked. According to a recent OHRLLS study, LLDCs' trade was only 61 per cent of the trade volume of coastal countries while their transport costs were 45 per cent higher than a representative coastal economy, implying that improved transport and trade facilitation were still key to reducing the high trade and transport costs of those countries.

44. Preparations for the comprehensive 10-Year Review Conference in 2014 were well under way in the three main tracks: the intergovernmental track, the United Nations inter-agency track and the private sector track. The first track saw the Euro-Asia Regional review in Vientiane in March 2013 and the Africa regional review in Addis Ababa in July 2013; the Latin American regional review would be held on 18 and 19 November 2013 in Asunción. At the national level, LLDCs had submitted national reports that fed directly into regional and global preparations. The intergovernmental track would culminate with two preparatory committee meetings that would draft the outcome document for consideration and adoption by the Conference.

45. The inter-agency track pre-conference events had highlighted key development challenges and needs of LLDCs that should be incorporated into the new programme of action. Enhancing productive capacities in LLDCs, supported by the provision of financial and technical assistance and capacity-building from development partners, was critical.

LLDCs should aim to transform their economic structures by promoting competitive industries and export structures that produced higher value added products. Many of the meetings had also underscored the importance of the service industry, the role of the private sector and the growing importance of regional and South–South cooperation.

46. Overall, the pre-conference meetings had suggested that the new development agenda for the LLDCs must not be designed simply as a sectoral programme but should address social and economic development, poverty reduction and sustainable development in LLDCs while retaining international trade, transport and transit issues at its core. The private sector track aimed to ensure that private sector actors were fully engaged in identifying tangible, action-oriented proposals addressing LLDC-specific problems and challenges in the area of trade and transport facilitation, investment and enterprise development.

47. With regard to the ongoing WTO negotiations on trade facilitation, the early conclusion of a WTO trade facilitation agreement at the ninth WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Bali, Indonesia, in December 2013 would be of paramount importance, in particular for LLDCs. They should take active part in the negotiations and demand the adoption of ambitious texts with binding provisions.

48. Recalling that the 10-Year Review Conference was a major undertaking of the entire United Nations system and the international community, the speaker called for the continued active engagement of all in the preparatory process of the Conference.

## **G. Open general debate**

49. One expert said that a large part of the trade of the Democratic Republic of the Congo passed through neighbouring countries in Eastern Africa. Traders were often confronted with challenges in transit countries. Although it was not formally an LLDC, the challenges it faced for large parts of its trade were the same as those of landlocked countries. In response, one expert said that the Almaty Programme of Action was not limited to supporting LLDCs, but rather that it aimed at focussing on the relevant issues, and as such should also benefit countries with large landlocked areas, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The speaker pointed out the risks posed by illicit trade and the need to ensure sufficient control of imports, exports and transit operations.

50. Another participant said that investments in logistics infrastructures must not be overlooked. These were often expensive, and the question arose as to what extent initiatives such as the WTO negotiations on trade facilitation would cover this important issue. In her response, the Director of OHRLLS explained that while the WTO negotiations did not explicitly include that issue, many of the initiatives undertaken under the Almaty Programme of Action did take on board issues related to transport and other infrastructures.

51. In response to a query about the WTO's estimate of the impact a trade facilitation agreement would have on world trade, the UNCTAD secretariat said that estimates by various organizations, including UNCTAD, had shown that the costs of procedures for trade and international transport ranged between 3 and 6 per cent of the value of international trade, with far higher figures for some LLDCs.

52. In reference to the Almaty Programme of Action, one expert highlighted the need for capacity-building, especially in the context of regional and multilateral rules relating to trade and transport facilitation. Many existing instruments had not been widely applied by developing countries, largely due to a lack of understanding and capacity.

53. The panellists expressed their support for the involvement of regional economic communities in the application of existing international instruments and reiterated the importance of ratifying and implementing existing international instruments.

54. With regard to the involvement of regional economic communities in the application of existing international instruments, several participants suggested that an institutional framework should ensure national coordination for trade facilitation reforms, as well as regional coordination among public and private stake holders. By way of example, the African Shippers Councils had supported international maritime transport initiatives in Africa. The Union of African Shippers Councils could well play the role of a regionally based organization representing the interests of key stakeholders in Western and Southern Africa. The establishment of transport observatories in its member countries was an activity that could be supported by the Council.

55. One expert, representing the Central Corridor in Eastern Africa, suggested that UNCTAD should look at intelligent transport systems and see how they could apply to customs union and integrated economic schemes along transport corridors. Along the same lines, another expert suggested that UNCTAD should prepare a study on best practices relating to logistics systems and organize a global meeting on sharing best practices in IT systems in international logistics and provide technical assistance in setting up a legal and regulatory framework for efficient logistics services to help countries design and put in place the best solutions. Yet another expert highlighted the importance of logistics infrastructure and logistics portals, such as ports and port community portals, as well as the growing share of e-logistics systems at the national and regional levels and South–South cooperation.

56. Several participants said that UNCTAD should assist LLDCs in dealing with the lack of financial resources for transport infrastructures. They encouraged UNCTAD to expand its work on financing transport infrastructures. Recalling the proposal made by the Director of the ECE Transport Division, several experts said that it was necessary to ensure that transport was recognized as a future sustainable development goal and to capitalize on this opportunity to meet the sector’s growing needs and fill its financial gaps.

57. One participant stressed the need to enhance institutional frameworks and promote a coordinated approach at the national, regional and international levels in implementing actions, including new monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, where international organizations could work together with regional organizations and member States, and promote better funding in the context of the successor to the Almaty Programme of Action.

58. It was important to define new financing mechanisms and access new means of finance such as climate finance and other carbon mechanisms in order to promote the development of transport and trade facilitation. Several experts called on UNCTAD to assist in developing such mechanisms and in promoting bankable projects. One expert suggested that, although UNCTAD was not a donor agency, it could play an important role as moderator or coordinator of a global meeting on transport infrastructure financing in the framework of development finance, bringing together transport stakeholders and financiers to discuss and define the main issues related to financing needs and bottlenecks in the transport sector.

59. With regard to the role that delegations in Geneva could play in building the future development agenda for LLDCs, the Director of OHRLLS said that the agenda should not be seen in a “silo” but rather in the context of the post-2015 agenda and the need to promote transport as a sustainable development goal. The next United Nations framework of assistance to LLDCs should have clear goals and responsibilities for all partners, LLDCs and transit countries, as well as the international community. It was important to ensure ways and means for implementation, including funding mechanisms. The WTO

negotiations on trade facilitation were a unique opportunity for LLDCs to further advance their transit transport agenda and participate more actively in international trade.

## H. Suggestions for the future contributions of UNCTAD

60. In general, the experts agreed to underscore the role UNCTAD should continue to play in researching and analysing, disseminating and allowing the exchange of successful experiences as well as in providing technical assistance as appropriate to requesting countries. The numerous requests could be grouped in the following fields, where UNCTAD should assist landlocked and transit developing countries:

(a) Technology-based and innovative solutions applied to transit transport systems. These included, among others, IT-based transit monitoring systems, the provision of advance transit information, service-level agreements among transit stakeholders, and public and private arrangements that would be designed, funded and operated for transit infrastructure and services;

(b) Regulatory, organizational and managerial schemes allowing the effective operation of transit corridors as most appropriate institutional frameworks. In this context, human resources and institutional capacity-building programmes as well as the collection of data by transport observatories were particularly useful in the design of tailored, state-of-the-art and ground-breaking sustainable transit transport arrangements;

(c) Regional integration and cooperation initiatives to review and refine transit policies and strategies to ensure that needs of landlocked and transit developing countries were addressed in the most effective manner, as portrayed in existing regional best practice examples that could be actively pursued by all countries;

(d) Research and technical assistance to promote effective financing mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, taking into account the specific needs of LLDCs, in order to attract international financial institutions, donors and the private sector to finance transport, particularly infrastructure projects;

(e) Strengthened multilateral rules that would further facilitate transit and international trade for landlocked developing countries.

61. As regards the inclusion of these categories of issues in a future United Nations framework of assistance to landlocked and transit developing countries, the meeting suggested as a matter of priority to promote sustainable transit transport systems in line with the Doha Mandate, paragraph 56(h) (TD/L.427/Rev.1).

62. Such a support for landlocked developing countries in achieving sustainability of transit transport systems would be significantly facilitated if experts took all necessary action to mobilize their national negotiators to ensure that transport was considered a sector deserving specific attention and financing on its own, not only as an enabler of other sectors. A crucial opportunity to support the transport sector in its bid for being granted the status of independent sustainable development goal would be provided by The Open Working Group on Transport as part of Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals to take place in New York, United States of America, in January 2014.

## **II. Organizational matters**

### **A. Election of officers**

63. At its opening plenary meeting, the multi-year expert meeting elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Andrei Popov (Belarus)
Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur	Mr. Arsène N. Omichessan

### **B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**

64. At its opening plenary, the multi-year expert meeting adopted the provisional agenda for the session contained in TD/B/C.I/MEM.7/1. The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Transport and logistics innovation towards the review of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014
4. Adoption of the report of the meeting

### **C. Outcome of the session**

65. At its closing plenary meeting, on Thursday, 24 October, the multi-year expert meeting agreed that the Chair should summarize the discussions (see chapter I).

### **D. Adoption of the report**

66. Also at its closing plenary meeting, the multi-year expert meeting authorized the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, under the authority of the Chair, to finalize the report after the conclusion of the meeting.

## Annex

### Attendance<sup>4,5</sup>

1. Representatives of the following States members of UNCTAD attended the multi-year expert meeting:

Afghanistan	Madagascar
Angola	Mexico
Azerbaijan	Morocco
Belarus	Nepal
Benin	Netherlands
Bhutan	Nicaragua
Brazil	Nigeria
Burkina Faso	Pakistan
Burundi	Paraguay
Cameroon	Philippines
Central African Republic	Republic of Moldova
Chad	Saudi Arabia
Chile	Senegal
Côte d'Ivoire	Sierra Leone
Cuba	Spain
Democratic Republic of the Congo	Sri Lanka
Ecuador	Thailand
France	Tunisia
Georgia	Turkey
Guatemala	Ukraine
Iraq	United Arab Emirates
Indonesia	United States of America
Kazakhstan	Uzbekistan
Kyrgyzstan	Yemen
Libya	Zimbabwe

2. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented at the session:

Eurasian Economic Commission  
European Union  
Union of African Shippers Councils

3. The following United Nations organs, bodies and programmes were represented at the session:

Economic Commission for Europe  
International Atomic Energy Agency  
International Trade Centre  
Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked  
Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

<sup>4</sup> This annex reflects the attendance of those member States, observers, organizations and other bodies that registered for the meeting.

<sup>5</sup> For the list of participants, see TD/B/C.I/MEM.7/INF.1.

4. The following specialized agencies and related organizations were represented at the session:

World Bank  
World Trade Organization

5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented at the session:

*General category*

Consumer Unity and Trust Society International  
World Association of Former United Nations Interns and Fellows

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