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Ministerial Meeting of Trade Ministers and Senior Trade Officials of Landlocked Developing Countries

UNCTAD XIII

Held at the Qatar National Convention Centre, Doha, on 23 April 2012

Summary prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat

1. Opening statements were made by Mr. Manuel Maria Caceres, Vice-Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paraguay; Mr. Nam Vizaketh, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mr. Supachai Panitchpakdi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD; Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; and Ms. Valentine Rugwabiza, Deputy Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
2. Further statements were made by representatives of the following delegations: the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mongolia, Nepal, Rwanda and Zambia.
3. Participants discussed in detail the development constraints faced by landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) owing to their specific geographical location, which deprived them from direct territorial access to the sea. As a result, merchandise trade incurred additional and higher transaction costs due to various impediments, including delays and uncertainties at transit borders, additional administrative procedures and longer transport routes.
4. There was agreement among participants that issues of transit transport, including the requisite infrastructure and trade facilitation, was of utmost priority to LLDCs. Benefits from trade facilitation were seen as more important than those related to tariff reductions. Many participants called on UNCTAD to continue strengthening its analytical work and technical assistance relating to transit trade, adding particular emphasis to UNCTAD's role in this area in the Ministerial Communiqué.

5. It was agreed that LLDCs should better coordinate their activities in this respect and become more vocal on these issues in relevant international organizations, such as WTO. They should also benefit more from the Aid for Trade initiative, particularly in the context of the forthcoming global review, and from mechanisms that facilitated WTO accession.
 6. Several participants highlighted the importance of investments for structural transformation. Industries that were not dependent or less dependent on transport, service activities and clean industries using renewable forms of energy were singled out as promising economic sectors for LLDCs.
 7. Any LLDCs that had not yet done so were invited to join the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries of 2010.
 8. All participants put great emphasis on a thorough preparation of the forthcoming Comprehensive 10-year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action, scheduled for 2014. Issues that were not yet fully visible at the time of drafting the Almaty Programme of Action in 2003, such as South–South cooperation, the economic impact of climate change and international efforts towards carbon tax schemes, should be addressed in a successor programme of action.
 9. The Ministers unanimously adopted a Ministerial Communiqué.
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