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Ministerial Communiqué of the Landlocked Developing Countries

We, the Ministers of Trade of the landlocked developing countries, having met in Doha during the UNCTAD XIII Conference,

Recalling the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations Organization, the final document of the 2005 World Summit, the outcome document of the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the Millennium Development Goals of 2010,

Recalling the Almaty Declaration and 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 Countries,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 63/2, of 3 October 2008, wherein was approved the Declaration of the high-level meeting of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly dedicated to the mid-term review of the Almaty Programme of Action,

Recalling the Asunción Platform, the Ulaanbaatar Declaration and the Ezulwini Declaration,

Recalling the Ministerial Communiqué of the landlocked developing countries adopted within the framework of UNCTAD XI and UNCTAD XII,

Recalling the Sao Paulo Consensus and the Accra Accord adopted at UNCTAD XI and UNCTAD XII, respectively,

Taking note as well of the communiqué approved at the Tenth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries, held at the headquarters of the United Nations, on 23 September 2011,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 62/204, 63/228, 64/214, 65/172, 66/214, on specific measures related to the needs and problems in particular of landlocked developing countries,

1. We highlight that the lack of direct access to the seas, worsened by the remote location from world markets have negative effects on the development of landlocked developing countries. The combined adverse effects of transport costs, transit traffic difficulties, additional and cumbersome customs procedures, and the lack of

predictability regarding the timely arrival of goods at destination decreases the competitiveness of landlocked developing countries, as well as increases the final costs of products in our countries. This situation is a stumbling block to the effective and beneficial integration of our economies into the world economy and to the socio-economic development of our countries.

2. We urge the World Trade Organization (WTO) members to undertake all endeavours necessary for the advancement and successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round. This, besides highlighting the value of multilateralism, will contribute positively to our social and economic development. An essential component to reach the goal of development is the effective realization of the principle of special and differential treatment, particularly of countries with special needs, such as the landlocked developing countries.

3. We emphasize the need to achieve better access to agricultural and non-agricultural markets, especially for products of interest to landlocked developing countries and through the elimination of all forms of non-tariff barriers to trade that could affect exports of the landlocked developing countries. Likewise, special attention must be granted to their interests in the trade facilitation negotiations, especially those related to transit, which should preserve what is already established in article V of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

4. We urge WTO member States to increase the level of assistance in the context of the Aid for Trade initiative and to pay greater attention to the development of productive capacities, the formulation of effective trade policies, the development of infrastructure, as well as the upgrading of information and communication technologies in landlocked developing countries.

5. We appreciate the work done by UNCTAD to promote the flow of direct foreign investment to the landlocked developing countries, particularly for the attraction and retention of foreign direct investment (FDI) for the development of productive capacities in line with our special geographical situation. We urge UNCTAD to intensify these efforts in order to achieve a better visibility of landlocked developing countries as a destination of FDI. To this end, we request UNCTAD to ensure the preparation or the update of an investment guide for landlocked developing countries.

6. We urge United Nation Members to take into account the adverse impacts of multiple, yet interrelated economic and financial, as well as food and energy crises, on development, and other emerging challenges in their deliberations in all development forums, including the elaboration of the work programme of UNCTAD for the next few years.

7. Regarding new and emerging challenges, the food crisis with its adverse effects on the poorest segments of the populations, must be addressed through technological development and the removal of trade barriers with a view to lowering the cost of trading food products. Moreover, in order to mitigate the constraints caused by the energy crisis, large investments are required in the development of new technologies and in the infrastructure for energy production and distribution, as well as in the requisite transit infrastructure.

8. Therefore, it is important to maintain the international commitment to cooperation through real technology transfer, the development of productive capacities and unhindered transit traffic, taking into account the difficulties and obstacles faced by landlocked developing countries due to their geographical situation.

9. We highlight the need to focus on information technology and the need to connect our countries to international networks of data transmission, which also requires

attraction of capital for infrastructure and connection. In this respect, international cooperation shall be useful to facilitate connectivity within landlocked developing countries, as well as internationally between the landlocked developing countries and the other parts of the world.

10. We stress the importance of strengthening the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) of the United Nations. Its work shall be intensified due to the proximity of the 2015 target year for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and also in view of the fast approaching period of the Almaty Programme of Action and its review.

11. We urge those landlocked developing countries, which have not done so, to accede, at their earliest convenience, to the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries in order to bring the Think Tank to full operation, and invite the organizations of the United Nations system, member countries and relevant international and regional organizations to support the Think Tank.

12. We further stress the importance of strengthening the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, in particular the landlocked developing countries unit, especially with increased financial resources, as well as of coordinating actions in favour of the landlocked developing countries with all other divisions of the UNCTAD secretariat.

13. We invite the organizations of the United Nations system, in particular UNCTAD, OHRLLS, the United Nations Development Programme, the regional commissions and other international organizations, especially the World Bank and the regional development banks, WTO and the World Customs Organization, to strengthen within the context of the respective mandates, their efforts to mitigate the special situation of landlocked developing countries.

14. In line with General Assembly resolution 66/214 of 22 December 2011, we also call on all relevant organizations in the United Nations system to provide all necessary support for and to actively contribute to the preparatory review process and the comprehensive 10-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action scheduled for 2014. Furthermore, 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 problems, should also address issues of growing significance to the landlocked developing countries, such as South–South and triangular cooperation; enhanced transit transport connectivity through regional cooperation; the promotion of development-supportive FDI inflows; assistance for economic restructuring and re-specialization, including the promotion of exportable services; export diversification; mitigating the effects of climate change; support to the WTO accession of the landlocked developing countries and to the conduct of the multilateral trade negotiations, and measures to ensure more benefits for the landlocked developing countries from the Aid for Trade initiative, to name but a few.

15. We request UNCTAD to support the preparation of the first pre-conference event for the comprehensive 10-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action on International Trade, Trade Facilitation and Aid for Trade, to be followed by a Meeting of Landlocked Developing Countries Trade Ministers, scheduled to be held in Kazakhstan in September 2012.

16. We request UNCTAD to strengthen its institutional and operating capacity for addressing the serious and complex development challenges faced by landlocked developing countries.

17. We invite UNCTAD to continue working closely with Missions of landlocked developing countries in Geneva on transit trade-related issues. We further instruct our Missions in Geneva to strengthen their cooperation and coordination on trade facilitation issues.

18. We urge bilateral and multilateral donors to increase their technical and financial assistance to landlocked developing countries in support of their national efforts to overcome the obstacles imposed by geography and to integrate landlocked developing countries more beneficially in the multilateral trading system.

19. We express our sincere recognition for the constant efforts undertaken by Paraguay in its capacity of Coordinator of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries in Geneva.
