



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. JOHN ASHE, AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON THE MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE ALMATY PROGRAMME OF ACTION (New York, 2 October 2008)

Mr. President,
Honourable Ministers,
Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished representatives,

1. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the convening of this high-level meeting to conduct a midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action. The Almaty Programme of Action provides a comprehensive framework to address the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and transit developing countries. The time is opportune for this review, given the looming 2015 deadline for the achievement of the MDGs.
2. Last week's high-level event of the General Assembly made it clear that we are not on track to achieve most, if any, of the MDGs, and landlocked developing countries are among those least likely to meet the goals.
3. The Group attaches great importance to high-level reviews of the implementation of the outcomes of major UN Conferences and Summits. It is the means through which we can monitor progress in implementation and allow for necessary adjustments to achieve the objectives.
4. The Group believes that the overall internationally-agreed development goals and targets can only be realized through continued focus on the special needs of the most vulnerable countries. The Almaty Programme of Action remains a sound global framework for global partnerships aimed at addressing the special needs of LLDCs. The full implementation should therefore be vigorously pursued.
5. During this two-day meeting, as the international community takes stock of progress made, lessons learnt and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action thus far, the Group hopes that our result will be greater support for the efforts of LLDCs and transit developing countries in their efforts to address the major constraints to their development. In this regard the five priority areas agreed upon in the Programme of Action are critical.
6. In this increasingly competitive globalizing world, trade is a vital means of international economic integration, and it is in this area that the LLDCs are at the greatest disadvantage. As such the failure of the Doha Development Round to address the development challenge in international trade is of great relevance to the situation of LLDCs.
7. In that context, the Group of 77 and China would like to highlight that:
 - o The current multi-dimensional global crises - food, energy, climate and finance - will compound the challenges to the development objectives of LLDCs and transit developing countries, and will constrain national efforts to advance implementation of the Programme. A robust and proactive

initiative, including a doubling of efforts and resources on the part of all development partners in support of LLDCs, will be required.

o Greater progress in implementation is being impeded by the persistence of long-standing barriers to development such as international trade barriers, lack of resources for investing in infrastructure, and weak international support measures.

8. The Group of 77 and China is now more convinced that a supportive international trading system is vital for the LLDCs, and the full implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action is critical and urgent. The Group emphasizes the need for initiatives, including aid for trade initiatives, to aim at lowering the administrative, financial and other costs to trade; improve competitiveness and enhance productive capacity.

9. The group reemphasizes the need for enhanced support from development partners for building and developing the capacity of LLDCs in WTO negotiations on trade facilitation, so as to enhance their ability to take advantage of any greater market access opportunities.

10. The Group is concerned that LLDCs, like most developing countries, continue to be at a competitive disadvantage in attracting private investments despite creating more attractive investment climate through reforms and policy improvements to reduce bureaucracy, lower costs, and improve business procedures and public services. There is a need, therefore, for conscious policy measures to facilitate and enhance the flow of investments, both public and private, in LLDCs in pursuit of the full implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

11. Further, bilateral development partners and multilateral institutions, including development banks and agencies, should redouble their efforts to encourage and facilitate public and private investment in transit and transport infrastructure development in LLDCs through innovative means, including investment guarantees.

12. The Group of 77 and China would wish to draw attention to:

- The need for greater access to advanced technologies in transport systems services and technologies that can improve product quality;
- The need for sufficient and predictable levels of ODA. This will require in the first instance that developed countries deliver on their commitments to provide 0.15 percent to 0.20 percent of GNI as ODA to the LDCs. In this regard the Group strongly supports the call of the Secretary-General to donor countries and the international financial and development institutions to support the trust fund established by the Secretary General for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.
- The need for technical assistance, including the facilitation of South-South Cooperation, in the construction, maintenance and operations of transport, storage and other transit-related facilities, and the promotion of sub-regional, regional and inter-regional transport-related programmes and projects.

13. The G77 and China welcomes the efforts of the Office of the High Representative of the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in compiling a set of macroeconomic indicators, including selected transport and communications statistics, to illustrate progress in implementing the Almaty Programme of Action. We urge that this initiative be enhanced further to include also the development of an acceptable set of benchmarks, in addition to the macro-economic indicators, to effectively monitor implementation.

14. In conclusion, we emphasize that progress in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action is integral to implementation of all the outcomes of major UN conferences and summits, including the Millennium Declaration. It is a test of our resolve to foster a global partnership for development in our efforts to track progress of all internationally-agreed development goals (IADGs).

15. The Group of 77 and China sincerely hopes that this high-level review meeting will increase the sense of urgency, renew and scale-up global partnerships in support of the implementation of Almaty Programme of action, and more generally support for the development efforts of LLDCs to achieve their national development goals in concrete, tangible and measurable ways.

Thank you Mr. President.

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