

Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)

14th Session
17 - 18 March 2009
Almaty, Kazakhstan

**MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE ALMATY PROGRAMME OF ACTION: STATUS AND
PROBLEMS OF IMPLEMENTATION WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO
ACTIVITIES RELATING TO PWG-TBC**

(Item 4 of the Agenda)

Note by the UNECE /UNESCAP

1. The unique situation of landlocked developing countries has featured prominently on the policy agenda of the United Nations. Unfavourable geographic locations, high transport cost, lack of regional cooperation with neighbouring transit countries and limited market access are typical features in many landlocked countries including in SPECA member states.
2. To address these formidable challenges, an "International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation" was held in Almaty from 25 to 29 August 2003. This Ministerial Conference adopted 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 and the Almaty Ministerial Declaration.
3. The objective of the Almaty Programme of Action (APA) was to establish a new global framework for developing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries taking into account the interests of both landlocked and transit developing countries. The Programme has aimed to (a) secure access to and from the sea by all means of transport; (b) reduce costs and improve services so as to increase the competitiveness of their exports; (c) reduce the delivered costs of imports; (d) address problems of delays and uncertainties in trade routes; (e) develop adequate national networks; (f) reduce loss, damage and deterioration en route; (g) open the way for export expansion; and (h) improve the safety of road transport and the security of people along corridors.
4. The General Assembly, in its resolution 61/212 on groups of countries in special situations, entitled "Specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation", called for the holding of a midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2008. In the preparation of the mid-term review, two global thematic meetings took place: a meeting on "Transit Transport Infrastructure Development of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries" held in Ouagadougou from 18 to 20 June 2007 and a meeting on "Trade and Trade Facilitation" held in Ulaanbaatar from 28 to 31 August 2007.

5. In addition, regional review meetings for Africa, Latin America and Euro-Asia were held in 2008 and the latter one was jointly organized by the UN-OHRLLS, UNECE and UNESCAP at the Headquarters of ESCAP in Bangkok on 22 and 23 April 2008. During the meeting, landlocked and transit developing countries from the Asia-Pacific Region and Europe had the opportunity to share their views on how the region as a whole had been implementing the Programme, and proposed actions required from all stakeholders. The outcome of this meeting (attached) provided a regional input for a strategy towards enhancing the full and effective achievement of the APA at the global level and was presented as a contribution to the comprehensive midterm review by the General Assembly of the United Nations in October 2008.

6. The outcome document of the meeting identifies progress and obstacles in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action along its five priority areas and makes suggestions on how to accelerate the implementation of the programme in the region. It contains specific action-oriented recommendations and deliverables aimed at strengthening harmonization of legal regimes, adoption of integrated approach to trade and transport facilitation, elimination of physical and non-physical bottlenecks to transport, and the promotion of integrated training programmes in both public and private sectors, establishing national transit and trade facilitation committees, completing missing links, promoting intermodal transport and developing integrated transport corridors and logistics services as well as the mobilization of domestic and external resources.

7. The General Assembly of the United Nations, in its resolution 63/2 of 3 October 2008, adopted the Declaration on the midterm review of APA. The Declaration has generated a new sense of urgency for the entire international community to focus on the specific challenges faced by both the landlocked and transit developing countries in establishing efficient transit transport systems.

8. In view of the above, the Transport Division of UNECE, in cooperation with OHRLLS, hosted an Inter-agency Consultative Meeting on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action on 2 March 2009 in Geneva. The Inter-agency Consultative Meeting aimed at assessing the outcome of the midterm review and at mapping the contributions by the United Nations system and other relevant organizations towards the accelerated implementation of the goals of APA.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

9. The Project Working Group is invited to reflect on the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action and on UNECE/ ESCAP activities relating to its implementation, as presented in the outcome document of the regional preparatory expert group meeting of Euro-Asian landlocked developing and transit countries for the mid-term review of the Almaty programme of action, Bangkok, 22-23 April 2008.