

**69<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**  
*25 April to 1 May 2013, Bangkok*

**SENIOR OFFICIALS SEGMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM 2: SPECIAL BODY ON LEAST DEVELOPED AND LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: (a) Final Review of the Almaty Programme of Action**

**STATEMENT BY DELEGATION OF BHUTAN**

Mr. Chairman,

1. Allow me to extend to you and the Vice Presidents of the Committee, our warm congratulations on your assumption of these important positions. We feel confident that we are in good hands, and assure you of our delegation's full support and cooperation as you steer the work of our Committee. Our appreciation is due to the Executive Secretary and the High Representative for their most thoughtful remarks this morning. We also thank the Director of the Macroeconomic Policy and Development Division for his comprehensive introduction of document no. E/ESCAP/69/1.

Mr. Chairman,

2. While we are all mindful that at this moment, our discussions take place in the context of Agenda Item 2 on the work of the Special Body on Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries, I far more prefer the term employed by the Dy Executive Secretary yesterday at the Meeting on Post 2015 for LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, to refer to states subject of the Almaty Programme of Action, that is "land-linked developing countries." My Government too holds the "the glass half full" point of view, and where challenges exist, feel we must whenever possible, seize and capitalize on potential strengths and synergies. However, the proviso is that partnership and an enabling environment are key. Our efforts alone are not enough. International cooperation is essential to unlock potential.
3. Bhutan was pleased to participate in the Euro Asian Final Regional Review of the Almaty Programme of Action convened in Vientiane in March this year, which assessed the progress made by the LLDCs in implementing the priority areas of the APOA, namely fundamental transit policy issues; infrastructure development and maintenance; international trade and trade facilitation and International support measures. The Vientiane Consensus, as contained in Doc No. E/ESCAP/69/1, reflects our renewed commitment towards addressing development gaps and integrating our countries more closely with the region's growth momentum. It also highlights the existing shortcomings and recommended proposals to work towards addressing the special needs and challenges we face as LLDCs. My delegation fully supports endorsement of the Vientiane Consensus by the Commission as the regional input to the global review of the Almaty Programme of Action to be held in 2014.

Mr. Chairman,

4. As we had shared at the Final Regional Review in Vientiane, the Almaty Programme of Action is consistent with Bhutan's current Five Year Development Plan, the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan, which guided by our policy of Gross National Happiness, has alleviation of poverty as its main objective. The priority areas of the Programme converge, reinforce, and draws synergy from Bhutan's efforts to actualize its overall development approach of Gross National Happiness. Since the adoption of Almaty Programme of Action in 2003, we have made good progress in the five priority areas, but there still remains much more to be done. In citing to two areas where our efforts continue, I wish to refer to the Asian Highway Network connecting the Asian countries, we are of the view that this initiative holds enormous promises and potential, especially for land locked countries. Bhutan has designated the Thimphu-Phuntsholing Highway as part of the Asian Highway network within Bhutan. In the area of international trade and facilitation, promotion of trade forms an integral part of Bhutan's development strategy. To provide a clear and definite policy framework to guide and promote the private sector, the RGOB adopted the "Economic Development Policy" in 2010. This policy has been complemented by the subsequent adoption of a revised Foreign Direct Investment Policy, which allows more room for Bhutan as an investment destination. We have also released the "Fiscal Incentive Scheme 2010" to encourage investments in trade and industrial ventures. The RGOB has also adopted the policy framework on Private Partnership in Infrastructure to enable construction and other companies to develop capacities and engage in mega projects.
5. We underscore that in order to support such positive efforts, landlocked and transit developing countries require support. Transit transport and trade facilitation projects require support from the international community to establish efficient transit transport systems through increased financial assistance.
6. We would also urge the international community to increase support towards Aid for Trade initiative to help LLDCs strengthen their productive capacities, trade infrastructure and enhance competitiveness in the global markets.

THankyou.