
**Global Preparatory Meeting on the Mid-Term Review of
the Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action**

on

**Trade Facilitation Opportunities for Landlocked and
Transit Developing Countries**

Geneva, 8–9 July 2008

**National experience:
Islamic Republic of Iran**

by

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Mr. Chairman,

The Review process of Almaty Plan of Action could contribute to the promotion of trade facilitation for the benefit of Landlocked and Transit developing Countries. Trade facilitation by the Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries, and related new approaches, solutions and options for promoting transit transport are critical for developing Transit Transport Cooperation.

Increasing synergies and coordination of rail, road, river and air transit transport infrastructure of Landlocked and Transit developing countries, and coherence of regulations, provisions and executive procedures of trade, custom and transport are fundamental factors to promote and strengthen transit transport among Landlocked and Transit developing countries. There is a need for long-term cooperation for strengthening transit transport system among regional countries to ensure sustainability of such arrangements and to promote safe and smooth transit transport, which is crucial for expanding trade opportunities of all developing countries. While acknowledging that the transit infrastructure is capital intensive, contribution of regional and international financial institutions, through provision of financial resources and soft loans is critical for expanding and sustainability of such infrastructures.

Mr. Chairman,

Regional cooperation and coordination is the cornerstone of promoting transit transport. Many endeavors have been made to reform the regulatory framework with the objective to promote transit transport and trade infrastructure in the ECO region and regional countries, including signing of Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) and Transit and Transport Agreement (TTA), as the most important arrangements for transit transport facilitation. Execution of numerous projects within the Islamic Republic of Iran including Bandar Abbas – Bafgh and Bafgh-Mashad Railways, as important links for facilitating transit transport with central Asian countries, including Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, has led to enormous reduction in distance for connecting the Persian Gulf to the Landlocked countries in Central Asia. Furthermore, Mashad- Sarakhs- Tedjan railway between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan has provided the critical cross boarder railway link between Iran and Central Asian Countries. Such major infrastructural projects has benefited all neighboring countries through facilitating and creating more efficient transit transport at the regional level.

Furthermore, there are other infrastructural transit projects under consideration and implementation such as International North-South Transport Corridor connecting Iranian ports in the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman to the Russian Federation ports in the Baltic; East-West Corridor from Iranian ports in the Persian Gulf – Iraq – Syria and Mediterranean Sea zone; Caspian Sea Railway Network connecting its littoral countries; and Sangan – Herat Railway connecting Iran to the city of Herat in Afghanistan. Such Projects which are developed through regional and bilateral cooperation need financial resources through different channels to expedite their implementation.

The Islamic Republic of Iran with wide networks of road, rail, maritime and air transport, being cross road for connecting other international corridors of Asia and Europe, could provide multi-modal and inter-modal transport services to all countries to facilitate regional trade. Through major investments in the transport sector, mainly from national resources, my country has developed a good transport infrastructure and network that could serve as the main transit route to Landlocked countries of Central Asia and Caucasian region from the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman. Nonetheless, I would like to emphasize that international support and foreign direct investment in ports, roads, railways, airports, and overall transport infrastructure is crucial for viable solutions to the existing challenges and bottlenecks in the area of transit transport in our region. Furthermore, developing necessary arrangements for transit transport through regional and sub-regional cooperation and partnership, with a view to addressing transit countries challenges and impediments is critical for the sustainability of transit transport systems.

Finally Mr. Chairman, I would also like to stress the importance of other major factors in the strengthening of transit transport systems including provision of financial and technical support for equipping transit corridors in Transit Developing Countries; facilitating movement of means of transport from transit developing countries to other countries, and establishing long-term arrangements for reducing related transactions costs; and addressing mutual and multilateral barriers to expand transit transport and providing technical assistance to Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries to overcome such barriers.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.