



STATEMENT BY H.E. MR STAFFORD NEIL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE SIXTH ANNUAL MINISTERIAL MEETING OF LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (New York, 19 September 2005)

Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,

I thank you for inviting me to participate in the annual ministerial meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries. We have just completed the 5-year review of the implementation of the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals during the High-level Plenary of the General Assembly. The reviews, with respect to the latter, have been mixed and have recognised significant variations in the level of progress within and among regions. It is clear that much more efforts will be required in order to meet the time-bound targets which we have established.

Paragraph 65 of the outcome document draws special attention is the special needs of landlocked developing countries. In the two years since the adoption of the Almaty Programme of Action, the Group has made progress both at the regional and international levels, in raising awareness of the peculiarities which impede and constrain the development prospects of LLDCs. What is needed now is to move more energetically towards concrete programmes for implementation.

We welcome the report presented by H.E. Leila Rachid, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Paraguay, which has elaborated the situation of LLDCs with respect to trade. The Asunción Platform for the Doha Development Round, which was adopted in August 2005 obviously and correctly points to some of the key areas requiring special focus in the context of the forthcoming WTO Ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong. In order to transform international trade into an engine for development, greater attention must be paid to addressing the special problems of small, vulnerable developing economies like those of the LLDCs.

We expect that fundamental issues such as ensuring a significant special and differential treatment component in all areas of the negotiations and the need to reverse the continuing marginalisation of categories of countries like the LLDCs in the process of globalisation, will feature prominently in the discussions. We had hoped that such issues would have been more forcefully reflected in the outcome document of the recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. We still have very high expectations for a positive and significant development outcome when Trade Ministers meet to complete the Doha Round in Hong Kong later this year.

The Group of 77 stands ready to lend its full support to the landlocked developing countries. Together, we will continue to persevere in securing the effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. One specific idea on which we intend to build, is that of a G77 Conference on Physical Infrastructure for Development, as agreed at the at the High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 16 to 19 December 2003. We had hoped that such a Conference could have been held in 2005 to provide an important medium for concrete initiatives to address infrastructural challenges such as those encountered by landlocked developing and transit countries which lack access to inexpensive and efficient transit transport systems. We are still continuing to work towards its early convening in the near future. I wish to stress the special importance of South-South Cooperation in the coming year and urge consideration of projects for implementation.

We are pleased that significant progress has been made by the Secretariat of the UN Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific in preparing a time/cost methodology for indicators to monitor progress in establishing efficient transit transport systems. We look forward to hearing of further progress in this regard and to see how this effort can be advanced during the current session.

Your efforts to intensify collaboration and cooperation through existing transit arrangements and agreements should be complemented by sustained international cooperation and support. We therefore call on donor countries and multilateral financial and development institutions to play their part in this process through the provision of financial and technical assistance. I am happy to be seated next to the President of the EU. We can rely on him to carry our message and to ensure that it does not fall on deaf ears. We also expect to see a more active role for the wider UN system in ensuring that the Almaty Programme of Action is integrated into the programme of work of the Organisation. We recognise the leadership role provided by the UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative, Ambassador Chowdhury and look forward to his keeping us continually informed on the progress in implementing the Almaty Programme of Action.

In concluding, I once again assure this Group of the continued support of the Group of 77 and China in advancing the interest of Landlocked developing countries.

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