



STATEMENT

**by H.E. Mr. Muhammetnyyaz Mashalov, Permanent Representative of
Turkmenistan to the UN ESCAP at Special Body of Least Developed
Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Pacific Island
Developing States**

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Good afternoon Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, taking this opportunity, let me sincerely congratulate Executive Secretary, Chair of the session, delegates and everyone on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP). There is no doubt that we all need the United Nations and its Commissions. We want to see the UN ESCAP as a strategic partner capable of helping and together with us to confront the challenges and threats of our time.

Today when mankind is facing the new global threat - the pandemic of the coronavirus infection and we have to speak first of all about the new danger faced by humanity in the XXI century. In a

short time, COVID-19 has become a real and perhaps the most threatening challenge of our time. A global challenge that does not recognize borders, races, and nationalities, which has a detrimental effect on all spheres of civilizational development.

The Coronavirus pandemic has a significant negative impact on the course and direction of the global economy and seriously undermines the global community's efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, especially for Landlocked Developing countries. Because LLDC's already pay more than double what coastal countries incur as well as require about double the time taken by transit countries to export and import their goods.

In this context, it is important to intensify cooperation aimed at restoring economic and trade relations. Today it is necessary to create platforms for putting the global economy on a sustainable growth trajectory. In our opinion, energy, transport, industry and trade should become key areas.

Lack of territorial access to the sea, isolation and remoteness from world markets and high transport and transit costs impose serious constraints on the overall socio-economic development and trade competitiveness of the 32 landlocked developing countries (LLDCs).

Reducing the high costs of transport and improving the export competitiveness of the LLDCs requires improving the “hard”

physical infrastructure such as roads, railways and addressing the “soft” infrastructure that involves the transit issues between the LLDCs and the transit countries.

The Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 to address the special needs and challenges faced by landlocked developing countries in achieving their development goals.

With regard to transport infrastructure development, the Vienna Programme of Action reiterates the importance of physical infrastructure in reducing trade costs and stresses the importance of the development and maintenance of transit transport infrastructure, including corridors, in both LLDCs and transit countries.

I would like to draw attention to one of the important aspects of the landlocked developing countries - the development of transport systems. Turkmenistan is actively promoting transport initiatives at the UN. We initiated and adopted 4 UN resolutions on transport. During the pandemic, Turkmenistan ensured the smooth passage of vital container traffic through the country’s road, rail and sea routes from Asia to Europe. Only in August of 2020, Turkmenistan acceded to six United Nations transport conventions.

The first Global Sustainable Transport Conference was held in November 2016 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan and the outcome – the

Ashgabat Statement on Commitments and Policy Recommendations
- notes the importance of addressing the special needs of LLDCs by establishing and promoting efficient transit transport systems that link them to international markets, by developing, upgrading and maintaining all modes of transit transport infrastructure.

It is in this context that the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UNOHRLLS), and the Government of Turkmenistan in collaboration with United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), was planning a Ministerial Transport Conference for Landlocked Developing Countries under the theme Ashgabat Process: Financing for Better Connectivity that would have been held on 26 and 27 March 2020. However, due to the development in the outbreak of the COVID19 virus the Government of Turkmenistan with the agreement of UNOHRLLS decided to postpone the above-mentioned Conference. Further information about the date of the Conference will be informed properly.

To the end, we hope and believe that only unity and solidarity can overcome and defeat it and allow mankind to become renewed, wiser, more responsible and farsighted after this battle.

Thank you for your attention.