



JOINT STATEMENT ON FACILITATING TRADE AND TRANSIT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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The COVID-19 pandemic has brought and continues to bring about unprecedented disruptions to the global economy and trade. Both production and consumption are suffering in almost every country.

While emergency measures to curb the spread of the disease were required, they also triggered unintended impacts on trade, including on global and regional supply chains for essential goods such as medical supplies and food products.

Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) lack direct access to seaports, trade through multiple border crossings and typically face high-cost administrative, transit and border procedures. This leads to relatively high trade costs.

Restrictive border measures aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19 aggravate these existing challenges and significantly impact the timely delivery of much needed medical and food supplies.

The economies of LLDCs remain highly reliant on international and regional trade and especially so in regard to commodities.

The various COVID-19 pandemic impacts will have significant long-term socio-economic ramifications for these countries and will, beyond any doubt, adversely impact on their efforts to achieve the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs for the decade 2014-2024 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Efficient transit and effective trade facilitation are critical for the LLDCs to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its impact. LLDCs and transit countries are therefore encouraged to keep trade flowing by simplifying and facilitating Customs processes for essential medical equipment, medicines and food supplies. They are equally encouraged to maintain the continuity of international and regional supply chains, while protecting the safety of transport workers and citizens.

The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLS) and the World

Customs Organization (WCO) call on LLDCs and transit countries to enhance cross-border collaboration by ensuring coordinated interventions between national border agencies.

We encourage LLDCs and transit countries, as well as regional organizations, to support the smooth functioning of transit, transport and trade corridors and ensure freedom of transit in line with the relevant provisions of the Revised Kyoto Convention and the guiding principles outlined in the WCO Transit Guidelines.

UN-OHRLLS and the WCO will continue to work closely with LLDCs, transit developing countries and other relevant regional and international organizations to support efficient transit and effective trade facilitation to enhance faster and easier movement of imported medical and food supplies to fight COVID-19 as well as to enhance integration of LLDCs in global and regional trade.

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