



**INTERNATIONAL THINK TANK FOR
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

**United Nations House,
Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

An input of the International Think Tank for LLDCs to the report of the Secretary-General for the 76th Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDCs

As COVID-19 has taken its toll on the entire world, the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries (ITLLDC) also experienced the hardships brought by the pandemic throughout the year 2020. Due to the constant lockdowns and quarantine measures taken by the Government, the Secretariat of the ITLLDC had to adapt to remote working for nearly one-third of the year and had changed the schedules of activities and studies that we planned to complete in 2020.

Although numbers of planned research projects, capacity building workshops, events and meetings had to be cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic, the ITLLDC did its best to carry out the planned activities. It should be noted that, the ITLLDC increased its number of researchers at the global level as well as the local staff at the headquarter in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

All of these were possible thanks to the generosity of our donors as it made it available to sustain our activities even in a pandemic period. The Government of Mongolia, the host country of the ITLLDC, carried on with its fixed annual contribution to the Trust Fund of the International Think Tank without which the regular operation of the think tank would be impossible. Moreover, the governments of Kazakhstan, Bhutan and Afghanistan provided earmarked contributions to the Trust Fund.

The ITLLDC's financial status of 2019 has been audited by the independent international audit firm as per the clause 8.4 of the Multilateral Agreement for the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries, and the audited financial statement was duly

1. Activities implemented in line with the six Priorities of the VPoA

1) Panel discussion on aviation sector development – October 20, 2020

Project Rationale. ITLLDC and Urug.mn, Mongolian private media group, co-organized a panel discussion on the issue of Aviation Sector Development in Mongolia on October 20, 2020 in Ulaanbaatar. The aviation industry is the only direct gateway to the global market for landlocked countries, and it is inherently related to infrastructure and international trade development, meaning that it is also in line with Priorities 2 and 3 of the VPoA. The issue of aviation liberalization in Mongolia as well as other LLDC's has been a topic of debate for many years, organizing such discussion was an opportunity to disseminate a relevant study that we already have on our hands.

Objectives.



generations of academics are prepared. As mentioned in the project rationale, organizing a capacity building training for the future generation academics was the objective, with goals to draw their attention to research and studies on LLDCs.

Outcome.

integration frameworks. Furthermore, development partners were able to communicate with a great number of representatives from LLDCs simultaneously which we believe that it was a good occasion to support efforts made by LLDCs and their transit partners. Thus, this effort was thoroughly in accordance with Priority 4: Regional integration and cooperation of the VPoA.

5) Disseminating the research findings and supporting research works.

Project Rationale. The ITLLDC's door is always open to researchers who work on LLDC relevant projects. Dr. Antonio Graceffo approached our think tank for support to his upcoming policy review paper on "Mongolia and the Belt and Road Initiative: The Prospects for the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor", which we gladly accepted his request by introducing our prior research and studies.

Objective. The research paper by Dr. Graceffo examines the impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on Mongolia's prospects for trade and access to overland routes to Europe and seaports in Asia. This policy article on economic corridor development by Dr. Graceffo referred to "Economic Impacts of Economic Corridors in Mongolia: An Application of IDE-GSM", a research project conducted jointly by the ITLLDC and the Institute of Developing Economic, Japan External Trade Organization (IDE-JETRO). It was an opportunity to promote our research through Dr. Graceffo's work.

Outcome. The policy review paper by Dr. Graceffo was published by Jamestown Foundation, an American think tank, mentioning the research by ITLLDC in the references.

6) Covid-19 pandemic situation analyses for LLDCs

Project Rationale. All countries in the world struggled to cope with the unprecedented effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the pandemic is having gruelling impact on LLDCs which are heavily reliant on transit neighbouring countries. Therefore, we decided to provide Covid-19 situation analyses and reports for LLDCs by using our social media platforms and official website.

Objective. The main objective of the project was to provide information about the ongoing Covid-19 situations in LLDCs so that we learn from each other's mistakes and successes. LLDCs face unique developmental constraints and challenges which means that the circumstances these countries face during the pandemic could be quite different. The ITLLDC has been striving to provide with useful information on the pandemic to LLDCs ahead of the adoption of the Roadmap, and we are continuing with the effort to date.

Outcome. We delivered the following analyses and articles on our social media platforms and the website: Covid-19 confirmed cases in Landlocked Developing Countries; the Global Humanitarian Response Plan; LLDCs' migrants and the calamity of the Covid-19; Coronavirus and cross-border trade flowing; Massive Donations & The Blame Game; and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education in landlocked developing countries were done and shared through social media. The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic increased the gravity of the necessity to come up with a comprehensive roadmap in regard to the implementation of the VPoA. Consequently, LLDCs Foreign Ministers adopted the Roadmap for Accelerated Implementation of the VPoA on September 23, 2020.

7) A joint report on socio-economic impact of Covid-19

Project rationale. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the ITLLDC regularly delivered Covid-19 situation analyses in LLDCs. But there was a necessity for a more comprehensive and full-scale report in this area which is the reason why the think tank supported and collaborated with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS).

Objective. The main aim of the joint report "Impact of COVID-19 and Responses in Landlocked Developing Countries" was to identify the specific challenges faced by LLDCs in responding to the COVID-19 crisis and suggest recommendations to effectively address the pandemic. The ITLLDC added its inputs to the chapters on education, ICT connectivity, food security and social protections sections of this highly sophisticated report led by the OHRLLS team.

