

The COVID-19 pandemic also affected transport infrastructure development in many countries. Some countries delayed non-essential or downgraded physical infrastructure projects owing to a loss in toll revenue and diversion of resources.

A recent study by WTO entitled "Easing the Trade Bottlenecks of LLDCs"¹ confirms that LLDCs face very high trade costs which are on average almost double the average trade costs faced by coastal countries. Inland transport corridors are the principal means for international trade of LLDCs. In order to be effective and efficient, transit transport systems need not only to have good and well-maintained transport infrastructure, they also require smooth implementation of agreed legal frameworks, transit rules and policies and transport and trade facilitation measures.

The Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 reiterates the importance of physical transport infrastructure in reducing trade costs and stresses the importance of the development and maintenance of transit transport infrastructure, in both LLDCs and transit countries, completion of missing links, facilitating regional connectivity and enhancing the role of private sector involvement in infrastructure development. The VPoA stresses the importance of reducing travel time along corridors; reducing the time spent at land borders; importance of implementing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and other legal instruments and conventions aimed at facilitating transit transport and trade; and the development and maintenance of transit transport infrastructure, including corridors, in both LLDCs and transit countries, completion of missing links, facilitating regional connectivity and enhancing the role of private sector involvement in infrastructure development.

The Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review of the Vienna Programme of Action² that was held in December 2019 made a strong call for action for among many other things: the effective implementation of all relevant agreements to improve transit; the promotion of corridor development; the development of regionally integrated, sustainable and climate resilient transport infrastructure; and enhanced trade facilitation.

Road transport is the primary mode for both freight and passengers for LLDCs. However, road networks in LLDCs are relatively poor in terms of both density and quality. LLDCs need to do

road infrastructure investments over rail transport. Missing links, aging track and inadequate maintenance are characterizing the railway network in LLDCs. OHRLLS estimated that LLDCs need to construct almost 46,000km of railway to reach the global average of rail network density

2. *What have been the major challenges? What capacity building support do LLDCs need to improve their transport connectivity and achieve the 2030 Agenda?*

What are the challenges and opportunities that emerged from the pandemic that will have an impact on sustainable transport?

4. *practices that the LLDCs could adapt to improving transport connectivity and accelerating progress on achieving the SDGs?*
5. *What are the issues that should be considered in preparation for the next programme of Action?*