



**Third United Nations  
Conference on  
Landlocked Developing  
Countries**

# **Connectivity Track: Transport and Transit**

**6 August 2025  
Awaza, Turkmenistan**

**From Landlocked to Landlinked**

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**CONCEPT NOTE**

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## Background

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Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) face persistent structural challenges due to their lack of direct access to the sea, making them heavily reliant on neighboring transit countries for their international trade. This geographic disadvantage results in significantly higher transport costs—often more than twice as high as those of their coastal neighbors—and prolonged transit times for imports and exports. These factors severely limit the global competitiveness of LLDCs, constrain economic diversification, and impede progress toward sustainable development.

In addition to geographical constraints, LLDCs grapple with inadequate transport infrastructure, cumbersome transit and border and customs procedures, and limited adoption of digital technologies to streamline logistics. These challenges further compound trade inefficiencies, undermine regional integration, and widen the development gap between LLDCs and other developing countries.

Climate change is a major threat to transport infrastructure and services in LLDCs, due to the increased risk of disasters, including flooding, storms, drought, cyclones, heatwaves, and other extreme climate events, but also due to long-term impacts of temperature increase, changing precipitation patterns, permafrost melting, or desertification.

These topics will be at the heart of discussions during the Transport and Transit session under the Connectivity track at the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3). The Conference will take place in Awaza, Turkmenistan, from 5 to 8 August 2025, at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the theme “Driving progress through partnerships”. The Conference will forge partnerships to implement a renewed framework for international support to address the special needs of the LLDCs.

## Priority thematic areas

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As LLDCs deepen cooperation with the international community to make cross-border trade faster, more efficient, and less costly, their geographical disadvantage can be transformed into a strategic advantage—turning *landlocked* into *landlinked*.

By investing in climate resilient infrastructure, simplifying transit procedures, promoting multimodal transport, and advancing regional integration, LLDCs can unlock new economic opportunities, increase participation in global value chains, and accelerate progress toward the SDGs. The Transport and Transit Connectivity session of the LLDC3 will focus on the following priority thematic areas:

- **Infrastructure Development:** LLDCs face a substantial infrastructure gap that hinders efficient trade and logistics. They lag behind the global average in paved road density by approximately 200,000 kilometers and require an estimated 46,000

kilometers of new railways to match global railway density standards. Addressing this shortfall is crucial for enhancing domestic and cross-border connectivity. The session will highlight successful infrastructure investment models, including public-private partnerships and flagship initiatives such as China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which has supported major road and rail linkages in several LLDCs.

- **Building sustainable and resilient transport systems:** Extreme climate events are accelerating the deterioration of transport infrastructure in LLDCs, increasing maintenance needs. Their road networks are especially vulnerable due to a high share of unpaved roads and limited adaptive capacity. The UN Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035) will guide global efforts towards sustainable, inclusive, and resilient transport systems. Its Implementation Plan will coordinate actions, mobilize resources, and track progress. This session will identify priorities, share best practices, and provide strategies and recommendations for building sustainable and climate-resilient transport infrastructure.
- **Transit Facilitation:** Cumbersome transit and customs procedures and non-tariff barriers continue to create delays and increase costs at borders. Transit facilitation measures—such as harmonizing documentation, adopting electronic customs systems, and establishing one-stop border posts—can significantly improve trade efficiency. The session will spotlight innovations such as the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Advanced Transit System and the single transit guarantee scheme of the African Export-Import Bank, which aim to digitize, harmonize and financially underwrite transit procedures across member countries, reducing clearance times and boosting predictability for traders.
- **Multimodal Transport Systems:** A well-integrated multimodal transport system—combining road, rail, inland waterways, and ports—can reduce logistics costs and enhance connectivity to global markets. One notable example is the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (Middle Corridor), which links Asia and Europe via rail and sea. In 2024 alone, cargo volumes on this route reached 4.1 million tons during the first 11 months, marking a 63% year-on-year increase. The session will explore strategies to replicate and scale such models across LLDC regions.
- **Regional Integration:** Transforming transport corridors into economic corridors can catalyze trade, create jobs, and stimulate investment. This requires enhanced coordination among LLDCs, transit countries, and regional economic communities to align infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and investment strategies. The session will explore examples of integrated corridor development that connect production zones, special economic zones, and logistics hubs within and across LLDCs. The focus will be on leveraging regional agreements and platforms—such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)—to build synergies and maximize development impact.

## Outcomes

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- **Partnerships:** Establishment of collaborations between LLDCs, transit countries, and international organizations to support infrastructure and policy development.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Dissemination of best practices and successful case studies to inform future initiatives.

- Investment Mobilization: Identification of funding opportunities to support resilient infrastructure projects and capacity-building efforts.

## Why attend?

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The LLDC3 Connectivity Track provides a once-in-a-decade opportunity for stakeholders to build transformative partnerships and mobilize investments across the LLDCs, which have a combined population of 606 million people, set to reach 1 billion by 2060. This is an opportunity for participants to:

- **Hear from and interact with world leaders** on the projects, programmes and priorities for development in LLDCs.
- **Shape the implementation of the Programme of Action for LLDCs for the Decade 2024-2034** that will guide the overall engagement of the entire UN system across the 32 landlocked developing countries.
- **Build transformative partnerships** across governments, world leaders, international organisations and the private sector.
- **Network:** Engage with policymakers, experts, and stakeholders from LLDCs, transit countries, and international organizations.
- **Collaborate:** Identify opportunities for partnerships and joint ventures to support the sustainable development of LLDCs.

By charting pathways for connecting landlocked countries to markets, the implementation of the Programme of Action will depend on the active engagement of the international community.

## Where and when?

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The LLDC3 Connectivity Track will take place on **6 August 2025** in Awaza, Turkmenistan, at the center of the third United Nations Conference on the Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3).

Additional information on the Connectivity Track is available on the dedicated Forum webpage: [Connectivity | United Nations](#).

## Co-organizing partners

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## How can I attend the LLDC3 Connectivity Track?

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Interested stakeholders are invited to visit the participate section of the LLDC3 website for the latest information on accreditation and registration at the following link: <https://www.un.org/en/landlocked/participate>

Participants are encouraged to ensure that their organization or business is duly accredited ahead of published deadlines and that each participating individual is registered. Participants are required to cover their own travel and accommodation expenses.

## Focal Points

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More information on LLDC3 is available at: [Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries | United Nations](#)

## PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

### LLDC3 Connectivity Track *From Landlocked to Landlinked*

Wednesday 6 August 2025

**14:00-14:30 High-level Opening Session**

**14:30-15:15 Showcasing infrastructure investment models (including multi-model transport systems)**

**15:15-16:00 Building sustainable and resilient transport systems**

**16:00-16:45 Innovations in transit facilitation**

**16:45-17:30 Regional integration initiatives**

**17:30 Closing remarks**