

Newsletter

2016
Jan-June

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In 2016, the Government of Mongolia contributed USD300.000 and UNDP USD20.000 to the International Think Tank for LLDCs for its activities.

In addition, the ITT raised USD16.159 from international sources in the first half of 2016.

Progress at a Glance

Since the launching of the International Think Tank for LLDCs in 2009, the year of 2016 is marked another vital progress on research projects and their launching at domestic and the international level.

In this newsletter a summary of our numerous activities in the first 6 months of 2016 are briefly introduced for the knowledge of the esteemed reader.

Highlights:

- The ITT has carried out a comparative study on ***"Strengthening emergency and essential surgical care at selected rural hospitals in Laos"*** in Lao PDR.
- The ITT organized a launching event to introduce the publication of the ITT ***"Multilateral Trade Negotiations and LLDCs: A handbook for negotiators and practitioners of LLDCs"*** in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- The ***National workshop on mainstreaming the Vienna Programme of Action*** was organized by the ITT in cooperation with the Government of Mongolia and UN-OHRLLS in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- A ***High Level Luncheon*** has been organized in Bangkok, Thailand for the 2nd time in order to promote activities and research papers of the ITT among Asian LLDCs.
- The ITT conducted a research on ***"Sea access for Mongolia and other landlocked developing countries: Case India - Nepal"*** which was funded by the Austrian Government and launched the draft report of the study in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in cooperation with the Austrian Embassy.
- The ITT has organized a ***seminar on Mongolia's Trade Policy Issues*** in cooperation with ERINA, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- The ITT participated in the ***49th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors*** of ADB in Frankfurt, Germany.
- On the invitation of the CAREC Institute, the ITT has participated in the ***Central Asia Think Tank Development Forum*** in Astana, Kazakhstan.

1. Events organized by ITT for LLDCs

April 13.

The launching event of our publication “Multilateral Trade Negotiations and LLDCs: A Handbook for negotiators and practitioners of LLDCs” was organized in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia.

The event brought together several line ministries of Mongolia, local government officials responsible for trade, policy-makers, policy think-tanks, experts, industrialists, trade unions, academics, and other stakeholders discussing the future course for trade negotiation.



Mr. Odbayar Erdenetsogt, Interim Director of ITT, gave a thorough presentation on the handbook to the invited audience by explaining that the handbook will be useful for enhancing the capacity of trade policymakers and negotiators, especially the LLDCs will benefit from this handbook by understanding the challenges relating to negotiating and implementing multilateral and regional trade related conventions and agreements.

As well as, the handbook is aimed at introducing policy makers in LLDCs to prepare for multilateral trade negotiations by providing a background on different negotiation topics in the World Trade Organization, which are relevant to all LLDCs.

The Handbook also proposes complementarity between the different LLDCs in certain negotiation areas. The users of the manual will be first and foremost the negotiators and their technical teams in LLDCs. Public officials in charge of trade, line ministries should also find elements of the handbook useful, in order to grasp key concepts and turn the challenge of negotiations in favor of their own interest.



From left: Mr. Dulguun D., Research Coordinator of ITT, Mr. Amartuvshin G., Director of the Department for Policy Planning and Coordination, MFA, Mr. Odbayar E., Interim Director of ITT.



The handbook provides an introduction and mapping of existing handbooks and guidelines on multilateral trade and negotiations produced by the relevant UN system organizations and other international organizations.

April 27-28.

The ITT for LLDCs in association with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia and UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing Countries (OHRLLS) successfully organized the **National workshop on Mainstreaming the Vienna Programme of Action** in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The National workshop was instrumental in enhancing the capacity of key stakeholders, including Government officials, civil society and private sector, to effectively implement the Vienna Programme of Action and mainstream it at the national level.



From left: Mr. Erdenebileg S., Chief of the OHRLLS, Mr. Odbayar E., Interim Director of ITT, Ms. Battungalag G., Director General of Department of Multilateral Cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, Mr. Kilaparti Ramakrishna, Head of ESCAP East and North-East Asia Office, Ms. Gerelmaa D., Deputy Director, Department for Multilateral Cooperation, MFA, and Ms. Ariunaa A., Deputy director, Department for Economic Cooperation, MFA



It consisted of a number of sessions, organized as panel sessions, with presentations by a number of speakers from the Government of Mongolia and selected UN and other international organizations, followed by interactive discussions and exchange of views.

The National workshop was actively attended by representatives of line ministries, such as Ministry of Finance, Industry, Agriculture, Road and Transportation, Energy, Mining, international organizations such as United Nations' Conference on Trade and Development, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic Commission for Europe, International Road Transport Union, and private sector represented by the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry and independent researchers of civil society.





The national workshop was opened by Ms. Battungalag G., Director General of Department of Multilateral Cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed by an opening speech by Mr. Erdenebileg S., Chief of the OHRLLS.

Apart from the panelists of the Government of Mongolia, the officials from the international organizations held presentations related to VPoA, implementation and monitoring.

May 19

The ITT in cooperation with the Embassy of Mongolia in Bangkok hosted a **High-Level Luncheon for Representatives of the Landlocked Developing Countries** during the 72nd session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at the UN-ESCAP Headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand.

The Luncheon was opened by H.E. Mr. Tugsbilguun Tumorhuleg, Ambassador of Mongolia to the Kingdom of Thailand and Permanent Representative to ESCAP and by Mr. Hongjoo Hahm, Deputy Executive Secretary for Programmes of UN-ESCAP. Interim Director Odbayar E. briefed all guests about the activities of the Think Tank.



The Luncheon was organized in Bangkok for the second time to inform LLDCs about the activities of the International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries and its operationalization, as well as to provide information on the current status of the “Multilateral Agreement on the Establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries” for Ambassadors and Permanent representatives, diplomats, senior officials from donor countries and landlocked developing countries of Asia-Pacific as well as heads of divisions of ESCAP Secretariat.



H.E. Mr. Damcho Dorji, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bhutan.



H.E. Mr. Hideo Fukushima, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan.



H.E. Mr. Kirill Mikhailovich Barsky, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation.

The presence of H.E. Mr. Damcho Dorji, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Bhutan and other high-level participants from LLDCs made the Luncheon very special.



Mr. Tan Jian, China APEC Senior Official, Deputy Director of Department of International Economic Affairs, MFA of China.



H.E. Mr. Khaga Nath Adhikari, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Nepal.

During the Luncheon H.E. Mr. Kirill Mikhailovich Barsky PhD, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the Kingdom of Thailand and Permanent Representative to ESCAP, H.E. Mr. Hideo Fukushima, Permanent Representative of Japan to ESCAP, Mr. Tan Jian, China APEC Senior Official, Deputy Director General of Department of International Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China delivered a speech by highlighting the achievements of the International Think Tank and congratulated Interim Director Mr. Odbayar E. and his team for their service to the LLDCs community.



From left: Mr. Odbayar E., Interim Director of ITT and H.E. Mr. Gankhuyag D., State Secretary of MFA of Mongolia.

During the luncheon ITT for LLDCs launched its first ever photo exhibition on the "History and Achievements of the International Think Tank for LLDCs" in the UNCC, ESCAP.

At the outset of the luncheon Mr. Odbayar E., Interim Director of the International Think Tank, welcomed the distinguished guests to the above mentioned photo exhibition, which showed key achievements of the International Think 2009-2016.

June 9

The ITT for LLDCs organized the launching event of the draft report on “Sea Access for Mongolia and other Landlocked Developing Countries: Case of India and Nepal” in association with the Austrian Embassy.

The launching event was opened by H.E. Dr. Irene Giner-Reichl, Ambassador of Austria to Mongolia and Mr. Odbayar Erdenetsogt, Interim Director of the ITT.

The launching event was attended by representatives of line ministries, such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Industry, Agriculture, Road and Transportation, Energy, Mining, the Diplomatic corps, international organizations and private sector.

This launching event aimed at promoting the activities of the ITT for LLDCs in general and the introduction of the Draft report on “Sea access for Mongolia and other Landlocked developing countries: Case of India and Nepal” for the Mongolian stakeholders and Diplomatic corps in Ulaanbaatar for their review.



From left: Mr. Odbayar Erdenetsogt, Interim Director of the ITT, H.E. Dr. Irene Giner-Reichl, Ambassador of Austria to Mongolia and Ms. Barbara Grosse, Embassy of Austria.



The research produced an analytical paper assessing the trade relations between Nepal and India as well as the trade between Mongolia and its neighbors by using comparative analysis methods specifically focusing on the fact that Nepal is using Indian ports to access the sea.

It produced analysis on whether the India-Nepal example can be seen as a best practice for Mongolia and other LLDCs.

The study analysed realities on the ground and focused on bilateral transit trade agreements between the countries concerned and put an emphasis on practices that can be taken by Mongolia and other LLDCs as a best practice.

June 13

The ITT for LLDCs successfully organized a joint seminar on Trade Policy Issues of Mongolia with ERINA-Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The seminar was opened by Mr. Odbayar Erdenetsogt, Interim Director of the ITT and Ms. Enkhbayar Sh., Senior Research Fellow of the ERINA.

The main goal of this seminar was to encourage and facilitate debate among researchers, academics, think tanks, and other audiences interested in economic development challenges of Mongolia.



Ms. E.Erdenechimeg (Ph.D.), Director, Asian Infrastructure Research Institute



From left: Ms. U.Nomintsetseg, Senior Lecturer, Mr. Ts.Tsolmon, Senior Lecturer, Commerce Program, Business School, National University of Mongolia.

June 24

While participating in the Fifth Meeting of Trade Ministers of LLDCs at the WTO, in Geneva, Switzerland, the ITT for LLDCs organized a side event on Multilateral trade negotiations and LLDCs. During this event, the ITT also launched its latest publication “Multilateral Trade Negotiations and LLDCs: A handbook for negotiators and practitioners of LLDCs”.



From left: Ms. Bolormaa L., Counselor of the Permanent Mission of Mongolia, H.E. Mr. Purevdorj V., Permanent Representative of Mongolia to UNCTAD, Mr. Mussie Delelegn, Chief of LLDCs section, UNCTAD, and Mr. Odbayar E., Interim Director of the ITT.



2. International conferences and participation of ITT

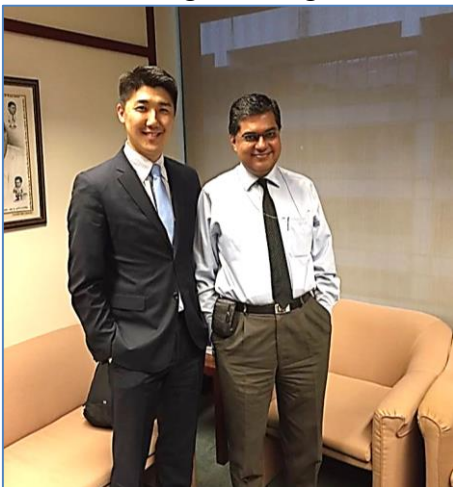
March 15-20

The International Think Tank for LLDCs, as an official observer of the ADB participated in the **7th Business Opportunities Fair (BOF)** of ADB in order to seek opportunities to connect with Asia Pacific Private Sector particularly with the private sector from LLDCs.

Furthermore, during the BOF ITT for LLDCs also participated in the side event dedicated to Think Tanks, Institutes, Academia and Centers of Excellence.



Networking meetings:



Interim Director Mr. Odbayar held a meeting with Mr. Arjun Goswami, Technical Advisor, Regional Cooperation and Integration Office of the Chief Economist and Director General, ERCD-Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department, ADB.



Interim Director Mr. Odbayar held a networking meetings with representatives from Asian Social Project Services (ASPSI), which is an international consultancy and training service provider mainly catering to the underserved sectors of the community.



Interim Director Mr. Odbayar held a meeting with Mr. Dongxiang Li, Advisor, Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department ADB in order to discuss different models of cooperation with the Asian Think Tank Network (ATTN).



Interim Director Mr. Odbayar held a meeting with Mr. Ying Qian, Director of the Financial Sector and Regional Cooperation Division, East Asia Department.



Interim Director Mr. Odbayar held a meeting with Mr. Ayumi Konishi, Director General, East Asia Department, ADB.



Interim Director Mr. Odbayar held a brainstorming meeting with Ms. Vicky C.L. Tan, Director, Regional Cooperation and Operation Coordinating Division, Central and West Asia Department.

May 2-5

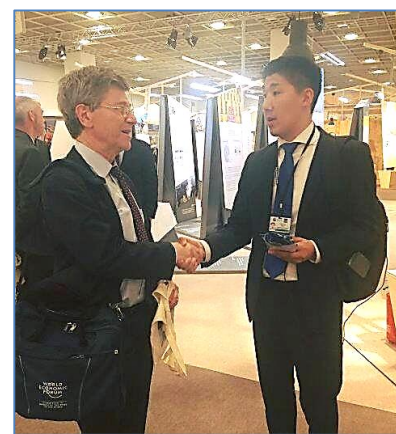
As an official observer of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the ITT for LLDCs was invited to the **49th Annual meeting of the Board of Governors of ADB**, which was organized in Frankfurt, Germany. The main objective of the annual meeting was to discuss developments in the Asia and Pacific region. The theme of this year's meeting was 'Cooperating for Sustainability'.

During the meeting the ITT for LLDCs actively participated in workshops, seminars and panel discussions on LLDC relevant issues to network, to raise awareness for the special needs and challenges of LLDCs as well as to contribute to the side events organized by ADB and partners.

Bilateral meetings:



Interim Director Mr. Odbayar held a side meeting with Ms. Maarit Palovirta, European Regional Affairs Manager of the Internet Society.



Interim Director Mr. Odbayar held a meeting with Mr. Jeffrey D. Sachs, Director of the Earth Institute, Columbia University, Quetelet Professor of Sustainable Development.

May 17-18

Within the framework of the networking endeavors, the ITT for LLDCs has participated in the **International workshop on Tools to Improve Border Management: Time Release Study (TRS) and Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring (CPMM)** which was organized by Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (CAREC) and CAREC Institute in Urumqi, People`s Republic of China.



The event aimed at building local capacity in CPMM and TRS methodologies for CAREC government organizations, academia, and research institutions. Resource speakers discussed findings in field visits and problems identified in the implementation of TRS and CPMM. Participants from member countries also discussed their current plans and activities supporting TRS and CPMM.

Representatives of the Customs Authorities and Think Tanks of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, PRC, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia and Tajikistan have participated in this workshop.

June 20-21

The ITT for LLDCs has participated in the first ever **Central Asia Think Tank Development Forum**, an initiative of CAREC institute which took place in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The forum's objectives were to promote Central Asian regional economic cooperation by sharing knowledge and research methodologies on infrastructure development and trade facilitation.



June 22-24

On the Invitation of the Under-Secretary General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), Mr. Odbayar Erdenetsogt, Interim Director of the ITT has participated in the **Fifth Meeting of Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries**, held in Geneva, Switzerland.

The meeting was being held under the theme" Harnessing the trade potential of LLDCs to implement the Vienna program of action for LLDCs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."

During his stay in Geneva, Mr. Odbayar held numerous bilateral meetings with Landlocked Developing Countries Government officials and discussed the membership of certain LLDCs at the ITT for LLDCs by calling on LLDCs to accede to the Multilateral Agreement for the establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs.



Mr. Odbayar held a meeting with H.E. Negash Kebret Botora, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia and representatives from the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and called on Ethiopia to ratify the already signed Multilateral Agreement for the establishment of an ITT for LLDCs.



Mr. Odbayar held a meeting with H.E. Daniyar Mukashev, Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic at the Kyrgyz Permanent Mission in Geneva and expressed his confidence that Kyrgyz Republic will be a member of the ITT for LLDCs soon.



Mr. Odbayar held a meeting with H.E. Jamshed Khamidov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan at the Permanent Mission of Tajikistan in Geneva and discussed the accession process of Tajikistan to the Multilateral Agreement.



Mr. Odbayar held a meeting with H.E. Rigoberto Gauto, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Economic Relations and Integration of Paraguay. H.E. Gauto reassured Paraguay's Commitment to the cause of LLDCs and expressed his confidence that the Parliament of Paraguay will soon ratify the Multilateral Agreement.



Mr. Odbayar held a meeting with H.E. Driton Kuqi, Minister of Economy of Republic of Macedonia at the World Trade Organization in Geneva and called on Macedonia to accede to the Multilateral Agreement.

3. Researches

A research team headed by Mr. Odbayar Erdenetsogt, Interim Director of ITT, carried out a field trip to Lao PDR for conducting a comparative study on "Strengthening emergency and essential surgical care at selected rural hospitals in Laos" in cooperation with the Collaborating Center of the World Health Organization on March 8-10. The goal of the study is to come up with a report based on comparative analysis on emergency and essential surgical care conditions in rural areas of Lao PDR and Mongolia.

This comparative study will be the baseline of future collaborations between Laos and other stakeholders operating in the health sector.

The International Think Tank is funding this study within its obligations to support South-South cooperation.



From left: M. Odbayar E., Interim Director of the ITT, Dr.Erdene S. and Dr.Ganbold L., Researchers of WHO Collaborating Center in Mongolia.



4. Others

- The International Think Tank for LLDC and Austrian Institute for SME Research signed a Letter of Intent in order to share knowledge and experience in the fields of SME research.
- On the request of the University of New South Wales (UNSW) of Australia, the ITT for LLDCs jointly organized an online lecture for students attending International Development courses at UNSW on April 21, 2016 at 11.30 AM Ulaanbaatar time and 1.30 PM Sydney time.

Students came from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds (political science, law, economics, medicine, commerce, etc.) UNSW has been arranging special Skype-in lectures for UNSW students with experts in different areas of development and governance.



This time, Mr. Odbayar Erdenetsogt, Interim Director of the ITT was invited to give a lecture on "Development perspectives of LLDCs in the framework of the SDG s and the VPoA".

The lecture continued with a Q & A session and was concluded after 1.5 hours with a discussion among participants.

- As an Institutional partner of the UN-ARTNeT, the researchers of the ITT for LLDCs have participated successfully at the workshop on Introduction to "Gravity Modelling for Trade Policy Analysis" which was organized by UN-ARTNeT-GIZ on April 18-22, 2016 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.



The purpose of this workshop was to provide a solid understanding of the gravity model of bilateral trade, including its theoretical basis; practical skills in applying basic gravity econometrics using Stata; an appreciation of data and estimation issues involved in the use of gravity models in a range of applied trade policy topics.

5. Upcoming events

The Activity Calendar of the International Think Tank in the second half of 2016.

- The UNCTAD-14 in Nairobi, Kenya. The ITT will hold meetings with African landlocked developing countries.
- A visit to Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Bolivia and Paraguay to hold political talks on operationalization of the ITT and ratification of the multilateral agreement on the establishment of an International Think Tank for Landlocked Developing Countries.
- An international conference of experts on LLDCs specific issues will be organized in December in cooperation with Sydney University.
- A workshop on "Facilitating Trade for Fragile and Landlocked States in the Post-Bali Institutional Environment".
- A seminar with University of Wollongong, Australia.
- A workshop on Dry Ports.
- A workshop on Geographical Simulation Model in cooperation with Institute of Developing Economies of JETRO and Statistical Office of Mongolia.



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