



INTERNATIONAL
THINK TANK FOR
LLDC

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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List of abbreviations

AIT	The Asian Institute of Technology
APCICT	Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
CFC	Common Fund for Commodities
DPG	Development Partners Group
ESCAP	UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDC	Global Digital Compact
GIF	Global Innovation Forum
GNH	Gross National Happiness
GSM	Geographical Simulation Model
ICT	Information and communication technologies
IDE-GSM	Institute of Developing Economies Geographical Simulation Model
IDE-JETRO	Japan External Trade Organization's Institute of Developing Economies
ITC	International Trade Center
ITLLDC	International Think Tank for Land Locked Development Countries
ITU	The International Telecommunication Union
LLDC	Land Locked Development Countries
MINASS	Mongolian Institute of Northeast Asian Security and Strategy
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
OPEC	The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
P2C	Partner to Connect
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
PIN	People in Need
RIN	Research and Innovation Network
SCO	Social Civil Organizations
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SPECA	The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia
TDP	Thanaleng Dry Port
UN	United Nation
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNRCO	UN Resident Coordinator's Office
UOH	University of the Humanities
VPoA	Vienna Programme of Action
WTO	The World Trade Organization

Expanding Our Footprint

Throughout 2024, ITLLDC actively engaged with **6 countries** through official visits, fostering international collaboration and advancing critical initiatives.

Countries Engaged

Below is a snapshot of our global presence in 2024:

North America: United States of America

Europe: Malta

Asia: Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Laos, Thailand

ITLLDC: Milestones of Engagement in 2024

Empowering Collaboration Through Events

Total Events Hosted and Co-Hosted: 12

- Key Highlights:
 - *Global Digital Dialogue 2024*
 - *Symposium on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea*
 - *Satellite Services Seminar*

Expanding Global Networks

Countries and International Organizations Engaged: 20+

- Participation from esteemed entities, including:
 - UN Agencies
 - Embassies
 - Leading stakeholders such as ITU, ESCAP, and GCF

Fostering Dialogue and Participation

Total Attendees at UN House Events: 350+

Foreword by the Executive Director

Dear Members of the Board of Governors,
Partners and Friends,

Reflecting on this past year, I am deeply proud of the strides we have made together at ITTLLDC. This annual report showcases our collective achievements and our unwavering commitment to addressing the distinct challenges LLDCs face.

In 2024, we advanced initiatives across the six priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action, from infrastructure to digital transformation and trade facilitation. Through a range of impactful events and research projects, we have worked to strengthen connectivity and resilience for LLDCs, expand opportunities, and empower these nations to thrive.

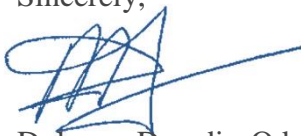
This year's milestones include our successful organization of the Global Digital Dialogue 2024, which highlighted digital inclusion as a key pathway for LLDCs, and our seminar on satellite services in Ulaanbaatar, which underscored the potential of technology to overcome connectivity barriers in collaboration with the UN Resident Coordinator's office of Mongolia and International Telecommunication Union. We also made strides in infrastructure research through our economic corridors seminar in Mongolia, emphasizing the importance of sustainable transport solutions. Additionally, ITTLLDC signed a Joint Declaration of Intent with the UN Resident Coordinator in Mongolia, which aims to enhance collaboration on research, policy development, and capacity-building initiatives tailored to the unique challenges faced by LLDCs, particularly in the context of sustainable development and climate change resilience, and made contributions to the ASEAN Logistics Symposium and the establishment of a Research and Innovation Network further demonstrated our commitment to fostering regional integration and sustainable development.

Visits from global leaders like His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reaffirm our mission. Their support symbolizes the shared vision driving our work forward.

With renewed dedication following LLDC3, we are more committed than ever to resilient solutions and international cooperation for LLDCs.

To our member states, supporters, and team, thank you for your dedication and trust. Together, we are creating lasting impact, and I look forward to our shared accomplishments in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



Dulguun Damdin-Od
Executive Director



1. Introduction

1.1 Brief about the ITT

The lack of territorial access to the sea, aggravated by remoteness from world markets, and prohibitive transit costs and risks continue to impose serious constraints on export earnings, private capital inflow and domestic resource mobilization of landlocked developing countries and therefore adversely affect their overall growth and socio-economic development.

Recognizing the importance of establishing appropriate mechanisms to facilitate and promote a close and effective cooperation among LLDCs, to enhance the analytical capability of landlocked developing countries and to promote the exchange of experience and best practices needed to maximize their coordinated efforts for the full and effective implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Multilateral Agreement for the establishment of an International Think Tank for LLDCs was endorsed at the meeting of Foreign Ministers of LLDCs in 2010. Consequently, the Resolution A/RES/64/214 on the establishment of the ITLLDC in Ulaanbaatar was approved by the UN General Assembly. The Multilateral Agreement entered into force on October 6, 2017 by the accession of Nepal on August 7, 2017 becoming the 10th member state of the ITLLDC. By now 14 landlocked developing countries have ratified the Multilateral Agreement.

The overall goal of the International Think Tank is to use top-quality research and advocacy to improve the ability of landlocked developing countries to build capacity with a view to benefiting from the international trade including WTO negotiations, with the ultimate aim of raising human development and reducing poverty.

Since its official establishment, the ITLLDC has served as the sole intergovernmental organization dedicated to advancing the unique development needs of LLDCs. In alignment with the VPoA for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024, ITLLDC continues to provide a coherent and holistic framework that addresses the specific development challenges faced by LLDCs.

The VPoA focuses on six priority areas: transit policy, infrastructure development, trade and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation, structural economic transformation, and means of implementation.

ITTTLLDC Member States and Growth Timeline

Since its establishment, ITTTLLDC has expanded its membership to **14 countries**, representing a diverse geographical and developmental landscape.

Membership Timeline

- **2011:** Mongolia
- **2012:** Lao PDR, Armenia
- **2013:** Afghanistan
- **2015:** Kazakhstan
- **2016:** Burkina Faso, Paraguay
- **2017:** Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Nepal
- **2018:** Ethiopia, Bhutan
- **2019:** Niger, Azerbaijan

Global Presence

Below is a world map highlighting ITTTLLDC’s member states:



1.2 About the Annual report 2024

In collaboration with development partners and donor countries, ITTLLDC has undertaken significant activities aligned with the priority areas of the VPoA. The *2024 Annual Report of ITTLLDC* provides a detailed account of its programs, initiatives, and events that advance the VPoA's strategic goals. Through sustained efforts and partnerships, ITTLLDC remains committed to realizing the VPoA's vision, promoting prosperity, and addressing the specific needs of LLDCs in alignment with global development objectives.

Section 2 of this report offers a comprehensive overview of ITTLLDC's key activities and accomplishments throughout 2024. This section systematically documents the organization's efforts in organizing, supporting, and participating in initiatives aligned with each of the six priority areas of the VPoA. Each subsection corresponds to a specific VPoA priority area, detailing actions taken to address challenges and leverage opportunities for LLDCs. This includes an analysis of projects undertaken, partnerships established, and key events in which ITTLLDC has engaged to support sustainable development, economic resilience, and regional cooperation for LLDCs.

The subsection 2.1 outlines ITTLLDC's efforts to improve transit policies that enhance connectivity and reduce trade costs for LLDCs. Activities include participation in policy dialogues, collaboration with transit countries to streamline customs procedures, and advocacy for improved transit and transportation.

In 2.2 subsection, ITTLLDC has focused on critical infrastructure related advocacy for LLDCs, including transportation, energy, and ICT. Key achievements include organizing workshops and establishing partnerships aimed at enhancing digital infrastructure. ITTLLDC has actively promoted international trade and simplified trade processes for LLDCs. Efforts under this priority area shown in the subsection 2.3 include hosting trade facilitation related events and supporting LLDCs' integration into regional and global trade systems.

Recognizing the significance of regional integration, ITTLLDC has taken steps to strengthen connections between LLDCs and their neighboring countries. The subsection 2.4 highlights activities focused on fostering regional economic communities, promoting cross-border development collaboration, and organizing dialogues to enhance political and economic cooperation within regional blocs.

The subsection 2.5 describes ITTLLDC's work that focuses on promoting economic diversification and structural transformation within LLDCs.

The subsection 2.6 highlights ITTLLDC's efforts to strengthen partnerships with development agencies, mobilizing financial resources, and facilitating technology transfer. Key accomplishments include launching capacity-building programs, establishing collaborations with academic institutions for resource sharing and knowledge exchange.

Section 3 includes a comprehensive description of the research and studies carried out by the ITTLLDC in 2024 in collaboration with partner organizations.

Section 4 provides overview of financial status of the ITTLLDC.

2. Key Accomplishments in 2024

2.1 Initiatives for Addressing VPoA's Priority 1: Fundamental Transit Policy Issues

ITTLDC has undertaken a range of targeted activities to address Priority 1: Fundamental Transit Policy Issues as outlined in the VPoA. These initiatives are essential for reducing trade costs, improving transit efficiency, and enhancing access to global markets for LLDCs. ITTLDC's key actions under this priority area are Policy Research and Strategic Recommendations, Stakeholder Engagement and Regional Dialogue by organizing and participating in regional dialogues and seminars, and Advocacy and Policy Influence by its active advocacy activities bringing LLDC transit issues to international attention.

Symposium "Unlocking Opportunities: UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and Dry Port Development in Landlocked Developing Countries" March 25, 2024, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

As LLDCs lack direct access to the sea, the ITTLDC aims to facilitate maritime access by producing and disseminating research and studies on transport and transit topics, and by strengthening the analytical capacity of LLDCs in transit.

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the UN International Law Commission, symposium titled "Unlocking Opportunities: UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and Dry Port Development in LLDCs" was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Mongolia as part of the "Port Revival" forum.



This significant event was a collaborative effort involving the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, the National Port Rehabilitation Committee of the Government of Mongolia, the Maritime Administration under the Ministry of Road and Transport of Mongolia, and the ITTLDC.

Distinguished speakers included Mathias Forteau, a member of the UN International Law Commission and Professor at the University of Paris, who discussed "Current Issues in the Law of the Sea," and Professor Louis Savadogo, also a member of the UN International Law Commission and Professor at the University of Paris, who provided insights on "UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and LLDCs."

Experts from the Mongolian Maritime Administration shared valuable perspectives on topics such as "Landlocked Mongolia and its Maritime Administration," "Landlocked Mongolia and its Ship Registry," and "Landlocked Mongolia and its Foreign Trade."

The symposium aimed to offer participants a comprehensive understanding of the provisions of the UNCLOS and to evaluate its impact on LLDCs. Furthermore, it sought to foster policy dialogue and promote stakeholder cooperation to enhance the efficiency of dry port infrastructure, which serves as crucial gateways to the sea.

Launching of “Transport Impacts of System Dynamics Model for Landlocked Developing Countries: Case of Mongolia” Research Report May 10, 2024, Ulaanbaatar

ITTTLLDC issued a new research project titled "Transport Impacts of System Dynamics Model for Landlocked Developing Countries: Case of Mongolia." The first discussion of this research was held on at the UNHouse , with participation from Mongolian researchers, transport industry experts, and representatives from relevant ministries.



Development Partners Group meeting May 15, 2024, UN House, Ulaanbaatar

ITTTLLDC was invited as a key speaker at the DPG Mongolia meeting, a regular gathering that includes all UN agencies, the World Bank, ADB, international development agencies, and embassies working in Mongolia.

At this event, ITTTLLDC consultants presented the findings of a study titled “*Transport Impacts of System Dynamics Model for Landlocked Developing Countries: Case of Mongolia*” and shared a research project proposal addressing the current challenges Mongolia faces due to climate change.



In addition, Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of ITTTLLDC, provided an overview of the new Programme of Action for LLDCs for the decade 2024-2034, which is scheduled for approval by the Group of LLDCs at the LLDC3.

**Visit of delegation of Thanaleng Dry Port of Lao PDR
June 12, 2024, Ulaanbaatar**



ITTTLLDC Executive Director Mr. Dulguun welcomed a business delegation led by Dr. Chanthone Siththixay, Chairman and Founder of PTL Company. The delegation included Mr. Parya Nuanthasing, Director of Business Development; Mr. Siththideth Kingvongsa, Secretary to the Chairman; and Mr. Sakhone Philangam, Managing Director of Thanaleng Dry Port.

During the meeting, the parties engaged in a constructive dialogue exploring avenues to enhance cooperation, and discussed over the possibility of further development of a corridor connecting Northeast Asia to Southeast Asia, which would significantly bolster regional trade and economic integration.

**Launching Seminar of “Auto Transport Development Policy Research”
September 5th, 2024**

Newly research paper "Auto Transport Development Policy" launched in collaboration with ITTTLLDC in the UN House Mongolia. This policy paper was conducted by Mongolian Transport Corporation, Mongolian National University, University of Finance and Logistic Research Center in 2024.



Key figures of Mongolian Transport sector, University professors and Decision makers gathered together to discuss on key findings. This research, funded by the Mongolian Transport Corporation represents the first "bottom-up" policy approach, aiming to shift from traditional "top-down" planning.

2.2. Initiatives for Addressing VPoA Priority Priority 2: Infrastructure development and maintenance

Addressing Priority 2 of the VPoA: Infrastructure Development and Maintenance is crucial for enabling sustainable economic growth and regional integration in LLDCs. This priority focuses on improving transportation, energy, and ICT infrastructure to enhance connectivity and trade opportunities. Key initiatives that accomplished by the ITT can effectively support this priority by enhancing ICT infrastructure for digital connectivity, strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks, and promoting innovation and technological advancements in LLDCs. These initiatives align with the VPoA's emphasis on improving physical connectivity, digital access, and economic opportunities for LLDCs.

Side event "Digital Innovations for Sustainable Development in LLDCs" at the 80th Session of UN ESCAP

April 22, 2024, UN Conference Center, Bangkok

The side event titled "Digital Innovations for Sustainable LLDCs" was organized by the ITTLLDC, in collaboration with the Embassy of Mongolia to the Kingdom of Thailand and ESCAP, with support from the ITU and the AIT.



The event offered a valuable platform to delve into the impact of digital innovations on LLDCs, fostering meaningful discussions among experts, policymakers, and stakeholders. These discussions aimed to contribute substantively to policy documents and the forthcoming Program of Actions for LLDCs, which is set for adoption at the LLDC3.

Global Digital Dialogue 2024: LLDCs' Sustainable Digital Transformation August 14, 2024, UN House, Ulaanbaatar

ITTLLDC co-organized the *Global Digital Dialogue 2024: LLDCs' Sustainable Digital Transformation* in collaboration with the UNRCO Mongolia. This event gathered leaders, experts, and stakeholders to discuss the digital transformation pathways for LLDCs and explore ways to enhance their digital readiness to meet the SDGs.

The dialogue highlighted the current digital landscape of LLDCs, identifying challenges and opportunities for utilizing AI and digital technologies to drive sustainable development.

The experiences of Kazakhstan, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia served as case studies, showcasing achievements, success factors, and key obstacles these countries face in advancing digital inclusion and efficiency.

The event placed a special focus on integrating the perspectives of youth, women and people with disabilities in digital development, advocating for an inclusive approach to the GDC. This was seen as essential for ensuring that digital technologies are accessible and beneficial to all.

Key international representatives included H.E. Gabit B. Koishibayev, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Mongolia; Mr. Yann Duval, Chief of Trade Policy and Facilitation at the UN ESCAP; and Mr. Kiyong Ko, Director of the APCICT under UN ESCAP. They, along with experts from international organizations, NGOs, and the private sector, contributed insights on how digitalization can support LLDCs in achieving the SDGs and foster sustainable development.



**Asia-Pacific regional workshop on Satellite Services, National Regulatory Frameworks, and Partnership in LLDCs and SIDS
October 1-2, 2024, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

The ITLLDC, in partnership with the ITU, held a seminar at the UN House in Ulaanbaatar to examine satellite services' role in advancing LLDCs and SIDS. Leading experts and representatives from 14 countries of the Asia-Pacific region attended.



Countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Malaysia presented satellite initiatives targeting digital access and disaster resilience, while representatives from Bhutan, Cambodia, and Nepal highlighted challenges like topographical constraints. Moreover, the participants and delegates encouraged the P2C Pledges and introduced their pledges.

The seminar emphasized international collaboration as essential for leveraging satellite technology to enhance connectivity, economic development, and resilience in LLDCs and SIDS.



Seminar on Economic Impacts of Economic Corridors in Mongolia October 8, 2024

ITLLDC, in partnership with the IDE-JETRO, co-organized a seminar, which was the fourth in a series of joint initiatives by the parties. The event convened experts, policymakers, and embassy representatives to explore the economic impacts of developing transport infrastructure corridors in Mongolia.

The seminar featured updated research titled *Economic Impacts of Economic Corridors in Mongolia: An Application of IDE-GSM*, introduced by Mr. Isono Ikumo, Deputy Director of IDE-JETRO. This study, which uses the GSM, provides policy insights to improve transport infrastructure in Mongolia. Dr. D. Gerelnyam, Head of the Information Technology Division at the Ministry of Road Transport, also presented Mongolia's new 2024–2028 transport policy.



International Symposium on ASEAN Logistics Connectivity October 10-11, 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR

Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of the ITLLDC, participated in the International Symposium on ASEAN Logistics Connectivity in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Hosted by Laos, the only landlocked country in Southeast Asia, the symposium aimed to address logistics challenges and enhance regional connectivity through improved sea-land interdependence, seamless cross-border processes, and strengthened geopolitical stability.



At the invitation of the Government of Lao PDR, Mr. Dulguun spoke during Session 3: Infrastructure Development and Regional Connectivity. He highlighted the critical importance of infrastructure development for LLDCs and shared policy recommendations to advance connectivity. His contributions supported ASEAN's economic integration efforts and emphasized the strategic role of LLDCs in regional infrastructure and logistics planning.

Visit to Thanaleng Dry Port Oct 11, 2024, Lao PDR



Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of the ITTLLDC, visited the TDP in Lao PDR during the Laos Logistics Fair 2024. Recognized as a Dry Port of international importance by the UNESCAP in 2013, the Thanaleng Dry Port serves as a critical logistics hub in Laos's effort to shift from a landlocked to a land-linked nation.

The TDP is a top priority within the Lao National Logistics Strategy (2016–2020), enacted by the Prime Minister's decree in 2015, as part of Laos's strategic action plan to enhance regional connectivity and economic integration

Global Innovation Forum 2024 October 28-30, 2024, Malta

At the 2024 GIF held in Malta, organized by the ITU, Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of the ITTLLDC, was invited as a speaker. Under the theme “Shaping our Digital Futures for Prosperity and Well-Being for All,” the forum facilitated a global exchange of best practices to strengthen digital innovation ecosystems worldwide.





During the session on “South-South and Triangular Cooperation as a Catalyst for Emerging Technology Clusters,” Mr. Dulguun highlighted the digital innovation potential within LLDCs. He urged governments and development partners to intensify commitments and partnerships, fostering inclusive digital progress aligned with the new Programme of Action for LLDCs. This framework is set to be adopted at the upcoming 3rd UN Conference on LLDCs in Gaborone, Botswana, on December 10-13, 2024.

2.3 Initiatives for Addressing VPoAPriority 3: International trade and trade facilitation

Priority 3 of the VPoA: International Trade and Trade Facilitation aims to support LLDCs in reducing trade barriers, enhancing market access, and increasing trade competitiveness. Addressing this priority is essential for integrating LLDCs into global value chains and fostering economic development. ITTLLDC initiatives align with the VPoA’s goals of reducing trade barriers, enhancing LLDCs’ trade competitiveness, and fostering inclusive economic growth by integrating LLDCs into regional and global markets.

Courtesy meeting with the CFC February 8, 2024

ITTLLDC held an online courtesy meeting with H.E. Amb. Sheikh Mohammed Belal, Managing Director of the CFC. During the meeting, Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od expressed strong interest in addressing the core priorities and pressing challenges faced by LLDCs in the current geopolitical landscape.

The discussion was meaningful and centered around crucial issues affecting these nations, including the development of the agricultural sector, SME development, and climate change.



The meeting underscored the CFC's commitment to engaging constructively with organizations like ITTLLDC, contributing to a broader dialogue aimed at addressing the unique needs of landlocked nations. As the meeting concluded, both parties expressed optimism about future collaboration, including the organization of joint seminars, trainings.

LLDCs Forum on Food Security and the SDG September 5 – 6, 2024, Tashkent, Uzbekistan



The High Level LLDCs Forum on Food Security and the SDGs was organized by Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Food and Agriculture Organization. Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of ITLLDC participated in this high-level forum at the invitation of Mr. Ibromkhim Abdurakhmonov, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and shared some data and information on Trade and trade facilitation issues in Landlocked Developing Countries with highlights of SDG trade related data.

This forum was an interactive platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and collaboration among policymakers, experts, private sector and business, value- chain actors, scholars, and industry leaders, and adopted a Declaration on the Sustainable Transformation of Agrifood Systems in Landlocked Countries.



2.4. Initiatives for Addressing VPoA's Priority 4: Regional integration and cooperation

Addressing Priority 2 of the VPoA: Infrastructure Development and Maintenance is essential for fostering sustainable economic growth and promoting regional integration in LLDCs. Key initiatives led by the ITT effectively support this priority by enhancing connectivity, strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks, and promoting innovation and technological advancements within LLDCs.

The King of Bhutan July 9, 2024, Ulaanbaatar

On July 9, 2024, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the King of Bhutan, visited the ITTLLDC at the UN House in Ulaanbaatar during his state visit to Mongolia. This historic visit highlights the shared values and challenges faced by LLDCs, as Bhutan is also an LLDC situated in the Eastern Himalayas.

His Majesty's presence underscores the significance of ITTLLDC in addressing the unique challenges faced by LLDCs. During the visit, he expressed appreciation to ITTLLDC Executive Director Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od for the organization's dedication to supporting LLDCs. His Majesty also signed the ITTLLDC's Guest Book of Honor, affirming Bhutan's commitment to the Think Tank's mission.

Furthermore, His Majesty shared his vision for Gelephu Mindfulness City, an initiative aimed at creating a sustainable urban environment in southern Bhutan. The development plan for Gelephu emphasizes mindful living, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation, reflecting Bhutan's commitment to GNHand holistic development.

During the visit the parties agreed to strengthen ties between Bhutan and ITTLLDC, reinforcing collaborative efforts among LLDCs and renewed commitment to addressing the challenges faced by LLDCs through mutual support and shared values.



“Blue Sky” 1st International forum on Central Asia September 18, 2024, Ulaanbaatar

On September 18, 2024, Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of the ITTLLDC, participated in the inaugural "Blue Sky" International Forum on Central Asia in response to an invitation from Mongolia's National Institute for Security Studies. This forum marked the first gathering of Mongolian and Central Asian researchers, with representatives from across Central Asia engaging in discussions on shared historical ties, regional integration, and multilateral diplomacy.



Mr. Dulguun presented the critical role of ITTLLDC in advancing multilateral diplomacy for LLDCs, emphasizing the importance of collaborative partnerships for economic growth and regional stability. He highlighted ITTLLDC’s commitment to fostering economic cooperation and addressing common challenges faced by LLDCs in Central Asia.

2.5. Initiatives for Addressing VPoA's Priority 5: Structural Economic Transformation

Many LLDCs remain reliant on a few export commodities with low value addition. To fully utilize their export and trade potential, it is crucial to promote structural economic transformation that can mitigate the negative impact of geographical disadvantages and external shocks. The initiatives of ITT aimed to foster resilient, diversified, and competitive economies in LLDCs. Through industrialization, human capital development, digital transformation, and regional cooperation, LLDCs can achieve sustainable economic transformation and long-term growth, enabling them to overcome geographic constraints and thrive in the global economy.

OPEC Fund Quarterly Interview March 2024



Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of ITTLLDC, provided a comprehensive overview of the organization's efforts in an interview for the OPEC Fund Quarterly magazine on 1st of March. He discussed the critical role of ITTLLDC, the challenges faced by LLDCs, and the transition from the VPoA for LLDCs 2014-2024 to a new 10-year Action Plan. Mr. Dulguun emphasized the ITTLLDC's commitment to addressing these challenges through tailored policies and sustainable development strategies aimed at fostering economic growth and resilience within LLDCs. He highlighted the significance of the upcoming LLDC3 Conference, set to adopt a new 10-year Action Plan to enhance the socio-economic development of LLDCs.

SPECA Economic Forum "Green Development in the SPECA Region" November 26-27 2024, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

At the invitation of Mrs. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under Secretary General of UN ESCAP, Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of ITTLLDC, participated as a speaker in the 2024 SPECA Economic Forum.

This Economic Forum provided a platform for high-level policy dialogue on green economic development in the SPECA participating States – Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, all landlocking developing countries. The Forum focused on an integrated approach towards harmonization of economic growth with environmental sustainability, while improving eco-efficiency towards achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and a prosperous future of the SPECA region.

2.6. Efforts for addressing the VPoA's Priority 6: Means of implementation

Priority 6 of the VPoA: Means of Implementation is crucial for supporting the resources, partnerships, and mechanisms needed to achieve the ambitious goals set for LLDCs. The initiatives of ITTLLDC promote and enable LLDCs to mobilize financial and technical support, foster strong collaborations, and build capacity to overcome geographic and structural challenges for sustainable development and economic resilience.

Information Dissemination Session on ITTLLDC and the 3rd UN Conference on LLDCs January 19, 2024, Beijing, China



To address the unique challenges faced by LLDCs and to amplify their voices at the upcoming 3rd UN Conference on LLDCs, the ITTLLDC organized a Luncheon-Information Dissemination Session at the Embassy of Mongolia in Beijing.

This event brought together Ambassadors and delegates from LLDCs based in China, providing a dynamic platform to foster dialogue and share essential information about the 3rd UN Conference on LLDCs, which was scheduled for June 2024 in Kigali, Rwanda.



MoU with Mongolian Institute of Northeast Asian Security and Strategy March 15, 2024

The ITTLLDC concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with MINASS on mutually beneficial cooperation.

The MoU highlights several key areas for collaboration, including joint research initiatives, policy analysis, and knowledge-sharing on issues relevant to LLDCs and regional security.

Meeting with ESCAP Environment Division On April 23, 2024, Bangkok

ITTTLLDC held an in-person meeting with the Environment and Development Division of the United Nations ESCAP in Bangkok. The discussion focused on joint studies and plans for cooperation in environmental sustainability and climate change issues, including glacial melt and land degradation.

The meeting brought together Mr. Dulguun, Executive Director of ITTTLLDC, and Mr. Sangmin Nam, Director of ESCAP's Environment and Development Division, marking a promising start for enhanced collaboration between the two organizations. They discussed joint studies and outlined plans for further cooperation in areas such as environmental sustainability and climate change-induced issues, including glacial melt and land degradation. Mr. Dulguun underscored the potential for synergistic initiatives aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by landlocked nations. He proposed conducting comprehensive reviews of the Paris Agreement Nationally Determined Contributions of LLDCs ahead of LLDC3, highlighting the importance of leveraging collective expertise to foster sustainable development and resilience in the region's landlocked developing countries.

Both parties reiterated their shared commitment to addressing pressing environmental and climate change issues within landlocked developing countries. They pledged to sustain dialogue and undertake concrete actions to bolster cooperation in these critical areas

UNRCO and ITTTLLDC Joint Declaration of Intent

May 15, 2024, Ulaanbaatar

ITTTLLDC signed a Joint Declaration of Intent with the UN RCO Mongolia. This agreement aims to enhance collaboration on research, policy development, and capacity-building initiatives tailored to the unique challenges faced by LLDCs, particularly in sustainable development and climate change resilience.



The signing ceremony was attended by Mr. Tapan Mishra, UN Resident Coordinator in Mongolia, and Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of ITTTLLDC, along with representatives from various UN agencies, international development organizations, and embassies.

The Joint Declaration of Intent aims to enhance collaboration on research, policy development, and capacity-building initiatives tailored to the unique challenges faced by LLDCs, particularly in the context of sustainable development and climate change resilience.

Mr. Mishra emphasized the importance of this partnership in his remarks, stating, “This declaration signifies our shared vision and commitment to supporting landlocked developing countries in overcoming their unique challenges. By working together, we can leverage our collective expertise to drive meaningful progress.”

Mr. Damdin-Od highlighted the potential impact of the collaboration, noting, “This partnership will enable us to combine our strengths and resources to develop innovative solutions and strategies that address the specific needs of landlocked developing countries. We are excited about the opportunities this agreement presents for advancing our common goals.”

The Joint Declaration of Intent is expected to pave the way for a series of collaborative projects aimed at improving transport infrastructure, enhancing trade facilitation, and bolstering climate resilience in LLDCs. This partnership marks a significant step forward in the global effort to ensure that no country is left behind in the pursuit of sustainable development.

Granted membership of the International Telecommunications Union July 5, 2024

The ITU is the United Nations specialized agency for ICTs, driving innovation in ICTs together with 193 Member States and a membership of over 900 companies, universities, and international and regional organizations.

By the decision of the ITU Council the ITLLDC was added to the ITU-D, becoming one of its 300 members and associates.

ITU works to close the digital divide and drive digital transformation to leverage the power of ICTs. It fosters international cooperation and solidarity in the delivery of technical assistance and in the creation, development and improvement of telecommunication and ICT equipment and networks in developing countries. ITU-D's work prioritizes those most in need — from people living in the world's Least Developed Countries to marginalized communities everywhere.

Establishing a Research and Innovation Network for LLDCs August 15, 2024

The ITLLDC and the UNRCO in Mongolia co-hosted a significant consultation aimed at establishing a RIN for LLDCs. This initiative, spearheaded by ITLLDC, seeks to advance collaborative research efforts that drive sustainable development for LLDCs.

The meeting brought together representatives from prominent international organizations, including the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, UNESCAP, the ITU, and the Asia-Pacific Training Center for ICT. National experts from diverse fields such as ICT, economics, finance, climate change, international relations, and legal sectors, who serve as strategic partners to ITLLDC, also participated.

Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of ITLLDC, inaugurated the meeting and emphasized the vital role that research plays in tackling the unique challenges LLDCs face, particularly in the context of global economic shifts and the growing impacts of climate change. The consultation encouraged active dialogue among participants, who shared insights from their experiences in creating research networks and provided actionable recommendations to support the RIN's development.

The RIN aims to strengthen sustainable development efforts for LLDCs by creating a global research platform that allows for collaboration among international organizations, academic institutions, and national experts. By fostering such partnerships, the RIN will equip LLDCs with research-backed strategies to navigate complex challenges and enhance resilience.

The network invites participation from academic institutions and researchers committed to addressing the development issues of LLDCs, supporting their journey toward inclusive and sustainable growth.



Visit of Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations Aug 22, 2024, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, visited the ITTLLDC during her official trip to Mongolia, marking a significant opportunity for the ITTLLDC to align more closely with UN initiatives.

Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, visited the ITTLLDC during her official trip to Mongolia, marking a significant moment for the organization. Her visit highlighted the importance of strengthening cooperation between the ITTLLDC and the United Nations to address the unique challenges faced by LLDCs.



23rd Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of LLDCs September 26, 2024, New York, USA

The 23rd Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of LLDCs convened with a focus on preparing for the LLDC3 in December 2024. Under the theme "Building Momentum towards Gaborone: Partnering for a Decade of Action and Transformation in LLDCs," the meeting aimed to foster collaboration on key challenges faced by LLDCs and set a proactive agenda.

Chaired by Hon. Dr. Lemogang Kwappe, Botswana's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the high-level gathering reviewed progress on the VPoA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while discussing a new Programme of Action to steer LLDC development over the next decade. The adoption of a Ministerial Declaration marked the commitment to advance Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in LLDCs through robust partnerships with transit countries and development partners.



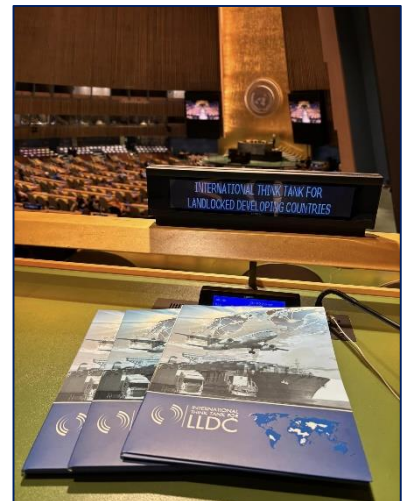
The ITTTLLDC contributed valuable insights, emphasizing the importance of innovative solutions and international cooperation for LLDCs. Executive Director Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od presented ITTTLLDC's ongoing commitment to research, advocacy, and capacity-building. He also announced ITTTLLDC's collaboration with international partners such as the ITU, ITC, and GCF in organizing three side events at LLDC3 on ICT, international trade, and climate change.

79th session of the UN General Assembly September 22-27, 2024, New York, USA

Executive Director of the ITTTLLDC Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od attended the 79th session of the UN General Assembly on 22-27 September 2024.

The ITTTLLDC has held observer status by UN Resolution since 2019. Since then the ITTTLLDC regularly attends the General Assembly and held bi-literal meetings with ITT member states and development partner organizations.

As part of the preparations for LLDC3, Mr. Dulguun announced ITTTLLDC's upcoming side events on ICT, trade, and climate change. These initiatives underscore ITTTLLDC's commitment to research, advocacy, and sustainable development, in collaboration with partners like the ITU, ITC, and GCF.



8th CAREC Think Tank Development Forum 27-28 August, 2024, Almaty, Kazakhstan



8th CAREC Think Tank Development Forum, held on 27-28 August in Almaty under the theme “The climate challenge- Thinking beyond borders for collective action”. The forum provided a distinctive opportunity for the exchange of knowledge, collaboration, and strategic planning among think tanks, policymakers, and development partners from CAREC member countries. The networking opportunities created during the forum have resulted in stronger relationships between organizations and individuals.

A Memorandum of Understanding signed with the University of the Humanities October 22, 2024, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

The ITLLDC signed a MoU with the UOH in a ceremony at ITLLDC Headquarters. This partnership was formalized by Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, Executive Director of ITLLDC, and Mr. Choi Seong-Soo, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations and Cooperation at UOH.

The MoU signifies ITLLDC's commitment to collaborating with Mongolian academic institutions to build research and knowledge-sharing networks. The partnership aims to enhance the research capacity of students and faculty at UOH, aligning with Mongolia's broader goals for human resource development.



Visit of Mongolian Prime Minister L. Oyun-Erdene October 24, 2024, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

His Excellency L. Oyun-Erdene, Prime Minister of Mongolia, visited the ITLLDC. During the visit, Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene highlighted ITLLDC's vital role as a key research institution supporting Mongolia and other LLDCs in addressing unique developmental challenges. He acknowledged ITLLDC's contributions to raising global awareness and advocating for LLDC-specific needs.



The Prime Minister emphasized the significance of strengthening regional cooperation to overcome the geographic and economic barriers faced by LLDCs. He also stressed the importance of the upcoming LLDC3, set for December 10-13, 2024, in Gaborone, Botswana, as a critical opportunity to address shared challenges, build partnerships, and advance sustainable development for LLDCs, including Mongolia.

Executive Director Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od presented ITLLDC's work in research, policy advocacy, and fostering international cooperation for LLDCs, underscoring the organization's commitment to promoting sustainable growth and integration for landlocked countries.

Visit of Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the 8th Secretary-General of the United Nations November 2, 2024

On November 2, 2024, H. E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-general of the United Nations, visited the ITLLDC in Ulaanbaatar. A key figure in ITLLDC's inception 15 years ago, Mr. Ban Ki-moon commended the organization's progress and its Executive Director, Mr. Dulguun Damdin-Od, for advancing the interests of LLDCs. He underlined ITLLDC's critical role in addressing LLDC-specific challenges and signed the Guest Book of Honor, symbolizing his ongoing support.



Strengthening Cooperation and Capacity building through Internship Program

The ITLLDC has undertaken several initiatives to enhance cooperation with existing development partners and to establish new partnerships that support and complement the development efforts of LLDCs. This includes launching academic cooperation and internship programs with diverse partners, fostering collaborative research, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building opportunities that align with the needs and priorities of landlocked developing countries.

- ITLLDC welcomed Ms. Nilufar Tahery Boeini as an intern for 1,5 month starting June 10, 2024. As interns are required to conduct at least one research paper on a topic related to LLDC issues during their internship she has worked on paper on UN Convention on the Law implications for LLDCs.
- Mr. Flavian contributed a research paper titled "Connectivity through Democracy: Leveraging ICT to Promote Democratic Development in LLDCs."
- For UoH intern focused on drafting a proposal paper for potential membership as a new state member.

3. ITT Research Papers and Studies

3.1 Transport Impacts of System Dynamics Model for Landlocked Developing Countries: Case of Mongolia

The study focuses on the development and optimization of Mongolia's transport sector, considering the unique challenges and opportunities faced by the country as a landlocked nation. The research includes a comprehensive analysis of the current state of the transport sector, projections for future growth, and strategic recommendations for enhancing the sector's contribution to the economy.

The study utilized a system dynamics model to simulate various scenarios and their impacts on the transport sector. This model highlighted the interdependencies between different modes of transport and other economic sectors, providing insights into optimizing transport logistics and infrastructure.

Key Findings

1. Current State of the Transport Sector:

- **Railway:** As of 2023, Mongolia's railway network consists of 2,693 km of public and private tracks, with a capacity to transport 41 million tons of cargo annually. The sector is a vital component of the nation's infrastructure, handling significant volumes of freight and passengers.
- **Road Transport:** The road sector has seen substantial growth, with an increase in paved roads and vehicle numbers. The capacity for road transport is projected to continue expanding, driven by both domestic needs and transit traffic.
- **Air Transport:** The air transport sector was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and geopolitical factors. However, there is potential for recovery and growth, especially in cargo and passenger transport.

2. Economic Impact:

The transport sector's share of Mongolia's GDP was 7.2% in 2010 but dropped to 3.9% in 2020. However, with recent improvements, it rose to 9.3% in 2023. The study projects that with strategic investments and infrastructure development, this share could increase to 20% by 2030.

Policy Recommendations

1. Infrastructure Development:

- **Railway and Road Corridors:** Prioritize the development of key railway and road corridors, including the Central, Eastern, and Western corridors, to enhance connectivity and reduce logistics costs. These corridors are crucial for facilitating international trade and transit.
- **Smart Transport Systems:** Implement smart cross-border transport systems and unmanned e-ports to streamline operations and enhance efficiency at border crossings.

2. Institutional Strengthening:

- Establish a comprehensive legal and institutional framework, including the creation of a unified Ministry of Transport Development, to oversee policy implementation and sectoral coordination.
- PPPs to attract investment in critical infrastructure projects and manage dry port operations efficiently.

3. Economic and Social Integration:

- Develop a national logistics network with the participation of the private sector to increase competitiveness and support the export of goods. This network should integrate trade, transport, and logistics services to optimize supply chains.
- Enhance the role of the transport sector in national development strategies, aligning with broader economic and social goals, such as the Food Revolution and the Billion Tree Movement.

3.2 Development of Inclusive Digitalization Roadmap

At the request of the PIN, an international non-governmental organization, the *“Inclusive Digitalization Advocacy Roadmap”* has been produced by the ITLLDC.

Mongolia's current legal environment, including relevant laws, policies, and legal documents related to digital transformation were analyzed. International studies and indexes on e-transition and e-governance were also reviewed. Additionally, key informant interviews and focus group discussion were conducted including government officials, members of the target groups of children and adolescents (1,360,055), poor rural people and herdsmen (298,338), national minorities (120,000), unemployed and unskilled youth (69,000), girls and women (1,786,500), people with disabilities (111,228), elderly (455,166), and domestic migrants (56,152), civil society organizations and private sector.

According to the participants of the target group discussions, the lack of involvement of these civil society organizations in the e-transition can be attributed to: insufficient information, understanding and knowledge about the e-transition; insufficient information about the policy and legislation (especially the newly developed laws, regulations and policies); a lack of e-skills in non-governmental organizations and a weak cooperation between civil society organizations.

Very few laws in Mongolia's information and communication sector had been implemented prior to 2021. On December 17, 2021, the Parliament of Mongolia approved a package of laws: "The Law on Electronic Signatures", "The Law on the Protection of Personal Information", "The Law on Transparency of Public Information", "The Law on Cyber Security" and the "Law on Virtual Asset Service Providers". On May 22, 2022, the guidelines for the development of Mongolia into an "E-Nation" were approved by order A/24 of the Minister of Electronic Development and Communications. Lastly, on May 14, 2024, the Parliament approved the "Law on Support of Information Technology Industry".

Within the last 2 years, six laws and many regulations have been approved to ensure the implementation of the policies, but certain problems persist. The long-term e-transition policy is not coordinated, the medium-term goals have not been approved, the short-term integrated strategy is unclear, and the lack of coordination among sectors creates an uncertain policy environment.

There is a clear need for significant reforms in the legal environment of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which are the main legal entities of civil society, to enhance their financial and operational capacity, there is also a necessity for a unified concept and understanding among stakeholders regarding the form of legal entities, as well as the regulations and content of the Civil Code and related laws.

Based on the situational analysis the roadmap is developed with primary goal to ensure equal participation of civil society organizations, representing targeted citizen groups, in shaping digital transformation policies and legal frameworks, while also facilitating their involvement in influencing policy, legal, and regulatory activities. The roadmap has three main priority areas and two supportive directions.

Three Main Priority Areas of the Roadmap:

1. Ensuring equal participation of NGOs in digital transformation policies and legal documents and conducting policy influence activities.
2. Enhancing the digital skills of SCOs
3. Improving the digital skills of targeted citizens and supporting equitable participation in digital transformation.

Two Supportive Areas of the Roadmap:

4. Advocacy and Awareness Raising;
5. Reporting and Monitoring and Evaluation.

The Inclusive Digitalization Advocacy Roadmap is uploaded to the ITLLDC webpage for public information.

3.3. Updated research on Economic Impacts of Economic Corridors in Mongolia: An Application of IDE-GSM

IDE-JETRO has updated the research titled *“Economic Impacts of Economic Corridors in Mongolia: An Application of IDE-GSM”*, and introduced key findings and recommendations in October 2024. This study, which uses the GSM, provides policy insights to improve transport infrastructure in Mongolia.

Key Recommendations from the Study:

- **Global South Neutrality:** Maintaining a neutral stance amidst geopolitical tensions can bring economic benefits, especially for countries like Mongolia, which may serve as a model for other Global South nations.
- **Promoting Regional Cooperation:** Economic corridors will benefit Mongolia, its neighbors, and the broader region, particularly through expanded railway infrastructure.
- **Sustainable Funding Models:** Inland countries with significant transit demands need sustainable funding mechanisms such as toll systems and public-private partnerships to support infrastructure.
- **Policy Reforms for Trade and Connectivity:** Bold reforms are necessary to promote trade, streamline business processes, and enhance connectivity.
- **Industry Diversification:** Developing industrial parks, special economic zones, and improved border facilities will support industry diversification.

Outcomes:

- **Strategic Insights:** The study offered data-driven insights for infrastructure development and economic integration strategies tailored to Mongolia and other LLDCs.

- **Policy Influence:** Mongolia’s transport policy for 2024–2028 aligns with the study’s findings, reinforcing the role of strategic planning in fostering sustainable growth.
- **Capacity Building:** The recommendations emphasize government and business capacity building, supporting economic resilience among LLDCs

4. Financial report

Financial Contributions:

- **Voluntary Contributions by ITTLLDC Members:**

Members of the ITTLLDC provide substantial voluntary contributions, as outlined in the Multilateral Agreement establishing the ITTLLDC. Mongolia, as the host country, makes a notable contribution to support the organization’s core activities annually.

- **In-Kind Contributions from Member Countries and Partners:**

Member countries and partners also contribute in-kind by sponsoring events, initiatives, and research projects. The approximate total of these contributions is estimated at USD20,000.

5. Future Outlook

- **Vision for 2025 and Beyond**

We submitted our input to the development of the next 10-year Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries to contribute to this significant initiative aimed at addressing the unique challenges faced by LLDCs and driving progress towards sustainable development goals.

Given the importance of the 3rd UN conference on LLDCs and our commitment to actively engage in its proceedings, I am pleased to inform you that the ITTLLDC in cooperation with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Trade Center (ITC) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) is planning to organize three side events during the conference. These events will focus on information and communication technology, international trade and climate change impacts. We are confident that these discussions will contribute meaningfully to the overarching goals of the conference.