



## THE GEOPOLITICAL AND GEOECONOMIC DYNAMICS OF LANDLOCKED COUNTRIES

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### **Abstract**

Landlocked countries, despite their lack of direct access to the sea, play a significant role in the global geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape. This article explores the unique challenges faced by landlocked nations, their strategic importance, and the various strategies they employ to overcome geographic constraints. Additionally, it delves into the role of international cooperation and the evolving global trade environment in shaping the future of landlocked countries.

**Keywords:** geopolitics, geoeconomics, landlocked countries (LLC), infrastructure, UNCTAD, regional integration

### **Landlockedness and Development**

Landlocked countries are sovereign states that lack direct access to the sea, making them dependent on their neighbors for access to maritime trade routes. There are 44 landlocked countries globally, 17 of which are categorized as least developed. Their unique geographic constraints have significant implications for their political, economic, and social development. In turn, LLCs can be classified into two subgroups: landlocked developed and developing countries. If for landlocked developed countries the remoteness from the sea is short as they are surrounded by major European markets, for the latest excessive distance is a serious geographical handicap. Kazakhstan has the longest distance from the seacoast, which is 3750 km, Afghanistan, Niger, Chad and Zimbabwe are the following countries with the distance of 2000 km. Most landlocked developing countries are exporting commodities.

### **LLC Geoeconomics**

Landlocked countries face substantial challenges in building and maintaining efficient transportation infrastructure. The absence of seaports necessitates the development of extensive road, rail, and air connections to neighboring coastal nations. Investment in these transport systems is crucial for promoting trade and economic growth. Trade cost is another constraint of LLC. The absence of direct sea



access often leads to higher transportation costs, increasing the prices of imported goods and decreasing the competitiveness of a country's exports. Landlocked nations must manage these elevated trade costs to remain economically viable. To tackle these hurdles transit agreements are one of the economic strategies to implement. Many landlocked countries negotiate transit agreements with their coastal neighbors, allowing them to access seaports and trade routes. These agreements can provide security and predictability for landlocked states and their trading partners. Another option is economic diversification. To reduce dependency on a single trade route or neighbor, landlocked countries often seek to diversify their economic activities. Investments in industries such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services can help create resilient economies.

### **LLC Geopolitics**

Landlocked countries are more vulnerable to the policies and actions of their neighboring coastal nations. Geopolitical disputes, trade blockades, or conflicts in neighboring coastal states can have severe consequences for landlocked nations. The number of international borders landlocked countries share can lead to complex diplomatic and security challenges. Maintaining good relations with multiple neighbors is crucial for ensuring stability and access to trade routes. LLCs need international cooperation. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides a legal framework for transit through territorial waters, archipelagic waters, and exclusive economic zones, which can be beneficial for landlocked countries. International agreements like UNCLOS help ensure that landlocked states can exercise their rights to access the sea. Participation in regional economic organizations and trade blocs can help landlocked nations expand their markets and reduce trade barriers. Examples include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Global Trade Environment is evolving. Advancements in technology and the growth of e-commerce have created opportunities for landlocked countries to participate in global trade without relying solely on physical infrastructure. The impact of climate change, including rising sea levels and extreme weather events, can affect both coastal and landlocked countries. Adaptation and resilience strategies are increasingly important for all nations.

### **Conclusion**

Landlocked countries face unique geographic and economic challenges, but they also play vital roles in the global geopolitical and geoeconomic landscape. Their strategic importance, diplomatic efforts, and economic diversification strategies



contribute to their ability to overcome geographic constraints and thrive in an ever-evolving global trade environment. International cooperation and adaptation to new technologies and environmental challenges will continue to shape the future of landlocked nations.

### **References**

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