

Opening Remarks by

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**At the High-Level Euro-Asia Regional Meeting on Improving Cooperation on
Transit, Trade Facilitation and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

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Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to join you at this high-level meeting.

TRANSPORT IN THE 2030 AGENDA

I want to start by complimenting the organisers for developing a holistic programme for this meeting, highlighting the inter-linkages among transport, transit, trade and sustainable development.

Indeed, sustainable transport is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 2030 Agenda underscores the importance of universal access to sustainable transport systems, calling upon Member States to, by 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all.

Sustainable transport is included in targets related to the Sustainable Development Goals on Health (SDG 3) and on Sustainable Cities (SDG 11).

In addition, transport is connected to many other SDGs, including Women's Empowerment (SDG 5), Economic Growth (SDG 8), Resilient Infrastructure (SDG 9), Climate Change (SDG 13) and others.

The 2030 Agenda further calls for improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations - women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

TRANSPORT CONFERENCE

Last November, the United Nations then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened the first-ever Global Sustainable Transport Conference in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

The concrete outcomes of the Conference include a forward-looking statement on commitments and policy recommendations on sustainable transport, and a list of partnerships, voluntary commitments and initiatives to support sustainable transport.

The message from the Conference is clear - sustainable transport is a key driver of sustainable economic growth and economic integration, while protecting our ecosystems.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

However, our current transport systems are characterized by unsustainable practices.

The transport sector accounts for nearly a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions.

Every year, one and a quarter million people die because of traffic accidents. Most of these fatalities occur in developing countries.

Urgent actions should be taken at all levels, national, regional and global, to ensure that the services and infrastructure for the mobility of people and goods are provided in a manner that is safe, affordable, accessible, efficient, and resilient, while minimizing the green-house gas emissions and the negative impacts to environment.

To this end, we need to launch the transport sector transformation.

We must start its transition to green transport, to strengthen connectivity in all modes - road, rail, aviation, ferry and maritime, to achieve basic equity on provision of transport and to leave no one behind.

Special attention should be given to the needs of developing countries, in particular SIDS, LDCs, and LLDCs.

For LLDCs, it is important to establish and promote efficient transit transport systems that link them to international markets, including by taking the following measures in synergy, not in silo:

by developing, upgrading and maintaining all modes of transit transport infrastructure;

by promoting and harmonizing enabling environment, regulatory frameworks and institutional arrangements for transit; and

by forging genuine partnerships between landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners at the national, bilateral, sub-regional, regional and global levels.

CONCLUSION

This meeting is very timely.

It is an important platform to follow up to the Global Sustainable Transport Conference, to exchange country experiences and lessons learned, address synergies between the Vienna Programme of Action for LLDCs and the 2030 Agenda, and strengthen cooperation for the development of sustainable transportation and transit system.

The topic couldn't be more relevant.

Europe and Asia, if combined, accounts for more than 70% of the world population and about 60% of world GDP.

Throughout history, the Silk Road over land and on the sea has played an important role connecting more than 50 countries from East to West. It was not only a route for caravans and trade, but a meeting point for culture and people-to- people exchanges.

In the new context of sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda, I hope these two continents, through advancing regional connectivity initiatives, become a new booster for growth and prosperity for the world.

I wish the meeting a great success and look forward to fruitful discussions with concrete policy recommendations and partnerships on sustainable transport.

Thank you.