

## Statement

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At the Ministerial Meeting of Landlocked developing countries on Trade and Transport

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Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing my sincere gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan and the UN OHRLLS for organizing and hosting this event and wish us all efficient and productive work.

The Government of the Republic of Armenia attaches special attention to the multilateral cooperation and implementation of the main objectives of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. When the Landlocked Developing Countries Group — LLDCs was established within the framework of the United Nations in 1994, the Republic of Armenia became actively engaged in the international processes taking place within the scope thereof, based on the fact that only through international cooperation, coordination and consolidation of efforts it is possible to ensure full integration into the global economy and sustainable development.

Situated at the crossroads of different continents, Armenia has always bridged various civilizations, thus becoming a very important center for the cultural and trade exchanges. Modern Armenia adheres to a strategy designed to build bridges among its major trading, economic and political partners.

Being a land-locked country with scarce energy resources, under the closed borders with two neighboring states, we have never bent to difficulties.

In Armenia a favorable framework for business and investments is created, which is stated by the positive trend in renowned international rankings like the World Bank Doing Business Report, the Economic Freedom Index of the Heritage Foundation etc.

There are three free economic zones in Armenia, specialized in high technology and innovation, as well as in jewelry and watchmaking. The business conducted within these zones enjoys an almost total exemption of taxes and duties, which serves as an effective platform for attracting foreign investments to the named fields of economy. Recently “Meghri” free economic zone was launched in Meghri town, on the border with Iran. It has a broad sector coverage, including agriculture, processing industry, trade, transportation and storage, tourism, entertainment and others.

Given its geographical position, commercial and logistical capabilities, as well as Armenia’s multi-vector preferential trade regimes, the free economic zone on the border with Iran can become a bridge between Iran, the EAEU and the EU.

The current policy of the Armenian government is aimed at bypassing the obstacles and limitations and increasing country's limited internal market through regional and international cooperation. Today, our geographic location and political and economic arrangements with partner nations enable Armenia's easy access and trade with markets of more than 300 million consumers, where many Armenian goods and services have already established brand value. As a member to the Eurasian Economic Union, we have customs-free access to more than 180 million consumers. A common border and visa free regime with the Islamic Republic of Iran open up a market of 80 million consumers. Historically friendly relations with Georgia give us access to the Black Sea ports as well as safeguard Armenia's trade turnover with Russian Federation, other EEU countries and the European Union. The forthcoming opening of the major infrastructure projects such as North-South highway corridor will make Armenia the shortest transit route connecting Persian Gulf to the Black Sea ports. Moreover, the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement opens new opportunities for the economic activities not only for the Armenian but also European business community.

Due to the development of productive cooperation in different directions Armenia may serve as a bridge between EEU and other economic blocs- the European Union, countries, associated with it, also with Iran and countries of Near East.

Mr. Chairman,

Agenda 2030 reconfirms that unilateral economic measures are detrimental to sustainable development. The Agenda includes a Goal aiming to reduce inequalities of all kinds, within and between countries which will directly contribute to the enhancement of productive cooperation and regional development. We believe that unimpeded contacts and open borders, a free movement of goods and services, as well as equal, inclusive and non-discriminatory regional cooperation are the main prerequisites for the development of the economic connectivity.

Thank you for your kind attention.