

RESOLUTION
of the International Conference
“Prospects of Development of Transport and Transit
in Central Asia and the Caspian Region”

Participants in the Conference organised by the Government of Turkmenistan in conjunction with the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and in collaboration with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN OHRLLS), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Inter-governmental Commission of the Transport Corridor Europe – Caucasus – Asia (TRACECA),

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the initiatives that the President of Turkmenistan, His Excellency Mr Gourbanguly Berdymoukhamedov presented in his statement at the 66th General Assembly of the United Nations (September 2011, New York, U.S.A.), which pertain to the development of the transit-transport potential between the Caspian and Black Seas and between Central Asia and the Middle East;

ACTING IN PURSUANCE of the goals set in the UN Millennium Declaration and the Almaty Program of Action adopted on 29 August 2003 at the International Ministerial Conference of landlocked developing countries, transit developing countries and representatives of the donor community, devoted to cooperation in the area of transit carriages;

APPRECIATING HIGHLY the transport and transit potential that Central Asia and the Caspian region hold for the development of transport links between Asia, Europe and the Middle East due to their strategic position in the centre of the Eurasian continent;

RECOGNISING the necessity to revive, on a new technological basis in the 21st century, the Great Silk Road with the aim to foster the development of trade and tourism and to set the stage for unhindered freight transportation across the vast expanse from China to the European Union and the Persian Gulf countries;

MAINTAINING that efficient, secure and environmentally friendly transport links along the New Silk Road should be supported by bringing national legislations closer to the provisions of international transport agreements and conventions, by simplification and harmonisation of transport, customs and other border crossing procedures, above all in transit operations, and by coordinated development of the main and ancillary transport infrastructure;

GUIDED by the provisions of the most important resolutions adopted earlier with regard to developing the transit-transport potential of Central Asia and the Caspian region, which include, inter alia:

- The TRACECA Brussels Declaration of 7 May 1993;
- The Baku Declaration of the 1998 TRACECA International Conference for Revival of the Historic Silk Road;
- The 2003 Declaration on cooperation in the area of transit haulage adopted at the Almaty International Ministerial Conference of developing land-locked countries, developing transit countries and donor countries, and representatives of international institutions dealing with financial matters and development;
- Joint statement on future development of Euro-Asian transport links, adopted at the Meeting of Ministers of Transport of the Euro-Asian region (19-21 February 2008, Geneva, Switzerland);
- Declaration of the 6th IRU Euro-Asian Road Transport Conference and the related Declaration of Ministers (16-17 June 2011, Tbilisi, Georgia);

- Joint statement on the results of the Coordination Meeting between the Heads of International Organisations and Financial Institutions on the future development of Euro-Asian transport links (16 June 2011, Tbilisi, Georgia);
- Regional action programme, phase II (2012-2016), of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, adopted at the Transport Ministers' Conference of the UNESCAP member countries (15-16 March 2012, Bangkok, Thailand);
- Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) initiated by the UN General Assembly Resolution 64/255;

RECALLING the General Assembly resolution 66/214 in which it was decided to hold a comprehensive ten-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014 and requested the United Nations system organisations and relevant international and regional organisations, within their respective mandates, to provide necessary support and actively contribute to the preparatory review process and the comprehensive ten-year review conference itself;

CONVINCED that road transport and development of multimodal and intermodal communications on the Caspian Sea, along with application of modern techniques and technologies, will allow road transport to drive progress, prosperity and ultimately peace and stability by making it possible for land-locked countries to gain access to world markets, enhance the competitive ability of national manufactures and create new jobs, thereby contributing appreciably to the development of national economies;

ATTACHING exceptionally great importance to the facilitation of international road transport, including harmonisation and simplification of border crossing procedures and the necessity to follow, in this connection, provisions of the Handbook of Best Practice at Border Crossings – A Trade and Transport Facilitation Perspective, produced by the OSCE and UNECE and published in 2012;

GRATEFUL to international inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations for their contribution to the realisation of the transit-transport potential of Central Asia and the Caspian region, including the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN OHRLLS) and also the UN regional commissions for Europe (UNECE) and for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the UN Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the TRACECA Inter-Governmental Commission, the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC), the Organisation for Democracy and Economic Development - GUAM, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and its Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation programme (CAREC), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the International Road Transport Union (IRU), and also the European Commission and other international organisations, financial institutions and development banks; and

EMPHASISING the particular importance of using the public-private partnership mechanism in creating an efficiently competitive transport sector, wherein stakeholder governments, international organisations, financial institutions and the business community have to be involved,

recommend hereby the following strategy for the realisation of the transit-transport potential of Central Asia and the Caspian region, and the creation of a New Silk Road:

1. Steady and integrated development of transport and ancillary infrastructures required to support international road transportation along the Asia–Europe and Asia – the Middle East routes, which include:

- motorways intended for speed road transport traffic and meeting the standards of the 1975 European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) and the 2004 Inter-Governmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network (AH);
- sea ports of the Caspian Sea, including appropriate terminals for multimodal and intermodal (complete with ferry services) road transport operations;
- modern and safe ancillary infrastructure facilities along the roads, including rest and accommodation services, petrol stations, motels/camping sites, border crossing points; and
- logistic centers in major transport hubs that make it possible to concentrate and redistribute freight traffic among various modes of transport to provide for their rational interaction along the routes of the New Silk Road.

2. Facilitation of international road transport and border crossing procedures on the basis of:

- introduction at national level of a Handbook of best practice at border crossings drawn up by the OSCE and the UNECE;
- accession to the UN international trade and road transport facilitation agreements and conventions and their effective application at national level;

measures to provide for permit-free transit road transport and step-by-step liberalisation of permit systems in bilateral road transport operations, according to the provision of Article 5 of the GATT, which calls for the freedom of movement through a territory to be assured for goods. Such traffic must be allowed to move via the most convenient route; is to be exempt from customs or transit duties; and is to be free from unnecessary delays or restrictions.

- enhanced participation in multilateral and regional agreements in the area of international road transport to drive economic growth;
- Accession to the Basic Multilateral Agreement on International Transport for Development of the Europe - the Caucasus - Asia Corridor on September 8, 1998
- application of efficient systems of customs transit, such as the 1975 TIR Convention and its current electronic instruments;
- introduction of modern navigation and satellite technologies in road transport, such as the electronic road maps, which makes it possible to increase the efficiency of road transport operations through rational route planning and to improve the drivers' work and rest times;
- simplification of visa procedures for professional drivers by extending the validity period of transit visas and expanding the practice of issuing professional drivers with multiple visas and visas at the borders; and
- further development of road-sea ferry crossings on the Caspian Sea, which includes, inter alia, commissioning new lines and creating, on the basis of one of the regional international organisations, a mechanism for monitoring and developing intermodal transportation on the Caspian Sea.

3. Measures of institutional nature at multilateral level to:

- consistently implement all measures recorded in the Almaty Program of Action and contribute towards the preparation of the Comprehensive Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action;

- expand multilateral cooperation and coordination of efforts by international organisations and financial institutions in the development of transport links along the New Silk Road connecting Asia, the Middle East and Europe via Central Asia and the Caspian region;
- carry out special research on the transport and transit opportunities along the routes between the Caspian and Black Seas, Central Asia and the Middle East with the aim to promote the initiative of the President of Turkmenistan to draw up a Special UN Program; presentation of the results of the above mentioned research at one of the UN events conducted within the preparation for the International Conference to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Almaty Program of Action;
- implement measures to open a road-sea ferry line between Turkmenbashi and Baku with a regular operation schedule, which should make it possible to considerably reduce the time span of transport between the European and Asian countries across Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan thereby attracting additional freight traffic to this section of the New Silk Road; and
- create, within the framework of one of the international organisations, a Working Group on transport and transit development in Central Asia and the Caspian region.

4. Enhancing investment attractiveness along the routes of the New Silk Road by means of:

- fostering an influx of resources from international financial institutions and development banks to support the implementation of national projects for the development of transport infrastructures along the routes of the New Silk Road;
- supporting at national and multilateral levels the promising and efficient projects that are directed towards the development of main and ancillary road infrastructure, including those within the framework of the Model Highway Initiative (MHI);
- wider application of the leverage of a public-private partnership, including also by formation of investment funds, banking pools and contractor companies' consortiums to carry out projects for the modernisation and further development of main and ancillary infrastructures.

The participants express their gratitude to the President and the Government of Turkmenistan for their efforts in the realisation of the transport and transit potential of the Central Asian and Caspian regions and in organising this Conference, as well as for the warm and friendly welcome extended to the participants.

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