

**Statement of the Secretary General H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri
at the Conference on Sustainable Transport:
Contribution to Sustainable Development
on the occasion of World Sustainable Transport Day
26 November 2023, Ashgabat**

**Mr. Azat Atamuradov, Honorable Chairman of the Turkmenemiryollary Agency (Turkmen Railways),
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great privilege for me to virtually attend and address this magnificent gathering.

Felicitating the Government of Turkmenistan for hosting this very important Conference, I convey my special appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Azat Atamuradov, the Honourable Chairman of the Railways of Turkmenistan who has kindly invited me to the event.

I acknowledge the significance of declaring November 26 as the “World Sustainable Transport Day” which is dedicated to raise global awareness and highlight the vital role of transport for sustainability and growth of our societies. In this regard, I would also like to commend the invaluable role and contribution of Turkmenistan to the evolution of diplomacy and literature on transport and connectivity.

The place of transport and connectivity on global development agendas remains centrally important, not only for supporting trade and economic activities, but also for an overall and inclusively covered sustainable development economic growth of the societies.

Given the integrative nature and importance of connectivity, the sector is placed on top of the ECO’s agenda of regional cooperation. With this understanding, the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) has been pleased to proclaim 2022 as the “Year of Strengthening Connectivity” and 2023 as the “Year of Green Transition and Interconnectivity” for sustainable progress and development in the region.

Distinguished Participants,

As an intergovernmental forum, the Economic Cooperation Organization has successfully entered the fourth decade of its existence and expansion, bearing ten member countries under its cooperative umbrella, including seven Central Asian and Caucasian landlocked countries.

ECO’s connectivity targets are vivid and in line with the aspirations of our people and the leadership. To achieve this end, we have adopted a holistic approach following a variety of regional and international policy, procedural and legal

guidelines with a view to supporting the regional connectivity process through infrastructural development, capacity-building, technical cooperation & coordination mechanisms.

Progressing towards enhanced connectivity, we have been able to implement various programs and projects for developing sustainable modes of transportation, including through rail, road, air and maritime connectivity in the region.

Some of our important and successfully implemented connectivity projects are: Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridor, Almaty-Bandar Abbas Rail Corridor, Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran (KTI) Rail Corridor and the extension of Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul Rail and Road Corridor to Europe.

In addition, the recently instituted Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Türkiye (KUTIT) and Tajikistan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Türkiye (TUTIT) Multimodal Corridors as well as the Azerbaijan-Iran-Nakhchivan Corridor will hopefully further contribute to the regional and international connectivity of our Member States.

ECO is also focused on providing our landlocked countries with strong intra-regional and inter-regional air linkages. Relevantly, the establishment of ECO Air Hubs in Samarkand and Gabala has been recently announced during the 12th Ministerial Meeting on Transport. This important development will augment our efforts for enhancing air connectivity in the region.

The Organization has also taken major steps in promotion of public-private partnership (PPP) through founding the ECO-TIR Associations Consultative Group (ECO-TIRACG) as well as setting up the ECO Freight Forwarders Associations (ECO-FFA) that will institutionalize involvement of the private sector in development of regional cooperation on transport and connectivity.

Distinguished Delegates,

Concluding my remarks, I once again congratulate you all to have this interactive opportunity that brings us together to discuss and deliberate this important subject of global connectivity.

I am confident that the constructive and productive outcomes of this event would be instrumentally advantageous to our common goal of promoting and consolidating greater global connectivity.

Thank you all with best wishes and regards
