



**Statement of the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri
at the First Meeting of the ECO-TIR National Associations
Consultative Group (ECO-TIRACG)
*2 October 2023, in virtual mode***

**Your Excellency Mr. Umberto de Pretto,
Secretary General of the International Road Transport Union,
Distinguished representatives of TIR Associations of ECO Member States,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I feel immensely pleased to participate and welcome you all to the First Meeting of ECO-TIR National Associations Consultative Group (ECO-TIRACG) and express my deep appreciation to the International Road Transport Union for co-organizing this important meeting and for its valuable support for the establishment of this Consultative Group.

The role of private sector in the development of transport connectivity cannot be overemphasised. We believe that the Consultative Group of ECO-TIR Issuing and Guaranteeing Associations will act as a much needed platform for a constructive public-private partnership and contribute to the achievement of the connectivity goals of the ECO in transport sector.

As a matter of fact, the establishment of the Consultative Group has been highly welcomed by the relevant stakeholders and eight Associations have already signed the Terms of Reference of the Group. We hope for the remaining two Associations to join the Group soon.

As rightly understood, transport connectivity is central not only for trade and economic growth but also for sustainable development of the countries and in particular our region. Without proper connectivity and transport infrastructure, we could not expect neither trade promotion nor sustainable development within our region and beyond and ensure our welfare and prosperity.

In this context, development of transport infrastructure remains one of the key pillars within the ECO framework. The regional cooperation in transport sector has resulted in remarkable achievements and progress in establishment of connectivity and considerable number of programs and projects have been implemented to enhance the trade and economic integration of its Member States

Distinguished participants,

The COVID-19 has highlighted the crucial role of the private sector operators especially the TIR Associations in maintaining sustainable supply chains during crisis situations. We hope that lessons learned during the pandemic will help us shape our strategies accordingly in order to be better prepared for such situations in future.

The Consultative Group is expected to develop a constructive relationship with the Member States and the ECO Secretariat through advisory assistance and sharing of expertise and best practices with the relevant bodies, notably the ECO Transit Transport Coordination Council on matters related to customs, international trade and transport in order to achieve the ultimate objective of ensuring a credible and uninterrupted transport connectivity throughout the region.

I am confident that outcome of the deliberations of this meeting will contribute to more effective cooperation towards sustainable transport and connectivity for our common membership and will also help us plan a better and prosperous future.

In the end, I would like to thank you all for your presence in today's gathering and extend my deep appreciation to H.E. Mr. Umberto de Pretto, the distinguished Secretary General of the International Road Transport Union and his entire team on the successful conduct of this important meeting.

Thank you for your attention.