

**Report of the 12th Meeting of the
Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of
Railway Committee of TTCC**
(Tehran, 17-18 May, 2015)

The 12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of Railway Committee of TTCC was held in Tehran on 17-18th May, 2015. All the ECO Member States except Uzbekistan participated in the Meeting. The delegations of the ECO, ECO-TDB, Islamic Development Bank (IDB), UNESCAP, OTIF, and UIC also attended the Meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex-I.

Agenda Item No.1
Inauguration of the Meeting

2. H.E. Dr. Abbas Akhoundi, Honourable Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran inaugurated the meeting and welcomed the delegations to Tehran and highlighted the important role of transport for sustainable development of the region. He mentioned that transit by rail being considered as a green means of transport with economic scale would be considered as an instrument for reaching lofty goals and objectives. He emphasized that strengthening rail transport network and its infrastructure in the ECO region will seriously be considered by the decision-makers of the Member States. A copy of the statement is attached as Annex-II.

3. The ECO Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Hayri Maraslioglu, warmly welcomed the distinguished delegates of the ECO Member States and delegates of UNESCAP, IDB, ECO-TDB, UIC and OTIF and appreciated their valuable participation. He also expressed his gratitude to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and particularly to Railway of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting this important event. He briefed the meeting about the established ECO Railway Corridors and hoped that this meeting will provide a platform to remove the obstacles being faced along these corridors for smooth functioning of the train and infrastructural development. A copy of his statement is attached as Annex III.

4. H.E. Dr. Mohsen Pour Seyed Aghaei, Vice Minister and President of Railways of Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI) in his opening remarks welcomed the distinguished guests and wished a fruitful meeting in Iran. He pointed out that regional and international cooperation has outstanding importance in the rail transport development and the ECO region with its unique geographical position and historical and cultural commonalities qualifies for becoming a major international economic hub. He touched upon the potential legacy of the region and urged the ECO Member States to actively participate in the activities of the railway transportation in order to minimize the physical and non-physical obstacles which are hampering the operation of the trains. He said that this meeting would provide a good opportunity to adopt vital decisions for defining a clear action plan for the development of rail transportation in the ECO region. A copy of the statement is attached as Annex-IV.

Agenda Item No. 2

Election of the Chairman

5. As per ECO Rules of Procedure, Dr. Mohsen Pour Seyed Aghaei, Vice Minister and President of the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran (RAI), was elected as the Chairman of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No. 3

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The Meeting adopted its Agenda as proposed by the ECO Secretariat. A copy of the adopted Agenda is attached as Annex-V.

Agenda Item No. 4

Appointment of the Drafting Committee

7. The meeting appointed an open-ended Drafting Committee for preparation of its report.

Agenda Item No.5

Statements/Country reports

8. The Heads of delegation of the ECO Member States delivered their statements and explained the ongoing latest projects through presentations/statements which are attached as Annex-VI.

9. The Representatives of UIC, Islamic Development Bank (IDB), ECO-TDB, OTIF and UNESCAP also delivered their statements/presentations which are attached as Annex VII.

Agenda Item No.6

Review of the decisions made in the previous Meeting and the implementation of Railway provisions of TTFA

10. The Meeting was briefed about the latest progress and implementation of decisions in the previous Meeting and the implementation of Railway related provisions of the TTFA.

11. The Meeting welcomed the accession of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to UIC and OSJD as well as accession of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Azerbaijan to COTIF.

Agenda Item No.7

Discussing the status and considering expeditious implementation of the ECO's activities/projects in the field of railway in the ECO region:

12. The Meeting reviewed the status of launching and implementation of the ECO's activities/projects for which the working groups have already been convened.

- i) **The ECO Container Train on Istanbul-Almaty route; and**
- ii) **The ECO Container Train on Bandar Abbas-Almaty Route**

13. The Meeting welcomed the decisions of the 1st Meeting of the HLWG of the ECO Container Trains on Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty Routes (Tehran, 2 - 3 March 2014) for taking measures to facilitate regular and smooth functioning of the Container Trains.

14. The Islamic Republic of Iran proposed to reduce the tariffs along these two routes and to consider unified tariff, for attracting the private sector to utilize these routes.

15. Kazakhstan highlighted the availability of considerable volume of cargo for transit along these two routes. He stated that these routes are the shortest routes for connecting Central Asian countries to Europe and open-seas. Kazakhstan also proposed to extend this route up to China with reduced tariff rates. A copy of his presentation is attached as Annex-VIII.

16. Turkey, while supporting in principle the proposal of Iran and Kazakhstan, stated that the situation shall be discussed internally to reduce the tariffs proposed by the enroute Member States and consider the unified tariff along these routes. It was also informed that Demiryolu Logistics Company based in Istanbul, is in process of making necessary actions for operation of train along this route but till now the situation has not concluded clearly.

17. Turkmenistan supported the idea of Kazakhstan regarding the extension of these routes up to China and stated that enroute Member States should reach a consensus on tariff issue in the Working Group Meeting.

18. The meeting welcomed the idea of Kazakhstan for extension of these routes up to China and also appreciated the proposal to reduce the tariff rates as well. The meeting decided to finalize the issue of unified tariff rates in High Level Working Group (HLWG) meeting scheduled to take place on 9th June, 2015 in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The meeting requested the enroute Member States to provide their proposal to the Secretariat regarding the unified tariff issue to be discussed during the HLWG meeting.

iii) The ECO Container Trains on Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul Route(ITI)

19. The Meeting welcomed the decision of the 8th HLWG on ITI train (Tehran, March 2014) to make the travel time 15, 5 days and that the enroute Member States have made revisions of the running time for their territories and the consolidated timetable has been circulated accordingly. The information on tariffs together with the fees for ferry boating, received from Turkey and the reduced tariff rates of Iran and the transshipment costs at Zahedan Station have been also circulated among the enroute countries.

20. Iran proposed to utilize this route for transportation of the Indian cargo to Europe. On this, Pakistan informed that the proposal should be sent to Pakistan through diplomatic channel which will be considered by the concerned authorities of Pakistan.

21. Pakistan delegation informed the meeting about the overall operations of the container train along this route and the status of implementation of the MoU signed between Great Anatolia Logistics Organization (BALO) and Pakistan Railway in December 2013. Pakistan requested the Republic of Turkey for confirmation of validity of intact agreement for launching

the regular operation of train. Turkey confirmed the content of the MoU signed between Pakistan and BALO.

22. Pakistan informed the meeting about its readiness to dispatch its train from Islamabad to Istanbul on 1st July 2015. The meeting also welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to convene the 9th HLWG meeting in July/August 2015. The exact date of the meeting will be communicated to the ECO Secretariat within two weeks.

iv) The Railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran(KTI)

23. The Meeting welcomed with satisfaction the inauguration of the railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran by honourable Presidents of the enroute Member States in December 2014.

24. Kazakhstan stated that this new railway has shortened the route and 1,110,000 tons of cargo has been transported on this route during 2014. He added that completion of discussions on technical specifications between Iran and Turkmenistan shall accelerate the operationalization of the route.

25. An informal trilateral meeting on KTI route was held in the ECO Secretariat on the sidelines of the 12th Meeting of Heads of ECO Railway Authorities. The meeting adopted the minutes of the Meeting which is attached as Annex-IX.

26. The meeting appreciated the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran for holding the Trilateral Meeting on KTI railway on 9th June 2015, which will be considered as High Level Working Group Meeting. The meeting requested the enroute Member States to provide the Secretariat with their technical specification of railway segment.

v) Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) Railway Project:

27. The Meeting took note of the decisions of the two High Level Working Group Meetings on the Project held in May and November 2013 in Baku and Rasht and the organized field visits of delegations to the construction site of Qazvin-Rasht railway segment of Iran.

28. Azerbaijan and Iran briefed the meeting on the latest status of implementation of their progress in the respective territories. Iran informed that the infrastructure works on Qazvin – Rasht segment will be completed in this year. For Rasht-Astra segment, the Feasibility Study has been completed and negotiation for financing of this segment is underway with the Russian Federation. He stated that other funding institutions especially IDB will be approached for financing of this segment.

29. The next meeting of the High Level Working Group will be coordinated with the enroute Member States. The meeting requested the enroute Member States to provide the latest progress report on the respective railway project to the Secretariat every three months.

vi) **Railway connecting China and Europe via Kyrgyz-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI)**

30. It was informed by the Meeting that Feasibility Study on Tajikistan has been completed by the Iranian Engineering Company (METRA). The Feasibility Study on the territory of Kyrgyzstan is being undertaken.

31. Afghanistan updated the meeting on the ongoing feasibility study conducted by CANARAIL International Company. Besides he mentioned that the study provides cargo traffic forecast and includes a gauge study element which is all funded by ADB. He added that there is potential of up to 40 million ton two way trade transit possibility on this route connecting China to Europe.

32. Kazakhstan briefed the meeting about a Feasibility Study which has been undertaken in the territories of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Kazakhstan suggested to be included in this route. Kyrgyzstan supported the proposal of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

33. As per the decision taken by the enroute Member States, the standard gauge would be utilized for this project. The Meeting requested Kazakhstan to submit its proposal for construction of new rail road with a standard gauge to the Secretariat for onward consideration of the enroute Member States. The Kyrgyz Republic may also convey its views for construction of Standard-gauge Railway connecting China and Europe via Kyrgyz-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran.

34. The Meeting decided unanimously that the ECO Secretariat will continue to coordinate all issues pertaining to the corridor to fulfill its function as mandated by the Ministers. The meeting also requested the Secretariat to follow all necessary coordination with China on behalf of enroute Member States.

35. The meeting was informed by Tajikistan that the dates and venue for holding the ECO Ministerial Meeting on KTAI Railway preceded by Senior Officials' meeting will be conveyed to the Secretariat within two weeks.

Agenda Item No. 8

Measures for implementation of prioritized infrastructure projects under ECO Railway Network Development Plan: Ways and means of promoting the regional partnership for implementation of the "ECO Railway Network Development Plan"

36. The representatives from the Islamic Development Bank and ECO Trade and Development Bank delivered their presentations, covering the main activities and functions of their institutions. Copies of their presentations are attached as Annex-X.

37. Subsequently, a brainstorming session was held and discussed the ways and means of promoting the regional partnership for implementation of the "ECO Railway Network Development Plan".

38. The ECO-TDB informed the meeting that the dates for organizing the Regional Partnership Forum and status of establishment of Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) as reflected in the 4th Meeting of ECO Ministers of Finance and Economy held in Astana to assist

development projects in ECO region, including ECO Rail and Road Network Programme, will be conveyed to the Secretariat within two weeks. Once the information is received from ECO-TDB, the Secretariat will communicate with the IDB to consider its involvement in the Regional Partnership Forum and Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF).

Agenda Item No.9

Status of cooperation with international and regional organizations

39. The representative of the ECO Secretariat briefed the meeting on the status of cooperation with international and regional organizations and joint events which have been organized since the last meeting.

40. The Meeting took note with satisfaction of the organization of the OTIF/UIC/ECO Conference on COTIF (Tehran, 11-12 November 2014) and the recommendations of the Conference. The Meeting recommended organizing such events regularly in the region in line with the MoU signed between ECO and UIC and ECO and OTIF.

41. The meeting appreciated OTIF for presenting the outcome of the study on railway facilitation aimed at identifying and analyzing the legal obstacles for removing physical and non-physical barriers impeding seamless international railway freight traffic. Copy of the presentation is attached as Annex-XI.

42. The Meeting, while appreciating the continuous support of IDB, welcomed its decision to commence the Customs Component “preparation of a new regional program for customs transit and modernization of border crossing points in the region” of TTFA, as envisaged in the ECO/IDB Joint Project for implementation of TTFA.

43. The meeting was informed by the IDB and UNESCAP of the possibility of the renewal of the MoU earlier signed in 2009 with the ECO, IDB and UNESCAP subject to the completion of legal formalities by these institutions.

Agenda Item No.10

Finalization of the revised ECO Railway Transit Routes Map

44. The Meeting considered the revised map of ECO Member Countries Transit Railways. The new map was also unveiled by Honourable Minister of Roads and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Heads of the participating delegations.

45. The Meeting, unanimously, adopted and approved the map of ECO Member Countries Transit Railways. Accordingly, the Meeting asked the Secretariat to publish the map for public distribution.

Agenda Item No. 11

Any other business

46. Afghanistan, while appreciating Iran for organizing the training course for Afghan Railway staff, requested the Member States and International Organizations to support

Afghanistan Railway Authority (AfRA) in organizing capacity building programmes and conducting comprehensive technical training courses for Afghanistan Railways staff. The proposal was welcomed by the chairman and recommended possible assistance in this regard.

47. The meeting took note of the proposal of Azerbaijan to host a meeting under “ECO Transit Transport for attracting more cargo from enroute members” with the participation of interested Member States on 4-5 August 2015 in Baku. However, the meeting requested Azerbaijan to communicate the detailed information to the Secretariat for onward transmission to the ECO Member States.

Agenda Item No.12

Dates and Venue of the next Meeting

48. The Meeting requested the interested Member States to convey the exact date and venue for hosting the 13th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/7th Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC Meeting to the Secretariat.

Agenda Item No.13

Adoption of the Report

49. Under this agenda item, the Meeting adopted its Report.

Agenda Item No.14

Vote of thanks and closing of the Meeting

50. Under this item, the Heads of delegations offered their vote of Thanks to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in particular His Excellency Mr. Mohsen Pour Seyed Aghaei, Vice Minister for Roads and Urban Development and Chairman of the Board and RAI President as well as the ECO Secretariat for successful organization of the Meeting.

51. The Chairman announced the closing of the Meeting.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of
Railway Committee of TTCC
(Tehran, 17-18 May 2015)

No	Country	Names	Position
1.	Afghanistan	H.E. Mr. Mohammad Yamma Shams	Director General of Afghanistan Railway Authority (AfRA)
2.		Mr. Ahmad Edris Angar	Deputy Director of Capacity Building Promotion Program, Ministry of Public Works.
3.	Azerbaijan	Mr. Fizuli Guliev	Director, Department of Infrastructure, Azerbaijan Railways
4.		Mr. Ali Qasimov	Head of Section for Transport Policy, Ministry of Transport.
5.	Iran	H.E. Dr. Abbas Akhoundi	Minister of Roads and Urban Development
6.		H.E. Dr. Mohsen Pourseyed Aghaei	Vice Minister for Roads and Urban Development, RAI President
7.		Mr. Hossein Ashoori	Vice President, Operation and Movement, RAI
8.		Mr. Abbas Nazari	Director General, International Affairs, RAI
9.		Mr. Vahid Ali Ghardashi	Director General, Engineering and Supervision over Fleet, RAI
10.		Mr. Khosro Rashidi	Director General, Way and Works, RAI
11.		Mr. Sadegh Sakari	Director General, Public Relation, RAI
12.		Mr. Mostafa Davoodi	Director General, Southeast, RAI
13.		Mr. Mohammad hadi Ziaee Mehr	Director General, Khorrasan Railway, RAI
14.		Mr. Mohammad Reza Ghorbani	Director General, North East Railway, RAI
15.		Mr. Ibrahim Mohammadi	Director General, Movement, RAI
16.		Mr. Hassan Jamali	Deputy Director General, International Affairs, RAI
17.		Mr. Morteza Ahmadi	Director General, Commerce and Marketing, RAI
18.		Mr. Hossein Malaek	Director General, International Affairs and Engineering and Technical Services Export, Ministry of Roads and Urban Development,
19.	Mr. Gholamreza Najafi	Deputy Director General, Commerce and Marketing, RAI	
20.	Ms. Mozghan Kordbacheh	Head of International Organizations, International Affairs, RAI	

21.		Mr. Ayoub Nourmohammadi	Senior Expert, International Affairs, RAI
22.		Ms. Fatemeh Hamzeh Ali	Senior Expert, International Affairs, RAI
23.		Mr. Mehdi Torabi	Expert, International Affairs, RAI
24.		Mr. Ahmad Safari	Deputy, ECO Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
25.		Mr. Abolfazl Azizipanah	Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
26.		Mr. Alireza Zolfaghari	Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
27.		Mr. Teimour Bashir Gonbadi	Expert, Ministry of Roads and Urban Development,
28.		Mr. Ali Moradi	Expert, Ministry of Roads and Urban Development
29.	Kazakhstan	H.E. Mr. Bauyrzhan Urynbassarov	Vice President, Kazakhstan Temir Zholu (KTZ), JSC
30.		Mr. Nurlan Kenzhebekov	Head, Representative Office of KTZ for Central Asia
31.		Mr. Rakhmetolla Kydaibergenov	Deputy Director, Board of Directors for Integrated Planning, Affiliated body to KTZ.
32.		Mr. Nurzhan Tursunbekov	Head of Representative Office of KTZ for Turkmenistan, Iran and Caucasus.
33.		Mr. Danyar Zhamiev	Director, Directorate of Transportation Process, Affiliated Body to KTZ
34.		Mr. Nurbolat Kulmaganbetov	Chief Manager, Wagon Entities Department, KTZ
35.		Mr. Mr. Amanbay Aitzhanov	Chief Engineer “Kaztemirtrans”
36.	The Kyrgyz Republic	Mr. Zhanybek Kasykenov	Chief Specialist of the Road and Rail Transport, Department of Ministry of Transport and Communications.
37.		Mr. Nurzair Kongurbaev	Chief Specialist of the Foreign Relations Department, Ministry of Transport and Communications.
38.	Pakistan	H.E.Ms. Parveen Agha	Secretary/Chairperson, Ministry of Railways.
39.		Mr. Anjum Perwaiz	Adviser to Federal Minister for Railways.
40.	Tajikistan	H.E. Mr. Usmonkul Kalandarov	Deputy Chairman, Tajik Railways
41.		Mr. Ismaildzhon Ismoilov	Head of International Department.
42.	Turkey	H.E. Mr. Ismail Murtazaoglu	Deputy Director General of TCDD
43.		Mr. Bilgin Recep Bekem	Head of Department, General Directorate of Railways Regulations, Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs & Communications.

44.		Mr. Bekir Keskin	Officer in Freight Department of TCDD
45.		Mr. Karaman	TCDD
46.	Turkmenistan	H.E. Mr. Begench Geldiyev	Deputy Minister, Turkmenistan Railway
47.		Mr. Mekan Dadyyev	Deputy Head of Financial Department of Turkmenistan Railway.
48.	ECO Secretariat	H.E. Mr. Maraslioglu Hayri	Deputy Secretary General
49.		Mr. Mohsen Esperri	Director (Transport & Communications)
50.		Ms. Zukhra Abisheva	Programme Officer
51.		Ms. Fereshteh Khorsandnia	Programme Officer
52.		Mr. Israr Ahmad Khan	Steno-Secretary
53.		Mr. Shafqat Amir	Steno-Secretary
54.	IDB	Mr. Atiq Ahmad	Senior Transport Specialist of Transport Division.
55.		Mr. Mohammad Mirzaei Kahagh	Senior Partnership Specialist, Cooperation and Integration Department.
56.	ECO-TDB	Mr. Shahzad Cheema	Director, Corporate and Project Financing
57.		Mr. Masoud Rekabdar	Chief Representative of ETDB Office, Tehran
58.	UNESCAP	Mr. Pierre Henri Jean Chartier	Officer-in-Charge, a.i. Transport Infrastructure Section of Transport Division.
59.		Mr. Jeongsu Park	Railway Expert, Transport Division.
60.	UIC	H.E. Mr. Jean Pierre Loubinoux	Director General
61.	OTIF	Mr. Carlos Tomas del Olmo Morand	Head of Legal Service.
62.		Ms. Sarah Pujol	Head of Communication

باسمه تعالی

**متن سخنرانی مقام عالی وزارت راه و شهرسازی
در مراسم افتتاحیه دوازدهمین نشست رؤسای راه آهن های اکو
۲۷ اردیبهشت ماه ۱۳۹۴ دبیرخانه اکو- تهران**

جناب آقای دبیرکل،

وزرای محترم راه آهن ها، رؤسای محترم هیأت های شرکت کننده،

خانمها و آقایان؛

در ابتدا مایلم از شما بزرگواران به خاطر مشارکت در برگزاری دوازدهمین نشست رؤسای راه آهن های اکو تشکر و قدردانی نمایم. همچنین از تشریک مساعی دبیرخانه اکو و مسئولان محترم آن که برای برگزاری مطلوب و ثمربخش این رویداد مساعدت لازم را به همکاران من ابراز داشته‌اند، سپاسگزارم.

خانمها و آقایان؛

منطقه اکو دارای گستره وسیعی از نظر وسعت بالغ بر ۸ میلیون کیلومتر مربع و سهم ۵/۳ درصدی در جغرافیای جهان و با جمعیتی بالغ بر ۴۴۰ میلیون نفر و سهم ۶/۲ درصدی از جمعیت جهان می باشد، اما سهم آن در تجارت بین المللی به این اندازه نیست. سهم اکو در تجارت جهان تنها ۳ درصد و بالغ بر ۸۰۰ میلیارد دلار است که از این میزان فقط حدود ۰۷۵ میلیارد دلار آن تجارت فیما بین این کشورهاست. این سهم کم، نشان دهنده این است که زیربنایها و ساختارهای لازم برای گسترش شتابان ترانزیت در این منطقه که جریان تجارت درون منطقه ای و بین المللی را هموار نماید کافی و مطلوب نیست که باید بطور جدی در اولویت تصمیم گیری قرار گیرد.

در این میان اهمیت و جایگاه حمل و نقل در رونق تجارت و بازرگانی انکار ناپذیر است و بر همین منوال جایگاه حمل و نقل ریلی در حمل و نقل سبز، مقرون به صرفه، کارآمد، قابل اعتماد و در دسترس همگان به عنوان یکی از راهکارهای حصول به اهداف توسعه پایدار برکسی پوشیده نیست. و همه ما با این پیشفرض در اینجا گرد هم آمده‌ایم که توسعه حمل و نقل ریلی برای هیچ لحظه‌ای نبایستی از دستورکار دست‌اندرکاران و تصمیم‌سازان حوزه حمل و نقل خارج گردد. به ویژه این امر در منطقه وسیع جغرافیایی اقتصادی اکو بیشتر مبرهن است.

همکاران محترم:

سهم حمل و نقل ریلی در میان کشورهای عضو اکو چندان قابل توجه نیست. به لحاظ سنتی و نیز تبعیت از محدودیت های جغرافیایی اعم از محصور بودن اغلب کشورهای عضو در خشکی، حمل و نقل جاده ای، شیوه

غالب حمل و نقل و ترانزیت در منطقه اکو باقی مانده است. اگر چه موقعیت کشورهای عضو اکو برای اتصال شرق به غرب، اروپا به آسیا و اتصال نقاط مهم مراکز جمعیتی، تولیدی و مصرفی، از نظر حمل و نقلی موقعیت ویژه ای است و امکان سرمایه گذاریهای دولتی و مشارکت بیشتر بخش خصوص در تقویت زیربنای ریلی اقتصادی و توجه پذیر است. اما سهم اکو از سرمایه گذاری عظیم مستقیم خارجی در جهان فقط قریب ۳ درصد بوده است. از اینرو حرکت ما به سمت جذب سرمایه گذاری برای تقویت حمل و نقل ریلی بایستی سرعت بیشتری به خود بگیرد.

در این میان موارد ذیر را خدمت سروران اشاره می کنیم:

۱. افتتاح خط آهن ایران- ترکمنستان- قزاقستان موسوم به خط آهن شرق دریای خزر در اواخر سال ۲۰۱۴ توسط رؤسای محترم جمهور سه کشور رویداد بزرگی در منطقه و نویدبخش رونق تجارت و ترانزیت و تسهیل عبور کالا در مسیر شمال- جنوب برای کشورهای آسیای میانه به خلیج فارس و دسترسی به آبهای آزاد و همچنین اتصال آسیا به اروپاست خواهد شد. بهره برداری کامل از این مسیر مستلزم توافق کشورهای مسیر روی تنظیم نظام تعرفه های یکسان، کاهش تعرفه ها، رفع موانع سخت افزاری و فیزیکی و راه اندازی قطارهای برنامه ای است. امید است هدف این پروژه یعنی انتقال سالانه ۲۰ میلیون تن بار در افق بلندمدت با برنامه ریزی مطلوب و عالمانه کشورهای مسیر برای رفع موانع سخت افزاری و نرم افزاری محقق گردد.
۲. رفع حلقه های مفقود ریلی در مسیر کریدور شمال- جنوب در قلمرو ایران، آذربایجان و ترکیه که اتصال شبکه های ریلی منطقه را بیش از پیش تقویت خواهد کرد.
۳. تقویت اتصالات ریلی اکو در مسیرهای استانبول- آلماتی و آلماتی- بندرعباس، اسلام آباد- تهران- استانبول و برنامه ریزی برای تسریع در احداث پروژه حائز اهمیت ریلی قرقیزستان- تاجیکستان- افغانستان- ایران که بیش از هر چیز نیازمند اجماع نظر روی این است که حمل و نقل ریلی دورنمای توسعه پایدار در کشورهای منطقه اکو را روشن و هرگونه اقدام سیاستگذارانه برای یکدست کردن مقررات، یکسان سازی و کاهش تعرفه و هماهنگی برنامه های ریلی کشورهای عضو در راه اندازی قطارهای برنامه ای بدون هیچ شائبه ای رفاه و امنیت جمعی مردم منطقه اکو را به ارمغان خواهد آورد.
۴. و در پایان تلاش برای طراحی مکانیسم های مناسب جذب سرمایه گذاری خارجی و استفاده از ظرفیتهای نهادهای مالی و شرکتهای سرمایه گذار بین المللی و جذب مشارکت بیشتر بخش خصوصی برای تأمین مالی تکمیل زیربنای حمل و نقل

آرزومندم پایان بخش مذاکرات هیئت ها در این دو روز، اتخاذ تصمیمات اجرایی مفید برای توسعه و عملیاتی کردن قطارها در مسیرهای کریدورهای حمل و نقل ریلی بوده و نمایشگاه دستاوردها و صنایع ریلی ایران نیز برای شما پرثمر باشد. **باتشکر**

STATEMENT OF
H.E. DR. ABBAS AKHOUNDI, HONOURABLE MINISTER OF ROADS AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Your Excellency Secretary General
Honourable Heads of Railway Organizations
Honourable Heads of Participating Delegations

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset I wish to thank you dignitaries for your contributions in organizing the 12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of Railway Committee of TTCC. I also express my sincere gratitude to the Secretariat of ECO and its distinguished officials for excellent arrangements they provided to my colleagues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

ECO Region expands over 8 million square kilometers and has a share of 5.2 in the world geography with a population of 440 millions and a share of 6.2 in the world population. However, ECO's share in the world trade is not as considerable as that. The share of ECO in the world trade is only in the neighbourhood of 3% which amounts to roughly US\$800 billion out of which only US\$ 50 billion is for intra-regional trade. This low share signifies the fact that the necessary infrastructures for accelerated expansion of transit in this region and for paving the ground to foster intra and trans-regional trade are not favourable.

Admittedly, the importance and position of trade in prosperity of trade and business is undeniable and that is why everyone admits the position of rail transport in the green, economical, efficient, reliable and publicly accessible transport as one of the strategies to achieve sustainable development goals. We have gathered here with the assumption that railway transport development must not be removed from the agenda of decision-makers and stakeholders of transport. This is particularly more prominent for vast economic ECO Region.

Honourable Colleagues,

The share of rail transport is not satisfactory enough. Tradition wise and due to some geographical limitations such as being landlocked for most of ECO Member States, road transport has remained to be a dominant mode of transport. Although ECO Member States enjoy special locations to connect East to West, Europe to Asia as well as to link important points of population.

Production and consumption of the world, and although it is economically justifiable to make public investment and have more private sector partnership in strengthening rail infrastructure, the share of ECO in world foreign direct investment is only roughly 3%. Therefore our transition toward investment attraction for strengthening rail transport need to be accelerated.

In this regard I wish to draw your kind attention to the following:

- i) Iran-Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan railway known as East Caspian Sea Railway was inaugurated by the honourable Presidents of the 3 countries and was a landmark in the region which was also a herald to flourish trade, transit and facilitation in passage of goods in North-South route for connecting Central Asian countries to Persian Gulf countries and open waters. In order to fully utilize this route, the enroute countries need to have concurrence on formulation of unified transit system, reduction of tariff, removal of hardware and physical barriers and regular operation of trains. It is hoped that we could realize the goal of this project which is the carriage of annually 20 million tons of cargo in the long-run through favourable hardware and software barriers.
- ii) Removal of missing rail links in North-South corridor in the territory of Iran, Azerbaijan and Turkey will further strengthen the linkage of rail networks of the region.
- iii) Consolidation of rail connections on the routes Istanbul-Almaty and Almaty-Bandar Abbas, Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul and planning to expedite the construction of the important rail project of Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran require countries to acknowledge that rail transport will cast light on the future of sustainable development in ECO Region and any policy making measure to unify regulation, harmonize and reduce tariffs and coordinate train timetable in ECO region will bring about welfare and security for the citizens of the region.
- iv) And finally making efforts to devise mechanisms to attract foreign investments and tapping into the capacities of financial institutions and international investing companies as well as encouraging further participation of private sector to finance the construction of transport infrastructures.

I wish that the outcomes of your deliberation in these two days could be useful for developing rail transport corridors.

**Statement by Deputy Secretary General
at the 12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th meeting of Railway
Committee of TTCC
(Tehran, 17-18 May 2015)**

**Your Excellency,
Dr. Abbas Akhondi, Honourable Minister of Roads and Urban Development of the
Islamic Republic of Iran,
Honourable Heads of Delegations**

**Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a great privilege for me to extend a warm welcome to all of you in this 12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of Railway Committee of TTCC. I wish to express my sincere thanks to Islamic Republic of Iran and particularly to His Excellency Dr. Abbas Akhondi, Honourable Minister of Roads and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran and H.E. Dr. Mohsen Pour Seyed Aghaei, President of Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting this important Meeting. I thank the Heads of Railway Administrations and delegates of the ECO Member States for their valuable participation. I also appreciate distinguished delegates of UNESCAP, IDB, ECO-TDB, UIC and OTIF for attending today's meeting.

Such good level of participation specifically from the Member States, is a promising sign, indicating the possibility of pooling the collective wisdom of railway policy makers and coming up with substantial decisions with regard to better advancement of our rail related corridors or projects. I have confident hope that through your vision and guidance, the goal of development of the ECO region through transport means will be pushed ahead and the very rich potentials of our region shall be better tapped.

Excellencies,

Guided by the goals of ECO which places “promotion of conditions for sustainable economic development and expansion of intra and inter-regional trade”, as its top priority, I am pleased to state that the economic performance of ECO during the last years indicated steady development.

The total foreign trade of ECO region in 2012, consisting of trade of both merchandise and services estimated to 1,111 billion US\$. Gross volumes of intra-

regional trade amongst ECO economies reached US\$ 66.6 bln. in 2012. This accounted to 7.3% of the combined regional trade. This positive trend proves inter alia the increasing role and instrumentality of transport sector which serves as both the facilitator and promoter of trade.

The transport sector deserves a strategically important niche amongst other priorities in ECO for the simple reasons that firstly its main objective is to provide connectivity and transportation services to over 433 million population of the region and secondly it has proved to provide ECO Member States with some best and most practical chances of regional cooperation, the recently North-South inaugurated Corridor of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran, being one example.

As concerns transportation, the overall length of railways in the region has expanded by 9.8 percent in 2012 compared to 2002. The overall cargo mass carried by regional railways increased by 36.2 percent compared to 2002. While Turkey and Kazakhstan staged regional heights in cargo transportation, most of other Member States in ECO region have registered good progress. In intra-regional trade within ECO, trade volumes between Iran and the neighboring Turkey reached US\$ 20 billion in 2012 and surpassed that figure thereafter.

Taking this occasion let me highlight the transport sector landmarks of ECO since the last meeting of ECO Heads of railways held in 2012 in Ankara:

Distinguished delegates,

Inauguration of the railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran in December 2014 with participation of the Honourable Presidents of the enroute countries completed the North-South corridor to connect the countries of Central Asia to the Persian Gulf. This long-aspired corridor provides better access, connectivity and broader development perspective to the region particularly our land-locked Member States, and serves the operationalization of Asian and inter- regional connections. We welcome this promising development and encourage the prompt completion of negotiations already going on all technical and operational matters so that the corridor may transform into a viable corridor along with other corridors.

Significant progress has been achieved on Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) railway, another ECO's major corridor developing project to connect the South Asia to the Northern Europe through Bandar Abbas-Baku-Moscow-Helsinki. The field visits organized in 2013 enabled becoming familiarized with the ongoing construction works at Qazvin-Rasht segment. The Missions of Finland, Norway and Russia in Iran were also invited to visit the construction site for their possible involvement to expedite the construction of Rasht-Astara segment

Tangible headway was made in the segments of the railway connecting China to Europe through the Kyrgyz-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI). Particularly, the

feasibility study in the Tajik segment was already completed. The Governments of Afghanistan and the Kyrgyz Republic are taking measures to conduct feasibility studies in their territories. The segment connecting Iran to Afghanistan in the territory of Iran has already completed.

Excellencies,

Let me also apprise of the latest status of the ECO Container trains on Istanbul-Almaty, Bandar Abbas-Almaty and Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) routes.

So far, 5882 TEU containers from different points of Turkey to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have been reported through Istanbul-Almaty route.

Noting the availability of sufficient cargo from China to Turkey, the coordinated actions by all enroute countries in this regard are expected to run the train in both directions thus uplifting the capacity of the train and extending the route towards China. We appreciate Turkey for its readiness to offer support to the private sector to materialize this issue and look forward to further information regarding technical and other arrangements, including the date of dispatching the train.

The High Level Working Group to coordinate Bandar Abbas-Almaty train took concrete decisions on the timetable, tariffs and other technical matters to regularize the train services along this route. We urge all interested parties of the enroute countries, notably, the private sectors, to join hands so that the route may start functioning based on availability of good amount of cargo from Bandar Abbas towards CIS countries. .

As regards Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) Container Train, I am pleased to state that through good will and understanding, enroute Member States have been able to take concrete steps to ease the resumption of the train. They have agreed on reduced and unified tariffs and also on reducing the running time up to 15,5 days in order to make the route economically more attractive for consignees. On the other side, application of common CIM consignment note has been agreed further to the accession of Pakistan to COTIF. Turkey is also taking measures to renew Van-Kapikoy segment and construct two ferry boats to increase the capacity of ITI.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you are aware, the corridor studies on rail and road components of the ECO/IDB Joint Project on implementation of TTFA culminated in preparation of the ECO Railway and ECO Road Network Development Plans which represent a valuable roadmap for the collective work to strengthen rail and road transit route. Here, I would like to express ECO's heartfelt appreciations to IDB for its uninterrupted support including the one recently provided to our Customs component of TTFA which will contribute to a regional program for modernization of ECO Members crossing borders. As concerns implementation of ECO Railway and ECO Road Network Development

Plans, ECO has provided a number of mandates calling for the assistance of ECO-TDB for convening a forum to look into possible ways and means of financing the implementation of the Plans. I am pleased to inform that the current meeting will provide a good opportunity to hear the esteemed delegation of ECO Trade and Development Bank regarding measures to organize a regional partnership forum to bring the feasible infrastructure projects to potential donors. It also provides the opportunity to learn from the experience and recommendations of IDB in this regard. I would invite all distinguished delegates to actively contribute their vision to the brainstorming session which shall follow the presentations to be made by ECO-TDB and IDB. We also appreciate and look forward to the valuable presentations which shall be made by UNESCAP, UIC and OTIF.

Excellencies, Last but not least, ECO is the product of our collective wisdom which has opted for regionalism as an instrument of maximizing our interests through cooperation, coordination and friendship. Accordingly, ECO Secretariat has been established by you to follow your decisions and facilitate their implementation. Utilizing this high level presence, I would urge us to act in consistency with the mandates you have provided to ECO Secretariat and support this facilitative coordination mechanism through following all related activities through ECO Secretariat.

At the end, I once again thank the Government and the Railways of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting this meeting in Tehran and I wish you all successful deliberations and a pleasant stay.

Thank you.

In the name of God

Welcome speech by H.E. Dr. Pour Seyed Aghaei

**12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities
17 May 2015, Tehran – Iran**

Esteemed ECO Secretary General, Heads, and delegations of railways and international organizations, and dear audience

I am very happy to see the railway community together and proud to host you at the 12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities. I would like to welcome the distinguished guests and wish you fruitful meetings and a pleasant stay.

Dear colleagues,

Regional and international cooperation has considerable importance in the rail transport development. The ECO region with its unique geographical position and historical and cultural commonalities is capable of becoming a major international economic hub. This region is located in the heart of the north-south and east-west corridors and is one of the most strategic areas in the world and a linking point of Asia to Middle-East and Europe. This region with a population of 433 million people, an area of 8 million square km, and direct access to the international waters has a huge potential for rail transport development.

The total length of the ECO member railways is more than 54000 km, the freight carried in the ECO region per year amounted to 460 million tons and passenger carried was above 200 million people, and now we are facing and increasing demand for using the railway industry in the region.

Here I would like to refer in brief that currently the length of rail network of Iran is 10500 km, which is intended to construct 9500 km of new rail lines. Construction of some sections has been started which requires a huge budget, and the government is seeking foreign finance for this purpose. For development of transportation, one of our short-term programs by March 2017 is to raise the passenger transportation from the present 26 million up to about 40 million people, and to achieve this goal 700 passenger cars are needed; also to increase the tonnage from the present 33 million to 70 million tons, which requires 11000 freight cars. The plan is to reach 12.7 percent in passenger section and 17.5 percent increase in freight sector annually.

Offering discounts for development of rail transit is amongst the other programs. Currently, there are considerable discounts envisaged in the tariff systems, including 30% on cotton transit, 35% on transit Sulphur and 30% on the fertilizers transited towards the southern sea ports of the country, and in general we offer discount to all the transit goods. Also, special discounts have been considered for the containers transported from Turkey to Pakistan and vice-versa. In the same way our discount for cargos from or to Razi along east-west corridor amounts to 50%. Along with these, based on the negotiations made with the railway authorities of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan during the last year, it was agreed to increase the freight

transportation and to more goods to be transited from these countries via Iran. As a result of these measures and discount policy, Railways of Iran enjoyed 56% increase in its transit traffic last year and this figure reached 85% this year.

For this purpose, RAI intends to equip its port **in order to develop and facilitate the combined and transit transportation**. The transit capacity of Iran's ports in 2014 was 26 million tons. At the Persian Gulf in south of Iran we have 4 (four) ports namely Shahid Rajaei, Imam Khomeini, Khorramshahr and Bushehr. The port of Chabahar with suitable equipment and existing wharfs is also ready to accept different types of ships, and small / large vessels due to its strategic situation as the shortest access way to the high seas for the Central-Asian land-locked countries. Connection of this port to the rail network is one of the plans of RAI which is under process. So transportation of goods from the CIS countries via Iran to the Persian Gulf states is potential. 82% of our transit is made on Sarakhs – Bandar Abbas and vice-versa, which is the most active rail route on the north-south corridor. Freight cars run regularly from Bandar Abbas to Sarakhs towards Almaty and freight trains from Bandar Abbas to Amirabad at the Caspian Sea; the goods are carried as combined from there to the ports of Türkmenbaşy, Aktau and Astrakhan. Also via the ferry-boat wharf, which is under construction in Amirabad, the ferry-boats can move across the Caspian Sea. Therefore, the situation for rail transit from the CIS countries to the Persian Gulf states and vice-versa through Iran is quite suitable.

Here I would like to say that RAI is currently fulfilling numerous plans for development of lines and connection with the neighboring countries in the region, which are in line with the key regional and international corridors and considered as the projects of the ECO region, including connection with Afghanistan for completion of the corridor of Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and China, connection with Azerbaijan in the form of Qazvin – Rasht – Astara – Astara project to complete the missing link on the north-south corridor, or connection with Turkmenistan via Gorgan – Incheh Borun rail link for completion of the corridor of Iran – Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan which was opened in November 2014. Also, the rail link with Turkey through the border of Bazargan is under consideration as a new alternative. These projects have been approved by the international organization like, ESCAP, UIC and ECO. In the annual ECO RPC (Regional Planning Council) meetings the procedures for carrying out these projects are considered and the future activities are planned. The details of the projects will be delivered in the country report.

Furthermore, by execution of the "ECO TTFA (Transit Traffic Framework Agreement)" as well as the "Rail Network Development Plan" aiming at managing the corridors and fulfilling the TTFA, a serious step has been taken in order to promote the commercial relation between the member countries which will expedite the regional economic cooperation.

Fortunately we have joint cooperation with ECO to implement the railway infrastructure projects. Here I would like to say that in November 2014 a conference on COTIF with collaboration of OTIF and ECO was held with large participation of the railways of the region leading to a joint statement.

Dear colleagues,

There is a positive and promising landscape ahead of us, however for the goals to be realized we are facing certain challengers. The most important challenges include lack of adequate investment on the infrastructure projects like construction, rebuilding and improvement of tracks, wear and tear and inadequacy of rolling stock in some countries, using different transport regulations, different rail gauges in the countries, and border formalities, which altogether could prevent smooth running of trains, causing increased transit time, long stops at borders and slow traveling time and increased costs.

As a solution to increase the rail transport share it is necessary that under the aegis of ECO to deliberate on the investments needed for completion of the rail routes with involvement of the international financial institutes, Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and Trade and Development Bank, the representatives of which are present here fortunately. In the interim, involvement of the private and public sector is inevitable to expedite the transportation procedure; in addition, at the border crossings an updated IT as well as efficient customs systems should be applied in order to facilitate the documentation and procedures; harmonization of regulations and having unified transportation regulation is a tool that contributes to interoperability in the railway transportation; therefore, using a joint CIM/SMGS consignment note will contribute to facilitation of exchanges between the CIS countries, Turkey and the European countries and adherence to the regulations of international organizations will help to interoperability ; to activate the corridors, running of the scheduled trains on the route like Bandar Abbas – Almaty, Istanbul – Almaty and Islamabad – Tehran – Istanbul must become activated and regulated; besides these, financial efforts, political will and strong participation of the countries is required to minimize the physical and nonphysical obstacles.

Dear colleagues,

This meeting is a suitable opportunity to do our best in using the capacities of the region and the member countries and to adopt administrative and vital decisions, and define a clear action plan with a focus on the railway key priorities in the region so that effective steps could be take in development of rail transportation in the ECO region. In this regard I would like to assure you that RAI is fully ready to cooperate and assist in the regional projects intended by ECO.

Thank you!

**Agenda of 12th Meeting of the Heads of
ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of Railway Committee of TTCC
(Tehran, 17-18 May 2015)**

1. Inauguration of the Meeting
 2. Election of the Chairman
 3. Adoption of the Agenda
 4. Appointment of the Drafting Committee
 5. Statements/Country reports
 6. Review of the decisions made in previous Meeting and the implementation of Railway provisions of TTFA
 7. Discussing the status and considering expeditious implementation of the ECO's activities/projects in the field of Railway in the ECO region:
 - i. The ECO Container Train on Istanbul-Almaty route;
 - ii. The ECO Container Train on Bandar Abbas-Almaty route
 - iii. The ECO Container Train on Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul route;
 - iv. The Railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran;
 - v. Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) Railway Project;:
 - vi. Construction of railway connecting China and Europe through Kyrgyz-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI).
 8. Measures for implementation of prioritized infrastructure projects under ECO Railway Network Development Plan: Ways and means of promoting the regional partnership for implementation of the "ECO Railway Network Development Plan"
 9. Status of cooperation with international and regional organizations
 10. Finalization of the revised ECO Railway Transit Routes Map
 11. Any other business
 12. Dates and Venue of the next Meeting
 13. Adoption of the Report
 14. Vote of thanks and closing of the Meeting
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