

## STATEMENT

### **at the Regional Dialogue "Strengthening Transport Connectivity in the SPECA Region and Beyond in the COVID-19 Era"**

*(September 29, 2020)*

*Distinguished Executive Secretary of the United Nations  
Economic Commission for Europe Ms. Olga Algayerova,*

*Dear participants, ladies and gentlemen,*

First of all, let me thank the leadership of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Office of the United Nations High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States for organizing this Regional Dialogue, the topic of which is very relevant in the current difficult conditions in the world economy.

I fully share the assessments and opinions expressed in the statement by the UNECE Executive Secretary and video address of the UN Under-Secretary-General.

It is obvious to all of us that today consolidated approaches of the international community are required in such critical areas as international transport and interregional connectivity.

The efforts aimed at ensuring the sustainability of transport logistics chains connecting landlocked countries and regions with the global system of freight and passenger transportation, and their

further development are taking on particular significance in our joint work in this direction.

In this context, strengthening and intensifying international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) is able to direct the resources currently available in the region and international partners to address specific tasks and achieve practical results.

The outcomes of the events held under the chairmanship of Turkmenistan in 2019 within the framework of the *SPECA Days in Ashgabat* serve in this regard as the basis for the development of joint action plans and the expansion of project activities. In particular, this work should build on the adopted in our capital, *Ashgabat Initiative, on Reducing barriers to trade and transport, using United Nations legal instruments, norms, standards and recommendations, while strengthening connectivity in the SPECA region.*

At the same time, it should be noted that in the pandemic context, it is necessary to adjust the previously outlined plans and redirect joint efforts to implement new proposals and initiatives to restore the regional economy as soon as possible and minimize socio-economic impact.

To this end, Turkmenistan, as a leading country in the multilateral processes to strengthen international cooperation on sustainable and reliable transport, has taken the *initiative of a broad dialog on issues of ensuring stable international transport during emergencies.*

In this regard, *we have drafted and submitted for the consideration* of the Member States of the United Nations a

relevant *draft Resolution of the General Assembly, which will be negotiated during the current 75th session.*

In this context I also recall that the UN General Assembly resolutions adopted at the initiative of Turkmenistan in 2014, 2015 and 2017, as well as the Outcome document of the Global Conference on Sustainable Transport held in Ashgabat in November 2016, serve as the basis for building up a dialogue on transport issues at the UN platform.

We invite the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Office of the United Nations High Representative for Landlocked Countries to participate in the virtual briefing and further negotiations on the draft resolution proposed by Turkmenistan on the margins of the General Assembly in October this year.

We are convinced that this document will create the necessary legal framework for multilateral cooperation in the transport sector, aimed at the implementation of a globally adopted *UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19* and the resolution of the UN General Assembly of September 11 of this year “*Comprehensive and coordinated response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic*”.

Turkmenistan also outlined a number of practical steps in this direction in 2021. In particular, we consider the *International Conference of Ministers of Landlocked Developing Countries*, planned to be held next year in Turkmenistan, as a platform for developing effective and mutually agreed approaches to multilateral cooperation on sustainable transport.

When it comes to the development of the legal framework for the expansion of international transport, which will be the subject

of detailed discussion during the first session of the Regional Dialogue, it is *necessary to emphasize the importance of continuing our joint efforts to enhance the use of existing legal instruments* on the facilitation of transport and transit procedures (particularly key role of the Conventions and multilateral agreements developed within the UNECE) by increasing the number of States Parties.

Moving progressively in this direction, Turkmenistan is constantly expanding its participation in multilateral documents in the field of transport. On August 28, 2020, the *Parliament of Turkmenistan adopted resolutions on the ratification of 6 international agreements and protocols* regulating international transport in Eurasia.

*Dear participants,*

One of the main conditions for the smooth, efficient and fast operation of international transport and transit corridors in the current environment is certainly the synchronization of digital tools to facilitate cross-border transport procedures (*especially e-TIR and e-CMR*).

The well-coordinated use of proven digital solutions minimizes human contact and reduces transport and trade costs, as well as waiting times when crossing borders.

In this regard, *we propose*, within the framework of the *SPECA Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity* in the very near future, namely in October-November this year, together with other international partners, *to analyze and develop proposals for the creation and further development of digital transport corridors* along the functioning physical transport infrastructure in the SPECA region.

*Dear participants,*

In conclusion, let me once again express my gratitude to the organizers of today's Dialogue and wish all the participants of this event successful and productive work.

I thank you.