

## **Statement of Mr. Askar Mirsaidov, Counselor of the Permanent Mission of Uzbekistan to the UN Office and other International Organizations in Geneva**

**Dear Participants!**

**Ladies and Gentlemen!**

It is a great honor for me to take part in this event.

The leader of our country pays great attention to the accelerated development of all spheres of the economy and especially the development of the transport and communication sector.

Over the past period, a great deal of work has been done to enhance relations between the countries of the Central Asian region at different levels. Many areas of the transport complex have undergone accelerated development. Many border issues with neighboring countries have been resolved, additional border checkpoints have been opened, various restrictions and barriers in the transport sector have been removed.

As a result of the large-scale work done, trade with bordering countries is growing at a tangible pace and today the growth is 140%, which makes increased demands on the development of the transport and communication complex.

Currently, Uzbekistan is implementing a program to improve transport infrastructure and diversify foreign trade routes for the transportation of goods for 2018-2022, aimed at forming a unified comprehensive strategy for the development of the national transport industry.

A high-speed rail link from Tashkent to the cities of Bukhara, Samarkand, Karshi and Shakhrisabz is successfully operating, and work is underway to open a link to Khiva. The fleet of high-speed trains is expanding.

The development of regional transport and transit potential is one of the most important factors for sustainable economic growth in Central Asia. Realizing this, we pay great attention to the modernization of the transport, transit and logistics sphere, to ensure the wide integration of the region into the international network of transport communications in order to provide access to sea communications.

We are interested in forming a developed network of transport corridors of regional importance.

In this direction, active work is being carried out with experts from Kyrgyzstan and China on the formation of a railway route "Uzbekistan - Kyrgyzstan - China", which will become part of the Transcontinental

transport corridor "China - Central Asia - Caucasus - Europe" with a branch in the southern direction to the Trans-Afghan corridor.

### **Dear Participants!**

At the same time, the most important conditions for ensuring the throughput of highways, transit corridors and the safest movement of transit cargo is the formation of favorable conditions and the provision of mutual preferences, simplification of customs procedures and unification of transport standards, and the creation of associated roadside infrastructure.

Moreover, the lack of direct access of the Central Asian countries to seaports leads to an increase in the transport component in the final cost of goods on international sales markets, which in turn leads to a decrease in their competitiveness.

Today, over 90% of freight traffic in intercontinental trade between Asia and Europe is carried out by sea. Landlocked developing countries spend about 18% of their export earnings on transport fees, while other countries generally spend 9%. According to UNCTAD, for the Central Asian countries, transport costs in many cases reach up to 60% of the value of imported goods.

In this regard, we urge to support the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to create a Regional Center for the Development of Transport and Communication Connectivity under the auspices of the United Nations, which has been put forward during the 75th session of the UN General Assembly that would create a platform for discussion and prompt resolution of emerging issues that hinder the development of the transport sector and develop new initiatives.

We are convinced that within the framework of the work of the Regional Center we will be able to fully achieve the desired results in activating existing transport corridors and forming new ones, ensuring the deep integration of our region into Euro-Asian transport corridors.

The Regional Center will expand mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of transport, which in turn will ensure an increase in trade, which will no doubt meet the interests of all countries in the region.

Ultimately, the role of the Central Asian countries as a key transport and transit hub will increase and will make it possible to become the most important component in the formation of freight flows along the North-South and West-East transport and transit corridors.

Thank you for your attention.