

SPEECH

at the Meeting of Ministers of **SPECA**

Participating-States

(April 17, 2023, video message, up to 7 min)

Your Excellency chairman **Jabbarov**,

Your Excellency Executive Secretary **Algayerova**,

Dear Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentleman,

It gives me an immense pleasure to participate at the ministerial meeting of the **SPECA** member states.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express sincere congratulations to the leadership and members of the **SPECA** with its **25th anniversary**.

We also express our gratitude to **Azerbaijan** for promoting and strengthening main principles of sustainable development during their chairmanship.

Current challenges taking place in the world, including **supply chains** disruption, **severe** consequences of the **climate change**, rising concerns of **food security**, growing

level of **global poverty** require us to concentrate our efforts on the development of joint actions to address these important issues.

That is why I believe that today's event is more relevant than ever.

Dear participant of the event,

Uzbekistan defines **SPECA** as an inclusive intergovernmental platform, enabling countries of the region to identify solutions of sustainable development challenges.

Over the recent years, our country has intensified its cooperation with the **United Nations** through diverse platforms, including **SPECA**.

We have **resumed** our participation (**2019-2020**) in **SPECA** and **cochaired** the program in **Tashkent** in **2021**.

We have adopted **three Road maps** to strengthen our multilateral partnership.

As a result of these measures, we were able to accelerate the process of implementing main objectives of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

Dear participants!

Our region has always served as a bridge connecting Europe, Asia and Africa.

There is a strong bond between our states. I can say with confidence, that there are no countries in the world that are as close as we in **traditions, customs and values**. We are not just neighbors – we are relatives and friends living together in a great region.

Over the last several years, trade turnover between **Uzbekistan** and **SPECA** participating-states has **doubled** (*\$9,2 billion*).

Since **2017**, joint ventures with companies of **SPECA** member countries in **Uzbekistan** increased **five** times (*total 2212*).

Overall **SPECA** member states have a **colossal trade and economic potential**, with **rich natural and human resources**, and an **advantageous geographical location**.

To realize the potential of our region through the lens of **SDG's** goals we propose to focus our partnership in the following priority areas.

First. Today we need to set a goal of **creating favorable conditions** for strengthening and increasing **mutual trade**.

According to our estimations, due to customer market of more than **127** (*one hundred and twenty-seven*) million people as well as proper utilization of our countries' **competitive advantages**, it is possible to increase the total trade turnover at least **two times** by **2025**.

It is important to intensify joint cooperation on **removing** existing trade barriers, **simplification** of technical regulations, **digitalization** of customs and **border crossing** procedures.

Second. Due to new **geopolitical risks** as well as socio-economic consequences of **pandemic**, the role of **food security** has become **more important than ever**.

Uzbekistan supports initiative of adopting **five Action Tracks**, which were introduced during the **first UN Food Systems Summit** in **2021**.

It is also important to support efforts of **ESCAP's (ЎЗКАТО) Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization** on promotion of sustainable agricultural initiatives for food security through **technical cooperation**, **exchange of information** and **knowledge sharing**.

Third. **Transport connectivity** is one of the major **driving forces** behind a sustainable growth.

We believe it is vital to diversify existing transport corridors, linking our region with the outer world.

In this context, we support the initiatives of adopting a **Roadmap** aimed at digitalizing multimodal data and document exchange along the **trans-Caspian transport corridor** using **UN** standards.

Forth. We believe that the acceleration of the establishment of **UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund** for **SPECA** would promote **cross-border economic and environmental cooperation** for the development of the subregion.

Last but not least. **Uzbekistan** prioritizes promoting important issues set out in the “**green**” agenda. This is why we support measures to implement strategies for the transition to a **green** economy, development of **renewable** and **hydrogen** energy.

Dear ladies and gentlemen!

Uzbekistan will consistently continue to develop the **broad-scale, open and practical** partnership within the framework of **SPECA**.

We are confident that implementation of all initiatives proposed during this meeting will further **strengthen** our

mutually beneficial cooperation and contribute to achieving **sustainable development goals** by all our countries.

Taking this opportunity, i would like to express my gratitude to **H.E. Minister Jabbarov** for the excellent chairmanship.

I wish everyone fruitful discussions today.

Thank you for your attention!