

OSCE Conference on the prospects for the development of trans-Asian and Eurasian transit transportation through Central Asia till the year 2015

Dushanbe, 23-24 October 2007

DUSHANBE JOINT STATEMENT

We, the Delegations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Mongolia, participating in the Conference,

Reaffirming the commitments related to transportation in the OSCE area, in particular those made in Ministerial Council Decision No. 11/06 on “Future Transport Dialogue in the OSCE” adopted by the Ministerial Council in Brussels (2006), the Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension adopted by the Ministerial Council in Maastricht (2003) and in other relevant OSCE documents;

Taking note of the Joint Statement by the delegations of the Central Asian participating States of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan at the Fourteenth Meeting of the OSCE Economic Forum, held in Prague, the Czech Republic, from 22 to 24 May 2006 (EF.DEL/51/06);

Welcoming the Chairman’s recommendations and suggestions resulting from the OSCE Conference on Strengthening the Co-Operative Security between the OSCE and the Asian Partners for Co-Operation, held on June 12-13, 2007 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia;

Bearing in mind the importance of appropriate follow-up to OSCE Economic and Environmental Fora, of which this Conference is a good example as well as the Permanent Council Decision No. 798 on the Theme, Format and Organizational Modalities for the Sixteenth Economic and Environmental Forum, dedicating a special session of the Prague segment of the Forum to the challenges faced by landlocked developing countries;

Recognizing the vital importance of transport development and secure transportation networks to the enhancement of regional economic co-operation and stability in the OSCE area;

Noting furthermore the crucial role of transport in promoting trade and generating economic development in Central Asia and across the OSCE region, particularly in the case of landlocked developing countries;

Recognizing that the socio-economic development of landlocked developing countries faces unique challenges related to their lack of access to the sea, high transit costs, dependence on transit services and difficulties related to the access to markets;

Acknowledging that addressing the needs of developing landlocked countries is an immediate concern as well as requires a long term process;

Recognizing, in this regard, the importance of the Almaty Declaration and the Almaty Programme of Action (APA): Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries, adopted by the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International

Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation in Almaty on 28-29 August 2003;

Welcoming the United Nations General Assembly resolution on conducting in 2008 amid term review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action;

Welcoming the Chairman's Summary adopted at the Thematic Meeting on International Trade and Trade Facilitation convened as part of the preparatory process for the midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action on 30-31 August 2007, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia;

Acknowledging that the main responsibility for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action lies within the landlocked developing countries themselves;

Recognizing however that efficient transit transport systems can only be established through genuine partnerships between landlocked and transit developing countries and their development partners at national, bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels and through partnership between public and private sectors;

Noting the role of the international community, including financial and development institutions and donor countries in providing financial and technical support to help landlocked developing countries;

Fundamental transit transport policy issues

The Delegations,

Noting that the development of international transport links is a complex and long-term process and that there is a need for strong political and financial commitment at the national level as well as effective international and regional mechanisms for co-operation and coordination of national strategies and approaches;

Endeavour to strengthen their dialogue on transport and transit related issues, including on the transparency of transit and border regulations and the elimination of non-physical barriers to transit transport;

Commit, therefore, to pay continued attention to the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action;

Endeavour to reduce negative impact on the environment of economic activities, and in particular of transport activities.

Transport Infrastructure Development and Maintenance

The Delegations,

Express support for the work done by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (UNSPECA) working groups, the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) programme, the IGC Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA) and other related initiatives, and notes that this has

promoted inter-country cooperation towards the development of Euro-Asian transport links, inter alia, through identifying and prioritizing Euro-Asian routes and projects along them;

Commit to take further practical steps to facilitate the development of the priority transport links and projects that have been identified, including the routes and infrastructure investments identified by the joint UNECE-UNESCAP Project on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Linkages, and the list of EurAsEC transport routes;

Call on International Organisations and International Financial Institutions to facilitate the ongoing regional coordination programmes and to provide the necessary resources for the development of the identified transport corridors and their infrastructure agreed upon by the Governments in the region.

Trade, Transit and Transport Facilitation

The Delegations,

Noting that the development of transport links is not only about infrastructure, but that it also requires efficient border crossings, harmonized transport regulations, greater interoperability of rail systems and other transport modes, a higher level of safety and security and greater convergence of transport policies and strategies;

Will step up their efforts to ensure accession and/or effective implementation of international legal instruments in this area, in particular the UNECE Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets, the UNECE International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade and the International Convention on Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures;

Will also step up efforts to improve national legal frameworks and procedures in line with the provisions of the above mentioned international legal instruments, to facilitate enhanced inter-agency cooperation at the national, bilateral and regional levels;

These measures could include:

- enhancing bilateral and regional cooperation aimed at facilitating transit transportation;
- promoting measures to facilitate border crossings;
- providing regular training on the TIR procedure for customs officials and transport operators;
- establishing national computerized customs systems to facilitate transit operations, such as the UNCTAD ASYCUDA system;
- introducing mechanisms for monitoring the situation at border crossings;
- better coordinating border controls, both nationally and with neighbouring countries;
- facilitating the issuance of visas to professional drivers and business representatives, and eliminate, to the extent possible, bilateral transport permits;

Request the international inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations concerned, in particular the UNECE, UNCTAD, the WCO, as well as the IRU and others to support capacity-building and training activities in the region and to provide technical assistance in the implementation of international legal instruments in the area of transport and trade.

Public Private Partnership

The Delegations,

Recognize that it is important for landlocked and transit developing countries to:

Review and revise their regulatory frameworks to allow greater participation of the private sector;

Introduce reform measures to make providers of transport services more responsive to user demands;

Increase transparency of transit and border regulations;

Establish streamlined administrative procedures;

Promote the use of information technology and to strengthen training programmes in the sector;

Conduct permanent consultation with private industry on procedures and legislation, even before adoption;

Apply public private partnership principles in implementing legislation and managing in practice of certain regulatory frameworks;

Support land transport links along the Silk Road, including pilot operations (truck caravans) by the private industry;

Support established border waiting time observatory efforts (internet applications) by the private industry;

Finance particular projects jointly by public and private sectors.

The role of the OSCE

The Delegations,

Welcome the OSCE's support to the implementation of the Almaty Declaration and the Almaty Programme of Action through capacity-building measures, awareness-raising and active co-operation with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States;

Take note of the proposal made by the Republic of Tajikistan on creation in Dushanbe of an international centre with a view to improve transit transport in Central Asia; the proposal of Turkey to conduct a study to identify obstacles for the development of rail transit transport systems linking Asia and Europe; also a note was taken of the proposals by the American Chamber of Commerce and the IRU to involve private sector in addressing transit needs through the implementation of transport and trade facilitation pilot projects;

Are convinced that the OSCE has a further role to play in the continued dialogue on transport in the OSCE area, inter alia in the following areas:

- in the exchange of best practices of participating States in the field of intensifying regional co-operation regarding transport between transit and landlocked countries as well as in the field of public private partnership;
- in establishing a survey of existing international transit regimes;
- in developing a virtual marketplace of knowledge and expertise;
- in providing support, upon request of the countries concerned, in compliance with the OSCE Rules of Procedure, for the creation of mechanisms of coordination of international transit transportation of goods in the region, including in the format of a specialized centre;
- in providing support, upon request of the countries concerned, in compliance with the OSCE Rules of Procedure, for the creation of logistics centres along the main transport corridors in line with best international standards;
- in raising awareness on the importance of environmentally sustainable transport;
- in assisting in implementing more effectively the existing international legal instruments in the area of transport and border crossing facilitation;
- in assisting in attracting large scale foreign investment into transport and transit capacity development in the region;

Invite the OSCE to revert to the issue of transit transportation and the challenges faced by landlocked developing countries in the framework of the Economic and Environmental Forum to be held (second segment) in Prague, the Czech Republic, from 19 to 21 May 2008 as well as at the second preparatory conference to be held in Ashgabad, Turkmenistan, on 6-7 March 2008;

Welcome active participation of the relevant international and regional organisations, such as the UNECE, UNESCAP, UNCTAD, the European Commission, the CIS Executive Committee, the EurAsEC, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Economic Cooperation Organization, as well as the international programmes of UNSPECA, TRACECA, CAREC and others, in the above-mentioned OSCE events.