

EEF.DEL/20/10  
5 February 2010

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of Uzbekistan

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
UZBEKISTAN AT PART I OF THE 18th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Vienna, 2 February 2010

**Session V: Improving security and efficiency of transport connections in  
Central Asia and with Afghanistan**

Distinguished Forum participants,

Permit me on behalf of our delegation to share a few facts with you regarding Uzbekistan's successful activities to improve the security and efficiency of transport connections in Central Asia and with Afghanistan.

The adoption and implementation of Uzbekistan's Anti-Crisis Programme for 2009 to 2012 is intended to minimize the negative effects of the global financial and economic crisis and has meant that our Republic is one of the few countries in the world to have been able to ensure sustainable economic growth and higher real incomes for its population.

Evidence of this is the fact that 2009 saw an 8.1 per cent rise in the gross domestic product, industrial production went up by 9 per cent, and the total volume of investment increased by approximately 26 per cent, including a 68 per cent rise in foreign investment.

During 2009, as part of the investment programme and industrial modernization programmes, 690 investment projects were implemented, 303 of which were successfully completed.

The focus of the Uzbek Government is on the implementation of a large-scale programme to build new roads and overhaul the country's existing national highways so as to bring them into line with the high international standards, provide a reliable link between all the regions of the Republic and ensure access to regional and global markets.

In 2009, 217 kilometres of highways were opened, and 538 kilometres of highways and 19 bridges underwent repairs.

Work continued on the development and modernization of the country's railway network. Five bridges were opened and six new railway sidings came into operation. Work has begun on the electrification of the railways and modernization of the rolling stock and locomotives.

In 2009 considerable work was carried out on the construction of an intermodal centre for international freight at the Navoi airport as one of the key facilities in Navoi province's free trade zone. Last year, modern transport aircraft flying out of this airport leased by the national airline from Korean Air serviced more than 330 international routes and transported around 8,500 tons of freight, making it possible to integrate Navoi airport into the global logistics network.

An international logistics centre has been built and put into operation in the city of Angren, ensuring a year-round transport link between the Republic's regions and the provinces of the Fergana valley.

These logistics centres can offer significant practical support in trans-border trade in the Central Asian region and along its borders.

I should like to draw attention in particular to the key important role played by Uzbekistan in long-term projects to create a modern transport and communications system including all forms of transport – road, rail and air.

The Republic's Road Fund has allocated 540 billion soms for highway development in 2010, almost double the amount allocated in 2009. A new project is currently being drawn up for the construction of new sections of the Uzbek national highway, with funds provided by the Asian Development Bank.

We believe that this programme will increase the volume of transport and transit services in Central Asia, improve the flow of goods and transit routes between Europe and Asia, develop logistics centres on the basis of the existing infrastructure and provide jobs for thousands of people.

In 2010, the Uzbek Government will pay greater attention to the further development and modernization of the country's railways. Infrastructure facilities and railway lines are scheduled for completion and work will continue on the construction of electrified railway lines in the south of the country.

With a view to establishing a legal framework for transportation, the Uzbek Parliament adopted a wide range of laws in this area between 2005 and 2009 to ensure the country's security, including measures to prevent illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, narcotic drugs and human beings. Uzbekistan is party to virtually all the counter-terrorism conventions and agreements, and its laws reflect the commitments it has undertaken under those international agreements.

In addition to ensuring the Republic's economic prosperity, Uzbekistan cannot stand on the sidelines when it comes to the efforts to ensure peace and stability in Afghanistan, where armed conflict has continued to rage for the last 30 years. As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Islam Karimov, has pointed out, a tense situation in one of the States of the region naturally poses a threat to the peace and security of the entire region.

Speaking from the most respected international platforms, Uzbekistan has proposed practical initiatives to resolve this conflict. For example, at the NATO/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Summit in Bucharest in April 2008 the President of Uzbekistan

suggested for the first time that the Afghan problem cannot be resolved by military means alone. With a view to resolving the conflict in Afghanistan, we proposed that the 6+2 contact group should be transformed into a 6+3 group, having in mind the participation in the group of the United States of America, Russia and representatives of NATO in addition to Afghanistan's neighbours.

Billions and billions of dollars have been spent on efforts to resolve the Afghan problem over the last 30 years. Today there is a clear need for a radical change in the approach to resolving the situation in that country.

In particular, it is especially important to ensure respect for the national customs, culture and religious values of the multi-ethnic and multi-faith people of Afghanistan.

It should be noted that a number of countries, in particular the participants in the London International Conference on Afghanistan, believe it is impossible to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan by military means, which bears out Uzbekistan's position on this matter.

In order to establish peace and stability on long-suffering Afghan soil, the international community must first and foremost provide targeted economic, financial, social and humanitarian assistance under the aegis of the United Nations.

The main priority must be to provide more effective targeted economic assistance to Afghanistan, to build and develop the economic and social infrastructure, to create jobs for the people and to resolve the most urgent problems of combating poverty.

Today, many countries around the world are providing Afghanistan with this kind of assistance. Naturally, the neighbouring countries are most interested in ensuring peace and stability in Afghanistan. As a close neighbour, Uzbekistan is also providing considerable aid to Afghanistan.

As regards the practical assistance Uzbekistan has given Afghanistan, it should be noted that in December 2002, with a view to providing effective assistance to that country, we opened the Hairaton bridge on the Uzbek-Afghan border, across which millions of tons of humanitarian aid have been transported. Since 2002, Germany and other members of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) have been granted use of the airport at Termez so that they can provide logistical support for the peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan through the shipment of ten thousand tons of aid and the transport of hundreds of personnel.

Each year, these countries are granted long-term diplomatic authorization enabling their air forces to use Uzbekistan's airspace and the Termez airport infrastructure to transport freight and personnel to Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan has built 11 bridges along the Mazari Sharif-Kabul highway to ensure unimpeded access. Uzbekistan's electricity supply to Afghanistan was restored in early 2002, and in 2008 the Hairaton-Puli Khumri-Kabul power line entered into operation, thanks to which Kabul is now guaranteed a reliable electricity supply from Uzbekistan.

In 2010, the volume of electricity supplied by Uzbekistan to Afghanistan increased six-fold in comparison to previous years.

In the telecommunications sphere, Uzbektelecom is carrying out a project to build international communications lines between Termez and Hairaton, including the construction of fibre optic communication links to Afghanistan.

The development of Afghanistan's transport infrastructure and its inclusion in international transport and communications projects needs to be dealt with without delay. The only railway line into the country goes from the city of Termez and to the Afghan town of Hairaton. The Asian Development Bank has drawn up a project to extend the railway to Mazari Sharif, with Uzbekistan taking responsibility for the construction work. This project, which is scheduled for completion in 2011, should make an important contribution towards the incorporation of Afghanistan's infrastructure within the Central Asian and Trans-Caucasus communications systems along the Navoi-Turkmenbashi-Baku-Kars route, providing access to the markets of Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

Since 2009 the transit of United States non-military goods through the territory of Uzbekistan along the Navoi-Hairaton railway route has also been part of Uzbekistan's contribution to the efforts to resolve this problem as quickly as possible and, in this way, a contribution to the future sustainable development of Afghanistan.

Uzbek builders and specialists are now beginning work on the construction of the Termez-Hairaton-Mazari Sharif railway line, which should be completed by the end of 2010.

In providing assistance to Afghanistan and co-operating with that country, Uzbekistan is guided by the principles of bilateral and good-neighbourly relations. We are ready to co-operate with all countries on a bilateral basis.

Thank you for your attention.