

GUAM STATEMENT
AT THE 18TH MEETING OF THE OSCE ECONOMIC
AND ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM (PART II)
Prague, May 24 – 26, 2010

ENGLISH only

*Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

On behalf of the Member States of the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development - GUAM allow me to warmly welcome the Kazakhstan Chairmanship and the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities and express our gratitude to the Government of Czech Republic for an excellent preparation for the second part of the Economic and Environmental Forum.

At the beginning let me reiterate the full support by the GUAM Member States for the topic of the Forum proposed by the Kazakhstan Chairmanship, which undoubtedly reflects the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security. We recognize the necessity to address security, economic and environmental issues in relation to border crossing and safety of land transportation and consider it to be a logical continuation of the transport related topics proposed by the previous Belgian (2006) and Finnish (2008) OSCE Chairmanships.

The GUAM Member States attach great importance to the discussion of substantive issues of integration by means of utilizing its countries' unique strategic advantages in the development of transport and transit potential linking Europe with Asia.

The GUAM countries consider the issue of increasing efficiency of existing transport corridors as one of the most important means to achieve deeper integration in our region. In this regard we should strengthen our transit and trade potential by accelerating our common efforts towards making our transportation services as one of the key comparative advantages of our economies.

The existing formats of cooperation within the GUAM seem helpful and interesting to unite us all in our efforts. We all have railway and road highways, and some of us use multi-modal infrastructures. In this regard the GUAM Member States, whose territories constitute a natural corridor linking Europe and Asia, cooperate with each other in order to fully utilize their national transport capacities, stimulate trade and attract foreign investments.

To this end, the GUAM Member States implement regional projects on Free Trade Zone, Trade and Transport Facilitation and Virtual law-enforcement Center on combating trans-border crime, which have already brought concrete positive results. We are interested in the development of Trans-Caspian links of the GUAM corridor and express our readiness for further cooperation in this direction.

The GUAM countries attach great importance to the enhancement of their transit potential and development of multimodal transportation. As a successful example of such cooperation we could note the EU sponsored project on Europe – Caucasus – Asia Transport Corridor (TRACECA Program) aimed at the restoration of the Great Historic Silk Road.

Now, **Mr. Chairman**, let me provide an example of a fruitful GUAM regional cooperation in the transport sector. At the Summit in Baku in 2007, the GUAM countries signed an Agreement on International Multimodal Transportation of Goods, which regulates transportation of goods by the railway, sea, river as well as the road and ferry communications.

At the GUAM Batumi Summit of 2008 the Memorandum of Mutual Understanding was signed between GUAM and the International Road Transport Union. In the framework of this document two organizations initiated a dialogue between state institutions and private companies, launched institutionalized cooperation with the main aim to promote transit potential of the GUAM. Heads of State also adopted Statement on development of the GUAM transportation corridor. Based on that Statement we are elaborating a concept of the GUAM transport corridor, which aims to provide better conditions for transportation of goods through territories of GUAM Member States and make the whole process more effective, secure and cost-saving.

The governments of the GUAM countries are taking measures to promote stimulation, development and competitiveness of multimodal transportation, in particular, to speed up cargo examinations on the borders, to carry out the coordinated tariff policy for transportation and cargo operations.

Mr. Chairman,

Alongside with the achievements of GUAM Member States in international transportation we want to share our concerns in this field, particularly with our EU partners. Fully realizing the need of effective control at border-crossing points in order to prevent trafficking in weapons, drugs and human beings, as well as illegal migration, we nevertheless find it necessary to address such a sensitive issue as the visa regime, which was not included into the agenda of the Forum.

We are confident that visa liberalization dialogue with GUAM Member States will potentially give the EU much stronger tools to answer their security concerns, than relying on restrictive visa regime. The completion of the visa liberalization dialogue would extend the same norms and standards of border management and control, documents security and migration policy that are applied within EU far to the eastern borders of GUAM Member States.

We do hope that a due attention will be given to this issue during the Prague Forum deliberations since visa liberalization dialogue is of great importance for strengthening cooperation in Europe in the sphere of good governance at border crossings and international land transportation.

Finally, The GUAM Member States would like to thank the Kazakh Chairmanship and the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for their productive work within the second dimension. We express our satisfaction with the current transport theme, which we believe will undoubtedly promote an effective dialogue among the OSCE participating States on regional cooperation issues.

Thank you.