

STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR F.ISMAYILOV, ENGLISH only
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE OSCE
ON BEHALF OF THE GUAM COUNTRIES
AT THE 14TH OSCE ECONOMIC FORUM IN PRAGUE
MAY 22, 2006

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the GUAM Countries I would like to join previous speakers in welcoming the participants of the Forum and thank the Belgian Chairmanship and the Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for the organization of this event. Special thanks go the Government of the Czech Republic for hosting this Meeting in the beautiful city of Prague.

Mr. Chairman,

Launched by the Dushanbe Conference last fall, preceded by the Vienna Forum and the Baku Conference, the current Forum sums up this year's EED process bringing new ideas to share and proposals to discuss.

Transport, in its entire complexity, is a crucial part of our economies and as such, is increasingly becoming an inescapable subject to center our discussions around.

During the preparatory process throughout the year, we have had a lot of opportunities to discuss the role that transport plays in fostering international cooperation, also touching upon issues of transportation security as well as the impact that transport has on environment and its energy aspect.

The GUAM countries believe that, based on previous deliberations, today's Forum can serve a good platform for an open exchange of views on many aspects of the issues discussed as well as on proposals that stemmed from these deliberations. This undertaking, however, requires a great deal of political will and commitment.

In this sense, the session on review of the implementation of OSCE-related transport commitments that will take place tomorrow will provide an insight into the status of affairs in this area and GUAM countries are looking forward to the presentation of the respective report by the UNECE and participation in the discussions.

Sessions on transport development to enhance regional economic cooperation and stability and on the role of governance in efficient border management, including trade facilitation and strengthening public-private partnership, that will also be the focus of our discussions tomorrow are of particular interest to GUAM.

Dear colleagues,

As you are aware, the Trade Transport Facilitation (TTF) project that is being jointly implemented by GUAM countries is a good example of this cooperation where multi-spectral issues of trade and transport are being tackled and good practices are being elaborated.

The GUAM Virtual Centre is another joint undertaking by the Group to contribute to ongoing global efforts to combat terrorism, organized crime, drug trafficking and other dangerous types of crimes that seriously impede and even nullify the benefits of international trade-transport cooperation.

Another topic we will look into during the Forum will be recommendations for future follow-up activities in the area of transport cooperation. The respective food-for-thought paper has been circulated by the Chairmanship and preliminary discussions have been conducted. Some of the proposals contained herein present interest to the GUAM Countries, while the time and conditions are not ripe for some of them to be taken full advantage of.

Not to a lesser degree this attributes to proposals related to alleviation of consequences of military conflicts and their detrimental impact on security and sustainability of regional transport cooperation by using economic tools for promoting confidence-building measures. Conflicts in the OSCE region have their own particularities and this should be taken into account in the process of their settlement, without jeopardising the primacy of norms and principles of international law.

As stated on numerous occasions before, the GUAM countries believe that political settlement of conflicts should be preceding all other efforts to promote confidence-building and related activities.

Dear colleagues,

Let me also bring to your attention that on these days Kyiv hosts the GUAM summit aiming at transforming our group into the international organization “GUAM-For

Democracy and Economic Development”. In this regard, we are looking forward for fruitful cooperation with the OSCE on all issues of our common activities for achievement of security, stability and prosperity for all nations within the OSCE region.

In conclusion, the GUAM countries wish the Forum successful deliberations and a positive outcome.

Thank you.