

EF.DEL/51/06
23 May 2006

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

**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**

Prague, 22 to 24 May 2006

Plenary Session I

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the delegations of the Central Asian participating States of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, we should like to express our gratitude to the Belgian Chairmanship and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities for organizing the Forum. Our special thanks go to the Government of the Czech Republic for its hospitality.

The transport sector is attracting growing attention from the OSCE community. This is absolutely necessary because the OSCE can provide a solid basis for sustainable development, co-operation, stability and security.

Transport communications are extremely important in view of the indivisible link between trade and transport. Efficient transport services are a key factor in the growth of international trade. High operating costs inhibit economic growth and result in trade imbalances and a decline in national prosperity and competitiveness. Transport issues therefore have a direct influence on the economic effectiveness of States. This is particularly true for landlocked countries, which suffer obvious disadvantages in competition with other countries on international markets. The absence of territorial access to the sea and high transit costs impose serious restrictions on the socio-economic development of landlocked countries. These problems require serious consideration.

In that connection, the OSCE participating States should work together to give impetus to trade and transport in the growing economies of the Central Asian countries, which enjoy a unique geographical position between Europe and Asia.

We believe that the OSCE should comprehensively support 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. The Central Asian countries are committed to

co-operation with specialized international organizations within the relevant programmes to develop Eurasian transport corridors.

We support more active involvement on the part of the OSCE in enhancing regional co-operation and in assisting our countries in the area of transport and the development of transport communications. We urge the Ministerial Council meeting in Brussels to adopt a decision on the development of mechanisms to assist the participating States in dealing with the tasks facing them in the area of transport.

We welcome the proposal by Tajikistan to host an OSCE conference on “Eurasian transit transport until the year 2015” as a follow-up to the Dushanbe conference in November 2005.

We are counting on the support of the OSCE participating States in this endeavour and look forward to a Ministerial Council decision on the holding of this conference in 2007.

We are convinced of the need for the OSCE to find an appropriate framework for continued dialogue on transport in the OSCE area. For example, the OSCE could regularly analyse and assess the progress made, and also undertake further implementing steps based among other things on the results of the current Economic Forum.

We believe that the Ministerial Council meeting in Brussels should determine the direction to be taken in the future activities of the OSCE in the field of transport.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.