

Presentation

First Deputy Minister of Transport Republic of Tajikistan 30 June – 1 July 2004

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me on behalf of the Republic of Tajikistan welcome here in Almaty all representatives of member-countries and financial institutes, thank the organizers for their initiative in organizing and holding this meeting, and for the hospitality which is creating a friendly and business atmosphere while considering the issues identified.

The Almaty Action Program adopted in August 2003 in Almaty by the International Conference on cooperation in transit shipments identifies the main directions of such cooperation for creating and developing reliable and effective international transport routes for landlocked countries, successful development of their international trade, tourism, and integration in the world economy.

Appropriate cooperation of landlocked countries and transit countries in specific international transport routes is a decisive factor.

Tajikistan being a landlocked continental country, geographically, has a central location in Central Asia.

Due to the mountainous relief, road transport is the main transport. The road network is around 30,600 km. As a result of physical natural destruction, roads restoration is the Government priority which is paid due attention to. At the same time the international (transit) shipments development goal has been set which is shown by the Tajikistan's active policy in forming the Asian Road network. International routes AH 7, AH 65, AH 66 have been included into the Asian Road network.

As for the railway, it is represented by three isolated lines: one connects Termez (Uzbekistan) with Dushanbe and Yangi-Bazar (93 km), the other connects Termez (Uzbekistan) with Kurgan_Tyube and Kulyab (340 km), and the third one of 110 km in the north of the country is a part of the Andizhan-Samarkand railroad crossing Tajikistan.

In the overall a goal of not only restoring the roads but developing the transit transport country's capacity has been set out. The following directions are promising ones:

1. West-East (Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-China)
2. North-South corridor
3. An exit to the Bandar-Abbas port (Iran)

A possibility to connect 2 terminal railways in the south of the country is considered.

One should also expect that together with the normalization of the situation in Afghanistan a requirement for reliable transport links (first of all road ones) with this country will increase. The recent USA decision to allocate US \$40 ml for the construction of a bridge across the Pyandj River and signing an Agreement on 31 Dec. 2003 between the Governments of TAJ and USA on this bridge construction testifies to it.

The Almaty Action Program should be implemented at the regional, sub-regional and national levels, with an active and constructive participation of the landlocked countries themselves.

Thus, the Republic of Tajikistan realistically (just as the other landlocked countries) should develop and implement its national Action Plan on implementing the Almaty Action Program (2003) for creating and developing effective international transport routes which are important for the country. Such a national Action Plan should reflect national and international aspects of international routes/shipments.

The Republic of Tajikistan, participating in respective international organizations and financial institutes (UN ESCATO, UN EEC, CIS, ShOC, TRACECA, SPECA, RCO, CACO, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Islamic Development Bank etc.), has an active position for those organizations' programs to include projects and activities in line with the country's interests.

On 1-3 June 2004 in Urumchi (China) under the auspices of the UN ESCATO, ShOC, on the initiative of the Ministry of Transport and Communication of China, an Expert Meeting on developing the draft Intergovernmental Agreement on facilitating international road shipments in the framework of the Shanghai Organization for Cooperation took place. Developing such type of a document envisages excluding all possible barriers while crossing borders and shipping goods.

Work on identifying the country's transit capacity and transit routes is being carried out.

The Republic of Tajikistan has signed an Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Road network on 26 April 2004 in Shanghai (China) during the 60th UN ESCATO session. However, we, until the present time, have not submitted to the UN ESCATO country proposals on forming the Trans-Asian Railroad (TAR) network though preparation for developing an Intergovernmental Agreement on the TAR network has already started. The Republic of Tajikistan intends to make such proposals in the nearest time.

As it is known, the Second International Eurasian Conference on transport (Sept. 2000, St. Petersburg) has identified the following main Eurasian transport corridors:

- a) **Trans-Siberian:** Europe – Russian Federation – Japan with the exits from the Russian Federation to:
 - 1) Kazakhstan-China and Korean peninsular

- 2) Mongolia-China
- b) **TRACECA:** Eastern Europe – through the Black Sea – Caucasus – through the Caspian Sea – Central Asia.
- c) **Southern:** South-East Europe - Turkey – Iran with an exit from Iran to:
 - 1) Central Asia – China
 - 2) South Asia – South-East Asia/Southern China
- d) **North-South:** Northern Europe – Russian Federation with exits from the Russian Federation to:
 - 1) Caucasus – Persian Gulf
 - 2) Central Asia – Persian Gulf
 - 3) Through the Caspian Sea – Iran – Persian Gulf ports

Evidently, recognizing the above mentioned corridors is an important stage of developing Eurasian transport links. Tajikistan is directly interested in some of the corridors (such as TRACECA, Southern, North-South).

We have been a party of the Main Multilateral Agreement on developing the Europe-Caucasus-Asia Corridor since 1998. Such cooperation should be made effective as in our opinion all member states of this agreement should be equal partners while its implementation.

The Republic of Tajikistan has identified priority trade-transit corridors which go through Tajikistan from the East to the West and from the North to the South and have an international significance.

The first transit corridor passes through Tajikistan in the north and has been identified as Bekabad-Kanibadam with an exit to Kokand (Uzbekistan) and Batkent (Kyrgyzstan) where electrification of the 110 km part of railroad and construction of the second 50 km line are required. This requires attracting investments in the amount of US \$54 ml. The peculiarity of this transit part of railroad is that parallel to the railroad a modern road passes. Ensuring continuous functioning of this route is important not only for Tajikistan but for Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan as well as it is the shortest way for shipment of goods from Fergana valley to the central parts of Uzbekistan and further to the west.

With implementing rigid economic, technical and other requirements by the Government in the sphere of transport, coordinated transport policy is required both with regard to the neighboring states and member-countries of international transport routes.

A transport corridor - the boundary of Uzbekistan–Dushanbe–Jirkigital–the boundary of Kyrgyzstan with the length of 434 km plays an important role in developing trade and economic relations in the region. This trade route becomes more and more important and attractive for businessmen every year. In our opinion it will have the most priority among all present transport corridors on the territory of Tajikistan. One should note that this route in a very harmonious way makes part of the regional road network and will comply with international standards if two neighboring states, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan implement rehabilitation of the road parts from Darband to the boundary of Kyrgyzstan by the Tajik party, and from the boundary of Kyrgyzstan to Sary-Tash by the Kyrgyz

party and resolve the issue of constructing a modern trans-boundary passage at the border. The Plan of activities approved by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan envisages capital repairs of 50 km of the road from Darband in the direction of Kyrgyzstan boundary.

To create an international transport corridor to the countries of South-East Asia and the Indian Ocean ports, construction of the road Murgab – Kulma Pass with an exit to the 32 km Karakorum road is required. The Governments of the Republic of Tajikistan and China have opened the Kulma control-passing point (Karasu) on 25 May this year. Construction and rehabilitation of separate parts of the road in the direction of Kulyab-Kalaihumb with the total length of 168 km is also carried out. International Financial Institutes (IDB, Kuwait Fund, Saudi Fund, OPEK) have allocated funds for construction of the main parts of Shkev-Zigar and Shangon-Zigar roads. Both sites are the main part of the main route Dushanbe-Kulyab-Kalaikhumb, Kharog-Murgab-Kulma Pass with an exit to Karakorum road (China). Rehabilitation of the 15.6 km Andzherobi Poyen-Shagon part requiring US \$11.5 ml is very important for developing international transport corridors. In the framework of cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank the funding issue for this part of the road has been envisaged by the three-year investment program of the Republic of Tajikistan. In the overall the length of the route is 1,024 km which ensures an exit to the Indian Ocean and the ports of China. The distance from joining Karakorum road to Karachi port (Pakistan) will make 2,567 km which by 170 km shorter in comparison with the direction Osh-Sary-Tash-Irkentash-Kashgar (in Kyrgyzstan).

One should note that not all trade-transit corridors comply with the current standard requirements in terms of their transport capacity and traffic safety. Most of the roads need reconstruction and capital repairs with the objective of bringing their parameters in compliance with modern standards. All the corridors that are of interest to the country are justified and can facilitate trade development and also promote economic development of both the state and of the whole Central Asian region.

Having received the principal consent of all the participating states involved in the Agreement on Transport Corridor North-South (September 12, 2000, St.Petersburg) the Republic of Tajikistan is involved in carrying out intrastate procedures required for Tajikistan to join this Agreement.

However, there may be other corridors worth considering.

In each of the international transport corridors that are of interest to our country it is necessary to identify all the feasible motor road, railway and inter-modal routes since the routes determine specific nature of shipment process.

The Third International Eurasian Conference on Transport accepted the strategy on developing Eurasian transport system which is also of interest from the view of implementing the Almaty Plan of Actions (2003).

The strategy covers the following:

- creation of integrated inter-modal international Eurasian transport routes/corridors and networks;
- formal drafting of international transport routes/networks (through relevant international agreements or by making amendments to the already existing agreements) so as to use them as base for further coordinated development;
- improvement of transport processes at border crossings, ports and so on. Based on relevant international conventions and through establishing where necessary, national committees/ inter-ministerial commissions on trade and transport by involving representatives from all the concerned ministries and agencies;
- review of routes/corridors for revealing physical and non-physical barriers/bottle necks;
- identification of operation arrangements for each of the international transport routes and periodically evaluate its performance;
- introduction/development of modern technologies;
- development of transport logistics;
- development of cooperation between government and private sectors (including between freight-forwarders and cargo owners);
- further development of efficient cooperation between the concerned international and other organizations.

Identification of international routes is important but it is only of a recommendation nature requiring formal approval of these routes by special international agreements. An example of such an agreement can be the European agreement on motor roads, European agreement on combined traffic, European agreement on railway main lines, the RCO Agreement on institutional and operation aspects of combined traffic moving in the direction of Europe-Asia, Intergovernment agreement on the Asian highway networks and the planned similar UN ESCADO Agreement on Transasian railway, the CIS Agreement on Major International Motor Routes as well as the Agreement under ECO on motor road and railway networks. Motor roads of Tajikistan, including Dushanbe-Tashkent, Dushanbe-Termez, Aini-Samarkand, Dushanbe- Kulyab-Kalaihumi-Horog-Murgab –Kulma passage-spur to the Karakorum highway (PRC), Dushanbe-Dusty-Nizhni Pyanzh – Afghanistan border, Dushanbe-Garm-Kyrgyz border and further Sary-Tash-Irkeshtam-Kashgar are included into the international network of the ECO motor roads.

Identification of physical and non-physical barriers and their liquidation is important for two reasons, they are enhancing operation efficiency of the route. For improving the border crossing procedures it is expedient for the Tajik Republic to join the main international conventions provided for by Resolution 48/11 under the UN ESCATO. As of today the country has joined four out of the 7 existing conventions. It is also worth mentioning if the country joins all the conventions it will be a vivid expression of its specific intention to develop international transport.

It is necessary to review the infrastructure and conduct technical analysis of all the border crossings of the country and also to bring them in conformity with the required level. In this respect it is worth mentioning that the Tajik Government Resolution # 494 on establishment of 11 specialized border complexes designed for carrying out the functions of controlling at the border in one single point. Addressing the issue of electronic data transfer across all the international transport routes (in conjunction with international organizations) will considerably simplify the border crossing procedures and it will also allow to solve the problem of cargo safety in the routes passing through the territory of the Republic of Tajikistan. Due to the economic constraints the Republic is currently involved in constructing only one SBC. Therefore, taking into account the importance of establishing such complexes in developing interstate trade and transport relations it is necessary to attract investments in the amount of 19 mln 860 000 US dollars.

Another important area for development and facilitation of interstate trade and transport relations in the Republic includes establishment of the network of terminals for providing services to international vehicles.

Presently the Terminals to service foreign vehicles have been set up in all major cities and the republic districts adjoining the boundary. At the Terminals conditions for centralized servicing the vehicles, carrying out customs clearance procedures and services have been formed. But those Terminals due to the circumstances require investments for their reconstruction and upgrading for which foreign investments of US \$1.25 ml for each of them are required.

To resolve the transport process regulating issues the Inter-Departmental Consultative Commission for Transport has been set up through the RT Government Resolution of 07 Aug. 2001. It plays a leading role in implementing the National Action Plan for implementing the Almaty Action Program (2003).

Modern roads are of strategic importance today. They connect countries, expedite consolidation of nations and economic integration of European and Asian regions and it also allows to set up a reliable transport hub through which transit vehicles will pass from many countries of the world.

We will be able to efficiently cooperate provided the financial institutions financially support all the investment projects.

Taking this opportunity and also paying attention to the fact that the delegates from the Republic of Tajikistan are sharing the table with the Mongolian delegates we would wish to establish transport communications between the RT and Mongolia with the assistance of the PRC.

Thanks for your attention.