

Dear Mr. Chairman!
Ladies and gentlemen!

Let me thank you for giving me the floor, and thank the leadership of the Azerbaijan Republic for its hospitality and arrangement for our meeting.

We hope that this meeting will be yet another important step in addressing common economic problems and strengthening mutual trust in Central Asia.

Stemming from the country's neutral status and based on the principles of peacefulness, good neighborliness and mutually beneficial international cooperation, the forward-looking foreign policy implemented under the guidance of the esteemed President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov has led to a high prestige of Turkmenistan in the global arena.

The President of Turkmenistan has elaborated a new concept of integrity and indivisibility of security, the principles of which underlie major foreign policy initiatives and proposals of our country. This concept is of fundamental importance. Turkmenistan is fundamentally committed to the settlement of any situation in the world by peaceful means and methods.

At the 66th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the highly-regarded President announced new international initiatives of Turkmenistan aimed at strengthening, regionally and globally, peace, security and sustainable development, and confirming the commitment of Turkmenistan to intensify and enhance constructive cooperation.

Turkmenistan has made significant progress in its development and been demonstrating stable high rates of annual growth in excess of 10%. Share of industry in the structure of the gross domestic product has been increasing permanently; now its growth exceeds 24%. The construction, trade, transport, communications and service sectors also have considerable share in the GDP structure.

Today Turkmenistan rapidly builds new facilities. The country absorbs \$ 48 billion worth investments and implements 2,447 construction projects.

Major construction projects include:

- The world's largest and most powerful Turkmenistan-China gas

main (7 thousand km);

Turkmenistan-Iran

- Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran international railway, which is an important part of the North-South international transport corridor. The North-South transport corridor is to become a new commercial “bridge” between Europe and Asia, which will provide Asian and European countries with a convenient economical way to South Asia and ports of the Persian Gulf, and will increase significantly the volume of trade across the continent.

- *Altyn Asyr*, artificial Turkmen lake that is currently under construction in the Karakum desert – one of the largest waterworks of the XXI century;

- the railway bridge built across the Amu Darya;

- “Avaza” national touristic zone facilities that have been, and are being constructed;

- highways meeting international standards – all major sites of international importance. These construction projects demonstrate that Turkmenistan uses its economic potential for the benefit of the mankind as a whole.

During the years of independence, the economy of Turkmenistan has been demonstrating steady growth of foreign trade turnover, which has increased by 4.2 times in **2010**, as compared to 2000. Furthermore, export of goods is outstripping, which leads to an increase in surplus.

It is gratifying to note that CAREC countries have achieved rapid growth in commodity turnover with Turkmenistan over the first nine months of 2011, as compared with a corresponding period in the past: 2.3 times as much with Uzbekistan, 1.5 times as much with Pakistan, 2.8 times as much with China, 1.4 times as much with Afghanistan, 3.5 times as much with Kyrgyzstan, 1.8 times as much with Tajikistan, 1.4 times as much with Azerbaijan, 2.8 times as much with Mongolia, and 106% as much with Kazakhstan.

It should be noted that Turkmenistan has implemented economic reforms aimed at transition to the market economy; these changes include the following:

- Turkmenistan does not apply tariff quotas on commodity exports and imports;

- In 2008 the country unified the national currency exchange rate.

Key areas of cooperation between Turkmenistan and Central Asian countries are identified in accordance with the economic interests of Turkmenistan focused on accomplishment of the country's strategic goal, as set by the President, which is to bring Turkmenistan up to the level of developed countries and promote high standards of living for the population; accomplishment of this objective requires capitalizing on regional economy.

The priorities here include: modernization and responsiveness of economy; achievement of rapid economic growth, primarily with the industrial and innovation factor; development of transport infrastructure and services, particularly tourism. Considerable importance is attached to development of social services and science.

Turkmenistan has excellent opportunities to export products in more high-tech areas. We hope that this activism of our cooperation will not only expand the supply of traditional products from Turkmenistan, but also create joint ventures on the basis of bilateral investment and mutual exchange of technology.

Economic interests of Turkmenistan also involve achievement of the international quality standards for domestic goods. To achieve this, efforts will be focused on promoting ownership and commitment of business representatives from partner countries of the region in such economic sectors as fuel and energy, agribusiness, chemical and petrochemical industry, construction industry, textile and food industries, transport infrastructure and transport logistics, tourism services.

The current stage of global economic development is characterized by substantial intensification of the regional cooperation process. As they develop, regional associations have an important impact on the structure and dynamics of the global economy, no matter what form of regional cooperation they are involved in.

In general, the strategy of regional trade is built in accordance with the established practice of international economic relations on the basis of:

- increasing the commodity and industrial competitiveness of domestic products;
- further expansion of exports of manufactured products and

services;

- maintaining equal conditions of access of Turkmen goods and services to regional markets and protecting the domestic market from unfair competition;

- implementing customs and tariff policies aimed at creating favorable conditions for expansion of domestic production and increasing its competitiveness.

To ensure optimal integration into the global economy in a regional format, our government is interested in accelerated and stable development of the Central Asian region as a whole.

The place and role of Turkmenistan in the world economic system are also determined by its geographical position. The country is bounded by the Caspian Sea and shares borders with Iran, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. It should be noted that Turkmenistan and Pakistan both joined the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program in 2010. Accession of Turkmenistan and Pakistan will increase access of CAREC to the Arabian Sea, thereby improving competitiveness of Central Asia in the world markets.

As a supplier of natural gas for TAPI route (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India), Turkmenistan will in turn meet the increasing long-term needs of the countries participating in the project. In addition to accomplishing the main goal, construction of the pipeline will give new impetus to the creation of new jobs, construction of social and industrial facilities. All of this will be for the benefit of the people by contributing to the improvement of standards and quality of their living.

Today, this largest project takes very specific acknowledgment of its relevance and viability. In this context, we should note a number of important initiatives of the President of Turkmenistan that contribute to dynamic promotion of the TAPI project at the international and regional level. The Summit of the heads of state of the TAPI participants gave a powerful impetus to acceleration of the project preparation process. The Summit resulted in signing of a framework agreement on the pipeline and an intergovernmental agreement on the TAPI gas pipeline project.

Today we are honored to represent Turkmenistan. Please let us

reiterate our appreciation to the organizers, as well as express confidence that the results of this event will serve to further enhance cooperation between Turkmenistan and CAREC.

Thank you for your attention.