ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Ministerial Conference on Transport, Moscow, 5-9 December 2016

Name of speaker: (Mr.) (Ms.) ____________________________
(Block letter) Ahsan Qbal

Country/Organization: ____________________________
(Block letter) Pakistan

Please indicate the agenda item on which you wish to speak:

Agenda Item No: ____________________________

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Honourable Ministers,
Expert Speakers and Moderators;
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!
Good morning. Dobroye Utra

On the onset, I wish to reiterate my delegation's gratitude to the Government and people of the Russian Federation for their warm welcome and hospitality in this beautiful city of Moscow.

Pakistan is delighted to be involved with this conference, and this vitally important discussion on sustainable mobility. Our presence here is a manifestation of the importance Pakistan attaches to various dimensions of transport and connectivity, particularly the sustainable transport. In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we are committed to build resilient and modern infrastructure to ensure among others, the provision of sustainable transport systems for all with improved road safety. Therefore, we have to deliver on this front. Together, we all should endeavor to achieve the goals and targets we have set for ourselves.

The issue of sustainability is rightly rising to the top of governments agendas around the globe. It's a discussion that involves every level of government, from municipalities to provinces and federal governments. It affects every community, town and city. This is indeed a vital achievement made possible by bringing together Key stakeholders from governments to engage in a dialogue on sustainable transport and its
multiple roles and linkages supporting the achievement of sustainable development goals.

Excelsior,

Our government under the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is fully committed to turn around its economy and develop it into a stable and truly progressive country. Pakistan is located at the intersection of three engines of growth in Asia, South Asia, China and Central Asia, which has three billion of world’s population. Regional connectivity is one of the key pillars of Pakistan’s vision 2025. We have therefore embarked upon various infrastructure development programs to enhance the regional connectivity, improve efficiency of transport and trade logistics sector. Our vision is to provide safe, reliable affordable and modern means of communications which effectively support the economy and act as a catalyst for the socio-economic growth in the entire region.

Our Government in collaboration with China has initiated China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. CPEC is not a bilateral project between Pakistan and China relations but will serve as a fate changer not only for this region but for other regions and world including Middle East, Europe and Western countries. “CPEC” will help overcome the energy crisis, increasing power generation capacity and fulfilling the electricity needs of the country. Similarly, the government has taken projects for upgrading the transmission and distribution system. Apart from focusing on energy and infrastructure, CPEC will also improve the quality of life through social and economic interventions. It also seeks to establish special economic zones, which will create tremendous trade and economic opportunities. Development of airport at Gwadar and construction of eastern, western and central alignments would connect all the provinces and regions.

Pakistan is also actively pursuing road and rail connectivity projects under Central Asian Region Economic Cooperation (CAREC) framework, which aim at integrating Central Asia into a vibrant economic region with global links.
We remain committed to the ideals of regional integration and we have engaged and continue engaging our neighboring countries through bilateral and multilateral road transport agreements. Pakistan has firm belief that for effective and sustainable relations both infrastructure and operational connectivity have equal roles. Pakistan is already a party to UN Intergovernmental Agreement on Asian Highway network and Intergovernmental Agreement on Trans-Asia Railway Network while for the other, we have bilateral or multilateral Road Transport Agreements with China, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. We are also doing our homework to accede to UN Intergovernmental Agreement on dry ports. As a strong proponent of regional integration, we congratulate China, Mongolia and Russian Federation on signing intergovernmental agreement on international Road Transport.

I am pleased to share that the Present Government of Pakistan has launched Integrated Transit Trade Management System (ITTMS) to facilitate the transit trade thereby upgrading the facilities at Torkham, Chaman, Wagah and Taftan borders. Land Port Authority is being established to improve trade logistics, services and regional connectivity (links with China, Afghanistan / CARs, Iran, Turkey etc.). In order to facilitate the logistics sector, our Government is also introducing Logistics Service Providers Act. This integrated approach will reduce the cost of doing business in Pakistan and bring the trade and transport logistics chain and services to international standards. To facilitate the movement of transit traffic, our Prime Minister approved Pakistan's accession TIR Convention 1975 subsequent to which Instrument of accession was deposited in UN Treaty Section in July 2015. Relevant Authorities of Pakistan are trying to finalize the operational pre-requisites to put this transit system in place by end of this year.

Process of approval for accession to UN CMR Convention-1956 dealing with the carriage of goods by road has also been initiated. Inter-ministerial and stakeholder consultation is pre-requisite prior to Cabinet's approval. Legal formalities for Pakistan's accession to CMR Convention are expected to be completed soon. Realizing the importance of International Conventions related to trade and transport, Government of
Pakistan is studying the legal implications, adoptability in terms of Pakistan’s existing procedures/rules for accession by Pakistan to Customs Convention on Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles (1956), Customs Convention on Containers (1972) and International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Control of Goods (1982).

Mr. Chairman!

No one can deny that the sustainable transport connectivity can only be achieved if infrastructure is built and services are delivered through sound policies, adequate institutions, and harmonized norms, standards and practices.

The Government of Pakistan is giving the highest priority to sustainable transport means through sound policies and harmonized standards. The realization of results of these efforts has started now. The commuters of its three major cities i.e. Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore have already taken a sigh of relief because of the operationalization of mass transit systems. Similar mass transit systems are being constructed in other cities namely Karachi and Multan. These projects will not only benefit millions of commuters and bring transportation systems of these major cities at par with the developed countries of the world but will also go a long way in promoting the sustainable transport means in the country.

Urban mobility is a multi-faceted challenge. It has the aspects of sustainability, safety, affordability, reliability, energy and time efficiency and decency. This challenge must be approached with a positive outlook.

Distinguished Delegates,

We do recognize that improving road safety should be one of the prime agenda of the Governments – particularly the emerging economies like Pakistan. I am happy to report that Government of Pakistan is fully aware of the task ahead. Thus, Road safety has been included in the National Transport Policy of Pakistan. Road Safety is also made part of every road development project. National Steering Committee with
representatives from all stakeholders at the Federal and Provincial Governments Levels has also been established and notified. National Road Safety Council at the Ministers Level also exists and will start functioning soon.

National Road Safety Plan for National Highways and Motorways has been prepared by Ministry of Communications with consultation of all stakeholders at the Federal and Provincial Governments Levels. This Plan has been based on the five pillars of the Global Plan of the United Nations Decade of Action which are:

i). Road Safety management
ii). Make roads and roadsides safer
iii). Safer Vehicles
iv). Safer Roads Users (Drivers, Motorcycles, Pedestrians etc)
v). Post Crash Care

Ladies & Gentlemen!

I am confident that the Ministerial Conference on Transport will come up with positive decisions and pragmatic recommendations for sustainable transport development & connectivity in Asia and the Pacific. Before concluding, I would like to thank UNESCAP and Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation for hosting this important Conference and extending great hospitality.

Thanks you!  [Bol'shoye Spasiba]