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Name of speaker: (Mr.) (Ms.) Cigiel Aslan, Deputy Director General

Country/Organization: Republic of Turkey
                    Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communication

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

Agenda Item No: ________________

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Giriş

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Representatives,

It is a great honor for me to greet, on behalf of the Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications of Turkish Republic, such an outstanding audience on the occasion of the UNESCAP Ministerial Conference on Transport.

I strongly believe that the High-Level Officials Meeting held during the last three days and this Ministerial Session will provide an important opportunity for taking up many aspects of transport throughout our region.

On this occasion, I would like to thank the Russian authorities, especially His Excellency Sokolov for hosting this vital event in the beautiful city, Moscow.
Honourable Ministers,

Turkey is currently within the 20th largest economies of the world and aims to be one of the top 10 economies by 2023, at its 100th anniversary of foundation.

Turkey aims to reach 1.1 trillion dollars foreign trade volume by 2023 and this surely requires new highways, railways and airports.

With this perspective, Turkeys plans to make 200 billion dollars of investment by 2023. 120 billion dollars of these investments will be allocated from public resources and the remaining 80 billion dollars will be realized by PPP models.

Undoubtedly, transport sector is one of the building blocks of this vital target. We also believe that new transport infrastructure will contribute to the development of transport networks in our region in an uninterrupted, sustainable and safe manner.

Honorable Ministers,

Distinguished decision-makers of the transport sector,

In our contemporary world, the shift of economic gravity towards emerging economies in Asia has generated a continuous growth in the transport of goods between Europe and Asia.
As top trading partners, trade between European Union and China is expected to exceed 800 billion Dollars in 2020 which will create a growing demand for connectivity in all countries of the region.

Bringing along growing demands to develop safe, secure and efficient inland and maritime transport as well as to promote logistical services among the developing eastern economies and the west, this development necessitates the revival of the Ancient Silk Road.

Once being an essential part of the historical silk road, Turkey is now at the crossroads of important transport corridors which are key for the revival of the modern silk road.

As you well know, there are three main corridors in Asia in the East-West direction, namely South, Middle and North corridors.

For Turkey, all three main corridors are crucial and complementary routes.

Turkey attaches a particular importance to the development of Middle Corridor as the Modern Silk Road from China to Europe.

The Middle Corridor extends from the western part of China to Kazakhstan, reaches up to Azerbaijan by crossing the Caspian Sea and Georgia through the Caucasus and then reaches Turkey and Europe.
The Corridor is one of the most competitive, shortest and cheapest routes in Asia. Complementing the other East-West routes, we attach great importance to Middle Corridor as it boosts socio-economic development of landlocked countries in Central Asia.

The main axis of our country's transport policies has been to realize large-scale infrastructure investments to provide an uninterrupted transport network from China to London.

We are proud to carry out vital projects that would serve as key routes for the whole Eurasia region. I would like to mention them in brief.

**DEMİRYOLLARI**

In the last decade, we realized many projects to adjust the imbalance of the transport modes in favour of the railways and to increase the share of railways among the transport modes.

An ambitious railway development programme is now adopted as the state policy. In this regard, our government made 20 Billion Dollar investment for railway transport since 2002 and we are planning to make an additional 40 Billion Dollar investment for the next ten years.

I would like to name some of our important railway projects that will also serve to enhance connectivity in the Asian Railway Network.
Currently, one of the top priorities of our government is to establish an Ankara-centred high-speed train network and rehabilitation of the existing lines.

Marmaray, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway Project and Edirne-Kars High Speed Railway Projects are completing missing links on the Middle Corridor.

**Marmaray**, which was completed by the end of 2013, provides an uninterrupted, modern, high capacity railway connection between Europe, Asia and Middle East under the sea and connects two continents in just four minutes.

**Kars-Tbilisi-Baku railway line**, which will contribute to further regional cooperation between our country, Azerbaijan and Georgia will also become a major transit corridor and it will be completed soon.

**Edirne-Kars High Speed Railway Project** is not only one of the vital railway projects for Turkey's transport strategy but also a vital project that would enhance connectivity in Eurasia.

The Project will be realized via cooperation between Turkey and China. The Railway Cooperation Agreement signed in Antalya between Turkey and China on the occasion of the G20 Summit, hosted by Turkey is actually a renewal and extension of a framework agreement reached five years ago.
The Agreement is exclusively about building a high-speed railway link between Kars and Edirne, in other words between the easternmost and westernmost points of Turkey, with Chinese funding and Chinese technology. The Project is envisaged to be finalized before 2023.

KARAYOLLARI

In terms of road transport, we aim to complete East-West and North-South road corridors in Turkey through construction of divided roads, tunnels and bridges.

We have proposed about 5,247 (five-thousand-two-hundred-forty-seven) km of our highway network to be included in the Eurasia Highway Network.

In the last 14 years, number of vehicles and the travel per km has doubled in Turkey. In the same period, length of divided road network rose from 6,000 kms to 25,000 kms.

Likewise, the standards of one-way roads have been elevated. As a result of these, average speed in traffic has been increased to 80 km per hour. The number of fatal accidents decreased by 17% in the same time period.

In the last decade, we have efficiently mobilized public-private-partnership mechanism in these projects.
The most important examples of these large-scale motorway projects realized in cooperation with private sector are: Gebze-Orhangazi-İzmir Motorway Project and North Marmara Motorway Project. and Eurasia Tunnel Project

Firstly; Gebze-Orhangazi-İzmir Motorway Project has a project budget of 6.5 billion dollars. The Project includes world’s 4th Suspension Bridge, namely Osmangazi Bridge that was launched on June of this year.

Second project in this regard is North Marmara Motorway Project that has a project budget of 6.2 billion dollars. This Project includes the longest suspension motorway bridge with railway line in the World, named Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, opened on last August.

Apart from these projects, The Eurasia Tunnel Project (İstanbul Strait Road Tube Crossing Project) to connect the Asian and European sides of Istanbul once more, via a highway tunnel going underneath the seabed will be launched on December 20th.

Last but not least, Istanbul Three-tiered Tunnel Project to include road transport and one level for urban rail systems will further facilitate transport connection between Asia and Europe. Project is now prepared for tender process.

We do also have huge projects in other modes of transport that is crucial for Eurasian connectivity, yet I will not be able to allocate much time on these projects due to shortage of time. I will just mention their names.
According to data released by the World Bank Group’s Private Participation in Infrastructure Database, Istanbul’s 35.6 billion dollar budgeted Istanbul Third Airport Project is the biggest public-private partnership project thus far.

Upon completion, the airport will become the largest in the world in terms of annual passenger capacity.

As regards the maritime transport, that is also vital for the Eurasian connectivity, we have plans to construct 3 hub ports in 3 seas surrounding Turkey. In line with this target, once completion of Çanakkale, Mersin and Filyos Ports is realized, the total container handling capacity of all Turkish ports is estimated to reach 32 Million TEU/year.

Promotion of international Ro-Ro transport is of utmost importance for our maritime policy. As of 2016, the number of vehicles transported via International RO-RO lines has increased %94 since 2003.

In the last four years, 16 international ro-ro lines have been launched.

**YATAY KONULAR**

Last but not the least, I would like to underline the importance of international cooperation for the development of connectivity in the ESCAP region. Beyond the infrastructural developments, smooth and fast operation is of great importance for international trade and traffic.
We should also intensify our cooperation in the horizontal issues such as facilitation of border crossing, simplification of visa procedures, safety and security in all modes of transport.

Harmonization of transport legislations is also vital for a smooth and reliable international transport.

SONUÇ

To sum up, I would like to express my wish that this meeting would be another good opportunity for building closer collaboration in the development of regional transport networks.

Thank You.