

In the Name of God
Address by Mr. Amir Amini
Deputy Minister of Roads & Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran

12th Annual Meeting of the IGC TRACECA

1 June 2016
Odessa, Ukraine

Heads of Delegations,
Distinguished Delegates,
Dear Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my pleasure to participate at the twelfth annual meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission TRACECA. I would also like to thank all organizers of this event, especially the honorable Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine and the honorable Permanent Secretariat.

Dear Participants,

Recognizing the common interests, Islamic Republic of Iran joined to TRACECA to be founded the preparation of wider cooperation. In this pattern of economics, commercial and transportation cooperation between thirteen countries, those are most important countries of Europe, Caucasus and Asia, high potentials has been created. Because of these high potentials, we should never be satisfied with current level of cooperation and should have eye to longer horizons.

Currently, a new season of amity relationships has begun with Iran and countries of Europe, Caucasus and Asia, also with international and regional organizations and institutions. For TRACECA, the Iran's quest for peace, friendship and good

neighborly relations with countries in the region, it seems to be a historical turning point and a valuable opportunity.

Due to the amity relationships and also planning and implementation of projects to develop transportation in all modes, the Iran today and future is a valuable opportunity for role-playing as a secure and affordable linkage between Europe, Caucasus and Asia.

I would like to mention that the statistics show that Iran's trade volume with TRACECA has increased during past years. Although at times there have been downs in short terms, but the long term common interests of countries always has priority.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the moment, Islamic Republic of Iran experiences planning and action for rapid, sustainable and job creation economic growth using all features and capabilities of country, and development of international transport and transit is one of the priorities of the country.

These measures with regards to in line with action plan and strategy of TRACECA, in addition to increasing the efficiency of existing routes of TRACECA in Iran, leading to new routes will be defined in terms of time and cost are more favorable moving of goods.

I would like to mention that, from the viewpoint of the Islamic Republic of Iran, detection of any transit alternative or definition of transit route is not as stagnation or elimination of existing routes. Any new route in TRACECA will motivate the authorities of existing routes to improve the services and productivity of infrastructure and facilities in a competitive environment.

**Dear Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Hereby I would like to inform you the most important actions and programs to develop and modernize the Northern and Southern ports of country and their hinterlands:

1. The historic trilateral agreement of transport and trade corridor of Iran, India and Afghanistan was signed recently. This agreement will remarkably increase the use of Chabahar Port in Southeastern Iran and it provides access of India to Central Asia through Afghanistan and in exchange for it, it provides access of Afghanistan to India through the sea. In this transit route, a multimodal transport will be used and special discount to transit goods will be provided.

This agreement, along with other effective interactions with countries, such as the quartet transit agreement between Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Oman to facilitate the transit of goods from Central Asia to Oman and Persian Gulf, laying the groundwork for more effective cooperation between TRACECA countries and Iran to develop Chabahar Port.

Chabahar Port is the suitable access of landlocked countries of Central Asia to international waters and with the implementation of mentioned agreement, Chabahar will become the center of transit, energy and trade of region.

Undoubtedly, the use of this port and investment in development of Port and railway and roads of its hinterland, will follow benefits for TRACECA. In this context, Iran is ready for and interested in cooperation with TRACECA countries.

2. Shahid Rajaei Port Complex in Southern Iran is the Golden Gate of TRACECA countries access to Persian Gulf and international waters due to the projects of increasing the capacity of loading and discharge especially

for containers, facilities and equipment of its hinterland especially access to national and international railway network, transit roads and air network. Iran is ready to attract investment and participation of TRACECA countries in the projects of this port and its hinterland, especially any plan to increase the share of rail network from transit cargo of port, development of multimodal transport and logistics centers.

3. In Northern Iran and margin of the Caspian sea, given the privileged position of Anzali port and its short distance to Northern and Western neighbors and also to the Capital city, the programs and projects of port development and promotion of transit capacity is in progress with emphasis on combined transportation. In the near future and after the operation of Qazvin – Rasht – Anzali- Astara Railway, its prosperity will increase. The government has attracted foreign investment and private sector partnerships. We welcome any suggestions of TRACECA countries and investors. We have provided favorable facilities for these partnerships.
4. Development of Amirabad Port in North of country is one of the most important ongoing projects. The port by using the most advanced equipment of loading and discharge of goods and also due to the access to the railway network of the country, could be as a strategic port for TRACECA. This port is connected to the Iran- Turkmenistan- Kazakhstan railway and it facilitates transportation East to west and vice versa Caspian Sea via North of Iran. I inform you that the attraction of private sector investment in this port has been done well. But because of the favorable condition of its hinterland, there is still high capacity for investment. In terms of the roads of hinterland, still a route as a road of North South from Amirabad to Bandarabbas in Persian Gulf, is under construction to be shorter than current route to an acceptable level.

5. In other commercial ports of Northern and Southern Iran including Khoramshahr, Abadan, Imam Khomeini, Boushehr, IJeh, Nowshahr, Neka and Freidunkenar, effective measures are ongoing. Each of these ports, has privileged position. Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes all TRACECA countries, companies and investors to collaborate in the ports of the country.

Dear Participants,

In the railway sector, based on the foundation of a new Paradigm, extensive planning for next Ten years has been done. Also construction and operation of high speed and electric lines, wagons and locomotive modernization and increment with partnerships and investment from known countries are under way. Important projects in cooperation with neighboring and regional countries to link the railways on the border with them is in planning and under construction. The major projects include:

1. In early 2016, after the stop of first China's container train in Tehran station after traveling fourteen days, Iran railway industry has taken a big step towards prosperity and progress. With more activities of the railway line Iran-Turkmenistan- Kazakhstan that jointly with a part of North- South Corridor, the travel time from Yiwu in Eastern China to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Iran will be reduced to eight days. This time will be about a month less than the sea route.
2. The projects of connectivity through China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iran will complete the missing railway links of connecting China and Persian Gulf and Europe via Iran route. We hope that in the near future, after completion these projects and also completion of railway project connecting Iran and Afghanistan, the Sangan- Khaf- Herat railway line, the

new routes to be activated to transit the goods of East Asia and Europe via Iran.

3. Another important effort in the North East and east of the country is to begin rail transit from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to Pakistan and in this regard, good cooperation between the countries has been formed.
4. Trying to complete the missing links of railway network to connect Iran railways to Europe through the North, North West and West country neighbors has been started in cooperation with the countries of region. In this regard, one of Important projects is the linkage of railway network of country to Azerbaijan that the executive operation has been started after an agreement in 2015 at a meeting called Astara- Astara.
5. Recently in meetings, three countries including Iran, Georgia and Azerbaijan has focused on setting up a new rail transit from the Persian Gulf to Europe. Thus, in a multimodal mode, the goods will be transported by railway and road from Persian Gulf to Azerbaijan via Iran, then by railway to Azerbaijan and thereon to Georgia, then it will shipped from Batumi and Poti in Georgia to Black Sea and then Ports in Romania and Bulgaria and thereon to the rest of Europe. Thus, all included countries of this route will benefit from common transit interests. This path could be considered as one of the key branches of TRACECA and also it will be a new season of increasing cooperation on convergence of countries of Caucasus, Black sea, Central and Northern Europe.
6. Iran is interested in Iran- Armenia railway connection on Jolfa Border. Calls and agreements between the parties have been done. We hope that in the future, this project will be operated for connecting Black Sea Ports to Southern Iran ports.

7. With the launch of Shalamchah - Basra railway line, the railway network of Iran will connect to Iraq and East Mediterranean countries through Khoramshahr, and the transit and movement of goods and passengers will take a new shape. Shifting a lot of import and export goods of Iran- Iraq from road transport to railway, with advantages of passenger transport between two countries, are the most important achievements in creation of this rail linkage. This connection can make a confident linkage between Central Asia countries to Iraq and East Mediterranean countries via Iran.
8. I would like to mention that the operation of time planned train of Pakistan- Iran- Turkey via rail linkage on rail border with Turkey, Razi Border, can have an important role in TRACECA. Iran has Considered this topic.
9. In addition to rail network infrastructure development, some major efforts are under way. Including Plans to modernize the equipment and electronic systems, founding leasing entity in the field of railways, the possibility of forming joint Iranian foreign companies, development of combined transportation and door to door services, offering discounts on loads carried by rail, providing favorable conditions for private sector and foreign countries participations with governmental guarantees. From my point of view, this is an opportunity for development of economic relations between member countries within the framework of TRACECA.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the road sector, currently a considerable portion of transit in the territory of Islamic Republic of Iran is carried out through the roads. At present, the extensive transit road network have favorable accesses to road borders with neighbor countries, ports and railway network. The projects of connecting the roads to

international and regional corridors seriously is under planning and implementation.

Considerable completed and planned measures to strengthen road transit include:

1. Use of the combined transportation models through the construction of logistics centers and dry ports. In this regard, comprehensive studies has been carried out. Hereby I declare Islamic Republic of Iran's readiness to cooperate with TRACECA member countries in investment and joint operation.
2. The system of roads management of country has been established and it is active on the basis of modern monitoring and control technologies.
3. Accession to the conventions and international treaties to facilitate customs procedures and to provide secure, safe, convenient, easy and environmentally friendly passage on the roads has been done and significant efforts to join conventions such as ADR in ongoing.
4. Establishment and expansion of activities of single - window and equipping road borders of neighboring countries with X-Ray and also smart customs procedures are priority actions in country.
5. Roads connection to neighboring countries, completing the missing road links and Asian Highway are underway. I would like to mention that the priority of construction the arterial roads is the projects those can attract the private sector and foreign countries investment.
6. Prioritization of road infrastructure maintenance projects via establishment the national road network maintenance management system.
7. Reducing road accidents using intelligent systems and elimination hotspots.
8. Exit of aging fleet and the entry of new fleet and adding heavy trucks through bank loans.

Dear Participants,

I would like to mention that in the air transport industry, preparation for a significant historical mutation has been provided. The contracts of significant number of new air fleet purchase have been concluded with most prestigious global major companies and the first series of new fleet will deliver to Iran this year. Of course, these contracts are the first step of historical mutation and a comprehensive plan to develop air transportation has been considered.

We have taken important steps to provide secure and open sky. These measures are valuable opportunities to establish a safe and affordable air link of passengers between Europe- Caucasus and Asia.

Heads of Delegations,

Distinguished Delegates,

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe that TRACECA Agreement can play a role as engine of development the economic relations between Europe, Caucasus and Asia countries in the space that has been created for cooperation and convergence of country members.

I hope that TRACECA countries strengthen their amity, cooperation and convergence with Iran, in according to the capabilities created in this territory, for detecting and using solutions to increase international transport and transit through the secure, safe and affordable territory of Iran.

At the end, once more, I thank to my dear colleague **Mr. Volodymyr Omelyan**, and also I thank to honorable Secretary General **Mr. Mircea Ciopraga**, for holding and organizing this meeting. I hope that this meeting could have valuable achievements for all member countries.

Thank you for your attention!