

Georgia

Your Excellency, President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov,

Your Excellency, Secretary - General Ban Ki-Moon

Your Excellences, Heads of States and Governments,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Distinguished guests,

It is my pleasure to be here today. I express my gratitude to the President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and to the Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon for initiating and organizing such important event.

Global Sustainable Transport Conference gives new impetus to our fruitful cooperation. In the framework of our meeting, we are witnessing the historical occasion of launching “Lapis Lazuri” project that is significant step forward towards the advancement.

I would like to use this opportunity and congratulate Turkmenistan and Afghanistan with the remarkable event that will further increase the importance of the East – West corridor.

Nowadays, partners and allies matters the most. Our gathering today is yet another proof of the significance of our cooperation. Historically friendly relation of our nations imposes highest responsibility on us, on the political leaders to enhance and deepen partnership between our states. Strengthening our cooperation is especially important in such sensitive period, when we all are at a critical juncture that comes to our common ability to shape tomorrow’s international agenda.

Strong partnership and the advancement is the only response to the existing challenges. We can resolve the problems and achieve success for welfare only through unity but not with wars, with cooperation but not with aggression, with healthy competition but not with invasion or occupation, through dignity and respect but not with the restoration of the “spheres of privileged interest”.

We must unify our efforts as our strength goes through development, potentials and new opportunities. In this regard, furthering partnership in the fields of economy, infrastructure as well as international trade is vital for all of us.

With this spirit, as the continuation of the historical traditions, we are developing international projects in the modern world. Being bridge between East and West as a centuries-old natural function of Georgia, my country creates great opportunities in further strengthening ties between Europe and Asia.

Georgia is already actively engaged in different international infrastructural projects. We have success hosing the functional pipelines and railroads of transcontinental importance as they provide transportation of goods, free movement of labor and capital from East to West. Caucasus region is the strategic pillar for transport and logistics for the development of the new "Silk Road".

We already have achievements through fruitful cooperation with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Chinese for the freight to move from China to the Black Sea ports of Georgia with low tariffs without any delays. Transportation of goods from China to Georgia is available in the shortest period within seven days. I am confident we will have even greater success and I call on our other partners for the active partnership and more engagement.

Georgia provides access to the Black Sea for 8 landlocked countries out of the 14 on the Eurasian continent. Georgian seacoast is one of the essential destination point for

the Europe-Caucasus-Asia corridor. Batumi, Poti and Kulevi ports offer extensive services to the foreign and local partners. The Anaklia deep-sea port construction project will increase the capacity of the free trade flows between Europe and Asia in the near future; respectively, it will contribute to the further development of transit and logistics potential.

Georgia is a reliable, responsible, predictable, strong partner and ally that always stays faithful to its commitments even in the crisis or hardship. In spite of creeping occupation of our territories by the Russian Federation, none of our partner has experienced any problem cooperating with us.

Georgia's European and Euro Atlantic integration brings more benefits and opens new perspectives that we share with our allies. The DCFTA has significant implications for Georgia's economy and provides new opportunities for international trade and economic growth. It facilitates business-to-business contacts and encourages foreign direct investments.

At the same time, it offers an opportunity to enhance prospects for exports and productions. My country, as a democratic state offers transparency, attractive investment climate, access of services, simplicity of doing and starting business with a low level of corruption and crime.

Stating altogether, Georgia is increasing its role as a trade, transport, logistics and financial regional hub. Our goal is to connect dozens of countries and tens of millions of people in Europe and Asia to one another and thus become a subject of their welfare, development and interest.

I am confident that intensive partnership and joint efforts will succeed to create better and more secure future for the generations to come.

I would like to thank President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and UN Secretary-General once again for organizing such important conference.