

Excellences Ministers of Transport,

Esteemed Delegates,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my thanks to the Government of Turkmenistan for their hospitality and excellent preparations made for the successful convening of this Conference. I also would like to express my profound gratitude to UN and ~~Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan~~ for this opportunity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Director General of SESRIC, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce ~~my~~ the organization. SESRIC is a subsidiary of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The basic mandate of SESRIC covers three areas: Statistics; Training and Technical Cooperation; and Research for the MCs

-In the area of Statistics, and under the category of "Transport and Communication", SESRIC provides data on 20 indicators

-In the area of Training and Technical Cooperation; SESRIC initiated Capacity Building Programmes

-And in terms of research, SESRIC recently completed a research report under the title: ***Transportation Networks in the OIC Member Countries: Impact on Trade and Tourism.***

Here, I would like to share with you the main highlights of the report:

- As a group, the OIC countries account for one sixth of the world's land area and enjoy a vast strategic trading region.

- Transportation networks facilitate mass carriage of goods, which is of special importance to the OIC countries since the majority of them are producers of primary commodities, mainly energy and agricultural products.
- Therefore, it is necessary to establish a **multimodal sustainable transportation system** which functions efficiently not only at the individual country level but also at the OIC regional level.
- The road network density in OIC countries is poor when compared with other countries group and points to the need to further develop the road network in OIC countries
- The rail networks in OIC countries standardized on the basis of population and land area are lower than what is observed in other country groups
- This situation in the OIC countries are mainly caused by the stagnant rail line infrastructure growth coupled with the increasing population.
- The air network density in OIC countries is still below the desired level and significantly lags that in developed countries and the world average
- In many OIC countries, the low levels of air traffic can be attributed to the lack of infrastructure facilities such as proper terminals and paved runways which are very low in number and size.
 - Sea transportation infrastructure in the OIC countries is underdeveloped and the transportation system as a whole offers poor connectivity

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- The lack of investment in road infrastructure seems to hinder the ability of OIC countries in increasing their trade and tourism, thus putting them behind the world average.
 - Sustainable transportation is an important element in sustainable development, thus the need to develop the transportation infrastructure while protecting the environment
 - OIC countries have done a relatively good job in meeting the MDG target of having a trend reversal in CO₂ emissions (kg per PPP \$ of GDP) with 43 OIC countries meeting the target.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The OIC fully understands the importance of the transport sector in achieving sustainable development and this is demonstrated by the following:

1. Mobility is one of the three principles of the **COMCEC strategy** and one of its ^{main} six areas of cooperation
2. The **IDB Special Program for Central Asia** targeted the transport sector as one of the three sectors requiring intervention
3. The **Organization of the Islamic Ship-owners Association (OISA)** was established by the 3rd Islamic summit
4. The establishment of a committee for implementing the **Port Sudan-Dakar Railway Project** was adopted at the 11th Islamic Summit
5. *There is a* Proposal of the OIC to commence a **Conference of Transport Ministers** to be held once every two years to establish high level policy coordination among Ministers of Transport in

member countries and promote dialogue on the challenges and problems facing the transport sector in the OIC countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

- OIC countries face critical obstacles and challenges in the field of transportation.: *Namely*
- Already inadequate infrastructure and maintenance services cannot be improved considerably, due to insufficient financing resources and investment in the transportation sector
- Complex and prolonged customs and border-crossing procedures, prevent the development of trade and transportation.
- Another challenge faced by OIC countries is inadequate implementation of trade and transport facilitation measures and the lack of information and knowledge-sharing among OIC member countries in this area. Lack of a sound, harmonized, and adequate legal and regulatory frameworks, both at national and OIC regional level further exacerbates this challenge.
- Moreover, OIC countries lack the adequate human and institutional capacity of relevant transportation authorities.
- Finally, the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in the area of transport, trade facilitation and tourism is also lagging.

In the light of the mentioned challenges the following recommendations can be made at both national and OIC cooperation levels:

- At the national level, the solution of infrastructure problems requires sustainable longer-term investment and involvement of the private sector in transport projects. In this regard, private investments via Public-Private Partnership (PPP) scheme have

become popular around the world as a tool for improving transport infrastructure.

- Measures should be developed to improve the maintenance of existing roads, railways, seaports and airports as well as to improve the quality of these transport modes services.
- Transport sector reform has to be set in the context of general reform of public institutions, and transport development plans should be integrated into their national strategies taking into consideration regional initiatives.
- National Trade and Transport Facilitation Committees (NTTFC) can be established for better coordination among private and public sectors institutions. This can help to identify the major transport related obstacles to tourism and trade in the member countries by increasing coordination among the ministries of transport, trade and tourism.
- At the OIC cooperation level, developing an OIC regional transport approach requires close cooperation and coordination between the member countries as well as the different organization and agencies involved. It also requires concluding of framework agreements on the priorities both in the infrastructure and policy areas.
- And Finally, Enhancing partnership with relevant regional and international organizations in the field of transport to avoid duplication and enhance effectiveness. In this framework, a master plan for the transport corridors in the OIC Member States should be prepared.

Ladies and Gentlemen, This brings me to the end of my presentation. At the end, I wish all of us success in our deliberations, and thank you for your kind attention.