

G e o r g i a

Dear Chairman,
Dear Colleagues,
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, let me thank the Government of Kazakhstan, the UNECE and the UNESCAP for the organization of the meeting on the high level. I avail myself of the opportunity and express my thanks to the UN, as well as to the other international organizations and financial institutions that support and show great interest in developing of the infrastructure in Georgia and in whole Caucasus Region.

By means of my presentation, I will try to highlight the progress achieved in the sphere of Georgian infrastructure, as well as the prospects of Eurasian Transport links and existing problems.

Briefly About Georgia

1. Georgia's favorable geopolitical location determined obtaining the role of transit country connecting Europe to Asia, for centuries. This has become more important for recent years, strengthened the mentioned function and achieved the worldwide fame.

At present, we can name many examples of successful regional and sub-regional cooperation that highlight and identify the great strategic importance of Georgia.

Asian Highway Network

2. Georgia became the UNESCAP member on July 25, 2000. Our country actively participates in Asian Highway (AH) Network Project aim of which is to stimulate international cargo transportation, develop it and make perfect. Signing of Intergovernmental Agreement on Asian Highway Network is planned in April this year. At present, domestic procedures concerning the Agreement are underway. Inter-regional route AH-5 passes through Georgia that takes its start from Shanghai (China) and ends at the border of Bulgaria.

3. As well as, two Intra-regional routes of Asian Highway AH-81 and AH-82.

Trans Asian Railway

4. Georgia also actively cooperates with the UNESCAP concerning the Trans-Asian Railway Project. At present, the processes of railway routes' initialization and analysis of the existing Agreements between the States in the railway sphere are underway.

AGR (E-Roads)

5. Georgia became the member of UNECE on July 30, 1993. E-60 Route of E-Roads, from Brest (France) to Irkeshtam (border between Kyrgyzstan and China) passes through Georgia.

6. As well as other routes of E-Category.

AGC (E-Rail)

7. E-rail route E-60 from Batumi (Georgia), via Baku (Azerbaijan), crossing the Caspian Sea to Ashgabad (Turkmenistan), Buchara and Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and connecting to E-50 in Arys (Kazakhstan) passes through Georgia.

TRACECA

8. The conference of eight Ministers of Trade and Transport of South-Caucasus and Middle-Asia regions took place in Brussels (Belgium) in May 1993. It was made the decision and the famous Brussels' declaration was signed by means of which the will of EU and these States was expressed. The aim of this declaration was to realize the formation of Eurasian Transport Corridor and special wide scaled technical support regional project TRACECA.

9. Several International Agreements were the base for the Europe-Caucasus-Asia Transport Corridor development. The first important stage for the activation of this process was the Intergovernmental Agreement on transit support that was signed in Sarakhs (Turkmenistan) in 1996 “Agreement on Cooperation in the Sphere of Regulation of Transit Transport of Goods” and “The Agreement on Coordination of Railway Transport Activities” (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). Realization of the above-mentioned Agreements increased transit cargo turnover.

10. On the Baku summit that was held on September 8-9, 1998 the basic Multimodal Agreement on International Transport, for the development of Europe-Caucasus-Asia Transport Corridor” was signed.

11. In September 2001, it was completed building of the Rail-Ferry terminal in Aktau Port by the financing of the European Union (the above-mentioned fact directly connected the Kazakhstan railway to the South Caucasus Railway network and obtained its access to the Black Sea Ports that importantly increased the volume of transit goods’ flow through Caucasus).

12. On the extraordinary meeting of Intergovernmental commission that took place in Tbilisi (Georgia) on December 11-12, 2001 the resolution directed to the TRACECA Program member countries was signed. The aim of the resolution was the simplification of procedures for humanitarian cargo movement to Afghanistan.

Joint Humanitarian Action of European Union and “Daimler-Chrysler”

13. In September 2003, The “Daimler-Chrysler” together with the European Union successfully realized the Germany Government’s humanitarian cargo transportation from Brussels (Belgium) to Afghanistan, through the TRACECA Route.

14. The journey was highlighted by the representatives of the Western Mass-Media (30 journalists). This journey satisfied such criteria of transportation as safety, time and transport service and once again underlined the crucial geostrategic and geopolitical location of Georgia.

Cargo Turnover

15. The volume of cargo turnover in recent years (Georgian Railway).

16. The volume of cargo turnover in recent years (Poti Port).

17. Dry cargo processing in recent years (Batumi Port).

The represented statistics is the conclusive and substantial evidence to prove that the transit traffic is of great importance for the economics of Georgia.

I cannot disregard the existing situation on the roads of Georgia that importantly influences on the attraction of International Transit Traffic. Total length of roads of Georgia is 20229 kilometers. The total length of roads of international Importance is 1474 kilometers. At the end of 2004 it will be completed rehabilitation works of approximately 350 kilometers of International Importance Roads, considered by the two projects. These projects are financed by the credits of the World Bank and the Kuwaiti Fund. Nevertheless, the significant proportion of International Importance Roads of Georgia still needs reconstruction and rehabilitation. Considering the above said, the support of International Financial Institutions is of vital importance to our country.

18. Our country welcomes and supports every initiative the aim of which is to support trade and cargo transportation, to improve the transport services, to increase the competitive ability in the sphere of transport and to carry out powerful transport policy.

I would like to thank You once again for your hospitality and for the organization of meeting on the high level.

Thanks for the attention.