

OSCE



UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference

Draft Welcoming Remarks

Secretary General Lamberto Zannier

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, I join previous speakers in welcoming you to this UN conference on Global Sustainable Transport. Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the organizers, President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Sustainable transport is a key driver of sustainable economic growth. It boosts regional cross-border trade and stimulates economic interaction and co-operation, strengthening economic development and creating jobs. It connects rural areas to urban centers, and economic hubs to regions with a less attractive business climate. Individuals benefit by gaining easier access to jobs and markets, education and healthcare.

Sustainable and secure transport has been on the OSCE's agenda for many years, and we have developed a close partnership in this area with the UN Economic Commission for Europe. This year, "economic connectivity" has been a central theme of the German OSCE Chairmanship, underscoring OSCE engagement in the area of transport. Infrastructure projects, transport corridors, trade, energy safety and digital connectivity were some of the key topics at the OSCE Business Conference in May.

One important way to enhance connectivity, particularly for landlocked developing countries which face specific transit challenges, is by reducing bureaucratic procedures that hamper international trade and discourage foreign investment

creating high transaction costs and delays in cross-border movement of goods and services. Tackling these kinds of challenges does not necessarily require a lot of resources. But it does require strong political will, as well as the technical capacity to simplify, streamline and harmonize regulatory frameworks and to co-operate more closely, both domestically and internationally. This is an area where the OSCE can help. For example, our Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe provides targeted, technical assistance and capacity building to customs, trade and transport officials on risk analysis, non-intrusive inspection methods, trade facilitation and the development of trusted trader programmes.

The OSCE also assists governments in building integrity in their customs and border services. In co-operation with the World Customs Organization, we provide training programmes aimed at assessing the economic impact of corruption in customs, facilitating the sharing of good practices and exploring the use of public-private partnerships in cross-border trade transactions. At its very core, our work in this field also contributes to better governance as it promotes transparency and government accountability towards the business community and citizens.

By mobilising support for the restoration of interrupted trade links or the establishment of new promising connections, we can make travel, commerce and transport easier, less time-consuming and more cost efficient. As a security organization, the OSCE also sees co-operation on trade and transport as an important confidence-building measure that could generate dialogue on broader political and security issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Transport needs to be secure if it is to be sustainable. Over the past 15 years, we have seen terrorist attacks on transport infrastructure in Madrid, London, Istanbul, the Russian Federation, and Brussels. Many more attempts – fortunately

unsuccessful – have not made the headlines. International terrorism and transnational organized crime pose serious threats to the transport sector and to our common security. The OSCE works with the International Air Transport Association (IATA), with which I signed a Memorandum of Understanding last month, to promote harmonized passenger data exchange programmes and measures to strengthen the security of travel documents in an effort to prevent the transit of foreign terrorist fighters. But the transport sector faces a broad and complex range of security risks beyond terrorism, including theft of high-value cargo, trafficking in dangerous substances and/or hazardous waste, as well as cyber threats to our increasingly digitalized transport systems.

At the same time, there is increasing recognition that we need to integrate the principles of sustainable development into transport policies so that they effectively protect health, the environment, and natural resources. The 2030 Agenda offers us clear guidance on what needs to be done. High-level meetings like this one enable us to build bridges and stronger partnerships that will help us to act on global goals we have set ourselves. As a regional security organization under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this global call for action.

Thank you.