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Turkmenistan UN Plenary Speech

Introduction

Mr President, Excellencies,

It is a great pleasure to attend the first Global Sustainable Transport Conference, hosted by the Government of Turkmenistan. The European Commissioner for Transport, Violeta Bulc, sends her best personal regards to you, Mr President, for a successful event. Thank you President Berdimuhamedov for this hospitality!

2015 was a defining year for sustainable development worldwide. In September last year, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. 2015 also saw the Paris Climate Agreement (COP21), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

[The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development represents a commitment to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development by 2030 worldwide, ensuring that no one is left behind. All countries, developed and developing alike, have a shared responsibility to achieve the SDGs.]

In its Communications of last Tuesday, 22 November, the European Commission set out very clearly how the Commission's actions, in conjunction with those of EU Member States, contribute to implementing the UN 2030 Agenda. The Commission shared a vision

and framework for development cooperation that aligns with the 2030 Agenda. Among many diverse actions, the EU commits to (1) support the development of sustainable, interconnected and secure transport networks, (2) further the promotion of sustainable urban mobility and (3) facilitate financing through the blending of public grants and loans for energy, transport and water infrastructure.

I see our meeting today in this wider context. Sustainable transport is a core element of our common work on sustainable development.

I will briefly describe some of what we are doing at the EU level to implement the 2030 Agenda on our side.

First, decarbonisation:

Within Europe, the EU has placed significant emphasis on the decarbonisation of transport. Earlier this year, we published an EU Low Emission Mobility Strategy. Transport accounts for almost a quarter of Europe's greenhouse gas emissions and adversely impacts on air quality.

[We are concentrating on three areas:

- First, higher efficiency of transport systems;
- Second, low-emission alternative energy sources for transport;
- And third, low- and zero-emission vehicles.

Using this Strategy, the European Union aims to cut carbon emissions from transport across all modes. If we succeed, our approach might become a model for other parts of the world, facing similar challenges.]

But sustainable development is a global challenge, and developing sustainable transport is a shared global task. In this context, the specialised agencies of the United Nations family play a vital role.

Allow me to take a few moments to focus on some specific actions on different modes of transport:

First, on aviation, the EU welcomes the strong leadership of ICAO – the International Civil Aviation Organisation. The deal on Global Market Based Measure is a major step forward to tackle CO2 emissions from aviation. Europe has consistently advocated global and coordinated action to curb the growth of aviation emissions.

[The Global Market Based Measure is a good outcome because it is global, it is non-discriminatory, it is fair, and takes into account differences in the economic and development situations of States, and finally, it is based on aviation activity, not on geography. States with little impact on international aviation will be exempted.]

This agreement opens a new chapter in international aviation. It is also the first global agreement to address CO2 emissions in a specific sector of the economy.

In **maritime transport**, the IMO – the International Maritime Organisation – recently agreed to introduce a mandatory data collection scheme for international shipping, starting from 2019. Data on fuel consumption and energy efficiency will be reported to the flag State and then transferred to IMO, which will produce an annual report. Data collection is an important first step.

[The EU strongly supports the IMO's intention to formulate an initial strategy to determine the emissions reduction objective of shipping in 2018. We also welcome IMO's decision to target a sulphur limit for marine fuel of just 0.5% by 2020.]

The EU remains committed not only to contribute to emissions reductions but also to financially and technically contribute to capacity-building across the globe. [For example, the EU is funding a capacity building project with ICAO for EUR 6.5 Million to facilitate developing countries in establishing CO2 reduction programmes related to aviation. The EU is also funding a EUR 10 Million project with the IMO to establish five Maritime Technology Cooperation Centres in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific. The Commission is determined to assist developing countries in responding to climate change to ensure that no country is left behind.]

A further element that I would like to mention is Road Safety.

The specific SDG 3.6 aims to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020, and this objective was endorsed by the 2nd Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety in Brasilia in 2015.

In Europe, since 2000, we have managed to halve the number of people killed each year on the roads. Nevertheless, the size of the problem is staggering. 70 people a day die on our roads, and 370 a day suffer life-changing injuries. To address the problem, Commissioner Bulc supports a three pillar approach is needed, based on the three 'E's: Driver EDUCATION, better ENGINEERING, and better ENFORCEMENT.

But road safety is a concern for all of us – and is an integral part of our work on achieving the sustainable development goals in view of its human and economic consequences in general. As such it is an important part of EU development policy and in our outreach to the developing world. A road safety component is included in all our transport infrastructure investments, notably in Africa. Our support for the UN DECADE project on Road Safety and its Africa Action Plan is challenged through the African Transport Support Programme, which we fund to a value €8 million.

Finally, I would like to highlight how the EU reaches out internationally to advance our common agenda of sustainable development:

Implementation will require new investments in sustainable infrastructure sectors like transport, contributing to global efforts towards economic growth, poverty eradication and combating climate change.

With a view to boosting investment for sustainable growth and jobs, in Europe and globally, a new **European External Investment Plan** was announced by European Commission President Juncker in September 2016. This can make a key contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals, bringing the development of sustainable, safe and resilient infrastructure networks in transport.

[In particular:

- It aims to boost regional and cross-border transport investment;

- It focuses on road safety and interventions in support of the Africa Action Plan of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020;
- It will support the provision of access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems by supporting sustainable urban mobility solutions in the context of the **Habitat III New Urban Agenda** and our commitments under the Paris Agreement on climate change.]

Last year, the European Union and China adopted the "EU-China Connectivity Platform" which represents the first step towards the development of a joint vision of future connections between Europe, Central Asia and China. The main aim is to ensure that transport markets can rely on free, fair and undistorted competition based on regulatory convergence, a level playing field and sustainability, as well as to promote cooperation in transport areas like infrastructure, equipment, technologies, standards, engineering and construction.

In this regard, the Central Asian region and Turkmenistan as a key part of the region have an essential part to play in strengthening cross-border cooperation in our common interest.

Conclusion

In closing, let me underline that the EU is sincere in its efforts to reduce carbon emissions, and wherever we can, we are willing to help. All our 28 Member States are committed to the Sustainable Development Goals. It is in the interest of us all to meet this challenge, to make sure that our planet can be enjoyed by future generations. Thank you for your attention.