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Increasing road transport’s contribution to the development of Central Asian economies

High-level International Conference on the “Development of Road Transport and Transit Potential in Central Asia for the Period up to 2023” confirms road transport’s untapped potential to contribute to the economic development of the region and adopts an Action Plan to further develop trade and international road transport in Central Asian countries.

Dushanbe – A high-level International Conference in Tajikistan today brought together some 150 business and political experts from 16 countries and 12 international organisations to discuss the “[Development of Road Transport and Transit Potential in Central Asia for the Period up to 2023](http://www.iru.org/en_dushanbe_conference_2013)”.Conference debates emphasised the great potential of the Central Asian region in supporting the development of trade and international road transport between Asia and the CIS, the Middle East and Europe, and particularly between Central Asia, China and Afghanistan.

In his address to the participants of the Conference UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon highlighted that trade, transit and transport are critical to economic growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development and around the world. They are critical to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Opening the Conference, the First Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, Matlubhon Davlatov said, “The development of trade and transport is one of our priorities. Today the development of road transport infrastructure in the Republic is actively being implemented, so that road transport can help our country escape from the transport deadlock and become an active participant in regional and transcontinental cooperation. Only a coordinated approach to regional development, the creation of full-fledged regional transport infrastructure and the harmonisation of procedures may attract trade by road to the Central Asian region.”

Conference participants adopted a Resolution stressing the need to integrate regional road transport in the Euro-Asian land transport links and called on governments in the region to harmonise international road transport and border crossing procedures by fully implementing tried and tested multilateral UN trade and transport facilitation Agreements and Conventions, as well as the OSCE’s “[Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings](http://www.osce.org/eea/88200)” in Central Asian countries, while progressively liberalising bilateral and multilateral road transport operations across the region and facilitating visa issuance procedures for professional drivers.

In his closing remarks, IRU Secretary General Emeritus, Martin Marmy stated, “Conference discussions clearly confirm that, while several Central Asian countries are landlocked to sea transport, no country is landlocked to international road transport. This Conference has confirmed the need to turn currently landlocked countries into ‘land-linked’ countries to trade by further facilitating road transport and that the development of road transport linkages between different regions of the world is an issue of global importance which can only be achieved by implementing UN multilateral trade and transport facilitation instruments in every region”.

The Conference was organised by the Government of Tajikistan in cooperation with the IRU, the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), the Intergovernmental Commission for the Transport Corridor Europe - Caucasus – Asia (TRACECA), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), as well as IRU’s Tajik Member, the Association of International Road Transport Carriers in the Republic of Tajikistan (ABBAT).

See Conference [speeches, presentations and pictures](http://www.iru.org/en_dushanbe_conference_2013)

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