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**“Maritime and inland waterways co-operation in the OSCE area:
Increasing security and protecting the environment”**

Part 2 / Prague, 19 – 21 May 2008

Plenary Session II

**Prospects for overcoming challenges faced by landlocked developing countries in the
OSCE area**

Please find attached the presentation by Mr. Annageldy Yazmuradov, First Deputy Minister of Water Resources of Turkmenistan.

Unofficial translation

Prospects of co-operation of Turkmenistan for development of transport communications in Central-Asian region

First Deputy Minister of Water Resources of Turkmenistan Mr. A. Yazmuradov

Dear Mr Chairman,
Dear participants and guests to the Forum,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Turkmenistan is situated in the south-west of Central Asia; its size is 489,2 thous. sq.m. Turkmenistan borders Iran and Afghanistan in the south, Azerbaijan in the west through the Caspian, Kazakhstan on the north and Uzbekistan in the east.

Since gaining independence, Turkmenistan has chosen its own sovereign political course, peaceful way, the way of rapid economic growth, independent development of all branches for the benefit of the country and its nation, while locating along the main transportation routes, which connect Central-Asian region with Caucasus, Europe, Asia and Far East. Since ancient times trade routes of the Great Silk Road passed through the territory of Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan, due to its geographic location and the Caspian Sea provides cargo transit from European countries and Caucasus to Asian countries and back through the international sea port Turkmenbashy. In order to ensure the transit of goods via Turkmenistan for land-locked countries, on 13 May 1996, the Governments of Uzbekistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan came into agreement to establish a railway-ferry link between the international sea ports Turkmenbashy and Baku.

Putting this crossing into operation will significantly increase the railway operation not only between these states, but for the whole Central-Asian region, and in future will provide exit via the Black Sea into the World Ocean.

After gaining independence, and implemented the Programme of construction of new and reconstruction of existing rail roads throughout the country was developed in Turkmenistan. The Programme envisaged constructing 2 thous. km of new rail roads.

Within this programme, the railway Tejen-Sarabs-Mashad (Iran) was constructed - the most important railway for the country, the total length of which is more than 300 km and 132 km of which passes through Turkmenistan.

At present goods from Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are being transported via Turkmenistan to the Middle East. This railway opened the way for the goods from Siberia and Far East, Central Asia to the ports of the Persian Gulf, Turkey, Europe and ensured access to the ports of all four oceans in Eurasian region. It is hard to over estimate significance of this road.

The second railway Turkmenabat-Atamurat, length 203 km also was built. After 1.5 km the joint railway and automobile road will have been completed in 2010, one more transit corridor will open eastwards to Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and

Afghanistan. It should be noted that this new route and a bridge through Amu-Darya river will unite a part of the road on the right side of the river with the whole railway network in the country, and give new impetus to speed up development of the eastern industrial region.

In 2008, Turkmen railway workers started to construct Turkmen part of the new international railway road Uzen' (Kazakhstan) – Gyzylgaya – Bereket – Etrek - Gorgan (Iran), the transport corridor “North-South” with the length 697,5 km.

Putting into operation of the international transit corridor “North-South” is planned for 2011; it will help establish a reliable direct transport corridor from CIS countries to the Persian Gulf region and reach the World Ocean.

Automobile roads are important part of transport communications of Turkmenistan. In our country there are 13640 km of automobile roads, 6465 k of which are roads of international significance.

Now in the country highways of international level are being rapidly constructed. They will provide transportation of goods until the international sea port of Turkmenbashi and further through the Caspian to European countries.

In light of this issue, I would like to note, that further development of transboundary co-operation will facilitate decrease of administrative barriers in international trade. In order to decrease and eliminate those barriers, which interfere with trade development between border countries, we have to be more active in order to jointly promote issues of transboundary communication through regional associations.

In this regard, I would like to mention, that today's Forum is extremely important. I believe, that OSCE could play a role of facilitator and consultant, in order to improve international transit, customs procedures for transit operators.

In the end I would like to thank the organizers of this Forum for the invitation to participate, for warm welcome, and would like to stress once again that we are ready for co-operation and dialogue, both within bilateral and multilateral formats, in order to discuss mutually beneficial constructive proposals for general development.

Thank you for your attention.