

Opening Remarks

**by H.E. Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov
Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, Permanent Representative of the
Republic of Kazakhstan to the OSCE, OSCE Chairmanship**

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of the Kazakh OSCE Chairmanship for 2010, it is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this second part of the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum on “*Promoting good governance at border crossings, improving the security of land transportation and facilitating international transport by road and rail in the OSCE region*”.

First of all I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to the Czech government for its warm hospitality and for all its efforts in the preparation of the Forum.

It is an honour to see among the participants the distinguished representatives of the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation; high-level officials from ministries and agencies for transport, customs, finance and border police; representatives of various international, regional and non-governmental organizations; experts from academia and the business sector. Let me also welcome our distinguished keynote speakers, Mr. Jan Kubiš, UN Under Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), and Mr. Cheick Sidi Diarra, UN Under Secretary General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. I look forward to your keynote addresses.

Economy depends on transportation. We need transport in order to transfer goods and people, and to organise trade. Enhancing the efficiency and security of transport is thus of paramount importance for the development of the economy.

Against this background, we have elaborated a comprehensive agenda for this concluding part of the 18th Economic and Environmental Forum. Let me now outline its main parts.

We shall explore how facilitation and security measures, which we discussed at previous Forum events and we will further discuss here, can help to develop major transport routes, in particular between Asia and Europe, and thus to overcome the global economic downturn. In this context, we will also address the specific problems faced by landlocked developing countries.

The Forum participants shall exchange views on the main findings and recommendations of the Review of the implementation of OSCE commitments in the area of transport and security prepared by the UNECE. This is again a clear testimony to the excellent working partnership existing between the OSCE and the UNECE.

I hope that the Panel format of Session III tomorrow will ensure a vivid debate on the vital topic of good governance in transport and at border crossings. Building upon the previous recommendations, the panelists and other participants will try to identify the best ways of improving management of border crossings, including harmonization of customs procedures and combating corruption.

Our continued focus on Central Asia and especially adjacent Afghanistan, I believe, is of high value and importance. The outcomes of the Forum on transport and security in that region can become a practical contribution to preparations for the OSCE Summit in Astana.

Yet another key part of our agenda is security aspects of transport. I am confident that our Organization can serve as a very useful and relevant platform for further exploring these issues, and we should aim at identifying areas where the OSCE could achieve concrete results.

We shall also assess the impact of land transportation on the environment and security. Our overall aim should be to promote policies that enhance the environmental sustainability of transport, with a special focus on the transport of dangerous goods and hazardous waste.

Before proceeding further in our Opening Session, I would like to make a few remarks about the Forum proceedings. Each session will be chaired by a Moderator. The Moderator's role is to manage the session and a key element in that regard is time enforcement for speakers and

participants. Speakers have been kindly asked to be brief and focused, and their presentation should not exceed 12-15 minutes. We need this arrangement to have enough time for discussion in each session.

Let me end by thanking you all for your attention.