

6th session of OWG on SDGs

11 December, 9-10 am (2 minutes)

Distinguished Co-chairs,

Distinguished Participants,

My name is Igor Runov. I represent the International Road Transport Union (IRU) - an umbrella non-governmental organization which has been the global spokesman for the road transport industry for the last 65 years. Today IRU's 170 members represent associations of road transport business community from 74 states on five continents.

During last years we have been actively working with the UN Office of High Representative for LLDCs, LDCs and SIDS H.E. Acharya providing our contribution to the Almaty Programme of Action – framework programme specially designed for the LLDCs.

Our main message today is that sustainable development of LLDCs is not possible without equally promoting sustainable transport.

In the last 25 years a lot has been done by the international community to ensure sustainability of the global supply chains. Major finance institutions and development banks have invested significant resources into creation of basic hard road infrastructure, however, it hasn't resulted in faster movement of goods across the borders. In fact, according to the latest surveys the average speed of truck traveling from Asia to Europe along once famous Ancient Silk Road is little higher that of a camel – merely 17 km/hour.

Our vast experience in Eurasia, Africa and Latin America shows that today administrative barriers are in the core of the problem. Absence of harmonised procedures at the borders, outdated infrastructure lead to a situation when truck drivers spend 40% of their traveling time in queues at the borders and the amount of bribes reaches almost one third of the freight. The best possible solution here is effective implementation of 50+ UN Conventions and Agreements on road transport regulation. Once implemented universally by all states it will radically improve situation at the borders and along the roads.

Another serious obstacle here is absence of adequate support roadside infrastructure – secure parking lots, service stations, motels. Traditionally international finance institutions and development banks tend to provide long-term loans to the countries on bilateral basis for financing hard infrastructure. No attention was paid to ancillary infrastructure which creates majority of the problems to trade, tourism and above all security issues. Currently this bilateral approach to financing should be supported by regional one, due to the nature of ancillary infrastructure projects which can only be financed effectively in large numbers in a number of neighboring states.

Finally, sustainable development should provide inclusiveness for all the stakeholders. Currently almost all global trade is done by sea – 80% of trade flows go thru 40 main sea ports. This situation has led to financial desertification of the whole regions in Central Asia, Africa and Latin America which are separated, not involved in international trade and, thus, are deprived from the benefits of globalization. In order to ensure inclusiveness of those countries in the sustainable development process, they should be interconnected between themselves to the global markets by development corridors. We should turn landlocked into land-linked, connected by road transport!

Thank you for your attention.