

Text of Speech
**H.E. Rostam Ghasemi Honorable
Minister of Roads and Urban
Development
of the Islamic Republic of Iran
In the conference of developing land
lock countries,
August 15-16, 2022- Avaza,
Turkmenistan5**

Dear Mr. Chairman,

first of all, I would like to thank your Excellency and the government of Turkmenistan for holding this important conference and generously hosting me and my accompanying delegation. I also consider it necessary to congratulate the appointment of Ms. Robab Fatima as the "High Representative of the United Nations in the affairs of landlocked countries "and thank her and her colleagues for coordinating and preparing this conference. I hope this event will lead to effective measures to help realize the development objectives of landlocked countries.

Dear Ministers, dear attendees, ladies and gentlemen,

Economic diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran focuses on deepening relationships with developing countries, neighboring countries and multilateral cooperation. "Connectivity" is one of our

priority areas in this regard. The importance of this issue becomes more prominent when we know many regional and international transportation corridors such as North-South Corridor, Almaty-Bandar Abbas Corridor, Almaty-Istanbul Corridor, China-Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran Corridor, Ashgabat Agreement Corridor, Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul Corridor, and similar corridors being established such as Persian Gulf- Black Sea corridor; Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Chabahar corridor; Tajikistan Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey corridor, use Iran's transit routes. Iran's sea transport routes in the Persian Gulf, the Oman Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Caspian Sea now play an important role in the movement of goods from the origin to the destination of the landlocked countries of the region. The Islamic Republic of Iran's approach to the category of "International and regional connectivity" is an interactive and cooperative approach and avoiding any kind of competition.

This approach is consistent with the approach and spirit of the Vienna Program of Action for Land-Locked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024. We have established good partnerships with the landlocked countries of the region as well as with the transit countries of the region. We have a good and effective cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and its member countries in the field of transportation, and this organization has succeeded in implementing effective initiatives in relation to the landlocked countries of the region.

Honored

audience,

A quarter of the 32 landlocked developing countries in the world, in other words. 8 countries of Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have close bilateral and multilateral transit interactions with the Islamic Republic of Iran. This means that Iran and other transit countries in the region have undertaken part of the commitment of the international community to reduce the vulnerability of landlocked countries and help them for reducing the cost of trade and having easier access to global markets.

This is while, as stated in the Vienna Action Plan as well as the report of the UN Secretary General to the General Assembly, countries developing transit are also facing infrastructural, financial and technological problems and should receive attention and receive assistance from the international community. So far, the transit network of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been able to play an important role in the access of the landlocked countries of the region to open waters by relying on its local capabilities and facilities. In addition to the general hardships affecting developing countries and the sufferings caused by the Covid-19 crisis, Iran has also been under the most severe restrictions due to the cruel unilateral sanctions. Unfortunately, the international community has failed to reduce these pressures on one of the most important transit developing countries.

**Dear Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,**

In the second part of my speech, I would like to address the central issue of this conference: Financing for Better Connectivity. There is no doubt that in order to reduce the vulnerability of landlocked countries, both landlocked countries and transit countries need to mobilize domestic and international financial resources. United Nations financing conferences such as the "Monte Rey" Conference and the "Addis Ababa" Conference have also paid special attention to the issue of infrastructure financing. Of course, the place of an international financing mechanism for connectivity is felt; This is especially important in the difficult conditions of economic recovery after COVID-19, energy crisis and food insecurity. The Islamic Republic of Iran, despite the economic constraints caused by unilateral sanctions and the conditions of Covid-19, has directed and spent significant financial resources on projects with regional effects.

Equipping the ports with the required logistics and transportation facilities, strengthening the maritime transport infrastructure in the Caspian Sea, constructing some missing road and rail links, and upgrading the logistics and customs facilities at the land borders are among the recent measures with limited domestic resources. Also, financial partnerships with some countries in the region are underway in Chabahar ocean port with the aim of facilitating cargo transportation to the landlocked countries of Central Asia and vice versa. Inter-modal and multi-modal transport along with other transportation modes are supported by the Islamic Republic of Iran. If the United Nations and the international community seek to reduce the problems and vulnerabilities of landlocked countries, they should also pay special attention to the requirements and needs of transit developing countries.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to meet the transit needs of

8 landlocked countries in the region as a developing transit country along with other transit countries in the region. On the other hand, the international community is expected to play its role. International financial resources can be used for the construction of some existing infrastructures in the transit and landlocked countries in our region. Important projects such as the railway connection of Chabahar on the edge of the Indian Ocean to Herat and Mazar e-Sharif in Afghanistan, the connection of Mazar-e-Sharif to Pishawar in Pakistan, the reconstruction of the Quetta railway in Pakistan to Zahedan in Iran, the construction of the missing railway line in Kyrgyzstan to connect the railway to Bandar Abbas through Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, as well as equipping the rail fleets of transit countries, the region should receive international financial resources..

Dear Mr. Chairman, Dear Madam, High Representative,

At the end, I would like to inform you that in order to help the process leading to Third United Nations Conference on the Landlocked Developing Countries, which is scheduled to be held in 2024, the Islamic Republic of Iran plans to hold a conference in coordination with the United Nations with the presence of transit and landlocked countries and transregional partners with the aim of determining practical solutions for a sustainable partnership between the transit countries, landlock countries and the international community. Information related to this conference will be announced after consultation with the UN High Representative.

Thank you all for your attention. ۛ