

THE STATEMENT

of the Deputy Minister of Education and Science
of the Republic of Kazakhstan Takir Balykbayev
at the Sixth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan
“The Silk Road through Afghanistan”
(September 3-4th 2015, Kabul)

Your Excellency, President Dr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani,

Distinguished Ministers and Heads of delegations!

Esteemed participants,

First of all, let me express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Afghanistan for hosting and excellent organization of this Conference.

Kazakhstan believes that the Sixth RECCA will be a significant milestone in increasing economic regional connectivity and further strengthening of regional cooperation in various areas.

The main theme of this conference - “The Silk Road through Afghanistan” – reflects the endeavors of the Government of Afghanistan to turn this country into a hub that will connect Central Asia to South Asia. We believe that with implementation of the current and future projects within this conference (and beyond) Afghanistan will find its path to stabilization and reconstruction.

Esteemed participants,

At the last RECCA conference in Dushanbe we agreed to take serious and measurable steps towards the implementation of the several priority projects. In accordance with the RECCA V declaration, the Regional Disaster Risk Management Center in Almaty has been established and it is ready to start its activities.

In this regard, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan call upon our partners to formally join this center that aims strengthening regional cooperation through coordinated activities in disaster risk reduction and disaster response. Afghanistan has also expressed its readiness to be a member of this center and at present we are waiting

that our Afghani partners will complete necessary formal procedures to join this center.

Distinguished participants,

Regional energy projects will play vital role in turning Afghanistan into a hub that will connect Central Asia to South Asia. In this regard, Kazakhstan supports CASA-1000 project and upon realization of this project we will have an opportunity to export our excess energy during the winter period when the CASA - 1000 grid will be underloaded.

Construction of roads and railroads in Afghanistan and its connection to neighbors is of crucial importance to increasing regional connectivity.

Kazakhstan has been contributing to the international transit corridor “Western Europe – Western China” that will significantly increase the trade turnover between Europe, China and Central Asia.

Last year the leaders of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran launched the transnational railroad linking three countries to the Persian Gulf. This railroad can be extended to Afghanistan and connect our countries. A representative from Kazakhstan National Railways Company “Kazakhstan Temir Zholy” is also attending this conference. Yesterday he had fruitful negotiations with his colleagues from Afghanistan railways authorities. We hope that these negotiations will serve as a basis for further developing of bilateral cooperation in railways sphere.

Distinguished participants,

Given that all projects require well-educated personnel, Kazakhstan highlights the importance of investments into human resources of Afghanistan as one of the most important elements of restructuring Afghanistan economy.

That is why Kazakhstan has been implementing an educational program for Afghani young people. This year we witnessed the second group of graduates of different professions that have started working and making their contribution to the

development of Afghanistan. Moreover, upon the request of the Afgani Government, Kazakhstan made a decision to prolong its educational program for two years and just recently in Kabul we have admitted a new group of students.

Esteemed participants,

Without peace and national accord in Afghanistan, it is difficult to achieve the implementation of important regional projects. For this reason the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace negotiation process is the paramount goal of the international diplomacy. Kazakhstan supports the Government of National Unity in its efforts to start a dialogue with the armed opposition and we hope that the recently re-launched talks will resume and bring positive results.

At the same time we are concerned with the rise of violence in the recent months in Afghanistan. Lack of security and growing instability hinder implementation of regional projects that aim reconstruction of the country. As security and economy issues intertwine, they have major effect not only on Afghanistan but the whole region, including Central Asia. All of our partners should recognize their responsibility in maintaining regional stability within the framework of multilateral cooperation, including SCO and other regional organizations.

Kazakhstan has always advocated an open and transparent approach in addressing Afghanistan issues and calls upon concerned parties to take concrete steps that will promote security and stability in Afghanistan.

Distinguished participants.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm Kazakhstan's commitment to a continued cooperation with all concerned parties to reach peace and stability in Afghanistan. In conclusion, I would like to wish you all a fruitful session in the spirit of mutual understanding and openness.

Thank you for your attention !