**The speech of H.E. Minister of economy at the Conference on“Implementing Aid-for-Trade (Aft) Road Maps”Geneva,**

**10-11 July 2013**

**Mr. Chairman**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Let me first, to thank the organizers for excellent arrangement done for this conference.

This event will build a vision of the current state of development of trade in our countries and outline further steps to implement the program documents adopted within the framework of SPECA.

Integration to international trade system is an important component of our development strategy, because we are sure that development of trade serves as a catalyst for both domestic and foreign investments, leading to creation of export potential and playes a possitive role in improving the competitiveness of the domestic goods in international market.

As an important sector of economy, the foreign trade activity of the country is progressing quite rapidly. At present Tajikistan has trade and economic relations with more than 80 countries. For the last 10 years the volume of foreign trade has increased 3.5 times.

***In 2012 the volume of foreign trade of the country was more than 68% of the GDP.***

However the structure of the trade is unbalanced. Particularly, import for this period increased for 5 times, while export increased for less than 2 times. The export mainly consisted of the raw materials.

In this regard, the government undertakes measures on regulation of the export and import in order to support the development of the national economy.

Specific positive changes in this direction have been already seen, as the share of raw materials in the total export in recent years has decreased from 80% to 56%. On the other hand, the export of other products, such as fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, precious and semi-precious metals and products thereof has increased.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to emphasize that the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is implementing systemic measures to achieve the goal of further development of the trade system of the country.

Particularly, among the adopted strategic documents the Living standart improvement Strategy for years 2013-2015 should be noted. This document includes measures on further structural reform of Tajikistan's economy, including trade.

The integral part of this strategy are measures aimed at the development of free economic zones and technology parks, a Program on Adaptation to the WTO Membership, the development of tourism and border trade.

As main task of SPECA is to strenthen subregional cooparetion in Central Asia and it's integration into the world economy. I would like to mention that, the specificity of the foreign policy of the Republic of Tajikistan is the regional approach. Such attitude involves the participation of the Republic of Tajikistan in regional and bilateral trade agreements to promote trade, effective use of existing resources and factors of production based on the recognition and compliance with the rules and regulations of the trade system.

In this regard, in order to expand trade and economic relations on the basis of mutual benefits, development and further strengthening of trade and economic relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and neighboring countries, frontier markets have been opened.

Our main objectives are improvement of the transport and transit regional cooperation in order to address transit-transport regional problems and to find the solutions to escape the communication isolation; development of regional trade and the adoption of measures to facilitate trade within the region and develop-ment of regional transport corridors.

In order to fulfill the tasks set and to achieve the reforms and priorities, there is an active cooperation within the Donor Coordination Council, which discusses the initiatives of development partners and their possible contribution to the realization of the above mentioned objectives.

In this regard, we are ready to discuss with our partners their possible contribution to achieving the goals of the Strategy, in particular on the development of trade.

**Dear colleagues,**

With the accession of the Republic of Tajikistan to the World Trade Organization the economic relations of the country are moving to more global level. The membership of Tajikistan in this organization provides an opportunity to establish transparent and predictable system, and most importantly the system that will comply with the global trade requirements, thus helping to solve the problems of access to the global market and competitiveness.

It is important to note that with the membership in the WTO the reform work is not finished and therefore the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade has found it necessary to adopt the Program of Adaptation of the Economy of the Republic of Tajikistan to the conditions and requirements of the membership in the WTO. This Program will include measures necessary to implement important reforms in the country.

The Program provides for adoption of new Customs Code and relevant implementing legislation for compliance with the WTO requirements and the best international practice.

Moreover, the Program provides for the adoption of measures necessary to improve the indicators for the ranking in World Bank Doing Business Report and to support promotion of nationally produced goods in international markets.

In the process of WTO accession the Republic of Tajikistan benefited form the assistance and support of our trade partners and international donors. We are sure that our efforts in implementation of the obligations undertaken in the process of accession to the WTO and implementation of further reforms of the trade regime in our country, as well as the equipping the customs border posts and introduction mechanisms of the trans-border trade in accordance with the best international practices and increasing the capacity of involved agencies will be supported in the same manner.

**Ladies and Gentlemen!**

 Activities carried out under the SPECA program over the past years have made a great contribution to the development of the regional trade.

I am sure that the needs assessment in the trade sector of Tajikistan, performed by the UNECE, will show the bottlenecks in the trading system of Tajikistan and will draw the attention of our development partners to the areas where support is needed.

In general, it should be noted that Tajikistan focuses on trade facilitation procedures in the country and at the regional level.

As you know, "Single Window" system for registration of business entities functions in Tajikistan. It allows registering a business within 5 working days.

Similar work is carried out for the simplification of trade procedures in the export, import and transit operations.

We are aware that without creating simple and transparent mechanisms for foreign trade, it won’t be possible to properly stimulate the development of foreign markets oriented economies.

In this regard, the Government of Tajikistan carries out reforms in parallel in two directions - in the area of ​​customs administration, and in the pre-customs clearance. The first part has been successfully implemented, and we have moved to a unified automated information system for customs clearance.

To achieve the goals of the second component, the concept of a "single window" for export, import and transit operations was adopted and State Unitary Enterprise "Single Window" was created, which is currently working on the introduction of the system. We hope that by the end of this year the "single window" system for export, import and transit operations will operate effectively.

We know that similar work is carried out in the Central Asian countries. Projects on trade facilitation are successfully implemented in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and other countries of the region.

In this regard, at the regional level, we believe that it is necessary to work on the integration of national "single window" systems. In the future, this will allow Central Asian countries to act jointly in inter-regional trade processes.

We have already discussed with the management team of UNECE the possibility of holding the next meeting of the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade together with a number of events focused on capacity increase in the autumn of this year.

I am sure, that with the active participation of our partners, we will review and discuss measures aimed for the realization of the “Implementing Aid-for-Trade (Aft) Road Maps” in SPECA countries and work out the next steps to achieve the agreed priorities stipulated in the Baku Ministerial Declaration.

For my part I would like to assure you our readiness to provide maximum assistance and support to hold the next meeting of the SPECA Project Working Group on Trade in Dushanbe.

**Let me thank again the organizers of this conference for the opportunity to present my vision on discussed topics.**

**Thank you for your attention!**