

**Address
by
H.E. Mr. Armen Sargsyan
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Republic of Armenia to the People's Republic of China
at the
70th Session of the UN Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific**

Bangkok, July 04-08, 2014

Mr. Chairman,
Ms. Executive Secretary,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first of all like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Royal Thai Government, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, the Executive Secretary, and the Secretariat of the UN ESCAP for the excellent organization of the 70th Session of the Commission and wish productive work to all of us.

Mr. Chairman,

As we have assembled here at this important international gathering aiming at the further advancement of our jointly defined strategic and imperative economic and social goals in the Asia-Pacific region, world hasn't become a safer place. On the contrary, it's currently being more fiercely devastated by conflicts and violence in different regions including ours. We witness a snowballing state of turmoil and escalating tension which hinder and obstruct the achievement of our common goals as only lasting peace, stability and sustainable development can be the fertile soil where the seeds of our joint social and economic initiatives and endeavors may sprout. This means that the international community has to make even greater strides towards the shaping of a cohesive and all-encompassing agenda to more effectively address and confront the multifaceted political, social and economic challenges we face in our troubled times.

Hence, in view of the above complications on regional and global levels, we do need to strongly reaffirm our commitments while pursuing the Millennium Development Goals, as well as those set by the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD). The tentacles of the world economic and financial crisis still distract us from the charted path. However, economic and political calamities we face and suffer today once again make clear for all of us that no country can achieve in isolation the MDGs in the world of growing interdependence and interconnectedness. As "RIO+20" enriched our understanding of the ways in making overall progress towards the political, social and economic development, Armenia also welcomes the "Post-2015 Development Agenda" as an important instrument to achieve that progress. The Government of my country therefore highly appreciates the cooperation in the framework of UN ESCAP striving to deepen the partnership on the various field of cooperation.

We remain strongly convinced that international and regional cooperation is essential for building peaceful, sustainable and prosperous societies.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the problems and challenges that Armenia faces today, my Government keeps seeking effective ways for insuring better life quality for its citizens, especially, the first wave of reforms in Armenia has laid solid foundations for the package of the second generation of improvements targeted at the increasing of the country's competitiveness and the modernization of the economy, accentuating the shift toward a knowledge-based economy.

The IT sector of the Armenian economy can serve as a vivid example of what has been said. The development of information technology sector in Armenia has always been in the focus of attention of Armenia's Government. In 2008 we adopted Information Technology Sector Development Strategy. The main vision behind the strategy was to create sustainable information society with advanced ICT infrastructure, high-level computer literacy, high level of computer saturation and internet access, extended use of e-services and e-governance systems, expansion of the local IT market with an increasing opportunities to reach out the regional and international markets. The greater part of our strategic goals in this field have been successfully achieved as of today while others are underway with the total number of operating companies in Armenia's IT sector being 380, and a qualified software workforce of 10740. The turnover of IT industry is 379.1 million U.S. dollars annually and continues to increase demonstrating an average growth of 22.8% per year.

Being a landlocked country and having access to the sea only in the North and in the South through Georgia and Iran, Armenia also places utmost importance on the development of transport infrastructures. The "North-South Road Corridor Investment Program" is among our major infrastructure priorities. The project with an estimated cost of 1.5 billion USD aims at connecting the Southern border of the country with its Northern point by means of 556 km long highway. The construction of this strategically important highway is designed to ensure traffic from Armenia's border with Iran to our border with Georgia and up to Black Sea ports. For the implementation of the Project we have signed contracts with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and European Investment Bank (EIB), and we are negotiating also with the EBRD to fully complete the project in 2019.

Mr. Chairman,

In the end, I once again congratulate all of us on the occasion of the UN ESCAP 70th session and to wish successful work to all delegations and participants.

Thank you for your kind attention.