

**Mr. İsa APAYDIN**

**8 May 2018, Tuesday**

**OPENING REMARKS**

Esteemed Minister

Distinguished Ambassadors

Distinguished Undersecretary

Distinguished UIC President

Dear Director Generals and distinguished participants,

First of all, I would like to express my pleasure to host 10<sup>th</sup> UIC World Congress on High Speed Rail enabling us to meet railwaymen attending from 30 different countries and to greet you all with great respect.

Welcome! You honour us!

I would like to express that it is a special meaning for me, as a railwayman, to host this Congress in the capital Ankara where High Speed Train operations started in our country in 2009.

In the opening discussions, round tables and parallel sessions which will be held with the participation of 150 speakers from 30 different countries, we will find the opportunity to listen to the experiences of experts who have contributed to develop high speed railways during the High Speed Congress which we inaugurate today and will last 3 days. In addition, we will also find the opportunity to see the latest technological innovations in the Trade Exhibition where high speed railway equipment and services are displayed with the participation of various firms in parallel with the Congress.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentleman,

As you all know, in a world where mobility, speed and punctuality are of utmost importance, the requirements for developing and expanding high speed train

technologies which realize safe, fast and environmental friendly the passenger transportation with high capacity approaches is increased with each passing day.

Today, about 41.00 km of high speed lines are operated all around the world. This figure will be increased to 98.000 km in the near future with the completion of the lines under construction and lines planned to be constructed.

During the congress and within the framework of the “Sharing Knowledge for Sustainable and Competitive Operations” motto, we will focus on how to reduce the construction and maintenance costs and how to retain its longevity as much as constructing high speed railway lines.

Within the scope of sustainable operations, we will also focus on finding answers for questions like how to provide sustainable maintenance management and how to compete with other modes of transportation by reflecting this on ticket prices.

This important event named Eurailspeed Congress which was organized in 1992 in Brussel for the first time and held every two years, started to be organized as World High Speed Congress globally since 2008. The Congress held in every two years and in countries that operate in high speed sector was held in 2010 on continent of Asia (Beijing), in 2012 on the continent of America (Philadelphia), in 2015 again on the continent of Asia in Tokyo where the high speed was born.

As a result of the studies conducted by TCDD since 2012, it has been decided in 9<sup>th</sup> UIC World Congress on High Speed Rail taken place in Tokyo to hold this major event within the borders of our country which is located in Middle East, Balkans region and the cross point of Europe and Asia and is the pioneer of high speed rail operations and infrastructure investments in the region. We are honoured to host this event in Turkey for the first time in this region. We are pleased to witness that the high speed railway operations implemented successfully serve as an example for all our neighbour countries.

As it is known, close relations with International Railway Union, which is the owner of this major event and our country is a member to since 1928, are going on. Since I was appointed to UIC Vice President during the 89<sup>th</sup> General Assembly taken place on 1 December 2016 and I am UIC Regional Assembly of Middle East (RAME) President, I am both the host and the owner of this great event. Therefore, I would like to express that we are trying to do our best to organize the World Congress on High Speed Rail in order to be fruitful for all participants. We hope we have been successful at it.

Esteemed Minister,

I would like to express my thanks to you for honouring the congress and for your support at the development of railways in our country and the Congress.

Also, I would like to welcome our distinguished guests and friends coming from abroad and thank them for their participation in this congress.

I would like to express my gratitude once more to be here with you and greet you all with kindest regards.