

**PROTOCOL**  
**of the Final Project Board Meeting of the joint project of the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan and UNDP**

**Date: 17.12.2021, 17:00-18:00**

**Project Name: “Strengthening the Trade Capacity of Turkmenistan”**

**Venue:** The building of the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan, c. Ashgabat

**List of participants:**

1. **Orazmyrat Gurbannazarov** - Minister of the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan.
2. **Narine Sahakyan** – UNDP Resident Representative in Turkmenistan;
3. **Merdan Annagulyyev** - Head of the Department of Foreign Economic Relations of the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan;
4. **Myrad Myradov** - Head of the Department of Legal Aid and Foreign Economic Relations of the Office of Foreign Economic Relations
5. **Halnazar Ovezov** – Specialist of the Department of Analysis of the State Commodity and Raw Materials Exchange of Turkmenistan;
6. **Nurjemal Melekeyeva** - Chief Specialist of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan
7. **Rovshen Nurmuhamedov** – Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP
8. **Akmyrat Danatarov** - Programme Analyst on Governance, Economic Diversification and Inclusive Growth, UNDP
9. **Muhommet Hommayev** - Project Manager, UNDP
10. **Ogulshirin Yazlyyeva** - Program Assistant, UNDP
11. **Kristina Kalinka** - Project Assistant, UNDP

**Agenda:**

1. Opening. Meeting goals.
2. Presentation of the project manager on the work done for 2021 and discussion of issues related to the extension of the project to implement the planned activities.
3. Questions and answers. Summing up the meeting.

Mr. Orazmyrat Gurbannazarov - Minister of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan welcomed those present and expressed gratitude for the meeting. Mr. Orazmyrat Gurbannazarov expressed his congratulations to Ms. Narine Sahakyan on her appointment as UNDP Resident Representative in Turkmenistan.

Ms. Narine Sahakyan, UNDP Resident Representative in Turkmenistan, thanked the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan for supporting the implementation of this project from the end of 2019 to the present, as well as all national partners involved in the implementation of the project.

Ms. Narine Sahakyan emphasized that the project is nearing its completion and the project's goal of increasing the capacity of national partners has been achieved despite the difficult time over the past two years associated with the global pandemic. UNDP, for its part, tried to attract competent international experts and the best organizations in the field of trade, such as respectable scientific institutions as the Higher School of Economics of the Russian Federation and the World Trade Institute in Switzerland, as well as the British company Crown Agents. This year alone, international experts have developed five proposals and relevant recommendations to strengthen the trade potential of Turkmenistan. These recommendations relate to such important topics as the use of modern marketing and information technologies in wholesale and retail trade, improvement of the practice of registering trademarks, improvement of the practice of concluding international agreements on trade and economic cooperation, improving the performance of trading houses, as well as the use of public-private partnerships. in developing the research potential of the trade sector.

These proposals and recommendations, developed by international experts, will soon be sent to the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan for further consideration and potential application.

Ms. Narine Sahakyan said that UNDP received a letter of concern regarding the implementation of the project and understands that the Ministry from the very beginning wanted to ensure the effectiveness of the activities carried out, most of which were aimed at increasing the capacity of employees of the ministry and other organizations in the trade area. However, global changes prevented optimum delivery performance and UNDP, like the rest of the world, had to adapt to new realities.

In accordance with the agenda of the meeting, it was proposed to hear the final report of the project manager to sum up the results of the project. Then the discussion and exchange of questions and answers will continue.

Further, Muhommet Hommayev, Project Manager continued the project council with a presentation on the progress of the project and provided a report on finances and activities carried out in 2021. (presentation attached).

The meeting was continued by Mr. Orazmyrat Gurbannazarov - Minister of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan and expressed his opinion on the events held in 2021. The Minister explained that the result of the online training format is about fifty percent compared to personal presence and contact. For employees of the Ministry, the main goal is a clear understanding and knowledge gained after completing online trainings and education. Mr. Minister emphasized that it would be a good idea to take trainings with certification for testing and checking knowledge in order to have a return on investment, because the most valuable is the professional development of personnel. The online format can help prepare for the trainings, but I would like to conduct the training itself in the personal presence of experts. Having expressed his proposals, Mr. Minister once again emphasized the readiness of the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan for future cooperation with UNDP in the above areas.

Ms. Narine Sahakyan, taking into account the wishes of the Ministry, commented that:

- UNDP is currently awaiting written confirmation from the MFA to facilitate the arrival of International Experts hired by UNDP for face-to-face meetings and events.
- Certification and test system will be proposed and discussed with experts for final project activities.

Also, Ms. Sahakyan proposed to discuss plans for future cooperation on the issue of joining the WTO and decide at this meeting the issue of extending the project for a month or six months, but at the same time freezing all expenses until the next clear definition of the project goals.

Mr. Rovshen Nurmuhamedov, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP, expressed the idea of continuing cooperation with the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan in an alternative format and proposed to consider the topic of public procurement of necessary materials of various kinds (food and non-food) for the needs of the Ministry with good quality, according to the most favorable prices and in the shortest possible time, and gave an example of such a procurement partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry and the State Customs Service of Turkmenistan.

Mr. Orazmyrat Gurbannazarov explained that the most important thing for the Ministry is to have an effective result and acquired knowledge as a result of the trainings. He also noted that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan is responsible for the issue of joining the WTO and the proposal of Ms. Narine Sahakyan can be considered under the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan. Regarding procurement for the needs of the Ministry, it is necessary to receive proposals from UNDP.

Myrat Myradov, Head of the Department of Legal Assistance and Foreign Economic Relations of the Department of Foreign Economic Relations of the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan, continued the meeting and expressed his observations regarding the extension of the project: a proposal to certify employees after completing trainings is necessary for an effective result. And he also suggested that in the case of sending unused funds to projects involving world practices to strengthen human resources; careful study and preparation of a meaningful project and a creative approach, taking into account the internal procedures of UNDP; it is necessary to pay attention to the recruitment of participants and possibly reduce the number of participants for a better coverage of the audience; also establishing a pattern of regular meetings between UNDP and the Ministry for further discussions.

At the end of the meeting, Ms. Narine Sahakyan summed up the results and announced the decision to extend the project for 3 months until the end of March 2022 for the last two events, and the remaining undisbursed funds will be frozen until new ideas and project goals are received.

Ms. Narine Sahakyan expressed her gratitude to the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan for the support and commitment to the implementation of the joint project during the joint work and the hope to continue the strategic partnership with the Government of Turkmenistan, and in particular with the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan to promote development trade policy for the implementation of the Foreign Trade Strategy of Turkmenistan for 2021-2030.

### **Conclusion:**

1. UNDP will prepare and provide documents to extend the project for three months as soon as possible.
2. UNDP will take into account all the comments and ideas for the planned activities in the online training format.
3. UNDP will prepare and send proposals and ideas for future cooperation to the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Turkmenistan.