

Statement by H.E. Professor Iftikhar Hussain Arif, President of ECO Cultural Institute at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers (Tehran, 26th November, 2013)

**Mr. Chairman,
ECO Secretary General,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honor to speak in this meeting for the first time. At the outset, I would like to express my profound gratitude for the confidence you bestowed on me by appointing me to such an important and influential responsibility as the president of ECO Cultural Institute. I assure you that I, with the cooperation of ECI staff, will exert maximum efforts towards realization of the shared aspirations and objectives of the ECO Member States as envisaged in the ECI Charter.

Mr. Chairman,

Culture has always been emphasized by the ECO Member Countries as the basis to promote peace, integration, and stability in the region. During the last 17 years, ECI has always been determined to put forward effective measures towards the realization of this goal.

Mr. Chairman, Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

ECI, under the new management, attaches great importance to directly involve Member States in ECI decision-making processes and programs. In this direction, within the short period of about 7 months, 4 ECO-CPR meetings have been held and now we are preparing the 6th BOT meeting.

Regarding ECI's recent activities, it was a great honor for us that our mission was initiated with the festival of Bismillah which was held concurrent with the holy month of Ramadan to display a collection of calligraphy, graphics and paintings on the theme of Bismillah. Among artists from ECO Member States as well as other Islamic countries, prominent artists from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Tajikistan were awarded and the exhibition book was published in two volumes, displaying the best artworks of the exhibition.

The ECO Poetry Night which was held in August was another initial step taken with an aim to foster the interactions among the literati in the field of poetry and literature in the region. I hope the incentive will be held more effectively on a broad scale in future.

ECI also organized an event in October to mark the birth anniversary of Hazrat Mowlana Jalaluddin Rumi in which internationally known Rumi scholars like Dr.

Mohammad Ali Movahed, Dr. Tofiq Sobhani, and Dr. Haddad Adel focused and discussed on Rumi`s 'prose writing'.

Tomorrow, ECI Headquarters will host 'Iqbal Day', a commemorative ceremony on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Allama Iqbal, the prominent philosopher and poet in the Muslim world. And I now have the great honor of inviting you to the function.

Moreover, we will have the opening ceremony of the 'ECO Park' today, hosted by the H.E. Dr. Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, honorable Mayor of Tehran. The ECO Park will hereafter serve as a venue for ECI cultural activities in cooperation with the ECO Member States as well as Tehran Municipality.

Designing the ECO Commemoration Stamp as well as publishing the fresh edition of ECI's prestigious quarterly, namely 'ECO Heritage' covering various fields of our countries culture and civilization, including literature, arts, architecture, handicrafts and folklores are among ECI's recent activities to promote regional public awareness on ECO.

Thus far, a number of considerable modifications have also been made within the ECI structure to increase the efficiency, dynamism and effectiveness of the Institute including decreases made in terms of the expenses and the size of member staff.

Excellency, Distinguished Ministers,

Needles to mention cultural interactions are the basic prerequisite for the strengthening and promotion of economic cooperation. However, there is a question still unresolved that why ECO Cultural Institute, after two decades of activity, has only four full members and even the Institute`s founding countries have not yet acceded to become the ECI full members.

I believe that all ECO Member States that contribute the establishment of a structure shall be regarded as its full members. The problem seems less likely to be due to the shares of the members. If so, then our disposal is to consider all ECO Member States as full members of ECI and set a period of 5 years for nonmembers to prepare for the share payment.

It is evident that joining other countries to ECI as full members is important for the implementation of ECI goals and objectives. Hence, ECI makes effort not to limit its activities ECI Member States only. An indicator of such an end is the publication of the new version of ECO Heritage which covers culture and civilization in all ECO Countries.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that to make ECI a more effective organization, this is very essential to have some focal cultural organization or individuals in the Member Countries to coordinate plans and events in those countries.

I thank you very much.

**Statement by H.E. Professor Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro, President of ECO
Science Foundation at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers
(Tehran, 26th November, 2013)**

**Excellency, the Chairman,
Excellency the Secretary General of ECO,
Excellencies and delegates from ECO Member States and Specialized Agencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Assalam-o-Alaikum!

At the outset, I congratulate the Chairman on assuming the Chair of the Forum. It is indeed a great honour and pleasure, for me to address this august forum.

Excellencies, the ECOSF expresses its gratitude to all the Member States and ECO Secretariat for their continuous support to the Foundation. We are especially grateful to the Government of Pakistan for patronizing the ECOSF through the Ministries of Foreign Affairs & Science & Technology, and Pakistan Science Foundation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the importance of Science and Technology for economic development can not be over emphasized. The Foundation has been making efforts to pursue the planned activities; but non-availability of funds has been the main impediment. However, I am pleased to report that the Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan has transferred the mandatory contribution of US\$ 0.19 million for the year 2012 to ECOSF account for which we are so thankful. However, mandatory contribution from remaining three ratifying member states is yet to come; although, I expect that the contribution from I.R. of Iran for the years 2012 and 2013 will come through soon.

I take this opportunity to urge the non-ratifying member states to ratify the ECOSF Charter so that the Foundation functions at full strength and the members can benefit from its programs.

Excellencies, some member states have nominated; their Focal Points for speedy coordination, and eminent scientists to serve on the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees of the Foundation; however, response of other members is still awaited. I would like to request this august forum to emphasize upon those member states for the following actions to be taken by them in order to smoothly run the business of the Foundation for the betterment of the ECO region:

- i. Nominations of focal points and members of Executive Committee and Board of Trustees by Republic of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Republic of Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan;
- ii. Payment of mandatory budget contributions for years 2012 and 2013 by remaining ratifying member states; viz., I.R. of Iran, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan;

- iii. Payment of voluntary contributions to ECOSF S&T Fund by all ECO member states particularly Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan, who have already pledged contributions of US\$1.000, 0.100 and 0.200 million respectively, for the commencement of the Fund;
- iv. Ratification of ECOSF Charter by; Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Uzbekistan;

Excellencies, during the report period, the following humble efforts have been made by the Foundation:

- President of ECOSF held advocacy meetings with Ambassadors / Head of Missions of ECO Member States viz., Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkey, Azerbaijan and Iran based at Islamabad and discussed the current activities and future plans of ECOSF and emphasized upon the actions to be taken by their respective governments in respect of ECOSF.
- The website of ECOSF (www.eco4science.org) is being updated regularly. The efforts are in hand to make the website more informative and dynamic.
- The draft Financial Regulations of ECOSF were prepared and sent to ECO Secretariat for legal vetting. After legal vetting, they are being considered by this forum. I hope those would be approved.
- A 3-days International Congress of Zoology was jointly organized with many other organizations including UNESCO, Pakistan Science Foundation and Pakistan Zoological Society from 2-4 April 2013 at Islamabad, Pakistan.
- Representative of ECOSF participated in “1st International Conference on Education linked with the 22nd National Educational Sciences Congress” held in Eskisehir, Turkey; organized by ECO Educational Institute from 5-7 Sept 2013.

Excellencies, all activities require funds and thus we have proposed an enhanced budget of US\$0.616 million for the year 2013 against the approved budget of US\$0.474 million during the year 2012. Excellencies, this is infancy period of the ECO Science Foundation and it needs careful nurturing, and without the finances, things would not go the way all of us wish to! Thus, I urge this august forum to please support the enhancement so that scientific activities can be enhanced.

In this context, following events have been planned during the year, without any extra-budgetary support from any member state:

- i) **Expert Meeting on Climate Change and Biodiversity:**
ECOSF in collaboration with ECO-IEST, various institutions of the Government of Pakistan and ECO Secretariat is organizing “**Experts Meeting on Climate Change and Biodiversity**” from 29-30 November 2013 in line with the decision of the 23rd RPC Meeting.

- ii) **2nd Board of Trustees (BoT) Meeting:**
The second Board of Trustees (BoT) Meeting was planned next month (Dec 2013) in Islamabad, Pakistan but due to financial constraint, it has been postponed.

- iii) **ECO Hub for IBSE at ECO Science Foundation:**
Initiation of setting up “ECO Hub” for Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE) at ECO Science Foundation in collaboration with the UNESCO Category-II “International Science, Technology and Innovation Centre (ISTIC), based at Kuala Lumpur- Malaysia, *Le main a le pate* (LAMAP Foundation) of the Academy of Science France and the UNESCO Headquarters. The emphasis of the forum would be on promotion of practical- activity-based science education at grass root level. In this respect, the consultation is underway with the key partners.

At the end, I express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran for their hospitality and the ECO Secretariat for the commendable efforts in convening the SOM and 21st COM meetings.

Thank you Excellencies.

**Statement by Mr. Serdar Yilmaz, Director of ECO Educational Institute
at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers
(Tehran, 26th November, 2013)**

Thank you Mr. Chairman,

Your Excellencies, distinguished representatives of delegations,

I wish to thank you all for giving the opportunity to announce you today.

President of ECO Educational Institute Prof. Selahattin TURAN has unfortunately % 50 nerve loss on his right leg. He is having physiotherapy which does not allow him to take any journeys. So we beg your prayers for him to recover fast from his current situation.

It has been 1 year and 7 months since ECO EI has officially been established after the “1st Meeting of Board of Trustees of ECO Educational Institute” in April 2012 and has been carrying the duty since then. I would like to summarize the areas that need support of the esteemed member states, and actualized and planned activities during 2013.

There are five main issues that ECOEI is facing:

1. The “2nd Meeting of Board of Trustees of ECO Educational Institute” couldn’t be organized the due to the lack of quorum. Negotiations between the Ministry of National Education and ECOEI go on in this sense.
2. The Esteemed Member States, except Islamic Republic of Pakistan, have not conveyed the names of their experts to the Academic Council to the ECOEI, and the names of their national focal points. So the draft work programme of ECOEI cannot be planned and actualized due to the lack of experts to the Academic Council.
3. The Esteemed Member States, who ratified the Charter of ECOEI, have not paid the scales of their contributions for the years 2012 and 2013 except Republic of Turkey.
4. The current activities of ECOEI are being coordinated through The Interim Directorate, which is the group of staff temporarily commissioned by the Turkish Ministry of National Education. The Interim Directorate is doing its best to set up the infrastructure and prepare a fully functional Institute as early as possible until category I, II and III staff of ECOEI starts their work.
5. Preparations for signing the “Host Country Agreement” between ECOEI and the host Government (Republic of Turkey) is in progress. A draft “Host Country Agreement” has been submitted to the esteemed Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Turkey. The reply from Ministry of Foreign Affairs is being expected in a short period of time.

When looking over those main issues, ECOEI needs the support of esteemed Member States in taking critical actions.

Now, if you allow me, I'd like to state the activities actualized in 2013 very briefly.

The "7th International Robot Contest" held in Istanbul-Turkey, on MAY 2013, was successfully organized by the Ministry of National Education of Republic of Turkey and ECO EI. The Contest organized 6 times previously on national basis in Turkey, became an international event with the participation of students and teachers from ECO Member States. Students and teachers from Republic of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan participated in the 7th International Robot Contest. The ECO Educational Institute requests the esteemed ECO Secretariat and Member States to kindly start awareness raising activities to announce the next year's International Robot Contest to the related parties to be held on May 2014.

"ECO Member States 1st International Conference on Education" was planned to be conducted on 30 May 2013. However, the Conference was postponed due to the lack of enough participation and that was agreed during the 23rd Meeting of RPC. This non-ECO event has been engaged with "22nd National Educational Sciences Congress" which was also in line with the purposes of the postponed Conference. Participants from Republic of Azerbaijan, ECO Science Foundation and ECO Cultural Institute joined the panel of the Congress with the theme "Education and Culture Systems in ECO Member States" on September 5, 2013.

Your excellencies, ladies and gentleman

I will finish my words by mentioning some planned activities by The ECO Educational Institute;

- Organizing ECO Member States 1st International Conference on Education
- Organizing Workshops on Methodologies on Religious Education and Special Education in ECO Countries.
- Construction of Online Language Self-Learning Website of ECO Member States

As a young institution of ECO, the Educational Institute is striving hard to serve the benefits of Member States. We believe the ECOEI will further plan better activities for the benefits of the people of the region and come up with more concrete results with the support of Member States.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Statement by Dr. Yasar Akgun, Vice-President of the ECO Trade and Development Bank at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers (Tehran, 26th November, 2013)

**Your Excellency,
Mr. Chairman, Honourable Ministers,
Excellency Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

“Introduction”

It is a great honour and privilege for me to participate the 21st COM Meeting I am delighted for the opportunity to speak at this landmark meeting. Taking this opportunity, I would like to provide brief information about the operations of the Bank including current development opportunities and challenges from global and regional perspective. Meanwhile, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ECO Secretariat for the gracious hospitality and excellent arrangements made for this meeting.

**“Global Economic Development”
Excellencies,**

The global economic recovery is improving but we know that sustainable growth is still prone to many interrelated risks. The current global economic landscape can best be summed up as one of cautious optimism. There is still no effective multilateral surveillance to bring discipline and responsible behavior for better crisis management. In addition, the problem of moral hazard has no perfect solution, but requires further credible common mechanism to limit it. The global markets are rocked by talk of tapering quantitative easing. The extraordinary, unconventional monetary policy measures taken by major advanced economies which cannot be sustained forever have to be normalized gradually as the economic growth and stability restored. However, no one wants this process to happen in a disorderly manner. Nevertheless, this normalization process would have negative spillover effects on some developing economies including ECO countries. It is, therefore, important for ECO countries to be vigilant and continue to strengthen the domestic and regional forces of growth. Particularly during this period building on sound macroeconomic policies, industrial diversification, stronger financial systems, buffers in foreign reserves, enhancing competitiveness and efficiency would put regional economies in a far better position in the post crisis-era.

**“Regional Economic Situation”
Mr. Chairman,**

The overall policy responses of ECO Member States to the global economic crisis so far have been relatively successful. The region showed considerable strength

in the post global crisis years of 2010 and 2011 but region's real GDP growth was sluggish with slightly below 1% in 2012. On the other hand, in 2012, the nominal GDP of the region touched another peak of USD 1.95 trillion and is likely to exceed the USD 2 trillion for the first time over the next years. It is, therefore, crucial for the economies across the region to consolidate gains and harness the benefits of the regional cooperation to further build on our respective strengths.

Looking beyond the short-term, we are witnessing transformative structural changes in the global economy. New growth hubs, energy and trade corridors are emerging and without doubt the ECO region would gain even more importance. We need to embark on the new opportunities in cooperation and solidarity. Of course, many challenges remains to be addressed in the development agenda of the Member States. I hold the belief that enhancing regional trade, investment in infrastructure, human capital, productivity, R&D, innovation and creation of a healthy business climate will pay off and deliver sustainable economic growth, jobs, and a better life for our people.

“Progress of the Bank”

Mr. Chairman,

This paradigm shift lays more responsibilities on us and Your Institution, ECO Bank remains fully committed to contribute advancing regional goals and aspirations. We are motivated to be bold, ambitious, and flexible to respond to the complex and dynamic needs of our Member States. In this connection, I am glad to inform this august body that we have recorded significant milestones in our operations. The total amount of loans disbursed to various operations in the Member States amounted to USD 745 million by the end of October 2013. The Bank has been posting a positive net income without having any non-performing loan in its well diversified portfolio. Through its network of cooperation with Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), national development banks and commercial banks, we have started to mobilize multiple additional resources to prospective projects in the Member States. In a nutshell, despite persisting economic uncertainties and lingering challenges, the Bank currently finds itself in the very special position of being a reliable development partner in the region. Building on our knowledge and expertise combined with strong local presence allow us to capitalize on specific and localized roles which are not always covered adequately by global institutions.

Recognizing these achievements, we have formulated new country partnership strategy 2013-2014 reports for each member country and adopted the Business Plan of the Bank for 2013-2017 period. These documents define the strategic road map of the Bank for the coming years. During this phase the key challenge for the Bank would include improving its resources, operations and building up further niche and desirable position in the regional development. Our strategy calls to step up our development activities, to address adequately ever evolving regional and global challenges, and continue to generate genuine value added for the member countries.

**“Final Remarks”
Excellencies,**

As I move towards my closing remarks, let me state that journey is long, and the tasks ahead are challenging, but the payoffs to development will be substantial. In this regard, membership of all ECO Member States to the Bank is undoubtedly a valuable support for us to carry forward successful operations with full regional ownership. The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan are in the process to finalize the remaining membership procedures. On the other hand, the membership application of the Kyrgyz Republic submitted in October 2013 has been approved by the Board of Governors and we expected to finalize necessary procedures soon. In light of this welcoming development, I would like to reiterate my invitation to the other ECO Member States to join the Bank. As a well recognized and reliable brand name of the region in development finance we stand ready to continue our assistance to the member countries for the achievement of their development objectives. I wish you every success for this meeting.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Statement by Dr. Mohammad Reza Karbasi, Secretary General of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers (Tehran, 26th November, 2013)

**Ladies, Gentlemen,
Dignitaries,**

At the outset I would like to thank the respectful officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran for making the arrangements for hosting the 21st Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers (COM) in the beautiful and historic city of Tehran as well as the honorable ECO Secretariat for conducting the best measures for holding this event.

ECO CCI as the economic wing of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in the new round of administration since January, 2011 has embarked on diverse approaches to help implement the ECO CCI 10 Year Plan of Action for which certain major steps have been pursued during one year period from May 2012 to Nov 2013 in the scope of Tourism, Women Entrepreneurs activities, Transportation, Industry and Investment, Trade Facilitation and Arbitration.

Therefore since October 2012 , twenty one (21) meetings were held within the framework of the ECO CCI comprising of the General Assembly , Executive Committee along with the meetings of the Tourism, Women Entrepreneurs, Transportation, Industry and Investment, Trade Facilitation and Arbitration specialized committees.

Due to the fact that the full report has already been distributed by the ECO Secretariat ,very briefly I would like to highlight some of the important aspects of implementations made by the ECO CCI .

During the last year, ECO CCI in collaboration with the member chambers and ECO Secretariat pursued development of tourism initiatives especially in health tourism in the ECO region .

First ECO Coordination Committee Meeting on Health Tourism was held on Dec 18, 2012 in Mashhad bringing about many rewarding conclusions and emphasizing on three main issues including visa relaxation, medical insurance coverage and investment (joint ventures on medical facilities) as the second meeting is planned to be held on Nov 26-27, 2013 in Mashhad, I R Iran and the First Conference on Health Tourism in ECO region will be held in 2014 in Iran which was approved by the 23rd Regional Planning Council (RPC) Meeting and added to the 2013-2014 ECO calendar of events.

The ECO CCI has been making the necessary arrangements for holding the First Forum of Hotel Owners and Tour Operators of ECO Member States in order to boost the convergences of the private sector and joint efforts to bolster these areas in the region.

As the house is fully aware the women constitute half of the society therefore they are very influential in economic growth and prosperity.

In this regard the ECO CCI has been striving to promote the women economic activities within the ECO CCI Women Entrepreneurs Council (WEC) by means of holding seminars, workshops specialized meetings, capacity building initiatives and exhibitions etc which is elaborated on within the full report of activities of the ECO CCI.

Active participation at the 2nd Meeting of the Islamabad-tehran-Istanbul road Corridor (ITI) on Feb 4-5,2013 in Tehran - I . R Iran , approaching all member states to get their opinions on bottlenecks and hindrances of border crossing among the member states whose outcome has been already circulated by the ECO Secretariat as well as participation and contribution to the 2nd and 3rd Meetings of the ITI Road Corridor held respectively on Feb 4-5,2013 in Tehran and September 23-24, 2013 in Ankara are among our implementations in the report period .

The ECO CCI is requesting the issue of the regular running of the ECO Cargo Train to be followed up and Member States be informed of the results of the proceedings made in this respect in order for their concerted action in this area as harmonization of the working hours of customs offices of Member States in collaboration with the ECO secretariat may be considered by the Council of Ministers .

In the area of Industry and Investment it is evident that there are far less than satisfactory projects of joint industrial investments in the region. In this regards there should be initiatives to define projects for production of finished products in order to avoid exporting raw materials and absorb the value added as well as bringing about more jobs, expertise and intra ECO trade augmentation .

Hence ECO CCI has assumed the task to encourage the ECO TDB to financially support and prioritize the joint industrial investments in the ECO region in order to expand its scope of activity to trade (L/C Opening) to fill the banking gap in the region as well as augmentation of the ECO TDB's capital to better serve the business communities of the ECO region.

The govtmnets support for the trade facilitation initiatives in the ECO region is of supreme significance , the administrattions have to provide the private sector with the right track to run the train of trade and investment , this track is constituted by the lagal and economic infrastructures .

The ECO Business Forum as a very efficient tool for business networking hence the 4th ECO Business Forum (EBF) and Buyers- Sellers Meeting (BSM) in Kabul-Afghanistan has been undergoing several postponements and rescheduling due to several reasons such as lack of quorum and not yet been held as it is hoped to convene later this year to the best.

The Visa Sticker Scheme ,ECOTA implemantation, holding the ECO Trade Fair which will be held in Tehran, I.R Iran and the contribution of the ECO TDB by measures such as L/C opening are also among the measures which should be encouraged and accelerated in order to further the intra ECO trade.

The COM may play a key part in encouragement of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO TDB) for augmentation of its capital, number of Member States and delivery of trade financing services to fill the gap of lack of a banking system for intra ECO trade and banking

Five ECOTA signatory countries may be encouraged for putting the agreement into operation for implementation of the agreement for the promotion of the intra ECO Trade and thus the ECO CCI is determined to contribute to the implementation of the ECOTA.

To enhance arbitration in ECO region, the recent meeting of the Arbitration Committee of ECO CCI had many rewarding decisions as a result of which ECO CCI member chambers were consulted and communicated regarding the nature, ways and means of support for establishment of the ECO CCI Arbitration Center and the results were reflected to the 22nd RPC Meeting.

The ECO Secretariat approached the member states that have not still joined the 1958 New York Convention on Arbitration to sign and ratify the convention.

In the area of information dissemination, ECO CCI Secretariat has embarked on the research-publication approach through extensive field studies and research initiatives by its experts .The Directory of top 100 companies of ECO member states in textile/construction materials/auto parts and pharmaceuticals was published and in 2014 we are planning to expand our feasibility studies for further research and publication activities.

ECO CCI also has recorded some other activities in the last year namely signing an MoU with the Islamic Development Bank in Jan 2013 another Memo of Understanding with the Intelligent Persian Corp (IPC) on Developing ECO benchmarking Network as well as active participation at the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum on March 4-6,2013 in Tehran

Due to shortage of time, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the honorable heads and members of delegations for their participation and valuable contributions to discussions and hope for success of this meeting in realization of decisions and making effective deliberations.

Thank you

**Statement by Dr. Atousa Goodarzi, Dean of ECO College of Insurance
at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers
(Tehran, 26th November, 2013)**

**Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It's my great honor, as the Dean of ECO College of Insurance to present College's annual report to the Senior Officials Meeting.

As you know, the RCD International School of Insurance was founded in 1970 to broaden the cooperation among ECO Member States in the filed of education and training of insurance human capital.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the last academic year the College participated in several important research events, such Conference and the annual seminar on Insurance & Development (held by Central Insurance of I.R. of Iran)

Meanwhile, college talks and seminar by the faculty members are a main attraction for research activities at the College.

It must mention that a meeting was held on the occasion of research week and college's lecturers presented their latest researches in insurance studies.

College professors published more than 10 books in insurance different areas and present numerous essays and papers in national and international academic journals.

To improve students' potentials, College purchased different academic sources in insurance, actuarial science, financial economics, financial mathematics, economics and other related subjects.

Now, ECO College of Insurance students can benefit from one of the enriched specialized libraries in insurance throughout the country and region.

Today, the College is in possession of more than 7000 English and more than 3200 Farsi books. Furthermore more than 120 English books and 220 Farsi books was bought by the college during the 2012-13 academic year.

As the same time students may use integrated digital library which is an advanced system to find electronic resources, databases, E-Journals, E-Books & References in Allameh Tabatabaie University.

By increasing the number of higher education graduates, the number of theses which provide findings and policy implications on current problems in insurance topics has been enriched. It is worth to mention that up to now more than 115 students in Master degree have been graduated from College and their thesis are available in the College library.

Computer facilities provided in the College helps students, especially in graduate courses, to find and use scientific sources through electronic data-banks such as Emerald, Science direct, Cambridge and Oxford journals.

Distinguished delegations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In student services area, state-based subsidized low-rate student loans provided for more than 170 students of the College in the last academic year.

University dormitory accommodation has been arranged for all students including Iranian and non-Iranian.

Student Discount E-Cards are issued on the occasion of the Tehran International Book Fair. Students are provided with some pre-priced coupons to purchase their education materials.

A student consultancy service as well as an equipped medical center has been provided for the College students.

Students were encouraged and supported during the “Research Week”.

A ceremony was organized for fresh students as well as for graduates with management of deputy of cultural and student affairs of Allameh Tabatabaie University.

As the final point, ECO College of Insurance Future Plans can be presented as:

1. Following the previous year’s report, the college is continuously seeking the approval of establishment of PhD Degree in insurance from Islamic Republic of Iran Ministry of Science, Research & Higher Education.
2. There has been some negotiations between the College and Insurance Research Center (Affiliated to the Central Insurance of the Islamic Republic of Iran) about financing the PhD. Students) after establishment the degree. Hence, the College hopes to provide the scholarships to the PhD students in the future.
3. The College intends to hold an international conference on “actuarial assessments of social security pension Funds” in Iran by the end of 2013.
4. The College has received the approval of publishing “Insurance Research” journal from Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. First editorial board meeting was held on September 2013. Conditional to the quality of articles,

after publishing two volumes, the journal will be recognized as a Scientific Research Journal through the approval of Ministry of Science, Research and Technology.

At the end, I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to distinguished delegations of the Member States my highest considerations.

Thank you for your attention.

**Statement by Mr. Morteza Asadi, Head of International Relations of ECO Supreme Audit Institution at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers
(Tehran, 26th November, 2013)**

**Mr. Chairman,
Ministers of Foreign Affairs of ECO,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, on behalf of myself and the supreme audit institutions of ECO member countries I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation for your invitation to the President of ECOSAI to attend the 21st Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers.

ECO is considered as an organization that targets the collective cooperation of member countries, the objective that I believe is very lofty and sacred based on historical connections and collective good. Considering the importance of this necessity and in spite of all problems and challenges, our ancestors have kept their extensive relations and have served towards meeting common needs and consequently have trained and produced valuable personalities and works. Today, our nations are proud of such works and personalities and feel very close to them.

Today, such necessities are felt more than the past. The economic realities of today's world have necessitated one important thing. Even the most powerful countries have faced great economic challenges, all politicians and thinkers are actively working on the possible solutions such as optimization of public resources and encouraging collective actions through exchange of experience and utilizing the existing advantages of countries which feel brotherhood towards each other.

This issue was also emphasized in the declaration of the 21st Congress of INTOSAI (International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions) which was held last month by the participation of 192 countries and important economic organization in China.

**Mr. Chairman,
Dear Foreign Ministers of ECO member countries,**

Allow me here to mention some of the recommendation of INTOSAI at its recent Congress in China. INTOSAI is the largest international organization for public audit which assists countries in transition from current economic problems especially the Western countries and also warns that the current economic crisis could be spread to other parts of the world.

Based on the efforts and activities of different working groups, committees and task forces, INTOSAI stresses on systematic financial supervision in government organization, improvement of laws and regulation with the objective to facilitate

economic activities, removing obstacles on the way of economic programs, exerting control on economic plans through performance auditing in order to ensure that the desired objectives have been achieved.

World experts believe that mismanagement of public fund is the major factor for economic crisis; they contend that there is a direct relation between national governance and public auditing and therefore sustainability of economic policies at public sector will lead to economic growth.

Supreme Audit Institutions all over the world are constitutionally mandated bodies, which are responsible for financial supervision. INTOSAI strongly supports the independence of such institutions and recommends to every member country to improve the skills of auditors, standardization of auditing, application of new audit methods through participating in regional audit organizations, and multilateral efforts.

Dear friends and brothers,

The distinguished members of the ECO established ECOSAI (Economic Cooperation Organization Supreme Audit Institutions) almost 18 years ago and the Presidents of the ECO countries in 1995 welcomed the establishment of ECOSAI in their joint declaration. The 6th Congress of ECOSAI will be held in Tehran in second half of December this year. ECOSAI has been active in exchange of experience among member SAIs, and strengthening the professional capabilities of auditors. But this level of activity is not sufficient and therefore does not meet the expectation of member countries. ECOSAI members can play a more active role in ECOSAI and make it more developed like other regional audit institutions, ASOSAI, ARABOSAI, EUROSAI, etc. though common efforts, exchange of experience and using the individual capabilities of other SAIs in member countries.

I am sure that ECOSAI can help ECO remove many of its current challenges and also help the economic development of the region based on the results of cooperative audits.

**Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I announce the readiness of ECOSAI to cooperate with the ECO as two independent organizations, I would like to request you to extend the support of your governments to the activities of the respective supreme audit institution in your country and encourage them to play a more active role in the projects and activities of ECOSAI. I request the 21st Meeting of Council of Minister to include one item in support of ECOSAI in its final declaration.

Once again thank you very much for your kind invitation to attend this auspicious gathering and wish you all the best.

**Statement by Dr. Mete KOMEAGAC, Chairman of ECO Seed Association
at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers
(Tehran, 26th November, 2013)**

Dear Delegates,

ECOSA (ECO Seed Association) was established in 2009, and registered in Turkey in 2011 as an international association. Its headquarters is in Ankara and serving an independent office.

The mission of ECOSA is to strengthen and develop the seed industry in its member countries.

The objectives of ECOSA are:

- To facilitate the seed production activities
- To promote and represent the seed production industry at a national, regional and international level
- To disseminate seed related information to its members
- To create a sharing environment for cooperation and information exchange among the national seed production association/societies and seed production companies.

Activities Done:

- There are 28 registered members at present all from Turkey,
- A number of applications for the memberships from ECO countries have been taken, their memberships will be accepted in the coming general Assembly.
- ECOSA organized 5 international seed Trade Congress in 2009-2010-2011-2012 and 2013. One of them organized and hosted by Kyrgyzstan.
- All of the Congress financial contribution from different sources such as, TIKA, TURKTOB, BISAB, TSUAB, IDB and ECO Secretariat.
- To this Congress ISTA, UPOV and OECD has provided technical support and participated.
- ECOSA is followed by international organizations with its effective and dynamic structure. This interest carried ECOSA to the central management committee of International Seed Federation (ISF). ECOSA holds this position when seed is mentioned in world and especially in our region (ECO), ECOSA will be involved in the matters directly.

Forthcoming Activities:

- 6th ECOSA Seed Trade Congress will be held in Istanbul 10-12 January 2014 again whit same place in seed technology fair
- We have already planned to visit all members' countries to meet national authorities and seed sector partners
- To complete the establishment of seed association
- Seed Project: "Seed Sector Harmonization and Development Project"
- The project is proposed by Ministry of Food Agriculture and Livestock of Turkey and will be carried out by ECO member countries, ECOSA and FAO-SEC
- Supported by FAO sub-regional office in Turkey through Turkish Aid fund and ECO. The total budget is US\$ 400.000/-, FAO-Sub regional office provided US\$ 350,000/- and ECO provided the remaining.
- Since the project is very important and critical for the development and growth of national seed sectors and regional trade in ECO countries.

The aims of the Project

- To take the snapshots of seed sector in the region
- Do training on the key subjects and produce a regional applicable seed registration, certification and trade system

Expectations

- As ECOSA we have few expectations from member countries and ECO Secretariat. Those expectations are:

From member countries:

- To cooperate whit ECOSA to realize seed project and other planned activities in the country
- To promote seed sector for the membership to ECOSA
- To promote seed companies to participate ECOSA international seed Congress hold every yield

From ECO Secretariat:

- To continue to mobilize different financial sources

Finally I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you and ECO Secretariat for their kindness and help throughout out activities also I would like to, once more express our sincere feelings that we are dedicated to contribute to strengthen and develop the industry by authorities and seed sector actors in member countries and I want to indicate that it will be impossible without your kind collaboration.

Thank you very much for time, collaboration and help

Statement by Mr. Ömer Özel, Regional Programme Coordinator of ECO Regional Coordination Centre for the Implementation of the Regional Programme for Food Security at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers (Tehran, 26th November, 2013)

**Good afternoon Mr. Chairman,
His Excellency Secretary General,
Distinguished Representatives of ECO Member States and ECO Institutions,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

My name is Ömer ÖZEL. I am the Regional Program Coordinator for the ECO Regional Program for Food Security.

First of all, I would like to thank Islamic Republic of Iran for organizing the event and hospitality and also thank ECO Secretariat for inviting us to the COM.

Now I will briefly talk about our Center and what we have done so far since the establishment of the ECO-RCC.

ECO-RCC was established in Ankara in November 2012 in accordance with the decisions taken at 20th Regional Planning Council (RPC) in Antalya in February 2010 and 19th Council of Ministers (CoM) in Istanbul in December 2010.

The Regional Program Coordinator and other staff members were appointed by Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock (MFAL) of Republic of Turkey.

A website for the ECO-RCC (www.eco-rccfs.org) was setup and launched in July 2013 for dissemination of knowledge and information on RPFS and ECO-RCC and for communicating with National Focal Points (NFP) at Member States.

We have visited and contacted various stakeholders, financial and funding institutions (such as Treasury of Republic of Turkey, Islamic Development Bank, EU Delegation in Ankara, OIC Institutions, TIKa) for cooperation opportunities and possible programs for funds and grants towards implementation of the RPFS.

We have been working in close cooperation with FAO and FAO-SEC in Ankara for designing and organizing training programs for institutional capacity development in the ECO region. Right now, there is an ongoing training in Ankara on Food Security and Project Cycle Management for a period of three weeks. Trainees selected from Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan are participating in the training.

We have assisted the MFAL's related units on submitting project proposals to the OIC COMCEC PCM Grant Program for possible financing of projects in agriculture and food security under the RPFS.

We have participated in several workshops and training programs (organized by ECOSA, COMCEC, FAO, etc.) on agriculture and food security as well as institutional capacity development subjects.

We organized and held the ECO-RCC Inception Workshop on RPFS in Ankara on 23-24 September 2013. Delegations from seven Member States and international organizations participated in the workshop.

We organized and held the First Program Steering Committee (PSC) Meeting back-to-back with the Inception Workshop in Ankara on 25 September 2013. Senior officers from seven Member States participated in the meeting. The PSC member and NFP for each participating Member State were determined during the meeting.

During the workshop and PSC meeting, priorities of Member States regarding food security were discussed and the leading RPFS components were determined as follows:

1. Strengthening of Regional Seed Supply,
2. Coordinated Research on Wheat Improvement,
3. Integrated Pest Management,
4. Development and Maintenance of Pastures.

The next PSC Meeting was decided to be held in May 2014.

Finally, I would like each Member State to participate in all our activities. We also have to find funds for implementation of the RPFS. Therefore, Member States have to make contributions and commitments. I urge Member States talk to the related bodies on finance and economy. Here, I also kindly request the present delegations from Member States that financing of the RPFS be placed into the agenda of the upcoming Ministerial Meeting on Finance and discussed in the meeting for taking decisions on country commitments and contributions towards implementation of the RPFS.

Thank you very much.
