



**ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (ECO)
SECRETARIAT**

Tehran Communiqué

**21st Council of Ministers' Meeting
(Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran, 26th November, 2013)**

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We, the Foreign Ministers of the Member States and Heads of official delegations of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO),

Convening, in a cordial and friendly environment, the 21st Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers on 26 November 2013 in Tehran, under the chairmanship of H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran,

Availing ourselves of the opportunity of the Tehran Meeting to exchange views on the most important regional and global issues,

Bearing in mind the goals and objectives of the Organization as envisaged in the Treaty of Izmir and as reemphasized by our Heads of State and Government, notably and recently in Baku Declaration 2012,

Reviewing with appreciation the progress made since our last meeting in Baku on 15 October 2012,

Taking stock of the ECO achievements and developments in its first two decades of expansion with a view to developing new approaches and adopting necessary policies and mechanisms to make ECO more responsive to the needs and expectations of its Member States and Peoples, and in this regard, **appreciating** the invaluable work done by our Senior Officials in their meeting on 24-25 November 2013 in Tehran,

Mindful of the immediate requirements of a successful ECO in its 3rd decade of expansion,

Emphasizing that ECO activities and undertakings in its 3rd decade and beyond shall be as inclusive as possible encompassing all its Member States,

1. **Endorsed** the final Report of the 21st Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers as prepared by the Senior Officials Meeting and **called on** the concerned authorities of the Member States and Secretary General to ensure implementation of the decisions therein.

2. **Reaffirmed** the continued critical value of collective cooperation within ECO for economic growth and development of its Member States, individually and regionally.

3. **Building** on the two decades of experience, decided to take forward the reform process of ECO on the basis of the recommendations of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) and instructed the ECO Secretary General to arrange, in cooperation with the Member States, the timely conclusion of the said process for enhancing the dynamism, efficiency and visibility of the Organization. The Council instructed the CPR to finalize and approve the roadmap for the implementation of the recommendations of the EPG by August 2014 with a view to its earliest implementation.

4. **Agreed** that the reform process shall address, inter alia, the regulatory, institutional, budgetary and other requirements of the Organization putting in place a reliable and durable cooperation framework for our Region, and to that end mandated the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to provide the Secretary General with necessary support and authorizations enabling him to mobilize all in-house and external resources, including pertinent expertise and applicable reform models, with a view to ensuring the applicability and usefulness of the envisaged reforms.

5. **Agreed** to review and revise the ECO Secretariat staffing structure during the year 2014 in order to more accurately reflect and further encourage all ECO Member States representation.

6. **Acknowledged** the pivotal role of intra-trade expansion in boosting economic growth and cooperation in the ECO region and in that respect **called for** early establishment of the requisite trade, customs, banking and tax arrangements, as well as public-private sector partnerships needed for an enabling regional trading environment. Accordingly called to take the necessary measures for the practical implementation and wider membership of trade related agreements within the framework of ECO. The need for ECO advocacy policy for assisting in early accession of its remaining Member States to the World Trade Organization (WTO) was highlighted as an important contribution to the trade agenda of the ECO region.

7. **Reaffirmed** its commitment to immediately operationalize ECOTA among the Contracting Parties, which have submitted their Lists. The Council also requested the remaining Member States to join ECOTA at the earliest.

8. **Having** full cognizance of the macro and microeconomic impacts of the transport and transit sector on the economic growth and development of ECO region as well as welfare of its people, **called for** action on removing the existing obstacles to full and early operationalization of the ECO rail and road corridors, including corridors identified in the ECO Railway and Road Network Development Plans. To that end, **invited** the international and regional funding institutions and the Member States to participate in financing the ECO transit/transport related projects.

9. **Revisited** the yet existing gap between ECO enormous potential for enhanced energy cooperation and its pertinent real achievements in the last two decades, and **reiterated** our firm desire to rectify this situation, including through outlines developed in the decisions of the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy held in March 2013 in Tehran.

10. **Reaffirmed** the significance of all projects, programmes and bodies within the Organization in areas such as environment, agriculture, industry, tourism, statistics, economic research, information and communication technologies, health, culture, science and technology, education, disaster risk management, Meteorology, human resource development, anti-corruption, drugs, organized crimes and other areas of relevance, and acknowledged the need for necessary streamlining.

11. **Commended** efforts of the ECO Secretariat to strengthen and expand ECO relations with the United Nations system, regional and international Organizations and relevant non-ECO countries, particularly those aimed at securing technical and financial support for the relevant ECO projects and activities, and **emphasized** the need for a revised ECO external relations policy commensurate with the needs and requirements of its 3rd decade. The significant role of the Contact Groups of ECO Ambassadors at international organizations was also **emphasized**.

12. Also **welcomed** the support given by the ECO in the framework of Istanbul Process for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan.

13. **Appreciated** the establishment of ECO Research Centre in Baku.

14. **Appreciated** the invaluable efforts of H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for the promotion of regional cooperation during his chairmanship of the

ECO Council of Ministers, and **felicitated** H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on assuming the Chairmanship of the Council.

15. **Expressed** profound thanks and gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Government officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their support and contributions to the 21st COM meeting held in Tehran. Also **thanked** the ECO Secretary General and his staff for their efforts to make this meeting successful.

Tehran 26th November, 2013