

**Inaugural Statement by H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu, Minister of Foreign
Affairs of the Republic of Turkey at the 20th Meeting of the Council of
Ministers
(Baku – 15th October, 2012)**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure for me to meet with you all in Baku, where we deem as our second home, on the occasion of the 20th Meeting of the Council of Minister and the 12th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). At this Significant Meeting, I am also pleased and honoured to hand over the Chairmanship-in-Office of ECO to our hosts and brotherly country Azerbaijan.

As you all know, we assumed the Chairmanship-in-Office of ECO back in 2010 at a time when global economic and financial crisis was bitterly felt all around the world, including our region.

During our term, we tried to take some concrete steps aiming at the reform and institutionalization of the ECO in order to meet the new challenges.

In this regard, the establishment of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) is especially worth mentioning, the idea of which was initiated by H.E. Abdullah Gul, President of the Republic of Turkey and adopted at the ECO Summit in Istanbul. EPG has been given the mandate to prepare recommendations on the steps to be taken for reviewing the work of the Organization as well as “the ECO Vision 2015 document”.

I am confident that the recommendations of the EPG, which will be submitted to the Council of Ministers during this Meeting, will be given due consideration by the Distinguished Ministers.

Along with some Ministerial Meetings at sectoral level and some new projects introduced during our Chairmanship-in-Office, the priority was given to the deepening of the ECO’s vision and enhancing its cooperation with other international and regional organizations, mainly the UN and its relevant agencies, ASEAN, the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, etc.

I would like to remind this August House that activation of ECO Science Foundation in Pakistan and ECO Educational Institute in Ankara, concrete steps taken for the implementation of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and for the

establishment of the ECO Parliamentary Assembly are just some of the noteworthy developments during our Chairmanship-in-Office.

I have the strong conviction that brotherly country Azerbaijan will successfully elevate these achievements to a higher level and add new ones during its Chairmanship in Office with a view to further broadening the horizon of our Organization.

I would like to assure our Azerbaijani brothers and sisters that we will always be ready to share our experience with them and wholeheartedly support their endeavours towards this end.

On this occasion, I wish to congratulate my Dear colleague and friend Elmar on his assumption of Chairmanship-in-Office of the ECO Council of Ministers and wish him every success.

With this I hand over the gavel to you my dear colleague.

Now we will elect the Chairman of the Meeting, I propose H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan as the Chairman. If everyone approves, may I now continue by giving the floor to my dear Colleague, H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov.

Yes, Excellency, the floor is yours.
