

## The 8<sup>th</sup> Summit

Statement of H.E. Dr. Kim Hak-su, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP

( Dushanbe, 14 September, 2004 )

*Annex-V*

*Your Excellency, President Emomali Rakhmonov of the Republic of Tajikistan and Chairman of the 8<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit,  
Distinguished Heads of States and Governments,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Secretary General of ECO,  
Esteemed Participants,*

I am highly privileged and honoured to address this 8<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization. I wish to express our deepest appreciation for the kind invitation extended to us by both the Government of Tajikistan and the ECO Secretariat to participate in this important meeting. I also wish to thank the Government and people of Tajikistan for the excellent arrangements and the warm hospitality accorded to all of us.

At the 7<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit Meeting of 2002, the Leaders, through the Istanbul Declaration, invited the relevant international as well as regional organizations to continue providing technical and financial assistance to the Economic Cooperation Organization and to extend such assistance to areas including poverty alleviation, environment, energy efficiency and transfer of technology. We, at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), would like to respond positively to this invitation and strengthen our partnership with the sub-region as a whole.

I am pleased to note that the Istanbul Declaration has given importance to poverty alleviation. This precisely is the major thrust of our work at UNESCAP. In our visionary report entitled ESCAP Towards 2030, which we issued on the occasion of the commemorative 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission held in Shanghai in April this year, we emphasized that our overarching mission is to tackle poverty in all its forms. We will combat poverty: be it poverty of resources – which keeps 800 million people in the region living on less than a dollar a day; or poverty of opportunity – which excludes millions from sharing the benefits of the region's economic growth; or poverty of rights – which deprives the disadvantaged and disabled of their dignity and self-respect. We will aim to achieve this objective through productive partnerships. And one such partnership is with ECO.

*Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,*

Since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between ECO and UNESCAP in July 1993, cooperation between our two organizations has grown from strength to strength. This was evident at the 9<sup>th</sup> Consultative Meeting among Executive Heads of Sub-regional Organizations and UNESCAP held in Shanghai in April this year. At that meeting, the UNESCAP and ECO Secretariats agreed that our cooperation in trade and investment has assumed greater importance with the coming of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA). In this regard, our cooperation should be enhanced in order to help facilitate the implementation of ECOTA, the development of Rules of Origin, and the finalization of the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment among ECO member states.

In the years ahead, the ten member countries of ECO will remain an important focus of our work at UNESCAP. We will continue to provide an extensive analysis of the macroeconomic performance of the member countries of ECO in the annual issue of our flagship publication, *Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific*. In this regard, we will make trenchant assessments of short to medium term development prospects of ECO countries in the light of changing global and regional conditions.

In the transport sector, there is ongoing cooperation with UNESCAP in multi-modal transport. ECO has been a staunch supporter of the development of the Asian Highway. Almost all the ECO member countries have signed the Asian Highway Agreement. At the ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications held in Bishkek in August 2004, the Secretariats of UNESCAP and ECO agreed to plan to strengthen collaboration, particularly in support of the ongoing work on Asian Highway investments and SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation.

We are aware that ECO has been working with its member countries to develop a container block-train

service between Almaty and Istanbul. We are interested to explore ways to further cooperation with ECO in this area, including share of experiences and strategies, since UNESCAP has been implementing a project on developing container block train services along the Trans-Asian Railway Northern Corridor.

In the environment area, UNESCAP and UNECE signed, in June this year, in this city, a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) with the IFAS Chairman, who is also the Chairman of this Summit, H.E. President Rakhmonov. Furthermore, under the auspices of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), a "Cooperation Strategy to Promote the Rational Use of Water and Energy Resources in Central Asia" has been developed, which covers majority of the ECO member countries.

Next year in March, we will organize the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development to be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea in Seoul. The conference will review the progress made in the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as well as the Phnom Penh Regional Platform for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. We invite the active participation of the economic planning and environment ministers of all ECO member countries. In this connection, we are organizing, in cooperation with the ECO Secretariat, a sub-regional preparatory meeting to be held immediately following the 2<sup>nd</sup> ECO Ministerial Conference on Environment to be held in Istanbul on 4-6 October 2004.

*Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,*

It is said that the twenty-first century is the Asia-Pacific century, with the region becoming the centre of economic growth and technological innovation. Such economic growth should be environmentally sustainable, and even more important, should be equitably shared by all countries and sub-regions, including the countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization. For this to happen, we must foster regional cooperation and partnerships. Therefore, I should like to reiterate our desire to enhance and deepen our partnership with ECO, not only at the Secretariat level, but with all the ten countries of this extremely vital and critically important sub-region. I am convinced that it is only through such partnerships that we can ensure the attainment of our common objectives. My prayer is that the coming Asia-Pacific century may also be the ECO century.

Thank you.

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