

Istanbul Declaration

Annex-VI

The Seventh Summit meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization was held in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey on October 14, 2002. The meeting, presided over by **H.E. Mr. Ahmet Necdet Sezer**, President of the Republic of Turkey, was also attended by:

H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan.

H.E. Mr. Heydar Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

H.E. Mr. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

H.E. Mr. Kassymzhomart Tokaev, Secretary of State-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

H.E. Mr. Askar Akaev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic.

H.E. General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

H.E. Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan.

H.E. Mr. Recep Saparov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan.

H.E. Mr. Erkin Khalilov, Chairman of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) Republic of Uzbekistan.

2. In a spirit of ever growing friendship and good neighbourly relations, based on respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders the participating Heads of State/Heads of Delegation reviewed the decade-long performance of the expanded ECO with reference to its achievements and the challenges it may encounter in the new millennium taking into account the profound developments in the region and in the world. They expressed their unflinching determination to strengthen the multi-dimensional regional cooperation especially in areas of Trade and Investment, Transport and Communications, Energy, Minerals, Environment, Agriculture, Industry and Drug Control to realize the objectives stipulated in the Treaty of Izmir and subsequently reaffirmed in declarations/communiqués adopted at the previous six summits and one extraordinary summit meeting held in Tehran (1992), Istanbul (1993), Islamabad (1995), Ashgabat (1996 & 1997), Almaty (1998) and Tehran (2000).

3. They observed that for the past 10 years their efforts focused on the establishment of multi-sectoral institutional dialogue capable of transforming the desires and hopes of over 350 million people of the ECO region for economic development and mutually beneficial economic cooperation into a tangible reality. Encouraged by the ECO achievements they would now ensure that the forces of regional cooperation, impulses of shared cultural and social affinities and the principles of mutual benefit would continue to guide them in their efforts to achieve economic prosperity in the region and their successful integration into world economy. In this respect, they underpinned the urgent need for creation of favourable climate for effective utilization of rich economic potentials of the ECO member states. To this end, they encouraged special promotional measures for intra-regional trade and investments.

4. They declared their support for the Islamic State of Afghanistan's efforts to restore peace and stability in the country to encourage effective participation of the international community in their campaign to launch reconstruction work in its war-ravaged country. They supported the efforts for reconstruction of Afghanistan for realizing concrete projects in line with the national priorities of the Transitional Islamic Government of Afghanistan by establishing ECO Fund within the possible financial/budgetary modalities acceptable to the member states.

5. Reiterated the continuing utility and centrality of periodic Ministerial meetings to the development of mutual cooperation. In this respect, they recalled the contributions made by the first Ministerial meeting on Energy/Petroleum (Islamabad, November 8, 2000), the first ECO Ministerial meeting on Agriculture (Islamabad, July 23-25, 2002) and the fourth ECO Ministerial meeting on Transport and Communications (Izmir, September 26-27, 2002). They expected that the second Ministerial meeting on Energy (Tehran, January 2003) and the 1st Ministerial meeting on Environment (Tehran, December 2002), the 2nd Ministerial meeting on Commerce & Foreign Trade (Islamabad, July 15-17, 2003) and the first Ministerial meeting on Information Communication Technology (Tehran, 2003) would make important contributions to accelerating the realization of ECO objectives in these fields.

6. They reaffirmed their resolve to further strengthen the institutional and legal framework of the cooperation for developing the region and to this effect they also desired to use the dynamics and the potential of the private sector for implementing ECO projects and programmes.

In particular they;

a. Declared that the march towards the development of effective and safe system of transportation and communication with appropriate links with global transport corridors as indicated in the Programme of Action for the ECO Decade of Transport and Communications (1998-2007) will continue. In this regard, smooth implementation of the important measures contained in this Programme of Action would continue to receive national priority. The construction of missing road and rail links as well as, where needed, upgradation of the existing infrastructure would be ensured as part of national transport planning strategies in all member states.

b. Welcomed the launching of a regular container train on Istanbul- Tehran-Turkmenabad-Tashkent-Almaty route of Trans-Asian Railway main line and the pilot run of the ECO passenger train from Almaty on the same route in 2002 as concrete achievement of the regional cooperation and hoped that these trains would pave the way for the promotion of tourism and trade in the region.

c. Underlined a strong need for an early operationalization of the Transit Trade Agreement (1995) as well as the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (1998) to facilitate efficient trade and transport in the region and beyond.

d. Noted that the revival of the Silk Road Development Project can play an important role in facilitating transportation within the ECO region and beyond.

e. Called for further progress of ECO-IDB project on interconnection of power systems in the ECO region, as well as the implementation of the Plan of Action for Energy/Petroleum Cooperation in the ECO region (2001-2005) and reiterated the necessity to further develop cooperation in this priority field.

f. Stressed the importance of the development of the region's mineral resources in a sustainable manner and noting with satisfaction, the ECO activities carried out in the fields of minerals and environment, underlined the need for dealing with the most urgent issues faced by the member states in these areas.

g. Called for the promotion of environmental cooperation within ECO, and entrusted the task to the First Ministerial meeting on Environment (Tehran, December 2002) to formulate a framework for regional cooperation in this context.

h. Stressed the importance of cooperation in Human Resource Development within ECO region in view of its central role in the development of the member states. In this regard they called for special attention to the empowerment of women and their full participation in the economic development activities in the ECO region.

i. Emphasized the importance of trade liberalization efforts in the region and early finalization and implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) that will envisage the removal of non-tariff barriers and progressive reduction of tariffs within an optimal timeframe.

j. Underlined the importance of strengthening the existing relations among national Chambers of Commerce and Industry within the framework of ECO-CCI and wished that the necessary measures would be introduced to facilitate contacts and legal procedures to stimulate the development of sectors such as energy, environment, transport, communication, agriculture, industry, tourism, health etc. leading to greater interaction at professional level and resulting in more public awareness and opinion in favour of ECO.

k. Expressed the wish that the ECO Trade and Development Bank and ECO Reinsurance Company soon be established so that they may play their due role in fostering economic development in the region. Also, they called for an early establishment of ECO Science Foundation;

l. Took note with satisfaction of the efforts of the ECO Secretariat to stimulate participation of the private sector in its economic programmes and activities. In this regard, they acknowledged the joint ECO/ITC efforts in expanding intra-ECO Trade and the business community's participation in the 1st ECO-CEC (Consultancy and Engineering Company) meeting held in Pakistan in March, 2002 and the successful scheduling of the ECO Business Forum on the sidelines of the Summit. They expressed the hope that the process would promote tangible contacts between the entrepreneurial community of the member states.

m. Resolved to cooperate on international trade issues to ensure a rule-based non-discriminatory and equitable international economic system responsive to the legitimate interests of the developing world and assist the member states seeking accession to WTO.

n. Called for the strengthening of mutual cooperation in the field of agriculture to benefit from the potential and various opportunities available in this field particularly as envisaged in the Islamabad Declaration on Agricultural Cooperation among the member states adopted by the First ECO Ministerial meeting on Agriculture held in Islamabad in July 2002.

o. Reiterated the action against drugs is a common and shared responsibility requiring an integrated regional approach on preventing illicit production, trafficking

and use of drugs and in this regard appreciated the technical and financial assistance of UNDCP and EU in launching the 2nd phase of joint project for strengthening the Drug Control Coordination Unit at the ECO Secretariat.

p. Emphasized the importance of the initiative for establishment of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank.

q. Took note of the status reports of the ECO Institutions and Specialized Agencies. In this context, they called upon the member states to take necessary measures to improve the performance of the ECO Shipping Company, ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Insurance College and ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

r. Appreciated the growing relations with regional and international organizations and financial institutions including WTO, UNDP, UNDCP, UNESCAP, UNCTAD, FAO, IRU, IDB, OSJD, ITC, ASEAN and UIC. In particular, they noted the financial and technical support from UNDP and IDB in the fields of trade, transport, energy, agriculture and health. They invited the relevant international as well as regional organizations to continue providing technical and financial assistance and further extending it to areas such as environment, food security, management, transfer of technology, rural poverty alleviation, energy efficiency, etc.

7. Bearing in mind that activities of ECO require constant improvement and streamlining efforts, they took note with satisfaction of the measures adopted by the Council of Ministers to promote the effectiveness and efficiency of ECO and emphasized the need for the ongoing process in this regard.

8. While appreciating the services of H.E. Dr. Abdolrahim Gavahi former ECO Secretary General, Heads of State/Heads of Delegation welcomed the appointment of H.E. Mr. Seyed Mojtaba Arastou as the new Secretary General and expressed the confidence that he would make a valuable contribution to promoting the regional cooperation and enhancing the international image of ECO.

9. The participating Heads of State/Heads of Delegation expressed their profound thanks for the sagacious manner in which H.E. Mr. Ahmet Necdet Sezer, President of the Republic of Turkey, had conducted the deliberations during the 7th ECO Summit. They also expressed their sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Turkey for the warm hospitality and excellent organization of the Summit and other ECO meetings in the beautiful and historic city of Istanbul.
