



Statement by
Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)
Ambassador Halil Ibrahim Akca

At the
9th Health Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement
(NAM)

24 May 2016- Geneva

**Honourable Minister Dr. Seyed Hasan Hashemi;
Dr. Margaret Chan Distinguished Director General of WHO;
Honourable Ministers;
Distinguished Participants;
Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is indeed a privilege for me to address the 9th NAM Health Ministerial Meeting today. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for this opportunity to share with you some thoughts from regional perspective.

As we all know, the UN document entitled “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” has clearly acknowledged the role of regional and sub-regional frameworks in facilitating the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete actions at the national level. This is the fact that regional dimensions as well as collective attempts by countries towards regional economic integration and interconnectivity contribute into the overall objective of sustainable development. The same document has given important role to regional and sub-regional organizations in helping countries achieve SDGs. This is envisaged through providing appropriate frameworks for sharing the best practices and discussion on shared targets.

The Non-aligned Movement, as the principal framework addressing health agenda in the developing world can also rely on the capacities of the existing regional and sub-regional frameworks

among its membership. This is in line with the roles of these regional and sub-regional organizations as defined and pursued by the United Nations system. The 2015 UN General Assembly “Declaration on Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and sub-regional Organizations” clearly underscored the need to support regional and sub-regional organizations, including through the United Nations system, in the effective operationalization and implementation of sustainable development.

**Mr. Chairman;
Honourable Ministers;**

As one of the largest regions in the developing world, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), with ten member countries in the West and East Asia as well as Central Asia and Caucasus, is now functioning in two tracks, namely, as a regional cooperation framework to complement individual developmental efforts of its Member States, and as a platform to translate global agenda into actions at the regional level. In health-related issues, I am pleased to inform this august Meeting that ECO Member States have since long decided to establish regional arrangements for cooperation to improve health situation in the countries and the Region as a whole. In MDGs era, ECO countries focused mainly on Goal 4 (Reduce Child Mortality), Goal 5 (Improve Maternal Health), and Goal 6 (Combat

HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases). There is strong interest in the ECO membership to continue health cooperation in the context of the SDGs and emerging global agenda. Later today, Ministers of Health of ECO Member States will convene their meeting here in this UN building in Geneva to agree on the areas of priorities for the next 15 years, keeping in mind global agenda and immediate needs and concerns of the Member States.

To conclude, let me express readiness of the ECO Secretariat to engage in any arrangements for inter-regional cooperation on health within the developing world. We also remain ready to engage in interactions with WHO with a view to working out proper partnership in the interest of our common Member States.

I thank you for your attention.