



Permanent Mission of Afghanistan to the United Nations

Remarks

by

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The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)
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Mr. Chairman,

It is a great pleasure to join you all here today. Allow me at the outset to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Mission of Turkey for organizing this gathering. The role which the government of Turkey is playing as the Chairman of our organizations is inspiring for all of us. I am confident that our Organization will benefit greatly from your support and rich experience in the year ahead.

Afghanistan has benefited from the generous assistance of ECO for which we are greatly thankful. Examples include: construction of a maternity hospital (in Faryab), a school (in Bamyan), part of the Research Center at the Afghan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, the Kabul Zoo rehabilitation project, which was completed and inaugurated just last week.

This year Afghanistan hosted two important ECO events: The meeting of the ECO Commerce Ministers in July this year in Kabul, and the ECO Disaster Management event also held in Kabul just last month. We intend to hold a meeting on investment promotion in the ECO region in Kabul in the near future.

We see an urgent need for our Organization to intensify its efforts in the areas of trade, transit and transportation. We stress the importance of promoting regional integration as an integral part of ensuring the long-term prosperity, stability and security of our peoples. In this context, we would like to see the realization of the ECO/ADB joint project for the preparation of a Regional Program for Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) with the full coordination of all ECO member states.

We have made tangible progress in the area of transportation. The successful initiation of the ECO Container Train on the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul route as well as the ECO Silk Road Truck Caravan was a key milestone in paving the way for stimulating the ECO Silk Road and expectantly to other major trade routes. We welcomed this historical Caravan of trucks from eight member states -- a sign of enhancing regional cooperation in road transport. As directed by the 11th ECO Summit, we call on the ECO Secretariat to start regular runs of trucks among member states.

We should also focus our joint efforts to gain freer access to markets outside the ECO region for the raw materials and finished products of Member States. We encourage the elimination of trade barriers and promotion of intra-regional trade, and greater contribution of ECO in the growth of world trade and gradual integration of the economies of ECO Member States into the world economy.

As the majority of our populations are involved in and dependent on the agricultural sector, we should also encourage the expansion of cooperation among ECO members on developing the agricultural and industrial potentials of all our countries.

Afghanistan also supports the idea expressed by ECO experts in New York on 9 September 2011 to establish a focal point at the UN for ECO.

Afghanistan is also supporting the measures taken last year to open up a railway line from China to Europe via Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey. As you are aware, the pre-feasibility study for Afghanistan has already been completed and we hope that the feasibility study for other countries in the region to be completed soon.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciations to the President of the Republic of Turkey for taking personal interest in the expansion of the membership of ECO Trade and Development Bank. Afghanistan has already become one of its members. I would like to once again thank the Turkish Mission for their warm hospitality.

Thank you.