

Press Communiqué

18th Informal Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers (COM) (New York-September 27, 2011)

The Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) held their annual informal Meeting on 27 September, 2011 in New York on the sidelines of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Meeting was hosted and chaired by H.E. Dr. Ahmet Davutoglu, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and the current Chairman of the ECO COM over a working-lunch. It was attended by the Foreign Ministers/Representatives of the ECO Member States. The Secretary-General of ECO was also present at the occasion.

The Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Muhammed Yahya Maroofi, presented an interim review of the status of implementation of the decisions of the 11th ECO Summit and the 19th ECO COM Meeting. While briefing the Ministers on the recent progress in the agenda of ECO, the Secretary-General touched upon the key developments made in various fields of cooperation including Trade, Transport & Communications, Energy & Environment, Narcotics Control, Health and External Relations of ECO.

The Foreign Ministers took note of the briefing made by the Secretary-General and expressed satisfaction over the progress made by ECO, during the current year, across the spectrum of fields under its purview particularly in transport, narcotics control and external relations. During the exchange of views, the Member states appreciated the progress on such transport-related projects of ECO as the construction of railway line on Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran route, feasibility study on Kyrgyz Republic-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran route, revitalization of ECO Container Trains on Istanbul-Almaty and Almaty-Bandar-Abbas routes and commercialization of the freight services on the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad container train. The Council while emphasizing the significance of these projects for developing an efficient and modern transport infrastructure in the region stressed the need for the Secretariat and the Member States to pursue their early realization. In their remarks, the Ministers also expressed satisfaction over the successful launch of the 3rd ECO Eminent Persons Group and expressed their confidence that recommendations of the Eminent Persons would help enhance dynamism, efficiency and visibility of ECO.

The Meeting, while commending the efforts made by the Secretariat in promoting ECO's ties with other regional and international organizations, called on the Secretary-General to sustain the ongoing efforts for further strengthening meaningful cooperation with the United Nations system and other regional and international organizations in line with the directives of the ECO decision-making bodies. The Meeting also reflected its satisfaction over the activation of contacts between ECO and ASEAN; welcomed the deliberations between the two Organizations at the 11th ASEAN-ECO Joint Ministerial Meeting held on 24 Sep, 2011 and expressed hope that follow-up of the decisions taken by the Joint Meeting would speed-up implementation of ECO-

ASEAN MoU and the Work Programme in the areas of Trade & Investment, Narcotics Control, Small and Medium Enterprises Development and Tourism.

With respect to the proposals of the ECO Contact Group in New York on effective implementation of the UNGA biennial resolution on ECO-UN cooperation, the Ministers endorsed the recommendations and stressed the need for the Contact Group to continue playing an active role in promoting ECO's interests at the United Nations and other relevant regional and international Organizations. The Council also welcomed Kazakhstan's bid to host the International Exhibition EXPO-2017 as well as Turkey's bid for EXPO-2020.

The Council underscored the need for sustained and active follow-up on all the decisions of the 11th ECO Summit and the 19th ECO COM Meeting to accelerate progress in different sectors of ECO cooperation.

In their concluding remarks, the Ministers renewed their abiding commitment to fostering regional economic integration among the ECO member States in keeping with the spirit of the Treaty of Izmir and resolved to play an active role in realization of the aims and objectives of the ECO. At the close of the Meeting, the Ministers expressed their gratitude to the Chair for excellent arrangements made for the Informal Meeting and for extending traditional Turkish hospitality to the participants.

New York
27 September, 2011.

ECO is a ten-member inter-governmental regional organization comprising Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Council of Ministers (COM) is the highest decision-making body of ECO that meets annually in ECO Member States on rotational basis. The Informal Meeting of the COM is organized on yearly basis in the margins of the United Nations General Assembly Session to review progress on the decisions of ECO Summit and formal COM Meetings.