

**Statement of the ECO Secretary General Amb. Khusrav Noziri**  
**17<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session of the Organization of Islamic**  
**Cooperation (OIC)'s Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM)**  
**on the situation in Afghanistan**  
December 19, 2021, Islamabad

**Your Excellency Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan,**  
**Honourable Ministers,**  
**Excellencies,**  
**Distinguished Delegates,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a matter of profound honour and great pleasure for me to attend this extraordinary session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC. At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Government of Pakistan, for the gracious hospitality and excellent arrangements for this session. We have gathered here at the time when our region is confronted with enormous challenges which pose serious threats to the peace, stability, and economic development. In this context, the 17<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session is a very timely and significant event, which is taking place on the latest situation of Afghanistan particularly the humanitarian crises in the country.

**Excellencies,**

We in the ECO recognize the strong interdependence between stability and development, and reiterate our firm belief that a stable and prosperous Afghanistan is not only the key to a developed and well integrated ECO Region but also a guarantee for World Peace. We cannot overlook these regional developments which are causing challenges to our economies and subsequently affecting the realization of socio-economic development's goals in the region. Keeping in view the spirit of our today's meeting, I have no doubt to acknowledge the relevance of this session to persuade the socio-economic cooperation amongst Afghanistan and its neighboring nations as well as the international community. The session would also provide us an opportunity to work together in charting the future course of action in realizing the collective objective of stable and prosperous Afghanistan by taking stock of the achievements, limitations and the experience learned from the Heart of Asia process.

## **Excellencies,**

As Afghanistan is one of the key members of our organization, reconstruction and development of Afghanistan has been under the focus of ECO and through *ECO Fund for Afghanistan* that was established in 2004, we have financed a number of projects on building hospitals and schools and other facilities. Moreover, in order to advance ECO's presence in Afghanistan, the ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan (EAPA) was adopted at 23<sup>rd</sup> Council of Foreign Ministers of ECO member states, held in Dushanbe in 2018. The ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan (EAPA) follows two distinct principles, the Complementary Principle and the second, the Favourable Measures Principle. The Complementary Principle will be in place to complement existing supporting programmes for Afghanistan conducted in other contexts such as certain ongoing CBMs (confidence-building measures); RECCA (Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan); UN and its agencies as well as bilateral initiatives) rather than to repeat or compete them. Based on the Favourable Measures Principle, the EAPA-related activities will be conducted in recognition of the fact that Afghanistan is still an aid dependent country and has huge infrastructure, institutional and human capacity gaps to be addressed and needs the favourable conditions to be allocated to Afghanistan to the extent possible.

## **Honourable Ministers,**

There is a unanimous understanding in the ECO that developments in one of its members positively affect the well-being of the entire region. That is why the Ashgabat Consensus for Action, which is a declaration adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> Summit of ECO Heads of State and Government, held in Ashgabat on November 28, 2021, pays a great attention to the situation in Afghanistan.

Particularly, ECO's 15<sup>th</sup> Summit expressed "support to international efforts to provide urgent humanitarian aid to Afghanistan through effective, transparent and accountable mechanisms and take measures to protect the livelihoods of the Afghan people, as well as to show solidarity with countries, which are hosting large number of displaced Afghans" and underscored "the importance of political inclusivity, protection of fundamental human rights of all components of Afghan people,

particularly women and continuation of effective actions in counter-terrorism”.

### **Excellencies,**

Despite current difficulties caused by the pandemic and latest developments in Afghanistan, there is a confidence and optimism among the ECO member-states with regard to the socio-economic projects in Afghanistan. Let me give you a few examples to illustrate my words. A year ago a railway section from Khaf (Iran) to Rozanak (Afghanistan) was commissioned, and with such a speed of construction it will reach the city of Herat in the coming years. At the beginning of this year near the border of Turkmenistan Aqina-Andhoy railway link with the length of 30 km was commissioned. This link was built with the help of Turkmenistan. Various electricity transmission lines, fibre-optic cables are being built to and in Afghanistan. ECO member-states are keen to use transport and transit potential of Afghanistan and are proposing projects on building railways and motorways that widen economic ties in the region.

### **Excellencies,**

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that ECO has always supported the goals of lasting peace, stability, prosperity and growth of Afghanistan. I would like to assure that the ECO remains ever-receptive and ready to make activities in its pertinent areas of cooperation with the neighboring nations, interested countries as well as relevant regional/international organizations. In this regard, the ECO plans to organize the first Meeting of the Donors in 2022 for seeking financial contributions to the specially established ECO Fund for Afghanistan. ECO also reiterate its support to United Nations’ backed programs and initiatives in Afghanistan. Particularly, ECO can assist UNAMA in its efforts for developing effective coordination within the region for the betterment of Afghanistan as a platform for related countries of the region. I would also like to call for greater cooperation between ECO and OIC in tackling the current humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and implementing various long-term socio-economic projects in Afghanistan.

I thank you for your kind attention.