

The Informal COM Meeting

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Bekzhasar Narbayev, Secretary General of ECO

(UN - New York, 02 October, 2003)

Annex-XI

*Your Excellency the Chairman
Honourable Ministers
Permanent Representatives and
Distinguished Guests,*

In this agenda item I wish to inform that ECO has been active in building over its existing foundation of relations with international organizations. Three Memorandums of Understanding with World Customs Organization, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and Colombo Plan were signed in the last six months. Now the challenge before us is to build meaningful plans with these and other international organizations with which we already have signed MOUs.

This year we do not have a resolution of UN-ECO Cooperation for General Assembly because of its biennialization but last year's resolution covers the period until the next resolution. UN agencies are continuing to cooperate with us in all relevant fields.

In August, I attended UN sponsored international ministerial meeting on transit transport issues of landlocked and transit developing countries. This was my first meeting in the field of international relations on behalf of ECO. I found that meeting very informative and it increased my resolve to give special consideration to transit transport issues in ECO countries, seven of which are landlocked.

Just to refresh your memory I will give you in a nutshell our activities in international arena. ECO is involved with UNCTAD and IDB to carry out a study in multi-model transport. About 20 consultancies with UNDP funding have been implemented. A project agreement with Food and Agriculture Organization has been signed and is being implemented. An anti-narcotics unit is already working comprising four officials in ECO Secretariat with the financial assistance of European Union and UNODC technical assistance. With UNFPA, a seminar on HIV/AIDS was carried out.

We have recently organized the 8th consultative meeting of Executive Heads of sub-regional organizations with participation at the highest level by all important regional organizations in Asia like ASEAN, SAARC, Pacific Forum and UN-ESCAP. The report drafted by us was greatly appreciated. My predecessor also attended the watershed Afro-Asian Sub Regional Organizations Conference in Bandung and we would remain engaged in the process.

Two days back, we held Joint ECO-ASEAN Ministerial meeting. We have this institutionalized arrangement to share experiences as well get technical assistance from ASEAN. I will try to start the study on cooperation relations with ASEAN as early as possible.

We are aware of the overall directives given to ECO regarding its relations with international organizations in the 13th COM, Bishkek Declaration and other previous declarations and we would do our best to continue building meaningful relations with international organizations.

As this would be my concluding remarks in this meeting, therefore before I finish, I would like to state that I greatly appreciate the work of my predecessor Mr. Arastou. He left behind a well oiled efficient machinery of dedicated ECO staff. You are already aware of his other efforts to improve work in the ECO Secretariat as well as to provide new fillip in the policy areas during his short stay. This has given me a good start in the Secretariat.

With these remarks, I wish to thank you again for making encouraging remarks for me and our Secretariat as well as for coming to this meeting and making it a success.