

TEXT OF THE STATEMENT BY
MR. MUSTAFA DAVULCU
AMBASSADOR / DIRECTOR OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS
AT THE 27TH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL
OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION
(TEHRAN, 5 – 8 DECEMBER 2016)

**MR. SECRETARY GENERAL,
DISTINGUISHED HEADS OF DELEGATIONS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

IT IS A GREAT HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE FOR ME AND MY DELEGATION TO PARTICIPATE AT THE 27TH MEETING OF THE REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION. I EXTEND TO YOU ALL THE HEARTFELT GREETINGS OF THE TURKISH CYPRIOT PEOPLE.

AT THE OUTSET, I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND OUR GRATITUDE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AND THE BROTHERLY IRANIAN PEOPLE FOR THE WARM WELCOME AND HOSPITALITY EXTENDED TO US. I ALSO WOULD LIKE TO THANK H.E. MR. HALİL İBRAHİM AKÇA, THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION FOR HIS CONTINUED SUPPORT TO AND COOPERATION WITH THE TURKISH CYPRIOT PEOPLE.

**MR. SECRETARY GENERAL,
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,**

THE TURKISH CYPRIOT STATE, WHICH SHARES A COMMON HISTORY AND CULTURE WITH THE MEMBER STATES, IS COMMITTED TO THE OBJECTIVES OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION. NORTH CYPRUS HAS BEEN PARTICIPATING IN THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS SINCE 1992, AND HAS BEEN AN OBSERVER MEMBER SINCE 2012. WE WELCOME THE EXTENSION OF OUR OBSERVER MEMBER STATUS IN OCTOBER 2015, WHICH GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER DEVELOP OUR ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH MEMBER COUNTRIES.

DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS,

AT THIS POINT, I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME TRADE FIGURES OF MY COUNTRY. IN 2015 AND SO FAR IN 2016, TOTAL EXPORT OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS TO MEMBER COUNTRIES, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF TURKEY, ONLY AMOUNTS TO 925 THOUSAND US DOLLARS, WHILE THE TOTAL IMPORT FROM ECO MEMBER COUNTRIES, EXCLUDING TURKEY, AMOUNTS TO NEARLY 2 MILLION US DOLLARS. SURELY, YOU WILL ALL AGREE THAT THERE IS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR THE AFOREMENTIONED FIGURES TO INCREASE. IN THIS RESPECT, AS THE TURKISH CYPRIOT STATE WE ARE READY TO WORK TOGETHER WITH THE MEMBER STATES TO FULFILL THIS POTENTIAL AND TO INCREASE THE TRADE VOLUME BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS. IN CONFORMITY WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION, LIBERAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM IS BEING IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COUNTRY. UNDER THIS SYSTEM, THE PROMOTION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE RATIONAL USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF FOREIGN INVESTMENT RECEIVE PRIORITY AS A MATTER OF GOVERNMENT POLICY. OVER THE YEARS, WE HAVE SUCCEEDED IN ESTABLISHING TRADE RELATIONS WITH MORE THAN 90 COUNTRIES ALL OVER THE WORLD.

**MR. SECRETARY GENERAL,
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,**

THE FIELDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TOURISM ARE THE TWO LEADING SECTORS OF OUR ECONOMY. OUR COUNTRY IS EMERGING AS A CENTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND A PROMINENT HOLIDAY DESTINATION IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION. IN THIS RESPECT, I AM PROUD TO SHARE WITH YOU OUR ACHIEVEMENTS AND WHAT MY COUNTRY HAS TO OFFER IN THESE FIELDS.

HIGHER EDUCATION CONSTITUTES AN IMPORTANT SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY OF THE TRNC. AS OF 2016, THERE ARE 14 UNIVERSITIES WHERE NEARLY 94,000 STUDENTS ARE STUDYING. THERE ARE ABOUT 52,000 TURKISH STUDENTS FROM TURKEY, 14,000 LOCAL TURKISH CYPRIOT STUDENTS AND 28,000 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.

OUR UNIVERSITIES ARE HOME TO STUDENTS FROM 131 COUNTRIES AND TEACHING STAFF FROM 65 COUNTRIES. AS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO THIS DIVERSITY, I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT ABOUT 5,500 OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE FROM ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION MEMBER COUNTRIES, MOSTLY FROM PAKISTAN, IRAN, AZERBAIJAN, KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKMENISTAN.

IT IS OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE TO ATTRACT MORE FOREIGN STUDENTS, PARTICULARLY FROM THE MEMBER STATES, TO STUDY AT OUR UNIVERSITIES IN THE COMING YEARS. AT THIS POINT, I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE THAT, NORTH CYPRUS BEING A SAFE AND TRANQUIL COUNTRY, WHERE ONE CAN FIND MANY CULTURAL SIMILARITIES WITH THE ECO MEMBER STATES IS THE PERFECT HIGHER EDUCATION DESTINATION FOR STUDENTS FROM THE ECO REGION.

IN THIS CONTEXT, WE WOULD WELCOME A DECISION BY THE MEMBER STATES TO INCLUDE OUR UNIVERSITIES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE RECOMMENDED LISTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION OF THEIR STUDENTS.

DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS,

ANOTHER SECTOR CONTRIBUTING SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE ECONOMY OF THE TRNC IS THE TOURISM SECTOR. ACCORDING TO THE STATISTICS IN 2016, NEARLY 1,7 MILLION TOURISTS VISITED NORTH CYPRUS. THERE ARE 133 HOLIDAY ESTABLISHMENTS WITH AN OVERALL BED CAPACITY OF NEARLY 21,500. THE ACCOMMODATION RANGES FROM 5 STAR LUXURY HOTELS TO HOLIDAY VILLAGES. OUR COUNTRY ALSO CATERS FOR SPECIAL INTEREST

TOURISM INCLUDING GOLFING, SCUBA-DIVING, TREKKING AND HIKING, CYCLING, YACHTING AND ECO-TOURISM. I MUST ADD THAT NORTH CYPRUS IS AN IDEAL DESTINATION FOR FAMILIES FROM THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION MEMBER STATES.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

WE ARE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGING FOREIGN INVESTMENT TO NORTH CYPRUS AND I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INVITE INVESTORS FROM MEMBER COUNTRIES TO OUR COUNTRY TO GET FIRST HAND INFORMATION ABOUT THE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND THE INCENTIVES OFFERED BY OUR GOVERNMENT.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST ESPECIALLY IN THE TOURISM SECTOR. HOTELS AND CONFERENCE TOURISM, SPECIAL INTEREST TOURISM LIKE YACHT TOURISM AND MARINA CONSTRUCTION ARE JUST A FEW OF THE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT AWAIT FOREIGN BUSINESS PEOPLE IN THE SECTOR. IN ADDITION TO THESE, NEWLY DEVELOPING AREAS SUCH AS HEALTH TOURISM AND AGRI-INDUSTRY ARE CONSIDERED AS ATTRACTIVE FIELDS OF INVESTMENT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND FOREIGN INVESTORS.

THOSE WISHING TO INVEST IN THE TURKISH CYPRIOT STATE CAN BE SURE OF FAVOURABLE GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE. THE RELEVANT MINISTRIES AND OUR STATE PLANNING ORGANIZATION, TOGETHER WITH THE CYPRUS TURKISH INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY, ARE ALL AT THE DISPOSAL OF POTENTIAL INVESTORS AND BUSINESS PEOPLE WHO WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EXTENSIVE OPPORTUNITIES AND INCENTIVES THAT EXIST IN OUR COUNTRY.

**MR. SECRETARY GENERAL,
DISTINGUISHED PARTICIPANTS,**

I AM ALSO DELIGHTED TO STATE THAT OUR COUNTRY HAS HOSTED FOUR HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL ECO EVENTS IN THE PAST. THESE EVENTS INCLUDE THE WORKSHOPS ON “AIR AND WATER POLLUTION CONTROL” IN AUGUST 1998, “WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT TECHNOLOGY” IN MAY 2004, THE “1ST ECO UNIVERSITY SPORT GAMES” IN APRIL 2013, AND MOST RECENTLY “THE WORKSHOP ON TOURISM” IN APRIL 2015. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO STATE THAT WE WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO HOST FUTURE ECO EVENTS IN NORTH CYPRUS AND TO SEE YOU ALL THERE.

**MR. SECRETARY GENERAL,
DISTINGUISHED HEADS OF DELEGATIONS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

BEFORE I CONCLUDE, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK ONCE AGAIN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN AND THE ECO SECRETARIAT FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN MAKING THIS MEETING A GREAT SUCCESS.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR MOST KIND ATTENTION.