

Visit of the Pakistan NMC Delegation to ECO Secretariat SG's Opening Remarks

**Distinguished Head of Delegation Mr. Nadeem Mahbub,
Dear Guests,
Excellency Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi,**

Assalam o Alaikum and Good Afternoon.

I feel exceptional privilege to welcome the Pakistan National Management College (NMC) delegation to the ECO Secretariat in Tehran.

While expressing pleasure to observe the presence of familiar face amongst the distinguished delegates, I am glad to recall that some years ago during my working assignment at the UN headquarters in New York, I had the great honour to enjoy not only official but also personal association of one of the respectable members of the visiting delegation. After a long time, coming across Mr. Suljuk Tarar has amazed, refreshed and rejoiced me a lot.

I extend my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Ambassador Rahim Hayat Qureshi for providing us this unique opportunity to host very valued and senior officials of the Pakistani diverse bureaucratic structure.

Respecting the limitation of time and before my DSG and Director for TC start making the desired presentations, I would like to slightly brief on ECO and its prioritized development sectors.

ECO was established in 1985. It is the successor of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) founded by Pakistan, Iran and Türkiye in 1964. The ECO was primarily established to promote sustainable conditions for joint economic development of the Member States and raising the standard of living as well as quality of lives of the regional community through mobilization of socio-economic potential of the region.

However, the scope of the Organization's cooperative partnership gradually expanded to scientific, cultural and educational advancement, as well as for the sustainability and development in other important areas.

I am happy to inform that this year ECO is marking the 30th Anniversary of its expansion that took place in the early 1990s with the inclusion of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In November of this year the Republic of Uzbekistan will be hosting the next 26th Meeting of Council of Ministers (COM) which is the main policy and decision making body of our Organization.

Today, ECO stands as a full-fledged and one of the oldest intergovernmental organizations. It has Observes and Specialized Agencies as well as Affiliated Bodies.

ECO priority areas include cooperation in trade & investment, transport & connectivity, energy, environment, economic growth and productivity, agriculture, tourism, social welfare & human resources development. Moreover, the Organization continues to adapt its functioning in line with the emerging and modernized working systems.

Focusing on greater regional integration, the ECO is advancing towards its trade and connectivity targets through the introduction of various legal trade and transport frameworks.

Our ambition is based on the principles of the Treaty of Izmir which is the founding document of the Organization, as well as the provisions of Vision 2025 adopted by the ECO Heads of State/Government in March 2017 during the 13th Summit at Islamabad.

Here, I must fairly acknowledge the excellent contribution of Pakistan for the development of ECO agenda of mutual cooperation and the continued promotion of multilateral economic activism in the region. The Organization highly values the unparalleled support and commitment of Pakistan towards smooth and steady accomplishment of shared targets.

While thanking to bear with me a while, I would like to give the floor first to our DSG Ambassador Sayed Mohsen Esperi and then to Director of Transport & Communication Mr. Akbar Khodaei to make sector-wise comprehensive presentations for briefing the distinguished members of the Pakistan NMC delegation on ECO sectoral activities and engagements.