



13th ECO Summit

Islamabad, 1 March 2017

ECO Islamabad Declaration

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization, gathered on the occasion of the thirteenth ECO Summit Meeting, in Islamabad under the theme “Connectivity for Regional Prosperity”, at the invitation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on the first day of March 2017, to review the objective conditions and progress in implementation of ECO programmes and projects and to exchange views on regional and global issues of common interest to the ECO Region with the aim of consolidating ECO as an organization, bolstering cooperation and building on shared values and mutual interests;

We, therefore, while:

Reiterating our political will and strong commitment for realizing the aims and objectives of the Organization for economic development, common prosperity, regional integration and peace and stability in the ECO Region;

Celebrating the silver jubilee of the expansion of the membership of the ECO that ushered in a new era and prospects of enhanced regional cooperation for development, and **Welcoming** further enlargement and outreach of the Organization through full membership to the interested states, and observership to the interested states/organizations, on case to case basis, adding value to the Organization;

Reaffirming our commitment to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Treaty of Izmir, and **Attaching** great importance to the cooperation frameworks developed under the different agreements concluded between the Member States and the momentum created in different fields of cooperation which can underpin and complement each other for meeting the objectives of the Economic Cooperation Organization;

Recalling our commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter including in particular the respect for political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, development of friendly relations among nations, and pacific settlement of disputes;

Sharing our assessment of the constantly evolving global and regional environment and new developments that present multiple challenges and opportunities;

Resolving to work together, including by positioning the ECO to effectively address these challenges and to seize the opportunities for the collective benefit of the Region and its people;

Noting the positive political, economic, cultural and technological developments that can facilitate the realization of the long-held dream of trans-Eurasian connectivity, including in the ECO Region;

Approaching connectivity as a dynamic concept that encompasses multiple dimensions including cyber, energy, rail, road, and ports and shipping;

Encouraging further development of educational and scientific linkages, and cultural and people to people contacts;

Underlining the significance of fully exploiting the complementarities offered by shared geography, history and culture, and the comparative advantages and diversity of resources of member states to bring about greater connectivity and economic integration in the ECO Region;

Appreciating the value and importance of a steady and flexible approach to regional connectivity and integration that enables Member States to contribute to, be part of and benefit from the various connectivity and integration programs in a gradual and progressive manner according to their respective state of preparedness;

Recognizing the existence of various connectivity initiatives in the ECO Region, and welcoming that these projects feed into the overall vision of comprehensive ECO connectivity and integration;

Reiterating commitment to promote intra-ECO trade as an instrument of enhanced economic cooperation and revitalization in the Region;

Underlining the importance of the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the role that can be played by the ECO Member States for achieving the goals and targets set out therein and in this context **Recalling** that promotion of conditions for sustainable development through mobilization of economic and social potential of the ECO Region requires further strengthened cooperation and collaboration especially through enhanced trade and connectivity among the Member States in order to further strengthen the deep-rooted historical and cultural ties among the peoples of the Region;

Recognizing the importance of moderation as an approach to counter all forms of extremism and promote dialog, mutual respect, understanding and social harmony, thereby contributing towards the achievement of sustainable and inclusive development, equitable growth, stability and prosperity in the ECO Region;

Acknowledging the importance of Afghanistan for ECO Region, and **Reiterating** our continued support to the national, regional and global efforts for reconstruction and sustainable development as well as peace and security in Afghanistan;

Welcoming the recently adopted United Nations General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/71/222) on proclaiming International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development “ 2018-2028;

Welcoming the adoption of the ECO Vision 2025 as a comprehensive document outlining the core principles and areas of cooperation within ECO, and **Resolving** that Member States as well as ECO Secretariat, ECO Specialized Agencies and Regional Institutions will take necessary steps for implementation of ECO Vision 2025 in a timely and effective manner;

Have agreed to:

- 1- **Ensure** continued and enhanced cooperation in the areas of common interest through effective, timely and result-oriented projects and programmes in the Organization.
- 2- **Undertake** to implement the long-term sectoral priorities of ECO on development of transport and communication infrastructure; facilitation of trade and investment; and effective use of the Region's vast energy resources and to consider ways and means to promote ECO's connectivity with other regions in these areas.
- 3- **Underscore** the three core principles of ECO Vision 2025, i.e. sustainability, integration and conducive environment; and **Emphasize** the need to augment cooperation in the areas of trade, transport and connectivity, energy, tourism, economic growth and productivity and social-welfare and environment as identified in Vision 2025.
- 4- **Envision** a more efficient and effective ECO, equipped with required capabilities and resources, to better serve the noble objectives of the Organization; and hereby **Task** our relevant Officials and the ECO Secretariat to take necessary and effective measures, using inside and outside resources, to bring about necessary reforms in the Organization.
- 5- **Encourage** Member States to accede to relevant agreements developed within the ECO framework in order to achieve the objectives set forth under the Treaty of Izmir and the ECO Vision 2025; and **Task** hereby our relevant Ministers and authorities to consider joining these agreements.
- 6- **Enhance** ECO-wide connectivity in terms of transport and transit; telecommunications; cyber; and all forms of energy; as well as people-to-people exchanges, including through regional tourism arrangements.
- 7- **Welcome** in this regard the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a far-reaching initiative that would act as catalyst for the development of the entire Region.

- 8- **Encourage** giving priority to, and cooperate on full implementation of the TTFA and its' annexes as ECO's approved and most comprehensive and well-studied Transit Transport Framework for ECO Region.
- 9- **Note** that the multi-dimensional connectivity in road, rail, energy, trade and cyber and associated infrastructure and industrial development can promote integration and economic development of the wider region, and **Encourage** all relevant international and regional financial institutions to actively cooperate with ECO Member States in financing the development of ECO transport corridors, related connectivity and energy projects.
- 10-**Work** to double the current level of intra-ECO trade within the next 3-5 years, including through implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and other ECO trade-related arrangements; as well as identification and elimination of physical and non-physical barriers to this end.
- 11-**Acknowledge** the crucial role of financing projects on regional development, appreciate the ECO Bank's growing scope of activities in this regard and **Underline** the need to further strengthen the Bank through augmenting its resource base, as well as increasing its membership.
- 12-**Call** for making ECO Reinsurance Company operational at the earliest and **Encourage** other Member States to join it.
- 13-**Enhance** regional cooperation in energy sector, focusing *inter alia*, on energy efficiency; energy infrastructure development including oil and gas pipelines, intra-regional energy trade, particularly electricity trade; and access to affordable energy resources, including renewable energy resources by promoting green energy investment and the development of environmentally friendly energy technologies; and **Task** respective authorities to consider possibility of pursuing the ongoing initiative of establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market with the widest possible intra-regional power grid interconnection.
- 14-**Support** the coordination of measures in the field of sustainable growth including, *inter alia*, the use of environmentally friendly, renewable energy

and clean energy, the conservation and efficient use of water and energy resources.

15-Develop, operationalize and commercialize the ECO intra-regional transit networks as well as corridors connecting ECO Region with other regions in line with the ECO rail and road development plans, with a view to building the required infrastructure needed for bolstering trade and transport connectivity within the Region and beyond.

16-Express satisfaction at the successful implementation of corridor-based strategy among the Member States, further **Express** appreciation for the ECO Secretariat for its active role in the execution of the TTFA.

17-Stress the importance of strengthened and continued cooperation among all stakeholders to build and run information structures in order to bridge the digital divide in the Region.

18-Recognize that information and communication technologies have the potential to provide new solutions to development challenges, particularly in the context of globalization, and can foster economic growth, competitiveness, access to information and knowledge, poverty eradication and social inclusion that will help expedite the integration of all Member Countries into the global economy, and in this context, **Welcome** the joint Study undertaken by ITU and ECO on the ICT in the ECO Region, which would be presented to the 2nd ECO ICT Ministerial Meeting in Azerbaijan for its approval as well as its subsequent Action Plan.

19-Develop a robust regional tourism industry, built on the vast natural endowments and cultural resources, as potential contributor to the economic growth and sustainable development of ECO Region, and to the strengthened affinities within our nations; and, therefore, **Task** our tourism and other related authorities to ensure that a multi-sector and multi-purpose tourism industry will be in place in the ECO Region as per ECO Vision by the end of 2025.

20-**Express** concern about the existing unresolved conflicts in the ECO Region, including Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, which hinder the economic growth and realization of the full economic potential of the Region and impede the development of economic cooperation on regional as well as broader level, and **Stress** the importance of making increased efforts for the earliest resolution of these conflicts based on the norms and principles of international law, in particular the principles of respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity.

21-**Acknowledge** the internationally agreed norms and principles, concerning sovereignty and **Express** concern over the attempts by certain quarters to threaten democracy discriminatory immigration policies by some states and use of unilateral economic sanctions and coercions by some states. Further **Acknowledge** the need for supporting measures to immediately address the threats to democratic governments, including *coup d'états* aimed at overthrowing the democratically elected governments and constitutional orders of the Member Countries and the foreign occupation of the territories of the Member States, including economic strangulation, which undermine the role of the legitimate democratic governments in pursuing their socio-economic development and programmes.

22-**Recognize** the inter-linkage between development, peace and security for lasting prosperity and stability in the Region and expressing grave concern over the security challenges of the Region, including inter alia terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations which pose a great threat to individuals' lives and national, regional and global security, **Reiterating** that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnicity and expressing our resolve to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

23-**Recognize** that the expansion of regional cooperation has, direct or indirect, impacts on safety, prosperity and welfare of our peoples and societies, including environment and climate change, health, food security standards, disaster risk reduction and education, which continue to be on the agenda of the Organization; and **Task** our relevant Ministers and officials as well as ECO Secretariat to streamline these important issues and concerns in the activities/projects of the Organization.

- 24-**Support** the efforts of the government of Republic of Azerbaijan aimed at promoting and strengthening Islamic solidarity among Muslim States and in this regard note with appreciation that proclamation of 2017 as the Islamic Solidarity Year in Azerbaijan by the President of Republic of Azerbaijan. To this end, **Call** Member States to actively participate in this event to be organized within the framework of the Islamic Solidarity Year in Azerbaijan, as well as in the 4th Islamic Solidarity Games and 4th World Forum on Inter-Cultural Dialogue to be held in May 2017 in Baku.
- 25-**Take note** of the establishment of Islamic Organization for Food Security aimed at the developing cooperation among ECO Member States in agriculture.
- 26-**Welcome** the “International Day of Nowruz” as a factor contributing to the strengthening of friendship between nations, and in this context, urge the Member States to actively participate in the celebration and preparation of joint events.
- 27-**Acknowledge** the important role that can be played by the National Parliaments of the Member States in giving more effect to the agreed frameworks within the ECO and **Welcome** the offer by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 2nd Parliamentary Conference of Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization (PAECO) at Islamabad in 2017.
- 28-**Recognize** the important role of the small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) in the economic growth of the Member States and the Region as a whole and **Task** our relevant authorities to undertake necessary measures to strengthen the SMEs, including those that enhance women entrepreneurship and knowledge based enterprises.
- 29- **Ensure** that the existing regional arrangements and programmes in ECO to combat the menace of drugs and transnational organized crimes, including, *inter alia*, human trafficking, are in place and continue to function and that effective regional mechanisms for cooperation in law

enforcement, judicial issues, capacity building, as well as other relevant areas are established.

30- **Renew** our strong desire for a secure, prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan, and recalling our recent commitments made in the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, **Task** our relevant authorities and the ECO Secretariat to develop a comprehensive ECO advocacy programme for Afghanistan in the upcoming “ECO Special Conference on Afghanistan” to be held in May 2017 in Kabul.

31-**Express** support to the implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/71/222) on International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028, adopted on December 21, 2016, and **Instruct** the relevant authorities as well as the ECO Secretariat to consider this issue in the framework of the activities and projects of the Organization.

32-**Appreciate** the initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic to host the 1st and 2nd World Nomad Games on 8-14 September 2014 and 3-8 September 2016, respectively, and **Encourage** Member States to actively participate in the 3rd Games scheduled for 2018, which will contribute to the cooperation between Member States.

33-**Welcome** the International Exhibition EXPO 2017 to be hosted in Astana, Kazakhstan from 10th June to 10th September 2017 and OIC First Summit on Science and Technology to be hosted in Astana, Kazakhstan on 10th -11th September 2017, and **Encourage** Member States to actively participate in these Events.

We also express our thanks to H.E. Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan under his leadership the 13th ECO Summit reached a successful conclusion. **We** also extend our gratitude to the Government and People of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangement made for the Summit.

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