



ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (ECO)
SECRETARIAT
(TEHRAN)

**Statements by the Heads of State/Government/Delegation
12th ECO Summit Meeting,
(16 October, 2012 – Baku)**

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**Statement by H.E. Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of
Afghanistan, at the 12th ECO Summit Meeting,
(16 October, 2012 – Baku)**

**Your Excellency President Ilham Heydar Oglu Aliyev,
Excellencies Heads of state and governments,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is a pleasure to have the opportunity to address the 12th Summit Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in the beautiful city of Baku. I would like to thank Turkey, particularly my brother, H.E. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan for the effective chairmanship of the ECO summit in the past two years.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate my brother, H.E. President Ilham Aliyev on his election as the Chairman of the summit and to express my gratitude and that of my delegation to the people of Azerbaijan for the warm and generous hospitality extended to us.

Also, I thank the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and its working groups for their hard work in preparing the required documents and proposals that have facilitated the discussions among the member states.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen!

Historically, geographically as well as culturally, Afghanistan remains an inseparable member of the two regions, Central Asia and the South Asia. With the peoples of the ECO member states, we enjoy strong and deep historical and cultural ties. In other words, together, we have inherited a great culture and civilization that remain as shared values to bond us perpetually.

I firmly believe that the region to which ECO member states belong is home to rich and ample resources and available opportunities that if used properly, can overcome most of the current problems. Our region has the potential to turn into a hub of inclusive cooperation and integration. The young, dynamic and hard working population, plus the abundance in natural resources have provided the potential for some countries to progress. However, the current trend of globalization makes it even more compelling that we take regional integration to its optimal level.

Building and strengthening regional cooperation remains among the top priorities of our foreign policies. The conferences held in Kabul, New Delhi, Islamabad, Istanbul, Dushanbe and the more recently in Istanbul and Kabul under “Heart of Asia”, demonstrate Afghanistan’s resolute determination to pursue stronger regional cooperation.

I believe implementing regional economic and transit projects can be the most practical measures to achieve regional integration. It was in line with this vision that the RECCA-V held this March in Dushanbe discussed 17 projects and priorities for stronger regional cooperation. To achieve the goals of inter-regional and international trade growth, Afghanistan and its neighbors will make every effort to implement transit infrastructures such as roads and railroads, and to provide a conducive mutual environment for increased investment, stronger trade and expanded communications to the regional water ports and to enhance stronger cultural and people-to-people contacts.

To promote and facilitate stronger regional cooperation, Afghanistan is working with all relevant countries to finalize major regional projects such as TAPI gaz pipeline and the CASA-1000 energy projects.

Furthermore, Afghanistan is making all efforts to realize the land connectivity projects that link east to west of the country and to further extend the existing roads. The railway from Uzbekistan to Hiratan – Mazar-e-Sharif is currently in use. Afghanistan is working to extend the Herat railway that connects west and north-east of the country to Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and to Pakistan via Kandahar through the Chaman border in the south..

Given the fact that the volume of investment in the ECO region is still much lower than the needs and the available potential, Afghanistan believes that the ECO Member countries need to intensify their actions to promote mutual investment and increased private sector development through the ECO Trade and Development Bank.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen!

I believe, the ECO member countries are facing common threats and problems, on top of which lies terrorism. The vile attempt on the life of Malala Yousufzai is one of thousands of examples that clearly shows no one can be safe from the threat of terrorism. This menace has no mercy even on our children and their quest for education. As an obvious act of terror, this ruthless attack can be a serious warning to all of us. Let's be honest in acknowledging that terrorism enjoys safe havens and facilities in our region and can not be defeated without sincere and joint effort by all of us. In addition to the terrorist groups active in Afghanistan, the international terrorist organizations such as Alqaeda, Uzbekistan Islamic Movement (UIM), Tahreek Taliban of Pakistan (TTP), the East Turkistan Movement and Chechen terrorists have presence in our region, and have been receiving training to carry out destructive acts for several years now.

With countless sacrifices, Afghan forces have also been confronting terrorists that are intent upon using our territory to cross into some of the Central Asian States and even Russia and China. These groups, while trying to encroach on our neighboring countries, have attacked Afghan forces, our political leaders, our

scholars and civilians, and have acted to destroy our schools, public and private property.

Afghanistan has done everything in its power to prevent such attempts. Our neighbors should recognize and respect our sacrifices especially in fighting the central Asian extremists. Meanwhile, it is also legitimate to expect our neighbors to contain, on their part, the entry of terrorists into our soil and commit all resources to dismantling the terrorists' training and equipping facilities on their soil. Afghanistan expects an earnest cooperation in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Narcotics and organized crimes are among the major problems our region is facing. It would be very naive to see this issue as restricted to one country. Afghan farmers are at the receiving end of the illicit business. Afghans are paying the price by suffering immense sacrifices in the counter-narcotics war and their legitimate economy is enduring a great deal of damage. However, the real profits go to the international smuggling networks and their supporters. The narcotics issue is a complex international problem. It is a problem that includes the whole criminal chain of cultivation, production and supply for consumption in markets. Therefore, it is imperative that we enhance cooperation on sharing intelligence, coordinating counter narcotics actions on borders and the supply issue of chemical precursors originating from outside Afghanistan. This is the only way to effectively combat this scourge.

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished colleagues,

Since 2002, Afghanistan has opened a new chapter in its political life. Today more than ever before, our national institutions have gained the ability to serve our people and protect the country. The considerable progress that we have achieved in promoting democracy, public participation in political processes and in economic and social development has benefited all our people.

Therefore, it is an integral part of our political life to protect a legitimate political system created by the free will of its people. With the departure in 2014 of foreign troops from Afghanistan, not only would nothing unpredictable take place, but also the security would be better than today, with government and state institutions stronger and more capable. Today, security has improved considerably in the areas where responsibility has been transitioned to the Afghan government.

We hope our borders to be the borders of peace and cooperation, and our country restores its historical role to serve as a land-bridge connecting Central to South Asia and China to the Middle East. The realization of this hope goes in concert with the strategic goals of the ECO organization and I believe every member state agrees with me.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen!

In conclusion, let me once again reaffirm Afghanistan's commitment to a stronger and more enhanced cooperation within the ECO framework. I wish you all health and prosperity.

Thank you very much

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Askar Zhumagaliev, Minister of Transport and
Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
at the 12th ECO Summit Meeting,
(16 October, 2012 – Baku)**

**Honorable Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies Head of States and Governments, Head of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, on behalf of the President of Kazakhstan, I would like to felicitate H.E. Mr. **Ilham Aliyev**, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on his election as the Chairman of our Forum.

Also let me express thankfulness to H.E. Mr. H.E. M. Yahya Maroofi for his fruitful work in his position as Secretary General of our Organization and congratulate H.E. Mr. Shamil Aleskerov on his appointment as ECO Secretary General and wish him every success.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to present the Republic of Kazakhstan at this Summit which is being held in anniversary year of foreign policy of Kazakhstan.

20 years Anniversary of the joining of Kazakhstan to the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Moreover this year was declared as the Year of establishment of diplomatic relations with the Member-States of Organization.

<p>Date of the joining of Kazakhstan – November 28, 1992 Date of the joining to the Agreements and Protocols with Iran – January 29, with Turkey – March 2, with Pakistan – March 24, with Azerbaijan and Afghanistan August 27, with Turkmenistan –October 5, with Kyrgyzstan – October 15, with Uzbekistan – November 23 (with all - 1992) and with Tajikistan – January 7, 1993.</p>
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All these years, participation in integration process has been among main priorities of foreign policy of our country.

We proceed from that the integration is the vital requirement of time and denying this unavoidably bring us to the periphery of the world economy. Present world requires joint efforts to prepare appropriate response to the challenges of time.

Since joining the ECO, Kazakhstan has been playing active role and supporting the gradual enhancing of regional cooperation.

Logic of ECO member-states to interact for the sake of regional revival and national prosperity fully matches with the main goals and policy principles of our country.

Recent years' project implementation analysis shows that we have achieved certain successes.

However joint efforts are needed to develop effective modalities for the implementation of already signed documents and fulfilment of Agreements.

ECO region's territory covers an area of 7 million square kilometres and its population is more than 380 million which shows great economic potential of Organization.

We are confident that the ECO realizes its potential by consecutive and gradual economic integration, mutually beneficial interregional commerce and mutual assistance in different aspects of social-cultural and science-technology development.

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

During recent years our country has been attaching great importance to the regional cooperation.

For Kazakhstan and for other member-states of the Organization, this present period is characterized by improvement in a post crisis period.

As a result of timely and effective anti-crisis measures, economy of Kazakhstan kept the pace of sustainable development. Last year economy of our country grew more than 7%.

GDP per capita following the results of 2011 was US\$ 11 300 and is planned to increase it up to US\$ 15 000. (by 5,6 % as to the first half of the year).

Realizing the main goals, Kazakhstan will remain active and responsible member for the international community.

It should be noted that fields of ECO such as transport, food security, energy and environment are also priorities for Kazakhstan.

In transport field of Kazakhstan, large-scale infrastructure projects are being implemented and realization of which as well as meeting the economic criteria in transport service shall ensure organic integration transport system into world transport system.

Last year we completed Uzen-Kyzylkaya-Bereket-Etrek_Gorgan railway project connecting Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran.

This year two railway projects have been launched (Zhezkazgan-Beyneu (988 km.) and Arkalyk-Shubarkol (214 km.) deadline of the completion is 2016) which would allow to establish Trans-kazakh direction from China border up to Aktau port.

However Aktau port has been chosen as one of the most attractive “points” for transport-logistic infrastructure of the country and is being developed as the “**West Gate**”.

Moreover we initiated Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey joint project on **Silk Wind** multimodal transport aimed at development of transport-logistics and trade-export potential of country.

We are ready to jointly consider new modalities for further operationalization of Istanbul-Almaty train and Bandar-Abbas-Almaty train projects.

As of **Food Security**, Kazakhstan initiates establishing inter-assistance system in a form of Regional Fund for Food Security like FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization).

This system will be aimed at prompt response, timely assistance and increasing financial instruments in case of sudden changes in food prices, decrease of living standard and emerging social tension in any one country.

Strengthening of Food Security shall ultimately bring to active efforts at all levels of supporting of agriculture, which is the source of development and struggle against poverty and it also brings to more effective actions to eliminate hunger all over the world.

As regards to **Energy Sector**, Kazakhstan has been attaching great importance to the energy security which is a key factor of international and regional stability.

Kazakhstan takes construction of effective architecture of global energy system with full responsibility.

Therefore main course of foreign policy of country aimed at solving issues on ensuring stable and security export route for domestic hydrocarbon products.

Our energy strategy is also based on economic suitability principles and minimization of anthropogenic impact on the environment.

We will further adhere to the position of diversification of transportation routes of goods at world market and most effective functioning of pipeline systems.

In continuation I would like to mention that Kazakhstan applied to hold International Exhibition EXPO-2017. Event at such a large scale would be held in Central-Asia region for the first time.

The topic chosen for EXPO-2017 is **Energy of Future** which is the one of the most urgency for the world community and practically fully matches with the recommendations of Consulting Group under the UNGA – Energy for sustainable development.

As of environment, Green Bridge initiative sequentially goes on which is a practical modality for development of ecologically clean production and transition to Green Economy.

Implementation of Green Bridge initiative would give significant advantage for attracting additional investments and technology for economy renew and modernization and increasing competitiveness of country.

Our countries also need such advanced technologies since in developed countries these are the ground of innovation.

We would join efforts and work together on establishment of technological infrastructure of Green Economy of our countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Perspective of regional cooperation within the framework of Organization partly depends on success process of economic revival of Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan welcomes new initiatives in this direction and is ready to render all and every support in taking concrete implementation measures.

Besides the international programme for supporting Afghanistan, the possibilities of rendering assistance is being considered under the regional security and cooperation for security and stability of Afghanistan.

In the last few years we have been extending humanitarian aid and food for Afghanistan also special quotas for Petroleum Oil Lubricants at Afghan market, supporting constructions of social and transport infrastructures.

Financing amount:

- construction of school in Samangan province – US&160 000;
- construction of hospital in Bamian province – US& 570 000;
- construction of bridges in Aybak province – US&1 500 000;
- Kunduz-Talukan road reconstruction – US& 1 650 000;

During the first two years of implementation of Special Educational Programme (2010-2020) 331 Afghan students have come to study in Kazakhstan Universities.

The matter of allocation of US\$ 2 million for Force and Security in 2015 is being considered.

Kazakhstan sees the perspectives of restoration of Afghan economy in its integration into world community by its more active participation in different programmes and projects of international and regional organizations including ECO.

**Distinguished Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Proposed final document in principle complies with the vision of Kazakhstan on what efforts should be taken for further development of integration process within the Organization.

Trust and unity among all nations – is the ground for new and equitable world order.

We do hope for success cooperation of member-states for our people's prosperity.

On behalf of our Government I would like to reiterate that Kazakhstan will continue open and transparency policy with all partners.

In conclusion of my statement I would like to express that this Summit would be one of the main step towards effective implementation of multisided potential of the ECO member-states in purpose of prosperity and flourishing of our countries and nations.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and brotherly nation of Azerbaijan for warm and cordial hospitality.

Thank you for your attention.

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, President of the Islamic Republic of
Pakistan, at the 12th ECO Summit Meeting,
(16 October, 2012 – Baku)**

**Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
ASSALAM-O-ALAIKUM!**

I am honored to be here among you for this important meeting of the Heads of the State and Government of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

I congratulate my brother, the Honorable President of Azerbaijan for assuming the leadership of this Group.

And I thank and admire, my brother, the Honorable President of Turkey for his guidance and leadership during his tenure as Chairman.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Permit me to begin with the vision of regional connectivity and trade articulated at the Third ECO Summit in Islamabad.

That vision was given by the Daughter of the East Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

She was my wife. She was the mother of my children.

She was my political leader.

But most of all, she was a fighter.

She fought for the women and children of our country. A country of 200 million people.

Her political legacy is a treasure that we all carry with great humility.

At the Third ECO Summit Islamabad in March 1995, she said and I Quote:-

“In the tapestry of history, our strong cultural and trading ties, our religious bonds, our mutual goals and objectives have woven us together into a rich communal cloth. Our poetry, our literature, our songs, our dances, our legends, reflect the community of our nations, the brotherhood of our people.

This common heritage has given us the collective political will and the modus operandi for further regional cooperation and integration amongst our ten countries". (unquote)

She said this seventeen years ago.

As we gather here today, let us reflect on two things;

Let us reflect on our collective potential.

Let us also reflect on the challenges and threats of our potential.

The potential is clearly written in the Treaty of Izmir.

It is written in our past pledges.

It is obvious that ECO still has a long way to go to achieve its goals.

While other regional blocs have progressed, we have not.

Regional blocks like the European Union and ASEAN continue to deepen their regional linkages.

But the ECO continue to speak only of potential rather than results.

We must ask ourselves, why this is so.

We must challenge ourselves to do better constantly.

This is the only way forward for us all.

We must challenge ourselves both within our countries, and as a collective group of brotherly nations.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

We must put into action, a vision of real cooperation between our countries.

The three areas where we can and must work together are trade, transport and energy.

We must urgently implement past agreements for trade liberalization.

We must bring down tariff and non-tariff barriers.

We should also facilitate our private sectors to increase investment in the Member States.

We must resolve to operationalize the ECO Trade Agreement from January 1, 2013.

We must commit to become a part of this fundamental Agreement.

This is one of the core objectives of our Organization.

We also need to strengthen regional connectivity.

Oil and gas pipelines and power grids must be built.

Energy must flow from energy rich to energy deficient countries in the region.

And the ECO Train, which I like to call the Gul Train, must be implemented.

It will enhance trade not only between Turkey, Iran and Pakistani businesses but in all countries of the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

This vision of an interconnected identity is not new.

It is rooted in our spiritual and literary tradition.

From Rumi to Iqbal, calls for unity and interconnectedness have echoed.

Our rich historical bonds are unique.

Perhaps no other region shares as much as we do.

And yet, no other region is as much under threat as we are.

We must face our challenges with courage and collective action.

We must not be shy of identifying them.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

There are three clear and present dangers that will prevent us from achieving our potential.

This first is terrorism.

The second is poverty and illiteracy.

And the third is the threat to the fundamental rights to our people, most of all, our daughters.

I opened this speech with a mention of the Daughter of the East.

But I must speak to you today about the Daughter of Pakistan.

My daughter, Malala Yusufzai.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Malala Yusufzai is fifteen years old child.

Since she was eleven, she has been an advocate of education for girls.

Malala is a symbol of all that is good about us.

Malala represents the courage of our girls and women.

Last week, terrorists shot Malala in the head.

Her attackers aren't just trying to kill the Daughter of Pakistan.

They are trying to kill Pakistan.

They didn't stop at Afghanistan.

They won't stop at Pakistan.

Attack on her is an attack on every child in our region.

It is an attack on the future of our region.

We cannot sit idly as our children are attacked. We must act, urgently.

We must arrest and prosecute the perpetrators of this heinous crime. We will.

But action also involves eliminating the heroin trade.

We must eliminate it as it destroys people's lives and finances terrorism.

But most importantly we must act to fight and defeat the militant mindset.

What kind of mindset allows a human being to shoot a little girl?

This mindset is our biggest collective enemy.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

We must act and act together.

My brothers and sisters in Afghanistan must understand that we are in this together.

We have suffered together.

We have suffered from the unintended consequences of the choices we all made.

These choices were made by us and the international community thirty years ago.

These were the choices when we armed Mujahideen with weapons and ideology.

We suffer the scourge of heroin and the tragedy of refugees together.

We suffer the extremism and violence together.

We must fight it together too.

We must not blame each other. This is what the terrorists want.

The terrorists want brother to fight brother.

We reject the terrorists.

We reject the blame game.

We reject allowing terrorists to define us.

We will define ourselves by what we truly are.

We are defined by love.

We are defined by togetherness.

We are defined by Rumi and by Iqbal.

We are defined by the beauty and grace of our daughters.

We are defined by Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

We are defined by our daughters like Malala Yusufzai.

Malala has done more for Pakistan's future than any military operation has or will.

She has exposed just how weak and pathetic terrorists are.

Pakistan will do everything in its power to ensure that our future is, InshaAllah, what Malala represents.

We cannot do it alone.

The potential of ECO nations is most at risk at the hands of Malala's attackers.

Today I invite you to join hands with Pakistan.

Let us commit to a collective future in which Malala Yusufzai and her sisters from your countries will have a secure future.

A bright and promising future defined by courage, knowledge and prosperity.

Ameen!

I thank you all once again.

May Allah's blessings and peace be on all of you!

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of
Tajikistan, at the 12th ECO Summit Meeting,
(16 October, 2012 – Baku)**

**Excellency Chairperson,
Excellencies heads of state and government,
Dear friends,**

I first of all would like to extend sincere appreciation to President Ilham Aliyev, the government and the people of Azerbaijan for the traditional and generous Azerbaijani hospitality extended to us and the excellent arrangement of our summit. I hope that it will inspire us for fruitful activities and deliberations. In ceasing this opportunity would like to thank Republic of Turkey for successful presidency over ECO.

At the last 11th Summit of the ECO in December 2010 in Istanbul, the Heads of State and Government of the member countries agreed that only fair, healthy and holistic approach to its activities can transform the Organization into a truly powerful lever for the development of regional trade and economic relations and which allows more efficiently implicate its potential for the good of the peoples and the benefit of the countries of the region.

In other words, the parties have intensely discussed a major reform of the Organization. And for this purpose, a Group of Eminent Persons was formed to study the challenges and identify the stumbling blocks that prevent organization to fully carry out its mandate, its main goals and objectives.

I think that over the past two years, the Group was able to adequately study the real state in the Organization, identify untapped resources and to recommend how to make the organization able to address the new challenges, and most importantly, has focused on the implementation of specific projects and programs to expand trade-economic ties, promote infrastructure and forge sustainable development and economic prosperity of the participating states and the region at large.

Today, in our opinion, the Summit will have to consider proposals and make a clear decision on their implementation. Our organization needs to move forward, if it is to remain competitive in the regional and global scales.

We are convinced that under the reform of the Organization, a particular emphasis should be placed on the project activities aimed at the implementation of its strategy. As it is known, the overall goals and objectives that meet the interests of all member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization have already been identified. They, in particular, are clearly reflected in the ECO Vision 2015. There are tasks among them that are taken by Tajikistan as the primary. Particularly, development of transport and energy infrastructure, efficient

water, energy and natural resources management, the establishment of free trade zones, providing conditions for the free movement of people, transports and goods.

To achieve practical results in these areas of cooperation, we need simple and clear rules and procedures, and effective enforcement mechanisms. Core mechanisms of cooperation can be, as we present, the already available and proven Economic and Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA). In addition, we do also need specific projects and programs to rely on these agreements with financial support, focused on the region and on the end result. Today transit transport projects for the establishment of railways and highways among the participating countries deserve full support and encouragement.

One of such projects is the construction of a railroad that will run across five countries – including, China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran. For Tajikistan, as a landlocked country, the construction of this railway is of vital importance. The Islamic Republic of Iran has delivered a substantial support in the preparation of a feasibility study of this project. The projects of building transport corridors, including the route Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran, as well as ECO Container Train Project all deserve the same support and need to be early implemented.

Tajikistan is convinced, that commissioning in the Baku – Kars railroad in the near future will diversify transit-transport potential of the Organization and its member states, and will enhance their opportunities of the access to the sea.

We want the Economic Cooperation Organization play a leading role and be actively involved in the development and the realization of this project. So when we speak of a clear project activity of the Organization, we do strongly believe that our Organization must be the initiator and coordinator of these projects aimed at the bottom line.

We expect an implementation of similar projects by our Organization in the field of energy programs. Unfortunately, this area of regional cooperation is not yet properly developed, and if there are any projects and cooperation in this area, then, they are precisely based on bilateral relations so far.

Distinguished participants of the Summit,

One of the strategic objectives of the state policy of the Republic of Tajikistan, at this stage of development is, to achieve energy independence. Nearly 60% of the water resources of the entire Central Asian region is formed in the territory of our country. This potential can not only ensure irrigated agriculture and other industries in the region with fresh water, but it is essential for the production of safe, and environmentally friendly renewable energy.

Implementation of a number of hydropower projects would enable to fully secure electricity not only the region of Central Asia, but also through prospective power transmission lines which are currently under construction, to transmit electricity to other countries in the ECO region. We hope that the ECO as a regional economic organization will show most increased practical interest to the projects of building energy infrastructure. At the last summit, on the initiative of Tajikistan, the Istanbul Declaration had included a point on the importance of the utilization of hydropower potential.

Participating countries have supported an implementation of the "CASA-1000" Project, which aims to connect the power lines of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

There is the prospect of bringing these lines up to other countries in the region in future. It depends on the soonest implementation of these vital projects.

I, in this context, would like to recall the Dushanbe Declaration and Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation for 2011-2015 which both have been endorsed at the Energy Ministers Meeting of the ECO member states, held in October 2010 in the capital of Tajikistan. We believe that these documents should be fundamental to its activities in the field of energy cooperation in the near future.

Socio-economic stability and sustainable development in the region today largely depends on the situation in Afghanistan.

And it is important that the issues of providing assistance for the establishment of lasting peace and security in this country, and at the same time, helping to recover the economy should remain on the agenda of our Organization and gain momentum, especially in connection with the withdrawal of the international coalition troops from Afghanistan in 2014.

In March 2012, as you know, Dushanbe hosted the 5th Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA), during which the participants agreed on the need to hold a series of broad administrative reforms and cross-border economic initiatives, including on improving customs procedures and a regional transit agreements that are designed to advance regional economic integration.

A number of projects in infrastructure, particularly in the energy and transport sectors have been presented at the conference. We believe that the economic cooperation could be the most reliable way to participate and find its own niche at those projects.

Tajikistan supports the activities of the Special Fund for the Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the implementation of the Action Plan for the restoration of public facilities, which undoubtedly contributes to the rehabilitation of the Afghan economy as a whole.

In this context, the support of our Organization for the project of establishing in Tajikistan Regional Multidisciplinary Vocational Training Center for the national economy of Afghanistan would be very appropriate and helpful.

We also stand ready for the implementation of the measures taken to promote peace and security in Afghanistan. A joint project of the Organization, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the European Commission, aimed at strengthening border security and prevention of illicit trafficking in narcotics from Afghanistan to the border, and other countries, is one of the major regional projects that deserve support and encouragement. Close cooperation of the participating countries in this area could make a significant contribution to the overall fight against this evil and would strengthen our common security.

Dear friends,

A consolidating role of the Economic Cooperation Organization should be enhanced through upgrading and updating of the Organization's agenda. An updated organization must become strong, with a huge practical impact and the ability to quickly and adequately respond to developments and socio-economic processes erupt in the region of its activities.

As for the Republic of Tajikistan, it has been and it remains committed to the fundamental principles and objectives of the Organization, and is ready to raise the level and a quality of participation in the interaction in this format.

In conclusion, I would like to extend our sincere congratulations to Mr. Aleskerov, to our new Secretary-General, a worthy representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan and to declare that the Republic of Tajikistan will support his mission aimed at updating and revitalizing the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Thank you!

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister of the
Republic of Turkey, at the 12th ECO Summit Meeting,
(16 October, 2012 – Baku)**

**Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Esteemed Ministers,
Distinguished Secretary General, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to be here in Baku, the capital of friendly and brotherly Azerbaijan, together with you on the occasion of the 12th Summit Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

I wish that this meeting will be blessed for the members of the Economic Cooperation Organization and for our region.

Availing myself of this opportunity, I would like to congratulate H.E. Mr. Shamil Aleskerov, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, who took office in August and wish him success in this important duty.

I believe that H.E. Mr. Aleskerov will perform a successful leadership in carrying the Organization much further and restructuring it in the upcoming period.

I would like to express especially that as the Republic of Turkey, we are ready to provide every kind of support to him and all of the personnel in the Secretariat and make the necessary contributions.

Representing a population of approximately 400 million and an area of 8 million square kilometers, the Economic Cooperation Organization occupies a strategic position between the East and the West.

In addition to having invaluable natural and humanitarian resources, this region is at the center of important energy and transportation routes of the world.

The Economic Cooperation Organization reaching its twentieth anniversary has matured in every respect and has become an Organization that provides important cooperation potentials for this region.

I believe that the power and influence of the Organization will further increase in the forthcoming period.

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Highly significant political and economic transformations have taken place in the last twenty years in the geography covered by the Economic Cooperation Organization.

We observe that this change and transformation process has not come to an end, but rather it is still continuing.

This change and transformation process taking place in our immediate vicinity is not limited only to the quest of democracy, but also involves demands for equal sharing.

These demands are voiced in many parts of the world from Africa, Latin America to Asia, as well as in our region and our immediate vicinity.

It is apparent that the economic and political pillars of the international system developed after the Second World War does not respond to the current needs of the international community.

The international system should be reconstructed according to the current circumstances in order to respond to the demands raised by the societies in accordance with the principles of justice and equity.

This reconstruction should be designed in a manner to reflect not only the interests of a certain country or groups of countries, but to respond to the expectations at global level.

As I also stated in the meeting of the Istanbul World Forum where I delivered the inaugural speech last Friday, it is increasingly difficult for the international organizations, which have not obtained a wider, a more equitable and a more effective representation, to sustain their existence and functions in the future.

The countries and organizations, which occupy determining positions in the international order, need also a fundamental change in their mentality as well as structural reforms.

If these two processes are not carried out together, it will not be possible to build a more just global order.

On the other hand, we all witness the consequences of the global economic and financial crisis which has been deeply affecting our region as well.

The global crisis once again demonstrated the importance of solidarity, acting together and developing cooperation in the fields of trade and economy.

The importance of regional integration movements increases all over the world every day.

Common policies that we would implement as the member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization will greatly facilitate our efforts in our struggle against global political problems.

Located right in the heart of the Eurasian continent, we, as Turkey, would like to extend peace, security, stability and prosperity and develop cooperation in every field in the whole of this geography.

For this purpose, we lead the efforts for the creation of mechanisms of regional dialogue and cooperation.

Likewise, we are exerting efforts to realize regional economic cooperation projects in the fields such as transportation, communication, agriculture and energy.

I would like to express that the Economic Cooperation Organization with which we have a common history and cultural heritage has a special place among regional formations which Turkey is a member of.

The 12th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization provides us also with the opportunity to review the objectives that were envisaged in the 2015 ECO Vision Document.

In a period of seven years that have passed, our progress has unfortunately remained modest, despite very valuable steps that have been taken to achieve the objectives of 2015.

The 1.7 trillion dollars of total gross domestic product of the ten ECO member states constitutes only the 2.4 percent of the world's total.

And the income per capita is around 4 thousand dollars.

768 billion dollars of total trade volume of ECO member states corresponds to only as small as 2 percent of the world trade.

These figures are very far from reflecting the potential of ECO.

Trade is the most significant means of all economic integration process, my distinguished brothers.

Liberalization of trade brings along new opportunities in the field of economic cooperation through tariff discounts and elimination of non-tariff barriers.

Despite the ECO Trade Agreement signed among the five member states in 2003, the eight-year transition process envisaged for the liberalization of trade in the region has unfortunately not been utilized efficiently.

While it is envisaged in the ECO Vision Document that a free trade zone in the region will be established until 2015, we are currently far from this aim.

However, researches prove that trade in the region may increase eight times, in case of full implementation of Free Trade Agreement in the ECO region.

For this reason, I call upon the members who have still not signed the agreement to become parties to this agreement and the members who are party to the agreement to fulfill the requirements of the agreement as soon as possible.

Distinguished participants,

A significant institution that will contribute to the development of economic cooperation among the member states is ECO Trade and Development Bank.

We expect that the bank, which has continued its operations in Istanbul since 2008 will make a significant contribution to the financing of ECO projects.

The signature by Afghanistan of the participation agreement and the statement of Azerbaijan to be a member of this bank, the founder members of which are Turkey, Iran and Pakistan, are encouraging developments.

Hereby, I call upon all member states to be a partner to the ECO Trade and Development Bank.

Likewise, a significant factor in the development of trade relations among member states is the agreement that envisages protection and encouragement of investments.

I think that we should also bring this agreement into force as soon as possible.

Another issue that we need to consider is the implementation of the Transit Trade Framework Agreement.

Implementation of this Agreement will substantially contribute to the revival of trade between ECO members.

We have made significant strides in the field of agriculture in recent years with a number of projects conducted.

However, these strides should be continued and the aforementioned projects need to be completed.

As Turkey, we are ready to provide the necessary contribution for the realization of these projects.

Our efforts are continuing for the implementation of the ECO Regional Programme for Food Security the coordinator of which is Turkey.

The works regarding the establishment of the Regional Coordination Center which will carry out the implementation of the Programme is in progress.

The successful implementation of this programme is only possible with the cooperation of all countries that will benefit from it.

We all need to show the necessary effort on this matter.

On this occasion, I would like to invite the Ministers of Agriculture of member states to the 5th Meeting of ECO Ministers of Agriculture and 2nd Meeting of Donors which are to be held in Antalya on 13-15 November, 2012.

The transportation sector has vital importance for the development and progress of every country.

It is impossible today to keep the social and economic life vibrant without adequate transportation services.

Accordingly, we should revitalize the Historical Silk Road in order to improve economic relations among our countries in particular and to utilize the potential of Eurasia, Central Asia and Caucasus region.

Important tasks fall upon the Economic Cooperation Organization for the revitalization of the Historical Silk Road which functioned as a bridge among ancient civilizations for thousands of years in the past.

We consider it as our historical mission to bring back the old glorious days to our region, which is situated at the center of important trade and energy routes among the three continents.

Within this context, we welcome the designation of the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul and Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran routes as the two main highway corridors within Economic Cooperation Organization. I believe that Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway Project which is one of the most important cooperation projects connecting Asia and Europe to each other will contribute greatly to the prosperity of the region.

I believe that today we will take constructive decisions here for the future by exchanging views on further improvement of all cooperation opportunities among our countries.

Facilitation of international transportation which constitutes the backbone of our trade relations holds significance in this regard.

We should develop solutions for the next term probing the potential and future perspective of land transportation as well as other transportation means.

It is well known to all of us that important decisions have been taken in this regard within the Economic Cooperation Organization.

We should especially continue the support that we have been giving to the projects facilitating the implementation of the provisions of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement concerning international transportation during the following period.

We find the relations to be established by ECO with other international organizations and regional formations very useful in terms of improvement of visibility of the organization and sharing of knowledge and experience.

In this framework, we regard the cooperation undertaken with the United Nations and with the specialized agencies of the United Nations as important.

Similarly, I believe that we should further develop our existing relations with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in which all of our members are represented and with the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) of OIC that is permanently chaired by H.E. Mr. Abdullah Gul, President of the Republic of Turkey.

In addition to these, I think that the deepening of the relations established with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-ASEAN, which has similarities to our organization in many respects, would be to the common interest of all member states.

My Esteemed Brothers,

I would like to point out that I have very gladly welcomed the approval of the observer status of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States to the Economic Cooperation Organization at the Council of Ministers Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization held yesterday.

Similarly, I have been very pleased also with the approval by the Council of Ministers yesterday of the observer status of the TRNC (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus) which has been an observer to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation since 1979 to the Economic Cooperation Organization, under the name of Turkish Cypriot State.

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

The establishment of the Eminent Persons Group, which we decided to establish during the ECO Summit in 2010 in Istanbul, has assembled eight times to date and prepared its report.

We deem the proposals of the report concerning the restructuring of the organization and ensuring the efficient functioning of the Secretariat by bolstering it with professional staff as appropriate.

We also support the proposals, as indicated in the report, such as the promotion of the sense of belonging among member states, as well as being selective on cooperation projects with a view to prevent loss of time.

I believe that the realization of the reforms as proposed in this report will add new dynamism and strength to the ECO in the upcoming period.

With this understanding, we have given special importance to the enhancement of the ECO vision and to the resolution of several institutional shortcomings during our Chairmanship-in-Office, which we assumed on December, 2010.

I believe that Azerbaijan, which will assume Chairmanship-in-Office for the next two years, will carry out its mission with a vision and an initiative to further advance the organization.

I would like to express that we are ready to extend all possible support to friendly and brotherly Azerbaijan in this process and share our experiences with them.

We especially welcome the starting of activity of ECO Educational Institute in Ankara as a reflection of the ongoing multi-dimensional cooperation within the ECO.

I believe that the Institute will contribute significantly to the development of cooperation among the member states in the field of education.

I would like to congratulate all distinguished authors, artists and historians who have been awarded with ECO 2012 Award.

In this context, I would like to congratulate also our distinguished poet and writer Sezal Karakoc, ECO 2012 Award winner for Literature, and I wish him health and well-being.

Concluding my words, I would like to express my wish that the decisions taken at the Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization would be instrumental in enhancing peace, prosperity, and cooperation within the Economic Cooperation Organization and our region.

Allow me to extend my deepest gratitude on behalf of my dear brother Aliyev to the friendly and brotherly people of Azerbaijan for the hospitality and generosity shown to us during the Summit.

I greet Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government and all our guests with the greatest respect and most sincere affection.

**Statement by H.E. Mr. I. M. Sobirov, Chairman of Senate (Majlisi Oli)
of the Republic of Uzbekistan, at the 12th ECO Summit Meeting,
(16 October, 2012 – Baku)**

**Distinguished Chairman,
Distinguished Heads of States/Governments of Member States of the
Economic Cooperation Organization.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me cordially welcome the Heads of official delegations of Member States and express confidence that this Summit will contribute to further development of regional cooperation between our countries.

Taking this advantage, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and personally to H.E. the President Ilham Aliyev for the warm hospitality and excellent organization of the Summit.

I would also like congratulate H.E. Mr. Shamil Aleskerov with his appointment on the position of Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

I am sure that his activities on this position will strengthen partnership and enhance economic cooperation between the Member States.

Distinguished participants,

Uzbekistan supports consistent development of regional collaboration to achieve economic prosperity through mutual cooperation and on the assumption of the objectives and principals of the ECO is making certain efforts within the organization and in this context considers ECO as a purely economic regional structure.

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Karimov I.A. repeatedly emphasized that Uzbekistan considers ECO as an organization destined to become an optimal instrument in resolution of economic, humanitarian and communication problems of the region.

In this regard, we consider the next ECO Summit as an opportunity to discuss the problems of interaction between the countries of our region and, above all, issues of regional economic cooperation.

To our opinion, the priority areas of cooperation for the countries of Organization should be trade and transport and energy communications development.

The Republic of Uzbekistan supports ECO's efforts oriented at expansion of regional cooperation by means of enhancement of transport issues.

Development of transit-transport potential as well as prospect of establishment of contemporary communication network will create new opportunities for the transportation of goods to the world market and will promote the economic growth of the region.

It is known that our country is one of the initiators and active conductor of practical implementation of the largest regional project – construction of the Trans-Afghan transport corridor through Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran and further to the sea ports of the Persian Gulf.

This project has a strategic importance for the whole region and its implementation will be a significant step in intensifying international efforts for the reconstruction of political system and socio-economic infrastructure of Afghanistan.

In November 2010 Uzbekistan completed the construction of “Khairaton-Mazari-Sharif” railway. The prospect of further construction of the railway to Herat will create an opportunity to be connected with transport communications of other countries of the region.

Another significant area of cooperation in the framework of organization is development of energy sector. Uzbekistan, with essential reserves of natural gas, pays great significance to its transportation and determines optimal routes of future regional pipelines.

The Republic of Uzbekistan took practical steps in increasing the volume of power supply to Afghanistan. Resulting from the reconstruction and improvement of existing power transmission lines and substations in Afghanistan, nowadays, we provide about 300 MW of electricity, from which also supply electricity to the capital of the country – Kabul.

In our opinion, equally important field of cooperation within the ECO is the telecommunications industry. More efficient use of opportunities in this area for the benefit of Member States will considerably improve intra-regional telecommunication capabilities.

Distinguished participants of the Summit,

Using this opportunity I would like to draw attention of participants of the Summit on current issues for all countries of the region regarding utilization of water resources and construction of hydropower stations on trans-boundary river basins. The Aral Sea is directly related to the use of water resources of the two main rivers in the region, the Amu Darya and Syr Darya. Any changes in the volume and regime of inflow of these rivers threaten to permanently disruption of the fragile ecological balance in Central Asia.

That is why we can not agree with some of approaches to utilization of water resources of our region. We consider any attempt to implement projects for hydraulic construction in head rivers which carries serious security threats in terms of ecological social and technological hazards as counterproductive and dangerous.

Ignoring these serious challenges put in danger the prospects and, in general, survival of millions of people of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

We believe that water and energy issues in Central Asia, including the construction of new hydro power stations on rivers should be addressed in accordance with universally recognized norms of international law which guarantee rational and equitable distribution of water resources, and ensure the interests of all Central Asian States.

Today Uzbekistan as other countries of Central Asia which are situated in lower reaches is in real deficit of water resources. That is why, guided by existing international legal principles and norms Uzbek side demands that all hydraulic structures, determined for the construction in the upper basins of the Syr Darya and Amu Darya were inevitably aligned with countries in lower reaches after experts opinion on reasonability of its construction.

In accordance with international standards, Uzbekistan also stands for clear prioritization in utilization of water. First of all, the limited water resources should be used for drinking and sanitary needs, and secondly to ensure food safety and environmental needs, and only then for industry and energy.

Distinguished members of official delegations,

To our opinion, at the present stage, the main objectives of ECO are to create opportunities for the utmost development of our countries. This could be accomplished through effective management process of regional integration and cooperation with international organizations.

Uzbekistan considers it necessary to continue reforms for improvement of ECO efficiency, which will help our region to become an important center of economic activity.

In conclusion, let me ones again express my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and assure the participants of the Summit, that Uzbekistan will continue to operate in accordance with the objectives and tasks of the ECO, stipulated in the Treaty of Izmir.

Thank you for attention.