

In the Name of the Almighty

Report of the 18th COM of ECO Presented by H.E. Mr.
Manouchehr Mottaki, honorable Minister of Foreign
Affairs to the 10th ECO Summit

**Honorable Chairman
Distinguished Presidents
Esteemed Guests:**

I have the honor to inform you that the 18th Meeting of the Council of Ministers was successfully organized with active presence and participation of foreign ministers of Member States. I may present a brief report of its outcomes.

- The council thoroughly reviewed ECO activities and projects, latest status of agreements, performance of specialized and affiliated agencies, and ECO cooperation with other regional and international organizations. The ministers called on all Member States to try their utmost to implement agreements and to enhance more cooperation.
- Since ECO Trade Agreement has been binding, the council underlined its operationalization.
- The head of the ECO Trade and Development Bank, having presented a report on the bank activities, delivered a positive and useful report on the global financial crisis and the strategies adopted by Member States to tackle it. The outcomes of this deliberation will be submitted to the retreat meeting among heads of states.
- The council highlighted enhancement of cooperation in transport sector. The project for demonstration run of Kerman – Zahidan train and the linkage of the Railways of Iran to Pakistan was finally realized after many years. This route will be opened and utilized with the presence of representatives from Member States. The Council also reached consensus on early implementation of three regional projects in railway transport namely construction railroads around Van Lake in Turkey, rehabilitation of Quetta – Taftan in Pakistan, increasing capacity of Sarakhs and Turkmenistan Station. The concept for constructing railways to connect China – Kazakhstan-Tajikistan – Afghanistan and Iran was welcomed.
- The agenda of the 10th Summit and Tehran Declaration were reviewed and discussed. The Declaration consists of important points on sustaining cooperation among Member States in various sectors such as trade, transport and communication, industry, agriculture and tourism.
- The Ministerial Meeting proposed that in order to increase the efficiency of the Organization, strengthen cooperation and expedite the implementation of agreements and signed documents, some modifications should be made to the Organizational Chart, Methodology and Rules of Procedures.

- The Council stated that, despite the historical and cultural commonalities among Member States, cooperation in these areas has remained at primitive stages and is limited to some of the Member States. Therefore, it is requisite that Member States adopt new strategies for developing cooperation in areas such as culture, art, and the media which today play important role in awakening and informing nations about international events as well as realizing economical cooperation among countries.
- The texts of the Additional Protocol on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen and “the Statute of RISCAM” were finalized and signed by the ministers. A Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in Transport Sector was signed among ECO and IDB – ESCAP.

In conclusion I would like to appreciate the presence and participation of all ministers and senior officials who spared no effort for preparing the ground for a successful and fruitful Summit.

I thank you Sir