

Report of the Chairman of the ECO Council of Ministers

Annex-V

*Honourable Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellency Mr. Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen*

In accordance with the ECO Rules of Procedure, I have the honour to submit a summary Report and conclusions of our deliberations in the ECO Council of Ministers held here two days ago.

The Council reviewed and adopted fifteen Reports of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) held in the past year. I would like to commend the Council of Permanent Representatives and the Secretariat for holding a record number of CPR sessions which is a clear manifestation of ECO's increased activity. The Council adopted the Report of the Second Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications held in Ashgabat two months ago. We also reviewed the Report of the Eight Meeting of the Regional Planning Council held last month. In addition, the ECO Calendar of Events and Work Programme for 1988-89 were also reviewed and approved. The Council also adopted the Basic Documents related to the ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Science Foundation and ECO Educational Institute along with its Charter. An MOU on Cooperation against Smuggling and Customs Frauds among ECO Member States, document pertaining to Modalities of ECO Awards and Transit Transport framework Agreement just concluded on the sidelines of the Senior Officials Meeting were also approved by the Council. The Council endorsed the ECO Budget for 1998 approved by the CPR on our behalf. Audit Report pertaining to the year 1996 was also approved by the Council.

It is a matter of satisfaction to report to Your Excellencies the entry into force of two important trade-related agreements signed during the Third ECO Summit, namely Transit Trade Agreement and Agreement on Visa Simplification Procedures for the Businessmen in the ECO Region. The Council was, to some extent, concerned at the lack of efforts and tangible progress on two important regional institutions, namely ECO Trade and Development Bank and ECO Reinsurance Company. We, in the Council, agreed to submit to this highest forum of our leadership our suggestions to address a joint call to the concerned Member States to ensure speedy completion of all requisite formalities for expeditious establishment of these two institutions.

The annual Reports of three Regional Institutions and Specialized Agencies namely ECO Shipping Company, ECO Cultural Institute and ECO College of Insurance were submitted to the Council. The Council also called upon the concerned Member States to fulfill their obligations with regard to the said institutions. In this connection, the Council also emphasized upon the shareholders of the ECO Shipping Company to meet their obligations so that this institution which is already operational, may not face undesirable difficulties.

The Secretary General in his Annual Report to the Council presented a resume of the reorganization and restructuring process. The Secretariat premises have been shifted to a new

and spacious building graciously allotted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. All these steps, concomitant to the implementation of revised and updated Basic Documents including the Treaty of Izmir, have infused a new dynamism in our Organisation.

The Secretary General's efforts for expansion and consolidation of ECO's external relations were well appreciated by the Council. His endeavours in this regard have been productive and fruitful. A Drug Control Coordination Unit (DCCU), as envisaged in the ECO Plan of Action on Drug Control, will start functioning soon in the Secretariat. Cooperation with FAO has been activated by signing an MOU last December. The UNDP's assistance in various areas of cooperation especially in the transport and trade sectors is forthcoming. In my capacity as the Chairman of our Organisation for the next twelve months, I assure the Secretary General of our fullest cooperation from the Council in his efforts and endeavours to improve the functioning and image of our Organisation.

As provided in the Rules of Procedure, the 8th Session of the Council of Ministers was required to prepare the draft Agenda and Programme for the Summit and other arrangements related it. We also had the honour to work out a befitting strategy for our future course of action in the form of draft Almaty Declaration, placed on Your Excellencies' Agenda for review and adoption.
