

## Statements of the Heads of International Organizations

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### **Message of H.E. Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali,**

*( Secretary General of the United Nations )*

And

### **Statement of Mr. Adrianus Mooy,**

*Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)*

*Excellencies, distinguished representatives  
Ladies and gentlemen,*

I am very grateful for the opportunity given to me to represent the Secretary General of the United Nations at the Fourth Summit Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization. The Secretary General is unfortunately unable to attend this Summit Meeting but he has asked me to convey the following message:

Quote "It gives me much pleasure to convey my warm greetings and best wishes to the distinguished Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organisation on the occasion of their Fourth Summit Meeting being held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

The Economic Cooperation Organisation has been playing a useful role in strengthening cooperation among its members in various fields of endeavour. As stipulated in the Treaty of Izmir, expansion of trade and the promotion of conditions for sustaining economic growth constitute the building blocks for strengthening regional economic cooperation.

Indeed, regional economic cooperation has been gaining momentum all over the world and should be viewed as an opportunity for the countries of Asia in their quest for growth. Economic benefits will, as a result, be more widely spread across the region. The far-reaching domestic reform programmes and related measures being implemented in several developing countries, and their movement towards more liberal, private sector oriented economies have enhanced the prospects for meaningful economic cooperation. Positive responses to the call for reduction of barriers to trade and investment should facilitate greater economic inter-linkages. In turn, the increased interdependence of economies should induce a wider dispersion of the beneficial impact of the trade and investment nexus.

It is noteworthy that regional and sub regional organizations, such as the Economic Cooperation Organisation, have been actively promoting cooperative endeavours among neighbouring countries with a view to spreading the benefits of development. Given the rich

social and cultural heritage which the members of the Economic Cooperation Organisation share, it should be possible to impart a greater degree of momentum to their economic development in an atmosphere of peace and stability.

It is also encouraging to note the growing linkages between the Economic Cooperation Organisation and other sub-regional and regional organizations in Asia. There are important lessons to be learned from the successful experiences of other regions, including such factors as incentives for promoting rapid export expansion, efficient public sector enterprises, adequate infrastructure and human resources development. These are also areas which the United Nations through its programmes in the economic and social fields has been striving to promote. I wish to assure you that the United Nations will continue to contribute positively to the development efforts of members of the Economic Cooperation Organisation.

I wish the Fourth Summit Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organisation every success as you consider important issues for strengthening regional economic cooperation”.

#### Unquote

*Excellencies, distinguished representatives  
Ladies and gentlemen,*

Having delivered the message of the Secretary General, I would like to add a few words on technical assistance that ESCAP is providing to ECO member countries.

As you are perhaps aware, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) signed a memorandum of understanding with the ECO Secretariat in 1993. I meet on an annual basis with the heads of all the sub regional organizations. The next such meeting is being hosted by ECO in Tehran next month. These meetings are an extremely important part of the process of identifying priority areas where ESCAP and the sub regional organizations could work together and also where ESCAP's assistance would be most useful. With the admission of Turkey as ESCAP's newest member, all ECO countries will be members of our Commission. The majority of the members of ECO share common problems as economies in transition. Difficulties in shifting to market economies are again compounded by the land locked nature of most members.

ESCAP is providing technical assistance to address some of these difficulties. National workshops on economic reforms have been organized in each of the Central Asian Republics to address issues such as monetary, fiscal and exchange rate management, liberalization of trade, privatization and foreign direct investment. A seminar on macro economic reforms has been held and issues related to tax reform, access of women to formal credit and increased productivity of the informal sector have also been studied. Further assistance in these areas will continue.

International trade will become increasingly important to ECO members. Enhancement of international trade can only occur when an efficient transport system is in place. ESCAP, in cooperation with participating countries, is implementing the Asian Land Transport Infrastructure (ALTID) project which involves the expansion of the Asian Highway and the Trans-Asian railway networks and the improvement of transport facilitation measures required for smooth movement of international freight and passengers.

Under the ALTID Project, ESCAP has been assisting the countries in the identification of routes, particularly the linkages from Central Asia to seaports to the south and east. ESCAP has contributed in the preparation of the Outline Plan for the Development of Transport Sector in the ECO region. The opening, just yesterday, of the new rail link between Iran and Turkmenistan is the latest development in the expanding transport network in the ECO region. This link follows the ancient silk route between China and Europe. ESCAP is currently undertaking yet another study on land transport corridors between Central Asia and Europe. Assistance in this area of land transport development will continue as an essential part of ESCAP's work programme for the foreseeable future. In the social sector, our work has concentrated on the implementation of the Agenda for Action on Social Development which is a follow up of the World Summit for Social Development. Technical support has been provided in addressing the problems associated with the handicapped in society.

A programme to promote private sector participation and privatization in industrial development in the ECO sub region is also being pursued.

I have touched on a few highlights of ESCAP cooperation with ECO countries. I want to assure you that our assistance to ECO will be continued and further strengthened in these and other areas of priority to enhance economic and social development in the ECO sub region.

*Thank you.*

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**Statement of H.E. Dr. Hamid Alghabid,**  
( *Secretary General of the OIC* )

*Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

On behalf of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference I would like to avail myself of this handsome opportunity to congratulate the Government and brotherly people of Turkmenistan for organizing the Fourth ECO Summit Meeting in this beautiful and historic capital of Ashgabat.

Our special appreciation and congratulations are extended to His Excellency President Niyazov for his wise and dynamic leadership and for his untiring and laudable efforts to improve the lot of the people of Turkmenistan and the socio-economic development of this great country.

We in the OIC and the Islamic Development Bank, have been following with a large measure of interest the activities of the Economic Cooperation Organization. This is in the national order of things as almost all the Members of ECO are also Members of the OIC. Besides it is our policy to encourage the formation and smooth running of regional groupings within the Islamic Ummah.

We are impressed by the resolve and determination of the ten member states to work together to harness the combined potential of the huge landmass, inhabited by nearly 300 million people, that constitutes the ECO region.

We are no less impressed by the sound and realistic policies, strategies and programmes that have been formulated to foster economic cooperation on a regional basis. At this juncture we would like to register our felicitations to all Member States of ECO and more especially to Iran and Turkmenistan on the occasion of the inauguration of the Mashhad-Seraks-Tejen railway line.

The realization of this important project is very significant not only in the context of the socio-economic development of the newly independent Central Asian States but also and more importantly in the context of the precipitation of the process of integration and the promotion and maintenance of peace and stability within the entire ECO region.

I should therefore congratulate the Economic Cooperation Organisation for its achievements so far and for the right steps being undertaken to address the issues of cooperation and integration within this important regional grouping. I also congratulate the Secretary General of ECO for the dynamic initiatives being undertaken. I have no doubt that these initiatives will produce fruitful results as the commonality of history culture and tradition and the mutuality of interests among the Member States of ECO provide a solid foundation for meaningful cooperation in all fields. The ECO must therefore continue to build on this foundation and also continue its efforts to promote and strengthen cooperative linkages with other regional organizations and international bodies.

The OIC on its part will continue to work closely with the ECO in order to strengthen the Islamic solidarity and ensure the welfare of all the people of the Islamic Ummah.

*Excellencies,*

As we approach the next millennium, the Islamic Ummah faces many challenges. The end of bipolarization has brought about new political impulses whose implications are difficult to foresee. Profound changes have indeed seriously affected the international economic and political order.

In the sphere of economic relations, we are witnessing an upsurge of economic liberalization on the basis of privatization and deregulation and the emergence of the World Trade Organisation and large and powerful economic blocs.

As developing countries and above all as members of the Islamic Ummah we must continue to monitor these trends carefully so as to optimize the benefits of the New World Economic Order and to avoid a greater marginalization of our countries, most of which are classified as least developed.

On the political plane we are faced with the problem of the Middle East and the crises of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kashmir and Somalia to mention but a few. We still have to monitor very closely the situation in Bosnia Herzegovina.

*Excellencies,*

In the face of these challenges we need more than ever before to continue to work closely together in order to strengthen our Islamic solidarity and joint action and intensify our Intra Islamic cooperation.

I wish the Fourth ECO Summit Meeting a resounding success.

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