

Report of the Chairman of the ECO Council of Ministers

Annex-VII

*Hon'ble Mr. Chairman,
Hon'ble Heads of State/Government,
Hon'ble Foreign Ministers,
Excellency Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies & Gentlemen*

I have the honour to present a brief Report to this august meeting on the outcome of the Sixth Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers which concluded here in Ashgabat on 12 May, 1996. This meeting, like the one we had a year back in Ashgabat in January 1995, was held in an extremely cordial atmosphere and completed its work in a spirit of understanding and accommodation. It was indeed a positive re-affirmation of our common resolve to convert the agreed programmes and projects into concrete realities keeping in view their priority and importance.

As part of its regular annual work, the Council reviewed and adopted the reports of the Council of Deputies and the Regional Planning Council, approved the ECO Budget for 1996-97.

During its session, the Council also reviewed the progress of the Agreements signed during the Third ECO Summit meeting at Islamabad. Since these Agreements constitute a major step forward in the attainment of our objectives, and in view of the urgency to implement them without any further delay, the Council of Ministers unanimously decided to request this supreme body of our regional leadership to endorse a joint call to the concerned authorities in the Member Governments to ensure completion of all requisite formalities for the expeditious establishment of Institutions and approval/ratification of Agreements.

In reviewing other activities of our Organisation, the Council of Ministers expressed its satisfaction over the progress made towards promoting the process of regional cooperation under the auspices of ECO and emphasized mobilization of our national and collective resources towards the continuation of this process for the socio-economic development of our region on sustainable basis.

The Council of Ministers also held an extraordinary session to consider and approve the recommendations of the Eminent Persons Group on ECO's Reorganization and Restructuring. The EPG has produced 11 comprehensive documents dealing with all aspects of ECO's organizational structure and functional methodology. We are grateful to the three esteemed participants of this important assignment – the Eminent Persons Group which produced these 11 documents through indepth discussions spread over four meetings during the past one year; the Secretary General, without whose profound contribution, the work of EPG could not have been completed in such a short span of time; and the Senior Officials of the ECO Member States, who with the help of their legal aides have fine-tuned these documents. These documents, once put into effect, will indeed infuse a new dynamism and efficiency into ECO enabling it to pay its role as a major regional organisation devoted to the common well-being of

the ECO region.

The Council of Ministers also prepared for consideration by the Heads of State/Government the draft Ashgabat Joint Communiqué which reflects the progress made so far and the new direction needed by our Organisation within the overall perspective of changes taking place on the regional and global scenes. It underlines the targets which we must achieve to disperse the benefits of our multilateral cooperation to the people in the ECO region. It also incorporates our shared perspectives and concern to protect and promote our regional interests within the framework of global peace, progress and prosperity. The draft Joint Communiqué also expresses our satisfaction over the prominence that ECO has achieved in the past four years at the regional and international levels. We are particularly happy to note the evolving cooperation of ECO with the United Nations and its Agencies and especially the adoption by the UN General Assembly of a Resolution on ECO-UN Cooperation during its 50th Session last year.

Excellencies, as you are aware, His Excellency Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, our distinguished Secretary General, is completing his tenure in August this year. The Council of Ministers, in our meeting, paid a special tribute to Mr. Shamshad Ahmad for the excellent work that he did as the head of this Organisation during the last four years. His tenure witnessed a historic transformation of ECO from a trilateral entity into a 10-Member Organisation. Mr. Shamshad Ahmad made a significant contribution to the process of regional cooperation during the formative years of ECO in its expanded framework and through his efforts led ECO to an unprecedented regional and international prominence.

The Council has now approved the appointment of H.E. Mr. Ondar Ozar as the new Secretary General with effect from August this year. We welcome him as the head of our Organisation and are confident that with his experience and diplomatic skills he will continue the good work done by his predecessor and will steer the Organisation effectively through the forthcoming critical phase of its reorganization and revitalization. We assure him of our full support and wish him success.

A resume of the activities of the Organisation shall be presented to you by the Secretary General in his annual report.

I thank you, Sir.
