

Report of the Chairman of the ECO Council of Ministers

Annex-V

Thank you Madam Chairperson,

The Council of Ministers met in closed session on 13 March. The report of the Special Meeting has been circulated.

I think we can take pride in the very constructive work that we were able to complete during the Special Meeting. This was owed entirely to the spirit of harmony and cooperation that has now become the tradition of the meetings of the ECO Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers welcomed and accepted the generous offer of Turkmenistan to host the next Summit and the meeting of the Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers also approved for submission to the Summit the text of the Joint Communique and the Declaration of the Third ECO Summit.

The draft declaration was seen as particularly significant in so far as it pointed to the sharper focus on areas of priority interest to the ECO countries, namely transport, communications, trade, energy, ecology and protection of environment.

The Council approved the agreements and instruments that are to be signed during this Summit meeting.

In the course of our deliberations, a number of Member States announced their readiness to accede to and sign some of the agreements on which they had not taken a decision earlier. Noteworthy were the decisions of the Kyrgyz Republic to initial the Charter of the ECO Science Foundation and the Islamic State of Afghanistan to sign the agreement on simplification of visa procedures.

The most important, however, was the approval of the agreement on the four ECO projects; ECO Air, ECO Shipping, ECO Trade and Development Bank and ECO Reinsurance Company and the agreement on transit trade and simplification of visa procedures, the setting up of the ECO Science Foundation and the ECO Cultural Institute, all of which will now provide a sound institutional framework for our organization.

The sustained efforts of our organization to establish linkages with international organizations has also been carried further. With the approval of the Council of Ministers, our organization will conclude two MOUs with UNDP and UNDCP.

The signing of the agreements at this Summit and the progress made by us in institutionalizing economic cooperation between member countries can be seen to mark the coming of age of our organization.

Thank you