

## Quetta Plan of Action for ECO

### *Annex-IV*

1. The Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization met in Quetta on February 6-7, 1993. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, the Ministers for Foreign Economic Relations and senior officials of the member countries. The list of leaders of delegations is attached.
2. The Council noted that with the enlargement of the ECO membership, policies for economic cooperation would now cover ten member states, spread over an area of over seven million square kilometers rich in natural and human resources, and date are for the needs of 300 million people.
3. It emphasized the vital importance of mobilizing natural and human resources of the region, based as far as possible, on a market oriented economy and common benefit.
4. The Council stressed the importance of establishing collaboration with international bodies and other regional groupings in accordance with article XXXV of the Treaty of Izmir. Such collaboration should include exploring possibilities of furthering ECO projects through international financing.
5. In reviewing the progress achieved in the development of regional cooperation, the Council commended the Regional Planning Council and the Technical Committees for their important contributions which had resulted in the initiation of significant projects amongst the ECO Member States. The Council also expressed satisfaction on the positive results of the various experts groups, seminars, meetings and training programmes ,held under the auspices of the ECO.
6. The Council stressed that ECO projects and programmes for regional cooperation could be put in motion whenever any number of ECO countries were ready to so act together while the remaining ECO countries would be encouraged to join in when they were in a position to do so."
7. For a plan of action which would aim to achieve its objectives by the year 2000, the Council adopted the following guidelines:

### **TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

8. The Council emphasized that modern communications were a prerequisite for achieving the goals of ECO. To this end, they indicated on behalf of their governments, their determination to allocate national resources and mobilize external resources, separately and collectively.
- 9 . Given the vital and technical nature of this sector, they proposed that a meeting of the Transport and Communications Committee be held within the next two months to prepare an outline plan for the development of the transport sector.

a) This plan should include the following objectives

- i) Enable trucks to travel from one end of the region to the other at internationally acceptable standards and in accordance with routes prescribed by member states;
- ii) Expand and integrate national railway networks to permit transportation by rail from one end of the region to the other;
- iii) Expand air connections so that there is a direct air connection between the capitals/major cities of each of the ECO countries at least once a week;
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- iv) Expand port facilities to handle the sea-borne trade of the region;
- v) Conclude agreements, within or without the region, that may be necessary to facilitate such transport including access through new border and custom posts that may be established

b) This plan should also examine:

- i) The national transportation networks of the ECO countries and propose such modifications in the current national schemes as would facilitate intra-ECO transportation;
- ii) The feasibility of a joint multimodal transport venture among the interested public-private sector companies in the members countries which would enable goods to travel within the region expeditiously;
- iii) The possibility to pool arrangements among the national airlines, setting up of an ECO Airline among the interested public/private sector companies of member countries and incentives to the private sector to initiate air, especially air 'Cargo, services in the region;

10. The proposed meeting of the Ministers for Transport for the ECO countries in Alma Ata in October, 1993, is expected to finalize this plan for its

i. Implementation.

ii. In the field of telecommunications, the Council of Ministers further directed the Committee to prepare within the same time-frame (i.e. by October 1993) a plan that would:

(i) ensure that by 1995, at least 40 telephonetelefax channels exist between each of the ECO country either directly or through another ECO country;

(ii) explore the possibility of expanding satellite links between all ECO countries for telecommunications, television and radio broadcasts. The feasibility of an ECO satellite may also be explored. I

(iii) effect improvements in the Postal System so that mail from one ECO country is delivered to another ECO country within one week's time.

12. In view of the vast potential for the development of a telecommunications industry in

the region, the Council of Ministers directed the Committee to explore, on the basis of comparative advantage, the possibility of cooperation in the field, including the manufacture of different components by regional member countries and harmonizing standards and requirements.

13. In order to keep abreast of the latest developments in the rapidly developing field of telecommunications, to generate innovations and to address the specific telecommunications needs of the ECO region, the Council directed that there should be enhanced cooperation between the existing research centres in the member countries, and that if necessary, new research centres be set up jointly financed by the governments and the public/private sector companies in the telecommunications industry.

## **TRADE**

14. The Council of Ministers agreed that with a view to promoting economic cooperation, the Members shall endeavour to make trade within the region a major component of their total trade. The Council of Ministers directed the Economic and Commercial Committee, in the light of Article 11 and III of the Treaty of Izmir, to work towards the elimination, as far as possible, of tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and restrictions within the ECO region and to examine the feasibility of expanding the present preferential tariff system to include the new member countries and to enlarge the -list of items to which preferential tariffs shall apply.

15. With a view to creating a greater awareness among the business community of the member countries of the trade potential of the region, the Committee should also conduct a study of the exports (present and potential) in each of the ECO countries and determine the extent to which these can meet the import needs (present and potential) of other ECO countries.

16. The Council directed the Committee to devise a uniform system of customs procedures, utilising current international practice, for goods in transit at all borders in the region with the objective of ensuring that goods in transit are cleared for onward movement expeditiously.

17. It also noted that economic activity was increasingly being directed in all the ECO countries towards the private sector and appreciated that lack of awareness of trading opportunities was a major factor inhibiting trade within the region. It directed that the ECO Chamber of Commerce should hold at least twice a year seminars to acquaint businessmen of the ECO countries with the trade potential that existed within the region. It noted that the Chambers of Commerce of member states are being affiliated with the ECO Chamber of Commerce.

18. To facilitate growth of trade, the Council further directed that the proposed Trade and Development Bank should, in its trade financing activities, focus

on intra-regional trade.

19. The Council agreed that necessary measures be taken by national authorities to facilitate the travel of businessmen within ECO region without delay and that visas, where required, are issued expeditiously.

## **ENERGY**

20. The Council noted the region's rich energy potential, both hydro and fossil, and directed the preparation of a well considered plan for a network of pipelines and the inter-connection of power grids to meet the entire region's requirements and to provide outlets, including sea ports, for access to international markets for the member countries. They directed that financing be explored for development of viable projects in this field.

## **INDUSTRY**

21. While recognizing the current role of the public sector, the Council noted

the substantial role of the private sector in the further development of industry and the need to encourage businessmen, through investment incentives, to establish industrial units to cater to the entire regional market.

22. The Council directed the Technical and Industrial Committee to make proposals in this regard and also asked for the examination of the possibility also of offering other special incentives for such units.

## **AGRICULTURE**

23. The Council of Ministers recognized the vital role of agriculture and related industries in the economic advancement of ECO member Countries and directed the Agricultural Committee to prepare a comprehensive study for cooperation in the region for the application of improved methods for maximising agricultural production (at least to the point of self-sufficiency in the food-deficit member countries) and where possible explore joint regional projects.

24. The Committee should also study means for enhancing cooperation among the existing agricultural training and research institutions in the member states, and where necessary, propose the establishment of new institutions to promote technical knowledge and exchange of experience. The Committee should study the feasibility of establishing an ECO Agricultural Data Bank to disseminate information on production and trade of agricultural products within ECO countries.

## **TOURISM**

25. Recognizing the importance of tourism in advancing national economic development and promoting mutual understanding, the Council expressed the hope that expansion of transport and telecommunication network would increase the flow of regional and international tourists. To facilitate such tourism further, it directed the national authorities to examine the possibility of facilitating issue of visas, and of promoting cooperation between the tourism organizations/travel operators within the region. The objective should be to increase substantially the ECO region's share in the global tourism trade.

## **HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

26. The Council noted that many ECO countries had technical assistance

programmes/scholarshipsto provide training facilities to foreign nationals. They agreed that an appropriate part of all such technical programmes/scholarships be placed at the disposal of ECO countries.

27. They further directed the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Committee to:

- a) undertake a study of all vocational training facilities available within the region and to propose such expansion/modification as would help these institutions to serve the needs of the region as a whole keeping in view the requirement as spelled out by each of the member country for vocational training;
- b) examine the possibility of the expansion of existing facilities within the region for language training to cater to the enlarged needs of the region; and
- c) to examine modalities, on the basis of proposals submitted by Pakistan, of setting up the ECO Science Foundation, visualized in Article XIV of the Treaty of Izmir, with the objective of seeking to ensure its establishment by 1995.

### **ECO SPECIAL FUND FOR FEASIBILITY STUDIES**

28. To achieve the objectives of this Plan of Action and to supplement the efforts of the Technical Committees, the Council decided to set up a Special Fund to undertake feasibility studies in various sectors of economic activity within the region. This Fund, which would have an initial contribution of a total of US\$300,000, from the founding members, would be placed at the disposal of the Council of Deputies, which on receiving proposals from the Regional Planning Council would commission feasibility studies by Consultants of international repute (preferably from within the region). In making proposals for the feasibility studies, the Technical Committee should try to identify private sector companies agencies who would benefit from and contribute to such feasibility studies.

29. This fund could be supplemented, with the approval of the Council of Deputies, by assistance from International Organizations.

List Of Leaders of Delegations of ECO Member States to the Third Session of the Council - Quetta 6-7 FebruALy, 1993.

1. **H.E. Dr. Najibullah Laffrai**, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Islamic State'of Afghanistan.
2. **H.E. Mr. Gasimov Tofik**, Foreign Minister of Republic of Azerbaijan.
3. **H.E. Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati**, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
4. **H.E. Mr. Karmangozhan S.A.**, First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Kazakhstan.
5. **H.E. Mr. Marat Sarlinov**, Deputy Foreign Minister, Republic of Kyrgyzstan.
6. **H.E. Mr. Muhammad Siddique Khan Kanju**, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
7. **H.E. Mr. Izzatullo Khayayev**, Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, Republic of Tajikistan.
8. **H.E. Mr. Hikmet Cetin**, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey.
9. **H.E. Mr. Ovezov Jagmur Ovezovich**, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkmenistan.
10. **H.E. Mr. Fateh Ghulamovich Teschabaev**, First Deputy Foreign Minister, Republic of Uzbekistan.