

*Annex-III*

*Mr. President,*

This Summit Meeting of the “Economic Cooperation Organization” will be milestone in its history. Turkey, Iran and Pakistan have gained considerable experience and covered distance in regional cooperation. Of course we must intensify our efforts to further develop our cooperation. On the other hand today we have the distinguished representatives of Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan among us. We are very happy to welcome them here.

Our purpose at this Summit will be to seek the possibilities of widening and intensifying our regional cooperation with our brothers who are now joining us. We have the necessary basis for this. The number of the members of ECO are increasing. As the cultural and historic ties with our new partners go back centuries, I have no doubts that our work will be successful.

Our world is changing and uncertainties are emerging. To overcome the challenges before us, and to achieve peace and prosperity in our region, economic development in the region and economic interdependence among our countries need to be increased. The provisions of the treaty of Izmir can help us to work towards this end. In fact the “Treaty of Izmir” has important provisions for the development of trade among our countries, for the establishment of the necessary infrastructure in the region, and for furthering cooperation among our private sectors. What we now have to do is to give life to these provisions as soon as possible.

We are living in a period where unprecedented changes are taking place in the history of humankind. The relatively developed infrastructure and communications in Europe is facilitating cooperation in that continent for adapting to new conditions. However, in Asia our task is more difficult.

In these difficult conditions we have to develop the infrastructure in our region. We have to establish the free market system, the advantages of which are no longer contested. We have to improve trade among our countries and take the necessary measures for economic development.

We believe that in addition to national efforts and bilateral arrangements, ECO too has a role to play in this respect. In our discussions we are going to take up all these questions. The fact that we are going to conclude a protocol on preferential trade among our countries is a happy development. However, I believe it is important for us to take immediate steps to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade among our countries.

*President Hashemi Rafsanjani,*

We are going to discuss the points I have just outlined in this beautiful city which reflects the rich Iranian history and culture. We are very happy for this occasion. We have been engulfed in the traditional and warm Iranian hospitality since we set foot in Tehran. The perfect organization of the meetings, and the warm atmosphere provided for our bilateral contacts

indicate even now how successful our meetings are going to be. I would like to convey to you on behalf of all the delegations here present, and I am proud to name them one by one; Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, our heartfelt gratitude and thanks for your warm hospitality and kindness.

*Thank you.*

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