

Statement
by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan,
H.E. Mr. Sirodjidin Aslov
at the Extraordinary Session of ECO Council of Ministers
New York, 23 September 2016

*Distinguished Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the ECO Secretary General and Secretariat of ECO for organizing today's meeting.

The Government of Tajikistan considers beneficial cooperation with the ECO countries as a constructive policy.

To accelerate the economic integration processes special attention must be paid to the development of transport and communication, implementation of infrastructure projects, simplification of trade procedures, efficient use of water and energy resources, establishment of a common energy system, free movement of goods, services, capital and people as a vital tool of development of cooperation within ECO.

This year Tajikistan has marked the 25-th anniversary of State Independence. In this regard I would like to mention that during the years of independence, Tajikistan has passed different ways in its development. However, despite many issues and challenges in the past Tajikistan succeeded in achieving the main objectives toward broadening of regional cooperation.

To ensure energy independence of the country and to connect it to the regional power grid and in this way to contribute to the development of the energy sector throughout the ECO region, a number of energy projects have been accomplished, including unification of energy system of the country. More than 1,300 megawatts new production capacities of electricity were added to the total power generation in the country.

It should be stressed that laying the first stone of the construction of power transmission line the CASA-1000 in May this year became the first major regional project with the participation of ECO countries.

Energy sector is one of the main areas of cooperation within the Organization. In this regard I call upon all member states to be engaged more

actively in the implementation of projects in this field for mutually beneficial cooperation.

During the years of independence 2,000 kilometers of roads, 240 bridges and more than 30 kilometers of tunnels have been constructed to expand the regional trade and link the roads of the country with international transport infrastructure.

Tajikistan is committed to participate in further development of regional infrastructure, including construction of bridges across the Panj River, construction and reconstruction of international transport roads and railways that will connect Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkmenistan and other countries of the ECO.

The Government of Tajikistan with adopting specific regulation and different programs aims of strengthen regional economic integration, simplification of trade procedures by reducing technical barriers, expansion of transit border trade.

At present, four free economic areas operates in Tajikistan. It should be noted that two of these areas located near the borders with the ECO member states. Most member countries of the Organization have sufficient experience in development of special economic areas and we invite all of them to actively participate in the projects in these regions.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Tajikistan supports the implementation of ECO agreements, including Transit Transport Framework Agreement, the ECO Trade Agreement, activities of ECO Bank and others.

The Government of Tajikistan pays special attention and significance to the future cooperation within ECO and expresses hope that today's meeting will be an important step toward achieving our common interests.

Thank you.