



Opening Statement
by
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Deputy Minister of Communication and Information
Technology
of the Islamic Republic of Iran

at the

Inaugural Session of
the 27th Meeting of
ECO Regional Planning Council

5 December 2016
Tehran- Islamic Republic of Iran

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Deputy Minister of Communication and Information Technology
Of the Islamic Republic of Iran
At the 21th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council
5 December 2016*

*Excellency, Mr. Halil Ibrahitim Akca,
Distinguished ECO Secretary General
Honorable Ambassadors of the ECO Member States,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

It is a distinct honor and privilege for me to be here with you at the 27th meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council. Please allow me, at the outset, to welcome and wish all delegates a memorable stay in the historic and beautiful city of Tehran. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Secretariat for all the preparations they have made.

Excellencies,

For the past 24 years, the Economic Cooperation Organization has embarked on a journey to enhance regional development, expand existing cultural affinities and develop joint plans for addressing priority needs of the region. The Organization has been successful in forging a range of cooperation frameworks with the principle aim of encouraging closer ties among our Member States. Cooperation on transport is a reflective example with its recent successful inauguration of Iran-Turkmenistan-Kazakhstan trilateral Corridor indicating a promising future. I hope that this RPC can further harmonize our individual planning and programs to meet the objectives envisaged in the ECO Charter.

Distinguished delegates,

I would like to emphasize that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been following an “ECO advocacy” policy and will continue to do so. Accordingly, since last RPC, Iran has contributed to implementing the mandates provided by the Member States and advancing its agreed schedule through inter alia hosting a range of meetings including on Heads of Customs, ECO-CCI, energy and ECO Regional electricity market. Apparently the trade and finance related meetings proposed to be hosted by Iran have not been convened mostly due to lack of Quorum which could be a signal inviting closer consideration of ways and means of coming up with workable solution to this undesirable situation.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As far as our method of work is concerned, I may indicate that: As a result of the expansion of the activities of the Organization in the recent years, the number of events/meetings included in the ECO Calendar of Events has been drastically increased which is beyond the available resources of the Organization. Therefore, I would like to suggest that this RPC meeting takes initiatives to include in the Calendar of Events only the events with substantial items in their agenda and more possible tangible results. In other words, the ECO work program should rather take a project and action oriented approach than a meeting oriented one. I am confident that this RPC Meeting would hold focused and constructive deliberations in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are standing at the end of the current ECO Vision 2015 and therefore, there is a need to assess the implementation of the Vision and to determine the extent to which the targets set forth in the Vision have been achieved in various sectors. It is equally important to analyze the reasons that have impeded the implementation of the goals and objectives set in the ECO Vision 2015. Furthermore, there is a need to initiate consultations for setting the strategic direction of the Organization for the coming decade, namely a new "ECO Vision 2016-2025". The current RPC Meeting as the most eligible technical body of the Organization is to be utilized to discuss and reflect on the results of the ECO Vision 2015 and to discuss and finalize the Draft ECO Vision 2025. I wish you all success in your deliberations on this topic.

I'm very pleased that ECO is finalizing a comprehensive ECO vision.

As someone closely associated and involved with development patterns of a variety of countries, I would like to share with you my part of

vision where I think there is a lot of real vision having the capacity of creating a lot of socio-economic opportunities for ECO region. ECO region may hardly be visionary without considering ICT regional potentials of cooperation. Let me elaborate a little on successful regional models of cooperation and try to utilize those experiences for similar gains in ECO Region.....

In this regard, we have a very well deliberated Study on ICT infrastructure needs and status of the ECO region jointly performed by ECO Secretariat and the ITU. I don't think we should stop at this initial stage. Hopefully we will soon have a 2nd ICT Ministerial meeting of ECO in Pakistan. Accordingly, we should do our utmost to build on this rich study and provide the ministers with a workable vision on regional cooperation in the ICT sector based on the above-mentioned successful regional models.

I would like to conclude my statement with wishing this very important gathering, a live and productive discussions and an outcome document which shall be remembered as a right step towards a better and more prosper future of our people and a more meaningful cooperation where vision serves promotion of ECO region in all possible aspects and I think you can make it.

Thank you very much.