

STATEMENT OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

His Excellency Mr. Nasrollah Jahangrad
Honourable ECO Secretary General
Excellencies Head of Delegation and Ambassadors
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

It is indeed a great pleasure for Afghanistan delegation to participate in the 27th Regional Planning Council of the Economic Cooperation Organization. First of all, allow me to express my sincerest thanks and appreciation for all the efforts of ECO Secretary General Mr. Akca and his team for the organization of this meeting and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today we are here to discuss and rationally agree on a new set of goals for our region for the coming decade. The ECO Vision 2025 agenda is our joint policy document which highlights our regional priorities to be addressed in the coming years. Our region has a unique geo-strategic location, linking the east and the west. Our region with its significant economic power, vast natural resources and dynamic workforce, has a huge development potential which we should harness in the interest of all our nations. By regional cooperation, enhancing existing relations and strengthening economic ties among the member countries, we are today much more hopeful that this organization will unlock this potential and achieves its objectives.

Afghanistan as one of the ECO member countries welcome the ECO Vision 2025 agenda and agreed to host the Development Ministerial meeting on ECO Vision 2025 in Kabul in October 2016 in close coordination with the ECO Secretariat and invited ECO Secretary General Mr. Akca to Kabul. Meanwhile, a special conference on Afghanistan reconstructions trust fund was also fully arranged to be hosted. However, no member countries have officially confirmed their participation

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are committed and believe in the potentials of regional economic cooperation. Since mid 2015 significant progress has been made in terms of realization of regional connectivity. In the sector of energy, the TAPI pipeline MoU to commence the start of construction of the 1800 KM to be completed by 2020, further ground breaking ceremony of CASA 1000 to commemorate the construction of a 500 KV transmission line, as well as the trilateral negotiations are soon to take place on the TAP-500.

In terms of transportation, the one belt one road initiative, the first train arrived in Herat in Northern Afghanistan on 7 September from China. In addition, discussion

is ongoing to improve road, rail and sea infrastructure and transit procedure between Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. The Chabahar Agreement was signed and the feasibility study for the rail corridor – connecting China, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran is ongoing. The Afghanistan railway networking is expanding very recently the Aquena-Mazar Sharif rail line has been inaugurated. According to our national plan by 2030 some 5500 KM railway network is expected to be developed.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Afghanistan Regional Economic Cooperation stands as one of the five pillars of our National peace and development framework recently represented and widely welcomed in the Brussels conference by the international community. With observing the changes at the global level, like the adoption of new agenda for sustainable development for the coming 15 years and the new efforts made for climate change in Paris the ECO Vision 2025 need to consider the implementation of SDGs through regional cooperation and support each other through sharing best practices and financing.

Before I conclude I would like to thank once again the ECO Secretariat for organizing the 27th RPC Meeting and thank you all for your kind attention.
