

The 3rd Ministerial Meeting

on Trade and Commerce

Report

(Istanbul, 07 July, 2005)

1. The Third ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade was held on 7 July, 2005 in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey. The Meeting was preceded by the 3rd meeting of High Level Experts Group on Trade, Investment and Other Related Matters in the ECO region and the Senior Officials' Meetings held on 5th and 6th July, 2005 respectively. The Senior Officials Meeting was chaired by Mr. Tevfik Mengü, Director General of Agreements, Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade of the Republic of Turkey.

2. The Ministerial Meeting was attended by the delegations of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Turkey as well as the Secretary General of ECO alongwith other officials of ECO Secretariat. The list of participants is placed at **Annex-I**.

Agenda Item No. 1

Inauguration of the meeting

3. The meeting was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Kürşad Tüzmen, Minister of State for Foreign Trade and Customs of the Republic of Turkey. In his inaugural statement, the Minister expressed his hope that all ten member states could eventually become a Contracting Party to ECOTA. He also stated that one of his country's principle strategies is to increase trade and economic relations with the neighbouring countries.

4. The Secretary General of ECO, H.E. Mr. Askhat Orazbay, in his statement briefed the meeting about the trade related activities of ECO and the developments that have taken place since the Second Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade held in Islamabad in July 2003. Copies of their statements are placed at **Annex-II**.

Agenda Item No. 2

Election of the Chairman

5. In accordance with the ECO rules and procedures, H.E. Mr. Kürşad Tüzmen, Minister of State for Foreign Trade and Customs of the Republic of Turkey was unanimously elected as the Chairman of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No. 3

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The Agenda adopted by the Ministerial Meeting is placed at **Annex-III**.

Agenda Item No. 4

Country Statements by the Ministers /Heads of Delegation on ECO Trade Cooperation

7. The Ministers and the Heads of Delegation delivered their statements, expressing the views of their respective governments on the ongoing and future activities and proposed measures on the promotion of the trade among ECO Member States. Copies of their statements, which were made available to the ECO Secretariat, are placed at **Annex-IV**.

Agenda Item No. 5

Signing of the Optional Protocol for Fast Track Approach to ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA)

8. The Ministers/Heads of Delegation appreciated the work done by HLEG on finalization of draft text of Optional Protocol on Fast Track Approach to ECOTA. The draft text of Optional Protocol for Fast Track Approach to ECOTA is attached at **Annex-V**.

Agenda Item No. 6

Signing of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) Protocol on Rules of Origin and approval of formulation of annexes of ECOTA

9. The Ministers/Heads of Delegation expressed their satisfaction on the finalization of the annexures of

ECOTA on State Aid, Intellectual Property Rights, Anti-Dumping and particularly on ECO Rules of Origin which will now facilitate early operationalization of ECOTA.

10. The Third ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade approved and signed the Protocol for annexes of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) on: (i) ECO Rules of Origin; (ii) Anti-Dumping Measures; (iii) State Aid; and (iv) Intellectual Property Rights. The said Protocol was signed by the member states, namely Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Turkey. The signed Protocol is attached at **Annex-VI**.

11. With regards to annexes on Lists of Sensitive Goods as referred to in para-1, Article-3 of ECOTA and products contained in the national schedule of concessions referred to in para-2 Article-12 of ECOTA, the Ministers/Heads of Delegation noted that these do not require approval /signatures of the Ministers and each Contracting Party may submit the referred annexes as per their domestic legislative requirements.

12. The Ministers/Heads of Delegation appreciated the designation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as coordinating country for early realization/implementation of ECOTA.

Agenda Item No. 7

Signing of Agreement on Promotion & Protection of Investment in the ECO region

13. The Ministers/Heads of delegation noted with appreciation the work of the HLEG for finalization of the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment in the ECO Region (APPI). The Ministerial Meeting approved the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment in the ECO region (APPI). The Agreement was signed by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of Turkey. The Ministerial Meeting urged the other member states of ECO to sign the Agreement for promotion of trade and investment activities in the region. The signed Agreement is attached at **Annex-VII**.

Agenda Item No. 8

Signing of Agreement on Establishment and Operation of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank

14. The Ministers/Heads of Delegation welcomed and appreciated the assignment of the Council of Heads of Customs Administration (CHCA) to finalize the Agreement on establishment and Operation of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank and hoped that the Agreement will increase the trade security in the ECO region.

15. The Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade approved the Agreement on establishment and Operation of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank. The Agreement was signed by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey. The signed Agreement is attached at **Annex-VIII**.

Agenda Item No. 9

Any other Business

16. The meeting did not discuss any other issue under this item.

Agenda Item No. 10

Date and venue for the next meeting

17. The Ministers/Heads of Delegation appreciated and welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to host the Fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade to be held in Kabul in 2006. The exact dates of the meeting will be communicated to ECO Secretariat in due course.

Agenda Item No. 11

Adoption of the Report and the Istanbul Communiqué of the Third ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade

18. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation adopted unanimously the Istanbul Communiqué and the Report of the Third ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade, held on 07 July, 2005. The adopted text of the Communiqué is placed at **Annex-IX**.

Agenda Item No. 12

Vote of Thanks

19. The participants appreciated the excellent arrangements made by the Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry for Foreign Trade of the Republic of Turkey for the successful conduct of the meeting and for excellent arrangements made to hold this important meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to the participants during their stay in the beautiful city of Istanbul.

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