

Inaugural Statement By
H.E. Mr. Mohammad Kabir Farahi,
Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan
(Senior Officials Meeting on 17th October 2007, Preceded the 17th COM Meeting)
(Herat, Afghanistan)

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Unofficial translation

In the Name of God

H.E. Khurshid Anwar, Secretary General,
Distinguished Participants,
Honorable Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you to the beautiful and ancient city of Herat. I hope you would enjoy your stay in our cultural city and take back with you good memories with you from Herat and Afghanistan.

Afghanistan, once the center for interaction between Eastern and Western civilizations which used to play an important role as a gate of trade relations between Asia and Europe, has lost ample of opportunities due to a long lasting war.

Six years ago, due to the ruling Taleban and the home of terrorist groups such as Alqaida, Afghanistan was a serious threat to regional stability and security. Fortunately, during the last 7 years regardless of major challenges by the terrorism and its supportive factors, Afghanistan has gained great achievements in establishing government institutions, continuous construction, revival of law and orders, economic growth, expansion of trade and promotion of trade relation within and outside the region.

Today, Afghan people have chosen the pace of peace and cooperation and we are confident that the globalization situation we should solve the present challenges only through common efforts and regional cooperation such as ECO. Thus, holding the 17th COM Meeting in Herat is a turning point for Afghanistan which its geographic location as a bridge between central and southern Asia has its own importance.

Distinguished Audience,

Last year in the beautiful city of Baku, we organized the 16th Meeting of Council of Ministers and the 6th ECO Summit and today we gather to hold the 17th COM Meeting.

I am confident that during the last year ECO, holding different meetings in ministerial or senior officials levels, has achieved notable results. I take the opportunity to extend my thanks and gratitude to the delegation of Azerbaijan for their leadership and capable efforts and continuous and active role of the ECO Secretariat under able guidance of its Secretary General.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

ECO region encompasses efficient capacities in terms of human resources, scientific, natural, geographic and industrial fields. Regarding the process of globalization and profound interdependence of our world today we all believe that solving the present regional and global challenges necessitate the enhancement and further strengthening of the regional cooperation. Therefore, we must try harder to transform ECO into a more effective organization which would play a more constructive role to strengthen regional economic institutions and bring more achievements for economic welfare of the people and promotion of the relations among the brotherly countries of our region.

ECO region with its vast capacities in terms of human resources, scientific, natural, industrial and especially its geo-strategic location is capable enough to meet and solve all existing challenges.

I hope that the Herat Meeting would provide more grounds for ECO to achieve its objectives and establish the practical ways for more cooperation towards economic wellbeing of our region.

Thank you and I wish you to have a successful meeting.