

**Statements By**  
**The Foreign Ministers/Heads of Delegations**  
(Herat, Afghanistan – 20 October 2007)

No. 17<sup>th</sup> COM/2007

Statement by H.E. Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta, Foreign Minister of Afghanistan  
Your Excellencies, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentleman,  
Once more, I would like to welcome you to Afghanistan and to the city of Herat.  
First, I would like to thank H.E. Elmar Mohammad Yarvo, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan who has also been presiding as the President of the Council of Ministers of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) for his diligence and foresight in managing accordingly the related matters of the Ministers Council. Their country's hospitality at the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Ministers, Heads of Member States of ECO, and the Afghan Delegation are going to be part of our lasting memory.

Also, I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretariat and Secretary General, H.E. Khurshid Anwar for their continuous efforts in bringing closer ECO Member States and exceptionally organizing all ECO related matters.

I would also like to extend my appreciation for accepting me as the Chairman of this council. I hope that the time you will stay amongst your brothers and sisters in Herat will be joyful and provide an opportunity for bringing our people and nations closer together.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

This morning, as it was mentioned by the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: "The name of Herat, Balkh, Touse, Samarkand, Bokhara, Marve, Konia, and many more cities of our nation, symbolizes our common identity." Great scholars from the Islamic countries used to come to Herat to acquire the then contemporary knowledge; and eminent intellectuals such as Bayzaad, Mir Ali, Jami, Amir Ali Sheer Nawahe, Taftazanie, and countless others from here, emerging from this region, introduced the knowledge of Islamic orient to the world. We are the inheritors of a great civilization and we ought to build up jointly our present and future on the basis of such civilizations."

All of us, we are faced with challenges that we can say are the products of the current unjust international relation. In our world, the gap between wealthy and poor nations is widening. Poverty and underdevelopment is a reality that can not be separated from our current global relations, which has threatened the security and coexistence amongst nations. The insolent use of scarce raw materials in the world has narrowed the opportunities for developing countries. Great parts of the world have been neglected from the accomplishments of Globalization. While, the fruits of these attainments are being collected by the elites, the environmental and social burdens and costs are being paid by the majority of the people in the world that are not responsible for the destruction of the environment.

Our current challenges in the world, at the same time, comprise our regional and national challenges. Solution to these global challenges such as terrorism, destruction of the environment, poverty, unemployment, spread of organized crime, overpopulation, and underdevelopment, expect that we must have a broad strategy: a strategy that from a global perspective, can distinguish different aspects of our challenges and provide regional and national solutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is committed to the goals and values contained in Regional Economic Cooperation (ECO). For us, ECO is a mechanism for integrating our nation and the region to the rest of the world. In order for us to join the world order, we must support the Regional Economic Cooperation. I believe that the globalize world is a world of regional cooperation and integration. Our future world is going to be a world of unified regions that will have economic, geographical and cultural commonalities. Luckily, our countries in the region also share geographical and cultural commonalities as well.

Dear Guests,

All of us, we are faced with the serious threat of terrorism. Afghanistan in its counter global terrorism efforts has suffered the most with enormous loss of lives and resources. We will not be able to destroy this serious menace unless we join our efforts to fight it! We are grateful for the cooperation of ECO Member States to Afghanistan in area of Counter Terrorism. We believe regional commitment that is part of the international community's commitment toward counter terrorism, reconstruction and the establishment of state institutions shall continue in Afghanistan.

Throughout its long history, the people of Afghanistan always have lived with enormous pride and dignity. Our endless love for independence and freedom of our nation has been the most important reason for our valor by which we will annihilate terrorism as well.

From our perspective, the presence of the international community in Afghanistan is in accordance to the well of our people and it fully complies with the norms of international law. The presence of the international community is beneficial for the establishment of security and prosperity of the region. Hence, I would like to reaffirm again that the presence of international community by no means shall be a threat from the people and government of Afghanistan to our neighbors and the region. We would also like to stay away from international and regional tensions; our hope is to strengthen regional and international cooperation based on the tenets of national sovereignty, territorial integrity and mutual respect.

Afghanistan is committing itself not to ever use terrorism and intervention as form of its foreign policy. We need peace. To encourage the culture of peace and

acceptance of others rights to choose their regime and their way of social and political life, comprises the pillars of our foreign policy.

Our neighboring and regional countries have benefited from the stability of our democratic regime which has originated by the unanimous will and vote of our citizens.

As President Karzai pointed out today, our export, capital investment and economic activities of ECO Member States in Afghanistan surpasses 4 billion dollars. However, we want this investment and economic activities amongst our nations to increase further. We would like to expand all the transit facilities for ECO Member States. To connect Central Asia via Afghanistan to Southeast and East Asia is one of the political priorities of our regional cooperation policy. Afghanistan has also speeded up the construction of energy transfer facilities. Soon, countries in Central Asia via Afghanistan will be connected to Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan. We hope that soon Central Asia via electricity facilities will transfer electricity from Afghanistan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as well.

In addition, I anticipate that ECO Secretariat in advice with Member States will take constructive steps toward the establishment of ECO College as an academic and cultural center amongst ECO Member States.

In order for us to be able to ensure closer relations amongst our youth, I propose that an exchange youth programs from the ECO Member States should be organized in an orderly and applied manner. In lieu of the enormous historical and cultural commonalities, announcement of various cities in our countries as examples of sister cities, just as the westerner refer to it as CITY PARTNERSHIPS, undoubtedly will be essential in bringing our people closer. In lieu of the serious threat of narcotics which our nations face, I would propose that within the framework of ECO, we should put emphasis on establishing a specific mechanism in order to fight this great menace.

At this juncture, I would like to thank the Member States of ECO that beyond their direct cooperation, they have assisted us by ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan.

It is my wish that our future generation will be able to use and experience our present frontiers of peace and friendship as free frontiers of our united region for tomorrow.

Once again, I would like to welcome you to my country and express my gratitude for each and every one of you for your active participation at this conference.

Thank you



*In the Name of Allah*

Statement by H.E. Mr. Mottaki, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic  
of Iran  
at ECO Council of Ministers (COM)  
Herat /Afghanistan- Oct. 20, 2007

Excellency,  
Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentleman,

At the outset, I would like to express my pleasure in participating in the 17th Council of Ministers in the beautiful and historical city of Herat. I would also like to appreciate the endeavors of the friendly and brotherly government and nation of Afghanistan in holding this significant meeting and their warm hospitality. Also, I would like to congratulate the commendable election of Dr Rangindadfar Spenta, the Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan as Chairman of the present meeting, as well as the forthcoming rotating Chairman of ECO Council of Ministers.

Since Afghanistan is hosting the ECO Council of Ministers for the first time, I wish that this promising event will be the vanguard for the establishment of absolute peace and stability in this neighboring country and through a further participation in the plans and programs of ECO, to bring about economic prosperity and exceeding elevation.

Excellencies,

The process of our collaborations within the framework of regional arrangements such as the ECO has been founded on the political will of member countries and has always experienced an evolving trend. Preparing and approving necessary documents and agreements in the past decade has led to a more suitable infrastructure for the execution of fundamental plans and schemes to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization. No doubt, we all believe that the path selected for further cooperation and integration within the ECO framework IS an appropriate and experienced option for economic prosperity and development of our countries and with the devices of regional organizations such as ECO, through trade liberalization, facilitation of the movement of goods investment and labor, and conducting, joint industrial and research projects in various fields, we can increase the potency of member countries in playing a more pivotal role in world trade and economy. It is obvious that fortifying and expanding intra-regional collaborations and establishing a well-structured economic group will surely be

accompanied by positive results and effects in the arena of political relations. In itself this will prepare the grounds for constructive collaborations with major economical poles through establishing desirable arrangements for economic mobility, which "will result in prolific interests and further developments and welfare for the Member States.

Economic cooperation Organization (ECO) has a unique geo-strategic location and is the linking point of the East and the West. Our region, with God ~ s bountifulness and natural resources, as well as the glorious human and cultural capacity, has a particular reputation among world nations: Accordingly, it deserves to attain a unique status in world economy.

Through pursuing the regional integration and enhancing existing relations, we can be hopeful that this organization in the near future will achieve at its fundamental objectives.

From the cultural aspect, common spheres and beliefs lead us to this truth that to attain regional objectives, we must refrain from engaging in difference and resort to the principle of brotherhood and understanding. In this case, any kind of problem and incident will be resolved through institutional understanding and voracious foreigners will not seize the opportunity for interference or possible dominance. Rather, any kind of interaction and collaboration with political and economical powers and poles will be based on mutual respect and with regard for the interest of all the interested states.

Dear Delegates

During the past few years, officials, experts and specialists of member states made vast efforts to advance the ECO activities. Through consultation and exchanging views and opinions, an important collection of collaboration documents including agreements and action plans in diverse fields have been prepared. Under the ray of the above collective actions, the prospect for regional collaborations in various fields has been drawn. Specifically with the completion of the ECO vision 2015 document, essential circumstances for executing joint projects have been prepared. Hopefully in two of the areas for ECO priority co-operations, that is, trade and transportation, significant steps have been taken. The enforcement of software instruments such as ECO trade agreement (ECOTA) and ECO Transit Transportation Framework Agreement (TTFA) has prepared the grounds for a significant leap in multi-lateral collaborations among member states. Long-term ECO cooperation plans and strategies in the terrain of communications, environment, industry and agriculture also encourage us to observe the enhancement of relations among member states.

Fortunately, with the adoption of ECOT A in the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Majlis Shoraye Islami), the remaining procedure for ratification of the aforesaid

agreement is in process. By completing the mentioned procedure, and official accretion of the Islamic Republic of Iran to ECOTA, a further fundamental step towards the realization of the exalted objectives of the organization will be taken. With the execution of this agreement, and also the completion of the procedures for the commission of ECO Trade and Developmental Bank, a bright future will be envisioned for intra-regional trade. I hope that with the efforts of member states, particularly the coordinating countries, regional priority plans including Trans-Asian Railway Projects, Inter-Connection of the Power Systems of Member States, Reinsurance Company and other ongoing plans, promising results will be observed. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as the coordinating country, in completing the aforesaid actions has undertaken strenuous efforts on the simplification of the Visa procedures for ECO businessmen and also ECO freight and passenger train project. Through revision of the aforementioned documents and preparation of additional protocol to visa agreement during Expert Group Meeting, Iran has undertaken to eradicate any shortcomings and limitations. This protocol is ready for adoption and endorsement in the present council. In line with the above actions, a technical Railway Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in a joint mission with ECO Secretariat visited in 2007 Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan and had constituent negotiations with the relevant authorities of these countries.

With the positive outcomes of the above mission and active participation of these two countries in the meeting of Railway Authorities in Astana ( Kazakhstan) in June 2007, significant progress concerning finalization of tariff issues and timetable of container train were achieved. I expect that with the prudence of my dear colleagues and endeavors of associated national authorities of member states, we will be able to employ the abilities and present facilities in order to simplify the course of goods transit in the region. Obviously increasing the presence and partnership of the private sector create golden opportunities for the activity and dynamism of the region's economy.

A point which requires serious attention in the field of energy, as one of the three priorities of ECO co operations, is the abundant capacities of this sector and the potential abilities of the countries of the region for creating a large energy market within the ECO region. One of these potential is using new and renewable sources of including nuclear energy. Due to the worldwide importance of this kind of energy on one hand and the climatic position of ECO member states on the other, it is suggested .that ECO members include the consideration and execution of plans of this sector, particularly the employment of wind and solar and nuclear energy in their agenda. Iran would be ready to share its experiences with other countries in the region in this regard. Regarding the topic 'bf oil and gas, despite primary expectations, ECO has not had enough speed and has sufficed solely on preliminary and superficial considerations. In this respect, perceiving the

significance of the matter of transit of energy containing materials as an intermediater loop between production and consumption markets, can lead to more active cooperation on behalf of the ECO member states. The Islamic Republic of Iran, due to its main road location of ECO region energy exchange, seriously welcomes plans on energy through employing its territorial advantages and expects member states to pursue co ordinations and co operations which are economical and safe, rather than pursuing parallel plans which are mostly costly and uneconomical. Also we hope that through the successful implementation of the Feasibility Study on Interconnection of Power System Project, grounds for implementation of the project will be provided.

During the past year, the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted the 3rd meeting of Agricultural Ministers. Since an important part of the ECO member states economical activities are centered on agriculture, establishment and operation of biotechnological network and inauguration of Natural Disaster Risk Management Center in Mashhad can be mentions as the valuable outcomes of this meeting.

One other meeting which was held in Tehran in the previous year was the Interior Ministerial Meeting. In its own part, the meeting was able to draw the opinions of members regarding strategies for further co operations in creating a safe environment for economical activity, particularly in the area of combating transnational crimes, Anti-Corruption Campaign and money- laundering in the ECO region. These broad and extensive subjects which require more cooperation on behalf of the members, contain humanitarian aspects and are related to the security and peace of our citizens. Hence, strengthening co operations of members in opposing sources of insecurity and crimes related to drugs and terrorism, through appropriate arrangements for execution of decision of Interior Ministers is strongly emphasized.

Another point which I would like to draw the attention of my dear colleges to, is utilizing ECO's appropriate capacity considering its international relations and obtaining the cooperation and partnership of important regional and international organizations, in order to refer plans and schemes of ECO at the level of regional countries. Fortunately, the decision of the previous Council of Ministers in Baku, provided a suitable device in the shape of a plan for reinforcing ECO external relations. It is expected that *by* the prompt implementation of the aforesaid scheme, particularly activating ECO Ambassador C?ntact Group in international centers, this opportunity will be valued.

Dear Participants Ladies and Gentlemen



Affirming the positive developments resulting from the expanding grounds of regional co-operations across ECO, it is essential that additional endeavors related to removing obstacles and problems delaying the organization's activities be taken into consideration. We have repeatedly observed and recounted these problems in the annual meeting of ministers, but overcoming these obstacles is dependant upon decisive decisions of all the members of the organization. Problems such as deferring a number of the organization's important plans and schemes due to the weak participation of some members, unfamiliarity of some internal member institutions regarding ECO regulations and decisions, complexity and disturbance of internal regulations with the commitments of the countries in the framework of intra-organizational co-operations and non-execution of a number of ECO approvals and basic agreements, are among the problems and damages on the course of the convergence of ECO members. Our major responsibility as fundamental decision-making pillars of the organization is subtle acknowledgment of the aforesaid obstacles and timely and concordant actions for their removal. Simultaneous strengthening of the internal structure of the organization and ECO Secretariat sketching essential strategies and plans to increase the organization activities in various fields, will prevent the outbreak of a number of inadequacies in the course of the co-operations of member countries. Obviously, the realization of the aforesaid objectives is dependant upon active and serious participation and timely execution of commitments and organizational responsibilities of all the members of the organization.

Excellency,

Availing the opportunity of holding this historical meeting in your country, I recognize it essential to emphasize the importance of the establishment of peace and stability in the neighboring country of Afghanistan. It is not concealed to anyone that the nation and government of Iran, during long terms of years, has sympathized with the Muslim nation of Afghanistan and by offering diverse means of living for the immigrants, has tried to reduce their pains and grieves. During the recent years in which the matter of rebuilding Afghanistan obtained prominence, different Iranian public and private facilities were employed 'in implementing the schemes considered by the government of Afghanistan and fortunately, the course of co-operations is rapidly increasing. Our collective belief has constantly been that the troubles of Afghanistan distress other neighboring countries and natiqns of the region. Any form of agitation in the living course of your people has a negative effect for other nations. On the other hand, Afghanistan's peace and stability contains decisive effects in the peace and stability of the region while the welfare and happiness of the Afghani nation will result in the happiness of the

neighboring countries. In line with this, the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in continuing the previous vital activities and in order to remove the problems and fears of the government and nation of Afghanistan will remain by your side and will not withhold its help from you. The wish of the government and nation of Iran is that the problems of our dear neighbor be solved and the government and nation of Afghanistan will soon achieve the eminence and development it deserves. Islamic Republic of Iran will continue its decisive pursuit of the process of reconstructing and completing the approved schemes with enthusiasm and will carry out its utmost efforts in this regard. Therefore to express my good intentions regarding these plans and schemes, in addition to the mutual unrequited aids and in continuation with the previous aid to the ECO trust- fund for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, my Government will donate the sum of 600 thousand dollars to this fund which I hope after undergoing the administrative procedures, will be settled to the above fund.

Finally, with the hope of acquiring fruitful and encouraging results from the present meeting, I wish you all success.

STATEMENT  
by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan  
His Excellency Mr. N.Yermekbaev  
at the 17th Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs  
of the ECO Member States  
(Herat, October 2007)

Mr. Chairman,  
Mr. Secretary-General, Distinguished Participants,

First of all, I would like to thank the organizers of the Seventeenth ECO Ministerial Meeting for the invitation to take part in this event and also the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for the warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for our meeting.

We appreciate the detailed Report of His Excellency Khurshid Anwar on the latest development of cooperation in the ECO framework. Nowadays, the tendency for regional integration is evident in every part of the world, since it becomes an effective tool for achieving sustainable growth and development.

In this regard the ECO has huge untapped potential. We believe that a number of events at the Ministerial and experts levels as well as other activities in the framework of the ECO will bring to practical output for the Member- countries.

In order to intensify involvement of the Central Asian Member-countries in the ECO processes, Kazakhstan proposes to establish a Representative Office of the ECO in Almaty or in Astana. This would facilitate active implementation of the ECO projects in Central Asia, fulfillment of tasks and achievement of set of objectives in the ECO Vision 2015, adopted by the 15th Session of the Council of ECO Foreign Ministers.

*Excellencies,*

We believe that cooperation development in trade, transport and energy issues are at the main focus of the Organization as His Excellency Mr. Khurshid Anwar noted during his meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of

Kazakhstan in Almaty on May 2007 held on the sidelines of the 63rd Session of the UN ESGAP.

In this regard I would like to express our full support of activities of the ECO Secretariat towards achievement of these goals. Moreover, Kazakhstan is considering the possibility of joining the ECO Trade and Development Bank. Tangible economic benefits brought in by the activity of the Bank would inspire the ECO members for further cooperation and joint implementation of various ambitious projects.

It is well-known that effective trade is impossible without effective transport infrastructure and development of transit routes. Therefore, Kazakhstan considers the implementation of Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) and Trans-Asian container train Almaty-Istanbul route project which are vital for further development of the Organization and its members. Removing the obstacles on the way of its implementation would not only facilitate intraregional trade, but also strengthen people-to-people contacts, which is important for further integration of our countries' economies into the global system. We pay great importance to the ECO transport official and experts meeting (one of them was hosted by Kazakhstan in June 2007) for coordination of our common efforts.

There are number of important regional projects meant to expand intra and interregional trade, such as the restoration of the Great Silk Road through the Transport Corridor Europe -Caucasus -Asia (TRACECA), the UN Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), Asian Highway Network and etc. Successful implementation of these activities diversifies transport and transit opportunities and assists the ECO member states in development of trade and economic integration.

*Excellencies,*

Kazakhstan fully supports the position of H.E. Mr. Khurshid Anwar on the significance of energy sector, which is a driving force of economies. In recent years we witnessed the major role that energy resources play in the world economy. In this respect there are strategically important projects in the ECO. Therefore we need to demonstrate the same level of activity and interest in implementing them as we have in transport sector.

*Honorable Ministers,*

Today, the whole world monitors the process of Afghanistan reconstruction. There is no doubt that one of the key issues of the Asian continent is the situation in this historical country. Considerable progress has been achieved in this direction so far. As for Kazakhstan, our country gives the priority to the programs of economic restoration of Afghanistan. Kazakhstan supports activities of the international community towards construction of stable and prosperous Afghan nation. We have elaborated the Plan of Assistance to Afghanistan 2007-2008.

In this regard, we welcome initiatives on establishment of the ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the Feasibility Study Fund and closely study the possibility to join it.

*Distinguished Colleagues,*

We attach greater importance to the development of our relationship with the Economic Cooperation Organization under whose auspices we are all gathered here today. The ECO is currently at the onset of pursuing its longer path of internal structural modernization in search of an adequate feedback to modern challenges faced by our countries. It is our view that flexibility of the ECO structure may solely enable a more effective coordination and channeling the efforts of member states.

At present the CPR is studying the principles of contributions to the budget of the Organization, and we hope that this work will result in logical and fair system of contributions in to the budget, which will be in compliance with the interests of all Member-states.

In conclusion I would like to wish success in reaching high goals of ECO for all of us and once again thank the representatives of the Government of Afghanistan and the Secretariat for the organization of today's meeting.

I do hope that this 17'h Session of the Council of ECO Foreign Ministers will play an important role in implementation of major ECO agreements.

Thank for your kind attention.

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## Kyrgyzstan's statement

Honourable Chairman,  
Your Excellency ECO Secretary General,  
Distinguished colleagues,

It's a great honour for me to represent the Kyrgyz Republic on the 17<sup>th</sup> COM meeting in a wonderful city of Herat. On behalf of Kyrgyz delegation let me congratulate all the participants with this significant event and also to congratulate H.E. Mr. Rangin Dadfar Spanty for his election as a Chairman, express my sincere gratitude to the government of Afghanistan for the warm hospitality and excellent conditions provided to the participants of this meeting.

I'd like to thank ECO Secretariat and H.E. Secretary General Mr. Hurshid Anwar for all the preparatory work.

Honourable Chairman,  
Distinguished colleagues,

Today this forum gives us an opportunity to make some conclusions of cooperation and discuss the further perspectives.

In this regard I'd like to assure you that Kyrgyzstan will continue doing its best for the further reaching the goals and objectives of our Organization.

Distinguished colleagues,

Evaluating the activities of ECO we can see that member states have reached the new height and level of development for the last 5 years.

We can trace this from the annual economic report prepared by the ECO Secretariat. We are the witnesses of the fact that our Organization is developing and the number of meetings is increasing. The important task for the stable economic cooperation development belongs to the activation of the relations of ECO with other regional economic and financial institutions, such as UN, IDB, ADB and others.

All the member states should contribute for the further strengthen of mutual trust climate and establishment of stability in the region.

Today we may say that the main activities included to the ECO Plan of action for reconstruction of Afghanistan have been implemented. The ECO Special Fund for reconstruction of Afghanistan is an important instrument for attracting finance and technical assistance of member states. Kyrgyzstan supports the further expanding of measures directed to assistance for Afghanistan and in this regard actively participates in preparation of the new Plan of action.

The upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> ECO Business forum and the 8<sup>th</sup> ECO-CCI General Assembly will be a stimulus for more effective involving of private sector into the ECO trade programmes and projects and activation of work of ECO-CCI.

In the sphere of transport it's necessary to mention coming into force ECO TTFA. Together with ECO member states we actively participate in developing of "East-West" and "North-South" transport corridors which gives the Central Asian states the opportunity to receive the access to the Persian Gulf through the territories of Turkmenistan and Iran. We also pay great attention to the project of construction of Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China railway, included into the ECO Programme of action.

In our opinion, the establishment of transport, communications, pipeline regional infrastructure is the necessary condition for the intra and inter regional cooperation.

We also support the measures taken for the extension of Istanbul-Almaty container train further to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Distinguished colleagues,

Our republic is continuing the energy capacity building. We have already finished the construction of Tash-Kymyr and Shamaldy-Sai hydropower stations at our own expenses, initiated the feasibility study of the construction of Kambaratin - 1 and Kambaratin -2 hydropower stations. Kyrgyzstan is one of the initiator of interconnection of power systems of ECO member states. We think it's necessary to activate the preparation of feasibility study of this project granted by IDB.

Distinguished colleagues,

In conclusion let me express the assurance that Herat Communiqué is equitable to the interest of all member states and I hope that today's meeting will demonstrate our mutual desire for implementing the concrete steps towards mutually beneficial cooperation.

Thank you!

Seventeenth ECO Council of Ministers Meeting  
Herat, Afghanistan  
(20 October 2007)

**Statement by the Foreign Minister of Pakistan**

Your Excellency,  
Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanta,  
Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Chairman of the  
Seventeenth Council of Ministers

Mr. Khurshid Anwar, Secretary General ECO

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is a matter of profound privilege to represent Pakistan at the Seventeenth Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers. On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, let me express our sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Afghanistan for their traditional warmth and hospitality.

Situated at the crossroads of the west, central and south Asia, the historic city of Herat invokes memories of an old and rich past, common heritage and shared history, that can form the basis for a new vision for the future of the entire region. I commend Government of Afghanistan for its choice to hold the Seventeenth ECO COM at this historic venue.

I also take this opportunity to felicitate you, Mr. Foreign Minister, on assumption of the Chairmanship of this Council. I am confident that your stewardship of the Council would be a great success and I assure you of our full cooperation.

I would also like to express our appreciation to Foreign Minister Elmar Mamadyarov of Azerbaijan, the outgoing Chairman of the Council, for having ably led this body for the past year and a half.

It is gratifying to note that this period has been among the most productive for ECO. From finance and economy to trade and transport, from cultural cooperation



to science and technology, and from agriculture to environment, ECO has made impressive strides. It has expanded the scope of its activities and broken fresh ground. Key agreements have begun taking shape. Projects conceived over a decade ago have entered implementation stage.

Central to this more active phase of ECO's development has been the role of the ECO Secretariat. Expansion of ECO's mandate and entry into force of many of its key projects has undoubtedly placed added responsibilities on the shoulders of the Secretariat. I commend them for their professionalism and their dedication and commitment to the objectives of the ECO.

With timely contributions to the Secretariat budget, ECO Member States can ensure that the Secretariat continues to play a pivotal role in promoting our collective interest. I urge Member States to accord the issue the priority it deserves.

Pakistan on its part remains committed to ECO's objectives and to sustain its current momentum. Since the last Council of Ministers Meeting in Baku, Pakistan had the privilege to host two ECO Ministerial Meetings, and no less than eleven additional events related to ECO's priority areas. I take this opportunity to thank fellow Member States for their active participation and cooperation and for the success of these events.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The ECO Trade Agreement remains at the heart of ECO's ambition to establish within the region, a free trade area by 2015. With regional economies registering unprecedented growth, ECO trade agreement has the potential to open up vast opportunities for the economic uplift of our peoples. It is heartening to note that with the necessary number of ratifications near completion, the entry into force of the Agreement is now imminent.

As ECO's coordinating country for this key initiative, Pakistan strongly urges non-Signatories to join the Agreement. We also believe that the fast track approach to ECOT A, which was launched at Pakistan's behest, remains a valid and viable option. Temporary setbacks should not discourage us from pursuing it. I would urge interested Member States to join hands with Pakistan for working towards a more ambitious tariff liberalization agenda.

To ensure seamless implementation of ECOTA, Pakistan would seriously consider hosting the inaugural meeting of the Cooperation Council. I would also like to reiterate Pakistan's offer made at the last COM to assist interested Member States in compilation of annexures to the Agreement.

The establishment of the ECO Trade and Development Bank is another milestone and it is indeed a matter of great satisfaction that the Bank will commence operations shortly. With this important regional institution in place, we shall have at our disposal, a powerful tool for regional integration.

Additionally, fruitful negotiations have been held to finalize the Articles of the Agreement for establishment of the ECD Reinsurance Company. We look forward to both these institutions working in tandem, in their respective spheres of competence to promote cooperation in the financial sector.

To encourage free flow of private capital, we have circulated, for consideration of the Member States, a draft treaty on avoidance of double taxation. This treaty would complement our efforts to make our region a viable free trade area, and I hope Member States would respond positively to the initiative.

Pakistan is also ready to join the agreement on promotion and protection of investments in the ECO region with the amendment agreed to at the Second Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy held in Antalya early this year.

Mr. Chairman!

With all these instruments in place in the near future, the missing link for free movement of goods, capital and investments within the region is an efficient transport and communications system.

The Transit Transport Framework Agreement, by laying down a comprehensive roadmap for establishing functional region-wide transit corridors, is meant to fulfill this important component. Its seamless implementation will require reforms both at the national and regional levels. I am happy to note that the Transit Transport Coordination Council established last year pursuant to the Agreement, has done some useful work in translating TTF A's promise into reality.

Pakistan at its end has been engaged in a massive effort to upgrade the national transport infrastructure, and link it to the regional arteries. In line with the time frame specified in the ECO programme of action for transport and communications, it is my proud privilege to inform that our deep-sea port of Gwadar has been completed. I am confident that in due course, it will serve as a gateway to the entire region.

Mr. Chairman!

The ECO Region is endowed with rich human potential. Its expertise in the field of science and technology is also significant. By pooling their intellect, Member States could help each other bridge the technology gap between the developed world and our region. Through the ECO Science Foundation, we hope to establish a credible network of science and technology institutions geared towards addressing the needs of the Member States in the area of applied technologies.

The ECO Science Foundation is an investment well worth making. Pakistan -it may be recalled has announced a contribution of up to one million dollars for establishing the Foundation at the Regional Planning Council meeting held in February this year. We also welcome the recent announcement by the Islamic Republic of Iran to make an initial contribution of one hundred thousand dollars to the Foundation and its programmes. In line with the decision of the recently held inaugural meeting of experts Pakistan will shortly be proposing a formula for mandatory contributions. We should make every effort to establish a Foundation that caters to the needs of the region.

Mr. Chairman!

Trade in electricity is an area where meaningful cooperation can yield quick and rich dividends. The feasibility study on interconnection of ECO power systems currently being conducted by NESP AK, lays the groundwork for a region-wide electricity grid. Its significance for States that are energy producers, as indeed for those that face deficits in electricity generation, is self-evident. I am thankful to those Members that have extended whole-hearted support to the Consultants in providing the necessary data. The completion of the study is being hampered by insufficient response from some Member States and I would once again request for their cooperation for this vital project.

The inception report based on the available data has already been released. As the coordinating country on this project, Pakistan is willing to host an Experts Group Meeting to discuss the report and recommend ways of overcoming difficulties in this area.

Mr. Chairman!

Pakistan is also at the forefront of ECO's efforts for the reconstruction of Afghanistan with a pledge five million dollars. One million dollars have already been remitted. As Afghanistan's close neighbour and friend, we feel duty bound to do so. I am happy to note that work on rehabilitation of recreational facilities in Kabul has begun and would be completed within a year's time. Successful fruition of this project will encourage ECO to undertake more ambitious tasks in the future.

Mr. Chairman!

Pakistan is encouraged to note ECO' s efforts towards institutionalizing linkages with international organizations. Its relationship with the UN in particular, can be very productive. We feel it is time to consolidate ECO's presence in the international arena and expand external linkages.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Few regions of the world are as richly endowed. Fewer still are heir to as great a cultural and historical legacy. With commitment and ownership of Member States, ECO is an ideal platform to realize our shared destiny.

Pakistan, for one, has full faith in the goals and objectives that ECO stands for, and will spare no efforts to realize them. As a token of our commitment Islamabad will soon be the venue of three key ECO events, including the next meeting of the Regional Planning Council, the Council of Ministers and the Tenth ECO Summit. Pakistan looks forward to Member States' active participation in these events at the highest level. It will be our honour and privilege to welcome you all in Islamabad in 2008.

Thank You.



## **Tajikistan's statement**

Your Excellency Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me heartily welcome the participants of the 17<sup>th</sup> COM meeting, excellent hospitality, provided by Afghani authorities and express my gratitude to the government of Afghanistan for organizing perfect conditions for our work.

I'd like to congratulate Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanty for his election as the Chairman of our meeting and wish him success for the upcoming working activity.

I would also like to thank the ECO Secretariat, headed by H.E. Mr. Hurshid Anwar, for the preparatory work, done to organize the today's forum.

The Republic of Tajikistan, in its international policy, pays great attention to strengthen the cooperation with ECO member states and considers this organization to be an important mechanism for the future progress, social-economic development, increase of population prosperity and integration of the member states' economies into the system of global relations.

I'd like to note with satisfaction that the activities, planned by ECO, will help to improve the effectiveness of economic cooperation between the countries that will lead our relations to more flexibility and adaptation to the modern reality.

The questions of reliable transport transit system, simplification of visa procedures, promotion of border trade, effective utilization of water resources, establishment of the integrated power system, free goods and labour force movement and the creation of common economic area determines the priority issues of today's ECO agenda.

Distinguished colleagues,

Let me note some priority aspects of cooperation in the framework of ECO. We are deeply sure that one of such regional cooperational aspects is the settlement of the problems of complex and effective utilization of water and energy resources. Therefore, the ECO/IDB project on interconnection of power systems of ECO member states is of high priority and Tajikistan supports the initiation of its feasibility study.

As you know, Tajikistan has huge energy resources. Due to this energy potential our country is one of the leading countries in the world. We are able to produce electricity up to 525 billion of kilowatt-hour per year. To our great sorrow, today, due to the lack of capacity, we produce only 5-6% out of this potential.

According to our strategic programme, the volume of energy production will be 80 billion of kilowatt-hour per year in 2025 and it will fully satisfy not only the necessities of our economy, but also the increasing needs of Afghanistan, Pakistan and other neighboring countries. Today we build the cascade of hydropower stations on Vaksh river. However we are considering the issue of construction another cascade of hydropower stations.

It's necessary to mention that our energetic programmes will bring to multiple benefit. We expect the defrayal of expenses and stable profit earning at the earliest. In addition, with the construction of dams and water storage reservoirs these programmes will give the real opportunity to irrigate about 2 million of land hectares in Central Asia and Afghanistan

It necessary to underline that the government of Tajikistan considers the development of hydro power together with reasonable utilization of water resources as one of our important strategic tasks.

The development of transport and communication infrastructure undoubtedly will turn into the important sphere of cooperation between the ECO member states. The further perfection of this sector is the key factor of trade growth in the region.

Transportation by existing transport corridors, avoidance of non-tariff barriers and their step-by-step decrease will allow us to develop the effective transit trade in the whole ECO region, promote the trade on the frontier points and minimize the financial costs for cargo transportation.

This aspect is very important in the contemporary world. In the conditions of absence the direct routes to sea ports, the establishment of common transport corridor will give an impulse to the further growth of geopolitical and trade economic importance of the region. The government of Tajikistan is doing its best to implement the project of transport corridor establishment. First of all it is the start of operation of Kulyab-Kalaihumb-Murgab highway, construction of bridge on Pyandge river and interconnection of transport routes of our country with Afghanistan and Iran.

Tajikistan takes necessary steps for finalization the construction of Anzob and Shakhristan tunnels.

Honorable colleagues,

ECO member states play the leading role in international trade of Tajikistan. In 2006 the share of ECO member states in Tajikistan's foreign trade turnover was 42.1% or 1313.3 billion of US dollars. This index has increased on 1.4 % in comparison with the past year.

But at the same time it's necessary to mention with sorrow, that the economic relations inside the region confine themselves only to export-import operations, implementation of some ECO projects which are far from positive results.

Therefore the priority should be given to the implementation of ECOTA in order to expand the cooperation between member states in the sphere of trade, to activate the liberalization of trade policy, harmonize and simplify customs procedures including harmonization of tariffs, standardization and simplification of customs documentation.



Excellencies,

ECO member states have great potential for cooperation development in food industry, agriculture and agriculture processing industry. For the full and reasonable utilization of this potential it is necessary for the ECO Secretariat to strengthen the cooperation with businessmen and private sector.

Distinguished participants,

The further stabilization of social and political situation in Afghanistan gives the opportunity for its integration into the contemporary process of economic development in the region. In this regard, Tajikistan welcomes the signing of the contract with Afghan company on the construction of Deh Mazan park and technical maintenance of Kabul Zoo. Moreover, we state of the view that more social projects should be initiated and financed from ECO Special Fund for reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Tajikistan is ready to develop further cooperation with Afghanistan, supplying energy, construction materials, consumer goods, providing training courses and facilitating in construction of highways and communications.

Excellencies,

I'd like to inform you that we consider the issue of opening the representative office of ECO Cultural Institute in Tajikistan, construction of the ECO park in Dushanbe, broadcasting the TV channel and some other projects for strengthening cultural relations.

In conclusion let me express the hope that today's discussions of the issues of regional cooperation will promote the mobilization of our potential in the name of economic progress and prosperity of the whole ECO region.

Thank you

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Ali Babacan, Foreign Minister of Turkey**  
(Herat, Afghanistan, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2007)

Mr. Chairman,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address the 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization in Herat. I also would like to convey our heartfelt thanks to the Government of Afghanistan for the warm hospitality extended to my delegation as well as the excellent organization of the meeting.

Allow me, Mr. Foreign Minister, to extend to you also my congratulations on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the Council of Ministers. I am confident that under your able leadership our meeting will contribute considerably to the attainment of the objectives of ECO.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the valuable contributions made by His Excellency Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, in his capacity as the Chairman of the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of Ministers.

I would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Khurshid Anwar, distinguished Secretary General of ECO, and his able staff for their valuable contributions in organizing this meeting.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Colleagues,

Promoting economic cooperation and development within the ECO will require regular dialogue between the regional countries. ECO has the means and opportunity to play a major role in facilitating economic cooperation and development in the region.

We are confident that efficient cooperation in the priority areas of the ECO will greatly contribute to the development of national economies and facilitate their gradual integration into the global economy.

In recent decades, the world economy has rapidly grown and become more integrated than ever before. Developing countries have increased their share in the world trade. As also expressed in the detailed report of our distinguished Secretary General, all ECO countries had grown by more than 5 percent annually since 2003. We are happy to note that ECO member countries'

aggregate GDP amounted to 891 billion Dollars in 2006 and ECO states' share in the world GDP rose from 1.3 percent (in 2002) to 1.9 percent in 2006. Our countries have outpaced global growth since 2002.

We are also content that Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan attracted the bulk of the foreign direct investment in the region. Turkmenistan has achieved a growth rate of around 9 percent. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also recorded strong growth in the recent years. While economies of Turkey and Pakistan kept their steady growth, economic growth in Iran was strengthened.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Colleagues,

Free trade among the member states is of essence in any scheme of regional economic cooperation. We, therefore, need to place free trade at the center of our activities. Elimination of all trade barriers is the main element towards increasing trade between the member states.

In this regard, we give utmost importance to the speedy implementation of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA). As Turkey, we have completed the ratification process and expect the other member countries follow suit.

Similarly, encouraging and engaging private sector and businessmen in ECO activities would certainly revitalize our cooperation with concrete results. We cannot reach our goals without involving private sectors in our activities. For the private sectors and mainly businessmen to interact, meet their counterparts and engage in business freely, we should remove the obstacles facing them. Visa barriers come to the fore as a main obstacle for businessmen.

In that sense, I would like to underline, one more time, importance of the ratification of the "Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen of ECO Member States". Effective implementation of this Agreement would certainly ease business visits and contribute to the improvement of commercial ties. Turkey fulfills its obligations stemming from the Agreement. On this occasion, I would like to call on the member states which have not yet signed for ratified the said Agreement to finalize the necessary procedures, in order to obtain the full implementation of its provisions.

We should give due consideration to the activation of the ECO-CCI. The major concern with regard to ECO-CCI is the rotational system of its Secretariat which causes its ineffectiveness. If ECO-CCI could have a permanent secretariat, it could better assume its basic role of mobilizing the private sectors of the member states, conducting supply and demand surveys and focusing a result oriented activities like creating platforms such as buyers/sellers and business fora.

In this context, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) has already offered to host the Permanent Secretariat of the ECO-CCI in Istanbul. I strongly believe that Istanbul, as a highly developed international finance, trade and tourism center, is well suited for the ECO-CCI to perform its duties and promote business activities efficiently.

As you all also agree with me, one of the weak points of our organization was the lack of funds or an institutional mechanism to finance the development projects in ECO member countries. For this reason, we were all enthusiastic about the establishment of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECOBANK). Thanks to our collective efforts and resolve, ECOBANK will become operational at the end of this year. This will certainly give a new impetus to our result-oriented activities and projects. On this occasion, I appeal to our other ECO member states to take part in this important ECO project.

Last but not least, the objective of enhancing regional trade will remain elusive in the absence of a well-developed system of transport in the region. It is, therefore, imperative that due attention be paid to the construction and completion of the rail and road links in the region as well as regulating transit traffic among the member states.

Mr. Chairman,

We welcome the positive developments in Afghanistan and under the able leadership of President Hamid Karzai, Afghanistan's progress and performance is remarkable. Reconstruction of Afghanistan is highly important and assistance of the international community is absolutely necessary. In this regard, Turkey follows a multi-dimensional programme for Afghanistan encompassing education, health, agriculture and human resource development. This constitutes the most comprehensive foreign assistance programme in the history of the Republic of Turkey.

Turkey also contributes to the ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Colleagues,

While concluding my words, I would like to reiterate our thanks to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for the warm hospitality extended to us all.

Thank you.

## **Turkmenistan's statement**

Honourable Minister of foreign affairs Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanty,  
Your Excellency ECO Secretary General Mr. Khurshid Anwar,  
Distinguished colleagues,

It's a great honour for me to take part in the 17<sup>th</sup> COM meeting. I'd like to avail this opportunity to express the highest consideration to the Minister of foreign affairs of Afghanistan Dr. Rangin Dadfar Spanty and H.E. Secretary General Mr. Khurshid Anwar for organizing and holding this forum.

Turkmenistan pays great attention to the regional cooperation with ECO member states in such spheres as trade, transport and communications which are of high priority for our country.

On March 11-12, 2007 ECO Secretary General paid a visit to Turkmenistan where he met with the President Gurbanguly Berdymuhammedov. The President of Turkmenistan expressed the readiness for expanding effective cooperation in the framework of ECO.

Today Turkmenistan has great opportunities to strengthen the regional partnership subject to increasing potential and establishment of industrial and communicational infrastructure. All these aspects together with the advantageous geographical position, social and political stability are the determining factors for further effective cooperation.

Regional partnership of Turkmenistan in energy, transport and communications has an intensive character. In this regard we establish inter-regional committees which will activate bilateral cooperation between the member states. Due to this mechanism we develop relations with Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan.

Turkmenistan is implementing the strategy of multi-version system of pipelines for delivery Turkmen's energy raw materials to global markets. These issues were highlighted by the President of Turkmenistan during the 62<sup>nd</sup> UN General Assembly in New-York.

Today we are implementing the above mentioned projects and the routes of pipelines will go through the territories of some ECO member states. It will promote further economic growth in these countries, develop industrial and social infrastructure, increase the number of working places and as a result will positively influence the political climate within the region and out of it.

Distinguished colleagues,

I'd like to attract your attention to some concrete examples of Turkmenistan's cooperation with certain ECO member states.

Particularly, economic relations with Afghanistan are being expanded on the basis of long-term perspective energy projects. We work on increasing the electricity export volume from Turkmenistan to Afghanistan.

Besides this, in 2007 the President of Turkmenistan signed the decree regarding the supply of electricity to Tajikistan. In August 30, 2007 Turkmenistan and Tajikistan signed the contract in this regard in Ashgabat. Tajikistan is ready to import from Turkmenistan in autumn and winter up to 1 billion of kilowatt-hour energy during three years starting from October 2007.

Turkmen side takes active steps for developing transport and communication infrastructure. In July 2007 Turkmenistan reconstructed 2 km of Serhetabad (Turkmenistan) – Turgundi (Afghanistan) railway at its own expenses.

At the same time Turkmenistan initiated the interconnection of its railway systems with Kazakhstan and Iran and the further exit to Turkey and Persian Gulf states.

On September 16, 2007 the Presidents of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Iran signed the mutual declaration on construction Uzen (Kazakhstan)-Kyzylkaya-Bereket-Etrek (Turkmenistan) – Gorgan (Iran) railway.

Implementing its objectives Turkmenistan takes into account the wide perspectives of regional and international economic cooperation and acknowledges the important role of transport and communications in achieving the goals of such partnership.

We always urge for increasing the effectiveness of transportation both in our country and in the whole region and in this regard the important objectives would belong to the cooperation in the framework of ECO.

Thank you!

## **Uzbekistan's statement**

Your Excellency Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me express my gratitude to the Government of Afghanistan for warm hospitality and high level of organization of this meeting.

I'd like to welcome the Heads of delegations, who have come to participate in this forum.

I would like to join the participants, who have expressed their thanks to H.E. Mr. Hurshid Anwar, ECO Secretary General, for his active work and efforts directed to the development of our Organization.

We observe with satisfaction the changes in ECO, its transformation into the factor of regional integration, in the framework of which, member states tend to unite their efforts, resources and capabilities for solving the common objectives of high priority for ECO people and countries development.

Distinguished colleagues,

Today we are the witnesses of the fact that Secretariat pays great attention to the solving of regional economic and communicational programmes and projects.

In our opinion the issues of transport and communications development are the most actual for the member states.

Uzbekistan considers the development of transit transport and energy capabilities of the region as one of the most important components for the export of goods and raw resources.

Geographically Uzbekistan is situated in the centre of Central Asia and serves as crossroads for communicational systems of the region and the most important transport hub. Today Uzbekistan uses several transport corridors for the export and import of cargo and develops the new international transport and transit corridors.

Our country is one of the initiators of the huge regional project on construction of Transafghan transport corridor, stretching through the territories of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Iran further to the sea ports of Persian Gulf. This project has the strategic significance for the whole region.

The establishment of modern and rational transport infrastructure facilitates the early and effective regional cooperation.

In this regard we highly evaluate the role of regional and inter regional highways and railways together with other transport communication systems.

The Republic of Uzbekistan joined more than 60 international conventions in the sphere of transport, negotiated more than 140 multilateral and bilateral agreements.

The activation of inter economic activity and strengthen the international sector of transport system determined as of high priority for the Republic.

Today, three international corridors, connecting 18 states of Europe and Asia go through the territory of Uzbekistan.

We hope the steps taken in our country directed to strengthen and development of transport communications, their integration into the international transport corridors will give additional impulse for the further development of regional economic cooperation and stability.

Honorable colleagues,

In the framework of ECO Uzbekistan pays special attention to the expansion of development in the sphere of transport and communications, energy, industry, agriculture, environment, trade and investment.

Uzbekistan supports the idea of interconnection of power systems and development of oil and gas network in the ECO region.

For Uzbekistan, which has rich gas resources the issues of its transportation, determination the routes of the future regional pipelines are also of high priority.

Our country is going to increase annually gas production at the expense of adoption the new oilfields.

We consider the cooperation in the sphere of investment as one of the most important which would promote economic and social development of the region. We need FDI, exchange of technologies for the stimulation of economic development.

One of the most important tasks for ECO is to develop the system of regional trade. In this regard we should develop the transport and communication infrastructure. When we speak about economic cooperation we shouldn't forget about those problems which can escalate and influence the positive results. I speak about the spread and illegal drugs turnover. ECO member states should fight together against this evil which is the serious threat for the people of our region.

Excellencies,

Afghanistan has reached great progress in spite of all difficulties. Uzbekistan believes that the people of Afghanistan will continue their efforts for creating stability and peace in the country. The foreign assistance in this regard should continue and ECO should do its best to help Afghanistan.

We want to underline that the Republic of Uzbekistan has a potential to help Afghanistan in construction of transport and social infrastructure.

In this regard Uzbekistan supports the expansion of relations of ECO with the international and regional organizations.



We consider it necessary to continue the reforms which will help our region to become the centre of important economic activity.

Declaring of our support to Herat Communiqué, Uzbekistan hopes that the implementation of this document will allow to create favourable conditions for the economic prosperity of our countries.

In conclusion let me express the assurance that our meeting will be held with the spirit of mutual understanding, respect and reasonable compromise which are the basic principles of ECO.

Thank you for your attention!