

The 14th Council of Ministers

Dushanbe Declaration

(Dushanbe, 14 September, 2004)

Annex-IX

The Eighth Summit meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was held in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, on September 14, 2004. The meeting, presided over by H.E. Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, was also attended by:

1. H.E. Mr. Hamid Karzai, President of the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan.
2. H.E. Mr. Artur Rasi-zade, Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
3. H.E. Mr. Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
4. H.E. Mr. Daniyal Akhmetov, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
5. H.E. Mr. Askar Akaev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic.
6. H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
7. H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.
8. H.E. Mr. Rejep Saparov, Deputy Chairman of People's Council of Turkmenistan.
9. H.E. Mr. Erkin Khalilov, Chairman of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of Republic of Uzbekistan.

2. The participating Heads of State/Government/Delegation, after listening to the brief remarks of the Chairman of Council of Ministers and the ECO Secretary General, reviewed the performance/progress made by ECO during the last two years towards achieving its aims and objectives as envisaged in the Treaty of Izmir, taking into account the political, social, technological and economic developments that took place in the region as well as in the world, gave new policy guidelines to be followed, and emphasized that continued peace, stability, confidence and security in the ECO region were prerequisites for attaining ECO goals and objectives.

3. They acknowledged that sustained and intensified efforts were required for ECO to be a more effective organization for the modernization, growth and development of the region and for facilitating gradual integration among the member states as well as into the world economy.

4. They stressed the importance of the sustainable ECO cooperation in all priority as well as other fields of the economy and expressed their support to implement and promote cooperation in regional activities to achieve economic prosperity in the region and successful integration into the world economy. They urged all the concerned authorities in the member states to pay special attention to ECO projects, programmes and activities and take follow up action to ensure implementation of the decisions taken at various ECO meetings.

In that direction, they particularly:

- i. **Welcomed** the finalization of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and **called upon** the Member States to sign and ratify this agreement expeditiously and establish a "Free Trade Area in the ECO region by 2015", as a priority task.
- ii. **Stressed** on the importance of the sectoral ministerial meetings towards achieving aims and objectives of the ECO. They expressed their appreciation for the outcome of the ministerial meetings held since the Seventh ECO Summit namely, (i) 1st Ministerial Meeting on Environment, 13-15 December 2002, Tehran, Iran, (ii) 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade, 17 July 2003, Islamabad, Pakistan, (iii) 1st Ministerial Meeting on Industry, 25-28 January 2004, Tehran, Iran, (iv) 1st Ministerial Meeting on Finance/ Economy, 29-30 January 2004, Islamabad, Pakistan, and (v) 5th Ministerial Meeting on Transport & Communication, 11-12 August 2004, Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyz Republic. They further expressed their desire to successfully hold (i) the 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Environment between 4-6 October 2004 in Istanbul, Turkey, (ii) the 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture between 6-7 December 2004 in Antalya, Turkey, (iii) the 3rd Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade in Turkey, (iv) 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Finance/Economy in Turkey in 2005, (v) 1st

Ministerial meeting on Information Technology in Iran, and (vi) 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Energy in Iran.

- iii. **Highlighted** the importance of Transport and Communications as one of the three priority areas of ECO regional cooperation which would facilitate trade development in the whole region.

In that respect, they particularly:

Emphasized the urgency of early ratification and implementation of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) for the promotion of trade and transport within ECO region and beyond and called upon those member states who had not ratified the same to do so as soon as possible.

Reiterated their pledge for the realization of measures contained in the Programme of Action for the ECO Decade of Transport and Communications (1998-2007).

Stressed on the importance of operationalization of Trans-Asian Railway main line which connects Almaty to Istanbul as one of the most significant transport projects within ECO regional cooperation framework and **urged** all member states to do their utmost for its early implementation.

- iv. **Expressed** satisfaction over the preparation of the Plan of Action on ECO's participation in the reconstruction projects of Afghanistan and financing feasibility studies for priority projects of Afghanistan from the ECO Feasibility Fund and also the establishment of the ECO Special Fund for financing priority projects of Afghanistan, and welcomed the decision of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to pledge US\$ five million for reconstruction projects of Afghanistan and asked other member states to contribute generously for the same within the framework of the Plan of Action as well as modalities of the ECO Special Fund.
- v. **Appreciated** the establishment of a High-Level Experts Group (HLEG), comprising the Senior Officials (Focal Points) of the Ministries of Finance/Economy and other regulatory agencies of member countries, to study and suggest a framework for cooperation in various areas of finance and economy and expressed the hope that the first meeting of the HLEG would be held as soon as possible. In this connection, they also welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Finance/Economy on the margins of the Annual Governors Meeting of IMF/World Bank, to be held on 4-5 October 2004 in Washington.
- vi. **Underscored** the commitment of the international community to realize the millennium development goals especially aimed at reducing poverty and food insecurity, **appreciated** joint efforts of FAO and ECO Secretariat for implementation of the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) for preparation of a regional strategy for food security and agricultural development, regional programme for food security in the ECO region.
- vii. **Noted** the evolving role of industry in the economic development of the region and the political will of the member states indicated in the ECO Plan of Action for Industrial Cooperation and Tehran Declaration adopted by the 1st Ministerial Meeting on Industry held in January 2004 in Tehran and **called upon** high level participation of member states in the High Level Experts Group (HLEG) established to prepare an ECO Long Term Industrial Strategy and its first meeting to be held on September 21-23, 2004 in Ankara, Turkey.
- viii. **Took note** with appreciation of the holding of the 1st meeting of Heads of Reference Marine Organizations in Tehran, October 13-16, 2003 and also the 1st meeting of the Heads of the Postal Authorities in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyz Republic, April 20-21, 2004 and **asked** the relevant authorities in the member states to implement the decisions/recommendations of the said meetings.

- ix. **Took note** of the ongoing efforts aimed at the establishment of the ECO Trade and Development Bank and the ECO Re-insurance Company and **directed** that the process may be expedited so that the two ECO institutions, vital for the trade and investment in the region, could come into existence as soon as possible.
- i. **Stressed** the expediency of intensification of ECO activities in the field of economic researches and statistics with a view to promote elaboration of conceptual framework aimed at deepening of economic cooperation and extending of economic integration within the ECO region.
- x. They **emphasized** the role that the private sector can play in the regional integration and enhancing the intra-regional trade. In this respect, they **welcomed** the assumption of the Chairmanship on rotational basis biannually of the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI) by Afghanistan for the next two years and **called upon** the member states to extend all possible assistance to make ECO-CCI more dynamic and vibrant.
- xi. **Highlighted** the need for establishing interconnected electric power systems in the region to achieve better patterns of electricity production, exchange and trade; facilitating development of oil and gas pipeline networks in the region; promoting cooperation for the development of new and renewable resources of energy; and enhancement of efficiency in energy production and use. They **called upon** the Secretariat and the member states to expedite the implementation of IDB-ECO project for feasibility study on interconnection of power systems of ECO member states and to deliberate on developing ways and means of power trade in the energy sector.
- xii. **Appreciated** the Plan of Action (2003-2007) adopted by the First Ministerial Meeting on Environment held on December 13-15, 2002, in Tehran, and the revision of the Plan of Action among ECO Member States at the Meeting of First Working Group on Environment held in Ankara on April 7-8, 2004, and asked the member states to implement the Plan within the stipulated time-frame.
- xiii. **Underlined** the need to develop cooperation in the minerals sector with emphasis on facilitation of the intra-regional trade and investment in this sector and enhanced exchange of the sector-related resources and technological information and experience.
- xiv. **Called upon** the Member States, who did not ratify the Charters of ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Science Foundation and ECO Educational Institute, to do so and invited the non-signatory Member States to accede to the Charters of these institutions.
- xv. **Emphasized** the need for various international and regional institutions to join efforts towards implementation of economic projects and programmes of ECO. In this respect, **welcomed** the signing of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) between ECO World Customs Organization (WCO), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and asked the Secretariat to follow up the implementation of the decisions/agreements reached through the MOUs which have been signed so far with the international organizations with the help of the member states.
- xvi. **Noted** with satisfaction the existing cooperation between ECO and other regional and international organizations such as IDB, UNESCAP, FAO, UNDP, ITC, UNCTAD, UNODC and UNIDO.
- xvii. **Appreciated** the implementation of the 2nd phase of the joint Project with the United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime (UNODC) for the strengthening of the Drug Control Coordination Unit (DCCU) at the ECO Secretariat and its role in enhancing the regional cooperation and coordination on drugs control among the Member States; **thanked** the technical and financial assistance of UNODC and EU for the 1st and 2nd phases of the project; and **called upon** the ECO Secretariat and the member states to ensure funding of DCCU through UNODC, EU and other

international organizations for the continuation of DCCU's functions and the sustainability of the Project's outputs after the completion of the Project.

xviii. In order to create a healthy economic environment, deemed it expedient to call upon the concerned high level authorities of the member states to coordinate policies on issues such as drug trafficking and illicit precursors, smuggling, money laundering and cross borders crimes that undermine peace and stability in the region.

5. Recalling initiative made by the 13th meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) for convening the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) Meeting to consider ways for enhancement of efficiency and effectiveness of ECO, they appreciate the efforts made by the EPG and took note of their constructive report. Noting the conclusion of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on the promotion of the efficiency and effectiveness of ECO, while endorsing the recommendation that the SOM would be held regularly during intervals of the Summit and Council of Ministers meetings, in order to review the current development and discuss the major policy lines of the Organization, they instruct the COM to take necessary steps in this regard.

6. Expressed their resolve to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and seized this opportunity to denounce and condemn all acts of terror, believing that a global approach and international cooperation was required to combat terrorism.

7. The Heads of State/Government/Delegation welcomed the appointment of H.E. Mr. Askhat Orazbay as the ECO Secretary General at the beginning of this year and expressed the confidence that under his able guidance, ECO will take strides towards realizing its goals and objectives.

8. The participating Heads of State/Government/Delegation expressed their profound thanks for the sagacious manner in which H.E. Mr. Emomali Rakhmonov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, had conducted the deliberations during the 8th ECO Summit. They also expressed their sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Tajikistan for the warm hospitality and excellent organization of the Summit and other ECO meetings in the beautiful and historic city of Dushanbe.