

The 1st Council of Ministers

Statement of H.E. Mr. Akram, Secretary General Foreign Affairs

(Tehran, 22-23 May , 1991)

Annex-V

*Excellency Dr. Ali Akbar Volayati,
Chairman, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran
Excellency Mr. Isin Celobi,
Minister of State for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Turkey
Excellency Mr. Ali Reza Salari,
Secretary General ECO Distinguished guests,*

I would like to convey to Your Excellency Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati my sincere congratulations on your election as Chairman of ECO Council of Ministers' meeting. I am confident that, under your able stewardship, this meeting will succeed in achieving its objectives and goals that the three governments have set for closer cooperation among our brotherly -member states of ECO.

Allow me also to express the gratitude of my delegation for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to us by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran since our arrival in the beautiful city of Tehran as well as the excellent arrangements made for this meeting.

I would also like to convey our sincere compliments and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Ali Reza Salari, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, for his unstinting efforts and devotion to duty and for the excellent manner in which he has guided the ECO Secretariat. I would also like to express my deep thanks to all the members of the ECO Secretariat for their untiring efforts, now and in the past, to provide invaluable support and essential services for the implementation of ECO's programmes.

We have heard with great attention the inspiring inaugural address of His Excellency Dr. Hassan Labibi, First Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. His important statement which contains many constructive ideas will guide our deliberations during this first meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers, since the ratification of the amended Izmir Treaty.

Since the last extraordinary Ministerial meeting of our three countries in Islamabad in January 1991, the Economic Cooperation Organization has been launched on a steady course. We have witnessed notable progress in the form of ratification of the amended Izmir Treaty, the establishment of focal points for the seven technical committees in each member state and the successful conclusion of the meetings of the Council of Deputies and the Planning Council.

This being our first regular meeting after the Izmir Treaty was amended, it is incumbent upon us to take necessary decisions to revitalize the Organization. Our actions can enthuse it with a new spirit that would reflect the commitment of the leadership of our three countries, expressed at the highest level, to make it a purposeful organization,

geared to promotion and advancement of the economic and social well-being of our peoples.

Mr. Chairman,

Our three brotherly countries stretch across a landmass of over 3 million square kilometers having the combined population of 230 million people, who for centuries have been inter-linked through the immutable bonds of history, geography, religion, common culture and traditions. The harnessing of the combined potential as well as the resources of our region can contribute immensely to promoting the well-being of our peoples. It has, in fact, become an imperative of the present times. I recall the words of our Prime Minister His Excellency Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, which best encompass our views on trilateral cooperation. The Prime Minister said that "our three countries have decided to reinvigorate the Economic Cooperation Organization. This is our shared desire and also reflects the dictates of the emerging world order."

Mr. Chairman,

As the East-West confrontation ebbs away and the North-South divide widens, regional economic cooperation is a necessity which cannot and should not be ignored. We owe it to the peoples of the three countries to decide on ways and means of promoting socioeconomic growth through expanded technical and scientific interactions and other mutually beneficial arrangements in the fields of economy, industry, agriculture and commerce both in the public and private sectors. We are convinced that, under the auspices of L-'CO, cooperation among our three countries can become a meaningful reality. Pakistan, for its part, is committed to make its fullest contribution towards the attainment of this objective.

Mr. Chairman,

The present government in Pakistan, under the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, has launched a comprehensive and all-encompassing programme, aimed at the rapid socioeconomic development of the country, inter alia, through de-regulation, privatization of the economy, liberalization of foreign exchange, provision of incentives for rapid industrialization and export promotion-and for mobilization of domestic and foreign resources for investments. We believe this path can lead us to our objective of achieving self-reliance and economic independence. In these efforts we hope to benefit from close cooperation with our brothers in Iran and Turkey and expect that L-'CO will make a substantial contribution.

It is encouraging that considerable ground has already been covered for the liberalization of trade among the three member states and for the creation of financial institutions which would facilitate trilateral economic growth, especially through investments in mutually beneficial industrial joint ventures. We are confident that our meeting would contribute to early finalization of agreements on preferential tariff arrangements and the ECO Development and Investment Bank.

Earlier this year, the meetings of the Council of Deputies and of the Planning Council chalked out a programme of activities to pursue the goal of mutually beneficial cooperation. The creation of seven technical committees, with their specialized areas of activity, has provided the necessary framework for consideration and implementation of ECO programmes of work, future direction of our Organization and our common destiny. We hope and pray that the required impetus in the form of political backing will be provided for the success of the programmes and activities of ECO in the coming years. Let us jointly resolve to carry forward the promise of the ECO to ensure a better and more prosperous future for the peoples of the ECO countries.

Thanks you Mr. Chairman.

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