

The Informal COM Meeting

Summary Record

(UN - New York, 02 October, 2003)

The informal meeting of ECO Council of Ministers was held on October 2, 2003 in United Nations Headquarters in New York on the sidelines of the 58th session of United Nations General Assembly.

2. The meeting was chaired by the Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Mr. Askar Ch. Aitmatov.

3. The meeting was attended by the delegations of the ECO member states and Representatives of the ECO Secretariat. The list of participants is placed as **annex-I**.

Agenda Item 1

Opening remarks/statement of the Chairman of the ECO Council of Ministers

4. The Chairman called the meeting to order.

5. H.E. Mr. Askar Ch. Aitmatov welcomed the delegates in the Informal Council of Minister's meeting and congratulated the new Secretary General of ECO, Ambassador Bekzhasar Narbayev for his appointment; he also lauded the services of former Secretary General of ECO Ambassador Seyed Mojtaba Arastou.

6. The Chairman called the signing of ECO Trade Agreement in Islamabad in July 2003 an epoch making event and stated that Kyrgyz Republic is taking steps to accede to it. He urged all ECO member states to accede to it.

7. Referring to situation in Afghanistan, the Chairman said that the Bishkek Council of Ministers meeting of June 2003 stressed on the importance of stability in the ECO region. He said that this was a very important issue for Kyrgyz Republic. A complete text of statement of the Foreign Minister of Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Mr. Askar Ch. Aitmatov is enclosed as **annex-III**.

Agenda Item 2

Adoption of the Agenda

8. Reading the agenda of the meeting, the Chairman enquired if any amendment was suggested. Seeing no suggestions coming, the agenda of the meeting was adopted with consensus (agenda of the meeting is enclosed as **annex-II**).

Agenda Item 3

Statement by the Secretary General

9. Secretary General of ECO, H.E. Ambassador Bekzhasar Narbayev while welcoming the delegates thanked them for their support to his work as Secretary General. He stated that it would be his priority to generate more enthusiasm in Central Asian ECO members about ECO activities. (complete text of his statement is enclosed as **annex-IV**).

Agenda Item 4

Exchange of views on main ECO activities

10. Secretary General Ambassador Narbayev giving a quick resume on main ECO activities in the field of transport, trade, agriculture, industry, energy, science and education urged the ECO member states to guide the ECO Secretariat as well as implement all ECO decisions. He also explained the Secretariat's activities viz-a-viz formation of eminent persons group and reconstruction in Afghanistan. Complete text of his statement is enclosed as **annex-V**.

11. The Permanent Representative of Afghanistan H.E. Ambassador Dr. Ravan Farhadi speaking after Ambassador Bekzhasar said that Afghanistan is striving to carry out its historic role to be a link between North and South and East and West. He said that all neighbouring countries as well as donor countries and international organizations including ECO were cooperating with Afghanistan (complete text of his statement is enclosed as **annex-VI**).

12. The head of delegation of Pakistan H.E. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood taking the floor said that as a result of high level contact between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan would fund US\$ 100 million project in Afghanistan for opening of schools and hospitals and banks and establishment of air links. (text of his statement is enclosed as **annex-VII**).

13. Ambassador Dr. Nasrullah Kamyab of the Islamic Republic of Iran stated that the establishment of Eminent Persons Group in 13th meeting of Council of Ministers was a good development as ECO was in need of supervision. He also made references to different ECO issues (a complete text of Ambassador Kamyab's statement is enclosed as **annex-VIII**).

14. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey H.E. Mr. Turkekul Kurttekin stated that Turkey gives high priority to the development of regional cooperation in the ECO region and therefore initiated the establishment of ECO Cotton Producers and Exporters Forum. Referring to energy, trade and decisions of ECO ministerial meetings he urged ECO to increase the pace of implementation of these (complete text of Ambassador Turkekul Kurttekin's statement is enclosed as **annex-IX**).

15. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan stated that Kazakhstan wished to be more involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan (text of Ambassador Yerzhan Kh. Kazykhanov's statement is enclosed as **annex-X**).

Agenda Item 5

ECO's relations with international/regional organizations

16. Speaking on this agenda item the Secretary General of ECO, H.E. Ambassador Bekzhasar Narbayev pointed out to the significance of the recent signing of MOUs with World Customs Organization, Colombo Plan and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Shedding light on ECO's developing relationship with different international organizations particularly with ASEAN, he said that he intended to continue his work under the guidelines provided by 13th meeting of the Council of Ministers in Bishkek (complete text of his statement is enclosed as **annex-XI**).

17. Heads of delegations of member states taking their turn appreciated the efforts made by ECO to develop its relations with international organizations and urged it to make these more useful for ECO.

Agenda Item 6

Adoption of Joint Press Release

18. A Joint Press Release circulated to the member states was approved and later issued to the media (a copy of the Press Release is enclosed as **annex-XII**).

Agenda Item 7

Any other business

19. No new item was discussed under this agenda item.

Agenda Item 8

Vote of Thanks

20. A Vote of Thanks for Kyrgyz delegation and ECO Secretariat was moved and approved by the meeting.

21. The meeting ended with a family photograph of the participants.