

The Informal COM Meeting

Statement by H.E. Mr. Askar Ch. Aitmatov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic

(UN - New York, 02 October, 2003)

Annex-III

Excellencies,

We have gathered here to discuss the current activities, to exchange views as well as to draft future plans for our organization in an informal and friendly atmosphere. I am fully confident of the successful and beneficial outcome of this meeting in New York City.

Taking this opportunity I would like to congratulate Excellency Dr. Bekzhasar Narbayev, esteemed ECO Secretary General on his assumption of such an important post. Let me sincerely wish him a success in the field of further increasing efficiency of our organization, strengthening and expansion of regional cooperation and prosperity of ECO member states.

I am pleased to note that the new ECO Secretary General has already actively started performing his duties. His New York visit programme clearly testifies this point. Besides participation of the ECO Secretary General in 58th session of General Assembly of the United Nations, the programme envisages meetings which will be held with different international organizations of the United Nations. Undoubtedly, it will contribute further expansion of international relations of our organization especially strengthening of its international image. I also hope that the outcome of the 8th ECO-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in New York two days ago would facilitate progress on practical cooperation between ECO-ASEAN.

Dear Colleagues,

Recently we have held a number of important meetings in the fields of trade, transport and energy in line with the decision of the 13th meeting of ECO Council of Ministers held in Bishkek on June 11, 2003. It is particularly worthy to note that the signing of ECO Trade Agreement during the Second ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade, held in Islamabad on July 17, 2003 has become an event of paramount importance for our organization in order to remove further trade barriers and promote trade in the ECO region. Kyrgyzstan considers that ECO Trade Agreement is aimed at economic development and prosperity of the member states through removal of obstacles and promotion of intra-regional trade. My country is highly interested in accession of all ECO members to this important Agreement and presently completing the accession procedure.

As a current Chairman of the Council I would call my esteemed colleagues from those members states which have not yet signed the said agreement to exert joint pressure for expeditious accession to the Agreement and its subsequent implementation.

At the Bishkek meeting we arrived at a common view that regional security and stability is a dominant factor for development of regional integration. The Council of Ministers had underlined that the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan should become main direction of the ECO activities. In this context I am pleased to note that the ECO Secretariat, in accordance with the decision of Bishkek meeting has submitted for consideration of the member states the Revised Plan of Action on economic reconstruction of Afghanistan for the year 2003-2008. At the same time slow progress in practical realization of adopted decision is the matter of our concern. I would like to stress the need for expeditious conduct of the meeting of the financial experts on establishment of ECO Special Fund on Afghanistan in Tehran as well as holding of the Second ECO Regional Investment Conference in Kabul.

Thank you Excellencies.