

The Informal COM Meeting

Opening Statement of H.E. Ambassador Bekzhasar Narbayev, Secretary General of
ECO

(UN - New York, 02 October, 2003)

Annex-IV

*Your Excellency the Chairman
Honourable Ministers
Permanent Representatives and
Distinguished Guests*

Excellencies,

First of all, I wish to welcome you, in our informal meeting of Ministers of ECO despite your busy schedule.

It is also a matter of great honour for me to address this august body. This occasion has provided me an opportunity to meet each one of Your Excellencies, individually. I also had the privilege to meet Your Excellencies, in Bishkek, last June.

I am greatly encouraged by the confidence reposed in me by Your Excellencies. I am grateful to the Republic of Kazakhstan that had nominated me for this important position.

Excellencies,

A challenge that I have accepted willingly is to create greater enthusiasm for participation in ECO activities by our Central Asian and Caucasus members. We now have Kyrgyz Republic as Chairman of Council of Ministers and I, as Secretary General, from Kazakhstan. This is a befitting setting for our unsure members to test the waters of opportunity in ECO region.

In the beginning, I am going to focus especially in priority areas of ECO like Transport and Communications, Trade and Investment, Agriculture and Health. I will try to promote closer cooperation and understanding among the member countries despite the competing economies in certain respect. In my opinion, our focus should be on enabling complementaries rather competition.

I will also do my best to demonstrate to the member states substantial benefits that can accrue if ad-hoc approach to problem is not used and issues are addressed keeping in view mutual benefits and regional approach. This serves our long term interest. This is where our major advantage lies. This policy will make future cooperation amongst us even easier. Negotiations with a spirit of compromise will not harm us rather put each of us in a win win situation.

I am fully aware of the brotherhood that exists between our countries and I look forward to building on this strong foundation, meaningful projects, to consolidate the

vision of our leaders into reality. I am sure with your support and assistance of the able ECO staff, we will make rapid progress towards our cherished goal of creating greater synergies between economies of our region.

As a new Secretary General these are my thoughts and creating a consensus in the ECO would be my approach.

Excellencies,

In subsequent concerned agenda item, I will throw some light on what we intend to do in our sectoral side.

Similarly on another agenda item, I will deliberate on what we have done in the field of our relations with international organizations and what are our programs to bring international expertise or technical assistance or funding to the ECO region.

Finally, I wish to thank H.E. Mr. Askar Ch Aitmatov, Foreign Minister of Kyrgyz Republic for chairing the meeting. I also wish to thank the Permanent Representative H.E. Mr. Mr. Kamil Bayalinov for taking such interest in organizing this important meeting and we wish to assure our Chairman that he will have our sincere support for the successful conclusion of the meeting.

Thank you.