

# **The 1<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Meeting**

on Trade and Commerce

Report

( Tehran, 6 March, 2000 )

1. The First ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade was held on 6<sup>th</sup> March, 2000 in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. The Meeting was preceded by Senior Officials' Meeting, chaired by H.E. Mr. Mostafa Sarmadi, Adviser to the Minister and Director General of International Affairs, Ministry of Commerce, Islamic Republic of Iran, held on 04-05 March, 2000. The Ministerial Meeting was attended by the delegations of Islamic State of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan. The Secretary General of ECO and other ECO officials of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. The list of participants is placed at **Annex-I**.

## **Agenda Item No. 1**

### INAUGURATION OF THE MEETING

2. The Meeting was inaugurated by H.E. Dr. Hassan Habibi, First Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. A copy of his inaugural Statement is placed at **Annex-II**.

## **Agenda Item No. 2**

### ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

3. H.E. Mr. Mohammad Shariatmadari, the Honourable Minister of Commerce of the Islamic Republic of Iran was unanimously elected as the Chairman of the Meeting.

## **Agenda Item No. 3**

### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The Agenda adopted by the Ministerial Meeting is placed at **Annex-III**.

## **Agenda Item No. 4**

### APPOINTMENT OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE

5. The Meeting of the Senior Officials of ECO Member States acted as the Drafting Committee.

## **Agenda item No. 5**

## STATEMENTS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF ECO AND THE HEADS OF DELEGATION ON ECO TRADE COOPERATION

6. The Secretary General of ECO, in his statement highlighted the present ECO trade cooperation activities, the trade situation in the ECO region and summarized the latest developments regarding relations with regional and international organizations. The text of the Statement is placed as ***Annex-IV***.

7. The Ministers and the Heads of Delegation made their statements, outlining their views on the trade cooperation and proposed measures on the promotion of the trade among ECO Member States. Copies of their statements, which were made available to the ECO Secretariat, are placed as ***Annex-V***.

8. The Ministers and the Heads of Delegation noted with appreciation the Statement made by the Secretary General regarding the Secretariat's efforts in promoting trade cooperation in the region. The Ministers also appreciated the progress made with regard to relations with regional and international organizations dealing with trade such as WTO, ITC, UNCTAD and ESCAP. In this connection, the Ministers specifically welcomed the *Observer Status* accorded to ECO by WTO. Moreover, while supporting the ITC Project, the Ministers encouraged the Secretariat to proceed with financing and the implementation of the said Project.

### **Agenda item No. 6**

## REVIEW OF THE ECO TRADE COOPERATION

9. Under this Agenda Item, the representative of the ECO Secretariat submitted a presentation on the ECO trade cooperation. While reviewing the present trade performance of ECO Member Countries alongwith trade policy environment prevailing in the region, he gave background information on the status of the ongoing trade activities and programmes pursued by the Secretariat.

10. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation took note with appreciation of the presentation made by the ECO Secretariat and urged the Member States to furnish the relevant and updated trade information to the Secretariat on a regular basis.

11. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation expressed their satisfaction concerning the work, which has been done by the Heads of the ECO Customs Administration and requested to proceed with their work in facilitating and simplifying the customs procedures.

12. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation emphasized the importance of the participation of the Member States at the appropriate level in the trade-related meetings particularly, the HLEG Meeting on Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers in the ECO Region.

13. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation reiterated the importance of the role of the private sector in trade cooperation and recommended the enhancement of the activities of the ECO Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

14. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation urged the Member States to take necessary measures for effective implementation of the Transit Trade Agreement.

### **Agenda Item No. 7**

#### CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON ECO TRADE COOPERATION

15. The Ministerial Meeting considered the draft Framework Agreement on ECO Trade Cooperation (FAT), prepared by the HLEG on Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers in the ECO region and finalized by the Senior Officials, in their Meeting which was held on 4-5 March, 2000 in the ECO Secretariat. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation approved the Framework Agreement on Trade Cooperation, and decided to open it for signing. The copy of the approved text is placed at ***Annex-VI***.

16. The delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan stated their reservation on the Article 12 of the Framework Agreement on ECO Trade Cooperation as following:

“Nothing in the Framework Agreement on ECO Trade Cooperation shall prevent the Republic of Azerbaijan from taking other WTO consistent measures.”

### **Agenda Item No. 8**

#### CONSIDERATION OF OTHER TRADE AREAS FOR COOPERATION

17. The Ministerial Meeting agreed that the benefits of trade cooperation would be more extensive through the promotion of investment & financial services, tourism, technical & engineering services, research & training and other trade-related services and decided that these issues would be taken up by the High Level Expert Group (HLEG).

18. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation also requested that the Member States should prepare themselves for taking part in trading in services which is needed for future cooperation.

### **Agenda Item No. 9**

#### ADOPTION OF THE COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE FIRST ECO MINISTERIAL MEETING ON COMMERCE/FOREIGN TRADE, TEHRAN

19. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation adopted the Tehran Communiqué to be issued at the conclusion of their Meeting. The adopted text of the Communiqué is placed at ***Annex-VII***.

### **Agenda Item No. 10**

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20. The representative of the Islamic State of Afghanistan made the following proposal, which was welcomed by the Ministerial Meeting:

“In line with the para 14 of the Tehran Communiqué, a Seminar with the participation of experts from ECO Member States, may be held - sometime in the third quarter of 2000. The venue and date of this Seminar will be informed by the ECO Secretariat later on.”

### **Agenda Item No. 11**

#### DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

21. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation appreciated and welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the Second ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade in Islamabad on (date: to be determined later).

### **Agenda Item No. 12**

#### ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

22. The Report of the First ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade was adopted unanimously.

### **Agenda Item No. 13**

#### VOTE OF THANKS AND CLOSING OF THE MEETING

The Ministerial Meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair for his smooth and efficient conduct. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their warm and traditional hospitality and excellent arrangements made for this important event. They also appreciated the meritorious efforts of the Secretary General and his able staff for preparing the comprehensive working papers and presentation, which facilitated the deliberations of the Meeting.