

**Statement by H.E. Associate Professor Mr. Hukum Khan Habibi, Deputy Minister for Technical Affairs, Ministry of Economy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Excellency Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates, respected Ambassadors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Very good morning,**

It is an honor and privilege for me to be present here at this important meeting of economic cooperation on Regional Planning Council. First of all, on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, let me extend my warm gratitude to the Leadership and management team of ECO organization for inviting us at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Regional Planning Council which is one of the most important occasions of ECO organization. I wish further success, prosperity and cooperation for better economic and social development relations of the ECO member states.

I also, would like to express my profound appreciation and thanks to the Islamic Republic of Iran for the tireless efforts, excellent arrangements, warm hospitality and invaluable services during this program.

Although much progress has been achieved within the framework of the ECO plan of action , but still greater coordinated efforts with strong commitment and sustainable development programs are needed for improving and liberalizing trade regimes , modernizing and expansion of export – oriented industries , joint ventures , sharing of experiences and greater involvement of private sector within each ECO member countries. These joint efforts will help to reduce the impacts of the world food, energy, financial and other economic crisis. Furthermore, we will consider joint efforts against corruption, money laundering and other criminal activities, including narcotic trafficking and terrorist activity treating the region as well as international community. Our delegation will participate and take active role in issues dealing with Human resources and sustainable development, MDG, Project Economic Research Statistics and other sectors, including cooperation on Natural Disaster Management and Drug Control Coordination .

**Excellency Chairman,  
Distinguish delegates,**

Though Afghanistan is still suffering economic and security problems, but on the other hand, there have been improvements in many areas, for instance;

rehabilitation and reconstruction of the roads, highways, energy, transmission and extension of the electricity power from the neighboring countries, telecommunication services reached almost half of the population, discovery of some huge mines, good improvement in the private sector, fiscal and monetary systems, social protection, education, health, governance and justice system, freedom of speech and media, gender equity and human rights All these positive changes happened with the great technical and financial assistance of the international donors, regional partners and the government itself.

For your kind information I would like to state that Tokyo international conference for development and economic stability of Afghanistan ended on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2012 with International donors pledges to assists \$16 billion aid for Afghanistan over the next four years. The Tokyo conference is being attended by high-level delegates from more than 70 nations and international organizations. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan thanks the participants, donors and technical organizers of this conference.

The economic vision of this conference is for long terms support for Afghanistan. Afghan government have prepared 22 national priority programs based on their last one decade experience which reflect all the development and economic requirements of Afghanistan. By smooth and proper implementation of these programs Afghanistan will be self- sufficient, prosperous and economically developed within next 10 years. 50 % of this assistance will be spent through the government national budget and remaining 50 % will be spent as off-budget based on the government priorities. The authorities of Afghan government have already prepared an aid management policy with international community for financial reforms jointly. The effectiveness of the money which has been spent in Afghanistan was almost less due to lack of essential coordination between government and relevant stakeholders. There is strongly need for Afghanistan and international community work together for effectiveness of this assistance after Tokyo conference.

With all these development in different sectors, still we are suffering from insecurity, terrorism and puppy cultivation, corruption and economic instability and we believe that we cannot overcome them alone without assistance of the international partners including the neighbors and regional countries, because most of the problems have regional linkages and we need a joint concrete strategy for the solution of these critical issues. Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) focused on the regional economic issues and it is one of the priority programs of the Government. No doubt, these efforts needs more time, more money, more human capacity, more equipments, better management and discipline, and more financial support from international partners.

**Excellency Chairman,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

ECO member states have a lot of cultural, historical, geographical values in common, and this bridge between the north and south, east and west certifies close relationships between these countries and definitely, it is for the benefit of the ( ECO) and the world as a whole. Close cooperation between these states can be useful for peace and stability, fight against narcotics corruption and regional terrorism will helps to tie-up and strengthens socio-economic relationships within regional countries.

As brief, cooperation between the ECO member states can play a very critical and key roles in bringing peace, security and sustainable socio-economic and political development in the region; therefore, we need a unified strategy for business transactions, transport and transit of the goods and facilitation for economic development for these countries.

**We request and propose the areas of Cooperation between ECO member states are as follows:**

- ECO member states should strengthen economic and business relations, for this purpose we need to simplify the transit procedures between these member states.

Fortunately, Afghanistan has signed bilateral agreements and set official protocols with some ECO member countries concerning economic and business cooperation and transit facilitation.

A transit and business agreement between Afghanistan-Pakistan has been signed on October 28, 2010 in Kabul, which is a very good improvement in the area of business and transit between these two countries. But the importance of these agreements could be useful when the government and responsible bodies implement them and consider the problems happening in this regard.

- ECO Member states should cooperate to strengthen the private sectors in these countries. Therefore, these countries should remove obstacles and problems and provide facilities for these activities. There are great opportunities in Afghanistan for investment in different respective areas specially in the mining sector that the ECO member states can benefit. The Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) have prepared the Investment support and facilitation policy which might be approved very soon, in the light of this policy, the ECO member states can do the investment specially for some common types of the projects.
- The member states of ECO organization should focus on extension of infrastructure and main projects in the region, such as highways, ring roads, construction of railways in the ECO member states to connect them to each

other. Fortunately, I can remind you the trilateral agreement b/w respected governments of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan about railway linkage. The technical survey has already been started through joint commission. We are looking forward to link the region as bridge for economic development.

- Furthermore, ECO member countries should cooperate in the area of energy which is very important for the socio-economic development in a country and it should be considered as the first priority. We appreciate the kind support of Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Working on CASA Project 1000, is another example of close cooperation in the energy sector.
- Cooperation between ECO state members in the Agricultural Sector is very important too. Food security and regular cooperation in agricultural and livestock sector is very crucial and it has a very positive impact in our economic development.
- It is critical important to put practical steps on the ground regarding about Sticker's Visas and multiple visas have to been issued to the traders and transporters.
- Many bilateral and multilateral agreements have been signed but the practical actions have not taken from member states and still there are many problems. So, it is kindly requested to consider the articles placed in the agreements.

**Excellency Chairman,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

In relation to ECO supported projects, I would like to mention that:

- Afghanistan has taken practical actions regarding conventions of ADR, ATR, ECMR etc and looking forward for overall cooperation of the ECO member states.
- Afghanistan has sent the focal point and technical specification regarding Kashghar-China Corridor (Road and railway) and looking forward for overall assistance of the ECO member states.
- Reactivation of the TIR has been in progress (80 %) and will be ended up to end 2013; the ECO cooperation in this regard is required.
- Rehabilitation of Kabul Zoo and Dehmazang Park project is completed and the final report and the last certificate of final completion of works will send by concerned department.
- Construction of MRRD A-Block Institute, according to the submitted document, the works of the project completed and officially requested from ECO to come to Kabul and inaugurate the project The mentioned date is 11 May 013 .

- The documents of Zargaran High School Bamyan for Female and the Construction of (50) bed Hospital in Faryab province already submitted to ECO for further action, the work is going on , and concerned departments will end the progress reports of both projects to ECO for further action .

I would like to draw kind attention of the august meeting, that Afghan authority has already sent list of different projects for further action of Eco Secretariat, and kindly request the meeting to consider those projects and make necessary action.

**Excellency, Mr. Chairperson and delegates;**

The Afghan Delegation is pleased to submit the attached proposals for your considerations.

At the end I wished more successes for this august meeting.

Thanking you

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Javanshir Akhundov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

**Distinguished Chairman,  
Honourable Secretary General,  
Dear meeting participants,**

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan I greet the participants of the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of Regional Planning Council of the Economic Cooperation Organization and express my sincere thanks to the ECO Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their efforts in solving organizational issues.

As you know in October last year Azerbaijan hosted the 12th ECO Summit and 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Council of Ministers during which a number of important decisions were made. During its chairmanship in ECO the Republic of Azerbaijan is making efforts for further development of the organization, enhancement of efficiency of its activities and work on concrete projects. With this purpose our country prepared *Food paper on increase of efficiency of ECO by defining priority fields of cooperation* and sent it to the member states through the Secretariat. We believe that in order to increase the efficiency of cooperation within the organization, firstly, we should approach to the issues of cooperation from the point of view of general development of the region, shift from holding meetings to realization of important projects, give priority to the establishment only those specialized agencies and centers of the organization which are aimed at economy, closely cooperate with UN specialized bodies for successful implementation of regional projects and seek funds from international financial institutions.

At the same time, the Republic of Azerbaijan considers cooperation between ECO and other regional organizations as one of key factors. As a concrete step our country expressed readiness to host joint events of ECO with African Union and ASEAN.

We would like to bring to your notice that the proposal of the Republic of Azerbaijan on establishment of the ECO Regional Economic Research Center was initially adopted on the 9<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit and mentioned in Baku Declaration. Alongside, our country prepared Statute of the Center and it was adopted on the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research held in November 2012 in Baku on the committee level. Today we state that the Republic of Azerbaijan suggests to host the ECO Regional Economic Research Center in Baku. With regard to this the draft Statute of the Center was provided to the Secretariat. The Republic of Azerbaijan considers it important to include this initiative into the RPC report.

## **Distinguished meeting participants,**

During the 11<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit in Istanbul there was a decision made at a high level regarding joining of the Republic of Azerbaijan to ECO Trade and Development Bank. Today we can note with satisfaction that it is realized now. The Articles of Agreement of the Bank were adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan and instrument of ratification was deposited to the ECO Secretariat. As stated by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, our country as a shareholder of the Bank is committed to participate in important infrastructure and economic projects implemented in ECO member states.

Our initiatives and activities in transport sector and also establishment of a modern railway network in the region should serve common regional interests. The Republic of Azerbaijan attaches much importance to the “North – South” international transport corridor. The construction of “Rasht – Qazvin – Astara (Iran) – Astara (Azerbaijan)” railway which is a part of that project will serve for the benefit of all ECO member states because this railway will connect not only Azerbaijan and Iran but also Asian countries with Eastern and Western Europe. This project will improve geo-economic situation and become beneficial and important for all of us.

We would like to bring to your notice that with a view to realize mentioned project there was an initiative to create a modality of trilateral cooperation and in order to speed up coordination of the project it was decided to establish a High Level Working Group comprising Azerbaijan, Iran and ECO Secretariat.

Construction of a new “Baku – Tbilisi – Kars” connecting railway the realization of which will connect Trans-Europe and Trans-Asia railway networks, will create favorable conditions for increase of turnover and goods transportation on “Europe-Caucasus-Asia” direction.

In 2010 the construction of a new Baku International Seaport was launched nearby Baku.

Currently, onshore works on transport infrastructure construction connecting port complex with the highway road and railway lines, as well as works on mobilization of construction of other entities are underway.

Since 22<sup>nd</sup> RPC meeting the Republic of Azerbaijan sent to the Secretariat its project proposals in the field of economy, information for the preparation of the Threat Assessment Report on combating transnational organized crime and terrorism, proposals on realization of ECO Program on Food Security, statistical data for preparation of ECO Statistical Report, revised information for the Progress Report on Blood Safety. Besides the Summit and COM meeting, the Republic of Azerbaijan hosted 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research, 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Editorial Board on ECO

Economic Journal, 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of Heads of ECO Trade Promotion Organizations and 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Heads of ECO Blood Transfusion Organizations.

As you can see, our country is participating at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Regional Planning Council at full strength. Our delegation will submit its position on relevant issues at the review committee meetings of the Council and provide its proposals regarding the upcoming ECO meetings in Baku.

In conclusion, once again let me express our profound appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and ECO Secretariat for organizing of this event and wish all the success to review committees in their parallel work today.

Thank you for your attention



**Statement by Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, Director, ECO Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

**In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful**

**Mr. Chairman,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This is a credible honor for me to address this meeting on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran. At the outset, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all participants. Let me express our appreciation for the excellent preparatory work by the staff of the ECO Secretariat under the able leadership of ECO Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov.

One year elapsed since our last RPC meeting, a relatively busy year for ECO, a year of important meetings and promising decisions. Baku Summit and Council of Ministers, Ministerial Meeting on ICT, Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Ministerial Meeting on Energy, as well as several other technical meetings resulted in a range of prospective arrangements for regional cooperation. Twenty third meeting of the Regional Planning Council is now convened to translate these prospects into frameworks for collective action. We are in strong need to generate momentum required for proper actions. My delegation is devoted to lend its full support to the objective of a very successful RPC meeting.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Fellow Colleagues,**

In the last 12 months or so, ECO continued to benefit from meaningful support by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Iran's "ECO-advocacy" policy continued to carry increasing weight even in the time of extensive in-house economic reform in the Country as well as in the face of ever-intensifying illegitimate economic sanctions. This unwavering support has its deep roots in our firm belief that ECO and the goals it pursues constitute a unique opportunity for the individual member states and for the Region as a whole to survive the potential challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to foster their development strategies.

I will present here a brief account of part of the ECO-related activities by the Islamic Republic of Iran since last RPC session. We continued to provide ECO with needed support and resources in different sectors and corners. In **energy** sector, as one of the ECO core cooperation area, the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum, where the momentum for a new ECO energy cooperation framework was reinforced through ministerial support. In the Tehran Declaration, Ministers proclaimed

2013-2022 as the “ECO Decade for Enhanced Energy Cooperation”. Ministerial Meeting also paved the way for enhanced private sector participation in regional energy cooperation. We also managed to organize some training courses for the energy experts and officials of member states in “Oil and Gas Training Center” in Tehran.

In **transport and transit**, Iran continued to play an important role through sharing its existing transit capacities as well as constructing the needed infrastructure to make ECO corridors operational to the maximum extent possible. For example, the construction of the Gorgan-Incheboron railway has been completed. This is part of a longer rail corridor which connects Kazakhstan to Iran through Turkmenistan. The Gorgan-Incheboron railway will be formally inaugurated soon. Given the importance of the whole corridor, we will engage in the consultations with the other two countries to arrange for possible simultaneous inauguration of the constructed segments across the Corridor. On other transport related issues as well as other ECO projected and operational corridors, we also hosted several meetings. In a relevant issue, we continued to work towards developing a plan of action on the allocation of the land to individual ECO member states in ECO Free Zone in Chahbahar. Given the importance of the project, it requires that all interested member states, particularly the land-locked ones be involved in this preparatory process.

In **communications**, the first ever ECO Ministerial Meeting on Information and Communications Technologies was hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran and resulted in innovative ideas for regional cooperation.

In **trade** cooperation, the Islamic Republic of Iran recently hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> ECOTA Cooperation Council in Tehran. It seemed to have been promising and parties agreed on the course of actions leading to early implementation of the Agreement. We also offered to host the 5<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Trade which failed to achieve needed quorum. We will soon renew our offer to host this important meeting.

In tax-related matters, we hosted the first Meeting of the ECO Heads of Tax Administration in Tehran. The Meeting was successful in airing noble idea of a possible ECO Tax Organization.

In **environment**, we have been involved in the implementation of the decisions of the fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment, including the Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and global warming. The ECO project on harmonization of the environmental standards has also been pursued by the Iranian project manager. The Karaj-based “Institute of Environmental Science and Technology for ECO Region” continued its successful kick-off activities and awaits early decision by ECO on its envisaged status.

In **industry**, we continued to push for early operationalization of RISCAM (Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation

and Metrology). Meanwhile, we formally deposited the RISCAM founding document in 20<sup>th</sup> COM meeting in Baku.

In **health** related matters, we managed to grant scholarship on Master of Public Health in a leading medical university in Iran to 8 candidates from the member states. The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of ECO Coordination Committee on Health Tourism was also organized in Mash'had, giving rise to the possible regional cooperation in this important and evolving sector.

In **drugs and organized crimes**, we continued to support, technically, intellectually and financially, the extensive activities covered by DOCCU. This included, among others, the envisaged establishment of the ECOPOL, as well as hosting various regional expert group meetings, workshops and seminars on different related matters.

In **agriculture**, we actively participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> ministerial meeting in Republic of Turkey and showed full support for enhanced regional cooperation in agriculture and related sectors. As decided by the last RPC meeting, we are still waiting for information on the ways and means to become involved in the activities of the Regional Coordination Center (RCC) in Ankara. On disaster mitigation aspect, the "ECO Regional Center for Risk Management of Natural Disasters" in Mash'had has been pursuing its mandate.

There are also areas such as civil registration, mapping cooperation, minerals, statistics, tourism, etc., where the Islamic Republic of Iran has been actively contributing to the work of the Organization.

**Mr. Chairman,**

What I presented here was a brief report about our recent activities. We do have some concrete proposals for the consideration and decision by the 23<sup>rd</sup> RPC meeting. To save the time of this august meeting, we have already submitted to the Secretariat a set of preliminary comments to be discussed in the Review Committees.

Before conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring to the attention of the distinguished participants that the UN resolution A/RES/67/14 entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization" adopted in November 2012 provides very encouraging bases for ECO cooperation with the UN specialized agencies and programmes. We request that Secretariat elaborates on these possibilities, including in the Review Committees of this RPC meeting. One of the areas that UN Resolution alludes to is the possible cooperation with the UNHABITAT on the disaster aspect of the human settlement. We are of the view that ECO should explore this kind of cooperation.

I thank you

**Statement by Mr. Ruslan Maguzmov, Deputy Chairman of Transport  
and Communications Committee, Ministry of Transport  
and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan,  
at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Regional Planning Council  
(6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

**Distinguished Secretary General,  
Distinguished Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Kazakhstan let me sincerely welcome the participants of the 23<sup>rd</sup> ECO RPC meeting and wish all of us a successful work. Allow me to express our deep gratitude to the Secretariat's staff and personally to the ECO Secretary General Dr. Shamil Aleskerov for excellent arrangements of this meeting.

At this difficult period of time, when global crisis challenges are increasing, friendly and mutually beneficial perspective relations between our countries are of high value and ECO is a bridge for their establishment. Interaction within the framework of the Organization gives broad capabilities for the further closer approach of our people, interpenetration of economies and cultures of the nations.

Relevant development of transit-transport potential, establishment of modern transport network and new routes for the transportation of goods to the global markets is not possible without strengthening of economic cooperation and trade in the region.

The majority of ECO member states are land-locked without access to the global markets, that's why Kazakhstan pays special attention to the development of transit-transport capabilities of the region as the main aspect for the export of its raw resources and goods.

According to Almaty Plan of Action for the development of transport infrastructure in the ECO region (Almaty 1993), the systematic work is being implemented in Kazakhstan for the establishment of modern and effective transport network, conformed to the world standards.

In 1995 Serakhs (Turkmenistan) - Serakhs (Iran) railroad was launched for the purpose of the development of transport route along the Great Silk Road which connects several regional states. Later on in order to attract tourists and businessmen the necessity for launching an international passenger train along Trans-Asian railway route became actual. In accordance with the decision of the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Administrations (September 2000, Almaty) the special Working Group was established for the preparation of the test demonstration run of Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul container train.

Regarding the development of transport and communications infrastructure Kazakhstan deems it's necessary for implementation of TTFA and regularly launching of Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul container and passenger trains which is extremely significant for the development of the Organization and member states as well. Removal of the barriers on the way of its implementation will help not only to increase the volume of intraregional trade but to strengthen the relations between the nations which is highly important for the integration of our economic systems into the global economy.

Besides, the issue of launching of Almaty-Bandar Abbas train at the nearest future is under the consideration. In 2010 Kazakhstan started the implementation of TTFA signed in 1995 and ratified in 2006.

Moreover, it is necessary to speed up the utilization of TRACECA transport corridor potential by member states (7 ECO member states are participants of this project).

The most advantageous air routes between Europe and Asia lie above the territory of Kazakhstan which is a good chance for increasing the air transit potential.

For the closer interaction in the sphere of air transportation among ECO member states, Kazakhstan drafted ECO Framework Agreement for cooperation in air transportation and forwarded this document for consideration of the contracting parties. Special attention should be paid to the cooperation in the sphere of communications especially within the TAEFOS project.

Kazakhstan is interested in the two transportation points through Sary-Aghash and Karakalpakstan that will assist in diversification of the routes and facilitate to deliver the goods to Afghanistan. Another important issue is the development of Aktau logistic center as the route through Karakalpakstan. Unfortunately today there is no progress in this regard. At the same time there are no real steps forward towards the demand for purchasing of Kazakhstan's goods for Afghanistan in spite of their conformity to international standards.

One of the main important and global contemporary challenges is the issue of food security. It is not only the way for the mankind survival but one of the most significant factors of the social stability in the country as well as in the region. Escalation of global food security issue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is stipulated mainly by the high rates of population growth in comparison with the food production and decrease of resources volume necessary for agricultural production as well as with the climate change.

First of all the food security issue is fully dependent on economic and political aspects on the global arena. Secondly, we face the sharp reduction of food products quality due to their pollution by the hazardous elements dangerous for the health. As a result, the countries loose the capability for satisfaction of their

needs by own resources. It creates the serious threat for the food security and strategic current interests of the countries.

For the strengthening of food security it deems necessary to expand trade and investment relations in agricultural sphere. As the priority, there should be established the joint enterprises as well as developed the farms and other complexes.

In this regard the perspective areas of investments are the financing melioration technologies, introduction of modern methods and mechanisms for soil cultivation, re-cultivation of lands and protection of water resources, development of new methods for storage, production and processing of wheat, fruit and vegetable high-yielding and, implementation of the new methods of selection and fattening of highly productive cattle breeding and its products.

The further cooperation will create a long-term basis for the development of food security among ECO member states. The strengthening of food security, as a result, should bring to activation of the efforts at all levels for the support of agriculture as the main source and means for fight against poverty.

### **Trade and economic relations**

The increasing of cooperation level in transport and communications sector will assist in expanding trade in the region. Nowadays trade is one of the most important instruments in regional cooperation development and has the priority positions in the Organization.

The current trade-economic potential of ECO region is not fully utilized. To some extent it is connected with the tariff and customs barriers. An important step in this regard was the establishment of ECO Trade and Development Bank. Kazakhstan is considering the possibility for joining the Bank. Economic perspectives of the Bank include the great market of human resources with 380 million of people as well as the project potential within ECO. In general, ECO TDB activities should be directed towards the mobilization of resources for projects implementation, creation of financial conditions for extension of intraregional trade, banking services and financing of mutually beneficial projects. Kazakhstan is now studying the possibility for joining ECOTA.

It is extremely necessary to continue the further development and strengthening of customs cooperation in the region within the framework of the Council of Customs Administrations Heads on the way for simplification and harmonization of customs procedures.

The establishment of the Centre for Economic Research and Statistics proposed by Azerbaijan for consideration by the relevant authorities of the Organization will facilitate economic development and systematic operative exchange of information within ECO.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> ECO Ministerial meeting of Industry and Trade held in 2006 in Lahore, Pakistan it was decided to establish an expert group for preparation the Draft Statute of RISCAM. The representatives of Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkey and Secretariat were the members of the mentioned group. Currently the Statute of RISCAM is in the process of finalization.

### **Energy sector**

Kazakhstan possessing considerable stocks of oil and gas, attaches a great importance to its transportation to the international market, also towards identification of optimum routes of the future export pipelines. Taking into account intentions of Kazakhstan on oil and gas extraction increasing and identification of operating and new deposits and ECO countries abundant experience in this region, also training for highly skilled, Kazakhstan is interested in enhancing cooperation with members of the Organization in energy sphere, including in energy systems interaction.

The Ministerial Meeting (10 October, 2010) expressed gratitude for the good work and asked to make the same efforts in implementation of a new Plan of Action (2001-2015).

Important task of ECO Central-Asia cooperation integration is establishment of common energy market which is caused by necessity of restoration and development of mutual economic communications between the member-states with the purpose of glut internal market with a cheap kinds of power resources, meet requirements of consumers and expansion of possibilities of export deliveries of power resources in the third countries.

Kazakhstan supports the early establishment of the ECO Center on water resources management.

### **Science and new technologies**

With a view of increase of efficiency of ECO activities, Kazakhstan suggests to build further ECO activity in conformity with annual priorities directing the basic efforts of all member countries to development of concrete cooperation sphere and implementation of the most perspective projects. For example to declare 2011 as a Year of development of new technology. Also Kazakhstan proposes to establish ECO Representative on development of Science and New Technologies in Almaty.

The given offer was approved by 18<sup>th</sup> ECO Council of Ministers (March 9, 2009, item V, sub item 51) and 10<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit (March 11, 2009, Teheran declaration, item XXV).

It should be noted that ECO Secretariat expects the response of Kazakhstan on this matter and the Embassy has been sending the several letters to the Centre in this regard. In last letter № 1054 dated September 7, 2010 Embassy emphasized necessity of the response of Kazakhstan (in particular response of Committee of Science, Ministry of Science and Education of Kazakhstan) on ECO Office for development of science and new technologies in Almaty.

## **Tourism**

For the majority of the states of the world the countries of the region are insufficiently studied tourist market. Thereupon, now with a view of development of the tourism, ECO Secretariat prepared appropriate Plan of Action on tourism development in ECO region. 2<sup>nd</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism (October 23, 2009) considered implementation of Plan of Action on tourism and asked Secretariat to follow up its performance. In whole, Kazakhstan invariably acts from the position of an intensification of member-states interaction within the ECO region not only on priority areas but also in cultural-humanitarian and scientific-technology cooperation.

In the field of ecology the Green Bridge which is the practical mechanism for ecologically friendly industry and transition to Green Economy sequentially progresses.

Implementation of Green Bridge initiative would give considerable advantages in attracting additional investments and technologies for updating and modernisation of economy and increase competitiveness of the country.

Our countries also require similar high technologies as in developed countries they represent themselves as the base of innovative growth.

We would ask to join efforts and work together for establishment of technological infrastructure of green economy of our states.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to mention that Kazakhstan became a place for holding EXPO-2017. Our state pays special attention for holding a specialized Exhibition EXPO-2017 in Astana. For 160-year-old history the EXPO Exhibition has not yet been held in developing countries of Africa, Southern, Central America, Southeast, Central Asia, in whole, in the new independent states.

Holding the international exhibition in the Central Asia for the first time would show new level of mutual understanding of nations of the world and would give a new impulse to exhibition.

The theme “Energy of the future” declared by Kazakhstan for EXPO-2017 2017 is very actual for today.



Prospects of regional cooperation within the Organization partly depend on successful process of revival of Afghanistan's economy.

It is necessary to force expansion of economic cooperation in the region and actively integrate Afghanistan into these processes.

Since 2007 our country has been implementing the special assistance plan for Afghanistan. In its frameworks the program on preparation of 1000 experts for peace trades for young Afghani citizens is being organized. Annually Kazakhstan renders the gratuitous technical and humanitarian help to Afghanistan. Talukan-Kunduz-Shirhan-Bandar road was reconstructed and school and hospital are constructed at the expense of Kazakhstan. Now National Agency KazAid on rendering of an official aid to development and technical assistance is established in Kazakhstan.

One of the priority areas of its activity is implementation of the projects in Afghanistan. Kazakhstan will be further facilitate restoration of peaceful life in Afghanistan with an accent on social and educational programs and projects rendering the humanitarian help in the form of the foodstuffs and Petroleum Oil Lubricants deliveries.

Since its membership in the Organization, Kazakhstan has proved itself as an active participant of cooperation process in all directions of interaction. Representatives of Kazakhstan participate in ECO activities regularly at various levels. At the same time, despite of appreciable successes and progress in development of cooperation within the ECO it is necessary to note a low coefficient of feasibility of project proposals and the signed agreements. The majority of issues remain in the agenda of the Organisation and pass from one session to another. As a result of such activity the considerable number of seminars, consultations and sessions are held in every possible fields of cooperation which not always lead to desirable results.

**Distinguished Mr. Chairman,  
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Undoubtedly, our people are bound by deep historical and cultural roots. Huge prospects for the further economic enhancement are available.

I do hope that initiatives of the Heads of our states on strengthening of regional cooperation stated during the 12<sup>th</sup> Summits in Baku will find understanding among our people.

**Statement by Mr. A. M. Kylychev, Charge d' Affairs of the Embassy  
of Kyrgyz Republic in Iran,  
at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Regional Planning Council  
(6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

**Distinguished participants,**

First of all, on behalf of delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic, I would like to welcome all the participants of today's 23<sup>rd</sup> ECO Regional Planning Council Meeting and congratulate everybody with its inauguration and extend my gratitude for the excellent arrangement of this important annual event.

**Distinguished delegates,**

Contemporary period of ECO growth have a huge historical meaning. From tripartite treaty (Iran, Pakistan, Turkey) it became a big regional structure with serious economic potential in 1992.

These changes have adjusted aims and objectives of Organization and today they are a condition for continuous socio-economic development of Member-States, consecutive and gradual integration of the economics of the region into the world system of economic relations, closer regional cooperation and interaction in cultural, technical, scientific and other spheres.

Cooperation in the framework of ECO is based on the principles of sovereign equality, mutual respect and partnership among Member States.

ECO region have good perspective for development of trade-economic, scientific and cultural collaboration.

Such a scope of functionality as significant reserves of minerals and other natural resources, high transit-transport capacity of Member States are a considerable prerequisite to active economic interaction of ECO states.

For the implementation of today's tasks, it has been formed a high-profiled organized coordination and management structure for regional cooperation, are acting a number of specialized agencies and regional institutes. Including: ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Educational Institute and Scientific Found; Marine Company, Aviation Company, ECO CCI, Reinsurance Company, ECO Trade and Development Bank, ECO Consulting & Engineering Company. Adopted structure identified the main direction of cooperation: external trade; fuel and energy spheres; transport and communication; industry and agriculture; social areas, including health, education and science.

Since its membership in Organization, Kyrgyzstan proved to be active participant in cooperation process in all spheres of interaction. Representatives of the Kyrgyz Republic take participation in meetings at various levels.

In the framework of Organization a priority spheres of cooperation for Kyrgyzstan are transport and communication, enhancing of trade-economic relations, energy and environment, as well as other equally important areas of cooperation.

Kyrgyzstan considers ECO as an acting instrument for the enhancing of socio-economic and technological cooperation among its Member-States. Organization is a reliable foundation for the multilateral economic collaboration, effective communications and provides economic stabilization of the vast region.

**Distinguished delegates,**

At the end of my statement, allow me once again to thank ECO Secretariat and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the excellent arrangement of 23<sup>rd</sup> ECO Regional Planning Council Meeting and wish you all success and fruitful work.

Thank you for your attention!

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Khalid Aziz Babar, Ambassador of the Islamic  
Republic of Pakistan to the I.R. of Iran at the 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Meeting of the Regional Planning Council  
(6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

**Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a matter of great honour for me, to represent Pakistan, at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Regional Planning Council meeting.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on your election, as the Chairman of the meeting, and pledge my delegation's full support, to you, in carrying out your work.

It is heartening to see, that with the passage of time, ECO has evolved, into a vibrant regional organization, which is evident from its growing international stature.

The Organization is today, embarked on several projects, in the sectors of energy, trade, transportation, agriculture and drugs control.

There have been numerous new development in the recent past, including the establishment of the ECO Parliamentary Assembly, in February this year. It was the brainchild of the former Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Dr. Fehmida Mirza, and it was due her commitment, and untiring efforts, that the idea became a reality. I am confident, that the participation of our Parliamentarians, in the Assembly meetings, will help in better understand of what we do in this organization, and result in quick passage of agreements.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is important, that the ECO Countries, should remove tariff and non-tariff barriers, and promote economic cooperation. We are now lagging, behind other regions, and if we do not remove the existing anomalies, from our trading practices, we would defeat the very purpose, for which this organization was established.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In order to achieve the objectives, of higher intra-regional trade, ECO Trade Agreement, which is one of the most important initiatives, of the organization, should be implemented, without further ado. Its early implementation, will pave the way, for the establishment of a Free Trade Zone, in the region.

Pakistan, as the Coordinating Country of ECOTA, continues to play its role, for the full implementation, of the agreement. We believe that within the agreed parameters, tariff barriers, among the member countries, should be lowered, to allow greater intra-regional trade.

My delegation would like to urge the ECO Member States, to complete their respective legal, and procedural formalities, to pave the way, for the implementation of the agreement, at the earliest. In pursuance of the third ECOTA Cooperation Council Meeting, held in Ankara in October 2012, Pakistan has already submitted its Positive, Negative and Sensitive lists to ECO Secretariat.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Development of an effective transportation, and communication network, within ECO region, is vital in order to expand trade, and economic integration. This is particularly important, because seven ECO Member States, are landlocked. Pakistan stands committed to facilitate, the ECO landlocked countries, in their trade, through its Karachi and Gawadar Ports. In this context, the Transit Trade Agreement, and Transit Transport Framework Agreement, are important milestones, to address issues, relating to customs, trade, road, rail and water transportation.

Another area in which the ECO countries need to enhance their cooperation, is energy. In this area, rich countries should come forward and assist those experiencing shortfalls on preferential terms.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Lastly, I would like to raise four issues, which need to immediate attention of this organization.

- a. Firstly, with rights and privileges, come responsibilities and obligations. No organization can function effectively, without all its members, paying their respective budgetary dues, in a timely manner. The annual budget of ECO equivalent to US\$ 3.5 million only is very small, and even if one or two, do not pay their contributions, it puts severe strain, on the organization. My delegation is confident, that those Member States, which have not paid their budgetary contributions, will do so now.
- b. Secondly, we have been found wanting, in respecting our own rules and regulations. If we do not like any provision of our charter, it is better that we amend it rather than flouting it repeatedly. The same rule cannot be applied differently, at different times, for different countries.

- c. Thirdly, like the sub-bodies of the United Nation, if any Member State volunteers the establishment of the Headquarters of a sub-body in its territory, it must honour its commitments of the host country, even if it is headed by the citizen of another country. If we do not do so, it would raise legitimate and un-defendable questions.
- d. Fourthly, and lastly, it would be recalled that at the 10<sup>th</sup> COM meeting, held in Tehran, in June 2000, it was decided to continue to follow the current scale of assessment of the Member States, till 2015, according to which 66% of the mandatory financial contribution to the Secretariat budget are made by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey and 34% by the remaining seven states. Thirteen years have passed since this decision was taken, and only two years remain, till the current scale of assessment will expire. It would, therefore, be prudent and timely that we immediately initiate discussion on a new scale of assessment, with the aim that is ready by 2015.

**Mr. Chairman,**

On that note, I would like to conclude, with the confidence that, under your able guidance, the meeting will achieve its desired goals,

I thank you.

**Statement by Mr. Ikromidin Nematov, Minister Counsellor of the  
Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in Iran at the  
23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Regional Planning Council  
(6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

**Distinguished Chairman,  
Distinguished Secretary General,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan I welcome all the participants of 23<sup>rd</sup> ECO Regional Planning Council and extend my sincere gratitude to the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the excellent arrangements of the meeting.

The Republic of Tajikistan highly appreciates constant contribution of Economic Cooperation Organization for the economic development of the region. We do believe that decisions made at previous Summit in Baku will play important role in strengthening of ECO Region as a catalyst of integration process and will become a platform for the further development of productive cooperation, identification of directions and projects for cooperation.

The Republic of Tajikistan considers that one of the imperative directions of cooperation within the ECO is establishment of active transit transport system, simplification of trade procedure, developing of border trade and industrial cooperation, effective utilization of energy resource potential and hydrocarbon resources, establishment of common interconnection power system, free movement of labour force, establishment of common customs union, and as a consequence-creation of common free market zone.

One of the important points to reduce the implication of crisis and rising of countries economics is developing of the transport corridors and communications in Central Asia. It is our common interests to consider issues of road construction which would bridge countries of region and provide an access for the Central Asian countries to ports of Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. Here is not only the issue of building the modern communications, but also ensure free movement of goods, services, capital and people across borders on which occasionally builds up an artificial barriers.

The railway project which connects China with Europe through Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Islamic Republic of Iran will give new impulse for the development of ECO transport infrastructure. Therefore we thank Islamic Republic of Iran for the allocation of 1,000 000 USD for the conducting of Feasibility Study in the territory of Tajikistan and do hope that Feasibility Study will be completed during this year. In this regard, Tajikistan express its readiness to host Ministerial Meeting on railway project proceeded by SOM Meeting in Dushanbe to support the project which connects China with

Europe through Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan – Afghanistan-Iran in second half of 2013.

**Distinguished delegates,**

Tajikistan as a country with huge water energy resources is interested in effective development of cooperation in the sphere of energy. At the same time, some countries of ECO region feel lacks of electricity. Our country forms about 60 percents of all energy recourses of Central Asia. This potential is capable not only to supply irrigation farming and other branches of a national economy of countries with sweet water, but also is precondition for the production of clean renewable energy. Therefore Tajikistan makes efforts for the effective utilisation of existing capacity for the construction of the hydropower plants, capable to supply with power interior and foreign market.

We are in the views, that ECO as a regional economic organization will be intently and practically interested on the construction of energy infrastructure.

At the same time, the modern infrastructure is very important to supply the region with clean energy. We are speaking of power grid interconnection which can bridge and bind all countries into the one network. It is necessary for Member States to implement «CASA-1000» which will connect power grid of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. There is a prospect that this power grid will be connected to other country of region in the future.

The Republic of Tajikistan welcomes the activity of ECO DOCCU and emphasizes necessity of a consolidated cooperation to combat drugs trafficking.

We are confident that all ECO Member States faces the common threats one of which is terrorism. Hundreds cases shows that nobody can be in secure from threat of terrorism. Let's be honest in acknowledging that terrorism enjoys safe havens and facilities in our region and cannot be defeated without sincere and joint effort by all of us.

The Republic of Tajikistan will always be for the strengthening of regional cooperation for the benefit of ECO people.

At the conclusion, I would like once again to confirm our readiness to enhance cooperation in accordance with basic guidelines within ECO region.

At the end, once again express our appreciation to the ECO Secretariat and Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the excellent arrangement of this event and wish success to the work of review committees.

Thank you very much



**Statement by H.E. Mr. Ahmet Yaman, Deputy Undersecretary, Ministry of  
Development of Republic of Turkey at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting  
of the Regional Planning Council  
(6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

**His Excellency Chairman of the Meeting Ambassador of Islamic Republic of  
Iran, Majid BİZMARK,  
His Excellency Dr. Shamil Aleskerov, the Secretary General of ECO,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset, I would like to express my pleasure of being with you on the occasion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Regional Planning Council Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization. First of all, I would like to thank the government of Islamic Republic of Iran and ECO Secretariat for excellent arrangements made for this meeting in an atmosphere of warm hospitality.

Seizing the opportunity, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Dr. Shamil Aleskerov for his appointment as the new Secretary General of ECO. Several months have passed after his appointment, but as this is the first RPC, I would like to put on record our confidence that, with his high qualifications, he will successfully serve ECO's objectives and undertake important works for the benefit of our membership as he has done in the past several months upon assuming his duties.

**Distinguished Representatives,**

As of January 2013, there are 354 Regional Trade Agreements worldwide. In an age where globalization and regionalization are intertwined, practical experience reveals that regional and global integration is one of the best ways towards sustainable development and coping with global economic crises.

Removing trade barriers in our region and enhancing intra-ECO trade have always been one of the most important objectives of our organization. Achieving 20 percent intra-trade by the year 2015 is our main target. However, until now, we could barely realize a modest success in this direction. The main reason for that is the lack of actual implementation of ECO Trade Agreement. ECOTA is the basis for realizing our trade potential which is estimated to be 8 times higher than the present levels according to study made by PIDE. Various regional organizations have enjoyed substantial increases in trade among themselves after embarking on regional trade arrangements. It would not be justice to deprive ECO from such a grand facility. As per decision of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ECOTA Cooperation Council Meeting which was welcomed by 12<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit and 20<sup>th</sup> Council of Ministers Meeting, we should have launched actual implementation of ECOTA by January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. But we missed that deadline several months and still there is not much progress yet. As we are all friends, I will speak quite frankly. If we will

not implement our decisions on the issues of such importance, why we are taking decisions? By all means, we should implement ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) at the earliest as a milestone of our cooperation. On its part, Turkey has sent its list of concessions before the deadline. Afghanistan and Pakistan have also sent their lists. It is our humble request from the other distinguished parties to do the same soon.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

I am pleased to express that ECO Trade and Development Bank has been expanding both its membership basis and financial outreach. We really appreciate signing of Articles of Agreement of ECO Trade and Development Bank by Afghanistan and Azerbaijan in 2012. Besides, we are of the opinion that other ECO Members may join the Bank to ensure that its operations would cover the entire region. Furthermore, financial facilities of the Bank, especially its capital, should also be augmented in order to launch broader programmes for project financing, trade financing and supporting exporting companies in the member countries particularly the SMEs.

I also believe that the role of ECO CCI, as the private sector arm of ECO, is extremely important for achieving our cooperation objectives. ECO CCI should endeavour, among others, to promote innovation in our countries and innovation culture among our private sector. Without innovation, without value addition, without a strong emphasis on quality, we can never evolve to efficient economies and serve our membership.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,**

A well-functioning transport system has a critical importance for economic development of our member states as well as for enhancing our cooperation. In order to increase intra-trade, develop tourism and encourage investments, we, first, need to facilitate transport in our region. In this respect, we attach particular importance to smooth implementation of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) for the easier movement of goods and people among our brotherly countries and attracting investments in the region. The railway projects, particularly Istanbul-Almaty and Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad are also very important initiatives for facilitating transport in the ECO Region. We should further our efforts to solve the problems faced in the running of the trains in these routes to make them viable and competitive.

Our region has enormous energy resources. The ECO cooperation in the field of energy is below its potential. The Ministerial Meeting on Energy and Petroleum held in March 2013, in Iran has taken important decisions. I believe that with the implementation of these decisions, the cooperation in this field will gain a momentum.

**Dear Colleagues,**

In the field of agriculture, 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture was held successfully with the participation of 7 Ministers from the esteemed Member Countries in Antalya, Turkey on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The meeting was quite instrumental in reviewing various activities in this critical sector, among others, inauguration of Regional Coordination Centre (RCC), activities of ECO Veterinary Commission (ECO VECO), ECOSA and Seed sector development project, Water Management Centre etc. I would like to inform you that 500.000 USD allocated from Turkey - FAO Sub. Regional Office for Central Asia partnership programme for the operational issues regarding RCC will be released soon.

**Mr. Chairman,  
Esteemed Delegates,**

Considering the rich and diverse natural, geographic, historical and cultural assets, ECO region has great potential for tourism. I am pleased to observe that our cooperation efforts in the area of tourism have been intensified in recent years and several tourism activities, including expert group meetings, ministerial meetings and trainings have been realized. As one of the major tourism destinations in the world, Turkey has been sharing its experience and knowledge in the area of tourism with the Member Countries. In this context, the Republic of Turkey hosted the “3<sup>rd</sup> Expert Group Meeting on Ecotourism” and “ECO Regional Ecotourism Development Training Programme” in last September 2012 in Antalya. I would like to inform the august house that Turkey is ready to host the 3rd Meeting of ECO Tourism Ministers as well as the 5th High Level Expert Group Meeting on Tourism in the first half of 2014.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce that in line with our decision at the previous RPC, the 1<sup>st</sup> ECO University Sports Game was organized on 15-20 April 2013 in Turkish Cypriot State with around 650 participants from the 6 member states and the observer country, Turkish Cypriot State.

**Honourable Delegates,**

Human resources, sustainable development, combating with illicit drugs, organized and trans-national crimes, disaster management also deserve maximum attention in designing and planning ECO activities, so that they could lead to implement-able and practically achievable projects. In this context, I'm glad to announce that Istanbul Symposium on Disaster Economics has successfully been organized in April 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey.

**Excellencies,**

Regarding the implementation of the Recommendations made by Eminent Persons Group (EPG), we are really happy that during RPC, the heads of

delegations will come together in a Retreat Session to discuss this important matter. I strongly believe that the deliberations of the Head of Delegations at the Retreat Session will provide valuable inputs for the successful implementation of the these Recommendations.

**Esteemed Delegates,  
Distinguished Participants,**

Despite negative influences of global economic crisis, Turkish economy grew at 8.5 per cent in 2011 as second fastest growing economy in the world. In 2012 as well, albeit with a slower pace, it has continued to grow approximately 2.2 per cent when some big economies of the world had negative growth rates. In this context, I am really happy to put on record that Turkey has realized substantial increases in its trade with ECO countries in recent years. Turkey's imports from ECO countries have increased from 6 billion USD in 2009 to 16.4 billion in 2012 denoting more than 250 percent increase in three years. In the same period, Turkey's exports to ECO countries have also increased from 6 billion to 16.6 billion USD again with a more than 250 per cent increase. Turkey, while trying to mitigate negative impacts of the economic crisis in its region and beyond, and adopting required measures for long term efficiency of the economy, pays special importance to its economic and commercial relations with ECO countries. I would like to reiterate that Turkey will continue to give utmost importance to its relations with all brotherly ECO countries and will continue to lend support to their development efforts.

I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my firm belief that this esteemed Council will come up with fruitful results and substantial decisions in enhancing the ECO cooperation.

I wish you all the success in your deliberations.

Thank you.

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Shamurad Mustafaev, Deputy of the Minister of  
Economy and Development of Turkmenistan  
at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Regional Planning Council  
(6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

**Distinguished Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Participants,**

First of all, on behalf of the Government of Turkmenistan and on my own behalf I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the offer to visit Tehran, a beautiful city for participation in the 23<sup>rd</sup> ECO RPC meeting.

At the present stage of cooperation our country is implementing Open Doors Policy, shows its readiness to enhance the cooperation with the authoritative international organisations and constant participation of Turkmenistan in ECO activities is the real confirmation.

Having multidimensional potential of cooperation, the countries of our region aspire to realise it with the maximum return confirming adherence to a course on full-scale partnership.

Discussion of such important topics for cooperation of all member-states as trade and investment, transport and communications, agriculture and other not less important topics which are in the agenda of our today's meeting, open additional possibilities for our countries energy interaction, transit advantages and integration into sustainable development process of region.

**Dear participants,**

The transformations which have been carried out in Turkmenistan under the initiatives of the President of Turkmenistan allow our country to keep high rates of its development, directing efforts on diversification and economy modernisation, increase of competitiveness in a domestic production, growth of the export capital and ensuring new quality of a life for people.

Growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) testifies that. In 2010 growth of GDP was 109,2 %, in 2011 it reached 114,7 % and in 2012 - 111,1 %.

Turkmenistan has all possibilities to increase mutual trade, investments, implementation of mutually beneficial projects in various fields of economy and intends not only to enhance the economic relations with the Central-Asian countries but also to create with them stronger trade relations. Our reciprocal relations with the ECO countries have a good basis. So, the total amount of the foreign trade of Turkmenistan 26% to 25%, for the last five years, even more on a share of these countries.

## **Distinguished participants,**

Our country intends to continue carry on a policy, which promote formation of effective, diversify and competitive economy. Priority will then be given to the high-technology, innovative projects and know-how, technologically difficult manufacturing with the use of modern methods of marketing and management.

Constructive policy, purposefully implemented by the President of Turkmenistan H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, as well as the Turkmenistan enormous hydrocarbon potential, endorsed by international experts today, creates all conditions for materialization of large projects in the sphere of energy.

An obvious example is successfully operating Trans-Asian gas pipeline. At present this pipeline are delivering Turkmen gas to China. Under this policy, we are actively expanding our presence in the fuel market, supplies gas via pipeline Dovletabad-Serakhs-Khangeran to Iran.

We attach much significance to the gas transmission trunk TAPI, urged not only to ensure a long-term supply of natural gas from Turkmenistan to major countries of South Asia, wherein can be observed a steady growth demand for energy resources, but also to become powerful stimulus for further socio-economic development of the whole region.

We are initiating new projects within the country aimed to increase the production of carbamid, technical carbon, liquefied gas, nonsour super gasoline, jet fuel, diesel oil, and also polyethylene and polypropylene.

All major national conversion programmes in the economic and social sectors realizing under the guidance of the President Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow is most closely related to environmental component as one of the important condition towards happy life of people in every respect. Turkmenistan pays significant attention to this subject, because environmental protection, protection of biological diversity, use of natural resources, practical implementation of innovative “green” technologies and, in general, ensuring of ecological well-being is elevated as priority of state policy in our country.

Electric power industry of Turkmenistan is one of the most important sectors of the economy. Its development promotes electric safety and completely covers the internal needs of the country on electricity.

Turkmenistan has all possibilities for expansion of power export to the Central Asian countries and participates in projects for proceeding to the comprehensive planning of power delivery system and power transmission on regional level.

In the framework of this strategy is implementing modernization of existing and construction of modern gas turbine electric power stations, laying of new

electricity transmission lines, banding Turkmen power system and delivery of the latest electrical equipment.

Taking in beneficial geographical location and, being at the crossroads of strategic trans-continental trade routes, Turkmenistan is implementing major international projects for the development of transport and communication corridors together with other states and stakeholders.

I would like to note that Turkmenistan has put forward a number of new initiatives for the building of new transport corridors North-South, East-West, including the construction of main railway Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran, which opens the shortest way from Europe to the sea ports of the Persian Gulf and India. Our country is a part of the regional TRACECA program.

Improvement of cross-border cooperation and expansion of ties will contribute the creation of a transit corridor, which will connect Turkmenistan with the Danube region on the route of South Caucasus through Azerbaijan and Georgia. Thus, our port of Turkmenbashi can provide transportation of goods both in Europe and Asian.

In the market conditions, Turkmenistan attaches great importance to the agricultural processing and food industry, where the main support is given for the construction of new, modern standard flour milling and livestock farms, greenhouse plants and factories.

At the conclusion, let me express a hope that our interaction will allow us to improve the model of further regional cooperation, based on compatibility of mutual interests of our countries and according with international initiatives.

Thank you for attention!

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Ilham Akramov, Ambassador of the Republic of  
Uzbekistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran  
at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Regional Planning Council  
(6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

**Distinguished Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Heads of delegations,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Let me, first of all express my gratitude to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization for the hospitality and high level in arranging this meeting which is to provide more active economic interaction within ECO.

Let me on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan greet the heads and members of delegations of our meeting and wish the forum successful and fruitful work.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Uzbekistan is a supporter of consecutive development of regional cooperation, achievement of economic prosperity on the basis of mutual cooperation and goals and objectives of ECO, and makes relevant efforts within the framework of organization and in this context considers ECO as a purely economic regional structure.

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. I. Karimov repeatedly emphasized that Uzbekistan sees ECO as an organization destined to become an optimal instrument in solving economic, humanitarian and communication problems of the region.

In this regard, we consider the next meeting of the Regional Planning Council as another opportunity to discuss the problems of interaction of the countries of our region and, firstly, actual issues of regional economic cooperation.

To our opinion, the issues of trade-economic cooperation and development of transport and energy communications should be among the most priority directions of the cooperation for the member states.

The Republic of Uzbekistan supports ECO's efforts aimed at the enhancement of regional cooperation by means of settling transport issues. Transit-transport capacity building, prospects of establishment of modern communication network will create new opportunities for goods transportation to the world markets and, will facilitate the economic growth of the region.



To our mind, transport infrastructure of the region should be development taking into account interests of the land-locked member states. Establishment of the transport corridors to the international ports and markets and construction of oil and gas pipelines should be one of the main issues.

It's known that our country is one of the initiators and active conductors of practical implementation of the biggest regional project – construction of Trans-Afghan transport corridor through the territory of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran and further to seaports of the Persian Gulf.

Another area of cooperation within the ECO is energy. Uzbekistan possessing substantial gas resources, attaches great importance to the issues of its transportation, defining optimal routes for future regional pipelines.

Another significant field of cooperation of ECO, to our view, is telecommunications, particularly, development of fiber optic communication. More effective use of opportunities in this field in the interests of ECO member states will enable to increase the quality of intra-regional telecommunications facilities.

**Dear participants,**

Issues and problems of environment are of actual importance today.

Using this opportunity, I would like to draw the attention of participants of the meeting to the actual regional issues of use of water resources and hydropower constructions on the basins of trans-boundary Rivers.

The problem of Aral Sea is directly related to the use water resources from two main rivers of the region – Amu Darya and Syr Darya. Any change in the volume and conditions of the flow of these rivers threatens to disturb irrevocably vulnerable environment balance in the Central Asia.

That is why we can not agree to some approaches to the usage of water resources of our region. We think any attempts to realize projects on large-scale hydropower constructions in the upper reaches of the river as counter-productive and dangerous, carrying serious risks to the security from the environmental, social and anthropogenic point of view.

Disregard of these serious challenges threatens the prospects of development and survival of tens of millions of people of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, as a whole.

We believe that water-energy problems in the Central Asia, including new hydropower constructions on trans-boundary Rivers should be considered in compliance with generally recognized norms of international law, guaranteeing

rational and fair distribution of water resources and taking into account interests of all countries of Central Asia.

Today Uzbekistan, as well as other countries of Central Asia, located in the lower reaches of trans-boundary Rivers, have a serious deficit in water resources. That is why being guided by the working principles and norms of international law Uzbekistan demands all hydropower constructions projected for construction in the upper reaches of basins of Syr Darya and Amu Darya to be agreed by all means with the countries of the lower reaches after the expert finding with regard to reasonability of their construction.

In accordance with international criteria Uzbekistan also acts for clear prioritization in water use. Firstly, limited water resources should be used for drinking and sanitary needs, secondly, for food security and environmental needs, and only then for industry and energy.

### **Dear colleagues,**

While developing organization we can also develop new areas of cooperation. Issues of cooperation in the fields of investments are one of priority directions within ECO for Uzbekistan and through that we could promote economic and social development of the region. We need an access to foreign markets and, particularly, to technology transfer which is a key factor in stimulation of economic development.

In this context, I would like to note that the leadership of the Republic of Uzbekistan spares no efforts for the development of trade on its territory. As an example the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Islam Karimov *On additional measures for stimulation of promotion of FDI and On establishment of free industrial-economic zone and special industrial zones* in Navvoy, Tashkent, Djizak and Syr Darya districts.

Main activity of zones is high technological and competitive production in world markets. There is a special customs, currency and tax regime on those territories.

### **Excellencies,**

To our view, creation of favourable conditions for multi-dimensional development of our countries is a main goal of ECO at a modern stage. That is feasible only through optimal management of processes of regional integration and development of cooperation with international organizations.

Uzbekistan considers it necessary to continue reforms for increasing efficiency of ECO which will help our region to become a center of economic activity.

**Honourable Chairman,**

In conclusion of my statement, I would like to express hope that the results of our today's work will promote successful realization of joint efforts on the way of enhancing multilateral economic cooperation.

Thank you for attention

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