

Statement by Mr. Kemal Köprülü, Director of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Affairs at the Ministry of Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus at the 23rd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)

**Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour for me and my delegation to participate in the 23rd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). I extend to you all the heartfelt greetings of the Turkish Cypriot People.

At the outset, I would like to extend our gratitude to the Government of Islamic Republic of Iran and to His Excellency Dr. Shamil Aleskerov, the Secretary-General of the ECO and the able staff of ECO Secretariat, for their tireless efforts in organising this important meeting.

**Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished Delegates,**

The efforts of our Government to boost the economy has been redoubled especially in the face of the current prevailing atmosphere of global economic crisis.

A liberal economic system is being implemented in our country. Under this system, the promotion of the private sector, the rational use of natural resources, the encouragement of foreign investment that will generate added value and employment, receive priority as a matter of government policy. Over the years, we have succeeded to establish trade relations with more than 70 countries all over the world.

Mr. Chairman,

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a fast developing country with higher education and tourism as two main economic sectors. Our country is emerging as a centre of higher education and a prominent holiday destination in eastern Mediterranean. We have eight internationally recognised universities accommodating nearly 60 thousand students from all over the world. We would welcome a decision by the member states, to include our universities in the available options for the higher education of their youth. It is our primary objective

to increase even further the number of students from ECO countries studying at our universities in the period ahead.

Our country with its unspoiled natural beauties, rich cultural heritage and many other attractions is the ideal holiday destination for our brothers and sisters from the member countries. There are holiday establishments with an overall bed capacity of nearly 20 thousand.

We are also encouraging foreign investment to our country which is one of the primary pillars of our development policy. I would like to take this opportunity to invite investors from the member countries to the Turkish Cypriot State to learn more about the investment opportunities in our country and the incentives offered by our government.

Investment opportunities exist especially in the tourism sector. Hotels and conference tourism, special interest tourism like yacht tourism and marina construction are just a few of the investment opportunities that await foreign businessmen in our country. In addition to abovementioned fields, newly developing areas such as health tourism and agri-industry are considered as attractive fields of investment for the private sector and for foreign investors.

Consequently, those wishing to invest in the Turkish Cypriot State can be sure of a positive government attitude. In this connection, our government is keen to welcome investors from ECO countries. The relevant Ministries and our State Planning Organization and the Cyprus Turkish investment promotion agency would be at the disposal of potential investors and businessmen who would like to learn more about the extensive opportunities and incentives that exist in our country.

**Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Participants,**

As you may all aware, the first ECO University Sports Games co-hosted in our country together with the Republic of Turkey, between the dates 15-20 April 2013. I take this opportunity to thank all the participants. It should be recalled that our country hosted two important ECO events, in 1998 and 2004 respectively on "air and water pollution control" and "waste water management and treatment technology" which both enjoyed a great deal of success and the member states enormously benefited from these events.

Mr. Chairman,

Before I conclude, I would like to thank once again to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ECO Secretariat for their efforts in making this important meeting a great success.

I thank you all for your most kind attention.

**Statement by Mr. Gismat Gozalov, Deputy Secretary General of the
Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States
at the 23rd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council
(6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)**

**Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,**

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Your Excellency Mr. Chairman for giving me an opportunity to address the 23rd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC).

The Regional Planning Council plays an important role in promoting the aims and objectives of ECO. Because RPC meeting is considered to be an important annual event, providing an opportunity to review progress achieved, it outlines future course of action for realization of collective goals and objectives. As an observer this allows Turkic Council to see ECO work in action, get acquainted with various proposals offered by Member States.

As it is a first time for Turkic Council to address RPC as an observer, let me elaborate a little about our organization.

Turkic Council is an intergovernmental organization with its headquarters in Istanbul, Turkey established by Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey by Nakhchivan Agreement signed in 2009, with the overarching aim of promoting comprehensive collaboration in all areas among Turkic Speaking States.

Turkic Council is an Organization dedicated to strengthening peace and stability, promoting wide-ranging cooperation and disclosing the potential for common development amongst its Member States. Although it brings together a particular group of countries, the Organization does not take an exclusive approach. On the contrary, by promoting deeper relations and solidarity amongst Turkic Speaking countries, it aims to serve as a new regional instrument for advancing international cooperation in Eurasian continent in particularly in Central Asia and Caucasus. Our intention is to engage in mutually beneficial collaboration with all organizations having a similar scope in a transparent manner.

The fact that all Member States of the Turkic Council are also ECO members provides us with great opportunity. With institutional cooperation between Turkic Council and ECO, a greater value added could be created for all stakeholders concerned.

With this in view, as an observer, Turkic Council shall be able to benefit from the enriched experience of the ECO meetings which have been accumulated throughout years.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my thanks to the ECO Secretariat for their kind invitation and excellent organization of this event and wish all the success to the Meeting.

Thank you for your kind attention.
