

The 12th RPC Meeting

Report of Secretary General on the ECO Activities

(Tehran, 06 March, 2002)

Annex-V

*Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates*

1. It has always been an honour for me to brief this august gathering on the activities of ECO. Indeed, we look forward to RPC each year for support and guidance to chalk out our yearly course of action. Their deliberations have been helpful in strengthening our commitment to accelerate the pace of regional development.
2. Before I present the report, I would like to congratulate you Mr. Chairman on your election to chair the 12th RPC. I am confident that under your able and sagacious leadership and rich experience, our deliberations will be more productive and fruitful.
3. Our sincere and heartfelt gratitude also goes to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for its traditional generous hospitality for the delegates since their arrival in Tehran.
4. For us, this year is very special. After more than two decades of civil war, political stability and peace is returning to Afghanistan. The international community is showing a strong sense of responsibility towards this important member of ECO. It has committed US\$ 4.5 billion for reconstruction and rehabilitation of Afghanistan. Both the United Nations and international development institutions like ADB and World Bank have underpinned ECO's visible role in transforming this war-ravaged country into a viable modern state. Indeed, we have to play our due role to make use of the strategic importance of Afghanistan, along with Iran, to break the isolation of our six landlocked members.
5. I believe that Afghanistan can again emerge as a crucial link in reviving the centuries old Silk route, providing road link between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Member States may consider initiating environment, health, drug control and other related projects under ECO flag to have our visible participation in internationally funded reconstruction drive in Afghanistan.
6. From an other angle, this year is also important. We are having our summit meeting, most likely in the month of June or July. We will have to double up our efforts to produce achievements which are substantive and concrete in nature. I expect unstinted support from our Member States in this regard.
7. I welcome the offers of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey to host Ministerial Meetings on Commerce/Foreign Trade and Transport & Communications respectively this year. We hope and expect that Member States will

also seriously consider holding of Ministerial Meetings on Energy, Mineral and Environment. Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, which could not be held last year, will take place in 2002. Such high level meetings, no doubt, provide necessary push and impetus to our programme.

8. The last RPC took place a year ago in Tehran. The programme approved for year 2001 was focused and, in all fairness, reflected the collective resolve of the Member States to steer the organization towards realization of its objectives as enshrined in the Treaty of Izmir. Like the previous years, the deliberations of the preparatory review meetings in last 3 days have been intensely productive and demonstrated a wide spread support for the ongoing projects in the region. The strategic opinion, which emerged from the preparatory meetings, is that each Member State should be involved in ECO activities. Therefore, sectors, which made less progress in 2001, should be extended support to make them more vibrant.

9. With regards to achievements, last year ECO was able to further enhance its stature as a regional organization. There is now more realization about the potential of ECO among the international community. We were invited to participate in many UNCTAD, UNESCAP, WTO, World Bank, ADB development projects and relevant meetings in the region. ECO made impressive gains in some priority areas such as Transport, Trade and Energy. Environment and Agriculture received renewed attention and, for the first time, some activities were undertaken in these areas. Nevertheless, the planned Agricultural, Ministerial Meeting could not take place in Islamabad due to security related developments in the region. Insha Allah, this will be held this year.

10. May I now share with you, in some details, the achievements as well as my evaluation of the ongoing projects and programmes in priority areas?

Transport and Communications

11. For us, this sector remains important in our drive to evolve an effective regional cooperative network. We are seriously engaged in creating an infrastructure capable of opening the region to global markets. A three-pronged approach is being actively pursued to achieve this goal. This approach aims to (a) build physical infrastructure (b) create an enabling environment and (c) build institutional capacity both in ECO Secretariat and within Member States.

12. Seen against odds, too familiar to us all, our achievements in this field have been significant. The Secretariat has been pursuing with Member States to construct the already identified missing road and rail links in order to complete the infrastructure necessary to have seamless transport within and beyond the region. Some Member States have done well. Others are awaiting international credits to complete missing road and rail links as envisaged in the Programme of Action for ECO decade of Transport and Communications (1998-2007).

13. There is a feeling that the Programme of Action for ECO decade of Transport and Communications contains too many projects (around 120). The number should be reduced to focus on specific routes, which are absolutely important for smooth movement of passengers and goods across the region. Though it makes sense, it will slow down the progress by opening a debate which route should be considered absolutely must for construction on priority. We should retain the element of flexibility for our Member States in this regard.

14. Regarding building a credible enabling edifice, ECO's track record has been more satisfactory. Continuous efforts are on through a series of expert level groups meetings, workshops and accession to international agreements and treaties to remove administrative, institutional and regulatory constraints. Consequently, an effective transit transport regime is emerging in the region. On January 20th this year, we were able to launch a demonstration container train between Istanbul-Tehran-Tashkent-Almaty route. Many European firms, particularly from Germany, have shown commercial interest in making use of this container train. The train, in concrete terms, will provide markets for goods coming from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Iran and Turkey. A real progress in ensuring launching of international passenger train from Almaty-Istanbul in near future has been made. In this respect, I am grateful to the Government of Uzbekistan for resolution of the last minute's technical obstacles blocking progress in this regard.

15. Unfortunately, the 2nd meeting of ECO Civil Aviation Authorities and Heads of National Airlines was postponed twice in view of the absence of the draft Framework Agreement on cooperation in the field of air transport in order to increase the effectiveness of air services in the ECO region. The said draft agreement was planned to be prepared by the relevant authorities of Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Turkey. So far, they have been requested eight times to furnish their versions of the draft to ECO Secretariat. Alas, none of these Member States has provided their versions of the said draft agreement.

16. Though satisfied with the achievements in transport sector, we need to create an instrument by which there emerges the possibility of having constant dialogue between Member States to ensure an effective transit regime through standardization of regulations and harmonization of custom rules viable common rail tariff policy as well as reciprocal measures such as visa waiver for businessmen and officials and reducing transit fees. We also need to strengthen ECO institutional capacity.

17. I see opportunities for ECO if it decides to expand its rail link beyond Kazakhstan to China, reviving the Silk route in the new form in the new millennium. In this connection, I would like to see ECO's participation in the UNCTAD-UNDP Silk Road Area Development Project (SRADP). Already Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are the active members along with the Peoples Republic of China. Our participation in this important project will link ECO region with Far East countries through China.

Trade and Investment

18. In the area of trade facilitation, the primary focus has remained on drafting of a comprehensive regional Trade Agreement which will ensure gradual reduction and removal of tariff & non-tariff barriers respectively. The ECO Framework Agreement on Trade Cooperation (FAT), which was signed in Tehran on March 2000, during the 1st ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade, set out objectives and scope of this agreement.

19. It is indeed a matter of great satisfaction that the work on drafting ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) has been completed and the draft Agreement will be put up for consideration at the 4th meeting of High Level Experts Group (HLEG) on Tariff & Non-Tariff Barriers.

20. Other trade facilitation activities are spread over areas such as transit trade, customs cooperation and trade information networking. These activities primarily aim at simplifying procedures for all regional transactions and creating an environment for effective regional cooperation in trade. In this regard, ECO Transit Trade Agreement (TTA), signed in 1995, is one of the most important trade facilitation instruments. The latest developments with regard to implementation of this Agreement were reviewed by the 3rd meeting of Transit Trade Committee (TTC) and its Sub-Committee meetings, held in Istanbul on September 26-27 and December 28-29, 2001 respectively.

21. Customs cooperation in ECO region received further impetus by the formation of the Council of Heads of Customs Administration (CHCA), which in its 1st meeting held in Istanbul on September 27-28, 2001 made some very important and far reaching policy decisions regarding implementation of the MOU on Cooperation against Smuggling and Customs Frauds, Customs Transit Management System, establishment of a Data Bank on ECO Customs Offences and issues concerning the integrity of Customs Administrations of Member States.

22. The establishment of networking system, facilitating the exchange of information on trade & investment opportunities, is expected to promote an enabling environment for expansion of trade in ECO region. To this end, the 3rd Seminar on Trade & Investment Information Networking in ECO region, is scheduled to be held in Pakistan this year. In order to upgrade and improve the trade information services in Azerbaijan and Central Asian Member States (ACAMS), the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey volunteered to render their assistance in this regard. A program for such assistance would be devised in consultation with both of these Member States.

23. The International Trade Centre (ITC) and Economic & Social Commission for Asian and Pacific (ESCAP) agreed to assist ECO Secretariat in devising a Plan of Action for developing ECO Trade-Net (ETN) into a regional trade information resource. ITC also agreed, in principle, that it will provide the necessary assistance to ECO Secretariat.

24. An important component of the Organization's trade promotion strategy consists of a joint project with ITC. The project is anticipated to have a positive impact on intra-regional trade and in enhancing business contacts among trading companies. Two important components of the project i.e. Product Selection Workshop and 1st Buyers-Sellers Meeting (BSM) on Textiles & Clothing Industry have already been concluded during the year under review. The 2nd BSM on Agricultural & Food Products is scheduled to be held in Almaty this year.

25. ECO and World Trade Organization (WTO) have continued their cooperation on exchanging information and participating in each other's activities within the framework of the *Observer Status* accorded to ECO. The two organizations are continuing to plan their future joint activities for the year 2002, taking into account the dire need of the region to promote trade and interact with the global economy.

26. The 4th ECO Trade Fair, which was scheduled to be held in Karachi, was postponed due to poor level of participation. The Member States need to actively participate in this important event, which is now scheduled to take place in Karachi (Pakistan) on May 17-21, 2002.

27. ECO Chamber of Commerce & Industry also needs to play a more active role in promoting trade among Member States. It is desirable if the National Chambers of the Founding Member Countries could help their counterparts in ACAMS to strengthen their capacities in this regard. In fact, by according greater priority to the participation of the private sector, ECO Member States may create a more favourable environment to facilitate and increase trade transactions within the region.

28. Intra-ECO trade has continued to stagnate at merely 6 percent of the total trade of ECO Member States. This is indeed an alarming trend, the roots of which can be traced to the trade policy orientation of Member States.

29. There are a number of factors, which impinge on the pattern and volume of intra-ECO trade. These are mainly in the nature of tariff and non-tariff barriers in ECO region. These barriers are put into place by Member States simply out of the fear that outside competition might harm their economies and prove detrimental to their developing agricultural and industrial sectors. This negative orientation of Member States has led them to pursue protectionist policies, which not only hamper free and unrestricted flow of goods and services across national frontiers, but also stand in the way of promoting meaningful economic cooperation among them.

30. Uneven levels of institutional development and infrastructural deficiencies (both physical and non-physical) concerning land and railway transportation, and lack of institutional and human resource capacity in Azerbaijan and Central Asian Member Countries, can be identified as some of the other constraints on intra-trade expansion in the region.

31. In addition to the aforementioned factors, the inherent structure of intra-ECO trade also has to be taken into consideration while probing the reasons for low levels of trade in the region. An examination of the regional trade flows reveals that the export base of the Member States is quite narrow. The main commodities that are traded amongst them continue to be mineral, petroleum and chemical products followed by textiles, prepared food stuff, machinery and electrical appliances, agricultural products, base metals and metal articles.

Energy, Minerals and Environment

32. In pursuance of the Treaty of Izmir and the Quetta Plan of Action, the First ECO Ministerial meeting on Energy/Petroleum (Islamabad, November 8, 2001) seeking enhancement of regional co-operation in energy and petroleum sectors adopted the Plan of Action for Energy/Petroleum Co-operation in ECO Region (2001-2005). In accordance with this Plan of Action, ECO Secretariat called for the 5th SETG meeting on power in July 2001 and finalized the Draft Technical Assistance (Grant) Agreement between IDB & ECO for feasibility study on ECO countries power systems interconnection. Later, an agreement for IDB grant for the project was signed during the visit of IDB President to ECO Secretariat on August 26, 2001. Now all concerned Member States have come on board and the project is ready to take off.

33. The requests for possible technical assistance to finance the cost of another important feasibility study on ECO Oil and Gas Pipeline Routes have been submitted to World Bank and Asian Development Bank, as well as Islamic Development Bank for their consideration.

34. As directed by 11th COM held in Dushanbe on May 1, 2001, the draft of ECO-Wide Energy Policy has been prepared. The policy includes, among other things, Regional Co-operation on the New and Renewable Sources of Energy. To promote development in this new area, the relevant proposals together with the aforementioned draft Wide Energy Policy have been submitted to ECO relevant authorities for their consideration and approval.

35. The Training Workshop on Energy Resources Development and their Environmental Impact Assessment held in October 2001 in Tehran emphasized preservation of environment while pursuing activities in energy and minerals sectors.

36. Towards the end of the year 2001, a Workshop/Ad-hoc Meeting on Energy Efficiency and Conservation was convened in Ankara – Republic of Turkey. Exchange of information and experiences in the subject matter was pursued among Member States and a future Plan of Action was agreed upon.

37. In the past, Member States have repeatedly identified development of ECO mineral resources as a supporting vehicle for industrial development and economic progress of the region. In this regard, the First ECO Mineral Experts Meeting on Enhancement of Regional Co-operation in mineral sector, held in October 2001 in

Tehran, constituted new capabilities for regional co-operation. In accordance with the recommendations of the 10th and 11th RPC, a Plan of Action for co-operation amongst ECO countries in the field of minerals was evolved.

38. Energy, Mineral and Environment are important sectors. Yet, many RPC approved activities could not take place. Being an Energy-man, I put an extra effort to help arrange some meetings/workshops in Tehran. I would like to request for more support from Member States to our activities in the field of Energy, Minerals and Environment this year. This year we are going to hold the second Ministerial Meeting on Energy and Petroleum in Tehran. I expect higher-level participation.

39. Another important event, namely a Ministerial Meeting on Environment, may also be organized this year. It was supposed to take place last year, but there was no offer to host this important meeting.

Agriculture

40. Despite the existence of great potential for ECO cooperation in the field of agriculture, not much progress has been made so far. Member States must pay more attention to this important field.

41. Pursuant to the recommendations of the last RPC and COM meetings on prioritizing the ongoing activities, the Secretariat focused on food security related activities. Our choice was self-evident. Food security is of crucial importance in ECO region where more than 50 million people are living undernourished. In this regard, a food security consultancy mission, comprising UNDP Consultant and ECO Director for Agriculture visited selected Member States to prepare the groundwork for ECO Food Security initiative. Based on the concept paper prepared by the mission, a workshop on the subject will be held in 2002. It is hoped that the event will pave the way for an efficient cooperation for strengthening food security across the region.

42. Moreover, during 2001, preparations for the first Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture on October 23-25, 2001 in Islamabad were undertaken by Secretariat. The Meeting was postponed to the year 2002. It is hoped that the host will announce fresh dates for this meeting so that the Ministers may approve the long-term framework of ECO activities.

Industry

43. The 11th RPC also took note of the need to streamline activities in the field of industry, with special emphasis on the field of industrial reconstruction policies. Accordingly the Secretariat concentrated its efforts on privatization and development of small and medium sized enterprises. The workshop on privatization to be held in June 2002 in Istanbul will assist the privatization authorities within ECO countries to share their experiences and get acquainted with the ongoing privatization trends at regional and international levels.

44. In the field of industry, a training course on Technology Management and Technology Transfer Negotiations was held with the cooperation of UNIDO's International Centre for Science and High Technology (ICS) and the Ministry of Industries and Mines of the Islamic Republic of Iran on June 23-25, 2001 in Tehran.

Health

45. The need to enhance health and hygienic situation is one of the pivotal issues in developing countries, especially in terms of development. Far reaching impact of dissemination of diseases and epidemic, especially spread of HIV/AIDS, is decimating the productive sector and straining the budgets of many developing countries. The magnitude of human suffering and increased burden of care, treatment and support on account of HIV/AIDS poses a major challenge to the global community as well as ECO region today. ECO Secretariat, in this respect, has agreed with UNFPA to organize a Seminar on HIV/AIDS Disease and Adolescent Health in 2002, and the Government of Kyrgyz Republic volunteered to host this activity in Bishkek.

Economic Research and Statistics

46. The fourth annual meeting of NFPs, which is the only meeting of the Directorate where the main issues and activities of the DERS are programmed, could not be held during 2001 because of lack of host and quorum when decided to hold it at the Secretariat on non hospitality basis. While committing to finance the airfares of two participants from each new Member States, the Secretariat has rescheduled the said meeting many times.

47. ECO cooperation in the area of research and statistics remain unsatisfactory despite our best efforts. Therefore, I would like to request the Member States to pay more importance to the activities of this Directorate and promote the objectives and plans in this regard, or if they think this Directorate no more useful, they may consider winding it up.

48. Nevertheless, before taking such a drastic step, we should take note of the fact that the Directorate has developed three quality research projects in consultation with international donors and has also prepared ECO Annual Economic Report every year. So far, four issues of ECO Annual Economic Reports, comprising information on ECO region macro-economic performance along with economic and social indicators of Member States for 1997, 1998, 1999, and 2000 have been published. Additionally, the Directorate is finalizing the publication of ECO Business Guidebook and ECO Statistical Yearbook for the year 2000.

49. In international field, cooperation with UNESCAP yielded a sub-regional training workshop on environment statistics held in Bangkok from 1-12 October 2001. All member countries except Turkey and Turkmenistan benefited from this workshop. ECO/UNESCAP has agreed to organize a similar sub-regional workshop to assist ECO Member States.

Project Research

50. Unlike previous years, the Directorate of Project Research remained fully occupied with preparing various documents and research papers as deliberated by the high decision making organs of ECO, i.e. CPR, COM and SOWG. In addition to its normal functioning, the Directorate looked after UNDP-ECO Capacity Building project with 13 ongoing consultancies and formulation of future ECO/UNDP cooperation, training courses for ECO staff, and acquisition of equipment for the Secretariat including ECO Library with grants from international donors. Besides, it evaluated ECO projects in all fields, consulted Member States with regard to their national priorities and prepared working papers for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Meetings of the Working Group of Senior Officials (WGSO). Moreover, the Directorate organizes all CPR sessions, around 12 meetings and the meetings of the Working Group to assist CPR.

51. While promoting cooperation with ECO Consulting and Engineering Company (CEC), the Directorate was also able to muster adequate support for ECO-CEC Conference in Pakistan which, however, could not take place as scheduled due to security developments in the region. The meeting will take place now in the 3rd week of this month. The response is encouraging.

International Relations, Drug Control, Regional Institutions and Specialized Agencies

52. ECO Cultural Institute is busy preparing for the 3rd meeting of its Board of Trustees set to take decision on some important pending matters, including the election of its President.

53. With regard to ECO Science Foundation, we await the initiative of the esteemed Government of Pakistan to hold the 1st meeting of its Board of Trustees to finalize the basic document of the Foundation.

54. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has ratified the Charter of ECO Educational Institute. We await similar action from other Member States.

Trade and Development Bank

55. The Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and Republic of Turkey signed the Articles of Agreement at Islamabad on March 15, 1995. We have learnt that Islamic Republic of Iran has completed the necessary legal proceedings, though has not yet communicated it officially to the Secretariat. The relevant authorities of the Republic of Turkey are requested to hold the trilateral interim meeting on the establishment of ECO Trade and Development Bank.

ECO Reinsurance Company

56. Since a linkage was established between ECO Trade and Development Bank and ECO Reinsurance Company, the Company could not be formally established, as the Agreement on establishment of the Bank has not yet entered into force.

57. On the other hand, a serious decline in the number of the member companies as well as the premium volume has been observed in the years following the transfer of ECO Reinsurance Pool to Karachi. We hope parties concerned will address this issue.

ECO Shipping Company

58. Some problems concerning amendments made in the Articles of Association and Procedures of the Audit Board, as well as existing legal, financial and auditing systems of ECO Shipping Company are under discussion of the equity share holders. We hope that these issues would be resolved amicably and the Company made financially viable.

ECO Air Project

59. ECO Air Project has been abandoned and it will not be reported in future.

DCCU

60. CPR has approved the draft Project Document for the second phase of ECO/UNDP/DCCU Project. UNDCP has informed that due to some administrative reasons, they would need to combine the project documents of Phase 1 and 2 without any policy or budgetary change for the sake of showing continuity of the two phases of the Project. Secretariat is in constant touch with UNDCP to get the project implemented.

61. Now in the field of sharing information and learning from each other's experience on drug issues, we have another opportunity at hand. We have the support of the decision making body of ECO to foster relations with the Drug Advisory Program of Colombo Plan and we are pursuing the matter with them. All data and reports on Drugs can now be seen at <http://www.ecodccu.org>. Member countries' Anti Narcotics Departments have also been linked through this web site.

ECO Awards

62. After the successful disbursement of this award on the occasion of 6th ECO Summit in June 2000, which helped encourage the intellectuals and scientists of ECO region, new awards will be disbursed this year. All Member Countries are requested to send nominations for the award as well as the Selection Panel.

External Relations

63. ECO is getting new international prominence and stature through its outward-looking approach and its cooperative relationship with major regional and international organizations including those within UN System.

64. Last year I met the Secretary General of the United Nations H.E. Kofi Annan, UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown, UNFPA Executive Director Ms. Thorryya Obaid, and World Bank President James Wolfensohn. Apart from providing necessary visibility to ECO, I elaborated on the needs of ECO region as a whole. All these important international personalities promised to accelerate their pace of cooperation with us.

65. Another testimony to the fact that ECO is gradually acquiring high profile is the pending requests of many countries including Russian Federation, Georgia, Egypt, and more recently Ukraine for observe status. We need to take a strategic view of this issue and should open our door to these states, making ECO more truly a representative organization of this region. Also, our relations with UN Specialized Agencies are progressing to our full satisfaction.

Conclusion

Excellencies,

66. ECO is progressing at a reasonable pace. The achievements are neither spectacular nor unsatisfactory. As its Chief Executive, I know there is a room for improvement. But we may not lose sight of the fact that intergovernmental decision-making process and implementation is a lengthy process. This is true for ECO when its membership profile is taken into account. The new members have been making important strides towards becoming market economies. But this process will certainly take more time. Therefore, the founding members are expected to show more sense of ownership towards ECO projects/programmes. At the same time I am convinced that we should catch up with other regional integration efforts. Comparatively ECO is lagging behind. It is only with Member States' diligence sense of ownership that we will make up for the lost time.

67. In my view, what restraints rapid growth of trading links between our Member States is the bureaucratic inertia. We have to cut across this barrier by ensuring more consultation process among Member States. The decisions of the 3rd meeting of Working Group of Senior Officials to examine ways and means to improve the effectiveness & efficiency of ECO and reconsider its Regional Institutions and Specialized Agencies – need to be given serious thought by RPC while deliberating on ECO programme and calendar of events for 2002.

68. I would also like you to focus on issues discussed by ECO Staff in strategic papers already submitted to ECO members and RPC. These strategic papers realistically capsulate the vision of those who deal with the issues on daily basis and aim at consolidating whatever has so far been achieved. The maturity and incisive

approach adopted by ECO Staff in preparing these strategic papers testifies the richness of institutionalized capacity of ECO and Member States should harness it by building closer organic link with ECO Secretariat.

69. Before I conclude, I would like to recall that last year I proposed raising awareness among officials in Member States about the relevance and utility of ECO. More support for higher-level participation in RPC approved activities was solicited. The results have been mixed. We need to give more political and financial support to ECO. Wherever needed, ratification of agreements, conventions, legal frameworks, MOUs, should be done without further delay. Non-ratification has slowed down the pace of our progress.

70. Another important segment of our activities, which requires further attention, is the participation of private sector in ECO events. Last year we managed to involve the private sector in two ECO events: first, Buyers and Sellers Meeting on “Textile and Clothing”; second, sub-committee meeting to consider the implementation of ECO Transit Trade Agreement, in which transporters’ associations were gathered with customs officials and national chambers. However, despite our best efforts, ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industries remains dormant and ECO Trade Fair in Karachi could not be held. In all sincerity, we need to create an organic and institutionalized link between SMEs in Member States to give a boost to interstate trade where the prospects are not too spectacular.

71. The honourable delegations have come from Planning Commissions. I am confident that ECO priorities would find a prominent place in respect to national priorities. Today, we cannot prosper in isolation. We need to harness our common synergies and resources.

72. I wish the participants a pleasant stay in Tehran and ensure them of our continued full cooperation in realization of ECO objectives.

Thank you for giving me a patient hearing.