

The 3th RPC Meeting

Statement by H.E. Mr. Shaharyar M. Khan, Pakistan Foreign Secretary

(Tehran, 17-19 January, 1993)

Annex-IV

*Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,*

It is with great pleasure that I extend to you, my dear brother, the sincere felicitations of the Pakistan delegation on your election as Chairman of the meeting of the Regional Planning Council.

Pakistan is bound with Iran in close fraternal ties which encompass a common faith, shared values and culture and a common history. I am confident that with your vast experience and skills you would successfully guide the deliberations of this important session of the Regional Planning Council.

Let me place on record, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, our personal gratitude for the cordial welcome and traditional generous hospitality extended to us in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The warmth and affection shown to us reflects the brotherly ties of friendship and amity which unite our two countries.

I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to pay special tribute to the Secretary General of our Organization His Excellency Mr. Shamshad Ahmad for his unremitting efforts in carrying forward the work of the Organization. His stewardship of the ECO coincides with its recent expansion and we are confident that in the pursuit of our cooperative endeavours his dedication and devotion would be a great asset to the Organization. The members of the ECO Secretariat also deserve our commendation for their valuable services in the preparation of the comprehensive documentation for our meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

It is indeed an auspicious occasion that the Regional Planning Council which is vital in terms of identifying and monitoring the programmes and activities of the Economic Cooperation Organization, is meeting today, with representatives from our brotherly Central Asian and Caucasian Republics and Afghanistan. The recently held extraordinary ECO Ministerial meeting in Islamabad had set the pace and I am sure with the cooperation of our brothers from Central Asia, Caucasus and Afghanistan, this meeting of the Regional Planning Council would be able to delineate a framework to promote economic cooperation in the region to mutual benefit. In this context, we welcome the representation of the Turkish Muslim community of Cyprus in ECO activities.

With the joining of the new members, the ECO has gathered additional dimensions, two of which I would like to highlight:

- i) The policies and actions of ECO now will affect the economic, social and cultural fate of over 300 million people;
- ii) The complementarity among the member states will increase significantly making economic cooperation under the extended ECO more viable.

Mr. Chairman,

As we move towards our declared objectives of enhancing economic cooperation in the region, I would like to recall the words of my Prime Minister who, in his inaugural address at the extraordinary session of the ECO Council of Ministers at Islamabad on 28 November last year, stated: "Today we embark on a new venture that links our countries and our peoples who have been held apart by artificial barriers. Today, the aspirations of 300 million people who share a common heritage and culture have been realized". The Prime Minister went on to say that "history bears witness that the ECO region indeed has great potential of becoming one of the major cooperative endeavours in the contemporary world. We must dedicate ourselves to realizing this objective".

Mr. Chairman,

Fundamental to our deliberations over the next two days would be the perspectives we draw and the guidelines we lay down for ECO economic activities through the instrumentality of the various Technical Committees in the years ahead. In this context, I would like to commend the Council of Deputies for providing us with a comprehensive draft Plan of Action which would encompass ECO activities over a broad spectrum, including in the fields of trade, transportation, communications etc. The draft Plan of Action establishes time frames and presents directions in areas which are vital to promote regional economic cooperation. We hope we could in examining this document try to provide further specific targets in agreed areas of cooperative activity. None of us can over-emphasize the importance of communications in bringing us closer. I wonder if we should not set more ambitious targets than have been presented to us.

Mr. Chairman,

While we move towards privatization it would be equally imperative that we look at how far the development plans of the governments of the member states are more closely synchronized to achieve the objectives we have in mind, especially in the areas of trade, industry, transportation and communications.

I would also like to draw the attention of the distinguished delegates to the Council of Deputies' recommendations in the field of energy. Since energy is a vital resource of the region it would be instrumental in generating the funds or savings that are required to promote greater economic cooperation amongst us and to quicken the pace of economic development.

Mr. Chairman,

The Council of Deputies has rightly focused also on human resource development. One of the recommendations is that 20 percent of all technical programmes to provide training facilities to foreign nations must be placed at the disposal of other ECO countries. Equal emphasis has been placed to set up by 1995 the ECO Science Foundation as envisaged in article XIV of the Izmir Treaty. There is no gainsaying the fact that human resource development would be crucial to the achievement of the objectives which we set for ourselves. Therefore, serious attention must be paid by the concerned Committee to identifying areas as well as outlining the actions required to reinforce our efforts in the field.

Mr. Chairman,

As we look back at the work of the ECO during the past two years, we are reminded of our deep commitment to the goals and objectives of the Organization. The rapid changes taking place in the merging international economic landscape call for our renewed pledge to bring our nations at par with the developed world. Our countries have been blessed with enormous resources waiting to be harnessed for mutual well-being and benefit. We need to intensify and accelerate our efforts in this direction.

In conclusion, may I end by reiterating the resolve of the Government of Pakistan to work relentlessly hand in hand with our partners in ECO to promote meaningful and productive cooperation for the betterment of our peoples. May Allah Almighty bless our collective endeavours to ensure a better and more prosperous future for our coming generations.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

[\[Home\]](#) - [\[Back\]](#)