

## The 3<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting

Statement by H.E. Mr. Ahmet Zeki Bulunc, Undersecretary of TRNC Prime Ministry's State Planning Organization and Leader of the Turkish Muslim Community of Cyprus Delegation

( Tehran, 17-19 January, 1993 )

*Annex-VI*

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

I thank you and feel honored to have been given the opportunity to address this august Assembly. Personally, and on behalf of my delegation, as well as on behalf of the Muslim Turkish People of Cyprus, I would like to extend our warmest and most cordial thanks to the Government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their warm hospitality that is being extended to us.

I would likewise congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, for having been elected to the Chair, and I am confident that your experience and skills will crown this meeting with success.

I should also not fail to pay tribute to the distinguished Secretary General for his untiring efforts to render the Organization an effective instrument for regional cooperation and development, and he can rest assured of our full cooperation in ECO's future work.

I would also like to express our heart-felt thanks to the founding members and extend a big warm welcome to the new member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Membership of the new independent Muslim states of the region, bringing the total population of the member states to 300,000,000 people, forms a considerable human potential which, under the guidance of this esteemed Organization could become an economic force as well.

*Mr. Chairman, Dear Delegates*

As you are all aware, the Council of Ministers has adopted at the end of last November series of modalities for the participation of the Turkish Muslim Community of Cyprus in ECO's economic, social, technical and cultural activities.

We, as the Turkish Cypriot People are honoured and are looking forward to take part, cooperate and contribute, to the best of our ability to the furtherance of the objectives of the ECO.

*Mr. Chairman,*

The siege and a relentless war of economic attrition waged upon the Muslim Turkish people of Cyprus, between the years 1963-1974 by the Greek Cypriots, continues to this very day in the form of an inhuman economic blockade, political denigration and

isolation in the international arena. Despite these negative factors, the Turkish Cypriots have succeeded in achieving a self-sustained and viable economy in the Eastern Mediterranean with growing regional ties.

Before giving statistical data, I, as the Undersecretary of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Prime Ministry's State Planning Organization, I would like to note that our Organization, which is composed of four Directorates, is the sole competent authority in the formation of the country's economic and social policies, in the preparation of five-year development plans as well as annual programmes.

I would now like to bring to your kind attention few statistical information reflecting the socio-economic potential of Northern Cyprus.

The average rate of annual growth of our economy has been 5.7% between the years 1975-1992. During this period, North Cyprus completed the necessary organizational and physical infrastructures for a dynamic economy, based on a free market approach.

The average annual growth rates have been 14.7% in tourism, 12.1% in industry, 8.3% in transportation-communication, 8.5% in financial institutions, 8.4% in construction and 7.2% in wholesale and retail trade sectors.

As a result of this economic growth, income per capita has increased extensively leading the Turkish Cypriot People to a higher living standard. During 1975-1992, per capita income has reached 3,447 US dollars, from 1,014 US dollars.

Despite various constraints, North Cyprus has also achieved a rapid progress in its foreign economic relations, having trade relations with more than 70 countries. The foreign trade capacity of the country rose from 106.9 m US dollars to 447.0 m US dollars with a yearly average increase of 11.6%.

The Turkish Cypriots have adopted the free-market economic model and accepted liberalization as the main economic principle. All legal amendments parallel to the world-wide improvements have been made to create the necessary environment for improving banking and trade sectors.

The Free Port and Zone at Famagusta, where incentives such as exemption from income tax and corporation tax are applicable to investors. Free Port and Zone is exempt from all customs duties.

The North Cyprus economy has also a well-developed Banking sector. During the last 13 years, the sector of financial institutions has grown with a yearly average rate of 8.5% and the number of banks increased considerably.

A new off-shore banking law has been enacted and seven off-shore banks have been registered already. Further applications from abroad are being filed in to establish new off-shore banks.

Although priority has been given to high quality motorway construction, investments are also being channeled to the improvement of air and sea transportation.

Ercan and Gecitkale Airports are operating with modern facilities. Scheduled and chartered flights to a number of countries via Turkey are being carried out regularly.

Passenger and freight transportation are available at all four sea ports of the country.

The communication system has been improved extensively and technologically modernized. The telephone network has been renewed and the capacity widened. Fibre-optic cables and digital electronic system have been installed and mobile radio-telephone system has been put into service.

In our country, where telephone, fax and telex services are widely available, the number of telephone subscribers is over 40,000, out of a total population of 175,000, and telephone density is 25%.

High standard health services have been widely and evenly distributed within the country. There are 8 fully-equipped government hospitals, 13 government health centres, 36 private hospitals and 172 private specialists. Health statistics indicate that there are 690 patients per doctor, 1498 patients per dentist, 1473 patients per pharmacist and 6 patients per bed.

Education has become a rapidly developing sector. Education is free and compulsory until 15 years of age; attendance rate is over 90% in classic and technical secondary schools and 29.4% in universities.

We have four Universities carrying out their curricula in English language. These Universities offer graduate and post-graduate degrees in the fields of economics, business administration, international relations, engineering and architecture. In the near future, new faculties of agriculture and medicine will be added to the existing capacity. These Universities which gained international reputation, have academic ties with some well-known Universities abroad and they already give educational services to students from 23 brotherly Muslim countries. I should hasten to add that these education opportunities are also at the disposal of the students from the countries members of ECO, for whom a certain number of scholarships may be offered.

North Cyprus has also a high tourism potential due to its unpolluted environment, climate, natural beauties, archeological and historical remains, sandy and clean beaches, and modern hotels and holidays resorts. In accordance with the force of the economic development. Investors in this sector enjoy a wide range of legal incentives. With these incentives, investments have rapidly increased and a large number of modern touristic hotels have been constructed. The bed-capacity recently reached 7000, in more than 90 hotels. The number of tourists has exceeded three hundred thousand in 1990. Net tourism revenues is the most important item in the balance of

payments with a share of 71%, and has increased during the last 4 years from 52 m US dollars to 224.8 m US dollars.

A tourism master-plan which is under way, is going to enable this sector to use its present potential in the most rational way.

Before concluding my words on tourism, I would like to offer to share our experience and knowledge in the field of tourism to the member countries and if approved, will be more than happy and honoured to host a meeting on this subject in North Cyprus.

*Mr. Chairman,*

I would also like to thank and congratulate the Secretary General for his splendid report.

In conclusion, I would like to assure all the distinguished representatives of the States Members of ECO that we, the Turkish Cypriots, are determined to play our part vigorously and diligently in the activities of the Regional Planning Council, Technical Committees, Expert and Working Groups and Seminars within the framework of this Organization. I am sure that we, with our economic capacity and the required infrastructure, shall be able to contribute to the economic, technical, social, sportive and cultural cooperation among the ECO countries to the furtherance of the objectives of the esteemed Organization.

Thank you.

Ahmet Zeki Bulunc, Undersecretary