

The 2nd RPC Meeting

The opening statement of H.E. Dr. Mohammad Habibian,
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Annex-II

IN THE NAME OF GOD

*Excellencies,
distinguished brothers,*

I would like to start my statement with the sincere greetings of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the distinguished delegations of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey and welcome our brothers to the second session of the Regional Planning Council of ECO.

The annual sessions of the RPC provide us with an excellent opportunity to make an assessment of the activities and accomplishments of the seven technical committees as well as set the course of our cooperation for the coming year. Therefore, these sessions play a pivotal role in helping the three member countries of the Organization to take decisions and work out measures and guidelines that render our efforts towards the realization of our common objectives as effective as possible.

In the light of such an important responsibility, it will be as important for the present session to highlight the achievements of the past year in all the related fields as to identify specific areas where due to certain shortcomings such as insufficient attention to planning or lack of coordination, results so far achieved have fallen short of expectations.

Given the importance of practical measures aimed at the translation of our decisions into concrete actions and results, the question of allocation of required resources to the approved and pipeline projects within the budgetary and procedural framework of each country or through any trilaterally agreed arrangement should be seriously considered. Working out practical measures in this respect will provide us with the actual means of implementing our decisions within agreed timetables. Furthermore, it will help us in focusing on areas of priority where, in view of existing constraints and bottlenecks, attainable objectives can be set.

Dear brothers,

In light of the newly emerging international situation, we have a unique opportunity to join hands in order to lay the foundations of a framework for cooperation that can serve as an example not only for our own region, but for the whole developing world. It is our strong belief that with the vast potential available to our three brotherly countries in terms of natural, human and economic resources, the Economic Cooperation Organization stands a very good chance of attaining an increasing important position in what has, rightly or wrongly, come to be called the new world order. This is amply certified by the momentous developments of the past year creating

completely new social, political and economic conditions in our part of the world. After decades of deprivation and imposed isolation, our Moslem brothers in the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union are freely voicing their aspirations to join us in our efforts to consolidate and enlarge the scope of our Organizations.

Obviously, the experience we have gained through many years of cooperation among our three countries will be tremendously useful in helping them with their social and economic development. In fact, it is the good fortune of our Organization that it is posed to serve as an effective vehicle for change, prosperity and development in the region.

Distinguished delegates,

Regarding the actual performance of the Organization, note has to be taken of the fact that all the seven committees were able to hold their meetings in accordance with the consolidated timetable of events agreed during the first session of the Regional Planning Council. This in itself is a clear indication that the Organization, having passed through the initial phase of preparation for its new course of activities, is already on the right track and to achieve its objectives with full determination. The fact that all the committees succeeded in considering the principal issues relevant to their particular spheres of responsibility, drawing up detailed lists of proposals and setting schedules for a number of concrete measures, augurs well for the future.

However, in certain important areas where agreements in principle have already been reached, concrete action is yet to be taken. The establishment of the joint financial institutions, the active involvement by the private sector enterprises of the three countries in the cooperation process through joint arrangements, the setting up of a data bank, sharing of experience and exchange of information in economic restructuring, privatization, liberalization and macro-economic policies and cultural and scientific exchanges are a few cases in point.

On the other hand, in some areas progress already achieved as well as prospects for future achievements are truly commendable. Concrete steps taken in the fields of transportation and postal services making for further enhancement of trilateral efforts in the future are among this category of positive results.

When all is said, there cannot be the slightest doubt that with unwavering commitment of the three brotherly countries to make the Organization fully successful in carrying out its worthy mission as an effective institution dedicated to progress and development for the three noble nations, any existing difficulties will be overcome and the path to comprehensive cooperation made as clear and free of obstacles as possible.

I would like to conclude my statement with a wish for the success of this session and a happy and memorable stay for my Pakistani and Turkish brothers in Iran. A vote of thanks is also due to the distinguished Secretary General and his staff for their efforts and dedication to the cause of cooperation among the three countries. Thank you.

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