

The 2nd RPC Meeting

Statement of His Excellency Dr. Yavuz Ege,
Secretary General, Economic Cooperation Organization

(Tehran, 27-28 January, 1992)

Annex-V

*Honourable Leaders of Delegations,
Honourable Secretary General,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

At the beginning of my statement, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the warm hospitality accorded to my delegation and for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting. My profound thanks also go to the ECO Secretariat for the well prepared documents which will no doubt greatly facilitate our deliberations.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you Mr. Chairman for your election to the chair of the meeting. I am confident that your experience and leadership qualities will bring our meeting to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Chairman,

At this second meeting of the Regional Planning Council, our task is to review the work done by the Technical Committees of ECO during the interim period since our first meeting, and submit our recommendations to the Council of Ministers scheduled to meet at the beginning of next month in Ankara. We note with satisfaction that all of the seven committees which were established by the amended Treaty of Izmir, had been able to meet on time, keeping with the calendar of events determined for the current period. During the course of this period, while the newly established committees have designated their proper areas of work and possible projects of cooperation pertaining to them, the existing ones tried to finalize the projects on their agenda.

In fact, concrete progress has been achieved towards the finalization of several projects since our first meeting held last April here in Tehran. To mention some of them, the protocol on Preferential Trade System together with its annexes is ready to be signed by the Ministers; the ECO Chamber held its first General Assembly Meeting thus initiating the activities stipulated in its Statute to facilitate close cooperation among the private sectors; and, last but not least, with the nomination of a firm by the Islamic Republic of Iran the prospects for Turk-Pak to become a full-fledged tripartite consultancy and engineering firm have increased.

Notwithstanding these promising developments, however, the finalization of the draft statute of the ECO Investment and Development Bank could not be made so far due to several postponements of the meeting among the Central Bank Governors of Iran and Pakistan and the Director General of the Turkish Development Bank. However, we hope this issue will be settled as soon as possible, in accordance with the understanding reached at the last Council of Ministers.

Mr. Chairman,

The fact that our present meeting is being held in the eve of the Ministerial Council and the Summit Conference of the Heads of States of the ECO member countries, further increases the importance of our meeting. The recent developments in the world economic and political scene and, in particular, the breakdown of the Soviet Union into several independent republics many of which have common historical and cultural ties with the ECO member states, will have important implications for the scope and future activities of ECO.

In fact, the recent request of some Republics to join ECO is the first indication of these implications for our organization. Turkey which has been the first country to recognize the Republics, wholeheartedly welcomes the requests to join ECO. We believe that with such an enlargement the potential for economic cooperation within EGO would be greatly enhanced due to an increase in economic complementarities.

Judging from these developments, it seems that during the period ahead of us, finalization of the current projects and initiation of well prepared and feasible projects will assume more importance. To achieve this we must strictly observe the principles for the rationalization of EGO activities, that is to say, we should avoid proliferation of activities, refrain from initiation of projects that are not supported by feasibility studies and avoid duplication of work between the committees.

In this connection, I wish to point out that we support in principle the proposal of Iran regarding the restructuring the ECO calendar of activities and tying it to certain principles so that all the meetings could be held in a more orderly and rational manner. Last but not least, let me emphasize another very crucial issue. via attach great importance to the realization of free play of market forces as well as liberal trade within our region. In this way we shall be able to establish a sound basis for economic cooperation and in . turn contribute to the well-being of our people.

I would like to conclude my statement by wishing all the success to the Council.

Thank you.