

The 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications

Islamabad Communiqué

(Islamabad , 27-28 April, 2000)

Annex-IX

The Third ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications was held in Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan on 24-28 April, 2000. The Meeting chaired by H.E. Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah, Minister of Communications of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was attended by the Ministers of Transport/Communications and high level delegates of other Member States.

2. The Meeting was inaugurated by General Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, who, in his opening remarks urged the delegates to work towards realising the goals and aspirations for cooperation set forth in Izmir Treaty, Quetta Plan of Action, Istanbul Declaration, Almaty Outline Plan and Ashgabat Declaration (1997) as well as the Economic Cooperation Strategy of the ECO.

3. While recognizing the deep commitment of each Member State in this regard, the Ministerial Meeting agreed that in line with the spirit and objectives of the ECO basic documents, it was advisable to prioritize the programme according to available resources and set specific time frame for their achievement to maximize economic cooperation through efficient transportation and communications infrastructure. The meeting also underlined the need to attain concrete results to demonstrate the commitment of Member States to realize the goals as set forth in the above-mentioned basic documents.

4. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation reviewed the status of ECO cooperation in the fields of transport and communications and formulated recommendations for development of future course of action for an effective cooperation in the region.

5. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation expressed hope that the task of preparing the Data Bank on the ECO Road Network as well as Roads Directory may be completed on priority.

6. While appreciating the printing of the first edition of ECO Roads and Railways Network Maps, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation agreed that the new edition would be ready at the earliest.

7. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation welcomed the initiation of ECO/IDB/ESCAP/UNCTAD Joint Project on the Introduction of Multi-modal Transport Operations in the ECO region and appreciated wholeheartedly the financial support of IDB which enabled its implementation.

8. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation appreciated the invitation extended by Pakistan to convene the 1st Meeting of the Civil Aviation Authorities and Heads of

Airlines of ECO Member Countries in Karachi on 17-19, November, 2000 and agreed to devise measures which would pave the way for increased frequency and volume of air traffic in the ECO region.

9. The Ministerial Meeting recognized that the establishment of the Permanent Commission on Transport and Communications (PCTC) will contribute to accelerate the provision of adequate infrastructure in the ECO Region.

10. The Ministerial Meeting highlighted the importance of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) in the ECO Region and expressed the hope that finalization of Annexures to the TTFA would be an important step towards its early implementation.

11. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation endorsed the recommendations of the 12th Meeting of Directors General of National Tele-communications Companies and Postal Authorities of the ECO Region held in Istanbul on 1-3- December, 1999 and called for their early implementation, with a view to establishing a Common Postal Area, enhancing cooperation in the development of tele-communication equipment industry and putting into operation Trans-Asia-Europe Fiber Optical Cable System (TAEFOS), in the ECO region.

12. The Ministerial Meeting noted with satisfaction the measures taken for cooperation between ECO and other international and regional organizations particularly the UNESCAP in the activities of common interest regarding transport infrastructure and facilitation of border crossing.

13. The Ministerial Meeting welcomed the invitation of the Government of Republic of Kazakhstan to the ECO Member States to participate in the 3rd International Conference "TRANSEURASIA-2000" to be held in Astana on 14-15 June, 2000.

14. The Ministers and Heads of Delegations expressed profound gratitude to H.E. Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah, Minister of Communications of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and all other government officials of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for their valuable efforts and contribution in the successful organization of the meeting in the beautiful city of Islamabad. The Ministers and Heads of Delegations also thanked the ECO Secretary General and his staff for their adequate preparations and untiring efforts to make this meeting a success.