



14<sup>TH</sup> ECO SUMMIT (Virtual)

Statements of the Observers

March 04, 2021

**Statement by**  
**The President of the TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS**  
**H.E. MR. ERSIN TATAR**  
**14<sup>TH</sup> ECO SUMMIT**

**Mr. Chairman,**  
**Mr. Secretary General,**  
**Excellencies,**

It is a distinct honour for me to address the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). I extend you all the heartfelt greetings of the Turkish Cypriot people.

At the outset, I would like to thank H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the president of the republic of turkey for hosting this important summit, which brought us together, at least virtually, during this difficult time where the whole world is still struggling with COVID-19 pandemic.

I also would like to express our gratitude to H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, the Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization and his able staff for their efforts in making this organization a success.

**Excellencies,**

Covid-19 pandemic is a global crisis which has not only adversely affected the health systems of countries, but also caused severe damages to their socio-economic structures. I hope and believe that, we will overcome this difficult period through solidarity. Undoubtedly, economic cooperation organization will play a significant role as an important regional player to this end.

I would like to express my gratitude for republic of turkey's generosity in sending thousands of shots of vaccines and medical equipment as well as the construction of pandemic hospital in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus within less than two months at this difficult time.

I avail myself of this opportunity to state that the TRNC government and Turkish Cypriot people are grateful for the unwavering support extended by the republic of turkey in all aspects of life from economy to politics, from construction of infrastructure to health. In this context, I would like to convey my heartfelt and sincere thanks to the president of the republic of turkey, H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for mobilizing all the resources available for the well-being of my people.

After diagnosing the first covid-19 positive case on 10 March 2020, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus immediately scaled up the necessary actions to prevent, suppress and break transmission of the virus.

Parallel to these measures to mitigate transmission, we have introduced bills that included direct payment to employees, support for businesses and unemployment programmes. The primary objective of our country has been to provide and protect the public health and to support the leading economic sectors to improve their resilience throughout the pandemic.

Allow me to share some statistics with you. More than 6,000 students from eco member states are studying at our universities. According to the official data, the number of eco member state citizens visited the TRNC has reached more than 55,000 people annually in the latest pre-pandemic years. Please note that the abovementioned figures do not include the number of Turkish citizens who have already visited our country.

Increasing access to covid-19 vaccine presents us an opportunity to transform our socio-economic policies to the post pandemic era. We have introduced and begun to implement the vaccination plan, according to which around 70,000 shots have already been administered. in that vein, our government is planning to complete the preparations to be able to host university students and tourists from brotherly eco countries and the rest of the world as soon as possible.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus shares a common history and culture with the ECO member states and is fully committed to the objectives of the economic cooperation organization at large and the eco vision 2025 in particular. The TRNC recognizes that historical and cultural affinities among the eco states are important elements in enhancing our cooperation that will lead to further economic integration.

The TRNC has a vast experience and expertise in the tourism sector which is one of the prioritized areas of cooperation in eco through which our country has lot to offer ranging from drafting a tourism strategy to health tourism, as well as educating the personnel in the tourism sector. We are ready to work with the eco secretariat as well as with each and every member state on a road map developing our cooperation on this specific area and other areas of mutual interest.

In addition to the previous events co-hosted in the TRNC, I would like to reiterate our desire to co-host "the 4<sup>th</sup> Experts Group Meeting on ECO-Tourism", "Second Workshop on Capacity Building and Best Practices on Biodiversity issues", Workshop on Protected Areas Systems". Workshop on ECO-System Services" and the 4<sup>th</sup> Experts Group Meeting on Tourism, with the participation of all Member States towards the end of the year should the COVID-19 pandemic allow us.

**Excellencies,**

Please allow me to take this opportunity to express our views regarding the recent political developments on the Cyprus question.

As your Excellencies know, there is an important informal meeting to be hosted by the United Nations secretary-general between 27-29 April 2021, with the participation of the two sides on the island and the guarantor powers namely, turkey, Greece and the United Kingdom along with the United Nations.

As the United Nations secretary-general has underlined that "*the purpose of the meeting will be to determine whether common ground exists for the parties to negotiate a sustainable, lasting solution to the Cyprus problem within a foreseeable horizon*".

The Turkish Cypriot side will participate in the 5+UN meeting with goodwill and creativity in the search of a freely negotiated and mutually acceptable settlement in Cyprus. H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres repeatedly underlines that "*this time must be different*". It is our considered view that this time can only be different if we learn from the previous mistakes and do not trap ourselves in the same formula that has repeatedly proven to be a recipe for failure for over 50 years.

After numerous failed negotiation processes for a so-called federal settlement in Cyprus due to the Greek Cypriot side's intransigence to share power and prosperity with the Turkish Cypriot people, the Turkish Cypriot people is now proposing a realistic and sustainable settlement in Cyprus, namely a model based on sovereign equality and two states that may lead to a cooperative relationship between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot peoples.

Based on the lessons drawn from the previous processes, it has become evident that without first equalizing the international status of the two sides, any attempt to find a negotiated settlement is bound to fail and can only lead to trapping us in a vicious cycle of failed processes.

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Mr. Secretary-General,**

The Turkish Cypriot side, on many occasions in this platform, has raised the issue of unjust and painful isolation inflicted on every aspect of the daily lives of the Turkish Cypriot people. The inhuman isolation, coupled with the magnitude of the pandemic, is more severe than ever.

I strongly call on the brotherly member states of eco to show determination to put an end to the isolations and lend their helping hand to their brothers and sisters in the TRNC at a time when solidarity is most needed.

**Thank you.**

**Statement by Secretary General of the Turkic Council**  
**H.E. Mr. Baghdad Amreyev,**  
**14<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit**

**Esteemed Presidents,**  
**His Excellency Mr. Secretary General,**

As it has been mentioned today by all of our leaders, such times of hardship not only come with unprecedented challenges but also have the potential to offer new opportunities. This cannot be more applicable to any other situation than the pandemic we are all going through.

The Turkic Council since it became an observer in Economic Cooperation Organization in 2012 has proved to be a reliable partner of ECO, especially given that all of our 5 member states are concurrently members of the ECO family as well.

From this point of view all our economic undertakings are undoubtedly are complementary to each other's efforts in this field.

There are various areas of cooperation that both organizations would benefit from. However, I would like to distinguish 3 main areas that are particularly of great importance for our shared region.

First of all, diversifying our economies both in the pandemic and post-epidemic periods will undoubtedly pave the way for an increased regional trade.

Primarily, it can be achieved by establishing effective mechanisms at national and regional level for restoring trade to expected levels and facilitating trade operations through Preferential Trade Agreements where it is possible. This is what we are working for in the framework of the Turkic Council.

Secondly, we believe that diversifying modes of transport and particularly ensuring a more efficient use of existing railway and maritime infrastructure in trade are paramount for our countries.

And given the growing significance of improving connectivity developing an efficient system will considerably reduce costs and time of transport and transit that ultimately contribute not only to increasing trade turnover, but also to sustainable economic development in our shared region, producing a multiplicative effect.

Thirdly, a special emphasis should be placed on introducing innovation in every applicable field of cooperation in our region.

Equally, supporting digital competitiveness of our region will be the key to recovery after the pandemic.

In this respect, harmonization and digitalization of customs and border crossing procedures would be essential in terms of facilitating movement of goods and people in the region. We believe that this particular field should rank among our common priorities.

The process of digitalization of transportation between Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan and Uzbekistan-Turkey has already started.

**Excellencies!**

Once again, I would like to stress that the Turkic Council; stands ready for successful partnership with ECO and to actively take part in reaching the objectives set by Your Excellencies in today's high-level discussions.

Bu vesileyle, Sayın Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'a bölgemizdeki işbirliğini artıracak bu önemli Zirveye ev sahipliği yaptığı için bir kez daha teşekkür etmek istiyorum.

Zat-ı Alilerinizin önümüzdeki günlerde Türkistan'da düzenlenecek Türk Konseyi Zirvemizin başarısına da etkili katkı sağlamasını arzu ediyoruz.

**Statement by the Secretary General of the International Energy Charter**  
**H.E. Dr. Urban Rusnak**  
**14<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit**

**Excellences, distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to attend the 14<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit Meeting. My sincere gratitude to the Republic of Turkey for hosting the meeting and facilitating a very important discussion on the theme of “Regional Economic Cooperation in the Aftermath of Covid-19”.

I very much appreciate our continued cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization. I believe this cooperation is very logical by its nature, taking into account our overlapping constituency. Nine ECO Member States out of ten are full Members of the International Energy Charter. I hope that Islamic Republic of Iran, which is an observer now, will eventually make a decision to upgrade its status and to accede to the Energy Charter Treaty.

As the Secretary General of the International Energy Charter, a unique multilateral instrument for international energy cooperation, I will be focusing on energy-related aspect of post-COVID recovery.

I think it is obvious now that the corona virus pandemic is having, and will continue to have, a dramatic impact on energy supply and demand balance around the globe. On one hand, we are facing a decline in the energy use, fossil fuels in particular, due to downturn mainly in transport and heavy industry sectors. This is a good sign for energy transition to pave the way forward to carbon neutrality. But on the other hand, does this really mean an end of fossil fuels era? Despite some progress, there is still an enormous work to be done to improve energy efficiency and scale up renewable energies in order to meet the objectives of the Sustainable Development Agenda and Paris Agreement. We are talking about billions of investment needed to ensure access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy.

I am glad that we are on the same page with the ECO countries in addressing these pressing issues. Promoting energy cooperation and integrating energy markets is crucial to achieve sustainable development through developing and sharing scarce natural resources. Regional energy cooperation has multiples benefits, including technical, economic and environmental. We need to accelerate regional integration in order to benefit from economies of scale, available technologies and resources.

As you are very well aware, last year, together with the ECO Secretariat, we kicked off the work on establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market. The event helped all of us to develop a common vision and to reflect on common benefits of power market integration. Indeed, this is a very promising but challenging task, where political will of the Member States is of utmost importance.

The International Energy Charter is ready to support its Members and to continue this work towards the regional electricity market in the ECO region; thus, contributing to sustainable development, energy security and energy transition.

**Thank you for your attention.**

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