

## Opening Remarks

**H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, the ECO Secretary General,**  
**Mid-Term RPC - 2021**  
**(July 28, 2021)**

**H.E. H.E. Mr. Toyli Malikov, the Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan**

**H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov, the Chairman of Council of Permanent Representative and Ambassador of Turkmenistan**

**Excellencies,**

**Dear Participants**

I am pleased and privileged to welcome the distinguished participants of this Mid-Term Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council. I thank all the delegates who made it kindly convenient to attend this important event.

As you are kindly aware, the basic mandate of RPC which is held in the beginning of every year is to review the previous activities of the organization, while considering and evolving some fresh programs and projects to be executed for maintaining the momentum of regional development on annual basis.

However, this particular mid-term RPC event is being organized to review and adjust the year 2021's activities and engagements of the Organization in special consideration of COVID-19 and the conditions emerged in the aftermath of the pandemic that obliged a shift in the methods of working at regional and global levels.

As you are all aware, this Mid-Term RPC Meeting is taking place in the time that Turkmenistan is the Chair of the Organization under the great leadership of H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov the honorable President of Turkmenistan. I personally had and have to opportunity to benefit from his Excellency's wise and seasoned guidance to enrich the agenda of ECO.

I am happy to recall that the first half of this year witnessed several important ECO meetings, including expert groups events as well as ministerial interactions.

We have been able to hold successful 14<sup>th</sup> Summit on March 14, 2021 with the highest level participation from Member States at the level of Heads of State/Government. The event was virtually chaired and hosted by the honourable President of the Republic of Turkey. I am glad to recall that 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit is scheduled at Ashgabat in the fourth week of November 2021. I may also underline that Summit is an event of greatest significance since it brings a valued opportunity to gather our Heads of State/Governments for reviewing the performance of the Organization and to guide its future strives in the larger interest of the region.

The ECO Secretariat is ardently working to comply with the useful ideas and proposals expressed by our leaders during the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit for greater regional integration. Let me recall that a High Level Committee established by CPR to review the ECO Vision 2025 and consider the proposals of ECO Heads of States made in the last Summit, is regularly meeting and is in process of developing comprehensive vision review to pursue the organization's developmental goals.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

Another important event held this year is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of ECO (PEACO) organized by the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on June 1 - 3, 2021. The event witnessed larger number of participation from parliamentarians of the Member States. The honourable President as well as Prime Minister of Pakistan graced the occasion with their kind participations and guidance. PAECO is an important ECO mechanism to support and push the agenda of the Organization.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> General Conference of PAECO strongly supported and encouraged the implementations, operationalization and strengthening of the ECO mechanisms and arrangements and building blocks for regional cooperation and integration as well as increase in the intra-regional trade and connectivity among ECO member states. The Islamabad Declaration was also adopted by the Conference. The main focus of the adopted document is to underscore the importance of transit trade, reducing the cost of doing business, and financial infrastructure in expanding intra-regional trade volumes.

I am thankful to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for offering the 3<sup>rd</sup> PAECO Conference in 2022 at Kabul.

## **Distinguished Delegates,**

I am delighted to say that in pursuance of the decision of 24<sup>th</sup> COM concerning the ECO's project-oriented approach, we have remained focused on preparing and implementation of development projects in the region. This outreach appeared to bear notable outcomes, especially increasing the number of small-sized regional projects to gratify our concept of making the ECO a more project-and-result oriented organization.

Despite the tight working conditions taking place due to the ongoing pandemic, the ECO Secretariat is determined to secure the Organization's aims and objectives within the ECO developmental framework. Nevertheless, a more collaborative, interactive and coordinated approach of the Member States is required to support the Secretariat for the maintenance of its obligatory responsibilities to meet the ECO's agenda of regional development in effective and efficient manners.

I conclude with the expectation that the kind contribution and support of the event's participants would facilitate the purpose of this midterm meeting of RPC.

**Thank you**