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Foreword



This present special issue of ECO Chronicle presents some of the highlights of the 14th ECO Summit organized under the theme of "Regional Economic Cooperation in the Aftermath of COVID-19".

ECO has made remarkable progress in key areas since the 13th ECO Summit held in 2017 in Islamabad. ECO continued its efforts for fostering regional integration and mutual cooperation among the Member States leading to sustainable socio-economic development in the region. One of the main achievements realized in this period was the conclusion and approval of the comprehensive reform process. Having revitalized by the reforms, ECO is on

the right rather upward trajectory. Sense of ownership and partnership is governed. As a result, participation by the Central Asian Member States in the ECO's affairs has been increased significantly and it is envisioned that in a decade ahead ECO would be a Central Asian oriented organization. The evidence to such a new orientation is the novel and visionary guidance provided by the Honorable Presidents of this part of the ECO through their valuable and brilliant ideas during the 14th ECO Summit.

The COVID-19 has changed the regional and global socio-economic trends. ECO as a regional organization has a potential to advance its role in the revival and advancement of regional economies in the post-COVID-19 era. Particularly based on the recent project and result oriented approach, a fresh momentum has generated for implementation of various activities and programmes in priority areas of ECO in line with the Vision 2025 aimed at enhanced intra-regional trade, increased regional integration, upgraded energy efficiency, balanced economic growth, strengthened regional tourism industry and advanced social welfare structure.

The 14th ECO Summit appraised the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of the region and provided the strategic direction for enhanced regional cooperation in the aftermath of COVID-19. The 14th Summit also supported the project oriented approach of ECO which is significantly attributing the activities of our organization since the 13th ECO Summit held in 2017. I am very much grateful to the honourable Heads of State/Government for their visionary guidance provided at 14th ECO Summit for alleviating the adverse socio-economic impact of the pandemic and to strengthen regional cooperation to accomplish the objective of a well developed and prosperous ECO region.

Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour ECO Secretary General







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Republic of Turkey organizes the 14th ECO Summit

he Republic of Turkey organized the 14th ECO Summit virtually on March 4, 2021 under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the honourable President of the Republic of Turkey. The event, convened under the theme of "Regional Economic Cooperation in the aftermath of COVID-19", was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Imran Khan, the honourable Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The Meeting was attended by H.E. Mr. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the

Republic of Azerbaijan; H.E. Dr. Hassan Rohani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran; H.E. Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan; H.E. Mr. Sadyr Zhaparov, President of the Kyrgyz Republic; H.E. Mr. Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan; H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan; H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Turkey; H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, President of Turkmenistan; H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, Secretary



General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) as well as the ECO Observers, including the President of Turkish Cypriot State, H.E. Mr. Ersin Tatar, Secretaries General of the Turkic Council and International Energy Charter were also present in the Summit.

Inaugurating the Summit, the Prime Minister of Pakistan welcomed the ECO leaders and highlighted the important developments made by the ECO during the Pakistan's chairmanship of the Summit. He thanked and congratulated the Republic of Turkey for organizing the 14th ECO Summit. Noting the regional and global health and economic consequences of COVID-19, he highlighted his five-point plan providing fiscal space to developing countries to deal with the adverse socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan also made six specific proposals to enhance the regional economic cooperation in the aftermath of COVID-19. He emphasized

that it was essential to reject linking Islam with terrorism. The Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's abiding commitment to ECO, to the founding principles of the Izmir Treaty and to full implementation of ECO Vision 2025.

Later, the President of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was unanimously elected as Chairman of the 14th ECO Summit. The Heads of State/Government and ECO Observers congratulated H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan on his election as Chairman of the Summit. The President Erdogan emphasized the need of strong solidarity, regional and global cooperation for achieving the success against COVID-19. He underscored that the Republic of Turkey, during its Chairmanship, focused on strengthening the Organization and advancing regional cooperation.

H.E. President Erdogan, while acknowledging the significance of ECO for regional development, emphasized on the early implementation of ECO Trade Agreement



(ECOTA) and other progressive initiatives aimed at pushing the process of development in the region. He noted that the COVID-19 pandemic gravely damaged the global economy and trade, straining on the existing healthcare system. President Erdogan said: "we can only win the fight against this global debacle through strong solidarity, regional and international cooperation." He underscored that during Turkey's Chairmanship of the Organization, the country had remained focussed on consolidating the organization and advancing regional cooperation. He felicitated H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the honourable President of Turkmenistan for assuming the chairmanship of the ECO for 2021, extending his best wishes for the country's success as new ECO Chair.

The honorable President of Turkmenistan, H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, expressing thanks for the assigned responsibility, assured of his country's complete support to secure the organization's overall aims and objectives. Voicing the priority sectors of cooperation within the framework of Turkmenistan's chairmanship of the ECO, he underlined his country's intention to promote the organization's work, focussing on the development of economic, cultural and humanitarian ties. He added that unfolding of the trade, transit-transport, energy, industrial and communication potential of the ECO would remain in the center of Turkmenistan's strategy during their chairmanship of the Organization. President Berdimuhamedov considered the establishment of economic corridors as a system of sustainable routes for the movement of goods, services, investment and industrial cooperation as well as energy corridors for diversification of energy resources supplies in the region, as Turkmenistan's key mission, with participation of Member States. He underscored that the essence of cooperation amongst ECO Member States was the geographical and historical ties, shared traditions, customs and values.

The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, felicitated H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of the Republic of Turkey for organizing and chairing the 14th ECO Summit. He briefed the ECO leaders about important activities of the Organization made during last year, referring steady progress in priority areas including trade, transport, energy, tourism and industry.

He also illuminated the finalization of latest reform process to enhance the sense of owner/partnership amongst all Member States, as well as ECO's fresh approach for making the organization more project and result oriented. He recommended some special initiatives for stimulating the intra-regional developmental activities that underwent in the aftermath of COVID-19.

The Heads of ECO Member States commended the valuable contributions of Dr. Soleimanpour made for accelerating the realization of the organization's agenda. Noting the impacts of COVID-19 pan-

demic, they highlighted the key aspects of their countries' response to the crisis and emphasised on an enhanced collaboration amongst the Member States to mutually address the pandemic's affects as well as joint strategy for developing the region's healthcare system. The ECO Heads of States/Governments extended felicitations to H.E President Berdimuhamedov for Turkmenistan's assumption of responsibilities as the new ECO Chair. In the concluding moments of the Summit, a ceremony was organized in Baku for signing the Charter of the ECO Research Centre.

The Summit is the highest-level forum wherein the Heads of State/Government of the Member States exchange views on regional and global issues of common interest to the ECO region and review the objective conditions and progress in implementation of ECO programmes and activities. The 15th ECO Summit was scheduled to be held on November 28, 2021 in Turkmenistan.



Prime Minister H.E. Imran Khan

inaugurates the 14th Summit of Economic Cooperation Organization

ECO CHRONICLE The Prime Minister of

Pakistan, H.E. Imran Khan, inaugurated the 14th Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Summit, held virtually under the theme of "Regional Economic Cooperation in the Aftermath of COVID-19".

In his wide-ranging opening address, the Prime Minister congratulated Turkey on successfully organizing the Summit during these challenging times. He highlighted the regional and global health and economic consequences of Covid-19, and elaborated Pakistan's 'people and poor-centric approach' to tackle the pandemic. The Prime Minister highlighted his 5-point plan to provide fiscal space to developing countries to deal with the adverse socio-economic impacts of the Covid-19.

The Prime Minister stressed the importance of stemming the disturbing trends of religious discrimination and Islamophobia in different parts of the world. He underscored that COVID lockdowns had enabled the suppression of peoples in occupied territories struggling for their right to self-determination. The Prime Minister underscored the importance of rejecting any



attempt to link Islam with terrorism and opposing the use of 'freedom of expression' to cause pain to Muslims by denigrating the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Highlighting the need for close collaboration for enhanced connectivity, trade linkages and energy flows within the ECO region, the Prime Minister recalled the ECO Vision 2025 adopted during the 13th ECO Summit in Islamabad in March 2017. He proposed a mid-term review of progress of its implementation and expansion of requisite cooperation. The Prime Minister underscored the importance of dialogue between ECO and other regional and international organizations to advance mutually beneficial collaboration.

The Prime Minister underlined the importance of peace and stability in Afghanistan for success of

physical integration in the ECO region. He also welcomed the ECO rail connectivity projects such as Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) commercial cargo train and stressed timely completion of cross-border energy projects such as TAPI gas pipeline and CASA-1000 electricity grid.

The Prime Minister underscored that for Pakistan, "the vision of the ECO's regional economic integration is an essential component of a strategy to transform the tensions of geo-politics into the dividends of geo-economics."

The Prime Minister made six specific proposals for enhanced regional economic cooperation in the aftermath of COVID-19:

Mobilization of national and international resources to recover from COVID-19 pandemic, as per his 5-point plan;

Building of resilient health care systems to respond to such crisis in future;

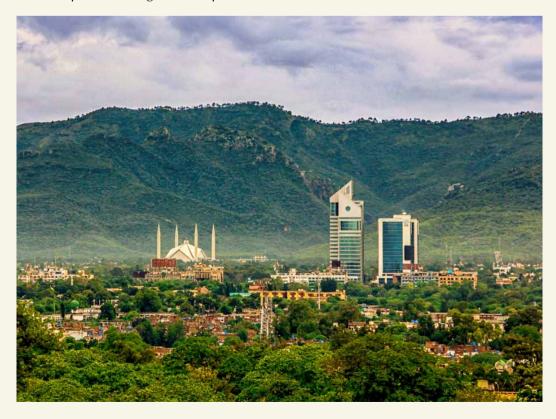
Development of integrated transport network to

facilitate both intra-ECO trade and to serve as pathway for trade with other global economies;

Establishment of ECO Investment Agency along with organization of Annual ECO Investment Fair;

Pursuit of trade promotion measures such as simplification of border procedures, establishment of intra-regional institutional linkages, reinforcement of existing regional mechanisms and implementation of ECOTA.

Promotion of knowledge-based economies, increased expenditures on research and development, and focus on rapid digitalization especially extension of broadband to all parts of ECO countries.



Speech by H.E. Mr. Imran Khan the Prime Minister of

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

at the

14th ECO Summit

Distinguished Heads of States and Governments, Secretary General ECO, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalam-o-Alaikum,

In Pakistan's capacity as the 13th Summit Chair, it is my honour to formally open the 14th Summit of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

I extend warm welcome and cordial greetings to all the participating leaders.

We appreciate President Erdogan's initiative in organizing this virtual Summit.

Convening the Summit in these difficult times is a reflection of our collective commitment to ECO.

We commend Secretary-General Hadi Soleimanpour for ably leading the Organization's work.Pakistan congratulates Turkmenistan as the next ECO Chair.

I also congratulate President Ilham Aliyev on successful liberation of Azerbaijan's occupied territories. Excellencies,

In 2017, we celebrated the silver jubilee of expansion of ECO membership and adopted the landmark ECO Vision 2025 and Islamabad Declaration on the occasion of the 13 th Summit, hosted by Pakistan.

It reflected Pakistan's strong resolve to advance our institutional goals and energize ECO as a dynamic Organization for regional cooperation.

Excellencies,

The focus of our present Summit - "Regional Economic Cooperation in the Aftermath of COVID-19" - is both apt and timely.

Like the rest of the world, the Member States of the ECO have been severely affected by the unprecedented health and economic crisis unleashed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 115 million people have been infected by the virus, and more than 2.5 million have lost their lives.

The world is still grappling with the pandemic's multiple dimensions. The full extent of its health, social, financial and economic impact on our countries has yet to be fully





14th ECO Summit

determined.

It is evident that developing countries, including the ECO members, have been disproportionately affected. Our economies have contracted. Trade has declined. Poverty and inequality have increased.

Excellencies,

We, in Pakistan, realized that we must prevent our people from dying from the virus and from hunger.

We pursued a 'people and poor-centric approach' and relied on a strategy of "smart lockdowns." We simultaneously focused on saving lives, securing livelihoods, and stimulating the economy.

Despite our financial constraints, my Government allocated an unprecedented 8 billion dollars to support the poorest and most vulnerable households and small businesses, with direct cash handouts and subsidies under the Ehsaas (Compassion) programme.

Pakistan has registered over half-a-million confirmed cases of Corona, but, Alhamdulilah, our recovery rate has been 93.5%.

Currently, in a population of 220 million people, we have over 1,000 daily infections. Our response strategy has been internationally appreciated, including by the WHO.

Excellencies,

The COVID-19 pandemic is not over yet. We must ensure that our peoples secure the earliest possible access to the vaccines being produced, on an affordable and equitable basis. The vaccine must be declared a "global public good." No one will be safe from the virus unless everyone is safe.

Pakistan has begun its vaccination drive with the front-line health workers as our highest priority.

We must also address the economic impact of the pandemic. The world economy has contracted by 5 per cent. The rich countries have injected \$20 trillion to stimulate their economies. Our economies are equally affected. But we do not have the capacity or fiscal space to create such liquidity.

I have proposed a 5-point plan to provide

developing countries the fiscal space to recover from the COVID crisis, including: Debt relief; SDR creation and redistribution; Concessional finance; Mobilization of climate finance; and Ending illicit financial flows and return of stolen assets to developing countries.

Excellencies,

Apart from its health and economic consequences, the COVID crisis has exacerbated the manifestations of religious discrimination, xenophobia and Islamophobia in various parts of the world. We have witnessed this in our immediate neighbourhood. The COVID lockdowns have also enabled the suppression of peoples in occupied territories struggling for their right to self determination.

It is essential to reject any attempt to link Islam with terrorism. Similarly, we must oppose attempts to use 'freedom of expression' to hurt the special feelings of the Muslims towards the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

At the UN, Pakistan, Turkey and other OIC countries have initiated a proposal for the annual observance of an 'International Day to Combat Islamophobia.'

Excellencies,

The Member States of ECO represent half a billion people and cover a contiguous area of 8 million square miles (or 12 million square km). We form the geographical link on the Asian Continent between East and West, North and South.

We possess the two essential pre-requisites for economic growth - rich resources and enterprising people. We have the potential for much larger production and consumption

Our common heritage and culture, nurtured by luminaries like Al- Beiruni, Farabi, Rumi and Iqbal, provide a solid foundation for cooperation under the ECO umbrella.

In the Vision 2025, the ECO members have set themselves an ambitious agenda of enhanced collaboration - in Trade, Energy, Tourism, Agricultural and Industrial Growth, and Social Welfare. We should undertake a mid-term review of the progress made, accelerate the pace of implementation, and

deepen the scope of our cooperation.

Excellencies,

In advancing our common objectives, we must take full advantage of our geographical location, economic assets, and political relationships. Regional connectivity and integration has been proven to be essential for rapid growth and development. Enhanced physical infrastructure will generate economic activity, trade, employment, mobility and cross-border exchanges.

Peace in Afghanistan is crucial to the success of such physical integration in the ECO region. I hope that successful culmination of the Intra-Afghan Negotiations will lead to durable peace and security in Afghanistan.

Excellencies,

Our priorities and goals are clear. I propose that we focus on the following six points:

First, we need to recover robustly from the economic and health crises induced by the pandemic. We must mobilize the national and international resources required for this purpose. I request ECO's support for my 5-point agenda mentioned earlier.

Second, we should adopt a plan to build resilient healthcare systems to respond to such crisis in future. We must possess the capacity to produce the medical equipment and medicines essential to respond to chronic and infectious diseases.

Third, we should develop an integrated transport network to facilitate both intra-ECO trade and serve as a pathway for trade between the major economies to our East and West, North and South.

The Istanbul-Tehran- Islamabad commercial cargo train and proposed Uzbekistan-Afghanistan- Pakistan railway links are important regional connectivity projects. In addition, linking CPEC with Afghanistan and beyond is vital.

Fourth, we must implement the cross-border projects already agreed among ECO members, including TAPI gas pipeline and CASA 1000. Establishing an ECO Investment Agency and organizing an annual ECO Investment Fair where investment-ready projects could be presented to ECO and

global investors are ideas that should be explored.

Fifth, studies indicate that our mutual trade, which is just 8% of our total trade, could be expanded ten-fold. Enhanced transport links will help. But, we should promote conscious measures for trade promotion; simplify border procedures; establish intra-regional institutional linkages; reinforce existing regional mechanisms like ECO Trade Development Bank; operationalize ECO Trade Agreement; and develop new initiatives like the Clearing Union.

Sixth, to remain competitive, we must promote knowledge-based economies; expand expenditures on research and development; and focus on rapid digitalization especially extension of broadband to all parts of our countries.

The ECO, as envisaged in the Vision 2025, should engage in dialogues with other regional and international organizations. We could emulate some of the successful models of cooperation in the EU, ASEAN and the African Union.

Excellencies.

For Pakistan, the vision of the ECO's regional economic integration is an essential component of a strategy to transform the tensions of geo-politics into the dividends of geo-economics.

I would like to conclude by reaffinning Pakistan's abiding commitment to ECO, to the founding principles of the Treaty of Izmir, and to the full implementation of ECO Vision 2025.

Excellencies,

As per the rules and procedures of the ECO, I now propose election of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as the Chair of the 14th Summit.

I congratulate His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Turkey, on his election and give him the floor to carry the Summit forward.

I thank you all.

President H.E Erdogan at the 14th ECO Summit:

"We can Strengthen our Economic and Trade Relations by Eliminating the Threats to our Security and Stability"

ECO CHRONICLE Addressing the 14th ECO Summit,

President Erdogan said, "We should always bear in mind that it is not possible for us to render the organization effective without a strong budget. We can strengthen our economic and trade relations by eliminating the threats to our security and stability."

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan addressed via video conference the 14th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Drawing attention to the grave damage the COVID-19 pandemic, which he noted has turned into a global crisis, has caused to economy and trade as well as healthcare, President Erdogan said: "Only through strong solidarity and through global as well as regional cooperation can we achieve success in the fight against this global disaster."

Underscoring that Turkey, during its term of presidency, has focused on consolidating the organization and advancing regional cooperation, President Erdogan noted:
"We have continued our works



despite the challenges of the global pandemic. As Turkey, we have put all our means at the disposal of the entire humanity as well as of our own citizens during this difficult period. With the belief of, 'A friend in need is a friend indeed,' we have provided medical aid and support to 157 countries and 12 international organizations. We have also made great progress in the studies for a domestic and national vaccine."

"We should work very hard in order to achieve the goal of 100-billion-dollar trade volume between the member countries," President Erdogan pointed out and added: "In this regard, it will be beneficial to immediately put into effect the Economic Cooperation Organization Trade Agreement, which has yet to be implemented for 17 years. ECO bank, located in Istanbul, has become an important organization for the financing of the organization's projects. I also consider it to be necessary to increase the corporate and financial capacities of ECO bank so as to meet the increasing needs of the member countries. On this occasion, I once again call on to countries that are not members of ECO bank to become a member of it."

Highlighting the importance of cooperation in transportation, the President expressed his satisfaction that the work on the resumption of the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad freight train services had reached its final phase.

Drawing attention to the victory Azerbaijan has achieved in its lands under Armenia's occupation, President Erdogan went on to say: "Our priority

from now on is to contribute to the establishment of security and stability in Karabakh, and to repair the destruction caused by the 30-year-long occupation. I believe that we, as the organization, will be in full solidarity with Azerbaijan during this period. We also hope that Armenia will be a part of the regional stability by the peaceful steps it will take. I would like to reiterate that we never have and never will approve anti-democratic interventions which disregard the people's will."

President Erdogan also called on all the member countries to enhance their relations with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in every field and help it to overcome the injustices it is experiencing.





Speech by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan the President of the

Republic of Turkey at the **CO Summit**

Honourable Heads of State and Government.

Esteemed Ministers,

Dear Secretary General,

Valuable representatives of international organizations:

I greet you with heartfelt sentiments and affection.

I am delighted to come together with you, albeit not physically, on the occasion of the 14th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

I pray to Allah that the Summit will be an occa-

sion of beneficence for our countries, our region and whole humanity.

With this meeting, we take over the Summit Chairmanship from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, as we hand over the Chairmanship of the Council of Ministers, which we held for a year and a half, to Turkmenistan.

In your presence, Dear Brothers, I wish the President of Turkmenistan His Excellency Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow success, and I express my gratitude to the Prime Minister of Pakistan His Excellency Imran Khan for his efforts and contributions.

Dear Brothers:

The COVID-19 pandemic which has turned into a global crisis, has become a threat affecting all aspects of our lives.

This scourge, which has so far claimed the lives of approximately 2.5 million people,

> has also inflicted great damage on trade and economy, as much as on health.

Therefore, we have considered appropriate to hold our Summit meeting under the theme of "Regional **Economic Cooperation in** the Aftermath of COVID-19".

We can only win the fight against this global debacle through strong solidarity,

regional and international cooperation.

To that end, we should make the best use of our Organization.

For the sake of our common trade, no doubt, the compulsory restrictive measures must be transparent, proportional and temporary in their nature.

Dear Brothers;

During our Chairmanship, in line with the priorities we had announced, we have focused on strengthening the Organization and advancing regional cooperation.

We continued our work with determina-





tion despite the limitations brought about by the pandemic.

In these difficult times, as Turkey, we offered our capacity to the service of not only our citizens but of entire humanity.

We have provided medical assistance and support to 157 countries and 112 international organizations believing that "a friend in need is a friend indeed".

We have made great progress in our domestic and national vaccine development efforts.

We have significant potential to increase the commercial activities among us.

However, it is a fact that the desired level of economic cooperation could not have been achieved since the establishment of the Organization.

We must work relentlessly to achieve the 100 billion dollars intra-regional trade target.

The implementation of Economic Cooperation Organisation Trade Agreement, ECOTA, after 17 years, without further delay will be beneficial to this end.

ECO Bank, which we host in Istanbul, has

become an important organization in financing ECO projects.

I consider it necessary to strengthen ECO Bank's institutional and financial capacity to meet the growing needs of the Member States

On this occasion, I want to renew our call on the States that are not members to the Bank to consider doing so.

We have made significant progress in the field of transportation thanks to the infrastructure projects in the recent years.

We have completed Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge, Marmarail and Eurasia Tunnels, connecting Asia to Europe, and put them into service.

With the Osman Gazi Bridge, we have opened the Marmara Sea to traffic in North-South direction.

Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway project, together with the Edirne-Kars high-speed train project and the 1915 Çanakkale Bridge on the Dardanelles that are all under construction, will reinforce this connection.

Under the leading hand of Turkey, our

Trans-Caspian East-West Middle Corridor Initiative, which aims at revitalizing the historical Silk Road, will enhance east-west interaction.

We are pleased that regular services have been started to China and from China to our country through this corridor.

The work on the resumption of the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad freight train services has reached its final phase.

I would like to take this opportunity to express that we deem the Belt and Road Initiative of China significant and support this initiative on a win-win basis.

Tourism and travel sector has been one of the fields where the effects of the pandemic are felt the hardest all over the world.

We have implemented a series of measures in line with the principles announced by the World Tourism Organization to mitigate the effects of the pandemic.

We have already started preparations for 2021, in order for it to be a year that over-compensates the losses in our tourism industry.

We are ready to improve our cooperation with you in these sectors.

Dear Brothers,

It is very important to implement the ECO Vision 2025 document in order to achieve our mutual goals.

We support the establishment of the ECO Vision Fund to be used in the financing of the projects and programs envisaged in this document.

We should further embrace ECO and continue the reform process in order to transform our Organization into a result-oriented body and render it effective in the face of COVID related challenges and opportunities.

We should remind ourselves that unfortunately it would not be possible to revitalize the Organization without a strong budget.

Esteemed friends,

We can strengthen our economic and commercial relations through the elimination of threats to our security and stability.

Our brother Azerbaijan liberated its lands occupied by Armenia through an epic victory, opening the doors for a new era in the region.

From now on, our priority is to ensure security and stability in Nagorno-Karabakh, repair together the damage caused by 30 years of occupation by Armenia.

I believe that as an Organization we will stand in full solidarity with Azerbaijan during this process.

We hope that Armenia will become a part of regional stability through the peaceful steps.

I would like to repeat here once again that we do not and will never approve of antidemocratic interventions that disregard the will of the people.

In Afghanistan, located at the heart of Asia, a new turn has been taken to end many years of conflict and achieve peace.

The termination of the unilateral sanctions imposed on Iran and the return of all Parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and re-assuming their obligations under the Plan, will contribute to the economic prosperity and stability of our region.

In this regard, I invite all Member States to develop relations with our brothers and sisters in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in every field and to help them overcome the unjust isolation they are subjected to.

The fight against terrorism and international cooperation in this area has maintained its importance in pandemic conditions, as it has in every period.

Turkey resolutely continues its fight against terrorist organizations such as DEASH, PKK/PYD/, FETO in this period as it has in the pre-pandemic period.

Before I conclude my words with these thoughts in mind, I would like to salute each one of you for your participation.

On behalf of my country and my nation I extend my condolences to your citizens who lost their lives during the Covid-19 pandemic.

I salute you all one last time with affection and respect.

President H.E. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov

Turkmenistan's Strategy as the Chairman of the ECO

<u>ECO</u>

The President of Turkmenistan

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov participated in the 14th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization which was held via video conferencing. It is vital to note that the chairmanship of ECO in 2021 has passed to Turkmenistan.

The heads of state and government of ECO Member States, as well as the heads of international organizations, particularly the Energy Charter and the Turkic Council participated to the Summit under the theme of "Regional Economic Cooperation in the Aftermath of Covid-19".

Speaking at the Summit, the President of Turkmenistan voiced the priority sectors of cooperation in the framework of the chairmanship of the country in the Organization and underlined that the state intends to actively promote the work of ECO with the focus on the development of eco-



nomic relations between ECO countries in order to increase the volume of intra-regional trade turnover.

While unfolding the Turkmenistan's strategy as the Chairman of the ECO, President Berdimuhamedov stated, "Our strategic goal is to promote comprehensive cooperation within the ECO framework in the economy, trade, industry, energy, transport and communications, as well as cultural and humanitarian spheres".

"As Chairman of ECO, Turkmenistan intends to actively promote expansion of cultural, sports, educational, youth and tourism relations in the spirit of friendship, brotherhood, commitment to common moral and ethical values that unite our peoples and states", the President of Turkmenistan further added.

The President of Turkmenistan also highlighted the imprtance of stability in Afghanistan and stated, " Separately, I would like to emphasize the great importance that Turkmenistan attaches to economic revival of Afghanistan as the most important factor in establishing lasting peace and harmony on Afghan land. We have been providing and will continue to assist this brotherly country in the restoration of its economy, energy supply, transport and communications systems,

and in the construction of social facilities".

The leaders of the ECO congratulated the President of Turkmenistan with assuming the Chairmanship in the ECO and welcomed the vision of the President on intensifying the work of the oreganization.

As the Chairman of the organization, the President of Tukmenistan proposed to organize the next ECO Summit in Ashgabat on November 28, 2021, on the occasion of the ECO Day.





Speech by H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov

the President of the

Turkmenistan at the **CO Summit**

Distinguished Mr. Chairman! Distinguished Heads of State! Distinguished Secretary-General!

First of all, I would like to express my grati-

tude to the esteemed President of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for organizing this Summit.

I would like to highlight and thank him for the successful and effective chairmanship of Turkey in the **Economic Cooperation** Organization.

Distinguished Heads of

Turkmenistan regards today's meeting as an important stage in the work of our Organization, both in terms of assessing and analyzing progress made and identifying prospects for the future. In general, I think we can note progressive nature of activity of the Economic Cooperation Organization and its positive impact on the course of regional partnership

Today, ECO is a major and reputable international structure that is recognized worldwide. Over the years of Organization's existence, various agreements and decisions have been reached among the member countries on priority issues of interstate cooperation.



A lot of work has been done to prepare viable strategy aimed at using our great common potential for the mutual benefit and socio-economic growth

A number of joint projects have been launched, among which I would like to emphasize projects in the transport and commu-

nication spheres, which play an important role in economic life of region today. The member states continue to take measures for effective development of regional trade, economic and investment relations.

The most important factor in the activity of our Organization is that it continues to distinctly follow the principles and goals laid down at its foundation almost thirty years ago when the Economic Cooperation Organization was enlarged with new members and formed its current membership. I am referring to the fact that ECO has mainAnd today ECO actively goes beyond regional boundaries by developing cooperation with other international organizations and many countries.

Being the ECO member country we can rightly consider all these achievements as our joint positive asset. But time does not stand still; it requires us to develop new approaches to Organization's activities, taking into account current realities, trends in the world economy and direction of regional processes. In this regard, ECO is entrusted with great tasks corresponding to the specific needs of our region and its unique geo-economic significance.

Here I would like to stress the unifying essence of ECO as a mechanism of an economic partnership of States united by geography, history, traditions and values, as a natural format for the implementation of joint projects based on our objective advantages and common interests.

ECO has necessary potential not only to participate in global and regional economic processes but also to actively impact the trends in their development. Therefore, the main task of ECO today, in our opinion, is to ensure sustainable development in the region by economic means and to create opportunities for broad and constructive economic cooperation in the name of peace and prosperity.

This is how Turkmenistan is considering its forthcoming chairmanship in ECO. I express my deep gratitude to all member states for the trust placed in our country. We view our chairmanship as a responsible and high mission, and we will make every effort to make it successful, effective in the interests of all members.

And now allow me to introduce you with main priorities of Turkmenistan's chairmanship in the coming period.

Our strategic goal is to promote compre-

hensive cooperation within the ECO framework in the economy, trade, industry, energy, transport and communications, as well as cultural and humanitarian spheres.

We intend to work with our partners to create conditions for further intensification of trade and economic relations between our countries. We aim to increase the volume of trade turnover and develop it through diversification.

To this end, Turkmenistan proposes to initiate the establishment of economic corridors in the ECO region.

We see them as a system of sustainable main routes for the movement of goods, services and investments. We believe that the most important component of this system of economic corridors is industrial cooperation, integration of production and technological potentials of our countries, and access to joint major infrastructure projects.

It is obvious that transport and communications are to play a key role in realizing the goals of economic development of ECO countries and their full participation in modern processes.

We see the ECO as a space network of convenient, cost-effective, high-tech transport and communication centers and routes in the Eurasian continent.

Our countries have a number of successfully implemented projects in this sector. As the most recent examples we can mention commissioning of a power transmission line Kerki (Turkmenistan) Shibergan (Afghanistan), opening of 30-km railway section between Akina-Andkhoy stations in Afghanistan, launching International fiber-optic communication system on the route Imamnazar (Turkmenistan) - Akina (Afghanistan) and Serhetabat (Turkmenistan) - Turgundi (Afghanistan), which were held in January this year.

We propose to consider implementing such large-scale and multilateral projects in different areas with participation of other ECO countries.

Creation of transport corridors and logistics centers is of particular importance today. Therefore, I believe that it is necessary to intensify ECO's project activities in this area and to identify the most promising schemes and routes.

In this regard, we propose to pay special attention to combine transport corridors along the East-West line, from the Asia-Pacific region to the European part of the continent and the Middle East.

We also suggest expanding cooperation in the Caspian Sea region. Because four out of five Caspian Sea states are members of ECO. With this in mind, we should actively move west and north across the Caspian Sea, to the ports of the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea.

We also consider it important to establish energy corridors in ECO region and to diversify energy supplies with participation of our states. At present Turkmenistan together with its partners is constructing (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) gas pipeline. This is an example of fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Work is underway on the implementation of a project of power supply along the route (Turkmenistan-Uzbekistan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan) and (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan).

However, I am confident that we need additional energy corridors, both within ECO region and beyond its borders.

We believe that in this regard our Organization could establish a focused dialogue with other interstate organizations of the continent such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Strategic interests of these organizations could be in line with those of ECO on a mutually beneficial and equal basis.

Separately, I would like to emphasize the great importance that Turkmenistan attaches to economic revival of Afghanistan as the

most important factor in establishing lasting peace and harmony on Afghan land. We have been providing and will continue to assist this brotherly country in the restoration of its economy, energy supply, transport and communications systems, and in the construction of social facilities. We see a strategic perspective for Afghanistan in its close integration into regional and continental economic ties as a participant in significant joint projects in industry, energy, transport, communications, and logistics.

As Chairman of ECO, Turkmenistan intends to actively promote expansion of cultural, sports, educational, youth and tourism relations in the spirit of friendship, brotherhood, commitment to common moral and ethical values that unite our peoples and states. In this regard, we propose to pay special attention to cooperation in the field of science and medicine, exchange of experience and knowledge in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

Distinguished participants of the Summit! Turkmenistan considers ECO as one of the factors of positive development of regional processes and sees in our Organization a promising potential for implementation of national economic growth programs of member countries.

At the same time, we understand that our common task is to effectively use the opportunities of ECO for well-being and prosperity of states and peoples, peace and progress in the region. As a Chairman of ECO, Turkmenistan will make every effort to achieve these goals.

In conclusion of my speech, I would like to propose holding the next Summit of the Heads of State of the Economic Cooperation Organization in Ashgabat on November 28, 2021, on the Day of Economic Cooperation Organization and, esteemed colleagues, I invite you all to visit the capital of Turkmenistan to participate in this meeting.

Thank you for your attention.

ECO Secretary General

presents an Overview of the recent Developments made in various fields of Cooperation

The ECO Secretary General,

H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, addressed the opening session of the 14th ECO Summit and underlined the important activities of the Organization made during last year, referring steady progress in some priority areas including trade & investment, transit-transport, energy, tourism as well as activities and engagements for enhanced economic connectivity in the region.

The ECO Secretary General felicitated H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of the Republic of Turkey for organizing and chairing the 14th ECO Summit. He appreciated that the ECO turned to be a more project and result oriented Organization under the chairmanship of Turkey. He also expressed his gratitude to H.E. Mr. Imran Khan, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for country's excellent



guidance of ECO since last Summit. The ECO Secretary General congratulated H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the President of Turkmenistan over assuming the organization's Chairmanship for 2021.

Dr. Soleimanpour, while focusing on the importance of the implementation of ECOTA, requested the Heads of States/Governments to mandate their

Trade Ministers to be more flexible during their interaction in the next Trade Ministerial Meeting this year.

Regarding transport cooperation, the ECO Secretary General mentioned some of the latest developments made in rails and roads corridors along with formulation of ECO guidelines under COVID-19 conditions to facilitate trans-border movement of essential food and medical stuff. "In 2021 under the Chairmanship of Turkmenistan, we plan to turn the major ECO transit corridors into Economic corridors, single window on main ECO Border Crossing points would be established, ECO dry ports would be linked up with the region's main sea ports and ECO sea hubs would be created", the Secretary General informed the Summit.

He recommended some special initiatives for

stimulating the intra-regional developmental activities that underwent in the aftermath of COVID-19. The Secretary General reaffirmed ECO's determination and support to shoulder the process of development and reconstruction in Afghanistan.

The ECO Secretary General noted that during the Chairmanship of Tajikistan, the ECO finalized its reform process. He also shared the key steps taken after conclusion of the latest reform process aimed at increasing the sense of ownership among all Member States and enhancement of efficiency of the organization.



Statement by H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour

ECO Secretary General at the 14th ECO Summit

Honorable Chairman H.E. President Erdogan

Honourable Heads of States and Governments,

Respectable Delegates,

Asalam alaikom and good evening

I am honored to express sincere felicitations to Your Excellency, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the honorable President of the Republic of Turkey for chairing the 14th ECO Summit under the very much relevant theme of

Regional Economic Cooperation in the aftermath of COVID-19. I would also like to extend my deep gratitude to the honorable Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Imran Khan for Pakistan's guidance to ECO since last Summit.

I am also thankful to the Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Turkey for leading the Organization during the last three years. Under the wise leadership of H.E. President Rahmon and Excellency's government, the ECO finalized the reform process aimed at making the Organization more efficient and effective. The ECO turned to be a more project and result oriented

Organization under the seasoned leadership of H.E. President Erdogan and Excellency's government.

I would also like to warmly welcome and congratulate the honorable President of Turkmenistan, His Excellency Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow and

Excellency's Government to assume Organization's Chairmanship for 2021. Under Your Excellency's patronage and visionary leadership, the ECO would make further progress and is expected to be more innovative.

I would also like to appreciate His Excellency Dr. Hassan Rouhani, the honorable President of Islamic Republic of Iran



14th ECO Summit





and Excellency's government for permanent support to ECO Headquarters in Tehran to fulfill its tasks.

Let me also congratulate the newly elected honourable President of the Republic of Tajikistan His Excellency Emomali Rahmon, Honorable President of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan His Excellency Dr. Ashraf Ghani, Honorable President of Kazakhstan His Excellency Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and the Honorable President of Kyrgyz Republic His Excellency Mr. Sadyr Zhaparov. I would like to assure H.E President Ghani that ECO attaches high importance to development of our brotherly country of Afghanistan. I would also like to thank H.E Shavkat Mirziyoyev the honorable President of the Republic of Uzbekistan under whose supportive approach Organization is benefitting from the increased engagements of Uzbekistan in ECO activities.

I further felicitate His Excellency Mr.

Ilham Aliyev the honorable President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the establishment of ECO Research Center in Baku, an initiative of late President H.E. Mr. Heydar Aliyev, which is a remarkable achievement for ECO family to make the organization more multidimensional. On this landmark occasion, let's recall the admirable Azerbaijani martyrs who scarified their lives to maintain territorial integrity of Republic of Azerbaijan.

Let me also congratulate on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Independence of Central Asian Countries and Republic of Azerbaijan.

Moreover, I thank the honorable leaders and observers for their kind participation in this important ECO Event.

Excellencies,

Under your wise leadership and valuable support, the Organization is on the right track. Sense of ownership and partnership is governed. Reform process has refreshed the organization. The project oriented approach is institutionalized, and required regional financial system and investment mechanism to support implementation of regional projects is going to be developed. Excellencies,

Allow me to report some recent achievements in sectoral priority areas.

In transit transport, some latest developments during last year are (i)
Commercialization of Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran (KTI) railway (ii)
Finalization of study reports of Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI) and Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) road corridors, (iii) Resumption of ITI cargo train and (iv) Development of ECO Guidelines under COVID conditions to facilitate trans-border movement of essential food and medical stuff.

In 2021 under the Chairmanship of Turkmenistan, we plan to turn the major ECO transit corridors into Economic corridors, single window on main ECO Border Crossing points would be established, ECO dry ports would be linked up with the region's main sea ports and ECO sea hubs would be created.

Excellencies,

In trade, though we witnessed some progress, desired outcome is to be seen. Today, our intra-regional trade volume stands at around only 8% of the total ECO global trade size.

To boost regional economic recovery in the post-COVID era, there is a strong need to facilitate regional trade and investment. Relevantly, an interim arrangement based on ECOTA is needed while a more comprehensive agreement should be agreed upon to meet national interests of all ten ECO Member States.

I request Your Excellencies to mandate the honourable ECO Trade Ministers to be more flexible during their scheduled interaction in the next Trade Ministerial Meeting this year. In energy sector, three important projects are under steady progress, which include 'ECO Clean Energy Centre', 'ECO Regional Electricity Market' and 'Energy Strategy 2030 including ECO Energy Corridors'.

In tourism sector, the ECO tourism action plan as well as ECO major tour operators' networks, ECO tourism routes and destination chains, and ECO single visa for inbound tourists as well as designing virus free tourism system are in preparation process to be launched in post COVID situation.

Excellencies,

A great experience in the COVID crunch is that confronting with pandemic and other such diseases inevitably require collective efforts and systematic cooperation in the fields of health, medicine, food safety and reliable transit-transport system at regional level.

ECO Region finds a good opportunity in the post-COVID scenario to jointly address the economic recovery of the Member States. This requires a more balanced and comprehensive system for trade and removal of tariff and non tariff barriers, more supportive instruments for intraregional investment, creation of regional value chains, comprehensive regional food security system, enhancement of regional financial system, advanced and reliable connectivity arrangements and appropriate system for public to public and business to business relations. In the given context, insights and support of our leaders are desired and highly appreciated.

In conclusion, I would like to thank H.E. the honourable President of Turkey to host this important ECO event. I also reiterate my deep gratitude to the honourable Heads of States/Governments and Heads of Delegations of the Member States for their valuable presence in the event.

Thank you, Excellencies.

President H.E. Ashraf Ghani

highlights the significance of **Peace and Regional Cooperation** to the ECO region

President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani, said at the 14th ECO Summit that Afghanistan is poised to serve as a roundabout between central, east, south and west Asia and a platform of international and regional cooperation.

President Ghani said that internationally organized and monitored election in Afghanistan to elect the next president is vital in ensuring a balance between constitutional continuity and change in the country.

President of Afghanistan further stated that Pakistan has an especially significant role to play in supporting a lasting peace process, as it is the country most likely to suffer from the adverse consequences of a failed peace process.

"We, the people and govern-



ment of Afghanistan and our international partners, have a true sense of urgency to make and build peace.

Your support for a comprehensive ceasefire to accelerate the negotiations in Doha is essential," the President added. He said for forty-two years, "we have been denied the fundamental right to peace.

It is time to stop the violence that has turned

our beautiful country into a killing field."
The 14th Summit of the Economic
Cooperation Organization (ECO), held under
the theme of "Regional Economic Cooperation
in the Aftermath of COVID-19", wherein the
leaders of regional countries shared their perspectives on COVID-19 challenges and way forward.

The Afghan President said that it is a time for our organization to develop its plan of action for enhancing regional cooperation in the context of the Covid-19, drawing on lessons learned from successes and failures of regional organizations.

"The friendship and partnership between our

countries is founded on a longtime horizon, without expiry or exit dates. Bonds forged through culture, civilization, commerce, history, location and Islamic ideals and networks form the foundations of our relations.

Fortunately, the ties that bind us now are driven by shared vision, common mental models and commitment of leaders to act on the demonstrated advantages of bilateral and regional cooperation", the Afghan President added.





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Speech by H.E. Dr. Ashraf Ghani the President of the

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan at the

ECO Summit

Excellency Erdogan, President of Turkey and Chair of the 14th Summit of ECO,

Excellencies Heads of States and Governments,

Doctor Hadi Soleimanpour, Secretary General of ECO,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to first of all congratulate President Erdogan on assuming the Chairmanship of this important Summit and to thank PM Khan for his stewardship during Pakistan's chairmanship. I am confident that under

your able leadership ECO will engage in meaningful and result-based deliberations and decisions.

We celebrated 100 years of diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and Turkey vesterday and it's a singular honor, Mr. President Erdogan, to congratulate you on this important milestone in our bilateral relations. The friendship and partnership between our countries is founded on a long-time horizon, without expiry or exit dates.

The same applies to our relations with every member country of ECO. Bonds

> forged through culture, civilization, commerce, history, location and Islamic ideals and networks form the foundations of our relations. Fortunately, the ties that bind us now are driven by shared vision, common mental models and commitment of leaders to act on the demonstrated advantages of bilateral

and regional cooperation.

The mutual trust resulting from the sense of mutual interests is finding concrete expression in the implementation of transformational programs and projects- such as TAPI, TAP, CASA 1000, railways. Having renewed our conception of ourselves as a crossroad, gates of the sub-continent and





a meeting ground of civilizations, cultures, ideas, and people, Afghanistan is poised to serve as a roundabout between central, east, south and west Asia and a platform of international and regional cooperation. ECO, therefore, is an important catalyst for the realization of our vision and action program.

The disruption caused by Covid-19 marks a disruption between the world of pre and post-2020. Let me express the deepest sympathies of the Afghan people and government to our brothers and sisters in ECO countries.

We have been fortunate in having managed the first and second wave of Covid-19, with minimum loss of lives. The toll taken on our livelihoods, however, has been significant, which we are addressing through a national program of distribution of food packages to 90% of our fellow citizens.

Regional cooperation has been the key

to our ability to minimize the adverse impacts of Covid-19. I would like to thank Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan for the uninterrupted functioning of supply-chains and value chains and medical supplies, Iran for quick resumption of trade and transit and generous medical assistance to Afghan refugees, Azerbaijan and Turkey for medical supplies and advice, and Pakistan for resumption of trade and transit after initial closure.

Thanks to your cooperation and India's cooperation in keeping the air corridor operating and a generous assistance in vaccines, the Afghan people have enjoyed continuous access to essential goods and basic services.

Covid-19 is producing a reset in global assumptions and relations. First, the wave of low trust in globalization is accelerating. Second, regional cooperation is becoming more pronounced. Third, the role of the state is becoming more prominent. Fourth,

digitalization is speeding up.

Fifth, transnational networks of terrorism and transnational criminal organizations are changing the scale and scope of violence and the nature of warfare, forcing states, regional and global organizations to rethink the definition of security for citizens, refine the protective function of the state, and refocus on regional and international cooperation.

Early recognition of emerging patterns and shaping the direction of the positive trends and developing tools for collective action to contain or preempt the negative trends will be key to our future stability and prosperity as ECO countries. It is time for our organization to develop its plan of action for enhancing regional cooperation in the context of the Covid-19 reset, drawing on lessons learned from successes and failures of regional organizations. Two issues require particular attention: shaping the rules of the game for multi-dimensional and multi-country cooperation and formulating the systems for design and implementation of transformational programs and projects of regional connectivity, including novel financing mechanisms, insurance, and risk guarantee instruments. Afghanistan's historic role in Asia has been captured by Igbal, Pakistan's national

Asia is but a body of water and earth Of which the Afghan nation is the heart From its accord the accord of Asia From its discord the discord of Asia

poet:

Afghanistan is poised its role as a platform for Asia's accord for security, prosperity, stability and regional connectivity. We are in a truly historic open moment to make a just and lasting peace through a political agreement to eradicate violence by achieving the end-state of a sovereign, democratic, and united Afghanistan, at peace within and with the world. Internationally managed and monitored elections to elect the next president is the critical criteria for ensuring a balance between constitutional continuity and orderly political change. We count on and need your support to secure international and regional guarantees for securing Afghanistan's future. Pakistan has an especially significant role to play in supporting a lasting peace process, as it is the country most likely to suffer from the adverse consequences of a failed peace process. We, the people and government of Afghanistan and our international partners, have a true sense of urgency to make and build peace. Your support for an comprehensive ceasefire to accelerate the negotiations in Doha is essential.

For forty-two years, we have been denied the foundational right to peace. It is time to stop the violence that has turned our beautiful country into a killing field. In the past 48 hours alone, three young female journalists and a seasoned Islamic scholar were murdered. Regardless of who pulled the trigger, the Taliban have a moral responsibility to condemn the violence and socialize peace to their commanders and their rank and file. When we are ready to make peace, their violence has no religious justification, as pointed out by some of the most prominent Muslim scholars.

Afghanistan will continue to support ECO. I do hope, however, that ECO will rise to the challenge of the reset arising from the effect of Covid-19, including as a catalyst for regional connectivity for Afghanistan and a force for regional guarantees for a peaceful Afghanistan.

Let me thank Secretary General Soleimanpour for facilitating the 14th ECO summit at this very challenging time. Let us dedicate ourselves to turning ECO into a model of successful regional cooperation.

Thank you.

President H.E. Ilham Aliyev

asks the ECO countries to join new Transport Corridor in the Region

President of Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, has invited ECO Member States to benefit from the new transport corridor, the Zangazur corridor, to be launched in the region which would pass through historic Azerbaijani land of Zangazur and link mainland Azerbaijan with its inseparable part Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and Turkey. President Aliyev made the remarks at the 14th ECO Summit, held virtually on March 4, 2021.

He said that with the aim of providing peace and stability in the region, we have started discussing transportation projects connecting a number of states. Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran share the same vision for the implementation of the regional transportation projects.

President Aliyev thanked ECO Member States for supporting late national leader Heydar Aliyev's initiative to open the ECO Research Centre in Azerbaijan. President Aliyev also thanked



Turkey, Pakistan, Afghanistan and all other states supporting Azerbaijan during the war with Armenia.

"Azerbaijan pays great importance to its relations with the ECO Member States. Today, we will sign the charter of the ECO Research Centre. We are grateful to the Member States for supporting late Azerbaijani President Heydar Aliyev's initiative and we will do our utmost for the efficient functioning of the centre based in Azerbaijan," he added.

He said that Azerbaijan has made a valuable contribution to solidarity among Islamic countries, calling on Muslim states for unity at numerous international forums.

"Azerbaijan strongly condemns all attempts to associate Islam with violence and terror. We must combat Islamophobia and promote the true values of Islam - peace, tolerance, justice. In this regard, we welcome the decision of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to designate 15 March as an International Day to Combat Islamophobia upon the initiative of brotherly Pakistan," he said.

"We condemn unequal and unfair distribution of vaccines among developing and developed countries. Some countries purchase several times more vaccines vis-à-vis their actual needs. It is clear that in such circumstances, some countries will face a

vaccine shortage. Azerbaijan is planning to initiate a draft resolution on behalf of the NAM at the UN Human Rights Council on this matter and I invite ECO Member States to support this initiative," he stated.

President Aliyev said that Azerbaijan was among the first countries to mobilize global efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic and detailed the initiatives by the country demonstrating its commitment to international solidarity and cooperation. He called on ECO Member States to support Azerbaijan's further steps to prevent the unfair distribution.





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Speech by H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev the President of the

Republic of Azerbaijan at the 14th ECO Summit

Thank you very much, my dear brother, dear President,

Thank you for this introduction while giving me floor.

I would like to inform all our colleagues that

President Erdogan's constant support for Azerbaijan not only during the war, but throughout the time he is President and leader of Turkey played very important role in the liberation of Azerbaijani territories.

Turkey is our brother. Turkey is our great ally. And people of Azerbaijan are happy to have such an ally.

People of Azerbaijan and Turkey and I am sure many people around the world clearly know the historic role of President Erdogan in not only transforming Turkey into one of the strongest centers of power in the world but also in providing security to the region.

Turkey plays an outstanding role in providing security and stability in a broader region. And as I many times said and want to say once again that the stronger Turkey is, the stronger is Azerbaijan and all its partners.

Mr. Chairman, my dear brother Recep

Tayyip Erdogan, Distinguished Heads of State and Government. Mr. Secretary-General,

First of all, I would like to express once again my gratitude to President Erdogan, President

Ashraf Ghani, Prime Minister Imran Khan, my dear brothers for kind words of congratulations during their speech with respect to the victory and the restoration of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

I would like to commend the brotherly Turkey for its successful chairmanship in the Economic Cooperation

Organization. I wish every success to the brotherly Turkmenistan for assuming ECO chairmanship.

Azerbaijan pays big importance to its relations with ECO Member States. Today, we will sign the charter of ECO Research Center. We are grateful to Member States for supporting the initiative of the late President of Azerbaijan Hevdar Alivev and we will do our utmost for the efficient functioning of the Center based in Azerbaijan.

In 2020 Azerbaijan put an end to nearly 30 years of occupation of its territories by





Armenia through military-political means. The military victory won over Armenia on the battlefield was also fully accomplished by political ways.

The United Nations Security Council resolutions of 1993 demanding immediate, full and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian troops from occupied territories of Azerbaijan remained on paper for 27 years. Azerbaijan itself ensured the implementation of these resolutions and restored its territorial integrity. The invaders were thrown away from ancient Azerbaijani lands of Karabakh. The armed forces of Armenia were fully destroyed within 44 days. Azerbaijan forced Armenia to sign act of capitulation on 10 November 2020.

The first country to support Azerbaijan during the war was the brotherly Turkey. We highly appreciate the statements of my dear brother Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Turkey and his political and moral support.

On the 27th and 28th of September of the last year on the first and second days of the

war brotherly Pakistan and Afghanistan called Armenia to put an end to its occupation, implement the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and expressed their support to territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

I express my deep gratitude to them for their support.

I also thank heads of state and government who supported us during the war.

During the time of occupation Armenia deliberately destroyed cities and villages, all cultural and religious sites of Azerbaijan in the occupied territories. Our mosques were used as stables for pigs and cows. Photos and video footages of these scenes are available in the internet. This is animosity against the whole Islamic world. International media has documented the facts of deliberate destruction and desecration of cultural and religious heritage of Azerbaijani people.

Attempts of Armenia, which insulted the feelings of all Muslims, to strengthen its rela-

tions with Islamic countries are therefore nothing but hypocrisy.

Azerbaijan has made valuable contribution to the solidarity among Islamic countries. We have called Muslim states for unity at numerous international foras.

Azerbaijan strongly condemns all attempts to associate Islam with violence and terror. We must combat Islamophobia and promote true values of Islam - peace, tolerance, justice. In this regard, we welcome the decision of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to designate 15 March as an International Day to Combat Islamophobia upon the initiative of the brotherly Pakistan.

Now we have a huge task in front of us - reconstruction of the liberated territories. We will rebuild our cities and villages, restore the cultural and religious heritage in the liberated territories.

Azerbaijan was among the first countries to mobilize global efforts against COVID-19 pandemic. Azerbaijan initiated the Summit of the Turkic Council, the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, two international institutions which we are now chairing and the Special Session of the UN General Assembly at the level of the heads of state and government last year. These initiatives once again demonstrated our commitment to international solidarity and cooperation.

From the beginning of the pandemic, we are closely working with the World Health Organization. We have made voluntary contributions to the World Health Organization in the amount of 10 million US dollars. Azerbaijan has provided humanitarian and financial assistance to more than 30 countries in relation to coronavirus.

Azerbaijan launched vaccination campaign on 18 January. We are among the first in the region to start vaccination.

We condemn unequal and unfair distribution of vaccines among developing and developed countries. Some countries purchase several times more vaccines vis-à-vis their actual needs. It is clear that in such circumstances, some countries will face vaccine shortage.

Azerbaijan is planning to initiate a draft resolution on behalf of the NAM at the UN Human Rights Council on this matter and I invite ECO member states to support this initiative.

Azerbaijan is an important partner in providing energy security in Eurasia. The Southern Gas Corridor was commissioned on 31 December 2020. 3500 km long Southern Gas Corridor connecting 7 countries is one of the biggest energy infrastructure projects in the world.

Azerbaijan participates actively in regional connectivity projects, such as East-West, North-South, North-West transportation corridors, becoming one of Eurasia's main and reliable transportation and logistics hubs. Together with our partners we connected Azerbaijan's transport infrastructure with Lapis Lazuli transport corridor and created broad opportunities for multilateral cooperation in the area of transportation.

As I already mentioned, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict ended after the glorious victory of Azerbaijan over Armenia. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was left in the past.

Now we are looking into the future. With the aim of providing the peace and stability in the region, we have started discussing transportation projects connecting a number of states. Azerbaijan, Turkey and Iran share the same vision for the implementation of the regional transportation projects. Armenia can also benefit from the process if behaves in normal way.

In this context, the new connectivity corridor which will pass through historic Azerbaijani land of Zangazur and link mainland Azerbaijan with its inseparable part Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and Turkey will create new opportunities in the transportation sector in the region. We invite ECO member states to benefit from the "Zangazur corridor".

Thank you for your attention.

President H.E. Hassan Rouhani

says ECO Constitutes a Priority in the paradigm governing Iran's regional and neighbourhood policies

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr Hassan Rouhani, attended the 14th ECO Summit held virtually on 04 March, 2021.

Stressing that ECO enjoys invaluable potential in terms of human and natural resources, energy reserves, complementary economies, interested private sectors, and an incomparable regionally and globally transit and transport advantages, the President said, "ECO constitutes a priority in the paradigm governing Iran's regional and neighbourhood policies".

With a view to accelerating the pace towards realization of the goals and objectives of the organization, the Iranian President emphasized on the



need to concentrate on operationalization of the ECO agreed programmes and decisions.

In this regard, Dr. Rouhani proposed the following actions:

Implementation of ECO trade agreement as well as working out ways and means to expand intra-regional trade

Further activation of private sectors for the sake of trade boost

Strengthening and activation of the existing and new ECO agencies such as ECO Trade and Development Bank, ECO Reinsurance Company, ECO Regional Institute for Standardization (RISCAM), and ECO Chamber of Commerce.

Removal of obstacles and challenges encountering transit and transport cooperation as the transport infrastructure is fundamental for trade expansion

Underlining the significance of transport facilities for enhancing regional trade, the President added "given our geographical location, we are prepared to share our transport network as well as infrastructures and facilities along Persian Gulf and Oman Sea with ECO Members, particularly the landlocked countries, bridging them with international waters and markets".





Speech by H.E. Dr Hassan Rouhani the President of the

Islamic Republic of Iran

at the

CO Summit

Your Excellency Mr Erdogan;

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to you and to your colleagues for effective efforts during Turkey's chairmanship of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), as well as for organisation of this

important meeting. This is a great pleasure to have another opportunity to attend this august meeting of the honourable Heads of ECO Member States. I hope that this Summit will serve as yet another step towards integration, welfare, and prosperity of the nations of the ECO Region as well as the promotion of the ECO.

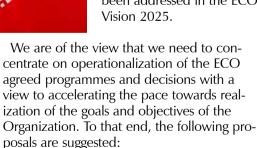
Honourable Presidents,

Economic Cooperation Organization constitutes a priority in the paradigm governing Iran's regional and neighbourhood policies. ECO enjoys invaluable potential in terms of human and natural resources, energy reserves, complementary economies, interested private sectors, and an incomparable regionally and globally transit and transport

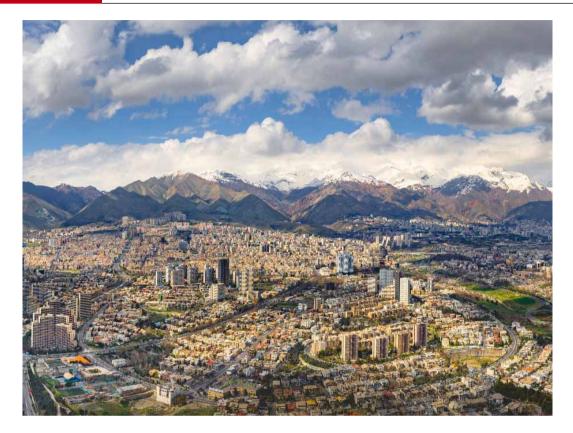
advantages. In fact, ECO meets all the requisites for being a success story of regional integration.

There have been major steps towards the enhancement of economic cooperation within ECO and precious achievements have

> been made. However, in certain areas such as trade, the achievements have not met expectations. Despite the high trade potential and the necessary infrastructure in place, intra-regional trade remains as low as less than 10 per cent- totally unacceptable. This has also been addressed in the ECO



Implementation of ECO trade agreement as well as working out ways and means to expand intra-regional trade,



Further activation of private sectors for the sake of trade boost,

Strengthening and activation of the existing and new ECO agencies such as ECO Trade and Development Bank, ECO Reinsurance Company, ECO Regional Institute for Standardization (RISCAM), and ECO Chamber of Commerce,

Removing the obstacles and challenges encountering transit and transport cooperation as the fundamental infrastructure for trade expansion.

The Islamic Republic of Iran remains ready to actively contribute to the operationalization of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and creating the necessary financial, banking and customs arrangements while having on board all ECO Member States. Given our geographical location, we are prepared to share our transport network as well as infrastructures and facilities along Persian Gulf and Oman Sea with ECO Members, particularly the landlocked countries, bridging

them with international waters and markets.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The international community is now experiencing formidable challenges which have affected all facets of human life. The COVID-19 has deeply and destructively affected economic and welfare conditions of the countries in the world. No country can afford to tackle such challenges single-handedly. Rather, it requires collective will along with joint cooperation. Accordingly, we consider very timely and promising for ECO Region the theme of this Summit, namely "Regional Cooperation in the Post-COVID Era".

In the time of the pandemic, the international community has disappointedly failed to act against unilateral measures and unlawful sanctions dragged into the realm of the fight against the disease, targeting the countries' capabilities in their struggle against this global plague. The great powers' depriving other nations of fundamental rights as

well as their disrespect for international organizations necessitate response from the like- minded countries including through strengthening cooperation and creating a united front against these challenges.

In the last 4 years, the international community has witnessed the US illegal approach and a full-scale economic war against Iran. These cruel and illegal sanctions have inflicted irreparable damage to Iran's government and people. As per Iran's wisdom and insight, the JCPOA has so far survived despite the fact that the US had opted for its obliteration. The US, as the one who violated the Deal, shall lift all sanctions and take practical steps in order to be able to return to JCPOA. The Islamic Republic of Iran will reciprocate action by action. The return path to the JCPOA is straightforward, and if the US government is determined to return, there is no need for negotiations.

Allow me to announce that the US unlawful unilateral measures have failed to bring the

great Iranian nation to its knees.

Notwithstanding severe economic pressure, this nation has relied on its domestic capabilities and has even made breakthroughs and achieved great achievements including in the fight against COVID-19 and its impacts. A vivid example is the production of coronavirus vaccine by Iranian scientists, where we are prepared to extend cooperation with other countries, particularly ECO countries. We are also ready to exchange our views on how to deal with post-Covid era and lay solid foundations for regional cooperation.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by renewing my gratitude to you as well as to the organizers of this Summit in Ankara, and the colleagues in the ECO Secretariat in Tehran. Seizing this opportunity, I would also like to express my congratulations to my dear brother, H.E. Mr. Berdimuhamedow, on the occasion of incoming ECO Chairmanship by Turkmenistan.

I thank you for your attention.



President H.E. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

takes part in the 14th summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization

ECO CHRONICLE The President of Kazakhstan, H.E.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev took part in the 14th summit of the **Economic Cooperation** Organization. At the beginning of his speech, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev expressed gratitude to the fraternal Turkish people and President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan for the assistance provided to his country in the fight against the pandemic. The Head of State noted, in the current difficult time, our countries are again convinced of the importance of mutual assistance and support at the global level.

He mentioned that thanks to the implementation of a comprehensive anti-crisis plan, backed by financial resources, Kazakhstan was able to minimize the negative impact of the pandemic and even achieved growth in areas such as construction, agriculture and manufacturing. This year we expect GDP growth by more than 3%, the President of Kazakhstan said.



The President of Kazakhstan said cooperation with the ECO is one of the priorities of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. He emphasized that large infrastructure and social projects should become the basis for interaction within the organization. "One of the most promising projects is the Trans-Caspian international transport route, which is being formed jointly with China. In particular, in November 2019, a container train was launched on the Xi'an-Istanbul-Prague route, connecting Kazakhstan, China, Azerbaijan, Georgia and

Turkey. In April last year, the first container train passed the Xi'an - Izmir route. It covered a distance of about 7000 km in 16 days".

He said these are good examples of our interaction. However, we still have a lot to do to ensure sustainable progress, he emphasized. "This year we need to ensure the full capacity of the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway route. Other new routes are also being worked out". It is expected that the high-speed railway from Turkestan to Tashkent will increase the tourism potential of both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, reduce travel time to two hours and facilitate communication between businessmen and social contacts of our countries, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said.

The speech of the President of Kazakhstan also provided information on Kazakhstan's participa-

tion in infrastructure projects in Afghanistan. "Together with Russian and Uzbek partners, our country participates in the construction of the Mazar-i-Sharif-Quetta and Mazar-i-Sharif-Peshawar railways".

He mentioned that another important priority for our region is food security. The President stressed that Kazakhstan supports all ECO initiatives in the field of agriculture and urged member states to join the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), which is headquartered in Nur-Sultan.



Speech by H.E. Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev the President of the

Republic of Kazakhstan at the 14th ECO Summit

First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Chair, the Republic of Turkey, for organizing this event.

We are especially grateful to the brotherly Turkish nation and personally to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for providing valuable

assistance in the fight against the pandemic. A friend in need is a friend indeed.

In these challenging times our countries have witnessed once again that mutual assistance and support are inherently important at the global level.

Therefore, I believe our partnership within the Economic Cooperation

Organization will proceed in a similar constructive spirit in the years to come.

Turkey's chairmanship of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), with the support of all Member States and the Secretariat, has been very fruitful.

Together, we have successfully carried out the reform of the Organization. We are now able to resolve many pressing issues and boost our interaction.

I am confident that the upcoming chairmanship of Turkmenistan will give a new impetus to the further development of the Organization for the benefit of the entire region

I express my special gratitude to the ECO Secretary General, Mr. Hadi Soleimanpour, for his effective work and leadership in this turbulent period.

World economy and our countries as well felt negative effect of the pandemic.

Kazakhstan's economy fared better than global economy on average. Our GDP declined by 2,6% compared to 3,5% globally.

Thanks to the well-financed and comprehensive anti-crisis plan, Kazakhstan was able to minimize negative impact of the pandemic and even achieve growth in areas such as construction, agri-

culture and manufacturing.

This year, we expect a stable GDP growth of over 3%.

Dear Participants!

Cooperation with ECO remains one of the priorities of Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

We believe that large infrastructural, social and cultural projects should become anchors of our cooperation.

First. Railway connection across our region is one of the key dimensions. During the pandemic we have seen the shift from freight traffic towards rail transport.

Trans-Caspian International Transport Route,



14th ECO Summit





implemented jointly by our countries and China, is set to become one of the promising projects.

In November 2019, a container service on the Xi'an-Istanbul-Prague route connecting Kazakhstan, China, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey was launched.

In April 2020, an inaugural container train traveled on the Xi'an-Izmir route. The train covered the distance of almost 7,000 km in 16 days.

These are good instances of our collaborative efforts. However, we still have a great deal of work ahead to ensure lasting progress.

This year we need to ensure that the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran (KTI) railway route reaches its full capacity.

Additionally, we are looking for new routes. A high-speed railway from Turkestan to Tashkent is expected to increase tourism potential of both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, reduce travel time to 2 hours and facilitate B2B, and social contacts between the countries.

Kazakhstan is also participating in infrastructure projects in Afghanistan. Together with Russian and Uzbek partners, we are constructing the Mazar-i-Sharif-Quetta and Mazar-i-Sharif-Peshawar railways. And we believe that acceleration of work on these projects is essential.

Our bilateral trade with Afghanistan grew by 55% last year (from \$402 to \$624 million).

Lifting of some restrictions to our transit of grain, flour, oil products to Afghanistan, will open up opportunities to increase supply of these vital goods.

Second. Food security is another major priority for our region. Kazakhstan supports all ECO initiatives in the field of agriculture.

As you know, our capital is home to Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS).

I call on all member states to join this organization and ratify its charter.

We are working to establish a national network of wholesale distribution and logistics centers. Food security and affordability is a common concern, therefore, we believe there is a great potential in joining our efforts on creating efficient logistics.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are working on construction of the International Center for Trade Cooperation at our border.

I have instructed my Government to speed up the project.

Third. Even though it has been hit hard by the pandemic, tourism remains another promising area of our cooperation.

In Kazakhstan, we intend to bring the share of tourism industry to 8% of GDP by 2025.

In this regard, we are actively developing the city of Turkestan, sacred for all Central Asian countries and the entire Turkic world.

In 2020 alone, domestic investment in urban infrastructure, tourism and logistics in Turkestan amounted to nearly \$1 billion.

Along with Turkestan, we have identified TOP-10 tourist destinations in Kazakhstan that may be of interest to investors and tourists from your countries.

Projects in these destinations will enjoy various forms of support from the government and municipalities.

We invite our friends and partners to actively participate in tapping our tourism potential.

Fourth. Health care has also become a "center of attraction" for foreign investment in Kazakhstan.

We offer competitive tariffs, well-educated work force and plenty of public-private partnership opportunities.

Our Turkish friends have long been actively and productively involved in building new hospitals in Kazakhstan and equipping them with high-tech medical equipment.

Turkish Rönesans Holding is commencing construction of its clinics in seven cities of Kazakhstan.

We also welcome Orhun Medical which together with the Kazakh National Institute of Oncology and Radiology plans to put in operation Tomotherapy Center in Almaty this year.

I am confident that we will continue our cooperation with Turkish companies and

invite partners from other member states to invest in Kazakhstan's healthcare system.

Fifth. Improving efficiency of the Organization in new conditions.

This is a special year since 6 member states of the Organization will celebrate 30th anniversary of their independence.

For many years, Economic Cooperation Organization has proven an effective multilateral platform for the development of our independent nations.

And yet there is further potential in the Organization.

Kazakhstan, as Chair of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), is ready to provide assistance in developing cooperation between ECO and CICA in the economic dimension.

Interaction between these institutions has great potential to bring about tangible results in the areas of transport and logistics, agriculture, finance, energy, tourism, digital technologies, among others.

In addition, I propose to instruct the Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive functional analysis of the Organization with concrete ways to increase its overall efficiency.

We believe that new times call for new answers.

For our part, we suggest to abandon the practice of dividing ECO member states into "founders" (Iran, Pakistan and Turkey) and "non-founders" (5 Central Asian countries, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan).

In our opinion, this is outdated and is not reflecting the contemporary spirit of our partnership.

Dear friends and colleagues!

We hope that comprehensive cooperation based on mutual interests and practical joint projects will allow us to withstand challenges of today and prepare us for the opportunities of tomorrow.

We pin our high hopes for the Organization. In conclusion, I wish our Turkmen friends a very successful chairmanship.

Thank you for your attention!

President H.E. Sadyr Zhaparov

names the priorities of Kyrgyzstan in the framework of cooperation with ECO

President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sadyr Zhaparov, took part in the 14th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), held on 04 March 2021 in the format of a video conference.

In his speech, Sadyr Zhaparov called on the leaders of the participating countries to take joint action to overcome the economic and social crises caused by the coronavirus pandemic, stressing that the organization has every opportunity to work actively in this direction.

"Within the framework of cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization, one of the priority areas for landlocked Kyrgyzstan is the transport sector," President of the Kyrgyz Republic said. He emphasized, the current goal of the ECO is to become a worthy and important player in the global economic system.

President Sadyr Zhaparov stat-



ed that in order to achieve closer regional cooperation and economic development, ECO Member States must develop and implement strategies in priority areas of the economy, such as trade, transport and communications, energy, tourism, social security and the environment.

"Kyrgyzstan, along with other ECO countries, participates in the development of East-West and North-South transport corridors. This will give the countries of Central Asia, including

Kyrgyzstan, access to the open sea through the territory of Iran. We also pay special attention to the promotion of projects for the construction of railways that connect the transport routes of the ECO member countries with the external markets of Europe and China, which is part of the ECO action plan on transport and communications," the Kyrgyz President emphasized.

He also noted the importance of implementing projects for the construction of new railway lines on the territory of the ECO including through Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to the border with China.

Further, the President stressed the need to expand trade in energy resources between the ECO countries. "Energy development will contribute to economic growth for many years to come. For example, today four countries -

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan - have begun construction of CASA-1000 facilities. This project is aimed at creating an interregional electricity market for Central and South Asia, thereby developing electricity trade throughout the region", Sadyr Zhaparov added.

The Kyrgyz President also mentioned a number of important projects in the field of food security and sustainable agricultural development in the region, which need to be improved and strengthened.



Speech by H.E. Mr. S.N. Zhaparov the President of the

Kyrgyz Republic at the 14th ECO Summit

Honorable Chairman, Honorable Heads of State and Governments, Honorable Secretary General, Dear friends,

On behalf of the delegation of the Kyrgyz

Republic and on my own behalf, I sincerely greet all participants in today's Summit.

I thank the Republic of Turkey for the excellent organization of this event and the successful chairmanship in the ECO.

It is a great honor for me to personally take part in the work of the Summit

and I am very pleased with this meeting.

Honorable Chairman,
Honorable Heads of Delegations,
As you are aware, important political
events have recently taken place in
Kyrgyzstan, such as the presidential elections and the referendum on the form of
the government.

The people of Kyrgyzstan have determined their path of development.

The corresponding constitutional amendments will be put to a vote soon and the work on reforming the public administration

system will begin.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to assure that Kyrgyzstan will continue to fulfill its international obligations in accordance with the previously reached agreements.

We reaffirm our commitment to maintain-

ing continuity in the development of friendly relations with our international partners.

Kyrgyzstan is open for dialogue and to mutually beneficial cooperation with all states on the principles of friendly relations, mutual understanding and mutual respect of interests.

Honorable Chairman, Honorable Heads of

Delegations,

Today's Summit provides us with a good opportunity to sum up (summarize) the main results of our cooperation and discuss the prospects for further regional cooperation within the ECO.

The year 2020 was a hard challenge for the whole world and our region was no exception. All ECO countries suffered significant economic losses from the pandemic and the restrictive measures that came with containing the spread. This has made significant adjustments to the plans of all member countries of our Organization. The pandem-





ic has shown that no one is able to fight the virus alone.

Even the world's largest powers have failed to stop it. Therefore, we must act together and get out of the economic and social crisis caused by COVID-19.

In this context, I would like to note that the Organization could actively work in this direction and combine the available resources of the health systems of the member countries, to exchange best practices, latest achievements in the area of medical science in the fight against "COVID-19", early development of vaccine, registration and the introduction of a vaccine, as well as vaccination of the population throughout the ECO countries.

Honorable Chairman,

Honorable Heads of Delegations, The ECO region has all the necessary potential, including large human capital, scientific resources, natural resources, and an extensive communications network. Our countries are united by common historical and cultural roots that date back centuries during the flourishing of trade cooperation along the entire Silk Road.

We expect that the ECO will be able to become an effective instrument of regional integration in modern conditions for the benefit of the prosperity of our people.

Assessing the activities of our Organization over the past period, and determining the prospects for the future, we see that the countries of the ECO region over the past few years have reached new heights, reached a new level of development and can solve more complex issues and tasks.

At the same time, the recent consequences of the global economic crisis, as well as modern challenges and threats to international security, pose completely new objectives for us.

Our Organization must be better prepared for new challenges. This will allow promot-

ing the fundamental principles of ECO by expanding economic activities, developing and strengthening its institutions, and playing an active role in realizing the future goals of the Organization.

It should be admitted that at present, the role of the ECO in the system of regional economic and bilateral ties does not yet correspond to the existing real potential of our countries.

Unfortunately, the growth of trade between the ECO countries is impeded by the presence of tariff and non-tariff barriers and high transport costs, the difference in the approaches of the participating countries to protect their markets and producers, the instability of the world financial markets, as well as political crises that undoubtedly impact economic and social stability.

In these conditions, our common integration aspirations and regional economic projects face even more difficulties in their practical implementation.

It must be recognized that the Organization must reach a completely new and qualitative level by searching for the necessary and acceptable solutions to optimize the ECO's activities.

It is important that the Organization corresponds to modern conditions and serves to fulfill the integration tasks necessary for all participating countries, which we face at the current stage.

Honorable Chairman, Honorable Heads of Delegations,

In order to realize enhanced regional cooperation, economic growth and development of our region, we must be determined to develop and implement strategies in such priority areas for our economies as trade, transportation, communication, energy, tourism and the protection of the environment.

For the Kyrgyz Republic, as a landlocked country, one of the priority areas for cooperation within the ECO is the transportation sector.

The Kyrgyz Republic, together with other ECO countries, participates in the development of the East-West and North-South transportation corridors. This gives the countries of Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan, the opportunity to access the open seas through Iran.

We also attach great importance to projects of railway construction designed to connect the transportation routes of the ECO member countries with access to the external markets of Europe and China, which were included in the ECO Action Program for the development of transport and communications in the region.

For the Kyrgyz Republic, the implementation of railway lines in the ECO region is of great strategic importance, including a project for a new railway through Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to the border with China. In this regard, the coordinated development of multi-modal routes takes on strategic importance.

The development of energy in the ECO countries, by expanding trade in energy resources between the ECO countries, will create the potential for economic growth for many years.

For instance, today, four countries, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, have begun the construction of the CASA-1000 project. This project aims to create an interregional energy market for Central Asia and South Asia, thereby developing electricity trade across the continent as a whole.

The CASA-1000 project widens the possibility to attract additional investments to the hydro power plants and the large potential of the rivers of Kyrgyzstan. All this and further cooperation in the energy sector will favorably affect the further macroeconomic stabilization of the countries of the Organization.

The ECO Secretariat is implementing a number of important projects in the field of

food security and sustainable agricultural development in the region. This direction should be further developed and strengthened.

Cooperation between countries in the tourism sector is becoming more and more active. The countries of our region have significant tourism and recreational potential and present great opportunities for the development of international tourism. The Kyrgyz Republic is ready to collaborate and assist in the further development of this promising area for all of us.

As you know, the initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic to hold the World Nomad Games in 2014, 2016 and 2018 was met with great interest by the world community. We are confident that the next World Nomad Games, scheduled in 2021 in Turkey, will be held at the highest level.

Honorable Chairman, Honorable Heads of Delegations,

In conclusion of my speech, I would like to confidently emphasize that the ECO countries, having all the necessary potential, and being in the center of the Eurasian continent, are sufficiently capable of independently fulfilling and realizing their goals and objectives.

The goals of our Organization today are to make our region one of the worthy and important players in the global economic system, with the presence of goodwill among our countries.

Let me once again thank the Republic of Turkey and personally President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for organizing this excellent ECO Summit. I would also like to take this opportunity, express my warm wishes in conjunction with upcoming Nooruz, and wish you all peace and prosperity.

Thank you for your attention.

President H.E. Emomali Rahmon

stresses upon the need for enhanced Regional Cooperation among ECO Countries

ECO_ CHRONICLE The Founder of Peace and

National Unity, Leader of the Nation, President of Tajikistan H.E. Emomali Rahmon, took part in the 14th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) held via video conference on 4 March, 2021.

In a statement delivered at the Summit, President Rahmon talked about the acute global social, economic and financial crisis caused by COVID-19 and expressed confidence that the Summit will serve to overcome the consequences of the pandemic and will contribute to sustainable development in the region.

Analyzing the state of trade cooperation between the ECO Member States as a factor in the



rapid development of the regional economy, President Rahmon stressed that trade between ECO Member States accounted for only 8% of total volume of the regional trade, which reflects the underutilization of trade opportunities between the states.

While analyzing the level of cooperation

between the ECO Member States in the fields of transportation, communication, energy, industry, mining, environmental protection and agricultural sector, he noted the necessity of expanding contacts and implementing important programs and projects to ensure sustainable development in the region.

In energy sector, the President of Tajikistan supported the ECO project on the establishment of the ECO Clean Energy Center.

"We hope that this Center will contribute to the implementation of projects on construction of "green" energy facilities and the formation of an effective regional energy market in the

region of the Organization", he said.

While highlighting the importance of Tourism as an effective factor in strengthening ties between the regional countries, the Tajik President announced that Tajikistan is planning to hold the International Festival "Dushanbe - the Tourist Capital of ECO" and the International Forum for the Development of Agri-tourism in 2021 in Dushanbe.





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Speech by H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon the President of the

epublic of Tajikistan at the

Distinguished Mr. Chairman, Excellencies Heads of State and Government, Dear Friends.

At the outset, I would like to offer my

gratitude to the President of the Republic of Turkey, His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the ECO Secretariat for organizing this meeting.

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the socio-economic development of all countries and regions of the world.

We have been faced with a severe global socio-economic and financial crisis.

I hope that the today's Summit outcomes will contribute to the maximum use of the Organization's potential to overcome the consequences of the pandemic and ensure sustainable development in its region.

Trade cooperation between the member states of the Organization, as a priority task, plays a key role in promoting the integration process as a factor in the dynamic development of the regional economy.

Today, the share of the Organization's member states in Tajikistan's foreign trade turnover account for about 40 % of its total volume. Meanwhile, intra-ECO trade accounts for only 8% of the total trade of its members. This figure shows that the cur-

rent level of trade between the ECO member states still does not match the available opportunities and potential.

Transport and communication remains another important area of cooperation. In this dimension, a number of important programs are under development, including railway projects aimed at expand-

ing the transport and transit capabilities of the region.

The test launch of landline freight transport along the Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran (KTAI) transport corridor, which links these countries to China, highlights the importance of implementing UN digital transport solutions to facilitate the transportation of goods across the region's borders.

To ensure sustainable development in the region, cooperation in the fields of energy,



industry, mining and processing of minerals, as well as environmental protection and the agricultural sector is equally important along with cooperation in the field of transport.

We support the establishment of the ECO Clean Energy Center in cooperation with the member countries and the Organization's Secretariat. We hope that this Center will contribute to the implementation of projects on construction of "green" energy facilities and the formation of an effective regional energy market in the region of the Organization.

With this in mind, it is very timely to implement the project on construction of a high-voltage power transmission line CASA-1000, which is designed to become the first energy bridge between Central and South Asia.

Agriculture and industry are very important and key sectors. The need for cooper-

ation in these areas becomes even more urgent based on the need to overcome the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic.

We believe that in the current context the Organization's Secretariat should initiate the coordination of efforts of the member countries to protect food security, overcome unemployment, poverty, as well as other specific issues aggravated during the pandemic in the ECO space.

We express the hope that the ECO project activities will focus on the elimination of these issues and all possible assistance to the socio-economic development of the member countries.

Taking into account the situation that has developed against the background of the pandemic, we also believe it is expedient to review the creation of a regional cooperation mechanism for control of transmissible diseases, in particular COVID-19 within the Organization.

Tourism cooperation between the Organization's member states is an effective factor in strengthening ties between our peoples. Striving to proactively participate in the development of tourism in the ECO region, Tajikistan hosted the last meeting of the tourism ministers of the Organization's member countries.

During this meeting, the city of Dushanbe was declared the tourism capital of ECO for 2020-2021. In this context, we plan to hold the International Festival "Dushanbe - the Tourist Capital of ECO" and the International Forum for the Development of Agri-tourism in May of this year in Dushanbe.

Dear colleagues,

Afghanistan's socio-economic development remains as a topical issue within the framework of our Organization. We, together with the Afghan side, plan to hold a high-level meeting of the Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process Forum in the third decade

of March of this year within our presidency in this process. Taking this opportunity, I would like to invite the participating countries to take a proactive part in this Forum.

Tajikistan will continue to take a proactive part in the activities of the Organization, and make constant efforts to achieve its goals defined in the strategic document ECO Vision -2025.

We have always advocated and continue to advocate stronger cooperation throughout the entire space of the Organization for the sake of the well-being of our peoples.

At the conclusion, I would like to highlight with great pleasure the productive presidency of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the ECO Summit and wish the Republic of Turkey success in its work within its presidency of the Organization's 14th Summit.

Thank you.



President H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev

participates in the 14th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization

ECO

President of the Republic of

Uzbekistan, H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, took part in the 14th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), via video conference.

In his speech, the President of Uzbekistan highlighted that the space of the Economic Cooperation Organization is a region with great potential and shared common history, religion, culture and values.

Speaking about the importance of theme of the Summit, 'Regional economic cooperation in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic', the President said, "This scourge clearly demonstrated our strengths and weaknesses, our obvious interdependence with each other and the need to further strengthen economic partnership".

At the same time, the existing potential and wide opportunities of the ECO Member States are not fully used, the President of Uzbekistan said.

The leader of Uzbekistan put forward important initiatives to develop



multilateral partnerships within the framework of the adopted ECO Vision 2025.

The expediency of removing trade and transport barriers and restrictions introduced as part of quarantine measures was noted to increase mutual trade and investments. Broad implementation of solutions for the digitalization of trade and the development of e-commerce, as well as the early adoption of a regional trade agreement, was proposed.

Another important area is the deepening of industrial cooperation between the leading enterprises of the countries based on an agreed roadmap. It was proposed to expand the mechanisms of financial

cooperation and hold a regional forum with the participation of the leading banking institutions of the countries to promote such projects.

Interaction in the transport and communication sphere was identified as a strategic priority. Uzbekistan is interested in the development of transport corridors Uzbekistan - Turkmenistan - Iran - Oman and Uzbekistan - Kyrgyzstan - China, routes in the direction of Turkey and European countries.

The importance of the construction of the new Mazar-i-Sharif - Kabul - Peshawar railway was emphasized to ensure sustainable development, as well as the integration of Afghanistan into regional economic processes.

Another important area, in which the President of Uzbekistan dwelled, is ensuring food security. In this regard, it was proposed, together with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, to prepare an

appropriate program and present it at the next meeting of the ministers of agriculture of the ECO states, which is scheduled for this year in Uzbekistan.

In the energy sector, the leader of Uzbekistan called for the development and adoption of a mediumterm strategy to widely attract advanced technological solutions and investments, primarily in renewable energy.

Attention was also paid to the importance of uniting efforts in combating the global consequences of climate change, as well as the need for strengthening cooperation in the health sector, including monitoring and promptly responding to modern challenges and threats.



Speech by H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev the President of the

Republic of Uzbekistan

at the

14th ECO Summit

Your Excellency, esteemed chairman Distinguished chairperson, Recep Tayyip Erdogan!

Esteemed Heads of State and Government!

Honorable Secretary General Mr. Soleimanpour!

First and foremost, allow me sincerely felicitate all participants of the Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

I convey my deepest appreciation to His Excellency, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for his effective chairmanship of the Organization despite the

pandemic and holding the high-level forum.

I extend my heartiest congratulations to His Excellency, the distinguished President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, on the assumption of the chairmanship of the Organization by Turkmenistan.

I wish you great success in effectively discharging this responsible mission.

Distinguished participants of this meeting!

The Economic Cooperation Organization's space is a united region with tremendous potential and shared history, religion, culture and values.

From time immemorial, the atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, trade and transport

and communication have brought together our friendly countries.

It is highly symbolic that our today's Summit is taking place under the theme "Regional economic cooperation in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic". Since the pandemic, which negatively impacted on the world economy, has also

affected our countries.

This scourge clearly demonstrated our strengths and weaknesses, our obvious interdependence with each other and the need to further strengthen economic partnership.

In today's world, characterized by sharpening competition for technology and resources, investment and access to external markets, pooling our efforts and capacities and making the extensive use of the comple-



14th ECO Summit





mentarities of our economies is acquiring increasing importance.

However, it should be noted that the trade, economic, financial, investment, transport/communications and energy opportunities available in the Organization have not been fully exploited.

In this regard, with a view to further expanding the multi-stakeholder partnership in the major areas of the "Economic Cooperation Organization 2025" Programme, I would like to put forward the following proposals:

Firstly, enhancing trade and investment linkages are undoubtedly the main drivers of economic growth.

Over recent years, Uzbekistan's overall trade volume with the Organization's member states has grown almost twice. Despite the difficult situation, last year we managed to maintain these volumes.

We firmly believe that the time has come to lift the trade and transport restrictions imposed by the member states of the Organization during the quarantine period.

Well, I think that the widespread adoption of digital technologies and electronic commerce in this area will make our trade relations much easier.

In this regard, the finalization and acceptance of the Mutual Trade Agreement proposed by Turkey should be expedited.

Secondly, the development of industrial cooperation based on the "Search for Complementarities" principle will improve the overall well-being of communities.

For implementation of this essential plan, it is advisable to outline a joint "Road Map", including specific directions and projects.

Thirdly, ensuring the free movement of funds, goods and services among member states, and expanding interbank links and financing are matters of urgency.

In particular, the revitalization of the ECO Trade and Development Bank under our Organization is of the utmost importance.

To further implement these objectives, we propose to hold in the nearest future a Banking and Financial Forum with participation of our countries' banking institutions.

Fourthly, expanding transport corridors and enhancing the transit capacity of our regions will enhance economic interaction.

We are interested in further development of "Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman", "Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China" transport corridors, as well as corridors providing access through Azerbaijan to Turkey and Europe.

In addition, the construction of the "Mazari-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar" new railway is of great importance for the integration of Afghanistan into our vast regions and for ensuring sustainable development.

In this connection, we hope to receive your support for our initiative to establish a Regional Centre for the Development of Transport and Communications Connectivity, as announced at the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Fifthly, we have seen how relevant is the issue of food security during pandemic period.

We believe that it is necessary, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to develop and adopt a new food security programme for our Organization.

In this connection, we are ready to hold a regular meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization in Uzbekistan this year.

Sixthly, our region, rich in alternative and renewable energy sources, has great poten-

tial for developing a "green economy".

I propose to develop and adopt a Medium-term Strategy aimed at ensuring energy sustainability and the broad involvement of investment and modern technologies in this area.

Seventh, we are clearly experiencing the negative impact of environmental and global climate change issues in our region, particularly in the Aral Sea region. We need to pool our efforts to address this issue.

We consider it advisable to establish effective mechanisms for regional cooperation in this sector.

Eighth, cooperation in the health sector should be further strengthened. Unfortunately, today we are witnessing the increasingly political nature of global vaccination processes.

In this connection, experiences in joint vaccine development and utilization should be shared.

At the same time, we propose the establishment of a system within the Organization for monitoring the epidemiological situation and the advanced planning of appropriate measures.

In this regard, I declare our readiness to support the initiative of the distinguished President of Azerbaijan, H.E. Ilham Heydarovich Aliyev, to establish the Organization's Research Centre, which will conduct in-depth and comprehensive studies on all the aforesaid areas.

Esteemed participants of the meeting! In conclusion, I wish to reiterate:

There is no doubt that, together, we can bring cooperation within the Organization to the entirely new high level in the future.

Thank you for your attention!

Republic of Azerbaijan organizes

the Signing Ceremony of the Charter of ECO Research Centre at 14th ECO Summit



The 14th ECO Summit

observed the live online signing ceremony of the Charter of ECO Research Centre held in Baku with the participation of relevant representatives of the Member States. The ECO Research Centre would aim at serving the goals and objectives of the ECO in one of the Organization's core activity areas, notably, economic research and statistics. The Centre would provide assistance for development and implementation of economic research projects, economic development strategies and policies for the ECO region. It would also build networking among the economic research institutes and planning departments of the ECO Member States.

The ECO Council of Ministers at its 21st Meeting held on 26th November, 2013 in Tehran approved the establishment of ECO Research Centre in Baku. Originally the idea for the establishment of ECO Research Centre came in 2006 and the 9th Summit Meeting of Heads of State of the ECO Member States held on 5th May 2006 in Baku, Azerbaijan "took note of Azerbaijan's proposal for the establishment of an ECO Research Centre".

"Today, we will sign the charter of ECO Research Center. We are grateful to Member States for supporting the initiative of the late President of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev and we will do our utmost for the efficient functioning of the Center based in Azerbaijan", the President of Republic of Azerbaijan mentioned at the 14th ECO Summit.

As host of the Centre, the Minister of Economy of the

Republic of Azerbaijan signed the charter, together with Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Charter is open for signatures by other interested ECO Member States.

Establishment of the ECO Research Centre in Baku is a remarkable achievement for the ECO family, the ECO Secretary General Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour announced at the 14th ECO Summit. " I felicitate His Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev the honorable President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the establishment of ECO Research Center in Baku, an initiative of late President H.E. Mr. Heydar Aliyev, which is a remarkable achievement for ECO family to make the organization more multidimensional", said Dr. Soleimanpour.



Conclusion of the 14th ECO Summit

he Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) gathered virtually at the invitation of the Government of Republic of Turkey on the occasion of the 14th ECO Summit on 4 March 2021 and exchanged views on the theme "Regional Economic Cooperation in the Aftermath of COVID-19" in line with global priorities. The Chairman of

the Summit, H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of the Republic of Turkey thanked all the Heads of State/Government and observers for attending the Summit and their valuable contributions. The main points of the conclusion of the Summit, provided by the Chairman, are:

We reaffirmed our commitment to the objectives the Organization was founded upon;

We referred to the strong cultural and historical ties among the ECO Member States and the geographical importance of the region in the world; we reiterated the key significance of ECO as one of the oldest cooperation organizations of the region;

We underscored our strong and shared will to further deepen our economic cooperation;

We reiterated our support to the principles and strategic objectives in sectoral cooperation areas in line with the ECO Vision-2025;

We referred to the role the ECO Trade and Development Bank could play in transforming ECO into a result and project-oriented Organization, and the key role of the implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) in the economic integration of the region;

We assessed the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of the region, recognizing the importance of cooperation, solidarity and multilateralism in alleviating the adverse socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic, we called for a more coordinated response and concerted joint efforts;

Recognizing the cooperation in the field of health among the countries of the region in items such as personal protective equipment and medicines, we emphasized that everyone should have affordable and equal access to vaccines as a global public good;

We expressed our determination to redouble our efforts to reach the level of economic cooperation we have been desiring since the establishment of the Organization;

We emphasized that increasing intraregional trade and ensuring the uninterrupted and regular functioning of the transportation corridors in the eastwest and north-south directions, especially railway lines, will also accelerate emergence from the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;

In light of the rich natural and cultural assets of the ECO region and the friendly relations between our peoples, we noted our will to develop mutual tourism as a component of sustainable development and the driving force of recovery efforts;

We highlighted the importance of ECO projects in the fields of environment, energy, industry, communication, agriculture and food security for sustainable development in the region;

We highlighted that ECO should continue to embrace peace and stability as essential conduit for sustainable development:

In this respect, we agreed that ECO countries should also work together to promote their common objectives in the United Nations and other international organizations and that they should be adequately represented in all international bodies, including in a reformed and enlarged United Nations Security Council.

At the Summit, lastly;

We held the signing ceremony of the founding agreement of the ECO Research Center that will operate in Baku,

We expressed our appreciation to the ECO Secretary-General and the Secretariat for their contributions to the coordination of cooperation among the Member States,

We wished Turkmenistan success in its Chairmanship, effective as of 4 March 2021, and pledged our strongest support in the carrying out of this important responsibility,

We thanked Pakistan for its contributions during its 13th Summit Chairmanship,

We welcomed Turkmenistan's proposal to host the 15th ECO Summit in Ashgabat on 28 November 2021, and agreed to continue our consultations at the level of Leaders at the said Summit.

