

Economic Cooperation Organization

Secretariat

**FAXED**

06 AUG 2013



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No. IR/PAECO/2013/1316

August 05, 2013

The Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization presents its compliments to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Embassies of the Member States in Tehran and with reference to the Inaugural Ceremony the First Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization (PAECO) held on February 11-12, 2013 in Islamabad, Pakistan, has the honour to enclose herewith the report of the event forwarded by the National Assembly Secretariat of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The ECO Secretariat avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the esteemed Ministry and the esteemed Embassies, the assurances of its highest consideration.

Encl: As above

All Member States

Copy:  
National Assembly Secretariat of Pakistan,  
Islamabad  
Fax: +92-51-902 2434





**Report on the Inaugural Ceremony the First Conference of the  
Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization  
(PAECO)**

**11-12 February, 2013**  
**Islamabad Pakistan**



**National Assembly Secretariat**

**Islamabad**



**Report on the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of Parliamentary Assembly of Economic Cooperation  
Organization (PAECO), Islamabad, February 11-12, 2013**

The initiative taken by Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Hon'ble Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan in 2011 materialized when Speakers from the parliaments of ECO countries gathered in Islamabad on 11 February, 2013 to formally sign the Charter of a new Parliamentary Assembly. Hence, the Parliamentary Assembly of Economic Cooperation Organization (PAECO) was formally established.

2. It may be recalled that Hon'ble Madam Speaker had proposed the concept of a parliamentary forum of ECO countries during her meeting with then Secretary General of ECO in March 2011 when she visited Tehran on the occasion of Naurouz celebrations (March 26-28, 2011). The proposal was followed by lengthy discussions in various meetings of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPRs), Parliamentary experts and Council of Ministers (CoMs).

3. The Inaugural Ceremony and the 1st Conference of PAECO were attended by parliamentary delegations from Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan (host country), Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Turkey. All delegations were represented by their respective Speakers, except Afghanistan's delegation which was led by their second Deputy Speaker of Wolesi Jirga. On instructions from their respective parliaments, diplomats from Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Kyrgyzstan and Republic of Uzbekistan officially attended the Inaugural Ceremony and the Conference. The list of participants is attached as Annex-I.

3. A detailed program of the First Conference was prepared, which included meeting of the Women Parliamentarians, Signing Ceremony of PAECO Charter, Inaugural Ceremony, Meeting of Executive Council, and the General Conference of the Assembly. Each event of the 1<sup>st</sup> PAECO was arranged according to a set agenda.

**Signing Ceremony of Charter:**

4. Leaders of delegations attending the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of PAECO signed the PAECO Charter, thus making the establishment of the PAECO. The Hon'ble Madam Speaker put her seal of approval of the Charter first, which was followed by Speakers of Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Deputy Speaker of Wolesi Jirga of Afghanistan. Secretary General of ECO also witnessed the ceremony. (Copy of Signed Charter is attached as Annex-II)

### **Inaugural Ceremony:**

5. Hon'ble Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan, who envisioned this forum formally inaugurated the Conference in an impressive ceremony held at Crystal Ball Room, Marriott Hotel Islamabad on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2013. In her inaugural address, the Speaker, National Assembly thanked all the Speakers for their cooperation in making this forum a reality. She drew attention of the delegates to some key challenges, faced by the region despite having largest repository of human and natural resources in the world. Copy of Madam Speaker's inaugural speech is attached as Annex-III.

6. Earlier, in his welcoming remarks, Mr. Karamat Hussain Niazi, Secretary National Assembly of Pakistan expressed his sincere gratitude to the distinguished Speakers, Parliamentarians and members of the delegations from the ECO Region for their presence in Islamabad as participants of the First Conference of PAECO. Copy of Secretary National Assembly's welcoming remarks is attached as Annex-IV.

7. The inaugural speech by Speaker, National Assembly of Pakistan was followed by remarks of Honourable Speakers of participating countries. They all complemented Madam Speaker for her initiative of having parliamentary forum and for hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of PAECO in Islamabad. The distinguished guests showed their satisfaction for the preparations made for the Conference. (Remarks of all distinguished Speakers are attached as Annex-V). Later, in the evening, a dinner was hosted by the Hon'ble Speaker in honor of all the participants, which was followed by a cultural performance.

### **Meeting of ECO Women Parliamentarians:**

8. Another significant event of the first Conference of PAECO was first-ever holding of the meeting of ECO Women Parliamentarians on the theme: "Role of Women Parliamentarians in Strengthening Democracy and Social Justice in ECO Region". The Women Parliamentarians made a unanimous pledge to jointly work for women's empowerment in the Region. The Women Parliamentarians also agreed upon a joint statement. Copy of Joint Statement is attached as Annex-VI.

### **Meeting of the Executive Council:**

9. A meeting of the Executive Council as per Article 5 (a) of the PAECO Charter was held on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2013. The Council formally elected Hon'ble Dr. Fehmida Mirza as President of the Council. In her address to the Speakers Council, she informed the Speakers about regrets by Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan to attend the Conference. The Council took following decisions by consensus:-

- i. The Conference of PAECO will be held on annual basis.
- ii. Afghanistan offered to host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the PAECO, which will be held in Kabul in 2014. Consequently, Hon. Neamatullah Ghaffari, Second Speaker of Afghanistan was elected as Vice President of PAECO.

- iii. Rules will be framed in order to provide an institutional structure to PAECO. A committee, comprising of the Secretaries and designated officials from all member States will be constituted to undertake this important task. The committee will submit its report in the next meeting of PAECO in Kabul.
- iv. Secretary PAECO was authorized to seek Observer status for the newly-formed Assembly in the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Union of the Islamic Countries.
- v. The Council also noted with satisfaction the holding of the first-ever meeting of Women Parliamentarians from the ECO Countries and agreed to provide this important forum all the needed assistance for its steady growth.
- vi. The respective parliamentarians should push their governments to give serious attentions to enhancement of communication, increasing intra-regional trade and investment, exchange energy resources and jointly work for peace in the ECO Region.
- vii. Hon'ble Ali Larijani, Speaker Islamic Republic of Iran suggested for issuing a joint declaration at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of PAECO mentioning the objectives of the newly formed forum..

#### **General Conference:**

10. The General Conference of the Assembly was held on 12<sup>th</sup> February, 2013. On this occasion, Hon'ble Speaker was formally elected President of the First Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Countries. In her remarks, the Hon'ble Speaker thanked the participating parliamentarians for electing her President of the PAECO. She further said that the PAECO Charter envisioned the parliamentarians of the 10 member countries to jointly promote common values, interests and opportunities. She also emphasized to invoke the dictums of "Parliamentary Diplomacy" in fostering democracy, peace and development in the ECO Region. She further said that the Member Parliamentarians were duty-bound to transform these promises into action-oriented results. Honourable Madam Speaker assured the member countries that she would try her best to strengthen this forum during her tenure as President of PAECO. A copy of her statement is attached as Annex-VII.

11. Proceedings of the General Conference were divided into two sessions. Parliamentarians of the participating countries shared their valuable ideas on the following topic during both sessions of the General Conference of the PAECO.

#### **a. Parliament's Oversight role on Intra-Regional Trade and Investment for the Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of the Region.**

12. The General Conference remained very important event where participates of the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of PAECO shared their valuable ideas and experiences. It provided immense knowledge and wisdom to all participates which eventually will help them to implement those ideas in policy making in their respective parliaments. The first session of the General Conference was presided over by Honourable Dr. Fehmida Mirza, the newly elected

President of General Conference. Besides lead speeches by H.E. Cemil Cecik, Speaker of Grand National Assembly of Turkey and Dr. Ali Larijani, Speaker, Islamic Parliament of Iran, the parliamentarians made total 13 deliberations during both sessions. The list of lead speakers and interventions is attached as Annex-VIII. Verbatim record of the proceedings will be printed separately.

13. During the proceedings of the Executive Council and General Conference, there is consensus on following points:-

- a. There is a need to utilize the forum of PAECO for pushing respective ECO governments to take practical steps towards increasing trade, investments and other areas of mutual cooperation.
- b. Promotion of pro-active role of Parliamentarians for eliminating terrorism as it was a threat to democracy.
- c. There is a need to fully harness potential of ECO member countries for fostering trade and investment.
- d. Active participation is required by member states for achieving the goals of crucial ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA).
- e. Foremost task of the PAECO should be to stress upon the governments through legislative and oversight role to fully activate ECOTA and ECO Trade and Investment Bank in Istanbul, Turkey. All the ECO member countries should sign the banking agreement for commencement of the bank.
- f. There should be continued constructive dialogue through PAECO to ensure 100% participation in all agreed ventures.
- g. PAECO should facilitate private sector through supportive legislations and removing numerous barriers, which creates hurdles in intra-regional trade and investments.
- h. There is need to build reliable road and rail links in the ECO region, which hold key for sustained economic activity. The projects like the North-South and East-West Railways and opening of all-weather road systems are essential for the integration of our Region.
- i. The prime objective of this forum is to further the ideals of economic cooperation.
- j. It was also agreed that the sustainable socio-economic development was not possible if it did not address the needs of women and children.
- k. The PAECO should make use of headways in achieving MDGs' indicators by strengthening the forum of ECO Experts Group on MDGs through a combined parliamentary mechanism. National Assembly's Committee on MDGs is already working and Pakistan will be happy to share experience with other PAECO countries.
- l. The platform of PAECO must work on long-term basis for empowerment of women.
- m. It was also agreed to raise voices for the rights of people of occupied Kashmir and Palestine etc through the platform of PAECO.

- n. Parliamentary exchanges should be increased and parliamentary seminars, workshops and discussions should be arranged on mutually agreed issues on regular basis.
- o. Different committees may be formed by Assembly, related to the various subjects.
- p. Executive Council decided that 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of PAECO would be held in Afghanistan.

**Concluding Remarks:**

14. The Conference was concluded with remarks of Honourable Speaker National Assembly. She expressed her satisfaction on the successful holding of the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of PAECO in Islamabad. She termed success of the Conference as "joint achievement" and also appreciated personal interest of all Speakers of ECO Parliaments and for their contributions. "Frequent events like this and exchanging of ideas will bring understanding among all members of the South Asian region", said Madam Speaker. She also appreciated all parliamentarians for their inputs in the theme of the Conference. Honourable Speaker made it clear that achieving MDGs was the biggest challenge for democracies and it required holistic approach. Climate change and related risks, chronic poverty and growing inequalities, uncontrolled population growth and urbanization and global financial crisis were the key challenges for the Region and genuinely required joint efforts in this regard. At the end of her speech, she thanked all Honourable Speakers, parliamentarians and all others concerned for their active participation in the Conference. Vote of thanks was also adopted. A copy of the concluding remarks is attached as Annex-IX.

**Bilateral Meetings:**

15. Bilateral meetings were also held on the sidelines of the First conference of PAECO. Honourable Speaker of Pakistan held successful meetings withal visiting leaders of parliamentary delegations. Besides, the visiting delegations also interacted with one another. During these meetings, various means of parliamentary cooperation came under discussion, with the objective of cementing and strengthening relations among parliamentarians.

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**COMPOSITION OF PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS FOR THE  
FIRST CONFERENCE OF PAECO**

**Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

| <b>S. No.</b> | <b>Name</b>                 | <b>Designation</b>  |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1.            | Hon. Neamatullah Ghaffari   | Second Deputy Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga (House of People) National Assembly of Afghanistan, |
| 2.            | Hon. Sayed Ishaq Gailani    | Member Parliament   |
| 3.            | Hon. Abdul Latif Pedram     | Member Parliament   |
| 4.            | Hon. Fatema Aziz            | Member Parliament   |
| 5.            | Hon. Abdul Qaium Sahjadi    | Member Parliament   |
| 6.            | Hon. Sahib Khan Kharoti     | Member Parliament   |
| 7.            | Hon. Mahauddin Mehdi        | Member Parliament   |
| 8.            | Hon. Shukria Paikan Ahmadi, | Member Parliament   |
| 9             | Mr. Samiullah Hussaini      | Director of Relations with IPU  |

**Republic of Azerbaijan**

| <b>S. No.</b> | <b>Name</b>                | <b>Designation</b>                              |
|---------------|----------------------------|---|
| 1.            | H. E. Mr. Oqtay Asadov     | Chairman of Milli Majlis (Parliament)           |
| 2.            | Mr. Safa Mirzayev          | Head of Administration, Milli Majlis            |
| 3.            | Mr. Aliaga Huseynov        | Member of Parliament                            |
| 4.            | Mr. Ilham Mammadov         | Member of Parliament                            |
| 5.            | Mr. Rashid Ibrahimov       | D.G. Foreign Relations Department, Milli Majlis |
| 6.            | Mr. Ilkin Mammadov         | Chief of Protocol, Milli Majlis                 |
| 7.            | Mr. Babak Aghayev          | Foreign Relations Department, Milli Majlis      |
| 8.            | Mr. Ruslan Ismayilov       | Assistant, Milli Majlis                         |
| 9.            | Mr. Bakhtiyar Gurbanov     | Assistant, Milli Majlis                         |
| 12.           | H. E. Mr. Dashgin Shikarov | Ambassador of Azerbaijan                        |
| 13.           | Mr. Ilham Mammadov         | First Secretary, Azerbaijan Embassy             |



**Islamic Republic of IRAN**

| <b>S. No.</b> | <b>Name</b>                        | <b>Designation</b>  |
|---------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 1.            | H. E. Dr. Ali Larijani             | Honorable Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Iran  |
| 2.            | H. E. Mr. Shaheen Mohammad Sadeghi | Honourable Member Parliament and Head of Presiding Board of the Islamic Consultative Assembly                                     |
| 3.            | Mr. Gholamreza Asadullahei         | Member Parliament and Head of Iran-Pakistan Friendship Group  |
| 4.            | Mr. Mehdi Sanaei                   | Member Parliament and National Security and Foreign Policy Commission   |
| 5.            | Mrs. Haleema Aali                  | Member of Parliament  |
| 6.            | Mr. Mohammad Jaffery               | Advisor and Head of the Speaker's Secretariat of Islamic Consultative Assembly  |
| 7.            | Mr. Hassan Ghashghavi              | Deputy Parliamentary, Consular and Iranian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs   |
| 8.            | Mr. Hassan Shaikhuleslam           | Advisor to Head and Director General International Affairs, Islamic Consultative Assembly   |
| 9.            | Mr. Seyyed Mohammad Yasrbi         | Director General Protocol, Islamic Consultative Assembly  |
| 10.           | Mr. Mansour Namavar                | Advisor Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly Secretariat  |
| 11.           | Mr. Mohammad Reza Bagher Panaei    | Advisor to Speaker Secretariat of Islamic Consultative Assembly   |
| 12.           | Mrs. Jalal Abol Hasani             | Head of Passport and visits of Islamic Consultative Assembly  |
| 13.           | Mr. Hamid Anousheh                 | Deputy Director of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Department Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran |
| 14.           | Mr. Farsheed Nourouzi              | Expert Parliament Secretariat   |
| 15.           | Mr. Mohsen Sadeghi Godarzi         | Head of Protocol Passport Section of Parliament   |
| 16.           | Mr. Mahdi Turabi Mehrbani          | English Translator  |
| 17.           | Mr. Ghazanfar Mirdamad             | Office Services   |

|     |                             |                   |
|-----|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| 18. | Mr. Akbar Muradian Taddayon | Protocol Services |
| 19. | Mr. Abbas Abdullahe         | Physician         |

**News Group**

|    |                                  |  |
|----|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Mr. Seyyed Jamal Taheri          | Head of News Group                     |
| 2. | Mr. Mohsen Nourouzi              | Photographer of the Parliament         |
| 3. | Mr. Hameedreza Khuddami          | Reporter of Khana-e-Millat News Agency |
| 4. | Mr. Mojtaba Sadeghi              | Reporter of Mehr News Agency           |
| 5. | Mr. Esmail Saltenatpour          | Reporter of Mehr News Agency           |
| 6. | Mr. Mohammad Hassan Fallah Rokni | Reporter of News Channel               |
| 7. | Mr. Behroze Azeemi               | Cameraman of News Channel              |

**Republic of Tajikistan**

| S. No. | Name                     | Designation  |
|--------|--------------------------|--|
| 1.     | Mr. Shukurjon Zuhurov    | Speaker, Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli (Head of delegation)                               |
| 2.     | Mr. Hisoriev Muhamadamin | Deputy Head of the Committee of Ecology and Agrarian of the Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli |
| 3.     | Mr. Gulov Safarali       | Deputy Head of the Committee of Economic and Finance of the Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli |
| 4.     | Mr. Sultonov Muhammadato | Head of Publishing Department of the Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli.                       |
| 5.     | Mr. Bobojon Bilol,       | Attaché, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan   |

**Republic of Turkey**

| <b>S. No.</b> | <b>Name</b>                 | <b>Designation</b>  |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1.            | H. E. Cemil Cicek           | Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)         |
| 2.            | Ms. FATMA NUR SERTER        | Member of Parliament, Deputy from Istanbul                      |
| 3.            | Mr. REHA DENEMEÇ            | Member of Parliament DEPUTY FOR ANKARA                          |
| 4.            | Mr. YILDIRIM TUĞRUL TÜRKEŞ  | Member OF PARLIAMENT, DEPUTY FOR ANKARA                         |
| 5.            | Mr. Bahadir Yakut           | Head of Foreign Relations and Protocol Department of GNAT       |
| 6.            | Mr. MÜCAHİT DURMUŞOĞLU      | CHIEF OF CABINET  |
| 7.            | Ms. Derya Baykal            | Expert in the Foreign Relations and Protocol Department of GNAT |
| 8.            | Mr. Ihsan Kiziltan          | Adviser of the Speaker on Foreign Relations                     |
| 9.            | Mr. VEDAT ÖNAL              | FOREIGN RELATIONS AND PROTOCOL OFFICER                          |
| 10.           | Ms. İLKNUR GÖNÜLTAŞ KASAP   | CORRESPONDENT OF TURKISH RADIO AND TELEVISION                   |
| 11.           | Ms. CEYLAN GÜRMAN ŞAHİNKAYA | Interpreter (Turkish - English)                                 |
| 12.           | Mr. MEHMET ALİ ŞANLI        | Interpreter (Turkish - English)                                 |
| 14.           | Mr. ERHAN HOŞGÖR            | CAMERAMAN OF TURKISH RADIO AND TELEVISION                       |

The following three ECO Member parliaments were officially represented by their respective embassies in the Conference of Parliamentary Assembly of Economic Cooperation Organization (PAECO):

**Republic of Kazakhstan**

| S. No. | Name                            | Designation  |
|--------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1.     | H. E. Mr. Bakhitbek Shabarbayev | Ambassador, Embassy<br>Republic of Kazakhstan              |
| 2.     | Mr. Aidar Jundybayev            | DHM, Minister-Counselor, Embassy<br>Republic of Kazakhstan |
| 3.     | Mr. Serik Baigazy               | Second Secretary, Embassy<br>Republic of Kazakhstan        |
| 4.     | Mr. Almatkhan Kali              | Attache', Embassy<br>Republic of Kazakhstan                |

**The Kyrgyz Republic**

| S. No. | Name                 | Designation   |
|--------|----------------------|---|
| 1.     | Mr. Kuban Toktorbaev | Deputy Head of Mission Kyrgyz Embassy in<br>Islamabad |

**Republic of Uzbekistan**

| S. No. | Name                   | Designation   |
|--------|------------------------|---|
| 1.     | Mr. Mir Shahid Aslanov | Third Secretary of Uzbekistan Embassy in<br>Islamabad |

Delegation from ECO Secretariat attended the conference as observers.

**ECO SECRETARIAT, TEHRAN**

|    |                       |  |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 1. | Dr. Shamil Aleskerov  | Secretary General, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) |
| 2. | Mr. Jehanzeb Khan     | Assistant Director (International Relations)               |
| 3. | Ms. Nurgul Duissenova | Interpreter  |

**Islamic Republic of Pakistan**

| Sl.No. | Name                        | Designation                      |
|--------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1.     | Mr. Shakeel Awan            | Member National Assembly (PML-N) |
| 2.     | Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb        | Member National Assembly (PML-N) |
| 3.     | Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhary   | Member National Assembly (PML-N) |
| 4.     | Ms. Nuzhat Sadiq            | Senator (PML-N)                  |
| 5.     | Sheikh Salahuddin           | Member National Assembly (MQM)   |
| 6.     | Mr. Asif Hasnain            | Member National Assembly (MQM)   |
| 7.     | Mr. Pervez Khan             | Member National Assembly (ANP)   |
| 8.     | Mr. Masood Abbas            | Member National Assembly (ANP)   |
| 9.     | Molana Mufti Ajmal Khan     | Member National Assembly (JUI)   |
| 10.    | Ms. Aasia Nasir             | Member National Assembly (JUI)   |
| 11.    | Mr. Riaz Fatyana            | Member National Assembly (PML)   |
| 12.    | Sheikh Waqas Akram          | Member National Assembly (PML)   |
| 13.    | Dr. Donia Aziz              | Member National Assembly (PML)   |
| 14.    | Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi      | Deputy Speaker                   |
| 15.    | Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali       | Member National Assembly (PPPP)  |
| 16.    | Miss Palwasha Khan          | Member National Assembly (PPPP)  |
| 17.    | Mr. Noor Alam Khan          | Member National Assembly (PPPP)  |
| 18.    | Mir Amer Ali Khan Magsi     | Member National Assembly (PPPP)  |
| 19.    | Mr. Khurram Jehangir Wattoo | Member National Assembly (PPPP)  |
| 20.    | Dr. Ayatullah Durrani       | Member National Assembly (PPPP)  |
| 21.    | Dr. Zil-e-Huma              | Member National Assembly (PPPP)  |
| 22.    | Syed Amir Ali Shah          | Member National Assembly (PPPP)  |
| 23.    | Pir Syed Fazal Ali Shah     | Member National Assembly (PPPP)  |
| 24.    | Mrs. Rubina Khalid          | Senator (PPPP)                   |

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**CHARTER OF  
THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF THE  
ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION  
(PAECO)**

Whereas the Speakers and the members of Parliaments of the ECO Member countries;

Conscious of their common social, economic and political interests, aspirations and the ties of history and friendship that bind their peoples;

Desirous of forming an organization to strengthen and foster friendly ties, understanding, co-operation and joint action to promote their common values, interests and opportunities;

Recognizing that the ECO Member countries have created a framework for the Parliaments to co-operate among themselves to achieve the ideals of the Izmir Treaty (The Charter of ECO);

Affirming their acceptance of the spirit, purposes and principles of the ECO Charter and of supporting the work of the ECO and promoting knowledge of its principles and activities;

Conscious of the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in fostering democracy, peace and development in our region;

Recalling the decisions of successive ECO Summits on people to people co-operation leading to finalization of guide-lines for extending recognition to ECO Member countries' Parliaments;

Convinced that such recognition would result in increased involvement of the people of ECO Member countries;

DO HEREBY unanimously agree to establish an Assembly to be known as Parliamentary Assembly of Economic Cooperation Organization Countries "PAECO" [hereinafter referred to as the "Assembly" with the following Objectives and Institutional Arrangements:

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**ARTICLE-1**

**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Assembly shall be to:

- (a) strengthen people to people contacts with a view to achieving mutual understanding, trust and friendship among the peoples of the ECO member countries;
- (b) promote contact, co-ordinate and exchange experiences among Parliaments and Parliamentarians of the ECO Member countries;
- (c) provide a forum for exchange of ideas and information on parliamentary practices and procedures and for making suggestions;
- (d) support the work of ECO and promote knowledge of its principles and activities among Parliamentarians of ECO Member countries;
- (e) co-operate in international forums in matters of common values, interests and opportunities;
- (f) enhance parliamentary interaction through strengthening Parliamentary Friendship Groups in the parliaments of the members of PAECO; and
- (g) promote exchange of visits of Parliamentary committees, officers between and among parliaments of the members of PAECO.

**ARTICLE-2**

**COMPOSITION**

- (a) All the ECO Parliaments shall be entitled to the membership of Parliamentary Assembly of ECO countries (PAECO).
- (b) The Assembly shall be composed of the Speakers/Presiding Officers and Parliamentarians representing the national Parliaments of ECO Member countries.
- (c) One Branch of the Assembly shall be formed in each Parliament. The Speaker/Presiding Officer of the Parliament shall be the *President of the Branch* and the Secretary or any other officer so designated by the Speaker shall be the Secretary of that Branch.
- (d) Observer status shall be granted to any other Parliament or Organization with approval of the General Conference.

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[Signature]  
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[Signature]

- (c) Special guests shall attend the Plenary upon the invitation of the President of the Assembly with the consensus of the Member Parliaments.
- (f) Every Branch shall adhere to the objectives of the Assembly.
- (g) Each Branch shall have its own rules which shall conform to the rules of the Assembly.

### ARTICLE-3

#### ASSEMBLY

The Assembly shall comprise:

- (a) General Conference;
- (b) Executive Council;
- (c) Secretariat

### ARTICLE-4

#### GENERAL CONFERENCE

- (a) The General Conference shall discuss and approve all matters falling within the objectives of the Assembly and are proposed to it by the Executive Council.
- (b) Each delegation to the General Conference shall be composed of up to 5 Members of Parliament including the Speaker, and Secretary of the Branch, provided that each delegation shall include at least one woman parliamentarian.
- (c) The Conference shall meet once a year in one of the Member countries, preferably by rotation in alphabetical order.
- (d) The women delegates to the General Conference shall hold their separate meeting on the sidelines of the General Conference to discuss and propose women-related issues for consideration of the General Conference.
- (e) The Speaker of the host country shall be the President of the General Conference and the Secretary of the Parliament of that country shall be the Secretary of the General Conference.
- (f) The Speaker of the country hosting the next Conference shall be the Vice-President of the General Conference.

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- (g) The term of office of the President, the Vice-President and the Secretary of the General Conference shall be from the commencement of one Conference to the commencement of next Conference.
- (h) The General Conference shall establish Committees to examine important issues.

#### ARTICLE-5

##### EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- (a) There shall be an Executive Council of the Assembly comprising the Speakers/Presiding Officers of the ECO countries parliaments. The Executive Council will meet prior to the General Conference.
- (b) The Speaker/Presiding Officer of the host country shall be the Chairman of the Council and shall hold office from commencement of one conference to the commencement of next Conference.

The Executive Council shall decide:

- (i) program and budget of the Assembly;
- (ii) agenda for discussion in the Executive Council, General Conference, and for any other conferences/meetings;
- (iii) all matters concerning the organization and conduct of the Executive Council, General Conference and other conferences/meetings;
- (iv) frame rules of the Assembly; fix the date and venue of conferences/meetings;

#### ARTICLE-6

##### SECRETARIAT

- (a) There shall be a Secretariat of the Assembly headed by the Secretary, who shall be responsible for the work of the Secretariat.
- (b) The permanent Secretariat of PAECO shall be in Islamabad, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The Secretariat will extend support to the country hosting the next General Conference.

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- (c) The Secretary of the PAECO Secretariat shall be appointed by rotation. The mode of election/appointment of the Secretary of PAECO Secretariat shall be decided by the Executive Council in its first meeting. Till that time, the Secretary National Assembly of Pakistan shall be the Secretary of the PAECO Secretariat.
- (d) The Secretary shall inter alia:
- (i) Prepare drafts of plan, program and budget for the Assembly;
  - (ii) Prepare and circulate to all Branches records of the proceedings of the Executive Council, General Conference and other conferences/meetings
  - (iii) Publish periodically an Assembly News Bulletin and also issue publications dealing with the subjects of interest to the Assembly;

#### ARTICLE-7

##### GENERAL FUND

- (a) There shall be established a General Fund for the PAECO Secretariat with voluntary contributions from the member countries and other institutions and organizations in the manner to be decided by the Executive Council.
- (b) Expenses on local hospitality, logistic support and internal travel shall be borne by the host country. Expenditure on international travel shall be borne by the respective visiting delegations.

#### ARTICLE-8

##### OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

The official language of the Assembly shall be English. Arrangements may be made by the host country for unofficial Russian interpretation.

#### ARTICLE-9

##### Entry into Force

The Charter shall enter into force immediately after four Member States sign the Charter and notify the ECO Secretariat that the required internal legal procedures have been fulfilled.

**ARTICLE-10**

**AMENDMENTS**

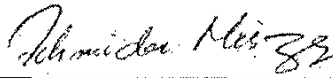
Amendments to the Charter and Rules shall be proposed by the Executive Council by consensus for final approval by the General Conference.

**ARTICLE-11**

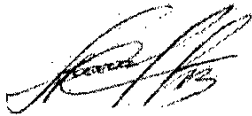
**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

- (a) Decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of consensus.
- (b) Bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from the deliberations.

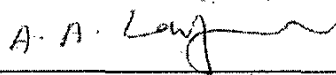
**(Done at Islamabad on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 2013.)**



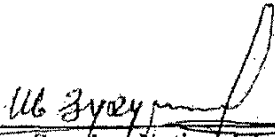
**Speaker National Assembly  
Islamic Republic of Pakistan**



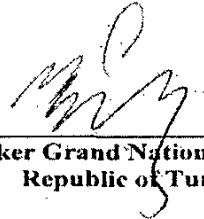
**Speaker National Assembly  
Republic of Azerbaijan**



**Speaker Islamic Parliament  
Islamic Republic of Iran**



**Speaker National Assembly  
Republic of Tajikistan**



**Speaker Grand National Assembly  
Republic of Turkey**



**Second Deputy Speaker Wolesi Jirga  
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

**ADDRESS OF DR. FEHMIDA MIRZA AT THE INAUGURAL & SIGNING CEREMONY OF THE PAECO CHARTER Islamabad, February 11, 2013**

Bismillah Irr Rehman Irr Raheem

Excellency Mr. Sabir Asad-Ov Chairman of the Milli Majlis of Azarbaijan!

Excellency Dr. Ali Larijani Speaker of the Shoura-e-Islami of the Islamic Republic of Iran!

Excellency Shukur-Jon Zuhur-Ov Speaker of the Majlis-i- Namo-yan-da-gon of Majlis-i-Oli

Republic of Tajikistan!

Excellency Jamil Chi-chak Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey !

Excellency Neamatullah Ghaffari Second Deputy Speaker of the (W)Olesi Jirga of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan!

Dr. Shamil Alesker-Ov Secretary General of the ECO!

Hon able Parliamentarians and Delegates of the 1st Conference of the Parliamentary

Assembly of the ECO countries!

Ministers, Excellences, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Assalam-o-Alikum and Good Afternoon to all of you!

It is my privilege to inaugurate the 1st Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Countries. This is a momentous occasion when the ECO s parliamentary fraternity has assembled in Islamabad to turn a new leaf in the history of our Region. I, therefore, warmly welcome all the distinguished Speakers, Parliamentarians and members of the delegations from the ECO countries, who have travelled long distances to participate in this important Conference. The signing of the PAECO Charter marks a historic step.

It reflects the shared resolve of the people s representatives to work together for the common prosperity in a spirit of friendship, trust and mutual understanding. I congratulate all of you on this worthy accomplishment and also express my deepest gratitude to the entire political and parliamentary leadership of the ECO countries for their valuable support in turning the idea of PAECO into a workable reality. Here, I would also like to appreciate the ECO Secretariat, especially its able Secretary General, for their valuable cooperation in seeking consensus on all related issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I had proposed the concept of PAECO at Tehran in February 2011 on the occasion of the Naurouz celebrations. Naurouz is the time when Mother Nature sparks a new beginning. As we all prepare to welcome the arrival of the spring season, let us hope that the initiation of PAECO at this time marks the political and economic rebirth of the ECO, which will reaffirm its foundations; broaden its scope and provide it with a constructive platform for a meaningful people-to-people engagement. Since time immemorial, our common bonds of history, culture, religion and commerce have closely knit our nations together. This joint heritage provides ideal grounds for the socio-economic integration of this region.

The ten ECO Member states combine to form the largest repository of human and natural resources in the world. With a total area of around 8 million Sq. Kilometres, inhabited by more than 400 million people, they represent over 5 percent of the world s land mass and 6% of its entire population. This makes ECO nearly double the size of the European continent and almost equal in

terms of its consumer market. What is more, ECO's geographical position serves as a bridge between the East and the West and makes it the trade corridor of the world. This great potential, however, awaits its optimum utilization from the platform of ECO. The adverse global and regional scenarios such as challenges concerning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, intolerance and extremism have emerged as serious threats to the region's stability, peace and security.

It is also because of these reasons that ECO has not been able to achieve its promised targets. The ECO Ministerial Meeting passed the crucial 5-Year Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation in 2010. This awaits its implementation even after 3 years. It is an irony that there remains a wide gap between the Region's abundant energy resources and the acute needs of its member states, especially Pakistan. Proposals like the ECO Vision 2015, which anticipated our region as a Free Trade Area by 2015; the ECO Trade Agreement; and the ECO Trade and Development Bank have all remained off-the-mark. The Intra regional trade is less than US\$ 50 billion. Despite sharing common borders, the inability to develop effective and reliable transport systems have not allowed any two of our member's states to become each other's leading trading partners.

These are the shortfalls, which have contributed to the rise of poverty, illiteracy, and spread of disease, unemployment, environmental degradation and lack of opportunities. These considerations led me to propose the parliamentary platform of the ECO countries, through which, we the parliamentarians could jointly infuse our energies and action to the ideals of regional cooperation. The Parliaments, as the representative voices of the people, provide a platform for fruitful exchange of ideas. The parliamentarians have an important role to play in affecting the state policies for the collective good of the people. We hold the people's mandate to create consensus out of conflict by recognizing and resolving the contentious issues.

Individually, our national branches can help our governments in finding solutions through supportive legislations and framing policy. Collectively, we can engage into a meaningful parliamentary diplomacy for understanding and accommodating each other for the realization of our mutually agreed goals. In the forthcoming sessions of the 1st General Assembly of our newly-found PAECO, the worthy delegates will be identifying their role as Parliamentarians in pursuing the agenda of sustainable socio-economic development by promoting trade and investments in the ECO Region. I am confident their meaningful contributions will help give new dimensions to the existing level of cooperation amongst our member states.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The plight of women and children in ECO countries is a critical area of our common concern. PAECO holds an added responsibility to address their needs for the fact that out of 10 member Parliaments of our organisation, 3 are headed by women Speakers. This morning, the women parliamentarians from the ECO countries held their first meeting on the side-lines of our Conference in which they agreed to promote closer links by organizing themselves under PAECO. The available forum of Women's Parliamentary Caucus in the Parliament of Pakistan can provide a sustainable base for such future contacts.

Distinguished delegates!

During the last five years, the present Parliament of Pakistan has enacted a number of legislation on a wide range of socio-economic and socio-political subjects. We will be more than happy to share these statutes with our sister parliaments in the ECO. At the same time, we also look forward to receiving the affirmative actions of your respective Parliaments in areas of our mutual concern. Keeping in view the commonality of our faith and cultural values, this cooperation in legislative business can go a long way in transforming our region into forward-looking and progressive Muslim democracies. I am confident that this first PAECO Conference will prove to be a watershed in identifying areas of our expanded cooperation. As I look forward to this substantive outcome, I also wish each one of you a comfortable and memorable stay in Islamabad. As I conclude, I once again whole-heartedly thank each one of the worthy Speakers for their support and cooperation in

realizing the dream of PAECO. In this age of rapid transformation, the ECO Region stands at a threshold of taking a quantum leap into :an unprecedented future; a future of unlimited opportunity and a future of infinite hope.

Let us combine our energies and our resources to make this dream a beaming reality. With these words Ladies and Gentlemen! And with a sense of history, I declare the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of ECO Parliaments OPEN! I thank you all! PAKISTAN ZINDABAD.

**Opening Remarks By the Secretary National Assembly At the Inaugural and Signing Ceremony of the PAECO Charter**

Bismillah Irr Rehman Irr Raheem

Excellency Dr. Fehmida Mirza, Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan and the Chief Guest of the Inaugural and Signing Ceremony of the PAECO Charter!

Distinguished Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Parliaments of the brotherly Republics of Azarbaijan, Iran, Tajikistan and Turkey!

Hon'able Second Deputy Speaker of the brotherly Islamic Republic of Afghanistan!

Secretary General of the ECO!

Worthy delegates, Ministers, parliamentarians, guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Assalam-o-Alikum!

On behalf of the people and Parliament of Pakistan, it is my privilege to accord warm welcome to the distinguished Speakers, Parliamentarians and members of the delegations from the ECO Region.

The National Assembly of Pakistan is indeed grateful to all of you for accepting the invitation of our Hon'able Speaker in joining the formal launch of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO --- the PAECO --- and to participate in its maiden Conference.

These are indeed defining moments of our region's history, when the elected representatives of the people of ECO countries are forging new bonds of unity in Islamabad to give new dimensions to our long-standing, historic and close relations.

For centuries, our ancestors interacted with each other through the historic Silk Route. Our successive political leaderships built upon this common edifice by agreeing to a common framework of Economic Cooperation Organisation.

And today the parliamentary leaderships of our respective countries are adding yet another milestone to this journey of mutual progress and prosperity by approving the idea of the Hon'able Speaker of Pakistan, Dr. Fehmida Mirza to form a Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO countries.

I recall with distinct pride that this novel concept was first launched by her two years ago, which followed an intense series of consultations and incessant communication amongst the ECO states.

These discussions yielded positive results last September in this city of Islamabad when in a spirit of mutual trust and respect --- as well as with the kind assistance of ECO Secretariat --- the Member Parliaments agreed upon the Draft Charter of the proposed Parliamentary Assembly.

The same was unanimously approved by the ECO Council of Ministers in its Baku meeting in October 2012 --- thus paving the way for holding of the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference of the PAECO.

The Parliament of Pakistan, therefore, considers it a unique honour to hold the founding ceremony of such a promising parliamentary forum. The combined support and goodwill of all participating delegations to this Conference has further renewed our spirits. We therefore assure the fullest cooperation of the National Assembly of Pakistan for the success and future growth of this Parliamentary Assembly.

In the end, we wish you a comfortable stay and hope that you return with fond memories of your visit to Pakistan.

I thank you all, Pakistan Paindabad

**Statement by the Chairman of the Milli Mejlis of the Republic of  
Azerbaijan Mr.Ogtay Asadov at the constituent meeting of the  
Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization.**

**(Islamabad, February 11, 2013)**

**Dear colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

First of all, on behalf of the delegation of Azerbaijan and personally on my behalf allow me to express my gratitude to the leadership of the Parliament of Pakistan, in particular to Mrs. Fehmida Mirza for providing and organizing magnificent conditions for the conduct of today's meeting.

I wholeheartedly congratulate all of you on the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization. I am convinced that this new international institution that we have founded will help promote development of the cooperation among the parliaments of our countries, deepening the political and economic ties among our states, materialization of the rich potential of our region.

**Dear colleagues,**

Today mankind is facing great tests and challenges. These are the problems that can be eliminated only with joint efforts of states. In other words, through history, the need for cooperation among the states has never been felt this much deeper. The dynamic development of the modern world is related with comprehensive integration in a number of fields of life.

All these give a new meaning to the role of parliamentary diplomacy as an important format of international cooperation. Parliamentary diplomacy complementing and thus enriching the traditional diplomatic mechanisms has



already proved to be a democratic forum for dialogue as well as an effective mean for cooperation amongst the states and peoples. In this regard, it is a political event of greater importance to establish the parliamentary dimension of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

We, the Azerbaijani side, pin great hopes on the activity of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization. I am convinced that the new Parliamentary Assembly will play a role as a useful and important forum for open and constructive dialogue and discussions, serve to promote and ensure our common interests as peace, stability and social-economic welfare.

We consider that the newly established Parliamentary Assembly should also serve to search solutions to the frozen conflicts existing in our region. In this context, it is of utterly great importance to bring the soonest settlement to the Armenian-Azerbaijani Nagorno-Karabakh conflict lasting more than 20 years on the basis of the norms and principles of international law, that is to say, liberation of the Azerbaijani territories occupied by Armenia, return of one million Azerbaijani citizens forcefully expelled from their permanent places of residence. Eliminating the consequences of the aggression conducted against my country and thereby restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan will open up thoroughly new perspectives for the development of the regional cooperation.

**Dear Friends,**

**Honorable colleagues,**

In conclusion, allow me to wish successes to the new Parliamentary Assembly's activity, peace and prosperity to our region.

Thank you for attention.

**Statement by H. E. Dr. Ali Larijani, Honorable Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly  
of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

*In The Name of God, the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful*

H.E. Dr. Fahmida Mirza, the Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly of  
Pakistan and the Chair of the First PAECO,

H.E. Mr. Shamil Askarov the Honorable Secretary General of ECO,

Honorable Heads of Delegations,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Greetings,

At the outset and on behalf of myself, my colleagues and my accompanying  
delegation I would like to thank the people, the parliament and the government of the  
friendly, brotherly, neighborly country of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for warmly and  
intimately hosting the first PAECO.

I would also like to thank H.E. Dr. Fahmida Mirza for her unsparing support of the  
PAECO. Without any doubt, this initiative will significantly promote the image of ECO  
and support its activities.

I hope this meeting will have fruitful outcomes under the chairmanship and  
management of H.E. Fahmida Mirza as well as the cooperation of the H.E. the Secretary  
General of the ECO and his colleagues in the ECO secretariat and the contributions to be  
made by all the present delegations.

Today and thanks to the signing and then approving the charter of the PAECO by  
the relevant authorities of the ECO member states we will be witnessing a valuable  
movement in the parliamentary diplomacy between the ECO members. In fact, with the  
implementation of this charter a new chapter will be opened in people to people contacts at  
the regional level.

**Distinguished Chairwoman,**

The ECO region enjoys high capacities and potentialities. In the last two decades,  
the members of ECO have tried to operationalize the objectives found in the Izmir treaty.  
Some of these objectives are to achieve gradual political and economic convergence and

make use of the global economy, develop the transit and communication infrastructures, foster environmental cooperation, utilize energy, industrial and agricultural potentials as well as to foster and strengthen the historical and cultural ties between the peoples of the ECO region.

The ECO members are facing the reality that regional and international crises are affecting their domestic conditions. Therefore, in order to alleviate the harms and improve the situation of the region it is necessary to utilize the capacity of ECO to have political and security consultations for peace and tranquility which are the foundations of lasting development.

The Iranian parliament believes that a new window has been opened in ECO called the PAECO which provides an appropriate opportunity to the members to have close, active and continuous parliamentary cooperation with each other to take advantage of the capacities of the member countries so that this assembly will be regarded as a strong foundation that can be relied upon to fulfill the Izmir treaty.

I hope that the parliamentarians of the ECO member states will place this new responsibility high on their agenda and welcome and support the initiative by the National Assembly of Pakistan.

I also hope that the subsequent meetings of our fledgling assembly will be held in a timely manner and according to the ECO calendar of events.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to the National Assembly of Pakistan and its honorable speaker for their hospitality and wisdom.

**Statement by H. E. Mr. Shukurjon Zuhurov, Speaker, Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan**

Dear Madam Chair

Dear representatives of country parliaments and members of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Taking advantage of this opportunity, I would like to express my sincerely gratitude to Chairman of National Assembly of Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Mrs. Fakhmida Mirzo for arrangement of today's high level meeting. I am fully confident that the signing of the Charter of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) as a mechanism of integration processes plays an important role in ECO 's contributions in the region. It will create reliable foundation for further consolidation of efficient cooperation in field of trade, as well as determination of spheres in economic cooperation.

I have to emphasize that one of the ancient world civilizations had arose in this region and its members made a significant contribution to development of culture and science. Just across this territory passes the Silk Road which is after many centuries still did not lose its commercial and economic magnitudes.

Consolidation of integration processes and development cooperation of Tajikistan with ECO have created favorable conditions in cooperation consolidation in industrial structures in countries of the region and have provided a positive effect in the field of output of products and also political achievements of states, reduction of poverty level and maintenance of well-being of the people.

In this connection, I would like to underline an important role of parliaments of member states of ECO, as a legislative structure and a mechanism of creation of the single legal standard of our countries.

**Thank you for attention!**

**Statement by H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov,  
ECO Secretary General  
First General Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of ECO  
Countries (PAECO)  
Islamabad, Pakistan, February 10 - 13, 2013**

**Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great honour and privilege to be here with you all on the occasion of the First General Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of ECO Countries (PAECO). The National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan deserves our sincere thanks for organizing this event and extending its hospitality to the visiting delegations. We would also like to applaud the excellent arrangements made by the host authorities for the Conference during our stay in the beautiful city of Islamabad.

The establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of ECO Countries (PAECO) and the signing of its Charter is an important milestone in the journey of ECO towards enhanced and comprehensive regional cooperation and integration. It is a manifestation of our commitment to advance the existing mutual cooperation to another level for the realization of our common objectives in the field of socio-economic development.

The idea of establishing a parliamentary forum of the ECO member states was launched by the then Speaker of the National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1993. We are grateful to the present Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Her Excellency Dr. Fehmida Mirza, for her recent initiative to revive the proposal concerning the establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO countries. It is due to the sincere efforts of the honourable speaker and the collective will of the member states that we are witnessing this important event. Although considerable time has elapsed before the realization of this goal, we must now make up for the lost time and seize the opportunities this new forum has to offer during the coming years.

The ECO member states are strongly bound by ties of history, culture, heritage and religion. It is our conviction that the shortest path to progress and development for our nations is through enhanced regional cooperation.

The ECO Region constitutes well over 6% of the entire humanity and represents a land share of more than 5.9% of the entire world. It is gifted with abundant reserves of natural resources and possesses a rich agricultural base and qualified human resources. Since ECO region is the bridge between East and West and North and South, its geographic location is ideal for development of diverse trading routes across the continents.

During the past years, various projects and activities have been initiated to realize the potential for socio-economic development in ECO region. The establishment of ECO Trade and Development Bank, finalization and implementation of ECO Trade Agreement and ECO Transit Trade Agreement, activation of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, initiating transport projects for interlinking the region with major world markets, implementation of ECO Food Security Programme, initiating projects on energy cooperation, agriculture, poverty alleviation, tourism, health and counter-narcotics are among the many of ECO's initiatives aimed at realizing our collective goals.

However, keeping in view the enormity of the challenges facing our region and people, let us not be complacent with what has been achieved during all these years.

The total world trade in 2011 stood at US\$ 18 trillion<sup>1</sup> of which the share of ECO countries remains much less than 10 percent<sup>2</sup>. The intra-regional trade of our region presently stands at approximately \$45bn.<sup>3</sup> One can see that there exists a great potential for increasing trade and investment in this region.

At this august occasion with honourable parliamentarians of the member states among us, we need a fresh resolve and a renewed expression of our political will to make sincere efforts for the achievement of our goals.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our region faces complex socio-economic challenges which could be better tackled in a collective manner. With the start of cooperation at the parliamentary level, we are positive that the existing collaboration will be enhanced to realize our common goals of regional growth and development.

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<sup>1</sup> World Trade Report 2012 by WTO

<sup>2</sup> Estimated from UNCTAD Handbook of Statistics 2011

<sup>3</sup> According to the ECO Annual Economic Report 2010, the intra-regional trade reached US\$44.5bn.

For the promotion of intra-region trade, development and investment, which hold remarkable potential as drivers of growth, the PAECO and national parliaments can formulate policies that can support regional trade integration. We are hopeful that the ECO Parliamentary Assembly will assist the national parliaments in introducing laws to harmonize trade legislation, regulations and standards, and in collaboration with the national parliaments, will advocate for evidence-based policy making thus supporting the trade promotion agenda. ECO with its resources and outreach will help in enhancing the intra-regional trade and attracting investment in the region.

The PAECO can offer its assistance to national parliaments in tracking and monitoring the ratification and implementation of the major ECO agreements. Additionally, the Parliamentary Forum will be in a position to encourage the respective Governments to provide resources to expedite the ratification and implementation processes.

If properly harnessed, intra-ECO trade and investment have the potential to serve as the bedrock for the region's economic resilience against economic crises and macroeconomic shocks. Enhanced regional trade and investment flow will also provide employment opportunities for the teeming population of our region, particularly for youth.

Let me express my confidence that in the coming years, PAECO will become a strong pillar of support to national and regional parliaments across the region for achieving our objectives of socio-economic development.

**Thank You**

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**JOINT STATEMENT**

**Women Parliamentarians from ECO Countries Meet at the First Conference of the  
Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Countries at Islamabad**

We the women parliamentarians from ECO Countries assembled for the meeting of the Women Parliamentarians at the First Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Countries being held in Islamabad, this 11th day of February 2012;

*Share* the common aspirations of our people within the region to live in peace and prosperity through social and economic justice;

*Welcome* the efforts of all ECO countries to strengthen social and economic justice of which women empowerment is an integral part;

*Considering* that the women of ECO region can be a source of great strength for the overall sustainable development of the ECO region.

*Realizing* that the needs and concerns of ECO women are more or less common in the emerging geo-political, socio-cultural and economic scenario, and so are some of the constraints to meet these challenges;

*Recognizing* that the women representatives have a special role and responsibility in articulating and shaping women's socio-economic and political empowerment within their respective countries;

*Reaffirming* the desire to build a just and inclusive order within the region that promotes people-centric social and economic justice.

*Inter alia* calls upon member countries to focus on the social, economic and political empowerment of women as well as on the potential of women's agency for social change

It is acknowledged women achieve results and advance their interests:

- i. If in numbers which is important for the critical mass factor
- ii. If they organize themselves into women's groups within parties and on multi-party level such as the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Pakistan
- iii. If they are mainstreamed into the body of politics of the parliamentary system

**DO HEREBY UNDERTAKE THROUGH THIS ISLAMABAD DECLARATION**

- To join hands and raise a collective voice through initiating discourse and series of dialogue to address the emerging socio-economic needs and concerns of the women of the ECO countries;



- To make concerted and collective efforts to position women for undertaking meaningful role at the policies and decision making levels within all spheres of the political and socio-economic development;
- To emphasize on adopting special measures to promote women's economic, social and political progress within our respective countries
- To evolve mechanisms that ensure positive and greater cooperation through launching ECO Women Parliamentarians Forum

The Meeting Further extends its gratitude to the Parliamentary Assembly of ECO Countries for deciding to incorporate such an initiative into its Charter and to encourage the holding of its first meeting as the first agenda item at its First Conference being held in Islamabad 10 - 13 February 2013.

Transmits the joint statement to the Executive Council with the request that the honorable Speakers individually and collectively would continue to facilitate in taking it forward

Further requests, it is transmitted to the first meeting of the Women Parliamentarians at the First Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of ECO Countries for attention as having taken place successfully and appropriately

The common objective is to establish a single market for goods and services. Under the agreement reached between ECO members, the common trade market should be established by 2015.

Sustainable economic development of Member States.

The status and power of the ECO is growing. However, the organization faces many challenges. Most importantly, the member states are lacking appropriate infrastructure and institutions which the Organization is primarily seeking to develop, to make full use of the available resources in the region and provide sustainable development for the member nations.

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**OPENING REMARKS OF DR. FEHMIDA MIRZA, SPEAKER, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF  
PAKISTAN & PRESIDENT, PAECO GENERAL CONFERENCE AT THE 1st GENERAL  
CONFERENCE OF PAECO February 12, 2013 Islamabad**

**Bismillah Irr Rehman Irr Raheem**

**Excellency Dr. Ali Larijani**

**Speaker of the Shoura-e-Islami of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

**Excellency Shukur-jon Zuhurov Speaker of the Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli  
Republic of Tajikistan**

**Excellency Jamil Che-Chek Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey**

**Excellency Neamatullah Ghaffari Second Deputy Speaker of the WolesiJirga of the  
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

**Dr. Shamil Aleskerov Secretary General of the ECO**

**Hon'able Parliamentarians and Delegates of the 1st Conference of the Parliamentary  
Assembly of the ECO countries!**

**Excellences, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

**Assalam-o-Alikum and Good Morning to all of you!**

It is an honour for me to assume the Chair of the President of the 1st Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO countries. The Parliament of Pakistan is privileged to hold this important regional parliamentary event and on its behalf, I once again warmly welcome all the worthy Presiding Officers and their delegations to our beautiful Capital, Islamabad. I also wish you a comfortable and purposeful stay here and hope that the links established in Islamabad, will go a long way in fostering closer integration in the PAECO fraternity.

**Distinguished delegates!**

In its almost 30 years' history, the ECO has offered a promising base for a viable cooperation in diverse fields among the member states. The principles of the Izmir Treaty have been guiding our governments to seek a peaceful, progressive and enabling environment for the sustainable human and economic development of our people. The establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Parliaments is a manifestation of the same resolve. This forum of public representatives not only reaffirms the existing foundations of mutual cooperation but also offers a viable means for a practical realization of these ideals.

The PAECO Charter, which was signed yesterday, envisions the parliamentarians of our 10 countries to jointly promote our common values, interests and opportunities. It desires them to invoke the dictums of "Parliamentary Diplomacy" in fostering democracy, peace and development in our region. We are now duty-bound to transform these promises into

action-oriented results. It is encouraging to note that a befitting start has already been made. In its first meeting yesterday, the Executive Council of PAECO took important decisions to set the direction of our Assembly.

I am pleased to inform the General Conference that: The worthy Speakers have agreed to hold the conferences of PAECO on annual basis and in this regard, the 2nd Conference will, Inshah Allah, be held in Kabul, Afghanistan in the spring of 2014. It has also been decided to provide an institutional structure to PAECO by framing its Rules for the conduct of its business. A committee, comprising of the secretaries and the designated officials from all member States has been constituted to undertake this important task. This committee will submit its report in our next meeting in Kabul.

We have also authorized the Secretary PAECO to seek observer status for our newly-formed Assembly in the Inter Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Union of the Islamic Countries. This will enable the PAECO parliamentarians to work closely on important multilateral forums. The Executive Council has also noted with satisfaction the holding of the first-ever meeting of Women Parliamentarians from the ECO countries and has agreed to provide this important forum all the needed assistance for its steady growth. These are indeed positive developments and reflect the common desire of the Member parliaments to promote and strengthen our mutual parliamentary contacts.

Distinguished Delegates!

The platform of the General Conference is also extremely important for the future healthy growth of PAECO. This assembly of the ECO parliamentarians has to work as the epicentre of ideas and workable solutions. The topic placed before this 1st General Conference holds the key for opening future vistas of a meaningful cooperation. It aims at enabling our parliamentarians to identify a tangible role for themselves for promoting intra-regional trade and investments for the sustainable socio-economic development of the region. I hope that Islamabad Conference will provide the worthy delegates a perfect setting to discuss such important matters in friendship and candour. In my capacity as the President of this august Assembly, I look forward to a meaningful outcome of the 1st Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Parliaments and wish this Conference the very best.

I thank you all.

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## LIST OF LEAD SPEAKERS OF INTERVENTIONS

| Sl No | Name                        | Designation  |
|-------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1.    | H. E. Cemil Cicek           | Lead Speech-1----- Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT)                     |
| 2.    | H. E. Dr. Ali Larijani      | Lead Speech-2-----Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Iran |
| 3.    | Mr. Shukurjon Zuhurov       | Speaker, Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli (Head of delegation)                                 |
| 4.    | Mr. Faisal Karim Kundi      | Deputy Speaker   |
| 5.    | Senator Nuzhat Sadiq        | Senator  |
| 6.    | Mr. Riaz Fatyana            | Member of Parliament   |
| 7.    | Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry    | Member of Parliament   |
| 8.    | Sheikh Allauddin            | Member of Parliament   |
| 9.    | Syed Asif Hasnain           | Member of Parliament   |
| 10.   | Ms. Sheerin Arshad          | Member of Parliament   |
| 11.   | Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali       | Member of Parliament   |
| 12.   | Mr. Khurram Jahangir Wattoo | Member of Parliament   |
| 13.   | Mr. Shakeel Awan            | Member of Parliament   |

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**Valedictory Address of Dr. Fehmida Mirza Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan & the President 1st Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Countries, February 12, 2013**

Bismilla hIrr Rehman Irr Raheem

Excellency Dr. Ali Larijani Speaker of the Shoura-e-Islami of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Excellency Shukur-jon Zuhurov Speaker of the Majlisi Namoyandagon of Majlisi Oli

Republic of Tajikistan

Excellency JamilChe-Chek Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey

Excellency Neamatullah Ghaffari Second Deputy Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Dr. Shamil Aleskerov Secretary General of the ECO

Hon'able Parliamentarians and Delegates of the 1st Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO countries!

Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Assalam-o-Alikum and good day to all of you!

I am extremely grateful for the vote of thanks, proposed by Excellency Naematullah Ghafari, the Vice President of the Association and the 2nd Deputy Speaker of Afghanistan, which was seconded by all other distinguished Speakers and leaders of the delegations from ECO Parliaments, present here. The sentiments expressed by each one of you have indeed humbled us and on behalf of the National Assembly of Pakistan, I whole-heartedly thank you for your kind appreciation.

I also consider the successful signing of the PAECO Charter and the holding of our 1st Conference the joint achievement of all Parliaments of the ECO Region. I warmly acknowledge the personal interest of each one of you in making this possible and also congratulate you for your valuable contributions. The wisdom and foresightedness, reflected in the keynotes and interventions of worthy Speakers have identified crucial vistas of enhanced cooperation. I am sure that under our collective leadership, the newly-established PAECO will foster strong intra-regional linkages.

Distinguished delegates!

The topic of the 1st Conference of the PAECO:

"Parliaments' Oversight Role in Promoting Intra-Regional Trade and Investments to Ensure Sustainable Socio-Economic Development in the ECO Region" generated a healthy and target-oriented debate. --- honourable members spoke on this key subject in the two sessions today and invited our collective attention to some of the burning issues.

All these esteemed speakers were unanimous in their conclusion that the full potential of the ECO, in the fields of trade and investment had not been harnessed. This could be increased to 8 folds if properly undertaken. They also pointed to the fact that although concrete plans and tangible institutions were floated but in the absence of active

participation by all member states, these remained largely dormant. The crucial ECO Trade Agreement has only been signed by 5 countries while the rest of the 5 countries are out of its fold. Even those, who are signatories to ECOTA have not endorsed it so far.

This is also the case with ECO Trade and Investment Bank, which is only participated by 4 member states. Therefore, the foremost task before PAECO should be to push our respective governments, through our legislative and oversight role to fully activate these forums. We must also engage into a constructive dialogue through PAECO to ensure 100 per-cent participation of all member states in all agreed ventures.

Another area of our focus should be facilitating the private sector through supportive legislations and removing numerous barriers, which create hurdles in intra-regional trade and investments. The importance of building reliable road and rail links in the ECO region hold the key for sustained economic activity. The projects like the North-South and East-West Railways and opening of all-weather road systems are essential for the integration of our Region.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

As PAECO takes its initial steps, it is important for all of us to realize that the prime objective of this forum is to further the ideals of economic cooperation. We must, therefore, identify and agree on realistic targets. Let us not forget that long journeys always start with small steps. The convergence of ECO Region is only possible by respecting and recognizing the diversity of our respective member countries. We must, therefore, work in a spirit of mutual respect, trust and confidence.

And before I conclude, I would especially like to stress that sustainable socio-economic development is not possible if it does not address the needs of our women and children. The Millennium Development Goal indicators of our Region show that almost all Members states lag behind on issues, pertaining to women's empowerment or mother and child health. The PAECO can make useful headways in this area by strengthening the forum of ECO Experts Group on MDG through a combined parliamentary initiative.

A Parliamentary Committee in the National Assembly of Pakistan, as constituted by me, is already working for speeding up the pace in this important direction. We will be happy to share this experience with our PAECO colleagues. The holding of the first meeting of the Women Parliamentarians of PAECO yesterday is also an important milestone. This forum must be strengthened on long-term basis and converted into a dynamic platform under PAECO.

The need now is to sustain this meaningful parliamentary dialogue. As the President of this Conference for 2013-14, I will be working on finding ways to increase the momentum of parliamentary exchanges among member Parliaments. Through PAECO, we will reorganize parliamentary seminars, workshops and discussions on mutually agreed issues on regular basis. I am confident that with the able support of all distinguished Speakers of the ECO Parliaments, we will succeed in taking the PAECO to another level. As I conclude, I, once again, whole-heartedly thank all of you for your support to my idea of PAECO and in the holding of this Conference.

Distinguished Delegates!

I also express my sincere appreciation to each one of you for your valuable contributions. Some of you travelled long distances and I hope that your brief stay was comfortable, which enabled you to benefit from this Conference. The Parliament and people of Pakistan will eagerly wait for your return, as and when you may desire to visit your second home, Pakistan.

*I am deeply grateful to our President Mr. Asif Ali Zardari for his kind patronage in carrying the PAECO idea forward. My sincere appreciation is also due to Government of Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf for all the needed support, which was made readily available to the National Assembly through the allied departments in the organisation of this important Conference. The Secretary and his entire staff in the National Assembly Secretariat deserve our joint accolade for their tireless efforts in making this Conference a success from start to its end.*

I also thank our friends in print and electronic media, who remained keen partners in all events of this Conference and provided amicable coverage to the deliberations and decisions taken here. With these words --- and with immense pleasure --- Ladies and Gentlemen --- I declare the 1th Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Countries formally closed.

Wish you all safe return back home.

**Pakistan Zindabad**