

**190<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives  
(CPR)**

**Agenda item 2**

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Majid Bizmark  
On his assumption of Chairmanship of the  
ECO Council of Permanent Representatives**

8 December 2013, ECO Secretariat

**Honorable Secretary General**

**Distinguished Fellow Colleagues**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

At the outset, let me express my gratitude to you all for participation in this meeting, the first CPR session following the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Council of Ministers. This is an honor for me and my delegation to take over the responsibility of CPR chairmanship in the coming year. I shall extend a heartfelt appreciation to the excellent leadership of the Council in the last 13 months by H.E. Ambassador Javanshir Akhundov and his team.

Let me continue by expressing deepest gratitude to ECO Member States for active and high level participation in the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers. The efforts made by Distinguished Secretary General and his team in the ECO Secretariat also deserve highest appreciation.

**Dear Colleagues**

The 21<sup>st</sup> COM meeting marked an important shift in approach by our Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The Ministers clearly indicated their firm desire to push for necessary changes in the Organization in order to make it more responding to the needs and merits of the Member States and people of the Region. This will involve ECO in all sectors

and corners. As Ministers precisely articulated in Tehran Communiqué, the reform process shall address regulatory, institutional, budgetary and other aspects of the Organization. Therefore, this is a common responsibility of Member States and the Secretariat. The Secretariat and membership alike shall be on board to ensure meaningful outcomes. Ministers instructed the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to give necessary support and authorizations to the Secretariat and the Secretary General for conducting the reforms. Ministers also mandated CPR to act on the recommendations of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG). So we have a heavy mandate ahead of us leading to the next COM meeting in Islamabad. This is why the post-21<sup>st</sup> COM era in ECO needs to be more dynamic than ever before, a critical task for both CPR and the Secretariat.

As the Chairman of the CPR, I am committed to facilitate implementation of the COM decisions. This is, however, a collective undertaking. This requires support and engagement of all Member States. I intend to have preliminary consultations with the Secretary General on the proper preparation for the implementation of the mandated reforms. The Member States will be certainly consulted in this regard. We will soon share with the membership the proposed "outline for implementation". We need to come up with a clear reform package based on the COM mandates. This would require pertinent time-bound measures at the level of membership and Secretariat. As indicated in Tehran Communiqué, the proposed roadmap for implementation of the EPG recommendations will constitute a solid point of departure for our exercise.

## **Dear Colleagues**

In addition to the reform-related decisions, the Council of Ministers addressed other important issues. The immediate operationalization of ECOTA and the imperative of its wider membership, establishment of the ECO Economic Research Center in Baku, early establishment of the requisite trade, customs, banking and tax arrangements within ECO, removing the existing obstacles to full and early operationalization of the ECO rail and road corridors, realization of ECO enormous potential for enhanced energy cooperation, streamlining ECO activities in some area as well as external relations of the Organization are among mandates issued by 21<sup>st</sup> Council of Ministers meeting which overload CPR with further crucial tasks.

I remain confident and hopeful that with your cooperation, CPR will be able to play its crucial role in the year to come. This may require more focused and target-oriented work at the level of ambassadors and at working level. We may need to involve capital-based officials in some point in time. Secretariat role is central to any envisaged achievements.

We will soon be clear on the course of actions we are expected to follow.

**Thank you for your attention**