

1st ECO Interior Ministers Meeting

Tehran Declaration

(*Tehran, 1st November 2006*)

Annex-VI

The Interior Ministers/Heads of Delegations of Member States of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), on the invitation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and in line with their effort to realize the common goals mentioned in the Declarations adopted by the Eighth and Ninth Summit Meetings held on 14th September 2004 in Dushanbe, the Republic of Tajikistan, and 5th May 2006 in Baku, the Republic of Azerbaijan, respectively, on coordination of policies and programs for campaign against terrorism and trans-national organized crimes, met in Tehran on November 1, 2006.

Emphasizing the importance of implementing the relevant articles approved by the ECO Summits on the necessity of consolidation, coordination and cooperation among Member States in their programs on campaign against terrorism and trans-national organized crimes in order to advance the high goals incorporated in the statute of the ECO and remove all obstacles in the way of the fulfillment of the said goals, the Ministers of ECO Member States agreed on the following points:

1. Recognizing security and stability as fundamental factors for any economic development and progress, emphasized the continuation and further deepening of cooperation among Member States in order to maintain and preserve peace and stability of the region, and seriously and jointly confront all threatening factors disturbing the security, including the factors related to the spread of trans-national organized crimes and offenses, drug trafficking, and terrorism which are in one way or another related to each other.
2. Aware of the adverse consequences and effects of transnational crimes, including organized crimes and terrorism, emphasized the necessity of adopting a common, comprehensive strategy to fight all forms of trans-national organized crimes such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering, smuggling of cultural and historical relics, rare plants or animal species and terrorism.
3. Noted that human trafficking and human smuggling have become the rapidly growing problems not only in the region but also worldwide; while considering the factors contributing to such problems, agreed to exchange bilateral information and experiences and consider establishment of an effective cooperation mechanisms to fight these threats.
4. Categorically condemning different forms of terrorism, reassured their determination to contain and campaign against this problem, firmly believing that an effective campaign against this complex phenomenon requires a comprehensive approach, encompassing judicial, police and intelligence cooperation among the Member States as well as the cooperation of relevant

international and regional institutions and organizations; Recognized that elimination of the problem of terrorism will not be possible without the identification of the root causes that shape and strengthen it, including on the one hand, social, economic, political and psychological factors and adoption of necessary measures to reduce grounds leading to terrorist activities, and, on the other, promotion of policies and programs consolidating the principle of understanding, and tolerance and peaceful co-existence among the civilizations.

5. In line with their resolve to fight terrorism, emphasized the need to exchange information in different fields among themselves on ways and techniques used by the terrorist groups and emphasized that they will prevent any settlement and activities of terrorist groups in their territories.

6. Following the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, the contents of the Declaration of Human Rights and Human Rights Conventions as well as other related international instruments, announced that campaign against terrorism must be within the framework of international rules and norms of international law and in conformity with all related principles and regulations of human rights and international humanitarian law and by avoiding adoption of unilateral, discriminatory and non-transparent policies.

7. Recognizing the special geographical and geopolitical situation of the ECO region on the one hand and the international developments over the past few years on the other, and also demonstrating the political will of their respective governments to fight all manifestations of trans-national organized crime, laid emphasis on the need to create an effective mechanism within the framework of the ECO to coordinate measures for the prevention and campaign against terrorism and trans-national organized crimes, particularly drug and psychotropic substances trafficking, and also laid emphasis on the expansion of cooperation with other regional organizations and relevant UN institutions.

8. Taking into account the reports of the relevant international organizations, particularly the United Nations, which emphasize the seriousness of the threats stemming from the continuation of poppy cultivation, production and trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors, laid stress on the need for sharing effective innovations and mechanisms for the continuation and deepening of collective cooperation among themselves within the framework of the ECO and also on developing effective cooperation and technical assistance with other countries and relevant international organizations, UNODC in particular, for a result-oriented campaign against this problem which somehow strengthens the financial and operational capacity of the terrorist groups and other trans-national organized criminals.

9. Maintained that the narcotic drugs and basic chemical substances threaten not only the countries of the ECO region but also all regions of the world and hence while being aware of their own mission as frontline states in an all-out

campaign against this problem, announced that more serious, comprehensive and effective international assistance and help in this regard, including in realization of the stability and improvement of economic condition in Afghanistan as well as fulfillment of all accepted commitments in comprehensive campaign against the production and trafficking of narcotic drugs, are the fundamental conditions for containment and campaign against narcotic drugs and other related crimes in the world.

10. Acknowledging the effective role of law enforcement agencies/security forces in coordinating and following up the policies and plans aimed at fighting trans-national organized crime, emphasized the upgrading of the qualitative level of activities of law enforcement agencies/security forces through expansion of comprehensive cooperation in various fields and various specializations, including the management of borders between the Member States, and establishing ECOPOL would also be studied for that purpose.

11. Stressed promoting neighbourly cooperation within the region and requested member states sharing common borders and coastal areas to strengthen cooperation through bilateral or multilateral arrangements to address subversive and insurgency activities aimed at common border and coastal security.

12. Expressing their serious concern at the size of financial and economic offenses, including money laundering, corruption as well as cyber crimes, and their adverse effects on and consequences for economic development and progress of the Member States which is among the key objectives of establishment of the ECO on the one hand and their role in consolidation of the financial power of the trans-national organized criminal groups on the other, emphasized the need for consolidation of regional cooperation to effectively fight these crimes, taking necessary measures to expedite and define practical mechanisms for cooperation among Member States to identify the techniques and methods used by terrorist groups and the trans-national organized criminal groups as well as to fight them through banking, technical, legal, judicial means, also to develop cooperation among law enforcement agencies/security forces.

13. Considering the prevalence of natural disasters in the ECO region, causing heavy human casualties, economic losses and threatening the security and sustainable development of member states, stressed the need to enhance regional cooperation for possible prevention and management of such disasters, as well as emergency relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation; expressed appreciation for the ECO Secretariat's efforts to enhance international cooperation including the proposed MOU between ECO and OCHA, which would pave the way for regional capacity-building, financial and technical assistance to member states. Also, investment in preparedness, in particular early warning systems and reducing vulnerability to natural disasters was underlined as important to curtailing losses from such disasters in the future; agreed in that

context, the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to set up a regional center for natural disasters management in Iran as well as the idea for the establishment of an ECO Natural Disaster Trust Fund so as to strengthen regional capacities to meet such challenges.

14. Agreed to set up a High Level Experts Group (HLEG) to prepare a comprehensive cooperation plan to launch a coordinated and organized campaign against the said crimes and offenses, and called on the group to present the outcome of its activities together with suggestions, to the next meeting of the Interior Ministers. Each member state, within a time-line of two months from the date of announcement of this Declaration, will introduce its high-level representatives for the HLEG to the Secretariat and the Secretariat will hold in one of the member states the first meeting of the HLEG within three months of the nomination of representatives for the HLEG. The HLEG may, if necessary, set up sub-committees and expert committees in the relevant fields and report the outcome to the next meeting of the Interior Ministers.

15. Thanking the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and appreciating its warm welcome, hospitality, and excellent management of the session.