**Draft welcome address by Worhty DG Ops to the participants of 1st General Assembly of the State Parties to the ECO- Regional Center for Cooperation of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsman (RCCACO)**

His excellency Ambassador Jandos Asanov, Deputy Secretary General ECO, Dear participants from August member countries, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen Good Morning.

I Husnain Ahmad, Director General Operations, National Accountability Bureau feel immense pleasure to welcome you all on behalf of Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in First General Assembly meeting of State Parties to ECO, Regional center for cooperation of Anti-Corruption agencies and Ombudsman.

**Dear participants**;

Undoubtedly economic growth is the most powerful instrument for reducing poverty and improving quality of life, as well as a strong economy is source of national strength. In order to promote economic, cultural and technical cooperation, Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was established in 1985 and Islamic Republic of Pakistan was one of the founding members. As you know well, in this globalizing world, transnational organized crime and the crimes of corruption and money laundering repeatedly cross borders. Corruption has become a difficult to eliminate problem. Many paper surveys emphasized that corruption costs economic growth of the country. Due to adverse impacts of financial crimes especially corruption on economic development and progress of the country, State parties to Economic Cooperation Organization stressed on the need for consolidation of regional cooperation to efficiently cope with the menace, as successful international cooperation is essential to eradicate corrosive effects of corruption. In this background Heads of Anti-corruption agencies and ombudsmen of the ECO member states decided in 2011 to establish a regional cooperation center for cooperation among anti-corruption agencies and ombudsmen of the ECO member states. The then Director General National Accountability Bureau, on behalf of Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan signed the Statute of RCCACO in year 2017 and it was ratified by Honorable President of Pakistan in year 2018.

**August delegates from member states**;

National Accountability Bureau is an apex anti-corruption agency of Pakistan, charged with the responsibility of elimination of corruption from the motherland. The bureau is determined to weed out the scourge of corruption by adopting a holistic approach of awareness, prevention and enforcement. Besides enforcement, NAB engages civil society and youth to sensitize them about ill effects of corruption through setting up character building societies, organizing walks, seminars, radio and TV programs. Many preventive committees are also constituted to examine laws, rules, regulations of various departments to recommend amendments in such rules, regulations to plug the loopholes.

**Dear Participants**

NAB is signatory of United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) on behalf of Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and is globally obliged to implement the provisions of the convention. Recently NAB facilitated second country review of Pakistan under UNCAC on Chapter II (Prevention) and Chapter V (Asset Recovery). Executive summary of the same has been adopted by Implementation Review Group (IRG) on 12 June 2023. Executive summary is also publicly available on UNODC website. Besides ECO-RCCACO, at present NAB on behalf of Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan is member of assets recovery interagency networks ARIN-AP and ARIN-WCA, GlobE network, ADB-OECD anti-corruption initiative for Asia and Pacific, OIC, Asia pacific Group on money laundering (APG) to exchange informal information on model legislation, tracing, confiscation of assets and money laundering. Further NAB has signed MoUs with Australian Federal Police, Chamber of Russian Federation, Ministry of supervision, China and Agency under the State Financial Control and struggle against Corruption, Tajikistan, while MoUs with Malaysian Anti- Corruption Commission, National Crime Agency UK, Federal Bureau of Investigation, USA are under process.

**Dear colleagues**

Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan fully recognizes the need for a sustainable and comprehensive approach to combat the menace of corruption through a long term coalition between state parties and international partners. Presence of members from state parties reflects seriousness and resolve of respective Governments in eradication of corruption and their strong commitment towards international obligation. Operationalization of this platform will strengthen the measures to curb and combat corruption effectively and efficiently through mutual cooperation, information sharing, technical assistance, studies and research and exchange of experiences.

I again welcome all revered participants for taking the time out for this noble cause.

Thank you