

**Statement by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, Abdul
Ghani Baradar
17th ECO Summit**

**Distinguished Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers, representatives and officials,
Honorable guests and officials of the host country,**

May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

I am honored to represent the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan at this historic 17th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization. I extend my sincere gratitude to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, His Excellency Mr. Ilham Aliyev, for graciously hosting and excellently organizing this important summit.

This gathering marks a significant milestone—a symbol of hope for enhanced regional cooperation, mutual understanding, and collective progress.

Afghanistan is fully committed to eliminating illicit drug production and trafficking. We have entirely banned the cultivation, processing, and smuggling of poppies and narcotics. Rehabilitation centers have been established to reintegrate affected individuals as healthy, productive members of society—guided by Islamic and humanitarian values.

Our foreign policy is rooted in the principles of **mutual respect, non-interference, economic development, and balanced engagement**. We have opened the doors to dignified and constructive relations with all nations and aim to transform our geographic position into a valuable asset for regional connectivity.

In this regard, several major infrastructure and transit projects are underway:

- **The Mazar-e-Sharif–Herat–Kandahar railway**, connecting Afghanistan with Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and onward into South Asia, holds immense regional potential.
- Practical work has begun on the **TAPI pipeline** (Turkmenistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan–India), which will serve as a critical energy corridor for the region.
- We express our support for the **North-South Corridor Project**, which promises to strengthen economic and logistical ties across the region.

Afghanistan's geographical position makes it a natural hub for regional cooperation. We encourage all ECO member states to collaborate with a stable, reliable, and cooperative Afghanistan to achieve shared economic goals.

Our priorities include boosting cooperation in:

- Trade and investment
- Energy and transport
- Agriculture and food security

- Environmental protection and climate resilience

We are utilizing our domestic capacities to revive the Afghan economy and call upon ECO member states to invest in promising sectors such as **mining, agriculture, infrastructure, energy, telecommunications, and healthcare.**

The Islamic Emirate is pursuing a shift from a consumption-based model to a **productive, transit-oriented, and self-reliant economy.** We believe Afghanistan's active participation is essential for regional economic growth and cooperation.

We urge ECO member states and the international community to engage with Afghanistan **realistically and constructively**—basing relations on mutual respect, practical cooperation, and shared interests. Only through such engagement can we overcome existing barriers and foster a prosperous, interconnected region.

Afghanistan is also committed to the **just cause of the Palestinian people.** We demand an immediate end to the violence, oppression, and blockade in Gaza. We fully support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and the protection of its Islamic identity.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that **Kabul will host the next ECO Summit.** We are fully prepared for this significant event and warmly welcome the participation of all member states. This summit will mark the beginning of a new era of joint cooperation, mutual development, and regional connectivity.

Let us work together, with sincerity and unity, for the shared prosperity and stability of our region.

Thank you.