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**Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's Remarks at
the 17th Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)
Summit, Khankendi, Azerbaijan, 3-4 July 2025**

**Excellency, Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of
Azerbaijan,**

Distinguished Heads of States and Governments,

Dr. Asad Majeed, ECO Secretary General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalaam-o-Alaikum,

- I would like to congratulate my dear brother, President Ilham Aliyev for the successful hosting of the 17th ECO Summit.
- I thank him and his entire team for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to us, in the historic and beautiful city of Khankendi.

- I also wish to appreciate the efforts of Kazakhstan, the out-going Chair, as well as the ECO Secretary General for their tireless efforts in fostering deeper cooperation among the members of this esteemed organisation.

Excellencies,

- The evolving global landscape, being redefined by rapid technological change, growing interdependence, and expanding frontiers of knowledge, has made regional cooperation all the more essential for dealing with common challenges, bridging economic divides and unlocking shared prosperity.
- Within this context, the Economic Cooperation Organization represents our best hope and Pakistan is proud to partner with its brotherly Member States in these collective endeavors.

Mr. Chairman,

- The focus of the 17th ECO summit – “**New ECO Vision for a Sustainable and Climate Resilient Future**”, is both apt as well as timely.

- Like the rest of the world, ECO Member States are facing the far-reaching impacts of climate change: from melting glaciers, desertification, extreme heat waves, devastating floods, and declining agricultural productivity.
- These challenges threaten the food security and livelihoods of millions of our people.
- Pakistan remains among the top ten countries that are most vulnerable to climate change. In 2022, we confronted floods of biblical proportions, which were the most dreadful manifestation of a climate-induced disaster.
- Over 33 million people were affected across Pakistan, with loss of life, damage to livelihoods and critical infrastructure.
- For my country, and many others, which have suffered similar catastrophic losses, a crisis of accelerated vulnerability now defines our existence.

- This is a shared crisis across the ECO region and the wider Global South. The solution, therefore, must also be shared.
- We must integrate climate resilience into the very fabric of our economic cooperation by investing in green infrastructure, enhancing early warning systems, and promoting regional climate adaptation strategies that serve our common future.
- Pakistan, on its part, is aggressively pursuing a **4RF Plan** focusing on Resilient, Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction. The success of this model offers valuable lessons.

Excellencies,

- Pakistan has undertaken a series of climate related policy initiatives that we believe, can be of benefit.
- In the context of the ECO, I propose that we may consider some of the following green initiatives:
 - 1) Partner in building **Low-emission Corridors,**

- 2) Explore regional mechanisms for carbon trading and clean energy investment, through a unified **ECO-Carbon Market platform**.
- 3) Develop **Regional Disaster Resilience Systems**.
- 4) Establish **Climate Knowledge Hub** for sharing regional climate data, coordinate climate smart agriculture, facilitate water resource management and strengthen early warning systems across borders.
- 5) Establish **ECO-wide Framework** to mobilize climate finance and accelerate adaptation efforts.¹
- 6) Encourage **Regional Clean Energy Corridors** and transmission connectivity among the members by promoting renewable energy trade, and supporting capacity building in solar, wind and energy storage technologies.
- 7) Encourage cooperation in **eco-friendly tourism development**, creating green jobs for youth and women; sustainable rural livelihoods especially in mountainous and climate vulnerable regions.

¹ Pakistan signed the Charter of ECO Clean Energy Centre last year and has also ratified it.

Excellencies,

- In today's volatile geopolitical environment, we need mutual trust, meaningful cooperation and sustained support more than ever.
- Forces of instability and destruction continue to destabilize our region for their own geopolitical agendas.
- The unlawful, unjustified and unwarranted Israeli attacks on Iran - a brotherly country and fellow ECO Member State, were the most recent manifestation of this trend.
- Pakistan strongly condemns this act of Israeli aggression against Iran.
- We have welcomed the ceasefire between Iran and Israel and hope that all sides will continue to honour this agreement. The region cannot afford any further escalation.

Excellencies,

- Unfortunately, the world has been witnessing an unprecedented man-made catastrophe in Gaza, a region that has descended into an abyss of perpetual suffering.
- It is as if humanity has collapsed, while famine looms large and humanitarian workers, including UN personnel

are being attacked by Israel with impunity to deliberately cut off their only lifeline.

- Pakistan stands firmly against atrocities anywhere in the world, whether against the innocent people of Gaza or the brave citizens of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.
- Here, I would like to appreciate the solidarity and support extended to Pakistan by the brotherly ECO Member States, in the wake of India's unwarranted aggression imposed on us, earlier this year.
- Pakistan has always strived for peace and stability in the region.
- We will continue to stand for these ideals, but would never hesitate if our sovereignty is ever violated.

Distinguished Delegates,

- While the threat of natural climate induced changes remains formidable, we are now witnessing a new and alarming trend, with India's "weaponization of water."
- India's illegal attempt to defy the World Bank-negotiated Indus Water Treaty, as well as its blatant disregard for

the recent ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, are completely unacceptable.

- Waters of the Indus are the lifeline of Pakistan's 240 million people.
- The international community, including the ECO Member States, must urge India not to pursue this dangerous path.

Honorable Heads of Delegation,

- Another area of critical importance for the ECO fraternity is trade.
- In my view, promotion of trade and investment holds the key to securing our common goals for strengthening regional connectivity, operationalizing major ECO Transport corridors, ensuring energy security, promoting intra-regional tourism, and economic growth, and productivity.
- You would recall that these elements were envisaged in **ECO Vision 2025** that was agreed upon by all of us during the 13th ECO Summit at Islamabad in March 2017.

- The ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) was conceptualized as a landmark intra-regional trade agreement in this regard. However, despite a considerable period, it is yet to be implemented.
- So far, only five Member States (Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Türkiye and Tajikistan) have signed the agreement.
- I urge all Member States, to take a broader and more holistic view of the issue, and work towards its earliest implementation.

Excellencies,

- The great ECO region is home to the oldest and most well-established “Silk Route”, that nurtured rich and industrious civilizations and cultures built around a strong spirit of cooperation.
- As heirs to this proud legacy, it is our duty to use this ancient synergy in modern times to shape a better future.
- Ours is a region that presents a rich cultural tapestry.

- I thank all Member States for their support in designating Lahore, a confluence of history, culture and cuisine as the ECO Tourism Capital for the year 2027.
- I assure you, that Lahore – Pakistan’s cultural heart, will enthrall all those who will visit us. I extend a very warm invitation to you all.
- I also congratulate Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan on the selection of Mary and Karakol as ECO Tourism Capitals for the years 2028 and 2029, respectively.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- To conclude, as members of the ECO family, sharing strong commonalities of history and geography, of faith and culture, we have a firm basis for a lasting cooperative relationship.
- We are endowed with rich resources, and most importantly the expectations of our 566 million hardworking and talented people, to see ECO as a credible vehicle of regional integration.
- We must spare no effort to meet their expectations.

- In this regard, Pakistan supports Uzbekistan's proposal for *Strategic Objectives of Cooperation 2035* as a step in the right direction.
- Let us resolve to enhance our solidarity and cooperation, stand up together to the global challenges, and channel our collective energies towards a future that guarantees our peoples a life of peace, progress and prosperity.

Thank you!