

**Statement by Rashid Meredov,
Deputy Chairman of the Ministers' Cabinet of Turkmenistan,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan
at the 17-th Summit of the Economic Cooperation
Organization**

(Khankendi city, the Republic of Azerbaijan)

**Your Excellency, Mr. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Honorable Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev,**

**Your Excellencies heads of states and governments,
Honorable heads of delegations!**

First of all, let me express sincere gratitude to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, for the invitation addressed to the leadership of Turkmenistan to participate in today's Summit.

Taking this opportunity, I wish to address the warmest words of greetings and deep respect to the President of Azerbaijan and all heads of states and governments of the ECO member states from the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov and National leader of Turkmen people, Chairman of Khalk Maslahaty of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov.

On behalf of the Turkmen delegation, I express sincere gratitude to the Azerbaijani side for warm hospitality and supreme organization of the work of the ECO Summit.

The Organization of Economic Cooperation, established nearly forty years ago, has made a significant progress and transformed into an important mechanism for common relationship. Today, ECO brings together ten states with a combined population of more than half a billion people and aggregate gross domestic product exceeding 2 trillion US dollars.

ECO Vision – 2025 established in 2017, outlined ambitious goals to develop trade, investments, transport and energy. An important milestone in development of our Organization was the adoption of the 2021 «Ashgabat Consensus for Action» by the results of the 15th ECO Summit held in Turkmenistan. The given document formalized common approaches to reinforcing of multilateral cooperation, strengthening connectivity and creating a sustainable supply chains in the region. «Ashgabat Consensus for Action» emphasized importance of inclusiveness and the need for adapting to new global realities.

Turkmenistan considers it extremely important **adoption of a new program document, which would define strategic goals and priorities of economic cooperation for the period until 2035.**

This document should address current global challenges, including digital transformation, climate change and the imperative of ensuring food security.

Under the conditions of the geopolitical tension, regional conflicts and uncertainty of world economy, there are rising challenges confronting the states.

In this regard, our Organization's role increases as an effective platform for building up multilateral cooperation, coordination of efforts and working out harmonized solutions meant to ensure sustained, inclusive and balanced development.

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Firstly, energy sector.

Turkmenistan has a significant potential for developing an energy cooperation in the framework of the ECO. We are ready to provide a reliable supply of energy carriers to the partner states and to contribute to strengthening energy security within the ECO space.

In this regard, we propose to consider **establishment of a mechanism for coordination of the energy policy of the member states of the Organization.**

Secondly, - geographic sector,

Geographic location of Turkmenistan at the crossroads of key trade routes between Europe and Asia offers significant opportunities for developing transport cooperation.

Turkmenbashi International Sea Port on the Caspian Sea, rail roads and highways of our country may serve as reliable transport corridors for movement of the goods and services between the ECO member states and other interested partners.

Thirdly, - investments.

Turkmenistan appropriates to step up the work to attract mutual investments and implement joint projects in various sectors of economy.

In this context it is necessary to consider the creation of a special investment mechanism within ECO that could mobilize resources from both public and private sectors.

Fourthly, - development on trade,

The Chambers of Commerce and industry of our countries as the main institutes to support business are meant to play key role in achievement of these objectives.

In this regard, Turkmenistan proposes **to establish the permanent ECO Council of Chambers of Commerce and Industry** for coordinating the activities of the business community and elaborating agreed approaches to increase mutual trade.

We also propose **to develop a unified digital platform of the Chambers** with database of export and import opportunities of the ECO countries and to create a system of mutual recognition of the quality certificates that would considerably simplify trade operations between our countries.

In this context, Turkmenistan puts forwards a proposal to create favorable conditions for trade in the framework of the border free trade zones, including simplified logistics and administrative procedures.

It can become an efficient instrument for stimulating cross-border trade, encouraging small and medium-sized businesses, strengthening ties between neighboring regions of the ECO member states.

Fifthly, particular attention should be given to development of cooperation in the field of **modern technologies and innovations**. Digital transformation of economy unfolds new possibilities for increasing production efficiency, promoting electronic trade and creating a unified ECO information space.

Attaching a due importance to the issue of sustainable growth and environmental protection, we believe it is important to step up cooperation among the ECO member states in the field of “green” technologies and joint counteraction against the negative impact of the climate change.

Economic integration should be accompanied by the strengthening humanitarian ties between our peoples. Development of cultural and educational cooperation, youth exchanges, tourist programs will contribute to mutual understanding and reinforcement of friendly relations.

Dear summit participants!

The Economic Cooperation Organization has all the necessary possibilities to become one of the leading integration organizations in Eurasia. Rich natural resources, good geographical location, significant demographic potential and centuries-old traditions of trade create a solid foundation for our partnership.

We are confident that through joint efforts we will be able to transform the ECO region into the area of stability, prosperity and sustainable development, which will serve as a model of effective regional cooperation for other parts of the world.

Thank you for your attention!