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The 1st Ministerial Meeting on Environment

Report

(Tehran, 13- 15 December 2002)

The First ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment was held in Tehran (Islamic Republic of Iran) on 15 December, 2002 and preceded by the Meeting of the Senior Officials (13-14 December, 2002). The delegations of all the ECO Member States: Islamic State of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. The ECO Secretariat's delegation also attended the Meeting. The representatives of UNEP, UNESCAP, UNDP, UNIDO, ROPME and IDB were also present. The list of participants is attached (***Annex –I***).

Agenda Item No.1

Inauguration of the Meeting

2. The Meeting was inaugurated by His Excellency Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The text of his official opening speech is attached (***Annex-II***).

3. H.E. Dr. Massoumeh Ebtekar, Vice-President and Head of the Department of Environment (DOE) of the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the delegates to the First ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment and stressed the importance of cooperation amongst the Member States in this vital field. The text of her welcoming remarks is attached (***Annex-III***).

4. H.E. Ambassador Seyed Mojtaba Arastou, Secretary General of ECO, addressing the meeting expressed deep gratitude to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly to the Department of Environment for hosting the Meeting in Tehran in an excellent manner and wished the Meeting to have useful

deliberations and fruitful results on the issues highlighted in the agenda. Copy of his statement is attached (*Annex- IV*).

5. H.E. Dr. Klaus Topfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), made a statement on behalf of UNEP. A copy of his statement is attached (*Annex-V*).

Agenda Item No.2

Election of the Chairperson

6. H.E. Dr. Massoumeh Ebtekar, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Head of the Department of Environment (DOE) of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was unanimously elected as the Chairperson of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No. 3

Adoption of the Agenda

7. The draft Agenda of the Meeting endorsed by the Senior Officials Meeting held in Tehran on 13-14 December, 2002 was adopted (Document No.EME/MENV/1st/2002/2). The adopted agenda is attached (*Annex-VI*).

Agenda Item No. 4

Appointment of the Drafting Committee

8. An open-ended Drafting Committee of the Senior Officials was appointed to prepare the report of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No. 5

Statements on the Environmental Issues by the Ministers/Heads of Delegation

9. The Ministers/Heads of delegation presented their statements covering national policies and programmes in the field of Environment as well as their views

on the regional cooperation on Environment. Copies of the statements are attached (*Annex-VII*).

Agenda Items No. 6 & 7

Outcome of the Johannesburg Summit and its impact on ECO Region

Expansion of Cooperation with International Organizations on Environmental Issues (UNEP, UNESCAP, UNDP, UNIDO, IDB, etc.)

10. The participants of the Meeting discussed these Agenda Items during the Ministerial Round Table on “Prospects of Sustainable Development & Regional Cooperation” with the participation of the Ministers/Heads of Delegation of the Member States and Representatives of the International Organizations. The discussion was held with reference to the Johannesburg Summit outcome and other related matters.

11. Some of the main conclusions of the deliberations were as follows:

Agenda Items No. 8 & 9

Consideration and Adoption of the Plan of Action and the Tehran Declaration on cooperation among ECO Member States on Environment

12. The Ministerial Meeting, after consideration, adopted the Plan of Action and the Tehran Declaration on cooperation among ECO Member States on Environment as finalized by the preceding Senior Officials Meeting. The text of the said documents (EME/MENV/1st/2002/4.Rev.I and EME/MENV/1st/2002/5) are attached (*Annexes–VIII & IX*).

Agenda Item No. 10

Date and Venue of the Second Ministerial Meeting on Environment

13. It was *decided* that the Second ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment will be held in the year 2004 *in Istanbul* in the Republic of Turkey.

Agenda Item No. 11

Any other business

14. Having discussed a proposal of the host country, Islamic Republic of Iran, to use for the future ECO Ministerial Meetings on Environment the logo designed and used for the 1st ECO Ministerial meeting on Environment, the meeting agreed that, although there was no objection to this effect, the final decision would be communicated by the Member States to the Secretariat. *it was decided by the ECO Member States to adopt this Logo for all future ECO Ministerial Meetings on Environment. The sample of adopted Logo is attached (Annex.....)*

Agenda Item No. 12

Adoption of the Report

15. The Report of the Meeting was unanimously adopted (Document No.EME/MENV/1st/2002/9).

Agenda Item No. 13

Vote of Thanks

16. At the conclusion of the Meeting, all the Heads of Delegation expressed their thanks to the Chairman for conducting the deliberations of the Meeting in a smooth and efficient manner and to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in particular the Department of Environment for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting and for the traditional cordial hospitality extended to all the participants. The Meeting also appreciated the efforts of the Secretary General of ECO and the staff of the ECO Secretariat, accordingly.

The 1st Ministerial Meeting on Environment

Tehran Communiqué

(Tehran, December 13-15, 2002)

Annex-IX

ECO/MENV/1st/2002/5

We the Ministers of Environment and Heads of Delegation meeting in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran on 15 December 2002, on the occasion of the First ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment, held in pursuance of the October 2002 ECO Summit in Istanbul and the concern of the ECO member states on the protection of the environment in the region,

Recalling the article 2(m) of the Treaty of Izmir, the basic charter of ECO, and Istanbul Declaration 2002 adopted at the 7th Summit as well as the Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the Rio Declaration of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development along with the “Plan of Implementation” of the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development held in September 2002,

Deeply convinced that promotion of regional cooperation in the field of environment is essential,

Aware and concerned about the trends of environmental degradation and pollution in the ECO region,

Cognizant of the fact that accelerated formulation and implementation of environmental action plans require political will and legal commitments,

Determined to achieve significant success in combating environmental degradation in the ECO Region with active and full participation of all actors of the society, an aware and educated population, respect for ethical and spiritual values and cultural diversity,

Agree to initiate cooperation in the following fields in accordance with the Plan of Action, adopted at our meeting:

Taking note of the importance of the Human Environment, decide to cooperate in the harmonization of Environmental Standards, Environmentally Sound Technologies, Urban Environmental Management, and improving the Environmental Impact Assessment systems,

Recognizing the importance of preservation of Natural Environment, decide to cooperate in promoting the sustainable use of biological diversity including sustainable eco-tourism and conservation of wetlands and water bodies,

Acknowledging the need to protect the Marine Environment from any source of pollution, stress the need to establish Marine Pollution Emergency Response and Preparedness Centres(ERCs),

Underlining the importance of Environmental Education, Training, Research & Development, agree in principle on the establishment of an ECO Environmental College, joint training courses, scholarships, awards and promotion of public awareness,

Stressing the importance of Legal Framework in the field of Environment Development, underline the need to seek International Financial Assistance to establish ECO Environmental Fund,

Decide to establish a Working Group according to ECO procedure to prepare implementation plans for cooperation in the different fields of Environment, as mentioned in the adopted Plan of Action. The ECO Secretariat together with the relevant authorities in the member states and national focal points nominated by them should play supportive and coordinative role in the implementation of all actions identified in this plan. The Secretariat shall also seek arrangements with multilateral agencies which may be supportive to the organization in this regard.

Appreciating the urgent need to restructure the environmental institution in Afghanistan, the ECO member states, offer to assist to develop the requisite infrastructure for the establishment of an Environmental Protection Agency in Afghanistan.

Agree to submit to the ECO Secretariat bi-annually national progress report on the implementation of the Plan of Action which shall be integrated and circulated by the Secretariat to member states and submitted for the review by the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR). The Secretariat shall also present an annual report on the status of implementation of the activities envisaged by the Plan of

Action to the meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC). The 2nd Ministerial meeting on Environment would review the implementation of the Plan of Action.

We express our sincere gratitude to His Excellency Seyed Mohammad Khatami, the Honourable President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for his guidance, support and leadership and sparing his extremely valuable time to inaugurate the meeting.

We welcome the offer of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Turkey to host the Second ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment during the year 2004.

We also express our gratitude to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the warm hospitality extended to the delegations and appreciate the excellent arrangements made by the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ECO Secretariat for the 1st ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment.