

## **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Ministerial Meeting on Environment**

Almaty Communiqué

( *Almaty, June 30, 2006* )

### ***Annex-X***

1. The 3<sup>rd</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment was held on 30 June 2006 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and it was preceded by the senior officials meeting held on 28-29 June 2006. The Ministerial Meeting was attended by the Ministers and Heads of Delegation from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Republic of Uzbekistan as well as the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) along with his staff. The representatives of UNEP and CAREC also attended the meeting. The meeting was inaugurated by H.E. Nurlan Iskakov, Minister of Environment Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan and H.E. Askhat Orazbay, Secretary General of ECO.

2. The meeting noted with appreciation that ECO member states in “ECO Vision 2015” adopted as a Basic Reference Document of ECO for the next ten years at the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) held in Astana, Kazakhstan on 1 October 2005, emphasized their commitment to intensify cooperation in the field of environment by jointly addressing common concerns and regional problems and taking necessary actions in cooperation with relevant international organizations with a view to contribute to sustainable development and improve the quality of life of the peoples in the ECO region.

3. Taking into account the above document and the Declaration of the 9<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit held in Baku on 5 May 2006, in which a concern with the state of the environment was expressed and the implementation of the Plan of Action for Cooperation among ECO Member States on Environment (2003-2007) was underscored, the meeting stressed the need for the ECO countries’ Environment Ministries/Agencies to further enhance their work and collaboration to strive towards the effective and full implementation of the said Plan of Action the term of which was extended up to the year 2010.

4. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation reviewed the progress of the implementation of the Plan of Action, and while welcoming the activities which had been carried out so far, requested more concerted and active participation of environment organizations of the member states in the implementation of the already agreed projects/activities as well as in developing and promoting of new ones to fully cover the provisions of the Plan of Action.

5. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation, while stressing the importance of national progress report on the implementation of the ECO Plan of Action on Environment, as an essential instrument for the exchange of information and experiences in the field of environment among the member states as well as the promotion of the regional cooperation, agreed that it would be provided to the ECO Secretariat, annually, in the beginning of the year, with coverage of the previous year, on the basis of the single agreed format.

6. While appreciating the outcomes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> meetings of the ECO Working Group on Environment on the Implementation of the Plan of Action for Cooperation among ECO Member States on Environment (2003-2007) held in the year 2005 and 2006, respectively, the Ministers and Heads of Delegation emphasized the need to continue holding these meetings as well as experts meetings/workshops and training programs to promote human resource development in the field of environment in the ECO region as per adopted Calendar of Events/Meetings on Environment.

7. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation, while appreciating the work done by the Task Force on the establishment of ECO College of Environment, welcomed its proposals on the creation of Institute of Environmental Science and Technology for the ECO region, which will provisionally function within the framework of the existing College of Environment in Iran.

8. The Meeting expressed appreciation to the ECO Secretariat for its efforts to enhance international cooperation while noting the signing of MOUs

between ECO and WMO as well as UNEP and requested international organizations (UNEP, IDB, CAREC) which attended the Meeting as well as the other organizations to assist ECO in developing financial mechanisms for ensuring implementation of projects/activities within ECO Plan of Action on cooperation in the field of environment.

9. The Meeting also requested the more advanced economies of the ECO to consider the possibility of extending their technical and financial support for the implementation of ECO Plan of Action on environment.

10. The Ministers and Heads of Delegations noted that development of ecotourism may bring economic benefits for the member states which have in abundance attractive nature sites and therefore it should be encouraged in a prudent manner to prevent possible negative impact on the environment and emphasized the need of identifying and carrying out joint activities in this field.

11. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation welcomed the project proposals for cooperation in the field of the Environment presented by Iran, and requested their concerned organizations to follow up these proposals with a view of completing their elaboration, proposing mechanism for their financing and collaborating arrangements and eventual commencing of their implementation at the earliest possible time. They also encouraged the other member states to prepare and to propose new projects within the Plan of Action on Environment.

12. The meeting appreciated the efforts of the ECO Secretariat for the preparation and publication of the first four issues of the ECO Bulletin on Environment, made also available on the ECO Web-site. The meeting requested the concerned authorities in all member states to take active part in the process of preparation of its next issues by submission of their relevant materials to the Secretariat, regularly.

13. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation took note of the following initiatives of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- To joint European and Asian processes of environmental protection and sustainable development and establish the Secretariat of the Eurasian process of sustainable development and Eurasian education center at Astana city.
- To create trans-boundary ecological–economic zones of sustainable development on basin principle for conservation of unique ecosystems of the ECO region.

14. The meeting decided that the 4<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment be held in 2008 and appreciated the offer made by the Government of Pakistan to host it.

15. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation expressed their profound gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, particularly to the Ministry of Environment Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the excellent arrangements made for the 3<sup>rd</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment and warm hospitality extended to the participating delegations.

16. They also commended the work done by the Senior Environmental Officials Meeting and thanked the ECO Secretary General and his staff for their support and hard work to make the meeting a success.

30 June 2006, Almaty, Kazakhstan