

# Islamic Republic of I R A N

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

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## Statement by:

**H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
in the Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers  
of the Economic Cooperation of Organization  
on the sidelines of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**(23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Mr. Secretary-General,  
Distinguished Colleagues,**

Let me begin by thanking all of you for participating in this Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the Economic Cooperation Organization on the sidelines of the 71<sup>st</sup> UNGA. I also wish to register my appreciation to H.E. Mr. Halil Ibrahim Akcha and ECO Secretariat for their efforts and for organizing this session.

While ECO has been successful in forging a range of cooperation frameworks, we are still away from realization of the objectives of our Organization. With your permission, I would briefly highlight a number of relevant issues to the Organization which require greater attention by the Member States:

**First**, our overlapping membership in other regional arrangements should only enhance our relations with and within ECO. It is evident that cooperation within ECO needs to bring meaningful benefits to all Member States, who should reciprocate by providing support to the Organization.

**Secondly**, there is a need to explore, and remain open to, needed regulatory, institutional, budgetary and other adjustments within the Organization. Reform is a common responsibility of the Membership and Secretariat, which customarily entails mandates given by the Council of Ministers. Any reform process shall be built on the experiences of the last two decades with a view to enabling ECO to respond to the needs and requirements of the Member States and the Region as a whole.

**Thirdly**, the Secretariat initiated the formulation of a new ECO Vision for the period 2016-2025, based on the deliberations of the Member States during the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meetings. We are still in the process of considering the draft document and later finalizing recommendations for the ECO Vision 2016-2025. In this regard, I would like to appreciate the readiness of our brother country, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, to host the Ministerial Meeting of Planning and Development on 24 October 2016 in Kabul on ECO Vision-2025. I hope this meeting will result in the development and implementation of strategies in the next decade in such areas as energy, transport and transit, trade, management of region's resources, human development, environment, and natural disaster risk reduction, in line with the context of the "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" as a universal roadmap.

**Lastly**, there is a strong interdependence between peace and development. Peace and stability are essential for realizing the genuine goals of sustainable development and welfare of our countries and peoples. We should recommit ourselves to continue supporting the national, regional and global efforts to achieve lasting peace, stability and prosperity in our region.  
Distinguished friends and colleagues,

Since our last meeting here on 2 October 2015, a number of important meetings have been organized and progress has been made in some ECO sectors, including organizing:

- The 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting from 13 to 17 December 2015 in Tehran, which finalized the ECO work program and calendar of events for 2016-2017.
- The second ECO Consultative Ministerial meeting on Environment on 27 May 2016 in Nairobi on the sidelines of the Second United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-2); and the 3<sup>rd</sup> ECO Health Ministerial Meeting on 24 May 2016 in Geneva on the sidelines of the 69<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly.
- The 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the ECO Public and Private Sector Energy/Petrochemical Consortium/Companies on 16-17 August in Tehran. And,
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Trilateral Meeting between Iran, Turkey and ECO Secretariat for the establishment of ECO Regional Electricity on 10-11 April 2016 in Shiraz.

Furthermore, Preparations have been completed for the inauguration of the Headquarter of Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation

and Metrology (RISCAM) in Iran. Another positive development has been the ratification of the statute of the ECO regional center for cooperation of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen (RCCACO) by the parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Dear Colleagues,**

Item 3 of our Agenda, which has remained from last year, constitutes an important and difficult part of our task today. Like last year, a special meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR), acting as the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), was convened in Tehran on 4 September 2016, and comprehensively reviewed our agenda, thus facilitating our work. Let me pay tribute to all participating delegates in the Special CPR Meeting.

Since we are supposed to cover all items on our agenda within less than 2 hours, I count on every delegation's support and cooperation to enable us to conclude our work in a smooth and successful manner. Thank you for your attention.