

**TEXT OF THE STATEMENT BY  
H.E. MR. TAHSIN ERTUĞRULOĞLU  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN CYPRUS  
FOR THE 23<sup>rd</sup> INFORMAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (COM)  
OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANISATION (ECO)  
(NEW YORK, 23 SEPTEMBER 2016)**

**MR. CHAIRMAN,  
MR. SECRETARY GENERAL,  
HONOURABLE MINISTERS,  
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,**

IT IS A DISTINCT HONOUR FOR ME TO ADDRESS THE 23<sup>RD</sup> INFORMAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (COM) OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANISATION (ECO). I EXTEND TO YOU ALL THE HEARTFELT GREETINGS OF THE TURKISH CYPRIOT PEOPLE AND OUR GOVERNMENT.

I WOULD LIKE TO AT THE OUTSET EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO H.E. MR. HALIL IBRAHIM AKÇA, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION, FOR HIS CONTINUED SUPPORT TO AND COOPERATION WITH US, THE TURKISH CYPRIOT PEOPLE.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK THE ABLE STAFF OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANISATION SECRETARIAT FOR THEIR TIRELESS EFFORTS IN ORGANISING THIS SIGNIFICANT MEETING.

**MR. CHAIRMAN,  
DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES,**

THE TURKISH CYPRIOT STATE, SHARES A COMMON HISTORY AND CULTURE WITH THE MEMBER STATES, AND IS FULLY COMMITTED TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANISATION.

NORTH CYPRUS HAS BEEN PARTICIPATING IN THE ORGANIZATION'S ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS SINCE 1992, AND HAS BEEN AN OBSERVER MEMBER OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANISATION SINCE 2012. WE WELCOME THE EXTENSION OF OUR OBSERVER MEMBER STATUS IN SEPTEMBER 2015,

WHICH GIVES US THE OPPORTUNITY TO FURTHER DEVELOP OUR ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH ECO MEMBER COUNTRIES.

**EXCELLENCIES,**

I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEFLY TOUCH UPON THE CYPRUS QUESTION.

AS KNOWN, AT PRESENT, NEGOTIATIONS ARE ONGOING BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS IN CYPRUS. IT IS AN ACCEPTED FACT THAT IF A SETTLEMENT IS NOT REACHED BY THE END OF 2016, AFTER ALMOST 50 YEARS, THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES ON THE ISLAND WILL COME TO AN END. AFTER THAT POINT, THE TURKISH CYPRIOT PEOPLE, WHO HAVE BEEN UNFAIRLY SEGREGATED FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD FOR OVER FIVE DECADES, CAN NO LONGER BE HELD HOSTAGE TO AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE TIED TO NEVER ENDING NEGOTIATIONS. HENCE, WHETHER A SETTLEMENT IS REACHED OR NOT BY THE END OF 2016, THE TURKISH CYPRIOT PEOPLE NEED TO BE READY FOR BOTH SCENARIOS. AT THIS IMPORTANT JUNCTURE, WE NEED THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANISATION AND ITS BROTHERLY MEMBER STATES TO TAKE CONCRETE AND SERIOUS STEPS TO SHOW SOLIDARITY WITH THEIR TURKISH CYPRIOT BRETHERN. IN THIS CONNECTION, AS THE TURKISH CYPRIOT GOVERNMENT, WE ARE READY TO TALK WITH THE ECO SECRETARIAT AS WELL AS WITH EACH AND EVERY BROTHERLY MEMBER STATE ABOUT A ROAD MAP ON HOW WE CAN FURTHER DEVELOP OUR RELATIONS.

**EXCELLENCIES,**

AS YOU ARE AWARE, NORTHERN CYPRUS IS A YOUNG YET RAPIDLY DEVELOPING COUNTRY WITH HIGHER EDUCATION AND TOURISM AS ITS TWO MAIN ECONOMIC SECTORS. I AM PROUD TO BE ABLE TO SAY THAT PRIMARILY OUR COUNTRY IS EMERGING AS A CENTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND A PROMINENT HOLIDAY DESTINATION IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN.

HIGHER EDUCATION CONSTITUTES AN IMPORTANT SECTOR OF OUR ECONOMY. TODAY, THERE ARE 15 UNIVERSITIES AND NEARLY 85,000

STUDENTS IN NORTH CYPRUS. THERE ARE ABOUT 47,000 TURKISH STUDENTS FROM TURKEY, 14,000 LOCAL TURKISH CYPRIOT STUDENTS, AND 25,000 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS. OVERALL, WE HAVE STUDENTS FROM 131 COUNTRIES AND TEACHING STAFF FROM 65 COUNTRIES. THIS DEPICTS THE INTERNATIONAL AND DIVERSE CHARACTER OF OUR HIGHER EDUCATION. IT IS A PLEASURE TO STATE THAT ABOUT 6,000 OF OUR STUDENTS ARE FROM ECO MEMBER COUNTRIES, MOSTLY FROM PAKISTAN, IRAN, AZERBAIJAN, KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKMENISTAN. IT IS OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE, IN THE PERIOD AHEAD, TO FURTHER INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS FROM ECO COUNTRIES STUDYING AT OUR UNIVERSITIES.

IN THIS CONTEXT, WE WOULD WELCOME A DECISION BY THE MEMBER STATES TO INCLUDE OUR UNIVERSITIES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE RECOMMENDED LISTS FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF THEIR STUDENTS.

I AM ALSO PLEASED TO STATE THAT THIS YEAR WE WILL BE GRANTING 5 SCHOLARSHIPS TO STUDENTS FROM ECO MEMBER STATES IN LINE WITH OUR NOTE-VERBALE ADRESSED TO THE ECO SECRETARIAT IN NOVEMBER 2015.

#### **EXCELLENCIES,**

IN LINE WITH THE ECO OBJECTIVES WHICH FORESEE TOURISM AS ANOTHER IMPORTANT AREA OF COOPERATION TO BE EXPLORED AND DEVELOPED FOR THE BENEFIT OF MEMBER STATES, WE STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT OUR COUNTRY WITH ITS UNSPOILT NATURAL BEAUTIES, RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE, ECO-TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES AND MANY OTHER ATTRACTIONS IS AN IDEAL HOLIDAY DESTINATION FOR OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS FROM THE ECO MEMBER COUNTRIES.

ACCORDING TO THE STATISTICS IN 2015, NEARLY 2 MILLION TOURISTS VISITED OUR COUNTRY. THERE ARE AROUND 133 HOLIDAY ESTABLISHMENTS WITH AN OVERALL BED CAPACITY OF 21,000 IN OUR COUNTRY. THE ACCOMMODATION RANGES FROM 5 STAR LUXURY HOTELS TO HOLIDAY VILLAGES. OUR COUNTRY ALSO CATERS FOR SPECIAL INTEREST TOURISM INCLUDING GOLFING, SCUBA DIVING, TREKKING AND HIKING, CYCLING,

YACHTING AND ECO-TOURISM. I MUST ADD THAT NORTH CYPRUS IS AN IDEAL DESTINATION FOR MUSLIM FAMILIES.

**EXCELLENCIES,**

WE ARE ACTIVELY ENCOURAGING FOREIGN INVESTMENT TO NORTH CYPRUS AND I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO INVITE INVESTORS FROM THE MEMBER COUNTRIES TO NORTH CYPRUS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND THE INCENTIVES OFFERED BY OUR GOVERNMENT. INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES EXIST ESPECIALLY IN THE TOURISM SECTOR. HOTELS AND CONFERENCE TOURISM, SPECIAL INTEREST TOURISM LIKE YACHT TOURISM AND MARINA CONSTRUCTION ARE JUST A FEW OF THE INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT AWAIT FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN IN OUR COUNTRY. NEWLY DEVELOPING AREAS SUCH AS HEALTH TOURISM AND AGRO-INDUSTRY ARE ALSO CONSIDERED AS ATTRACTIVE FIELDS OF INVESTMENT FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND FOREIGN INVESTORS. THOSE WISHING TO INVEST IN NORTH CYPRUS CAN BE SURE OF THE SUPPORT OF OUR GOVERNMENT. THE RELEVANT MINISTRIES, OUR STATE PLANNING ORGANIZATION AND THE CYPRUS TURKISH INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCY ARE AT THE DISPOSAL OF POTENTIAL INVESTORS AND OF BUSINESSMEN WHO WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE EXTENSIVE OPPORTUNITIES AND INCENTIVES THAT WE OFFER.

I AM ALSO DELIGHTED TO STATE THAT OUR COUNTRY HAS HOSTED FOUR HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL ECO EVENTS IN THE PAST. THESE EVENTS INCLUDE THE WORKSHOPS ON "AIR AND WATER POLLUTION CONTROL" IN AUGUST 1998, "WASTE WATER MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT TECHNOLOGY" IN MAY 2004, THE "1ST ECO UNIVERSITY SPORT GAMES" IN APRIL 2013, AND MOST RECENTLY "THE WORKSHOP ON TOURISM" IN APRIL 2015. I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO STATE THAT WE WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO HOST FUTURE ECO EVENTS IN NORTH CYPRUS AND TO SEE YOU ALL THERE.

**MR. CHAIRMAN,**

UNFORTUNATELY, THE ALL-EMBRACING ISOLATION CONTINUES TO BE A HARSH REALITY IN THE DAILY LIVES OF ALL THE TURKISH CYPRIOT PEOPLE, IMPEDING OUR COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT IN ALL FIELDS OF LIFE.

IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER A SETTLEMENT IS REACHED OR NOT BY THE END OF 2016, IT IS HIGH TIME THAT THE UNJUST AND INHUMAN ISOLATION IMPOSED ON THE TURKISH CYPRIOT PEOPLE ARE LIFTED IMMEDIATELY. THE LIFTING OF THE ISOLATION IS ALSO A NECESSITY FOR THE PURPOSES OF REACHING A SETTLEMENT BECAUSE IT WOULD SERVE AS MOTIVATION FOR THE GREEK CYPRIOT SIDE TO ACT MORE CONSTRUCTIVELY AT THE NEGOTIATION TABLE. AND IN THE EVENT THAT REACHING A SETTLEMENT IS NOT REALISED YOUR TURKISH CYPRIOT BROTHERS AND SISTERS WILL ANYHOW REQUIRE DEVELOPMENT IN ALL FIELDS. HENCE, YOUR COOPERATION AND SOLIDARITY WILL BE ALL THE MORE IMPORTANT.

WE HOPE AND TRUST THAT ALL THE MEMBER STATES OF ECO WILL, WITHOUT ANY FURTHER DELAY, TAKE CONCRETE STEPS AND CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS ENDING THE ISOLATION OF THE TURKISH CYPRIOT PEOPLE.

**MR. CHAIRMAN,**

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO MENTION THE "ONE OF A KIND" 80 KM-LONG UNDER WATER PIPE LINE WHICH IS CURRENTLY TRANSPORTING DRINKING AND IRRIGATION WATER TO NORTH CYPRUS FROM OUR MOTHERLAND TURKEY. IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE PROJECT WILL MEET OUR WATER NEED FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS. TO ADD SOME DETAIL, 37 MILLION CUBIC METERS OF THE 75 MILLION CUBIC METRES SUPPLIED, WILL BE USED FOR IRRIGATION PURPOSES. THIS WILL ENABLE A GREATER VARIETY AND QUANTITY OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TO BE PRODUCED, WHICH IN RETURN WILL SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE OUR AGRICULTURAL SECTOR AND INCREASE OUR POTENTIAL FOR TRADE WITH YOUR ESTEEMED COUNTRIES. HAVING COMPLETED SUCH AN AMAZING PROJECT WE NOW LOOK TOWARDS THE FUTURE FOR SIMILAR INNOVATIVE UNDERTAKINGS TOGETHER WITH MOTHERLAND TURKEY.

BEFORE I CONCLUDE, ALLOW ME TO THANK ONCE AGAIN THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE ECO SECRETARIAT FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN MAKING THIS MEETING A GREAT SUCCESS.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR MOST KIND ATTENTION.