

The 7th Council of Ministers

Statement of H.E. Mr. Alem Razm, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic State of Afghanistan

(Tehran, 28-29 April , 1997)

Annex-IV

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Excellencies,

Your Excellency Mr. Chairman I am happy to express my greetings to you in this meeting taking place in this beautiful country and in this welcoming city. Let me thank wholeheartedly the Kazakhstan authorities for their warm and brotherly welcome and for the elaborated preparation they have done for this Ministerial meeting and for the subsequent Summit.

Mr. Chairman,

We are thankful to ECO Secretary General, Mr. Onder Ozar, for his report on ECO activities during the year. The report gives the necessary information on the progress of the process of coordination in so many important fields of the ECO members. It also indicates the points regarding what has been practically achieved and what performances had to be done. The report constitutes a useful guide for our current and coming common actions.

While I confirm our agreement with the contents of the ECO .secretariat Budget for 1998, and the Audit Report for 1996, I have the regret to say how much the current civil war in Afghanistan, imposed on us, is preventing us to pay regularly our financial contributions. Our financial situation has worsened, especially since September 1996, when on official services in Kabul were first occupied by the invading mercenaries, and soon later became inactive. We are highly thankful to the members of the ECO to show their great understanding regarding this matter.

The drafted work program of the ECD for 1998-99 indicates the preparations we have to make for the coming months. This calendar will be our guide for the near future.

His Excellency Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, the President of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, represented Afghanistan in the Summit Meeting at Islamabad in 1995. The review of progress on agreements signed during 1995 in Islamabad's meeting also shows our short coming in carrying out some of the agreements in the case of Afghanistan. We hope that in a better circumstance, we shall be able to work out the contents of the agreements.

We are thankful, for the work done by the senior officials of ECO countries to them. In both cases, I mean:

- (1) The follow-up of the agreements signed during the third ECO Summit and
- (2) The follow-up of Ashqabad declaration of the May of last year, the high officials are providing to us their assessment and the basis of our action.

We also highly value the documents, and drafts related cultural and educational institutions. Regarding the documents on the modalities, scope and procedures for

granting observers or dialogue partnerships, our view is that we must be flexible as far as possible in order to have more observers and dialogue partners. This goes together with the transparent character of the ECO and work our cooperation in this organization. At the end, I express my best wishes for the success of this Ministerial I meeting and also for the success of the Almaty summit. We are certain that the adoption by our heads of states and government of the Almaty Declaration will have a historical impact the ECO role and the services it renders for common progress and our continuation in global economy.

Thank You very much.