

**Statement by Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari
Deputy Secretary General
of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)**

At the

**6th Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on
Afghanistan (RECCA-VI)**

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**The Honourable Chairman, Your Excellency Minister Rabbani
Honourable Ministers and High Level Officials
Distinguished Participants
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great honour for me to represent the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) at the sixth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan. I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for inviting the ECO to this important and august forum.

Excellencies

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has been engaged in regional activities sponsored by the Economic Cooperation Organization since its accession to ECO in 1992. Since then and in the last 3 decades, ECO and Afghanistan have been mutually contributing to one another's development programmes. For ECO, a region of diverse membership from South, West and Central Asia and Caucuses, covering an area of 8 million square kilometres connecting China to Europe and Russia to Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman, Afghanistan is considered as a country of huge potential to offer for regional development programmes.

For Afghanistan, ECO has also mattered. With the exception of China, five out of six Afghanistan's neighbours are members of the ECO. This implies that most of the ECO projects have, in one way or another, involved and will involve Afghanistan as a contributing and beneficiary member country.

As an organization dealing with the economic development of a region of over 440 million inhabitants and endowed with vast natural and human resources, the ECO and its Members States possess great potential for achieving socio-economic development and generating regional economic growth with the direct bearing on the national development programmes of its members, including Afghanistan. Trade promotion, quality management, banking and finance, transport and regional connectivity, agriculture and food security, energy efficiency and environment, disaster risk reduction, health, and drug trafficking and organized crime are among areas where ECO has developed regional frameworks and networks for cooperation. ECO has also developed Afghanistan-friendly projects, including rail and road transit corridors, and has established a Special Reconstruction Fund for Afghanistan, with a view to assisting this Country in

overall efforts to respond to its developmental needs and requirements.

ECO has also proved its credibility as a regional partner for global agenda for helping Afghanistan. We have been in partnership with major UN agencies as well as other players in the international community in implementation of some projects targeting Afghanistan. In December 2014, ECO successfully completed a 5-year project aimed at fighting drug trafficking from/to Afghanistan sponsored by the European Union. The Member States of the ECO were extended capacity building and technical support within the framework of the 9.5 million Euro project. As part of the project, a number of measures were adopted to develop and strengthen the capacities of the Member States in tackling the menace of drug trafficking that affects the regional economies, as well as the stability and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are in ECO in the process of developing our Vision for the next ten years which may entail re-defining ECO policy

towards Afghanistan, with a view to responding more effectively to the emerging needs of this Country. ECO will soon co-organize with the Government of Afghanistan, a special meeting with the participation of the Afghan authorities and interested donors to review the performance of the ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan and to develop ECO Advocacy Policy for Afghanistan in the years to come.

Let me conclude by assuring the government of Afghanistan of the full support of ECO for the national, regional and global activities aiming at securing higher rate of economic growth for Afghanistan and more prosperity for its people. We also remain ready to share with potential partners from outside the Region our capacities to help implement development-friendly programmes for Afghanistan.

Thank You for your attention