

STATEMENT
of
H.E. Dr. Abdolrahim Gavahi,
Secretary General ECO

for the

MILLENNIUM SUMMIT of the UNITED NATIONS
(New York, September 8, 2000)

**Mr. President,
Honourable leaders attending the Millennium Summit,
Distinguished Delegates,**

At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Economic Cooperation Organization, let me extend to you, Mr. President, our congratulations on your assumption of the Chair of the current Millennium Summit. I am grateful to be given this opportunity to deliver my statement in this august session.

Mr. President,

The ECO Region comprises a land mass of over 7 million square kilometers inhabited by more than 300 million people who are bound together by deep-rooted historical and cultural ties, and represents enormous human and resource potential. Its seat located in Tehran, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is purely an economic organization seeking to promote multi-dimensional regional cooperation for accelerated socio-economic well-being of its Member States. It comprises ten members, which include besides Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, six independent republics of the former Soviet Union namely Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Having been granted the Observer status during the 48th UN General Assembly session, our joint endeavours with various UN Specialized Agencies and Programmes over the past few years have contributed significantly in promoting the objective of all-round socio-economic development of the ECO Region. In the past decade, ECO has signed Memoranda of Understanding with

more than a dozen UN agencies such as UNDP, UNDCP, UN ESCAP, UNCTAD, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNFPA, UNESCO and has since then carried out joint missions, projects and activities with them in order to serve our mutually common objectives vis-à-vis this Region. ECO has also been granted Observer status at the WTO since March 1999. Outside the UN System, we have mutually beneficial close contacts with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Islamic Development Bank, the European Union, the ASEAN and the South Asian regional organization SAARC.

Excellencies,

The Tehran Declaration issued at the dawn of the new millennium by our leaders on the occasion of their sixth Summit reaffirms our collective commitment to a prosperous ECO Region. It addresses all important issues of our concern in the priority areas of trade, transport and communications, energy as well as environment, health, drug control etc. This declaration, inter alia, welcomes, as has been globally received and acknowledged by the whole world, His Excellency Muhammad Khatami the Honourable President of the Islamic Republic of Iran's initiative of "Dialogue among Civilizations", for which United Nations has designated the year 2001 as the UN year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

In conclusion, Mr. President, please let me congratulate His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan and the UN Headquarters' Staff for making excellent arrangements for this auspicious and august session. Coinciding as it does with the advent of the new millennium, we wish it every success.

I thank you all