

**The address of H.E Ghashghavi, Deputy foreign Minister for consular procedures, parliamentary and Iranian abroad affairs to be delivered before the heads of ECO member states Civil Organizations Conference**

**(3<sup>rd</sup> Oct 2011\_Tehran)**

I bid my warm welcome to honorable guests and I wish you will have a pleasant stay in I.R.IRAN.

I am honored to attend the session of the heads of ECO member states Civil Organizations.

I also express my gratitude to H.E Nazem Ardakani, Deputy Interior Minister and the Head of Iranian National Civil Organization, Director Generals and relevant experts to hold this conference.

New global conditions after post-cold war era totally has changed regionalism's essence in a way that information revolution and development of free trade system in international relations arising from Globalization led to shift of direction and nature of regional cooperation in line with securing the needs of different geographical regions and blocks.

That is why, from 1990s, we are witnessing an unprecedented growth of regional arrangements and developing countries gravitation towards new regional and trans-regional groupings.

Nowadays globalization is driving countries towards formation of regional groups and economic blocks based on cultural and religious proximities and geopolitical affiliations. In this regard balanced economic, political and social development of the region is one of effective mechanisms that all regional countries can take advantage from that.

ECO region also enjoys abundant geopolitical and demographic capacities. This region is place of 400 millions of people and is geographical heartland of the world. Our region is bordering with some major markets like Europe, India, China, Russian Federation, strategic Persian Gulf and Oman Sea. With respect to historical geographical position of ECO, it always was used as the natural trade route between West and East (Silk Road). This region also affords rich natural resources including minerals, energy and agriculture.

ECO which was formed in line with new regionalism as full of different potentials for all-out cooperation. Though ECO is a young organization but it still continues to grow further.

Member states also during last 2 decades have experienced close cooperation and taken big steps towards regional development through their collective efforts.

Among the factors for success of ECO are project-oriented and specialized natures of its activities. It is our great pleasure to have this matter among the 21<sup>st</sup> ECO regional planning council's legislations in current year held in Tehran. We are confident that ECO member states will be experiencing tremendous growth in their regional cooperation in future through this approach.

As you know, meeting our desired goal that is securing welfare of our people is only attainable in spirits of real cooperation and interaction. Undoubtedly ECO enjoys numerous privileges and capacities that help member states to secure interests of their people. In historical and cultural terms, the region enjoys integrity whose geographical borders are consistent with its cultural and historical borders. In our perception popular exchange and interaction are the most significant regional strategies. That is why we sincerely call on all ECO countries to develop their consular cooperation and remove communication barriers between people. One of these privileges and capacities is member states

cooperation to develop their consular relations and facilitation of 400 million people's interaction around the whole region. When it comes to I.R.IRAN we have always been harbinger of providing people with these consular facilities and visa cancelation I.R.IRAN also has started cooperation with ECO member states to issue a uniform visa for foreigners who are intended to enter ECO territory and has prepared the grounds to that end.

There are some other initiatives in hand for ECO member states to cooperate on civil registration that come as follow,

- Set a unification procedure in issuance of ID documents
- Exchange of demographic information
- Acceptance of interregional documents authentication
- Acceptance of marriage registration

With respect to majority of Muslim population of ECO member states, I deem it necessary to express my thanks to I.R.IRAN National Civil Organization for its tremendous efforts to convene this high level conference and I do hope that conference like this helps synergy and exchange of experiences among member states.

Thank you for your patience