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**22nd Session of the Conference of the Parties
(COP 22) to the UNFCCC**

**Statement by Mr. Fuad Farzalibeyov,
ECO Director for Environment, Minerals & Energy**

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Marrakech, Morocco

**Distinguished Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC,
Honourable Delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great honour and special privilege for me to attend and address this august event. On behalf of the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), I would like to congratulate the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on successful organization of the landmark 22nd Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-22) to the UNFCCC in Marrakech. Allow me to express my profound gratitude to the UNFCCC for inviting ECO to participate at the COP-22 as observer international organization. I would also like to appreciate the delegates from the ECO Member States for actively participating in the COP-22 Sessions.

ECO is a regional inter-governmental organization with diverse membership of 10 Member States, notably Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, covering more than 8 million square kilometres and above 440 million inhabitants. Over the period of the last three decades, ECO has developed into a full-fledged regional organization with growing international profile and its role as the most inclusive intergovernmental platform for the ECO Region has been widely acknowledged by key global players and organizations. Since its enlargement in 1992, ECO has been engaged with national, regional and international stakeholders in formulating result-oriented strategies, elaborating new partnership frameworks, as well as setting-up various institutional mechanisms for enhanced regional cooperation and dialogue.

We must confess that with regard to the ECO Region, climate change is no longer a threat, but a reality alarming more environmental disastrous challenges ahead. Desertification, dust haze and sand storms, more frequent floods, unpredicted torrential rains, land erosion and other natural disasters, water shortages and reduced agricultural yields are the consequences among climate change incidents heavily affecting our planet and particularly the ECO Region. All these effects are calling for urgent and coherent actions for crafting inclusive, sustainable and resilient climate agenda in global and regional levels.

Realizing this grim situation, the ECO Secretariat with extensive cooperation of its Member States are considering a shift in paradigm focusing on synergy impacts and enhancing regional concerted actions to identify common applicable approaches on climate change and mobilizing resources for adaptation and mitigation related actions.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

I would like to bring to your attention that ECO with close collaboration of its Member States is vigorously pursuing the UN global agenda on combating climate change at regional and national levels through policy making, prioritizing areas of cooperation, undertaking feasible projects in addressing the pre-and post-climate

change impacts in the ECO Region. The ECO Secretariat along with its Member States have enthusiastically participated in the UNFCCC COP-21 Paris Climate Conference last year and prior to the Conference, the ECO Member States also submitted their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to the Secretariat of UNFCCC, which demonstrates their committed engagements with global partners in dealing with environmental challenges. Furthermore, ECO Senior Environment Officials convened the Coordinating Meeting on 7th December 2015 on the sidelines of the COP-21 in Paris and discussed issues of common interest within the framework of global climate process to address in a balanced and equitable manner all three elements of climate change (adaptation, mitigation and means of implementation) with particular emphasis on adaptation; common trans-boundary and emerging challenges as dust haze and sand storms; management of high carbon terrestrial and coastal ecosystems; academic cooperation for dissemination of knowledge and awareness raising purposes; and cooperation on the enhanced use of renewable energies, particularly hydropower generation.

Consequent upon adoption of the Climate Change Agreement in Paris 2015, ECO Member States have also signed the same agreement this year in New York and now are in the process of its ratification. In this rationale, ECO Secretariat has been pursuing the outcome and follow-up of the COP-21 with relevant stakeholders for proper implementation of the UN Climate Change Agenda at regional and global levels to tackle the adverse impacts of climate change in ECO Region and to continue cooperation and coordination within ECO's environmental dimension for the benefits of all Member States and global community.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

ECO has been successful in following and crafting implementation dimensions of environment and climate change agenda since 2014 by organizing a series of fruitful events with a view to developing appropriate frameworks for regional and global partnerships. The ECO Consultative Ministerial Meetings on Environment (2014 and 2016 in Nairobi, Kenya) on the sidelines of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-1&2) developed a set of action points for building future resilience in tackling regional environmental and climate change challenges.

The 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment (17 December 2014, Istanbul, Turkey) was a landmark event for generating long-needed momentum and adopting set of decisions, notably "ECO Climate Package" in line with ongoing global climate negotiations; identification of environment and the impacts of climate change as the cross-sectoral priority of the ECO; adoption of "Istanbul Declaration on Climate Change and Green Economy in the Context of Sustainable Development" and prolongation of the "ECO Framework Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming" from 2011-2015 to 2016-2020. Furthermore, the ECO Ministerial Conference on Climate Change (27 March 2015, Safranbolu, Turkey) also adopted a milestone Safranbolu Declaration on "Post-2020 Agreement on Climate Change". The 3rd ECO Experts Group Meeting on Biodiversity (6-7 March 2016, Antalya, Turkey)

adopted 5-Years Biodiversity Work Plan in ECO Region (2016-2020), which is focused on dealing in a coherent and resilient manner with major threats to the biodiversity challenges. The 6th ECO Working Group Meeting on Environment (1-2 June 2016, Islamabad, Pakistan) was instrumental in identifying ways and means for coping with environmental issues, particularly in the context of Paris Agreement on Climate Change and within the ECO policy frameworks.

In view of critical role being played by the forests with regard to climate mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction and food security, the ECO Secretariat has established a robust and close working relationship with United Nations Forum on Forest (UNFF). The Secretariats of ECO and UNFF co-organized two workshops in 2014 and 2015 with respect to the regional capacity-building on designing projects for sustainable forest management and forest financing. Besides, the Secretariats of ECO and UNFF jointly organized the Experts Meeting on enhancing regional and sub-regional involvement in the work of the International Arrangement on Forests (IAF) on 26-28 September 2016 in Tehran, Iran with active participation of delegates from regional and sub-regional organizations and processes, which identified 13 priority actions for enhancing involvement of regional and sub-regional organizations and processes in the UNFF and IAF Strategic Plan for 2017-2030.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

ECO Region is in need of strong support from its international partners to address pressing environment, climate change and related challenges. In this vein, the ECO Secretariat with the mandate of ECO Environment Ministers has been engaged in close cooperation with international organizations and important environmental fora. It is worth mentioning that ECO has been granted Observer Status in the respective UN Organizations, including UNFCCC, UNEP, UNCCD, IPCC, UNFF, and UNCBD, and thus ECO has been actively participating in various events of these organizations on climate change and other environment related aspects. Given this impetus, I am confident ECO would play an important role in advancement of global and regional coherence for climate resiliency in post-Marrakech era and would facilitate the UN Agencies in pragmatic implementation process of their global climate change agenda in the ECO Region, including the UN Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 with high focus on relevant SDGs.

Meanwhile, I believe that the proceedings of COP-22 will grant desired momentum and opportunity for policy-makers from all over the world to engage themselves in a joint exercise to address knowledge gaps across the world and identify common global approaches on vital issues of climate change and other environmental disasters that world community has long been facing and will certainly deal in future as well.

Thank you.