

**OPENING REMARKS OF
DR. FEHMIDA MIRZA,
SPEAKER, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN &
PRESIDENT, PAECO
GENERAL CONFERENCE
AT THE 1st GENERAL CONFERENCE OF PAECO**

**February 12, 2013
Islamabad**

Bismillah Irr Rehman Irr Raheem

**Excellency Dr. Ali Larijani
Speaker of the Shoura-e-Islami of the Islamic Republic of Iran**

**Excellency Shukur-jon Zuhurov
Speaker of the Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli
Republic of Tajikistan**

**Excellency Jamil Che-Chek
Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey**

**Excellency Neamatullah Ghaffari
Second Deputy Speaker of the Wolesi Jirga of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

**Dr. Shamil Aleskerov
Secretary General of the ECO**

**Hon'able Parliamentarians and Delegates of the 1st Conference of the Parliamentary
Assembly of the ECO countries!**

Excellences, Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Assalam-o-Alikum and Good Morning to all of you!

**It is an honour for me to assume the Chair of the President of the 1st Conference of the
Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO countries.**

**The Parliament of Pakistan is privileged to hold this important regional parliamentary
event and on its behalf, I once again warmly welcome all the worthy Presiding Officers
and their delegations to our beautiful Capital, Islamabad.**

**I also wish you a comfortable and purposeful stay here and hope that the links established
in Islamabad, will go a long way in fostering closer integration in the PAECO fraternity.**

Distinguished delegates!

In its almost 30 years' history, the ECO has offered a promising base for a viable cooperation in diverse fields among the member states.

The principles of the Izmir Treaty have been guiding our governments to seek a peaceful, progressive and enabling environment for the sustainable human and economic development of our people.

The establishment of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Parliaments is a manifestation of the same resolve. This forum of public representatives not only reaffirms the existing foundations of mutual cooperation but also offers a viable means for a practical realisation of these ideals.

The PAECO Charter, which was signed [yesterday](#), envisions the parliamentarians of our 10 countries to jointly promote our common values, interests and opportunities. It desires them to invoke the dictums of "Parliamentary Diplomacy" in fostering democracy, peace and development in our region. We are now duty-bound to transform these promises into action-oriented results.

It is encouraging to note that a befitting start has already been made. In its first meeting [yesterday](#), the Executive Council of PAECO took important decisions to set the direction of our Assembly.

I am pleased to inform the General Conference that:

- **The worthy Speakers have agreed to hold the conferences of PAECO on annual basis and in this regard, the 2nd Conference will, Inshah Allah, be held in Kabul, Afghanistan in the spring of 2014.**
- **It has also been decided to provide an institutional structure to PAECO by framing its Rules for the conduct of its business. A committee, comprising of the secretaries and the designated officials from all member States has been constituted to undertake this important task. This committee will submit its report in our next meeting in Kabul.**
- **We have also authorised the Secretary PAECO to seek observer status for our newly-formed Assembly in the Inter Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Union of the Islamic Countries. This will enable the PAECO parliamentarians to work closely on important multilateral forums.**
- **The Executive Council has also noted with satisfaction the holding of the first-ever meeting of Women Parliamentarians from the ECO countries and has agreed to provide this important forum all the needed assistance for its steady growth.**

These are indeed positive developments and reflect the common desire of the Member parliaments to promote and strengthen our mutual parliamentary contacts.

Distinguished Delegates!

The platform of the General Conference is also extremely important for the future healthy growth of PAECO. This assembly of the ECO parliamentarians has to work as the epicentre of ideas and workable solutions.

The topic placed before this 1st General Conference holds the key for opening future vistas of a meaningful cooperation. It aims at enabling our parliamentarians to identify a tangible role for themselves for promoting intra-regional trade and investments for the sustainable socio-economic development of the region.

I hope that Islamabad Conference will provide the worthy delegates a perfect setting to discuss such important matters in friendship and candour. In my capacity as the President of this august Assembly, I look forward to a meaningful outcome of the 1st Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Parliaments and wish this Conference the very best.

I thank you all