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

at
"Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction"
New Delhi, India
3-4 November 2016

Honorable Ministers,

Excellencies;

Distinguished Participants;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is a distinct privilege for me to address this august Conference on behalf of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). At the outset, I would like to express my profound gratitude to the people and the Government of India for the warm hospitality extended to us and the excellent arrangements made for this important Conference in beautiful city of New Delhi. My gratitude also goes to UNISDR, Mr. Glasser and his team, particularly the UNISDR Regional Office for Asia and Pacific for organizing this important event.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Let me continue with presenting a brief report on what Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) has been doing since Sendai UN Conference. As an inter-governmental regional organization, ECO collective regional efforts for economic development of its Member States have always been threatened by the disasters risk. Located between Europe, China, Russia and Persian Gulf, ECO Region is one of the most prone-regions in the world which is suffering terribly from natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods, landslides and drought. Over the past two decades, there has been a steady increase in the incidence rate of disasters in the Region, and empirical evidences along with scientific findings show that our Region may be prone to more calamities in the future. The majority of the 440 million ECO Region's inhabitants live in the moderate to very high risks earthquake hazard areas. The geographical vulnerability of ECO countries and the Region as a whole is exacerbated by phenomena such as climate change and urbanization.

In line with the new global momentum generated by Sendai Conference, ECO started to promote an optimal regional approach to disasters synergizing Sendai priorities and targets with the needs and requirements of the Member States who are individually undertaking their commitments under global frameworks such as Sendai, SDGs and climate change. This was, and still to be, a difficult task for ECO to identify what exactly it can offer to the Member States while avoiding duplication. This is why ECO decided to engage from the beginning the relevant partners and stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels. Accordingly, dialogues were pursued with relevant regional and international players since Sendai, including with UNISDR, UNESCAP, UNHABITAT, UNDP and UNESCO with a view to identifying areas where ECO has comparative advantage to contribute to implementation of the DRR programmes in this region.

As a result, ECO contributed in to the UNESCO-UNHABITAT project on risk analysis for Afghanistan, Iran, Turkmenistan and Pakistan. We have also participated in the UNISDR regional DRR platform for Central Asia and South Caucasus (CASC). ECO has also discussed with ESCAP possible cooperation on implementation of the ESCAP resolution on sand storms as well as implementation of ECO project on dust haze and sand storms. Possible cooperation with ESCAP on addressing sand storms in the region has been jointly examined. ECO has given its support to UNESCAP in its ongoing initiative to operationalize the newly established Asia Pacific Center for Disaster Information Management (APDIM). APDIM, to be hosted in the ECO Region, can contribute into the scientific, technological and information aspects of the DRR activities of the ECO.

Distinguished Participants;

As the latest step for implementation of the Sendai Framework in the region, ECO Secretariat in collaboration with UNESCAP, UNISDR and IDB hosted recently relevant experts from Member States and the international

organizations, including UNDP, UNOCHA, UNESCO, UNHABITAT and IFRC, to work on an optimal regional framework for DRR in the ECO Region. Experts managed to agree on some priority areas for regional cooperation by 2020 and elaborated on potential projects and flagship programmes towards implementation of SFDRR. They agreed to establish a task group to continue working on the draft regional framework. The outcome of task group will be discussed by experts in February 2017 in Turkey, who will also consider incorporation of the UN global indicators for implementation of Sendai Framework in to the regional framework.

Ladies and Gentleman;

We are expecting to get valuable inputs from the outcome of this AMCDRR to enrich ECO regional framework. ECO also remains ready to contribute to the implementation of the imminent Asian Regional Plan for Implementation of the SFDRR.

To conclude, it should be noted that regional frameworks, such as the emerging ECO Framework, will undoubtedly facilitate disaster risk management, mitigation and preparedness at the national and international levels. We believe that addressing all these issues is the responsibility we share with the national authorities and international community.

Thank you for your attention