



**Dushanbe Declaration**  
**The Second Session of the Arab Cooperation and Economic Forum**  
**with Central Asian Countries and Azerbaijan**  
**Dushanbe, The Republic of Tajikistan**  
**16/10/2017**

The Second Session of the Arab Cooperation and Economic Forum was held with the Central Asian countries and the Republic of Azerbaijan under the title of "Cooperation in the Area of Development and Investment" on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan.

The Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Economy, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan, and HE Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the League of Arab States Secretary-General participated in the Forum.

The Ministers affirmed the historical relations, religious and cultural ties between both parties, the prospects of economic cooperation and the potentials of Arab States, Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan, including the vast natural resources and promising investment opportunities in the area of energy, mining, petrochemical industries, tourism, and others.

The Ministers commended convening of the first session of the Forum in 2014 in Riyadh, and the decisions and resolutions included in Riyadh Declaration. They also affirmed the importance of developing cooperation mechanisms for the Forum in all fields to serve the common interests of both sides.

The Ministers held in-depth consultations on the most important international and regional political issues of common concern, reaffirming the need to further enhance coordination and consultation and exchange of views on various issues of mutual interest, thus contributing to maintaining and establishment of international security and stability.

**I. Political Consultation**

1. The Ministers affirmed the need to support the political consensus solutions to resolve the crises that some countries are facing in the Arab region through encouraging comprehensive dialogue and national reconciliation, rejecting any interference in the internal affairs of states, and the obligation to respect their sovereignty and independence and to ensure their unity and territorial integrity in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.
2. The Ministers affirmed their support for the establishment of an independent and geographically connected Palestinian state on the borders of 4th June 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital, and finding a just and comprehensive solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant to the



international legitimacy resolutions. They also demanded that Israel must cease all its settlement activities and abide by the international legitimacy resolutions, in particular Resolution 2334 (2016), which condemns the settlements and seizure of lands.

The Ministers expressed their rejection of all steps and measures carried out by Israel to change the legal and historical situation in the Islamic and Christian holy sites in occupied Jerusalem, and condemned the serious Israeli escalation in the city of Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque/ Haram al-Sharif. The Ministers also called on Israel not to repeat the closure of Al-Aqsa Mosque / Haram al-Sharif in the future. The Ministers commended the efforts exerted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Hussein, the Custodian of Islamic and Christian Holy Sites, in protecting the Holy City and the identity of its Arab Islamic and Christian holy sites, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque. They also commended the efforts of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, King of the Kingdom of Morocco, Chairman of Al-Quds Committee, in defending the Holy City and preserving its cultural and historical identity. The Ministers also appreciated the Custodian of the Holy places king Salman Ibn Abdoul-Aziz Al-Saud's efforts and contacts with World's Leaders to end the arbitrary measures carried out by Israeli authorities in Al\_Aqsa Mosque. Further, the Ministers welcomed the resolutions adopted by the Executive Board of UNESCO, as well as its most recent resolution approved in May 2017, which affirmed that the Old City in East Jerusalem is purely Palestinian territory, and Israel has no sovereignty over it.

The Ministers affirmed their rejection to the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, that led to the deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situations, demanding that Israel (the current occupying power) ceases its violations of Palestinian human rights, to implement its obligations with accordance to the International Law, immediately lift all constrains set on the Gaza District, and to accelerate the reconstruction process.

The Ministers demanded Israel to release the Arab and Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons, and called on the International Community to bear its responsibility to exert pressure on Israel to preserve the rights of the Palestinian prisoners and detainees with accordance to what is stipulated in the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. The Ministers stressed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian refugees to return to the homeland.

The Ministers condemned the Belfour Declaration, which marks it's 100-year anniversary, and the serious injustice resulted against the Palestinian people. The Ministers called upon the international community to work together to lift injustice against the Palestinian people in order to regain its rights, in accordance with the resolution of the international legitimacy, principles of the International Law and International Humanitarian Law.



The Ministers welcomed the signing of the Palestinian reconciliation Agreement, and appreciated the Egyptian efforts to achieve it, on the basis of the Factions Agreement that took place in Cairo 2011, and all the steps taken to restore the National Government in order to conduct its work in Gaza Strip under Egyptian sponsorship.

3. The Ministers affirmed the importance of preserving the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria, and stressed the need to intensify efforts to find a political solution for the Syrian crisis in order to preserve the lives of Syrians and achieve the aspirations of the Syrian people according to the outcomes of the Geneva Communiqué and relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution 2254 (2015). They also expressed their disapproval of the military solution and all acts of violence and killings practised against the Syrian people, including those carried out by terrorist groups and organizations. Further, they reaffirmed their support for the efforts to achieve peace through the Geneva process and the Astana process that are aimed at reducing the military escalation. The Ministers also expressed their support to the countries hosting the Syrian refugees and displaced, and called upon the International Community to provide them with all possible support.
4. The Ministers emphasized their respect for the unity and sovereignty of the State of Libya and its territorial integrity, non-interference in its internal affairs, and expressed their grave concern over the security challenges and terrorist threats that Libya faces and support its efforts to combat these challenges and threats. In this regard, they welcomed the recent announcement of the liberation of Benghazi from terrorist groups. The Ministers also called for pursuing political solution through dialogue and national reconciliation, stressing support the implementation of the Libyan political agreement signed in Skhirat in The Kingdom of Morocco, rejecting the military solution, and called for support to the presidential council of the Libyan Government of National Accord. The Ministers also commended the efforts of the League of Arab States, the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of LAS to Libya, the role of the United Nations and the Special Representative–Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Libya’s neighboring countries and, the Quartet concerned with supporting Libya which includes the League of Arab States, the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union and the African Union High Level Committee on Libya.
5. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment to the unity, sovereignty, security, stability and territorial integrity of Yemen, and the support of the legitimate government of Yemen led by President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, the resumption of Yemeni political consultations and working towards reaching a political solution to the situation in Yemen in accordance with the three references represented by the Gulf Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the National Comprehensive Dialogue and relevant UNSC



Resolutions, in particular Resolution 2216 (2015). The Ministers also expressed their support for the work of the UN Special Envoy to the Secretary General on Yemen in support of the Yemen political process. The Ministers shared grave concern over deteriorating humanitarian, health and economic situation in Yemen and called for intensifying the effective humanitarian and medical assistance to the people of Yemen and expressed support for the reconstruction efforts by the legitimate Yemeni Government.

6. The Ministers condemned terrorism in all its forms, manifestations and motives. They also reaffirmed the importance of combating terrorism, uprooting its roots and drying its sources, they also refused to associate terrorism with any race, religion, nationality or civilization, and called on States to refrain from providing any form of explicit or implicit support to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts, including the finance of terrorism. They also commended, in this regard, the achievements of the Iraqi army in the fight against terrorism, the most recent of which was the liberation of the city of Mosul from the control of Da'esh terrorist organization. The Ministers also appreciated the efforts of all countries in combating terrorism.
7. The Ministers reaffirmed their support to all peaceful efforts, including the initiative and efforts of the United Arab Emirates, in reaching a peaceful solution to the issue of the Three Islands (Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa) through bilateral negotiations in accordance with International Law, and the support of this issue according to the international principles.
8. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance to have cooperative relations between Arab States and The Islamic Republic of Iran on the basis of the principles of good neighborliness, non-interference in internal affairs, respect of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, resolution of disputes through peaceful means, in accordance with the UN Charter and the International Law, and to refrain from the use or threat of force.
9. The Ministers welcomed the Sudanese Government's constant efforts to achieve national reconciliation, particularly the National Dialogue Initiative that was launched by His Excellency President of the Republic of Sudan, Field Marshal Omer Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, under the slogan "Sudan for All" aimed at reinforcing peace, security, and stability in the country, and crowning it with the formation of the National Reconciliation Government. The Ministers welcomed the US administration's decision to lift the economic sanctions imposed on Sudan since 1997, affirming that this decision will have a positive impact on the economic situation in Sudan, and will support the reconstruction, development and stabilizing efforts carried out throughout the country, including the succeeding of the food security initiatives. The Ministers also called to revoke Sudan's name off the "State Sponsors of Terrorism" list in consistency with the decision taken to lift the sanctions which entailed that Sudan has fulfilled its commitments especially



the aspect regarded to cooperation in the field of countering-terrorism. The Ministers stated their support for the UNSC Resolution 2363 (2017) regarded to the downsizing of the United Nations - African Union Mission (UNAMID), and their support of the Sudanese government's demand to allocate more resources in support for the plan to develop and enhance stability, security and peace in Darfur. The Ministers welcomed the Sudanese government's decision on weapon's collection in the states of Darfur considering that it represents an advanced step towards enhancing peace, security and stability in the region. The Ministers stated their support for the Sudanese Government's efforts to relief the Sudan's external debts and to benefit from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC). The Ministers also stated their support for Sudan's efforts to accede the World Trade Organization "WTO".

10. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment to the unity, sovereignty, stability and territorial integrity of Lebanon and called for the full implementation of the relevant UNSC Resolutions including resolution 1701, and expressed their support for Lebanon in its right to exploit its oil and gas resources in the exclusive economic zone. The Ministers emphasized the need of supporting Lebanon, acknowledging the role of the Lebanese Armed forces in confronting the attacks carried out by terrorist groups and organizations. The Ministers supported the need of reducing the burden imposed on Lebanon from hosting more than 1.5 million Syrian displaced and encourage their safe return to their country.
11. The Ministers affirmed the necessity to settle the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh region by peaceful means, on the basis of the principle of territorial integrity and sovereignty, in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the principles of International Law.
12. The Ministers expressed their aspiration to make the necessary efforts to assure the success of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference 2020 "NPT" to fulfil the unequivocal Treaty regarded to nuclear disarmament. The Participants also stressed that the mandatory nature of the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East is the foundation of Security and Stability in the Middle East, assuring the priority of the denuclearization of the Middle East, the joining of Israel to the NPT as a non-nuclear state, and subjecting all its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguard of the International Atomic Energy Agency "IAEA". The participants also welcomed the United Nations' adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Ministers also commended the inauguration of the IAEA Low-enriched Uranium Bank Facility on August 29, 2017 in Kazakhstan and stressed that the Bank is a unique international project, which will be an additional mechanism for ensuring a stable development of the world nuclear fuel market and peaceful atomic energy industry.



## **II. Economic and Social Cooperation**

13. The Ministers welcomed the growing economic cooperation between the Member States of the League of Arab States, Central Asian States and Azerbaijan; and called to encourage the implementation of this cooperation, they also stressed on the tremendous potential in both regions to increase bilateral trade exchange and investment between both parties, particularly in areas of industry, agriculture, food security, water resources, banking and finance, oil and gas and renewable energy, urban development as well as peaceful uses of atomic energy, transport, tourism, communications, and intellectual property rights, in addition to cooperation in various fields, such as environment, technology transfer, capacity-building, Sharia-Compliant Financial Services, and others. The Ministers reaffirmed that the Arab side is willing to prioritize cooperation, encourage and facilitate investment in the field of food security, financial resources, renewable energy, peaceful atomic energy and clean energy, especially in the solar and wind sectors. The Ministers called for support and development of a comprehensive Strategic Program/Roadmap for the next decade on the practical implementation and resource mobilization for the “Islamic Infrastructure Initiative”.
14. The Ministers called for the expansion of the scope of trade exchange, economic cooperation and investment between both parties, as well as encouraging mutual investments, especially in the fields of high value-added industries, creating a conducive environment for attracting businessmen and investors from both sides, reviewing obstacles and ways to eliminate them; and concluding bilateral agreements to protect and encourage investment and avoid double taxation.
15. The Ministers called for the strengthening and enhancing cooperation in the areas of energy and renewable energy, nuclear energy for peaceful uses, trade, transportation, new means of communication and environment, water, agriculture, sustainable development, capacity-building and training, tourism, statistics and databases, intellectual property rights, industry and scientific research and opening prospects for financing joint economic and investment projects.
16. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of enhancing and developing the agricultural cooperation between the Member States of the League of Arab States, and Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan; urging the officials and business communities to support and strengthen this cooperation through holding workshops between specialists from both sides. The Ministers also encouraged the concerned parties from the Arab side and Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan to hold an event on "Food and Food Security" in the year 2018, and welcomed the offer of the Republic of the Sudan to host the event. The Ministers also commended the efforts of the Government of Kazakhstan for the progress made with regard to the establishment of the Islamic Organization for Food Security, with its headquarters in Astana. The Ministers expressed their support to the initiatives of the Republic of Uzbekistan on establishment of International



Scientific Research Centre in Samarkand and Islamic Civilization Centre in Tashkent, which would promote wide dissemination of ideas calling for tolerance and moral improvement particularly among the youth, encourage research of cultural and historical materials, civilization dialogue, strengthen religious tolerance and promote peace values of Islam at the international level.

17. The Ministers called to work on learning from the experiences of other countries on the implementation of the Smart Irrigation Program and, cooperate to prepare strategies for water reuse in the industrial and oil sectors by which we can reduce the demand on fresh water, thus allow provision of large amounts of water for other uses. And welcomed, in this regard, the declaration of the international decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" (2018-2028), and expressed the readiness to deepen and widen cooperation to achieve the sustainable development goals and targets, related to water resources.
18. The Ministers called to work on enhancing and developing the transport sectors (land, sea and air) and railways between the Member States of the League of Arab States and Central Asian Countries and the Republic of Azerbaijan. In this context, the Ministers also commended all projects that help in increasing the level of trade between both sides. The Ministers affirmed the pivotal role of the new Suez Canal in enhancing the movement of international trade and supporting the economy of the member states of the forum, in addition to the continuous work to transform the Suez Canal axis from mere commercial traffic crossing to a main global logistics hub for provision and supply of international transport and trade.
19. The Ministers stressed the necessity to collaborate with the Republic of Azerbaijan and within relevant regional and inter-regional initiatives and projects aimed at developing transport connectivity, in particular through the development of North-South, East West and South-West international Transport Corridors and Trans-Caspian International Transport Route connecting South Asia, Gulf and Black Sea regions in order to create more favorable conditions for trade and economic development as well as to ensure increase in the volume of international passenger and cargo transportation.
20. The Ministers stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation between both the Arab, Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan's sides in the area of environment protection, climate change issues, and joint action to maintain balance in implementation of Paris agreement and the outcome of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its Twenty-Second Session (COP-22), which was held in Marrakesh, Kingdom of Morocco, in November 2016 in a way that serves the common interests as well as cooperation and coordination of positions in (COP-23) that will be convened in November 2017, in Bonn.



21. The Ministers called for cooperation within the frame of the "Green Economy", including issues of environment, agriculture and energy, reaffirming the importance of cooperation in this field and the potentials available in Central Asia, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Arab States as a promising source of electricity, environment friendly products, agricultural products and food resources. In this context, the Ministers called for the convening of a workshop between both sides on topics of “energy, environment and green economy” in an Arab State in early of 2018. The Ministers noted the importance of the initiative of Kazakhstan to create an International center for transfer of green technologies and investment projects “Future Energy” as part of EXPO-2017 exhibition legacy, and welcomed its endorsement by the United Nations and underlined its relevance in the context of implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
22. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of Arab cooperation with Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan in areas of housing, reconstruction and sustainable urban development, and seeking to convene a conference in this regard in one of the countries of both regions.
23. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of developing the touristic ties between the Member States of the League of Arab States and Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan, as well as the need to further enhance the cooperation between relevant organizations and agencies and the sustained efforts on all levels to ensure the security of tourists and achieve sustainable tourism. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the preparations made by the Ministry of Tourism, Air Transport, Handicraft and Social Economy of the Kingdom of Morocco to organize a training course in the field of tourism in the cities of Fez and Rabat during the period 23-27/10/2017, which will be carried out within the framework of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the League of Arab States and Central Asian Countries and the Republic of Azerbaijan.
24. The Ministers called to facilitate and enhance trade exchange between both sides, which will have a great impact on expanding and increasing the economic relations and opening up investment horizons among them. The Minister also reaffirmed that the revitalization of economic and trade relations can strongly contribute to the promotion of peace and stability as well as the increase and support the trade flow between them. They also affirmed the importance of private sector and participation in the investment and trade activities, urging the national associations of the chambers of commerce and the Business men’s associations and links to promote these activities at both parties, which will lead to encouraging the linkage between the banking and financial institutions at both parties, as well as, easing the pressure on foreign currency, and working to develop mechanisms to settle commercial and monetary transactions between the two sides using national currencies. The Ministers welcomed the establishment of the Astana International Financial Center as a financial Hub of Central Asia,





which will develop Islamic Banking services as one of the priorities of its activities.

25. The Ministers welcomed the holding of the first session of the conference of Arab Businessmen and Investors in Central Asian countries during the year of 2018 in one of the Arab States, and the convening of its second session in Tajikistan in the year 2019.
26. The Ministers congratulated the Republic of Kazakhstan for their organization of Astana EXPO-2017 exhibition that took place during the period of 10 July 2017 till 10 September 2017, that aimed to discuss ways of joint cooperation in areas of renewable energy and green economy, also the United Arab Emirates for the successful bid of the City of Dubai to host the (EXPO-2020). The Ministers also called the concerned institutions in the Forum's Member States to have effective participation therein, given the significant opportunities for communication and establishment of new partnerships for sustainable development that they will gain. The Ministers took note with the nomination by the Republic of Azerbaijan of its capital Baku for hosting the World EXPO-2025.
27. The Ministers called to coordinate positions in international and commercial forums, and to cooperate with other international actors with a view to contribute to the economic decision-making process at the international level in their respective interests; which will have a great impact in elevating the process of trade exchange, as well as, investment development and, establishing strong and effective partnerships among them, and support the countries in their negotiations to adhere to World Trade Organization.
28. The Ministers called to adopt various activities that reflect the role of Arab States, Central Asian countries and the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Arab and Islamic culture. They also called for preserving cultural heritage and cooperation in developing programmes in areas of culture, translation and educational institutions through the establishment of joint cultural exhibitions, arts festivals and book fairs and encouraging the establishment of ties between research and studies centres and scientific centres, exchange of students and the allocation of scholarships. The Ministers also reaffirmed the importance of cooperation in areas of health care, poverty eradication, family and childhood care, women empowerment, youth and sports, cultural development and media. Further, they called for the implementation of Goal 4/7 of the sustainable development agenda, which states the "the promotion of a culture of peace, non-violence and global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development by 2030".
29. The Ministers called for the strengthening of cooperation among Arab States and Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan in the areas of education, culture, communication and information through opening of information platforms such as joint cultural and television channels and radio stations, holding conferences and



symposia, organizing competitions and seminars in cooperation with specialized educational institutions in order to achieve the aspirations of the people of these countries, besides spreading Arab and Islamic values, the culture of tolerance and coexistence, rejection of terrorism and extremism, promotion of inter-civilizations dialogue, the values of justice and peace, as well as the principles of freedom and human rights. The Ministers also called for supporting educational and scientific institutions, universities and research centres to serve the Forum countries in an effective modern style suitable for young people and future generations, benefiting from technological development; and encouraging the establishment of strong ties between research and studies centres, as well as scientific centers, exchange of students and expansion of educational scholarships.

30. The Ministers Acknowledged that appropriate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) connectivity can bridge the digital divide and provide solutions for new challenges, access to information and knowledge as well as speed up social progress, and called for early implementation of the Trans Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM) initiative with its Trans-Caspian segment to connect Asia and Europe and contribute to improvement and diversification of telecommunication transit routes in Eurasia.
31. The Ministers welcomed the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan aimed at promoting and strengthening Islamic solidarity, including the proclamation of 2017 as “Islamic Solidarity Year” in Azerbaijan by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the organization of the IV Islamic Solidarity Games and IV World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue which was held in May 2017 in Baku.
32. The Ministers expressed gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for hosting the First OIC Summit on Science and Technology on September 10-11 in Astana and stressed the significance of the Summit outcomes.
33. The Ministers welcomed the initiative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to conduct the Second Science and Technology Summit of the OIC in Uzbekistan in 2020 and committed to actively working with the Uzbek Party and the Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation to make substantive achievements in development of science and technology in the Islamic world to that date.
34. The Ministers expressed their sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Republic of Tajikistan for good preparation and generous hospitality accorded to the delegations participating in the Second Session of the Forum, which contributed to the success of the work of this session.
35. The Ministers decided to convene the Third Session of the Forum in 2019 in one of the Arab countries.