

ADDRESS

by

H.E. Mr. Edward Nalbandian,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia,
to representatives of the Permanent International
Secretariat of BSEC,
BSEC Member States, Observers and Related Bodies

(BSEC Headquarters, November 24, 2008)

Mr. Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to address this distinguished audience at the Permanent International Secretariat of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

The growing importance of the BSEC region in the world policy and the global economy with new priorities make us accountable for enhancing multilateral economic cooperation, improving neighborly relations and establishing constructive and productive cooperation in wide range of economic development.

The Republic of Armenia assumed the Chairmanship of our organization at the time when the contemporary world is facing a new challenge - a global financial crisis. The international community, international organizations, BSEC should join efforts in order to overcome this severe test. This could be considered as one of the major priorities for the coming period.

The improving of efficiency, effectiveness and visibility of BSEC is among the priority tasks of the Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office.

A month ago, in Tirana, I had a privilege of announcing the Armenian priority agenda in BSEC for the next six month period of the Organization's operation.

The Armenian Chairmanship finds it essential to focus among the other priority areas on cooperation in developing of the regional transportation networks.

We will take steps towards the implementation of the provisions of the 2008 Odessa Joint Declaration on Cooperation in the Sphere of Transport in the BSEC Region.

We acknowledge the recent developments within the framework of implementation of one of the major Memoranda of Understanding signed by the Member States on Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway, and calls for accelerating internal procedures to make come into force of another one - Development of the Motorways of the Sea at the BSEC Region. The issue of proper realization of the mentioned projects is on the priority agenda of the Chairmanship.

The accomplishment of the Memorandum on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region remains priority item on the Organization's transport cooperation. The Armenian Chairmanship attaches importance to joining of all Member States to the Agreements on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Lorry Drivers and for the Businesspeople Nationals of the BSEC Member States.

Given the strategic significance of the BSEC region, the Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office will undertake initial steps in the process of formulating an integrated BSEC regional energy strategy based on the provisions of

the relevant BSEC declarations, as well as the strategy of enhanced cooperation with the EU energy related structures in the light of the 2008 Kyiv Declaration.

Since the environmental issues do not recognize political borders due to their international nature there is an urgent necessity for integrating the national strategies and put the issues of water and air pollution, generation of waste, climate change, deforestation and degradation of biodiversity on the priority agenda of the BSEC Member States. The Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office will further encourage the Project Development Fund projects to be put into action in this field.

We will strive for further encouragement of the project-oriented agenda of BSEC in other priority fields of cooperation such as information technologies, science and social life, emergency assistance, combating organized crime, institutional renewal and others.

Among other priorities the Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office will focus on further enhancement of cooperation between BSEC and international organizations including EU to contribute to solution of complexity of social, economic and humanitarian issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In cooperation with the BSEC Secretariat, the Member States and related bodies around 60 various events will be organized, of which 14 in Armenia.

And I am pleased to note that under the Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office these priorities have been already started putting into effect.

On November 3-rd under the Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC and with co-sponsorship of the Republic of Armenia the 63-rd Session of the United Nations Organization adopted the draft resolution

on “Cooperation between the UN and the BSEC Organization”.

On November 10-12 here in Istanbul and in Brussels the Armenian delegation in BSEC has chaired the BSEC “Troika” Meeting, Joint Coordination Meeting of the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office, BSEC Related Bodies and BSEC Permanent International Secretariat, the Coordination Meeting of the BSEC “Troika” in an open format and the BSEC-EU Consultations with the COEST Working Party.

During these events the Armenian priority agenda in BSEC was discussed and approved, the Calendar of events of the Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office was finalized and important decisions were taken on further improvement of the BSEC operation efficiency and on further enhancement of the concrete project-oriented BSEC-EU cooperation agenda.

The extraordinary meeting of the Working Group on Banking and Finance was organized on November 18th here in the BSEC Headquarters to urgently respond to the full-scale crisis embraced the global financial system and find ways to overcome it by the joint efforts.

We are ready to negotiate with the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat the launching of any other event to coordinate steps among the BSEC Member States for overcoming the negative consequences of the crisis.

The Armenian Chairmanship along with the Secretariat has just organized here in Istanbul a meeting of the Working Group on Energy. Armenia as a Country-Coordinator of the Group is preparing for a forth-coming meeting of the BSEC Ministers of Energy to be held in Yerevan where important decisions on the BSEC-EU cooperation on energy are going to be taken.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that as an organization having a special responsibility to promote economic development in the wider Black Sea area, BSEC should address the most substantial challenges of the regional cooperation and contribute to its effectiveness and to the development of a project-oriented agenda.

In this respect I would like to acknowledge the devoted activities of the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat and Secretary General Ambassador Leonidas Chrisanthopoulos. I am confident that the Secretariat in cooperation with the Chairmanship and Member States will continue to contribute further to the enhancement of multilateral economic cooperation within BSEC.

In conclusion I want to extend my gratitude to the Secretariat for organization of this meeting and for warm hospitality shown to us.

Thank you.