Mr. President,

This statement on behalf of the Pakistani delegation is being made on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), and United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). I shall also take this opportunity to speak on the future cooperation between the United Nations and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Pakistan has the privilege of being the founder member of all the three organizations.

2. The Organization of Islamic Conference is one of the largest intergovernmental organization. Its 54 members and 6 observer states come from Asia, Africa and Europe. As the collective voice of the Muslim world, the OIC has been engaged over the years in a constructive and cooperative relationship with the United Nations, reinforcing common efforts in pursuit of peace and development.

3. The OIC has endeavored to promote a better understanding and dialogue between and among different civilizations and cultures. It has taken significant measures in fostering peace, in promoting social and economic development, in combating ethnic or racial intolerance, and in seeking an end to the causes of injustice and instability, which are a constant threat to world peace and security.

4. In the aftermath of the tragic events of 9/11, the Islamic world under the auspices of OIC, joined the international community in our common fight against international terrorism. The OIC has been emphatic in its condemnation of terrorism. It has adopted a Convention to deal with this scourge. The Convention provides a comprehensive framework for dealing with this problem while upholding the UN Charter’s cardinal principle of self-determination and acknowledges the legitimacy of freedom struggles against foreign occupation and alien domination.

Mr. President,

5. We are pleased to refer to the report of the Secretary General A/59/303 which recapitulates the progress achieved during the past year by the United Nations system and the OIC in promoting their shared goals of international peace and security and development. We welcome the effective contacts and consultations that the two organizations have maintained over the past several years.

6. The two organizations have regularly interacted over a number of political issues and their mutually supportive role and determination to promote negotiations to resolve these conflicts continue to receive wide international support. Representatives of the UN attended the tenth session of the OIC Summit in Malaysia in 2003 and the ICFMs held in Tehran and Istanbul in 2003 and 2004 respectively. We would like to see the two organizations work more closely in addressing and resolving some of the conflicts in the Muslim world including Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and Kashmir. More work needs to be done by all concerned to address the root causes of these conflicts and promote justice and peace.

7. We are of the view that the two sides should continue to examine ways and means of further expanding and diversifying their cooperation by identifying new areas. We welcome the meeting held in Vienna in July 2004 which identified several proposals for joint projects between the UN and OIC. Cooperation between the two organizations has taken place on numerous occasions in the past and we would like to encourage the regularization of this trend with at least
one general meeting of representatives of the Secretariat of the UN System and the OIC each year. This formal interaction would further enhance cooperation between the two organizations.

8. Pakistan has the proud privilege of chairing one of the two main Committees of OIC, namely the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH). The Pakistan based Committee is responsible for promoting cooperation in the fields of science and technology amongst the Muslim countries. Pakistan is also host to the Islamic Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Mr. President,

9. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is another major regional cooperation organization seeking to promote socio-economic development of its member states on the basis of their common needs and in keeping with the challenges taking place on the global economic scene. The Organization was founded by Pakistan, Iran and Turkey as the successor organization of the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD). In 1992, it was expanded to include Afghanistan and the newly established Central Asian States of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, as well as Azerbaijan.

10. ECO has played an important role in strengthening and promoting multi-dimensional regional economic cooperation amongst its member countries. It has identified four priority areas for intense regional cooperation namely; trade, transport, communications, and energy. The project-oriented Almaty Outline Plan underscores the importance that ECO member states attach to the development of transport and communications infrastructure linking the ECO Member states with each other and with the outside world. The conclusion of two important agreements namely; the ECO Transit Trade Agreement and Transit Transport Framework Agreement has given further impetus to the expansion of regional trade and economic cooperation.

Mr. President,

11. The ECO region covers a territory of more than seven million square kilometers and includes a population of nearly 350 million people. The region has immense natural resources and its members have the political will to tap these resources for mutual advantage of all. The Presidential elections, held in Afghanistan have been an important landmark in the peace process and augur well for peace and stability in Afghanistan. Peace and stability in Afghanistan needs to be bolstered with socio-economic development and integrating the Afghan economy with that of its neighbours. The Economic Cooperation Organization can serve not only as a vehicle for the post-war reconstruction of Afghanistan but also for developing and integrating the economies of the region which have borne the brunt of the conflict in Afghanistan.

12. ECO already has in place the blue prints for the region-wide development of transport and communications infrastructure, facilities of trade and investment, banking and insurance, culture and education and effective use of the region's vast energy resources. We expect the United Nations system and the international community to support the efforts of the ECO and its member states in order to realize these blue prints not only for the benefit of the region, but also for the world at large.

Mr. President,

13. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) representing the seven countries of South Asia, i.e. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka was launched at the first-ever Summit meeting of the South Asian Heads of State or Government in Dhaka in December 1985.

14. SAARC seeks to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life by accelerating economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the
region. SAARC also aims at strengthening cooperation with other developing countries and with international and regional organisations with similar aims and objectives.

15. The highest authority of the Association rests with the SAARC Heads of State or Government who meet annually at the Summit level. To date, twelve Summits have been held. The 12th SAARC Summit held in Islamabad in January 2004 raised hopes and opened up new avenues for regional cooperation amongst the South Asian countries. SAARC member states are developing modalities for dialogue partnerships with other regions. SAARC countries have also decided to seek the Observer Status with the United Nations.

16. To conclude, Mr. President, I would like to express our hope and confidence that the cooperation of the United Nations with both the OIC and the ECO will continue to flourish to the mutual benefit of the two organizations. We also hope that a new chapter will soon begin in cooperation between the United Nations and SAARC. Pakistan as a proud member of the United Nations, the OIC, the ECO and SAARC, would remain actively involved in the work of all four.

I thank you Mr. President.