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GURAMASYNYŇ 15-NJI SAMMITI**
AŞGABAT, TÜRKMENISTAN, 2021-NJI ÝYLYŇ 28-NJI NOÝABRY

**THE 15TH ECONOMIC COOPERATION
ORGANIZATION SUMMIT**
ASHGABAT, TURKMENISTAN, NOVEMBER 28, 2021





Foreword



Economic Cooperation Organizations (ECO) regularly publishes chronicles to keep readers interested in regional studies abreast of important happenings taking place under its framework. I take great pleasure in bringing you this issue of Chronicle, offering a glimpse of most important activities of the ECO for the period August -December 2021.

In today's hyper-globalised and interconnected world, the problems confronting peoples in the ECO Region and beyond seem to have changed the nature and dimensions. The world is fast becoming a complex planet. Uncertainty and unpredictability are a new norm. The outbreak of Covid-19 is just a case in point.

Isolation and exclusion offers no solution other than failure and disappointment. Autarky, in all respects, has no place in modern era. The world and its people need cooperation and coordination to tackle new challenges. The forums like Economic Cooperation Organisation are vital in this context. They are necessary to nip challenges in the bud and lead peoples to the highest level sustainable socio-economic development.

The ECO is fully aware of the aspiration of its founding fathers. We are abreast of priorities of our Member States. We are more than motivated and geared to the goal of regional integration and economic prosperity of our peoples mainly due to the momentum and drive provided by the ECO Heads of State at the 15th ECO Summit in Ashgabat last year.

The ECO has transformed a lot. It has changed its approach. We are now more result-and-project-oriented than ever before. The recently-concluded reform process has made our Organisation efficient and effective. And we are on the upward trajectory to make ECO visible among the community of nations and multilateral organizations. We aim at enhancing our visibility by maximizing sphere of our international relations. We are committed to deepen our ties with our external partners. A lot has been done and a lot is in process to this end. This issue of Chronicle in hand sheds light on a few of those endeavors. The ECO needs full support of its members. ECO needs patronage of Member States to realize the unrealized dreams.

Let me conclude with prayers for this region's prosperity and a very bright future for its peoples. We are hopeful that this highly insightful compilation will be of great use and benefit for all its readers and especially those keeping a keen eye on the developments taking place in the region.

Khusrav Noziri
ECO Secretary General



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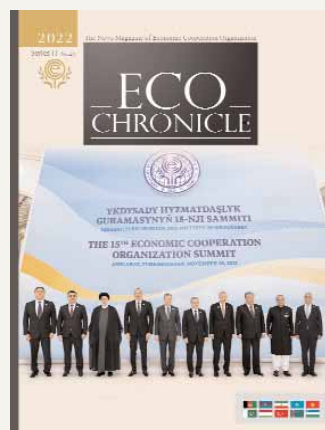
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In The Name Of God

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The New ECO Secretary General

Assumes his Duties

 The new ECO Secretary General, H.E. Khusrav Noziri, arrived in Tehran on August 16, 2021 to assume his responsibilities as new Secretary General of the

Economic Cooperation Organization.

On his arrival, he was received by the senior officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ECO Secretariat including

Deputies Secretary General, Ambassador Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli and Ambassador Jandos Asanov.

The new Secretary General, while addressing the staff of the ECO Secretariat, emphasized on the importance of concerted efforts and teamwork to maintain efficiency of the organization.

He expressed his receptivity and readiness towards any suggestions by relevant staff for supporting the working of the Secretariat while assuring his best to be delivered for securing maximum objectives of the organization.

H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri further


desired a cordial and mutually facilitative working environment in the Secretariat to ensure smooth accomplishment of the Organization's envisioned goals and targets.

Recalling the great commitment and excellent contribution of his predecessor H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour to make the ECO more productive and result-based regional economic forum, the new Secretary General further acknowledged the dedicated services and role of all the distinguished ECO Deputies Secretary General and their teams to shoulder the functioning of the Secretariat in the pursuit of ECO's envisaged aims and objectives.



ECO Secretary General Participates in the

UNESCAP Disaster Resilience Week

 H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, the ECO Secretary General, attended the UNESCAP Disaster Resilience Week organized from August 23-28, 2021. The ECO Secretary General participated in the event on the invitation of the UN's Undersecretary General and Executive Secretary of the UNESCAP. H.E. Noziri, in his video message, highlighted the ECO scope of activities which embrace various fields with direct and indirect impacts on the social and economic development of the ECO Member States.

In a meeting held on the theme of "Scaling-up sub-regional and regional cooperation frameworks to manage cascading risks" with participants from International,

Intergovernmental and Regional Organization, Mr. Noziri noted that ECO is one of the most disaster-prone regions in the world stretching from central to south and to south-west Asia. The Region is located on a high-risk geological structure, topography and climactic characteristics and is exposed to a wide range of natural hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, sand storms, droughts, floods, glacial lake outburst flood (GLOFs), heat and cold waves, sea water intrusion, cyclones and avalanches that trigger various types of disasters, which cause human and economic losses, the ECO Secretary General underlined.

The ECO Secretary General further conveyed that ECO Regional Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (RFDDR), developed with financial assistance of the IsDB and technical support of the UNESCAP, is a unique and effective arrangement to move forward in line with the Sendai Framework on DRR and in consonance of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and other frameworks under the overall context of SDGs. He emphasized that smooth implementation of the RFDDR required continued interaction



amongst the relevant regional and international organizations as well as development partners.

The ECO Secretary General welcomed the UNESCAP's recent proposal to cooperate on a new regional framework and strategic action plan for managing cascading risks from natural and biological hazards in collaboration with sub-regional bodies, including ECO to shape a longer-term, holistic, coordinated and more strategic approach with a view to building disaster and climate resilience in special consideration of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The seventh session of the Committee on Disaster Risk Reduction of the ESCAP that was convened from August 25-27, 2021, gathered a number of officials and stakeholders from Asia Pacific Region under the theme: "Building-back better after COVID-19: addressing cascading risks and systemic gaps for resilient peoples and economies." Under the Asia Pacific Disaster Resilience Network, ESCAP's partnership network for disaster resilience, a Regional Learning Platform, as well as a series of thematic sessions showcased various pathways to build systemic resilience to address multi-hazard risks from both natural and biological.

Dushanbe Tourism Capital of ECO

 Republic
of

Tajikistan hosted an international festival entitled "Dushanbe - ECO Tourism Capital" on August 29-30, 2021 in Dushanbe. A number of participants, including senior local dignitaries and the high-level delegations representing the tourism sector of the ECO Member States as well as delegation of the ECO Secretariat attended the event.



While welcoming the participants, Mr. Tojjiddin Jurazoda, Chairman of the State Committee for Tourism Development said that Dushanbe serves as a mirror of cultural and historical heritage of the country. The Deputy Mayor of Dushanbe, Ms. Mavsuma Muini briefed the event's participants about the development of the capital city in the recent years. On the occasion, the ECO Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Jandos Asanov presented, on behalf of the ECO Secretary General a certificate declaring the capital city of Tajikistan - Dushanbe as ECO Tourism Capital for the years 2020-2021.

In his remarks, Ambassador Jandos Asanov noted that the tourism sector of Tajikistan made remarkable progress under the patronage and vision of the country's honourable President, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon. He expressed optimism that the organization of such events would help realize our shared interests and objectives in the region's tourism sector as per ECO Vision - 2025.

ECO Secretary General Meets with the Permanent Representatives of the ECO

ECO CHRONICLE After assuming the charge of the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Ambassador Khusrav Noziri held meetings with the Permanent Representatives of the ECO in order to discuss the ways and means of enhancing mutual cooperation towards materialization of objectives of the Organization.

H.E. Ambassador Khusrav Noziri received the Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Tehran, H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullayev on August 30, 2021.

The two sides discussed the importance of an accelerated promotion of collaborative regional activities and engagements for the continued mutual socioeconomic development. While welcoming Ambassador Abdullayev, the Secretary General acknowledged the significant role of Uzbekistan in the process of

regional development. He expressed confidence that with the continued backing of the Member States, the Organization will continue to move forward for securing its envisioned targets. He also extended his warm congratulation to the Ambassador and the people of Uzbekistan on their Independence Day falling on September 1, 2021.

The Uzbek Ambassador felicitated the Secretary General for assuming new responsibilities and extended him best wishes for the success of assigned task. He also assured his full cooperation to push the ECO's agenda of shared progress, prosperity and growth in the region. It was further recalled that the Republic of Uzbekistan would be taking over the Chairmanship of the Organization in January 2022.

H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, the ECO Secretary





General, visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran to meet H.E. Dr. Seyed Jalaleddin Alavi Sabzevari, Director General of Multilateral and International Economic Cooperation and Permanent Representative of Iran to ECO.

During the meeting held on September 1, 2021, the two sides discussed different areas of regional cooperation within the framework of ECO.

While appreciating the role of the Islamic Republic of Iran as the host of ECO Secretariat as well as an important founding member of the Organization, the Secretary General thanked for Iran's continued support to develop the ECO's agenda in the greater regional interest. He further acknowledged the efforts and contribution of Iran for promotion of cooperation in the region, expressing his deep desire and determination to expand the scope of the organization as a unique and vital regional economic forum for an unhindered prosperity and wellbeing of the Member States. The Secretary General also recalled and applauded the excellent contribution of his predecessor H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour for taking several important initiatives to make the ECO more productive and result-based as well as for encouraging and involving all Member States in the activities of the organization.

Dr. Alavi expressed warm receptivity and

pleasure on appointment of Mr. Noziri as the ECO Secretary General. He assured Iran's continued cooperation and support to facilitate the functioning of the Secretariat under new Secretary General. He also appreciated the Government of Tajikistan for nominating a veteran and experienced diplomat to the post of ECO Secretary General.

The both sides also touched upon various areas of multilateral activities and engagements, ways and means of an accelerated promotion of enhanced intra-regional trade and connectivity as well as explored the possibilities for expanding regional and international cooperation. Moreover, the two dignitaries appeared amicably interested to continue such interactive consultations with a view to sharing and developing mutual ideas for expanding the magnitude of cooperation and integration in the region.

The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Ambassador Khusrav Noziri visited the Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan in Tehran, H.E. Prof. Nizomiddin Zohidi on September 6, 2021.

Ambassador Zohidi, while congratulating the Secretary General for his new assignment, assured Tajikistan's strong determination to actively engage in implementation of the agenda of the Organization aimed at prosperity, progress and wellbeing of the ECO Region.



The two sides also exchanged views regarding ECO-Tajikistan cooperation in various fields. The Secretary General commended Tajikistan side on successfully hosting two ECO Events on tourism, namely "Dushanbe - ECO Tourism Capital for the years 2020-2021" and International forum "Agrotourism Development" on August 29-30, 2021.

H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, the ECO Secretary General, visited the Ambassador of Turkmenistan in Tehran, H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov on September 6, 2021.

Ambassador Ahmet Gurbanov welcomed the Secretary General and felicitated him for his new responsibilities. He underscored the importance of the organization for pushing the overall process of socioeconomic development in the region. Ambassador Gurbanov noted that Turkmenistan is well-determined to

advance the agenda of the Organization and achieve the developmental targets as envisaged in the ECO Vision 2025.

ECO Secretary General thanked the Ambassador for the warm receptivity and acknowledged his kind consideration about the region. He said that under Turkmenistan Chairmanship and active engagements of all Member States, the ECO would continue to make accelerated progress for the shared progress and prosperity in the region.

The two sides also discussed the ways and means of developing mutual cooperation as well as took into account the preparatory arrangements concerning the forthcoming ECO Summit and the 25th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers to be hosted by Turkmenistan during the last week of November in Ashgabat.





The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Ambassador Khusrav Noziri visited the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Tehran, H.E. Mr. Askhat Orazbay on September 8, 2021.

H.E. Orazbay, while felicitating the Secretary General for assuming responsible post, emphasized ECO`s tremendous potential to further facilitate sustainable development in the ECO Region and assured Kazakhstan`s firm position on active engagement to implement Organization`s envisaged goals and targets.

The ECO Secretary General expressed sincere gratitude for warm welcome and appreciated Kazakhstan`s role in the advancement of agenda of the Organization, inter alia, aimed at greater ownership and partnership among all the Member States.

His Excellency Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, the ECO Secretary General, visited the Ambassador of Republic of Turkey in Tehran, H.E. Prof. Derya Ors on September 8, 2021.

His Excellency Derya Ors, congratulated the Secretary General for assuming new responsibilities and wished him every success in his future endeavors to serve for further progress, prosperity and wellbeing of the Member States.

The Secretary General profoundly thanked Ambassador Ors for heartfelt welcome and expressed hope for Turkey`s continued cooperation and support to expand the scope of the Organization to make the ECO more project-oriented. The two sides also discussed different areas of regional cooperation within the framework of ECO.

The ECO Secretary General, His Excellency





Ambassador Khusrav Noziri visited the Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic in Tehran, H.E. Mr. Turdakun Sydykov on September 9, 2021.

While felicitating the Secretary General for assuming responsible post, Ambassador Turdakun Sydykov assured that Kyrgyz Republic will be actively involved to achieve the Organization's envisioned aims and targets aimed at prosperity and further development in the ECO Region.

The Secretary General sincerely thanked Ambassador Sydykov for warm welcome and expressed his determination for expansion of regional cooperation in different areas within the framework of ECO.

H.E Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, the ECO

Secretary General, met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Tehran, H.E. Mr. Ali Alizada on September 22, 2021.

H.E. Ali Alizada, while felicitating the Secretary General for his new assignment, expressed Azerbaijan's active engagement in implementation of the agenda of the Organization, especially in the fields of connectivity, trade, agriculture and tourism.

The ECO Secretary General congratulated Ambassador Ali Alizada for assuming the post of Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Tehran, as well as Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the ECO and expressed hope that full-fledged cooperation in the ECO region will further be strengthened for the benefit of the Member States.



ECO Deputy Secretary General participates in the

UNOSSC's Event



On the invitation of the UNOSSC, the ECO Deputy Secretary General, Dr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi participated in an intergovernmental organization meeting on South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific Region as part of the commemoration of the UN Day for South-South Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific virtually held on September 14, 2021. In his remarks, Dr. Akhlaqi underlined the ECO's activities and engagements that the Organization made in special consideration of the COVID-19.

He informed about several post-pandemic initiatives taken by the ECO Secretariat to facilitate the Member States and the smooth

intra-regional movement of essentially required supplies, particularly medicines and food stuff. He added that soon after the outbreak of the Corona virus the ECO Secretariat released a Preliminary Assessment Report concerning the potential impacts of COVID-19 on the economy of the ECO Region.


The panel discussion, inter alia, focused on three priority areas, i.e., climate change and green recovery, digital transformation, and SMEs Recovery and entrepreneurship.

Such thematic areas are perceived as key areas in mitigating the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and to support and assist the countries of the global South to build back better.

The event was aimed at making interactive deliberations on certain issues of multilateral interest, particularly, discussions on the latest developments in South-South and Triangular Cooperation at global and regional levels.



ECO Secretary General Participates in the SCO Summit

 The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri participated in the 20th Jubilee Summit of the Council of Heads of State/Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) held on September 17, 2021 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

The event witnessed the participation of SCO Heads of State/Government, including the host President of Tajikistan, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon. The President of Turkmenistan, H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov attended the meeting as the guest of honour. Other Heads of State/Government of China (virtually), India (virtually), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia (virtually), Uzbekistan as well as Heads of SCO Observer States, including Presidents of Belarus, Iran and Mongolia (virtually) participated in the SCO's mega event.

The Summit was also attended by the SCO Secretary General Vladimir Norov and Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure Jumakhon Giyosov, as well as the UN Secretary General (virtually) and Secretaries General of other

regional organizations, including the Commonwealth of Independent States, Collective Security Treaty Organization, Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, and Eurasian Economic Union.




The leaders of the SCO summarized the status of their activities and engagements made during their twenty years of cooperation. They further discussed, inter alia, the challenges being currently faced by the SCO and the possible ways and means of expanded multilateral activism with a view to addressing the emerging needs and requirements

of the SCO region. In addition to deliberations on enhancement of regional partnership, the agenda of the Dushanbe Summit, included security threats in the SCO region and its neighboring states particularly Afghanistan's current situation, the COVID-19 pandemic and collective measures to combat the negative impacts of Coronavirus on SCO economies. The SCO leaders also proceeded to grant SCO membership to the Islamic Republic of Iran and dialogue partner status to Egypt, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia.



The ECO Secretariat took part in the Commemoration Day

Organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

 The Deputy Secretary General of the ECO, Ambassador Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli paid a tribute to the commemoration event organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on September 27, 2021.

The ceremony brought together representatives of diplomatic corps, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Islamic Republic of Iran, public figures, media and Azerbaijanis living in Iran. Photo exhibition, devoted to the "44 day Patriotic War" and the documentary video has been screened for the participants.

The ECO Deputy Secretary General in his statement extended congratulations to the Government and the people of Azerbaijan on the liberation of Azerbaijani territories as a sign of important milestone in the prevailing of peace and prosperity in the region. He also expressed condolences to the bereaved families over the martyrdom of and also wished soonest recovery wounded peoples while defending their land and civilians. While concluding his remarks, Mr. Bicakli reaffirmed significance of peace and stability for sustainable growth and progress in the region and, assured that ECO would remain ready and receptive to assist the Republic of Azerbaijan during the process of rehabilitation in its liberated territories through relevant regional projects. In collaboration with Azerbaijan and other Member States, the ECO would continue to move on the path of development for the collective betterment of the region.




Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Islamic Republic of Iran H.E. Mr. Ali Alizade and former ambassador of the Islamic

Republic of Iran to the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Mohsen Pakain during their key note remarks condemned the actions perpetrated against civilians, as well as aggression towards territorial integrity and sovereignty of states. Particularly, it was referred to the international documents supporting territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized

borders of states. The speakers also emphasized the importance of joint solidarity, enhanced cooperation and good neighborhood in the region as well as between Azerbaijan and Iran.

First Meeting of the ECO Working Group on Information & Communication Technologies

 On 28 September 2021 the First Meeting of the ECO Working Group on Information & Communication Technologies was organized by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in cooperation with ECO Secretariat in virtual format.

The event brought together the esteemed delegations from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Turkey and Republic of Uzbekistan to discuss variety of ICT agendas, share their progress and define future cooperation.

Mr. Khodaei Director of Transport and communication of ECO in his statement emphasized on preservation of digital sovereignty as an important factor in the existence of the states and mentioned that large IT corpora-



tions and IT businesses, being in another jurisdiction, seek to compete with the state and its legal institutions, so, there is need to develop our legislation between ECO members.

The participants unanimously agreed to further their efforts on various topics including establishment of regional regulatory framework, cyber security and enhancing regional presence at global level.



Activation of ECO- ITI Road Corridor A historical achievement for ECO Region



The long awaited ECO-ITI
(Islamabad-Tehran- Istanbul)

Road Corridor finally came into existence with the arrival of two loaded trucks from Karachi to Istanbul on 7th October 2021. The convoy of the two trucks travelled the distance of 5300 Km transiting through the Islamic Republic of Iran and entered the Istanbul Customs on 07 October 2021.

The ECO-ITI project was first initiated at the 8th ECO Transport Ministerial Meeting in 2011 and after consistent follow up and support by the ECO Secretariat finally operationalized to serve the cause of regional con-

nectivity and economic integration.

A Study Project was also conducted in 2020 with technical assistance of IRU to sort out the details, opportunities, challenges and solutions of the important corridor.

The trucks were the first transit operation for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan under TIR system since the country acceded to the important transit convention.

Mr. Khodaei, Director of Transport and communication of the ECO Secretariat, in his statement, during the ceremony at the Muratbey Customs office of Istanbul on 8 Oct 2021, described the movement of trucks on ECO-ITI as a historic milestone that goes beyond a mere transit operation and well serves the regional development and integration targets.

He also highlighted the role of IRU and TIR Convention in the project and emphasized on the digitalization of the corridor to help speed up and simplify the administrative procedures for border crossings.





Participation of ECO Secretary General at the **6th meeting of CICA** Ministers of Foreign Affairs

ECO CHRONICLE On the invitation of H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi, Deputy Prime-Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Amb. Khusrav Noziri attended the Sixth Meeting of the CICA Ministers of Foreign Affairs held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan on October 11-12, 2021.

Among the participants of the event were ministers of foreign affairs of Bahrain, Belarus, India, Qatar, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Russia, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as well as deputy ministers of foreign affairs of a

number of countries, heads of international organizations and diplomatic missions.

The heads of delegations were received by His Excellency Mr Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Addressing the august gathering President Tokayev said that Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building measures in Asia (CICA), initiated by Kazakhstan right after country gained independence, has transformed into a continental platform with widest geographical coverage and all-inclusive agenda. Currently CICA has a required potential for bringing together the collective will and wisdom of the Asian countries in the interests of peace and development, maintained Mr Tokayev. President Tokayev said that one of the ambitious priorities was turning CICA into a full-fledged organization.



Kazakhstan's President proposed His Excellency Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev, First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who put forward in 1992 at the 47th General Assembly of the United Nations the idea of convening the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA), to the position of the Head of the newly created Council of Eminent Persons of CICA.

President Tokayev also proposed to extend Kazakhstan's chairmanship in CICA by two years up to 2024, since COVID-19 pandemic has been hindering the work of the chairmanship.

Discussions in the event were dedicated to the theme "Security and sustainable development in Asia in new realities of the post-pandemic world".

CICA participating states welcomed Turkmenistan on becoming an observer in CICA.

Addressing the ministerial meeting the current

Chair of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan His Excellency Mr Rashid Meredov emphasized on the readiness of ECO Chairmanship of Turkmenistan to facilitate close relations between ECO and CICA.

In this regard, Minister Meredov drew attention to the transport-transit and energy issues as greatly concerning the ECO area.

Speaking at the CICA ministerial meeting ECO Secretary General Amb. Khusrav Noziri said that against the backdrop of recent challenges, including COVID-19 pandemic and evolving regional security threats, the importance of promoting CICA process and implementing the agreed confidence-building measures (CBMs) in Asia has increased manifold. ECO Secretary General stated that ECO valued its cooperative relationship with CICA

and strongly believed that the joint efforts of ECO and CICA would contribute significantly in bringing durable peace and achieving sustainable prosperity in the region.

Sixth Ministerial Meeting of CICA concluded its work with adoption of updated CICA Catalogue of

CBMs and Regulations of CICA Council of Eminent Persons.

The relationship between ECO and CICA was institutionalized in 2008 by signing an MoU, providing the basis for mutual cooperation between the two sides.



3rd Meeting of ECO Geomatics Committee in Tehran

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The 3rd Meeting of ECO Geomatics Committee, hosted by the National Cartographic Center (NCC) of Islamic Republic of Iran was held virtually on 18 October 2021 in Tehran.

The delegates from Azerbaijan, Iran (host), Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as ECO Secretariat delegation attended the Meeting.

At the opening, acting director general of NCC Iran, Dr.Ali Javidaneh expressed readiness working together with ECO Member States on mutual projects, share information and learn from each other's knowledge.

He also informed about institutional capacity of NCC Iran and revealed opportunities to export innovative technical and engineering services abroad. Director for energy, minerals and environment at the ECO Secretariat, Rovshan Mirzayev in his opening remarks, emphasized importance of geomatics as a key to delivering timely data needed for governments, businesses, communities and citizens to make evidenced-based decisions.

He also mentioned that common agenda on geomatics in ECO region can address key global challenges such as climate change, natural and other disasters, urbanization and food and water insecurity.



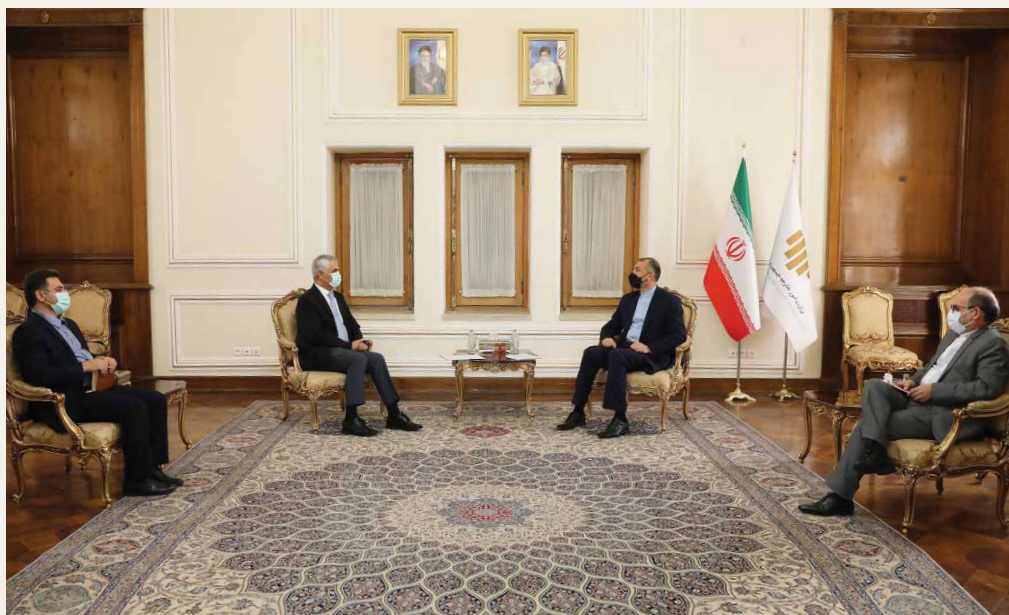
Dr.Ali Soltanpour, general manager of NCC Iran, Secretary of ECO Geomatics Committee, briefed on events organized since 2nd meeting of ECO Geomatics Committee and called for more active involvement of Member States in the formation of ECO Economic Atlas, ECO Geomatics Journal and Capacity Building.

Member States – Azerbaijan, Iran and Pakistan delivered key note speeches along with national reports on geomatics.

Cooperation to establish ECO Geoportal, Reference Framework Network and ECO Regional Spatial Data Network were raised and supported among member states.

Dr.Ali Soltanpour re-elected as a secretary to the ECO Geomatics Committee with consensus of participating states.





ECO Secretary General Calls On Foreign Minister of Iran

ECO CHRONICLE H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, the ECO Secretary General, called on the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. The two sides during their interaction on October 21, 2021 touched upon certain areas of ECO engagements and activities, including the progress and achievements of the Organization in the recent years.

The ECO Secretary General, while encapsulating some of the most important features, capacity and potential of the region, acknowledged the significant role and contribution of the member countries for their collective progress and prosperity. He appreciated and thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting and facilitating the ECO Secretariat as well as its staff, noting that Iran's receptive and supportive approach has extensively helped promote the agenda of the Organization in the greater regional interest. The Secretary General also updated the honourable Minister on preparations of 15th ECO

Summit to be preceded by 25th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) scheduled for the last week of November 2021. He hoped highest level of participation from all Member States that, he optimistically believed, would enable the Organization to achieve the intended goals, aimed at pushing the overall process of socioeconomic wellbeing in the region.

The honourable Foreign Minister thanked the Secretary General for the foregoing briefing, reassuring him of Iran's continued support to shoulder the Organization's objectives of joint economic development and betterment of the member countries. Moreover, he appeared pleased and satisfied to observe the notable progress on several important ECO projects, including in the fields of transport, energy and trade. He further expressed optimism that the scheduled Summit and the Ministerial Meetings would be beneficial to fortify the existing ties amongst the Member States, paving some fresh avenues to move forward for future developments in the region.

ECO Secretary General visits Uzbekistan

ECO CHRONICLE The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, visited Uzbekistan on the invitation of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to witness the country's Presidential Election, conducted on October 24, 2021.

He participated in the electoral process as an International Observer, alongside other global and regional representatives.

On the sidelines of his visit, the ECO Secretary General called on the Deputy Prime Minister-Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Minister of Economy and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to discuss different areas of regional cooperation within the range of ECO framework.

While calling on the Deputy Prime Minister-Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade H.E. Mr. Sardor Umurzakov the ECO Secretary General appreciably acknowledged the increased role of Uzbekistan in the organization's activities.

Expressing pleasure over the introduction of some fresh and valued proposals by the honourable President of Uzbekistan during 14th ECO Summit that



included the areas of trade & investment, transport & communication, agriculture & industry, energy, mineral & environment, human resources and sustainable development, the Secretary General considered that this would be beneficial for the overall wellbeing of the region.

Referring the joint objectives as envisaged in the ECO Vision-2025, he believed that with the enduring and enhanced support of Uzbekistan as well as the augmented cooperation by other Member States, the ECO would continue to travel on the path of mutual development, progress and prosperity.

The Deputy Prime Minister-Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade reassured Uzbekistan's complete cooperation to support the ECO in the pursuit of its agenda of greater cooperation for the sustainable economic growth and stability in the region.

Both sides appeared poised to push the regional development process and continue interaction for the accomplishment of mutually beneficial targets.

In addition, they agreed to expand the scope of ECO agenda of regional cooperation to fully exploit the available resources and potentials of the region.

During meeting with the First Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Farkhod Arziev, the ECO Secretary General summarized the status of ongoing preparation process concerning the organization of 15th ECO Summit to be preceded by 25th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM)

under the chairmanship of Turkmenistan, which is scheduled in Ashgabat for the last week of November 2021.

The interaction between the two sides also covered several issues of regional interest, as well as the next ECO Chairmanship to be taken over by the Republic of Uzbekistan in January 2022.

It was optimistically believed that under the leadership of Uzbekistan, the Organization would plow ahead, exploring the existing and some fresh avenues of cooperative advancement to secure the envisioned targets for greater socioeconomic development in the region.





ECO Secretary General visits Turkmenistan

ECO
CHRONICLE

The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, visited Ashgabat on October 28-29, 2021 for bilateral talks, as well as discussion on the issues related to the preparation of the forthcoming 15th ECO Summit, preceded by the 25th Meeting of the Council of Ministers to be held on November 28, 2021 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

During the visit, the Honorable President of Turkmenistan H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov received the ECO Secretary General on October 28, 2021.

While warmly congratulating the

Honorable President of Turkmenistan and Excellency's Government for successfully holding Organization's Chairmanship in 2021, ECO Secretary General underlined the vital role of Turkmenistan as the current ECO Chair in pursuing the ECO Vision 2025 and the Organization's strategic objectives aimed at accomplishing the sustainable development goals and prosperity in the region.

The President of Turkmenistan assured Turkmenistan's commitment and continuous support to ECO activities in further strengthening the role of ECO and expressed hope that upcom-



ing ECO Summit will facilitate the expansion of the development of ECO agenda to fully utilize the available resources and potentials for effective regional cooperation.

While touching upon issues of preparation of the forthcoming Summit, the President of Turkmenistan H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov further shared valuable guidance for organizing this high-level meeting of ECO Heads of State and Government in an excellent manner.

The ECO Secretary General had also talks with the Deputy Prime-Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov.

ECO Secretary General expressed appreciation to the constructive approach of Turkmenistan as ECO Chairmanship, envisaged in the Turkmenistan ECO Chairmanship concept, as well as Turkmenistan ECO

Chairmanship Roadmap.

The two sides had a detailed exchange of views regarding preparation of the forthcoming 15th ECO Summit, preceded by the 25th Meeting of the Council of Ministers, e.g., Programme, Agendas, sidelines events, as well as other issues related to the ongoing preparation process.

The ECO Secretary General discussed organizational and protocol arrangements of the 15th ECO Summit and 25th COM Meeting with the expert group of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Beriniyaz Myatiev.

During the visit ECO Secretary General also participated in the opening ceremony of the first stage of the "Ashgabat-Turkmenabad-High Speed Motorway" in the "Ashgabat-Tenjen" section, officially inaugurated by the Honorable President of Turkmenistan on October 29, 2021.

ECO Secretary General holds a Meeting with the Secretary General of ALBA

ECO CHRONICLE A virtual videoconference was held between the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Ambassador Khusrav Noziri and the Secretary General of the ALBA, H.E. Mr. Sacha Llorenti on November 02, 2021 to discuss and explore the opportunities for cooperation between the two organizations.



The two sides broadly exchanged views on issues of mutual interest.

The Secretary General of the ALBA briefed the ECO Secretary

General about the background and activities of the ALBA in various fields. Mr. Llorenti mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic has enhanced the importance of cooperation among different regional blocs and organizations in order to address this multi-dimensional challenge.

The ECO Secretary General, while acknowledging the briefing of the ALBA Secretary General, appreciat-

ed the activities of ALBA for enhancing cooperation among its Member States.

He stated that ECO is a geo-economic organization comprising 10 Member States from South, West and Central Asia and relationships among the Member States of the organization are based purely on economic cooperation.

Ambassador Noziri informed the Secretary General of ALBA about the main decision making Organs of the ECO.

He also highlighted the strategic goals of the ECO Vision 2025 in six priority areas of cooperation.

In their concluding remarks, the two sides expressed desire to continue the process of mutual consultations in future for exploring the ways and means for establishing the cooperative relations between the two regional organizations.



The 2nd Meeting of ECO Technical Committee on — **Electronic Data** — **Interchange (EDI)**

ECO CHRONICLE The 2nd Meeting of ECO Technical Committee on Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran; was held virtually on 9th November 2021. The delegates from Islamic Republic of Iran (host), Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. ECO Secretariat delegation headed by Deputy Secretary General (DSG), Dr Syed Yahya Akhlaqi, also attended the Meeting.

Dr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, DSG, ECO while inaugurating the meeting noted that trade is an engine of economic development and an instrument of socio-economic integration. For creation of compatibilities and drive towards economic efficiency it is necessary to reduce the cost of doing business and focus on institutional capacity building.

In this regard, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) needs digitalization of the business documents, harmonization of formats and languages, synergies in the processes and their transmission to add to trade facilitation in the region. He emphasized that there is a need to harmonize EDI at regional level to increase the prospects of intra-regional trade.

The chair of the meeting Mr. Hossein Kakhki Director General of international Cooperation Department of the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA), in his opening remarks, emphasized the need for trade facilitation and Customs control by using



intelligence-driven risk management system. For progress in this matter, he stressed the need for accurate data from various resources. He opined that the exchange of trade and customs-related information in a real time manner; is crucial.

The meeting held comprehensive discussions and deliberations on the issues surrounding EDI such as the architecture of the data system, the basic components of the EDI infrastructure, standard format for the transactions and minimum requirements of the software.

The meeting decided to establish an expert working group to “formulate recommendations on data elements’ for presenting to the next EDI Committee for endorsement. The Secretariat will schedule the meeting of the Working Group.

Meeting of ECO Secretary General with Deputy Minister of — Foreign Affairs of — the Islamic Republic of Iran for Economic Diplomacy



ECO CHRONICLE H.E. Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, the ECO Secretary General, met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for Economic Diplomacy, H.E. Mr. Mahdi Safari, on November 16, 2021.


While reiterating importance of enhancing the regional cooperation within the framework of ECO in various

fields, the two sides expressed readiness to further follow up and implement targets, envisaged in the agenda of the Organization.

The issues related to the preparation process for the forthcoming 15th ECO Summit, preceded by the 25th COM Meeting were also discussed during the meeting.

Sustainable Transport and Trade for a

Green and Inclusive Economy after Pandemic

 An ECO delegation headed by Dr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, Deputy Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization participated in the 2021 SPECA Economic Forum held on November 17, 2021.

The Forum was jointly organized virtually by the UNESCO, UNECE and the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Uzbekistan under the theme of “Sustainable Transport and Trade for a Green and Inclusive Economy after Pandemic. High-level Representatives from SPECA countries, as well as regional and international organizations also attended the Forum.

In his statement Deputy Secretary General Dr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi informed the Forum on progressing projects between 7

SPECA countries which are also the member-states of Economic Cooperation Organization. The Deputy Secretary General underlined the priority to implement TTFA Agreement and emphasized that Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan to finalize the approaching to this Agreement. He stressed the need to commercialize railway corridors as well as shared views on the further projects in coordination with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and ECO-Trade Development Bank (ECO-TDB). He supported ongoing initiatives to strengthen the connectivity and resilience of transport systems.

Dr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi also called for strengthened regional cooperation in the areas of trade, transport, and digital connectivity through accession to and use of the United Nations legal norms, standards and best practice recommendations for sustainable transport and trade facilitation.



The Forum discussed complementarities between the implementation of short- to medium-term measures to support socioeconomic recovery and responding to the call for action to accelerate implementation of relevant international agendas such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Vienna Programme of Action.

The Forum identified potential opportunities for enhanced cooperation to support sustainable and inclusive socio-economic recovery efforts in the sub-region.

Online meeting between

ECO Secretary General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan

ECO CHRONICLE On November 18, 2021 ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri held online videoconference with Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov.

The two sides had a detailed exchange of views regarding preparation for the upcoming 15th ECO Summit, preceded by the 25th Meeting of the Council of Ministers, e.g., Programme, Agendas, side-lines events, as well as other issues related to the ongoing preparation process.

While expecting forthcoming important ECO events to be



held in able organizational manner, the two sides expressed hope that the outcomes of the said meetings would enable the Organization to enter into another phase of development for the interest and benefit of the ECO Region and its people.



International conference

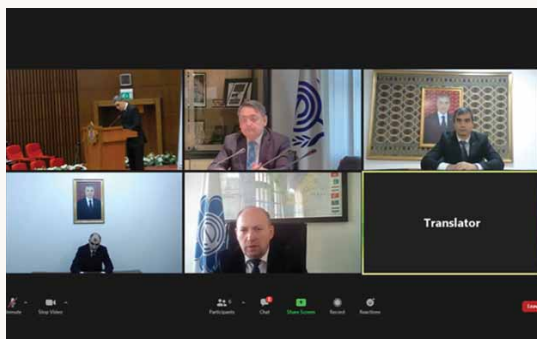
"Neutrality, peace and trust" held in Ashgabat

ECO CHRONICLE The International Conference "Neutrality, Peace and Trust" was held on November 19, 2021 in Ashgabat, which was jointly organized by the Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan with Secretariat of ECO.

The conference was moderated by Mr Jumamyrat Gurbangeldiev, Rector of the Institute of International Relations.

The participants of the conference exchanged views on various aspects of interaction between Turkmenistan and Economic Cooperation Organization.

Addressing the conference Deputy Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organisation Mr Jandos Asanov



noted that adoption of a UN resolution on September 9, 2021 "On cooperation between the United Nations and Economic Cooperation Organisation" is one of the valuable contributions of Turkmenistan to the advancement of common goals and objectives of the ECO area.

Mr. J. Asanov also expressed confidence that the 15th ECO Summit to be hosted by Turkmenistan on November 28, 2021 in Ashgabat would provide strategic direction for achieving the Member States' common targets for sustainable socio-economic development in the ECO region.





ECO Secretary General calls on the President of the **Islamic Republic of Iran**

ECO CHRONICLE The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri called on H.E. Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran on 23 November 2021. This meeting was held prior to 15th ECO Summit Meeting scheduled for 28 November 2021 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

The Secretary General briefed the

honourable President on the activities of the Organization and expressed hope that the 15th Summit Meeting would be a success. In this context, he noted the importance of the outcome of the Summit Meetings for the development of future plans for the Organization.

H.E. Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, while referring to the need for identification and

removal of barriers hindering fulfillment of ECO objectives underlined the importance of the role which could be played by the Secretariat in this regard through initiation and development of the comprehensive plans.

H.E. Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, highlighted that the Islamic Republic of Iran attaches importance to the regional cooperation specifically within the framework of ECO. H.E. added that ECO Member States possess capacities and resources which provide suitable ground for a coordinated enhanced cooperation within the framework of ECO in different fields such as Energy, Transit Transport, Trade, Digital Economy,



Tourism, Maritime Economy which should be activated and used for the economic prosperity of the region.

The Secretary General, with respect to the need for identification and removal of impediments in the achievement of the ECO regional goals, brought to the attention of H.E. Dr. Raisi that ECO recently conducted a mid-term review of ECO Vision 2025 with the same purpose and the outcome of this exercise is going to be presented to the 25th Meeting of the Council of Ministers scheduled to be held one day before the 15th Summit Meeting.





ECO Secretariat Participated in the 37th Ministerial Meeting of **COMCEC** in Istanbul

ECO CHRONICLE
The Deputy Secretary General of the ECO, Ambassador Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, participated in the 37th Ministerial Meeting of the COMCEC held in November 24-25, 2021 at Istanbul Congress Center.



Secretary General H.E. Mr. Hussein Brahim Taha, who was assumed his duties as of 17 November 2021 and exchanged views on what could be done to further expand the relationship and cooperation between ECO and OIC. Dr. Bicakli also made several fruitful consultations and exchange of views with some ministers and

In the sidelines of the meeting Dr. Bicakli met and congratulated the new OIC



The Ministerial Working Group was chaired by Vice President of the Republic of Turkey H.E. Mr. Fuat Oktay.

During this year's COM-CEC Ministerial Exchange of Views Session, the subject "The Role of Islamic Finance in Supporting Microenterprises and SMEs Against Covid-19 Pandemic" has been addressed, and the Ministers have shared the experiences of their countries.

senior officials of OIC & ECO member states.

The Meeting was commenced with the video message of the President of Republic of Turkey, H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan. While the Opening Session of the meeting was chaired by the Vice President of the Republic of Turkey H.E. Mr. Fuat Oktay, on behalf of the Honorable President.

At the Opening Session, the Trade Preferential System among the member states of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (TPS-OIC) was introduced, and the OIC/COMCEC 50 Shariah Index and the launching ceremony of the OIC Arbitration Center were conducted.

During the Ministerial Exchange of Views Session, countries' experiences about subjects such as the works of Islamic Finance Organizations, the role of regulatory and supervisory agencies, and regional and international collaborations regarding the utilization of Islamic Finance products and means by the SMEs that have an influence on many areas after COVID-19 pandemic both in terms of economic and social aspects have been shared, and the ways of enhancing the cooperation between Muslim countries on this subject have been discussed.

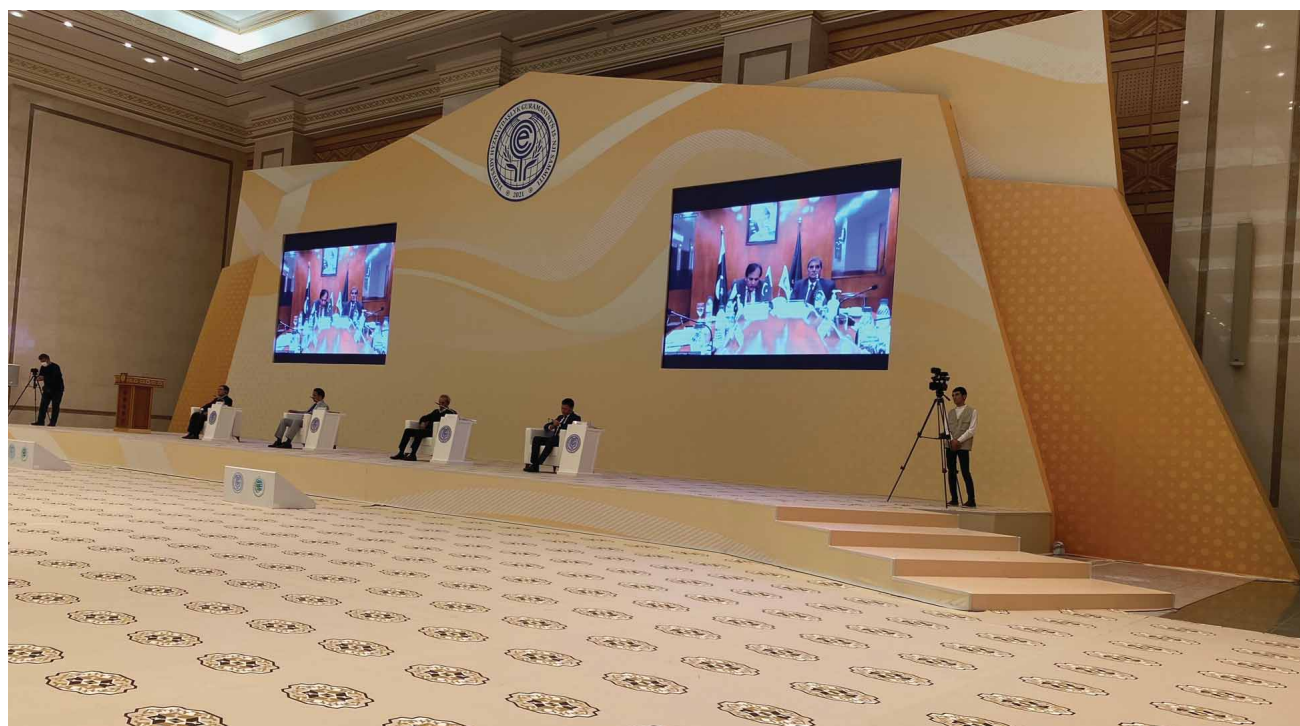
Within this scope, the Ministers have acknowledged the policy recommendations as prepared by COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group.



4th ECO Business Forum in Turkmenistan

ECO CHRONICLE The 4th Business Forum of the ECO Member States was held in hybrid format on 26th November 2021 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan and was successfully jointly organized by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan, ECO Secretariat, and ECO-Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI). The Business forum was attended by the delegates from the ECO countries including Chambers of Commerce and Industry, high level representatives of different Ministries of Turkmenistan as well as representatives from the International Organizations and International Financial Institutions namely UNESCAP, UNECE, UNIDO, ADB, IDB, and ETDB etc.

The Deputy Secretary General ECO, Dr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, while addressing the forum highlighted the fact that the region there is a need for more regional integration to boost intra regional trade within the ECO member states through trade liberalization trade facilitation and greater connectivity. He apprised the forum about the project oriented approach by the ECO Secretariat in order to meet the targets set in the ECO Vision 2025 by the leaders of ECO Member States to meet the target set in the ECO vision 2025. He shared that the trade in the ECO Region has declined from US\$ 708 billion in 2019 to US\$ 661 billion in 2021, a share of less than 8 per cent in global trade. The operationalization of ECOTA can



provide an impetus to trade expansion. He expressed his deep gratitude to the Government of the Turkmenistan and Turkmenistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry for holding such a successful event in these difficult times of covid-19.

Mr. Zahid Hussain Abbasi, Director Trade and Investment also made a detailed presentation highlighting various aspects for greater business integration to increase regional trade as well as ECO's share in the global trade. He emphasize the need for greater competitiveness and diversification in the exports basket of the ECO region to create trade flows from the ECO to the rest of the world as well as within the ECO region. He shared various initiative taken by the ECO secretariat in this regard. He apprised the forum that the top ten exports and imports contain some products such as Mineral Fuels



and products, Machinery and parts, plastics and products etc, which are exported by some Member States of ECO to the world, whilst some other Members import these from world due to high tariff and non- tariff costs. That's is the reason that intra regional trade remains at US\$ 49.8 billion, a mere 7.5 per cent of its

trade with the world.

The forum was also addressed by speakers from International Organizations, International Financial Institutions Chambers of Commerce and Industries, Representatives of Government of Turkmenistan and ECO-CCI etc.

Mr. Khodaei, Director of Transport and

Communication of ECO , in his statement briefly elaborated the Project on Commercializing the Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan-Iran Railway Corridor (ECO- KTI) that is aimed to convert the route into an economic corridor.

As mentioned by the director , the project comprising of three components started in 2017 and terminated in 2021. The project envisages establishment of a Corridor Management Mechanism (CMM) that will jointly administer the operation on the corridor and coordinate all the activities to finally convert it to economic corridor.

He further highlighted and appreciated the Islamic Development Bank and UNESCAP as partners of the Project and expressed interest to continue the excellent collaborative relations in the future.



— 25th Meeting of — ECO Council of Ministers



ECO CHRONICLE The 25th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) preceded by Senior Official Meeting (SOM) held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on November 27, 2021. The delegations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan (host) and Republic of Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. The delegation of ECO Cultural Institute as well as the ECO Secretariat's delegation headed by the Secretary General also attended the Meeting.

The former ECO Chairman, the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey, His Excellency Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu congratulated Turkmenistan for their excellent chairmanship during their year 2021. The Minister said that the Member States should benefit from ECO to have an integrated regional response to challenges like

the pandemic and needed economic recovery. During the chairmanship of Turkey, the organization worked towards this goal and at the same time focused on increasing regional trading connectivity, he added.

His Excellency Mr. Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of the Ministers and the Minister of Foreign Affairs in a capacity as Chairman of Council of Ministers (COM) welcomed and extended warm greetings to the honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegation in 25th meeting of COM. While referring to the concept of Turkmenistan's chairmanship that the country developed to lead the Organization, he emphasized on some key objectives given under their concept that particularly entailed the intensification of investment activities in the Member States, creation of free trade and economic zones, formation of new economic corridors and establishment of partnerships in the field of sustainable energy, including renewable energy sources.

H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov also highlighted that comprehensive support and promotion of cooperation in the fields of science, education, sports, scientific research in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic, as well as expansion of interaction in agriculture, food security and other fields, remained priority for ECO Member Countries. He acknowledged the important



role of ECO Secretariat to meet such goals. Moreover, he thanked the ECO Secretary General H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri and his team for joint work during the Chairmanship of Turkmenistan and for preparation of this meeting. While highly appreciating the competence and dedication of the Secretariat, he believed that the Secretariat's team should keep up with the current time and work in accordance with today's requirements and standards.

The Foreign Ministers/Heads of Delegations in their statements stressed the need of further enhancement of regional socioeconomic cooperation to overcome the impacts of pandemic as well as other current challenges. They desired more intensified collaboration amongst the Member States for creation of free trade and economic zones, formation of new economic corridors, expansion of interaction in fields of sustainable energy including renewable energy sources, science and technology, education, sports, agriculture & food security and tourism.

Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, ECO Secretary General while extending his sincere thanks to the Government of Turkmenistan, especially His Excellency Mr. Rashid Meredov, the honourable Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan for hosting the important event and warm hospitality, thanked the honourable Foreign Ministers as well as the heads of delegations for their kind participation in this important meeting.


The ECO Secretary General acknowledged that under the ECO's Chairmanship of Turkmenistan during

2021 the Organization successfully maintained its momentum and activities to pursue the aims and objectives of the ECO Vision 2025 for greater regional integration. He also thanked the former ECO Chairman His Excellency Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, the honourable Foreign Minister of Republic of Turkey for excellently chairing the organization, noting that during Turkey's chairmanship the ECO experienced a notable progress in the pursuit of its noble goals for the collective socioeconomic developments of the Member States.

The ECO Secretary General also congratulated the Republic of Uzbekistan for their upcoming ECO's Chairmanship in January 2022. Assuring his full support and cooperation, he believed that under Uzbekistan's Chairmanship the Organization would plow ahead with further advancement to achieve expanded cooperation in the region.

The 25th Meeting of COM concluded its session by adopting several reports regarding the activities of the Organization as well as approved other important documents aimed at further development of the agenda of the organization.

ECO Secretary General calls on the Foreign Minister of Iran on the sidelines of the **15th ECO Summit** in Ashgabat

 The ECO Secretary General H.E.Mr. Khusrav Noziri, called on the Honourable Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran H.E. Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, on the sidelines of the 15th ECO Summit at Ashgabat, on 28 November 2021.

The two sides during their interaction discussed the bilateral and multilateral cooperation amongst the ECO Member States. The ECO Secretary General highlighted the importance of enhancing intra-trade and noting that Iran's receptive and supported approach has extensively helped promote the agenda of the organization in the

greater regional interests and also follow-ups and suggestions by H.E. Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, Honourable President of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the 15th ECO Summit in Ashgabat.

The Honourable Foreign Minister thanked the Secretary General for briefing regarding ECO and reassuring him of Iran's continued support to organization's objectives of joint economic development of the Member States.

In addition, the two sides looked into some fresh avenues, to move forward for future developments in the region.



ECO holds 15th Summit in Ashgabat



The 15th ECO Summit was hosted by Turkmenistan on November 28, 2021 in Ashgabat.

The event, organized under the theme of "Together into the Future", was chaired by the honourable President of Turkmenistan, H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov while the honourable President of the Republic of Turkey, H.E.

Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as the Chairman of 14th Summit Meeting inaugurated the forum. The ECO Heads of State and Government from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as ECO Secretary General attended the Summit event.

The honorable President of Turkmenistan after his election as the



Chairman of 15th Summit Meeting made his opening statement and referred to the establishment of dynamic dialogue of Turkmenistan with ECO and the work done in the Organization during the chairmanship of Turkmenistan.

He also highlighted the permanent neutrality position of Turkmenistan and the cooperative relationship of Turkmenistan in international relations. He also attached importance to the strengthened cooperation among ECO Member States in the priority areas of the Organization such as Energy and Transport, Trade and Investment.

He also assured that the support of Turkmenistan will be extended to the

Economic Cooperation Organization for the fulfilment of its objectives. He then invited H.E. Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization to brief the Heads of States and Governments on the Activities of the Organization.

Addressing the meeting, the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri made a focused briefing concerning the Organization's key areas of cooperation, particularly, trade, transport, energy, tourism etc.

He mentioned that following the guidelines of the ECO Leaders, given during the 14th Summit in special consideration of the pandemic, the Organization made

considerable progress to secure its developmental goals as envisaged in the ECO Vision 2025 under the chairmanship of Turkmenistan.

He emphasized that the Summit's theme is more important in particular reference to the conditions developed after the COVID-19 defining the significance of enhanced collaboration and partnership among Member countries during the time of crisis.

While noting the importance of ECO's external relations with other regional and international bodies as most essential tool for achieving strategic objectives, the Secretary General informed that during the 25th COM held a day before Summit, an MoU between the ECO and UNESCAP was signed for further institutionalizing the mutually developed cooperative ties between the two sides.

He also reiterated ECO Secretariat's commitment to accomplish the organization's aims and objectives in line with its Vision 2025 and the Treaty of Izmir. To meet this end, the Secretary General looked forward to the continued patronage and support and guidance of the ECO Leaders.

The Heads of ECO Member States appreciated the Secretary General for his comprehensive statement, valuing the performance of the Organization especially to counter and manage the post-COVID negative impacts on the overall socioeconomic condition of the region.

They also agreed to expand and develop their trade and economic ties in the shared areas of interest, highlighting some priority areas of cooperation, trade, transport and energy.

While noting the progress and implementation on some joint projects, the ECO Leaders also put forward various ideas, initiatives and proposals for development of some new projects in diverse areas of collaboration. Moreover, they appeared poised to remain united and make consolidated efforts to address the impacts of the pandemic on ECO regional economy.

The Summit also adopted the Ashgabat Consensus for Action, renewing the Member States' commitment for the shared progress, prosperity and development in the region, as well as promotion of ECO as a more effectual regional economic forum.



Briefing for the press on outcomes of 15th ECO Summit



On November 29, 2021 H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan and ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri hold joint briefing for press on the outcomes of the 15th ECO Summit with participation of Ambassadors and other representatives of diplomatic corps and international organizations accredited in Ashgabat.

Orazklychev prominent historian scholar, from Turkmenistan.

The briefing was opened by H.E. Rashid Meredov on deliberating the gist of Council of Ministers' Meeting and the Summit. Particularly, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan emphasized the importance of decisions that have been made at both meetings, particularly on facilitating and promoting transit-transport potential, mainstreaming sustainable energy development agenda, such as establishment of ECO Clean Energy Center, addressing cooperation in tackling environ-

The briefing has started with presenting the ECO Award by the Secretary-General of ECO to the winner in the category of history, culture, literature & fine arts to Mr. Yazklych



mental challenges, and ways of increasing trade and economic ties in the ECO region.

ECO Secretary General expressed gratitude for Turkmen hosts for making excellent arrangements and congratulated Turkmenistan on successful organization the 15th ECO Summit.

He noted that Turkmenistan by hosting this important regional Summit manifests its urge to perform lead role for regional cooperation under the umbrella of the ECO for achieving regional economic development and people's prosperity. And the implementation of Turkmenistan's policy of permanent neutrality in the regional perspective has a great relevance of philosophy of neutrality and the principles of ECO which are purely based on the mutual cooperation of the Member States. And the economic aspect of neutrality has tremendous potential for promoting economic cooperation at the regional level.

ECO Secretary General also expressed satisfaction on achievements made under the great remarkable leadership of Turkmenistan. He further noted that adopted "Ashgabat Consensus for Action" will provide a way forward towards realization of the principal goal of sustainable socio-economic development and prosperity in the ECO region.

The briefing participants and mass-media have been informed on the key decisions and documents adopted at the 25th COM and 15th Summit events, such as holding ECO Business forum, MOU on railroad Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Tehran, ECO Vision 2025 Mid-term review, establishment of ECO Clean Energy Center, designation of ECO Awards and areas of cooperation within Ashgabat Consensus for Action dedicated to the conclusions of 15th ECO Summit.

In the end, ECO Secretary General expressed gratitude to the Government and people of Turkmenistan for their enduring support to the ECO in pursuit of the common agenda of the regional development. He particularly presented tribute to the President of Turkmenistan, H.E. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov for his visionary leadership, commendable support and patronage to the ECO for accomplishing its objectives and promoting regional cooperation among the Member States.

At the event Ambassadors and other representatives of diplomatic corps and international organizations accredited in Ashgabat also shared their views on the outcomes of the 15th ECO Summit and expressed hope that adopted documents and programmes will further serve for greater socioeconomic development in the ECO Region.

ECO Secretary General received by the President of Turkmenistan



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On the sidelines of the Peace and Trust Conference held on 11 December, 2021 in Ashgabat, the Secretary General of the ECO, H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri, was received by H.E. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the President of Turkmenistan.

At the very outset, the Secretary General congratulated the President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov on successful organization of the Peace and Trust Conference.

The Secretary General appreciated the vision of the President on regionalism and expressed his gratitude for his commendable support and patronage to the ECO. He briefed the President about plan of action of the ECO to implement the decisions of the 15th ECO Summit held in Ashgabat on 28th November, 2021.

The President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov underscored the impor-

tance of ECO for its tremendous potential for regional cooperation in various sectors. The President also appreciated the plan of Secretary General towards implementation of decisions of the 15th ECO Summit and congratulated him and the staff of the Secretariat for organizing the Summit in an efficient manner.

He ensured the Secretary General of full support of his Government and expressed his hope that under the able leadership of Amb. Khusrav Noziri the Organization will achieve its objectives and goals set in the vision 2025 and in the recent adopted "Ashgabat Consensus for Action".

The ECO Secretary General expressed gratitude to the President for providing opportunity to apprise him the recent developments of the organization in the aftermath of the 15th ECO Summit and seeking the President's guidance for the realization of those objectives enshrined in the "Ashgabat Consensus for Action".



On the invitation of Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov, the ECO Secretary General H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri attended the Peace and Trust conference held on 11 December, 2021 in Ashgabat. The theme of the conference was "Peace and Trust Policy - Basis of International Security, Stability and Development".

In his inaugural remarks, H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the honourable President of Turkmenistan, underlined the importance of joint efforts for de-escalation of regional and global conflicts that emerged in the recent time. He enlightened the conference that on the initiative of Turkmenistan, the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly declared 2021 as the International Year of Peace and Trust. He shared some of the key aspects Turkmenistan's approach of "Peace and Trust" and "Permanent Neutrality" and encouraged the participants of the conference to contribute actively for providing a way forward aimed at ensuring regional and global stability based on universal principles of trust and respect in bilateral and international relations.

Addressing the High Level Session of conference, the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri, recognized the substantial role of Turkmenistan towards enhance global stability and achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals. Amb. Noziri expressed his gratitude to the President of Turkmenistan, H.E. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, for providing his continued commendable and thoughtful guidance on various regional issues. He stated that inspiration of peace and trust approach corresponds to the geographical, historical, and ethno-cultural realities of Turkmenistan and the national character of its people and their desire for good neighbourly relations based on mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. He elucidated that the Turkmenistan's approach of Peace and Trust, having Neutrality as an imperative component, has enhanced the status of Turkmenistan at the global stage as a country that strives to promote mutually beneficial relations between all the countries of the world and resolving the global issues through peaceful means.

The ECO Secretary General, while congratulating Turkmenistan on successful organization of the recent 15th ECO Summit held on 28 November 2021 in Ashgabat, highlighted the lead role of the country for

The ECO Secretary General attends the Peace and Trust Conference in Ashgabat



regional cooperation under the umbrella of the ECO. He informed that based on the Turkmenistan's policy of permanent neutrality, the Summit has adopted the "Ashgabat Consensus for Action" that provides a way forward towards regional stability and realization of the principal goal of sustainable socio-economic development and prosperity in the ECO region. In his concluding remarks, the Secretary General of the ECO expressed his confidence that the outcome of the conference would assist in developing a roadmap towards enhanced regional cooperation and stability in the wake of latest challenges.

The ECO Secretariat holds the ECO Award Distribution Ceremony

 The ECO Secretariat held the ECO Award distribution ceremony on December 13, 2021 at its premises.

The ceremony was organized to acknowledge and award one of the winners of the ECO Award 2021, Dr. Ms. Mitra Rahnejat for her magnificent achievement in the field of Economics.

On the occasion, the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri, highlighted the significance of ECO Award for excellence and mentioned that awards like the ECO Award are instrumental to inspire brilliant and promising minds in the specific fields of excellence.

He congratulated Dr. Rahnejat on her selection for the ECO Award and expressed his belief that the achievement of Dr.



Rahnejat will provide a strong encouragement and motivation to other emerging experts especially the young professionals for enduring their efforts in the relevant fields. In response, Dr. Mitra Rahnejat thanked the ECO Secretariat for institutionalizing this prestigious Award and stated that ECO Award is a true manifestation of the endeavour of the ECO towards recognizing researchers, scientists, academicians and artists of the region for their valuable achievements and contributions in the specific fields of excellence.

The ECO Awards for excellence are conferred biennially on eminent individuals from the ECO Member States for their outstanding research work, contributions and achievements in five specific fields including economics, history and culture, science and technology, education, and agriculture and environment.

First ECO Senior Officials/Heads Meeting for Disaster Insurance Authorities

ECO CHRONICLE The First ECO Senior Officials/Heads Meeting for Disaster Insurance Authorities and Training Workshop on Disaster Risk Transfer through Insurance were held virtually on December 13-14 December via virtual means.

The events hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran saw delegates from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Uzbekistan gather to discuss the issue of the creation of the regional; (1) Disaster Information System and (2) Disaster Insurance System as envisioned by the ECO Vision 2025.

Speaking at the senior officials meeting ECO Deputy Secretary General, Dr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, stated that the Economic Cooperation Organization attaches great importance for collaboration in the field of Disaster Risk Management. He further stated that the 8th ECO Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (March 17, 2021) adopted the "ECO Regional Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction" and the Roadmap of Implementing ECORFDRR (2021-2025). The ECO-RFDRR and its roadmap seek to enhance collaboration among Member States to integrate disaster risk reduction into economic cooperation in the region.

Dr. Golamreza Soleimani, the President of the Central Insurance of Iran and Mr. Esmail Najjar, the President of the Iran National Disaster Management Organization gave their statements during the meeting where they enumerated the actions of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Disaster Risk Management. "The Iranian insurance market consists of 34 insurance and reinsurance com-

panies active in the field of life and non-life. In 2020, the total written premium reached to USD 19.3 billion while its total claim paid was equal to USD 11.8 billion. Also, the fire insurance written premium as the most important field of natural and man-made disaster insurance coverage, reached to USD 880 million, and the total claim paid was equal to USD 368 million," Mr. Soleimani said.


The Deputy Head of Agricultural Insurance Fund, Mr. Mohammad Ibrahim Hassannejad addressed the meeting on Iran's Agricultural Insurance Experiences in Natural Disaster Risk Management. He proposed holding conference on "Agricultural Insurance in Iran, Experiences and Achievements" with the participation of managers and experts in insurance and agriculture from ECO member countries. The meeting will seek to provide Member States with an insight into the policies, strategies, services and achievements of the Agricultural Insurance Fund of the Islamic Republic of Iran, he added.

The Senior Officials/Heads of Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Turkey, and Republic of Uzbekistan delivered their statements.

The Training Workshop on Disaster Risk Transfer through Insurance was also held virtually on 13th December 2021. The Training workshop was arranged by the Central Insurance of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The workshop sought to create a common understanding on disaster and climate risk among ECO Member States while strengthening risk governance and resiliency on insurance.

The ECO Secretariat Participates at 32nd Meeting of the Energy Charter Conference




 The 32nd Meeting of Energy Charter Conference was held on 14 December, 2021. The Meeting, hosted by the Republic of Armenia, was held virtually. ECO has been an observer in the Energy Charter since 2017. At the meeting, among other issues, report for 2021 and Future Outlook by the Secretary

General, Reports of the Subsidiary and Working Groups of the Conference and the Industry Advisory Panel were presented. Also was discussed the modernization of the Energy Charter Treaty.

The ECO Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Participated in the meeting on behalf of the ECO Secretariat and noted the important role of ECO's cooperation with the Energy Charter in the field of energy development in the region. He stressed that the ECO countries are beginning to actively develop the use of renewable energy sources and one of the key steps in this direction is the creation of a Clean Energy Center in Baku. He also pointed out the importance of establishing ECO Regional Electricity Market and noted that the Energy Charter is a key partner of ECO in the implementation of this project.



ECO Workshop on Development of Project to Combat Desertification in the ECO region held in Antalya

 On December 14-16, 2021 The Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change of the Republic of Turkey hosted the Workshop on Development of Project to Combat Desertification in the ECO region – ECO LandCare in collaboration with ECO Secretariat. Three days event brought up cooperative platform to review latest situation on land degradation with particular emphasis to





desertification, sand storms and dust haze in ECO Member States. The participants delivered country presentations with current problems in land use and solutions that have been particularly exploited to tackle with environmental and anthropogenic challenges. The regional offices of UN Convention to Combat Desertification and Food and Agricultural Organization also took part in discussions along with latest activities in the region.

Member States such as Turkey, Iran and Pakistan introduced their advanced experiences in combating causes of land degradation for sharing as best practices in the region.

Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan briefed on national developments and international cooperation toward combating land degradation, sand storm and dust hazes as well. The Republic of Turkey indicated particularly its financial and technical assistance schemes in rendering cooperation on land degradation issues for the countries of region. To facilitate and promote benefitting from ECO's financial and technical capacity, the participants were updated on institutional decision-making and project financing procedures.


The Meeting particularly focused also on ECO flagship project – ECO Landcare. Project partner, ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST) summoned Member States' pledge to launch the project implementation as an important expected outcome of ECO Vision 2025. Participants were updated about project's evaluation and latest situation.

The Meeting concluded mandating ECO-IEST to follow up efficient implementation mechanism of ECO Landcare project and the Member States will explore opportunities to enhance cooperation in exchange of best practices amongst them to address challenges of land degradation.





Participation of ECO Secretary General Mr. Khusrav Noziri at the 4th UNESCAP Ministerial Conference on Transport

 The Secretary General of ECO, H.E. Ambassador Khusrav Noziri participated at the 4th UNESCAP Ministerial Conference on Transport held virtually on 16 December 2021.

The Secretary General in his statement highlighted the timely organization of the event at the crucial time as the international supply chain is severely under pressure due to unforeseeable consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic and elaborated the impacts of the Corona pandemic on the economies of the Member States particularly the land locked counties of the ECO Region.

Ambassador Noziri further provided details on the measures taken by the ECO for mitigating the risks arising from the pandemic through devising the "ECO Practical Guidelines on Cross Border Facilitation Measures under Conditions of Covid-19" that, among others, calls for

application of some internationally recognized measures and practices that reduce physical contacts amongst the individuals at the border crossings.

"ECO Practical Guidelines on Cross Border Facilitation Measures under Conditions of Covid-19" that, among others, calls for application of some internationally recognized measures and practices that reduce physical contacts amongst the individuals at the border crossings.

In his statement, the Secretary General highlighted the important role of UN bodies particularly UNESCAP in development of ECO region that has resulted in tangible enhancement of transport in the Member States and in this connection he also underlined the joint ECO/UNESCAP/IDB Study Project on Commercialization of KTI Corridor (connecting Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran) and the MoU between ECO and UNESCAP that



demonstrate profound mutual commitment towards sharing the strength for development of the region and its people.



The ECO's chief official, emphatically expressed the will of the Organization to enhance its efforts for development of transport and connectivity in the region for the betterment of life standards and

prosperity of its people and invited all the international organizations and financial institutes and banks to support ECO in implementing the wide range of projects included in the ECO Railway Network Development Plan and ECO Road Network Development Plan that benefit its members collectively.

The ECO Secretary General expressed his confidence that the Ministerial Conference will further highlight the challenges of the sector, recommend practical solutions and streamline all the stakeholders towards a more supportive, resilient, cost effective and sustainable transport.

In the end, Ambassador Khusraw Noziri expressed his gratitude towards Mrs. Armida Salsiah Alisjahban, the honorable Executive Secretary of UNESCAP for inviting him to the important Conference, and making excellent arrangement to organize the event.



ECO Secretary General participates in the 17th Extraordinary Session of OIC-CFM



On the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, the ECO Secretary General H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri visited Pakistan to participate in the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Council of Foreign Ministers (OIC-CFM) Meeting, held on December 19, 2021 in Islamabad.



UN Agencies took part in the event.

The meeting's participants, while expressing deep concerns over the dire humanitarian conditions in Afghanistan, appeared ready and receptive to make further efforts for addressing the urgent and essential needs of the people of the country.

The Extraordinary Session of OIC-CFM was organised by the initiative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - the Summit Chair of OIC and devoted to the recent humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. The OIC Member States Ministers of Foreign Affairs, OIC Observers, as well as representatives from USA, UK, Russia, China, France, Germany, Japan, key

During the meeting, the ECO Secretary General delivered his statement and while acknowledging the importance of peace and stability in Afghanistan reiterated ECO's continued support to the national, regional and global efforts for reconstruction and sustainable development in Afghanistan. He also mentioned the goals and objectives specified in the ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan (EAPA).



ECO
CHRONICLE

The long awaited ITI Cargo Train finally got its way towards Turkey transiting through the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the 6560 Km railway corridor. The ITI train resumed its operation in the presence of H.E Mr. Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, along with H.E. Mr. Azam

Khan Swati, Minister for Railways, H.E Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, distinguished Ambassadors of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Turkey, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Kazakhstan as well as Representatives of the private sectors during a ceremony held in Islamabad on December 21, 2021.

The Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan appreciated the resumption of ITI freight train, believing that the service would play an important role, not only to enhance regional connectivity, but also for the promotion of economic and commercial activities in the ECO Region.

Resumption of ECO ITI Islamabad - Tehran - Istanbul Cargo Train

The ECO's Director for Transport and Communication, Mr. Akbar Khodaei, who is also coordinating the Project, said that the potential of ITI train, a single rail connection between Pakistan, Iran and Turkey, is yet to be realized. He noted that this train would offer Pakistan the opportunity to start crucial export activity and establish connection with interna-

tional markets. While Iran could become an important trans-shipment and transit location for international trade, this cargo service would be providing Turkey an opportunity to further develop its natural role as a bridge between Asia and Europe, he considered, adding that the ECO-ITI has the capacity to open a new transit route from China to Europe and ensure a sustainable income source for the en-route countries.

He also mentioned that as per the comprehensive study conducted by the ECO Secretariat on this strategic corridor, multi-modal transportation could further maximize the load-capacity of the train on the corridor by mobilizing cargo from multiple sources that yet to be connected to the railway network.



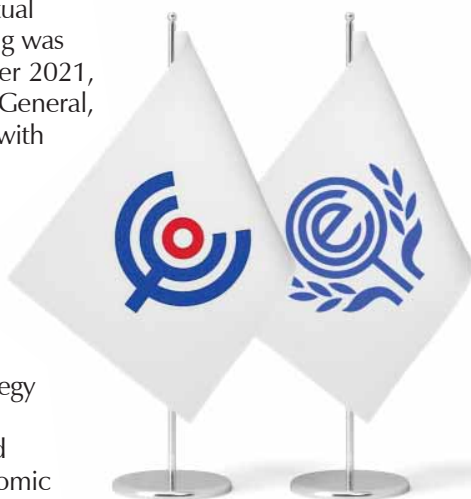
Meeting of the ECO Secretary General with the President ECO-Trade and Development Bank to bolster mutual collaboration between ECO Secretariat and ECO TDB



A Virtual Meeting was held on 29th December 2021, by the ECO Secretary General, Amb. Khusrav Noziri, with the President of ECO Trade development Bank (ECO-TDB) Mr. Yalcin Yuksel, to discuss collaboration of ECO Secretariat and ETDB to prepare a joint strategy to pursue the goals of expansion in trade and realize the socio-economic development targets set in ECO Vision 2025. The need for a common strategy was stressed by both sides to pursue these targets amid the increased mandate confided on them by the leaders in 15th ECO Summit in Ashgabat.

The President of the ECO-TDB Mr. Yalcin Yuksel underscored the significance of mutual cooperation and face to face consultation and proposed his visit to ECO Secretariat at the beginning of New Year for deliberating on a joint strategy for effective negotiations to invite the remaining four ECO Member States to join the Bank.

The Secretary General, Amb. Khusrav Noziri welcomed the proposed visit of the ECO TDB delegation to the Secretariat as good



opportunity to discuss collaboration after 32nd Regional Planning Council (RPC) Meeting. He highlighted the novel approach of the Secretariat to implement greater number of projects in various priority areas mandated by the Council of Ministers. He alluded, in his remarks, to the need to increase the contribution of ECO region to the global trade from existing US\$ 661 billion and intra-regional

trade of US \$ 49.8 billion in year 2020, to a level commensurate to its potential. Whilst, appreciating the role of ETDB for fostering and shouldering the process of development of ECO member states, he emphasised the need to strengthen the specialized role of the Bank to finance projects for reviving economic activity; bolstering Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and SMEs in the region. On the need for greater partnership for facilitation in financing regional project, he shared the details of 'ECO Gate' project for connectivity to harnessing the potential, with substantial contribution from IsDB and invited partnership of ETDB.

Both sides agree to mull over a joint plan to enhance cooperation on all areas including the increasing membership of the ETDB.