



Foreword



This present issue of ECO Chronicle broadly outlines the activities of the ECO for the period summer - autumn 2019. ECO remains focused on promoting the organization's objectives by focusing on the implementation of ECO Vision 2025, transforming into a project-oriented organization, and finally fueling the spirit of ownership, partnership, and commitment by concluding the organizational reforms process.

Priority areas of ECO have brought under our recent project based approach and a new momentum has generated for implementation of proposed projects in various fields in line with Vision 2025 that would bring enhanced trade, regional integration through transport corridors, energy, tourism activities in the region. At the same time ECO has maintained high level of engagement and activities with regional and international organizations to realize its goals and objectives.

Particularly, the second half of the year 2019 proved to be a productive for ECO Tourism. In October 2019, the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism was held in the city of Khujand of Tajikistan where the ECO Ministers for tourism adopted ECO Principles for Sustainable Tourism Development as well as three new significant projects including the first ever ECO Regional Plan of Action in the ECO Tourism sector.

It is my hope that this compilation will be of benefit to diplomats, scholars, socio-economic analysts as well as general public interested in the activities of ECO.

*Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour
ECO Secretary General*



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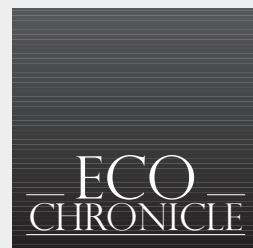
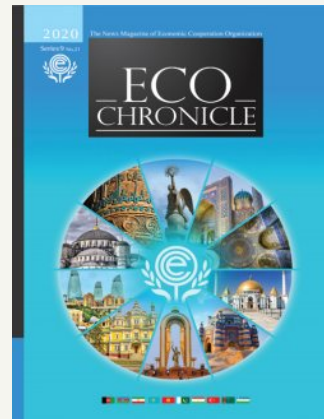
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In The Name Of God

Front Cover



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ECO SG, President of Tajikistan meet in Guliston city

 The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has met with the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon to discuss enhancement of regional tourism, ensuring peace, security and stability in the neighboring countries of Afghanistan as well as the country's

socio-economic development.

The meeting of August 21, 2019, at the Guliston city of Sughd Province of Tajikistan, saw the two sides discuss among others the reform process and the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA).

While describing reform as a means to the enhancement of the efficiency of the Organization, the Secretary General said with the aim of enhancing the efficiency, the Organization is undergoing structural reforms which are currently under deliberation at the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR).

On the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), Dr. Soleimanpour added that in order to facilitate further economic cooperation within the region; the ECOTA Cooperation Council is amending the 2003 Free Trade Agreement to reflect the new realities of the region.

The Secretary General proposed that an economic ministerial meeting could be convened in Tajikistan in early 2020, and could serve as a catalyst for promotion of





further economic cooperation in the ECO Region.

The Organization is committed to railway transport corridors and is focusing on transforming the transit corridors of the region into economic ones, and seeks to facilitate more connectivity between land-locked Member States to the seaports of the ECO region as envisaged in the Turkmenbashi Declaration, he added.

The Secretary General said that the valuable experience gained through the Central Asia-South Asia power project, commonly known by the acronym CASA-1000, could effectively contribute to the implementation of the ECO Regional Electricity Market project.

While welcoming the initiative of Tajikistan's President in declaring 2019-2021 the "Years of Rural Development, Tourism and Folk Crafts", Dr. Soleimanpour explained that the arrangements required for the meeting of ECO Tourism Ministers scheduled to

be held in Khujand city on October 3-4, 2019 are underway within the Secretariat.

Appreciating the efforts made by the Secretary General and his team, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan expressed satisfaction over the existing cooperation in trade, transit and transport policy as well as the strengthening cultural and humanitarian ties. He emphasized on Tajikistan's commitment to further strengthening the comprehensive cooperation in trade, investment, energy, transport and communication, industry, agriculture, environment and tourism sectors with the other ECO member states.

Appreciating the selection of Dushanbe as ECO's tourism capital, the President expressed optimism that the forthcoming ministerial meeting on tourism would give an effective impetus to the development of tourism sector in the ECO Member States.

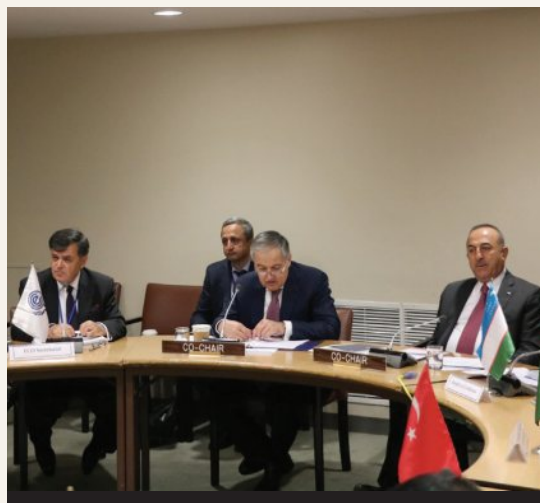
ECO Informal COM Convenes in New York

ECO
CHRONICLE

The informal ECO Council of Ministers (COM) has convened on the sidelines of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York to discuss relevant regional and global developments within the ECO framework.

The 26th Informal Meeting was co-chaired on September 27, 2019, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, Sirodjiddin Muhridin and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Mevlut Cavusoglu.

Also present were Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan, and Permanent Representatives of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic,



Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations. The Turkish Cypriot State attended the Meeting as an "Observer".

During the meeting the Ministers exchanged views on issues related the regional and global developments, cooperation in the framework of ECO, as well as ongoing reform process in the Organization.



ECO SG, Tajikistan's Minister of Economic Development and Trade Meet in Dushanbe



ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has met with Minister of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan, Nematullo Hikmatullozoda to discuss the latest development on economic and trade cooperation in the region.

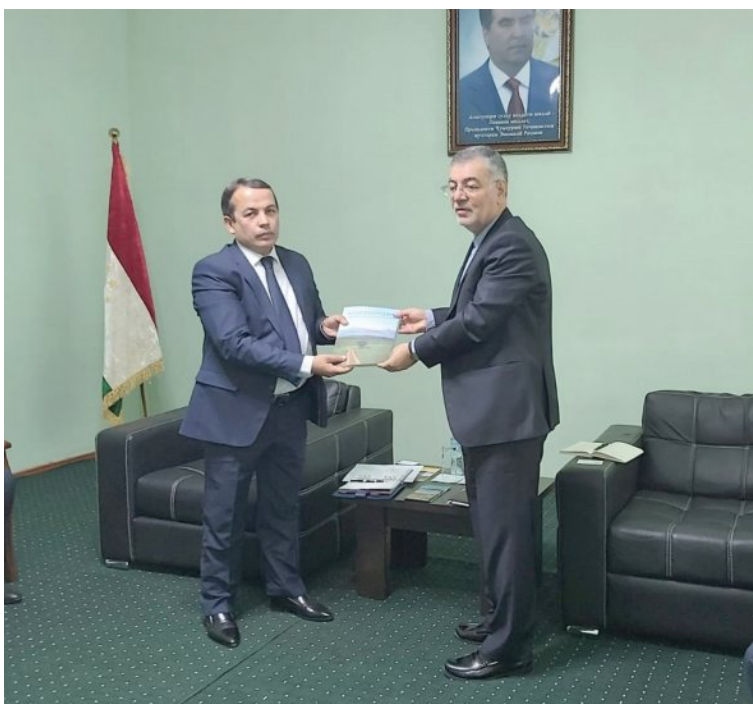
During the meeting of August 22, 2019, the Tajik Minister underlined the great human and natural potential in the region as well as the importance of its efficient utilization for the progress and prosperity of the ECO nations. He also underscored the continuity of Tajikistan's relations with the Organization, adding that the ECO's chairmanship of Tajikistan coincided with an important span of time.

Referring to the ECOTA Trade Agreement, Mr. Hikmatullozoda noted that despite the passage of 20 years since the signing of the said agreement, its full implementation has yet to take place. Given the current realities, it is necessary to re-consider the ECOTA Trade Agreement, he said.

Referring to ECO's priority areas within the Vision-2025, the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) underlined the necessity for strengthening economic, trade, financial and investment ties amongst the Member States. Mr. Soleimanpour also encouraged Tajikistan to consider becoming a member of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB) which was established on August 3, 2005 in Istanbul. In addition the establishment of ECO Clearing Union would facilitate ensuring better conditions for payments in the region, promote financial and monetary cooperation and facilitate expanded trade and economic collaboration amongst the Member States, he added.

ECO SG, Chairman of Tajikistan's Committee for Tourism Development

Meet in Dushanbe



ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has met the Chairman of the Committee for Tourism Development of the Republic of Tajikistan, Nu'mon Abdugafforzoda, in Dushanbe on August 22, 2019.

While discussing Tajikistan's

tourism development and potential and emphasizing on his government's priority in the development of tourism sector, the Chairman, said that the designation of 2018 as the "Year of Tourism Development and Folk Crafts" and "2019-2021 as the Years of Rural development, Tourism and Folk Crafts in Tajikistan would contribute to the tourism sectoral expansion in the ECO Member States.

Tajikistan is famous for its ecological, health, historical, cultural and hunting tourism, deeming it appropriate to share their experiences with other Member States in view of Tajikistan's continued evolving in tourism, he added, offering to convene the next ministerial meeting on tourism on October 3-4, 2019 in Tajikistan.

During the meeting The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) underlined tourism as one of the priorities of Organization which has been also enshrined within the ECO Vision 2025. While appreciating Tajikistan's willingness to host the Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, Dr. Soleimanpour said the meeting of ECO Tourism Ministers which will be convened on October 3-4, 2019 in Khujand city of Tajikistan would play a significant role in paving the way for further development of tourism in the ECO region.

He added that revision of the 'Tourism Action Plan' during this meeting would be of great importance in undertaking the required measures for further development of the sector in the Member States.

ECO SG, Iran Foreign Minister meet in Tehran

ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has met with the Iranian Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif to discuss the issues of mutual interest, including connectivity and commerce in the region.

During the meeting of May 23, 2019, Dr. Soleimanpour expressed ECO's deep appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the country's continued support and kind hospitality as the host of ECO.

The Secretary General also discussed with Foreign Minister on the ECO Regional Planning Council, the organization's main technical planning body which is responsible for preparing policies and programs on organizational activities including trade, investment, transportation and communication. Their interaction also took into account the ECO's priority areas as well as achievements made so far in 2019 on connectivity, commerce and energy cooperation.

Acknowledging the significant role of the ECO on enhancement of bilateral and regional cooperation, the Iranian Foreign Minister stated that Iran attaches great importance to expanding relations with its neighbors on both bilateral as well as multilateral forums and regards the regional arrangements like the ECO as imperative to achieving such objectives.

The enhancement of regional connectivity can serve as useful element to pave way for further and continued development in the diverse areas of collaborative activities, including trade and investment in the region, Mr. Zarif added.

The Foreign Minister reaffirmed his sup-



port to the ECO and Secretary General's efforts with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. The two sides reassured their commitment to work together for securing the objectives of their common agenda and addressing any challenges.

Third ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism held in Khujand, Tajikistan



ECO CHRONICLE The 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism proceeded by the 5th High Level Experts Group (HLEG) on Tourism was held in Tajikistan's second-largest city of Khujand.

The meeting of October 3-4, 2019, was hosted by the Committee of Tourism Development of the Republic of Tajikistan with the presence of delegations from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In his opening statement ECO Secretary General, HadiSoleimanpour underscored the importance of tourism and its sustainable development within the region. The tourism industry has gained a very positive attention from the Member States and has become a priority development field for the coming decade, he said. The Secretary General drew attention to the fact that the development of the tourism industry throughout the region needs intra

regional international connectivity through all modes of transportation. This could ensure comfortable, cheaper, more accessible and secure travel in ECO Region, Dr. Soleimanpour said.

The session was inaugurated by the Governor of Tajikistan's Sughd Province, Rajabboy Ahmadzoda, who highlighted the potentials and progress of the Republic of Tajikistan in Tourism Sector and the importance of knowledge sharing events in support of mutually beneficial cooperation among the Member States.

The meeting adopted the ECO Principles for Sustainable Tourism Development in ECO Region and the ECO Tourism Plan of Action. It also designated Tajikistan's city of Dushanbe as ECO Tourism Capital for 2020-2021 and the Iranian cities of Sari and Ardabil for the years 2022 and 2023 respectively.

The 4th and 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism will be hosted by The Republic of Uzbekistan and Islamic Republic of Iran respectively in 2020 and 2022.



ECO SG, Kazakh D. Foreign Minister meet in Tehran

ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has met with the F. D. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mukhtar Tileuberdi at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran on 11 April 2019.

The Secretary General welcomed the Minister to the Secretariat and acknowledged the rigorous efforts and enduring commitment of the Republic of Kazakhstan in pursuit of regional cooperation among ECO member States. He also deeply appreciated the first president and the leader of the nation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, for his commendable support and patronage and hoped that with his guidance the Organization would further achieve its objectives.

Dr. Soleimanpour briefed the Minister about the ECO's current progress and future plans in different areas. He presented key features of ECO Vision 2025 & ECO Reform Process and informed the Minister that in order to materialize the vision of our leadership and to upgrade the living standards of the people of the region, ECO has been working on the implementation of several projects. The ECO Secretary General also provided an update on key legal frameworks of the organization. He highlighted the significance of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) in enhancing intra-region trade and requested Kazakhstan to become a signatory to ECOTA. While expressing his views about regional financial framework, he informed the Minister about the plan of establishing ECO regional financial system which would provide facilitation to settle payments to import and export of goods and services



among the ECO Member States. He invited the assistance of Kazakhstan in drafting the agreement of its establishment. He also invited Kazakhstan to consider joining the ECO Trade and Development Bank. The ECO Secretary General appreciated Kazakhstan's support on ECO's initiative to commercialize the railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran (KTI) and expressed his hope that the Government of Kazakhstan would continue its assistance for KTI study project and in developing other important corridors in ECO region.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan thanked the ECO Secretary General for providing detailed information about the Organization and its activities. He also appreciated the initiatives launched by ECO in different sectors aimed at promoting regional trade and regional integration among the member states and expressed his full support towards activities of ECO. He acknowledged the idea of establishing ECO regional financial system and informed the Secretary General that Astana International Financial Centre could assist ECO Secretariat in realizing this important regional financial framework.

ECO SG receives Tajik Amb. credentials in Tehran



ECO CHRONICLE The newly appointed ambassador of Tajikistan to Iran, Nizomiddin Zohidi presented his letter of credence to the Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour at the ECO Secretariat on June 3, 2019.

During the meeting, the sides discussed issues of cooperation between Tajikistan and ECO and strengthening the organization's activities in various fields during the Tajikistan Chairmanship.

Special attention was paid to the implementation of the ECO Vision - 2025 strategic, ongoing reform process, as well as the implementation of joint transport projects in the ECO countries.

The ECO Secretary General congratulated Ambassador Zohidi on the beginning of his activities as the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to ECO and wished him successful tenure in Tehran.

ECO SG takes part in ECO-CCI meeting in Istanbul

ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has participated in the 26th Executive Committee and 17th General Assembly Meetings of the ECO-Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI) on July 30, 2019 in Istanbul.

During the session, the ECO Secretary General underscored the significance of cooperation in promoting economic growth of the Member States and improving living standards of people in this region who are blessed with abundant natural and human resources. He hoped that implementation of the ECO Vision-2025 will take the region on a trajectory of enhanced economic growth and development in the next decade. He also referred to ECO's legal frameworks especially ECOTA, APPI, TTFA, institutional mechanisms, initiatives, projects and programmes which are a clear reflection of collaboration, nonetheless, it requires more interest and participation of the Member States to capitalize the potential benefits and generate greater opportunities. He maintained that ECO Secretariat is in an effort to speed up completion of projects in the areas of trade, trans-

portation, energy, tourism, etc., with the collaboration of regional and international organizations and appreciated interest of the private sector therein which would help improve speed of implementation of on-going projects/programmes and develop new ones for the collective benefit of the region.

The meeting inaugurated by President of the Union of the Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), M. Rifat Hisarciklioglu and chaired by the Secretary General ECO-CCI, Adem Kula. Also present were the President of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Daroo Khan Achakzai and the representative of the Iran Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Seyed Hossein Salimi.

The dignitaries from the National Chambers of the Member States in their statements highlighted that the trade level among Member States is far below expectation level and that investment in regional infrastructure and human resources can play important role in fostering economic growth and development in the region. They stressed on the need for increased cooperation at government and business levels and operationalization of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and improve connectivity through KTI, KTAI rail and road corridors to make the region more integrated for the prosperity and socio-economic development of the region. They emphasized on removal of impediments for enhancement of intra-ECO trade.

During the Statutory Session of the 26th Executive Committee and 18 General Assembly Meeting, the Secretary General of ECO-CCI, Mr. Adem Kula, presented activity report of



ECO-CCI since 25th ECO CCI Executive Committee Meeting held in Tashkent in December, 2018. Reports of sectoral Committee Meetings i.e. Trade Facilitation Committee, Industry and Investment Committee, Transportation Committee, Tourism Committee, Arbitration Committee, Women Entrepreneurs Council (WEC) Committee held on 28-29 July, 2019 were presented along with the report on the training session of National Chambers. Mr. Muhammad Safdar from the Directorate of Trade and Investment represented ECO in these meetings prior to Executive Committee and General Assembly Meetings.

The Meeting concluded with appreciative note and high spirit aiming to strengthening cooperation and collaboration in all vital areas and with resolution to take maximum advantage from the region's vast and huge resources through stepping up efforts in all major areas and strengthening cooperation under the ECO umbrella.

ECO SG, Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan meet in Ashgabat

ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has met with the Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister, Rashid Meredov on August 11, 2019 to discuss opportunities for more active participation of the country in ECO activities including transport, energy, trade, tourism.

The meeting on the sidelines of the 1st Caspian forum in the Turkmen city of Avaza along the Caspian coast, saw the Secretary General detail the latest developments and

perspectives including the commercialization and transforming the Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran (KTI) railway into an economic corridor, the Plan of Actions on Natural Disasters, the Afghanistan Advocacy Program and means to enhance the role of ECO Trade and Development Bank.

During the discussions, the Foreign Minister stated that Turkmenistan firmly supports ECO's endeavors aimed at fostering economic activities in the region. He expressed his readiness to consider all proposals of strengthening of cooperation within the Organization.

The first Caspian Economic Forum marks the first anniversary of the conclusion of the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea, which was signed by the five heads of states of the five Caspian states of Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran and Azerbaijan in Aktau, Kazakhstan on August 2018. The convention has served as a starting point for further regional integration and opened a new chapter of cooperation in the fields of transport, trade, energy and ecology.



ECO Heads of Meteorological Services meet in Iran

ECO CHRONICLE The 3rd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Services hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran Meteorological Organization (IRIMO) was held at ECO Secretariat Tehran, on November 12, 2019.

The Meeting was attended by the delegations from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Turkey in addition to the ECO Regional Center for Risk Management of Natural Disasters (ECO-RCRM).

The session was inaugurated by the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour, who expressed his wishes for successful meeting. ECO Deputy Secretary General, Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi highlighted the importance of water conservation, drought monitoring system and effective utilization of yield management.

The President of Islamic Republic of Iran Meteorological Organization (IRIMO), Sahar Tajbaksh Stated that as natural disasters knows no geographical boundaries, ECO Member States may make use of the best practices of other countries regarding weather-related disas-



ter management.

In addition to decisions and recommendations for enhancing the cooperation among the ECO Member States in the area of natural disasters management and objectives related to ECO Vision 2025, the meeting approved the statute of the ECO-RCRM. The meeting also welcomed the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's offer for hosting the next ECO Heads of Meteorological Services Meeting in August 2020.



ECO SG Inaugurates

ECOTA Cooperation Council Meeting in Tehran



ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has inaugurated the 8th Meeting of Cooperation Council for the Economic Cooperation Organization Trade Agreement or ECOTA at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran.

The meeting of August 18-19, 2019 was attended by the delegates from all five Contracting Parties namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Turkey.

In his opening statement, the Secretary General highlighted significance of trade as the foundation of economic growth and socio-economic sustainable development and enumerated promising benefits such as improving living standards of the populace, creating investment opportunities, job creation, industrial

growth and technological advancement. He added that the current level of intra-ECO trade hovering around 8 percent of the total region's trade is not comparable with other peer economic blocs. He referred to the ECO Vision-2025 which stipulates to double intra ECO trade by 2025 from its current level which needs to be pursued vigorously.

He further maintained that there is need to adopt an innovative approach to implement ECOTA or upgrade its mechanism to deliver its aims in the light of the views of the contracting parties. To move forward, he propounded the idea of sectoral application in the first stage and the Council agreed to consider the proposal of the ECO Secretariat by taking it up with their respective Governments.

The Secretary General, ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI), Adem Kula said as the voice of business leaders of ECO region, ECO-CCI fully supports the efforts on the implementation of ECOTA and finding new ways for its operationalization. As the dynamics of the world are changing rapidly cooperation among countries, trade blocs, regions and even unions are developing and those already developed are deepening, he added. Mr. Kula extended his organization's offer to be a part of the efforts and play instrumental role in enhancing intra-regional trade.

In his statement in the Statutory Session, the ECO Deputy Secretary General, Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, underlined that efforts for economic and trade growth are crucial for our region which has great geo-strategic, geo-political and geo-economic significance due to abundant natural and human resources. He maintained that ECOTA can be implemented with more constructive approach and better understanding among the contracting parties.

The Heads of Delegations of the Contracting Parties delivered brief statements underscoring the need for trade liberalization in the region. They presented their views on implementation of ECOTA, highlighted progress and enumerated actions taken by their respective governments to implement tariff concessions.



The 4th Meeting of

the Board of Trustees (BoT) of the Economic Cooperation Organization Science Foundation (ECOSF) was held in Isfahan, the Islamic Republic of Iran on July 9, 2019 with the participation of delegations of the four ECOSF Member States.

Representatives from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan, considered the comprehensive report of the ECOSF President on the activities and programmes of the Foundation and approved its strategies and work plans for the period 2019-2020. The Meeting also adopted the Isfahan Communiqué 2019. The meeting was preceded by the 5th Meeting of ECOSF Executive Committee on 8 July, 2019.

As the Chairperson, the Minister for Science and Technology of Pakistan, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain opened the session, which was then handed to the Minister for Science, Research and Technology of Iran, Mansour Gholami.

ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour opened his remarks by thanking the Government of Pakistan for hosting the Secretariat in Islamabad and appreciated the efforts of the ECOSF and its President on the progress of the Foundation.

Dr. Soleimanpour said that the ECO is currently undergoing a reform process aimed at making ECO a more effective and efficient regional organization capable of realizing its core objec-

ECO Science Foundation holds BOT

Meeting in Isfahan

tives and strategic goals as envisaged in the ECO Vision 2025. "This development would also bring new dimensions to the working of the ECO's specialized agencies including ECO Science Foundation," he added.

The Secretary General said that the ECO Vision 2025 has set out some priority areas such as energy, connectivity, sustainability, and trade as well as lead-

ing sciences such as bio, nano and info technologies.

These main priority areas can be pursued by ECOSF in its main stream activities and plans, he added. He also called upon Member States to extend the Mandatory Financial Contributions to the ECOSF and actively participate in its programmes, enabling the Foundation to reach its potential.

In his remarks, the outgoing Chair of the BoT, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain appreciated the efforts made by ECOSF for promotion of science and technology in the ECO Region and hoped that the Foundation would continue to contribute effectively to foster regional cooperation in the field of science, technology and innovation.

The Chair of the BoT, Mr. Mansour Gholami appreciated the efforts of the Foundation in promoting STI cooperation and collaboration among the Member States and suggested the ECOSF to actively contribute in other areas of cooperation such as undertaking technology transfer and exchanging students, researchers and academics.



ETDB Annual BOG Meeting held in Istanbul

 The 18th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors (BOG) of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ETDB) was held on July 04, 2019 at Istanbul, the Republic of Turkey.

Speaking at the plenary session ECO Secretary General, Hadi Soleimanpour, congratulated the management of the Bank for financing the priority ECO projects and supporting financial needs of ECO Member States and underlined the need of promoting further of the existing cooperation between the Bank and Secretariat for socio-economic development within Member States.

Based on the outcomes of the last ECO Summit and Council of Ministers Meetings, Dr. Soleimanpour informed the Board that ECO is focusing on implementation of regional priority projects of ECO Vision-2025 and harmonizing the activities of the Secretariat with the ECO Specialized agencies including ECO Bank etc.

In addition, the Secretary General emphasized on the need for the establishment of the ECO Vision Fund with collaboration of ECO Bank to finance the implementation of the priority projects, a mechanism to facilitate payment transactions for ECO trade and services and the expansion of the mandate and capacity of the ECO Bank to rightly address ECO's main priority areas.

Within the frame work of the cooperation between the two organizations the Secretary General also requested the BOG to consider providing loans to the Member States for implementation of joint ECO



regional projects and financial assistance for feasibility studies, capacity building projects and consultancy services to ECO projects.

The BOG of ETDB comprise of representatives appointed by the Governments of the Member States and holds annual meetings and such other meetings deemed necessary by the Board. All the power of the Bank is vested in the BOG. The BOG, inter alia has the power to increase or decrease the authorized capital of the Bank, elect the President of the Bank, approve, after reviewing the auditors' report, the balance sheet and the statement of profit and loss of the Bank, determine the reserves and distribution of the profit of the Bank etc.

The ETDB was established on 3 August 2005 with its headquarters located at Istanbul, Turkey and started its operations in 2008. The representative offices of the Bank at Tehran, Iran and Karachi, Pakistan are fully functional. The current shareholders are now six members of ECO, namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan and Turkey.

The ETDB offers a range of medium-to-long term products i.e. project finance, corporate finance, trade finance and loans to support small and medium-sized enterprises directly or through financial intermediaries to private and state owned entities. In this context, sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture, energy, transport and communications, which have potential impact on the development of the member states, are given special attention.

ECO Workshop on Cybercrimes held in Tehran

ECO CHRONICLE A workshop on Cybercrimes was held in Tehran on at the International Police Academy of the Islamic Republic of Iran (AIPA) with the participation of representatives from six ECO Member States namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Turkey.

The session of November 3-7, 2019 was co-organized by the Economic Cooperation Organization, the National Central Bureau (NCB) of Tehran and AIPA to inform participants on means to combat cyber-attacks and mobile

hacking. In addition, data collection methods, skimming and infiltration test tools, OSINT (open-source intelligence), crime scene investigation, cyber digital forensics, digital evidence lab, and data excavation were also discussed.

During the session, ECO Deputy Secretary General, Huseyin Avni Bicakli said that the Organization has been tasked with coordinating collective regional efforts in the fight against organized crime within the Region with a view to promote peace and stability as one of the prerequisites for economic development.

During the meeting Iran's Deputy Head of Interpol, Kazem Mojtabaei, said that various training sessions have been delivered to different countries in Iran and expressed hope that effective cooperation within the region on cyber-crimes can assist law enforcement officials in identifying international cyber criminals.



ECO Railway Heads Meeting held in Istanbul

ECO
CHRONICLE

The 14th Meeting of Heads of Railway Authorities of ECO Member States and the 8th Railway Committee of TTCC (MHRA) was held on 20-21 June 2019 in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan to evaluate the operationalization of existing railway routes by completing rehabilitation and construction of missing links.

The Meeting which was inaugurated by the First Deputy Minister of Transport of Republic of Tajikistan, Sohrab Mirzozoda saw High level Delegations from the ECO Member States updated the Meeting on prospective progress on railway development, at national level and regional level. Official representatives of International Organizations, including ESCAP, IsDB, ADB, UIC, OTIF and UNECE contributed



to the Meeting by sharing views, suggestions and constructive proposals on the betterment of regional railway connectivity, common access, and safety.

The ECO Secretariat was represented by Director for Transport and Communications, Ahmad Saffari, who in turn welcomed the delegates to the session which in line with recommendations of Turkmenbashi Declaration adopted by the 9th Meeting of Ministers of Transport of ECO Member States (1-3 May 2019, Turkmenistan) noted considerable progress on railway projects: Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Azerbaijan)-Astara (Iran) and Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul.

Pre-operationalization steps for the existing railway routes have been developed: (i) on KTI, the need to ensure that the implementation of the Study Project on KTI be realized timely, in line



with its set schedule was highlighted and the Inter-Governmental Agreement was said to be in place for endorsing Common Management Mechanism for the route; (ii) on Istanbul-Almaty & Bandar Abbas-Almaty routes, no sharp issues were revealed for regular run of container trains and, thus, pre-operationalization plan was agreed to be put up for endorsement by the upcoming meeting of en-route countries.

The construction of KTAI railway project was discussed, in detail, as were new routes designed to improve regional railway connectivity in the ECO region. In line with recommendations of Dushanbe Communiqué (17-18 April 2018, Tajikistan) new ways of widening the ECO regional connectivity by rail were discussed. From this stance, a new railway project "Afghanistan-Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China" was endorsed for implementation.

The need for transforming ECO's existing railway routes into economic spaces with structured integrated economic and free trade hubs with production sources in close proximity with supply chains so that railway services could further maximize on large scale spillover effects of such zones has been emphasized.

The Meeting also agreed to cooperate on railway passenger transport. Prerequisite arrangements for the proposed railway transport mode were quoted by Iran, Azerbaijan and others. The passenger tourist train was said as tested in the direction of Mashhad (Iran)-Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) and those ECO countries that have an interest in improving their tourism potentials by transport means were welcomed. The participants suggested issuing ECO Railway Maps, Annual Railway Transport Statistical Year Book and compile ECO Railway Directory for the purposes of information and knowledge sharing.

The subsequent 15th Meeting of Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/9th Railway Committee Meeting of TTCC was agreed to be held in Iran in 2021.

ECO Confobition on Health Tourism

held in Ardabil



ECO
CHRONICLE

The Second ECO Confobition (Conference + Exhibition) on Health Tourism was held on 18-20 June, 2019, in North Western city of Ardabil, Mohaghegh Ardabili University and Ardabil Exhibition Center.

The event was hosted by the Iran Chamber of Commerce Industries Mines and Agriculture in coordination with ECO Secretariat, ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI), Iran International Healthcare Association (IIHA), Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization and Ministry of Health and Medical Education. Almost 150 domestic and foreign guests from 8 world countries were present in this Confobition. The 3-day event which commenced on Tuesday had been attended by the a few ECO Member States namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan.

Also the presence of non-ECO representatives at the event was glorious. Including Germany, Georgia, Greece, India, Iraq, Malaysia, Oman, Russian.

ECO SG Takes Part in 18th NAM Summit



ECO CHRONICLE On invitation of the Foreign Minister of Republic of Azerbaijan the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has participated in the 18th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in Baku on October 25-26, 2019.

Held under the theme "Upholding Bandung principles to ensure a concerted and adequate response to the challenges of the contemporary world", the Summit was attended by representatives of nearly 160 countries including 25 Heads of State and Government as well as heads of various international organizations.

The Summit which was formally inaugurated by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev saw Azerbaijan assume presidency of the movement for a three-year term from 2019 to 2022.

On the sidelines of the Summit, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour held talks with Foreign Minister of Republic of Azerbaijan and the Secretary General of the Turkic Council. During his meeting with the Foreign Minister of Republic of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov, the ECO Secretary General expressed ECO's deep appreciation to the Government of Republic

of Azerbaijan for the country's continued support and contributions in the activities of the ECO. While mentioning H.E. Mammadyarov's proposal on enhancing regional cooperation in tourism sector, Dr. Soleimanpour informed the Foreign Minister about the successful organization of the recent ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism held in Tajikistan. He also invited the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan to participate in the upcoming 24th ECO Council of Ministers scheduled to be held in Antalya on 9 November 2019.

The Foreign Minister reaffirmed Azerbaijan's support to the ECO and Secretary General's efforts to achieving the regional cooperation in the diverse fields.

In the wake of the Comprehensive Work Programme signed between the ECO and Turkic Council in April 2019, the ECO Secretary General also met with the Secretary General of the Turkic Council, Baghdad Amreyev. The two sides shared their views and conclusion was made to initiate a joint project on Tourism shortly. Besides, the two Secretary Generals reassured their commitments in order to further strengthen cooperative relations between the two organizations in other areas of mutual interest.

ECO SG, European Commission meet in Tehran



The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has met with the European Commission's Deputy Head of Unit for Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia, Micha Ramakers in Tehran to discuss avenues mutual interest and cooperation.

The meeting of April 18, 2019 saw the ECO Secretary General outlining the priorities, objectives and mission of the organization in favor of promoting economic solidarity within the region. ECO is a geo-economic organization and there are various areas of mutual interest where both the organizations could reciprocally contribute to accomplish their respective objectives, he said.

While appreciating the growing role of the European Commission in promoting economic development and social change in different regions of the world, Dr Soleimanpour highlighted the possible scenarios for future cooperation of the two organizations including joint projects in regional connectivity, disaster risk reduction, sustainable clean energy and climate change. European Commission's Programmes for Central Asia, restructuring of Afghanistan and combating drug production & trafficking were also discussed. The Secretary General also stressed the need to adopt necessary measures to develop a mechanism for enhanced cooperation between the two organizations in the coming period.

The Head of the European Commission's delegation, Mr. Micha Ramakers appreciated

the initiatives launched by ECO in different sectors aimed at promoting economic cooperation and regional integration among the member states. He also stated some of the areas of possible cooperation for which there existed a lot of scope and complementarities and in this regard he share the ECO Secretary General's view on potential



joint activities in regional connectivity, disaster risk reduction, sustainable clean energy, restructuring of Afghanistan and combating drug production & trafficking. He further expressed his views that both organizations can benefit from their respective expertise and potential in the mentioned areas to achieve the common objective of socio-economic development in the region and beyond.

Prior to the meeting, ECO Deputy Secretary General, Huseyin Avni Bicakli, underscored different cooperation areas within the Organization, including transport and communications, trade and investment, agriculture and industrial development, energy and environment, human resource development, economic research and information technology.

ECO SG, Azerbaijan FM meet in Baku

ECO
CHRONICLE

The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has met with the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov on the sidelines of the 5th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in Baku on May 2, 2019.

The Forum which was inaugurated by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, examined the critical role of Intercultural Dialogue as an actionable strategy for building human solidarity and helping localities counter the violence and discrimination in diverse communities.

During the meeting the Secretary General congratulated the Foreign Minister for the successful organization of the 5th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue and discussed ECO's recent initiatives such as the ECO reform process. He also said that in order to realize this important strategic goal of the ECO vision 2025, ECO is in the process of developing a Regional Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism and at the operational level, ECO is endeavoring to organize a "Tour Operators Network in ECO Region." The role of ECO Trade and Development Bank (ETDB) was on the agenda with Dr.

Soleimanpour stating that as the primary objective of the Bank is to provide financial resources for regional projects, the utilization of financial resources of the Bank in transport and infrastructure sector could be of use to the ECO region.

On Regional Connectivity, the ECO Secretary General said that progress on construction of Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) rail-



way line which is an important part of International North - South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and East-North corridor linking the ECO region to European region through Azerbaijan is of valuable importance within the Organization's objectives.

In the Energy field, the ECO Secretary General referred establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM) as pivotal and promising ECO project initiative. He added that Azerbaijan with its huge electricity potential, could take advantage of this ECO initiative by exporting its excess electricity production. He also informed the Minister about the progress on establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre (CECECO).

The Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan underlined the significance of ECO as regional economic organization and in order to enhance commercial activities in the region, said that connectivity is a primary and the most important component. Mr. Mammadyarov reaffirmed Azerbaijan's commitment to the implementation of regional economic projects within the ECO region. Highlighting the regional projects initiated by Azerbaijan, he was of the view that other ECO member states might benefit from those projects.



ECO SG takes part in first Asia Pacific Innovation Forum in Tehran



The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Hadi Soleimanpour has participated in the 1st Asia Pacific Innovation Forum (APIF) on June 10-12, 2019 in Tehran.

The Forum jointly organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was held under the theme of "Technology Start-ups for Sustainable Development" in recognition of technology being a key means of implementation for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Forum was attended by the representatives of international agencies including UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as well as the representatives of more than 50 countries.

The ECO Secretary General participated in the Ministerial Level Opening Session of the



Forum held on 11 June 2019, and addressed the session. His address focused on the role of technology for economic growth and sustainable development. In this regard, he particularly emphasized the role of industrial revolution 4.0 and AI in terms of their immense impact on human life style. He, also, underlined ECO's efforts for seeking collaboration with its member states

to develop a regional blueprint for industrial revolution 4.0 as laid down in ECO Vision 2025 and the importance of start-ups and their flexibility in terms of closing inefficiency gap in agricultural sector felt throughout the region and closing up R&D gap between the developed and developing countries touching upon the comparative advantages of the ECO region.

On the sidelines of the Forum, he also exchanged views on common interest with various key dignitaries including Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, the Executive Secretary of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP).

UNGA Adopts UN-ECO Cooperation Resolution



ECO CHRONICLE The United Nations General Assembly has adopted a resolution on Cooperation between the United Nations (UN) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) on July 25, 2019.

The resolution covers various aspects of UN-ECO relationship and provides a framework for furthering the cooperation with the UN system including its specialized agencies, funds and programmes, covering a

wide range of areas of relevance to ECO, such as trade, transport, energy, agriculture, industry, human resource development and Tourism.

The Assembly encouraged all the relevant international financial and specialized institutions, taking into account the key role played by the railway and road networks of the region as land bridges between Asia and Europe, to consider participating in the implementation of the decision of the 9th Meeting of the ECO Ministers of Transport held on 3rd May, 2018 in Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan.

The Assembly also invited the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Trade Centre to develop strategies for the member States of the ECO for trade liberalization and the promotion of foreign direct investment to facilitate the global and regional integration of their economies.



ECO SG takes part in First Caspian Economic Forum

ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has participated in the First Caspian Economic Forum on August 11-12, 2019 in National Tourist Zone of Avaza in Turkmenistan.

The First Caspian Economic Forum was inaugurated by the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov with participation of the representatives of the governments of the "Caspian Five," Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Novruz Mammadov, First Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Eshaq Jahangiri, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan Askar Mamin and the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Dmitry Medvedev, as well as and Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria Boyko Borissov.

The ECO Secretary General addressed the Plenary Session of the



Forum held on 12 August 2019. He expressed his confidence that First Caspian Economic Forum will provide guidance and new direction to move on to the higher echelon of economic trajectory and collective uplift and well being of the region. He further underlined that the Agenda of the First Caspian Economic Forum 2019 is fully relevant to the needs of ECO region and have far-reaching impact; it touches upon the crucial economic issues and challenges the region is facing today.

He informed the plenary on the ECO potentials and priorities, including trade, transport, tourism and energy and highlights the latest achievements of Organization in 2018-2019.



ECO SG, UNESCAP Executive Secretary meet in Tehran

ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Hadi Soleimanpour has met with the Executive Secretary of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP), Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana on June 11, 2019 in Tehran.

The meeting which took place on the sidelines of the 1st Asia Pacific Innovation Forum (APIF), saw the Secretary General and the Executive Secretary hold candid discussions on issues of mutual interest and focused on ways and means to enhance constructive cooperation between ECO and UNESCAP.

The Secretary General briefed the Executive Secretary about the achievements of ECO and highlighted the key features of ECO Vision 2025. The ECO Secretary General noted the increasingly important role of ESCAP at regional and sub-regional levels including the ECO region and appreciated the regional commission's support for ECO's initiative to commercialize the railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran (KTI). The

Secretary General added that ECO Secretariat is ready to work closely with ESCAP on the common priority areas at all levels including policy coordination and project implementation.

The Executive Secretary of ESCAP appreciated the initiatives launched by ECO in different sectors aimed at utilizing the collective potential of the region to achieve sustainable development goals and promoting regional integration among the member states. She assured the Secretary General of her organization's support for the realization of common goals of socio-economic development in the region and beyond.

Taking note of the overlapping membership and convergence in objectives, the two sides stressed on the need to adopt necessary measures to further strengthen the cooperative relationship between ECO and UNESCAP. In this regard, both sides also expressed their readiness to review and update the existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organizations.



ECO SG, SCO SG meet in Turkmenistan



The Secretary General of the ECO, Hadi Soleimanpour has met with Secretary General of Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Vladimir Norov on August 12, 2019 in the Caspian Sea city of Turkmenbashi.

During the constructive conversation, Vladimir Norov informed his counterpart about the SCO's activities and shared the Organization's long-term plans in follow-up to the Bishkek summit in June 2019.

The Secretary-General also expressed willingness to cooperate with the ECO



in economic, cultural and humanitarian affairs and noted that the forum's international platform contributes not only to transforming the Caspian region into one of the world's largest transit hubs but also to cooperation between international institutions through building a positive dialogue in trade and investment.

The parties agreed to diligently promote matters of mutually advantageous cooperation, including by developing an action plan for implementing the Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by the organization's secretariats in 2007.

ECO SG, Head of Institute of International Energy Studies of Iran meet in Tehran



The Secretary General of the ECO, Hadi

Soleimanpour has met with Managing Director of the International Energy Studies (IIES), Ali Mobini-Dehkordi at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran on June 3, 2019.

During the meeting the Secretary General briefed the delegation on the ECO's priorities, objectives and key challenges faced by the Organization for promoting oil and gas cooperation in the region. Dr. Soleimanpour stressed on the need to develop a mechanism for enhanced cooperation between the two organizations by providing the list of possible activities and projects that could be politically implementable, economically viable and financially bankable. He proposed IIES to be involved in and contribute

to the forthcoming development of the fundamentally new 5-year ECO Strategy/Plan of Action on Energy Cooperation. ECO Secretary General also initiated the establishment of the network of energy research centers and think tanks in the ECO Region and convening its meeting in 2020.

Both sides agreed to consider the possibility of engaging in a cooperation framework between ECO Secretariat and IIES upon the progress in joint activities, as well as exchange of research papers related to ECO Region's energy cooperation opportunities, which may further serve to finding certain synergies and complementarities.

The managing Director also met with Deputy Secretary General, Huseyin Avni Bicakli, who highlighted the Secretariat's interest in engagement with a wide range of energy stakeholders within the ECO Region and beyond, including think-tanks and research centers through streamlined initiatives. As energy is one of the priority areas of cooperation within ECO, Ambassador Bicakli appreciated the interest of the International Energy Studies (IIES) in collaboration with ECO and welcomed any proposals for joint cooperation. Also present at the meeting was ECO Director of Energy, Minerals and Environment, Fuad Farzalibeyov who elaborated on recent energy trends and developments within the ECO region, particularly the ongoing transformation of its energy agenda towards sustainable energy.

Managing Director of IIES underscored the importance of the integrated approach and convergence in energy collaboration in the framework of ECO. In this regard, he expressed the Institute's readiness to support ECO's energy activities and engage in energy research and education cooperation. The IIES acts as an affiliated research body of the Ministry of Petroleum of the Islamic Republic of Iran and is recognized as this Ministry's hub for strategic researches.



ECO Deputy SG Takes Part in Intl. Aral Sea Conference in Uzbekistan



ECO CHRONICLE ECO Deputy Secretary General, Huseyin Avni Bicakli has participated at the High-Level International Conference "Aral Sea Region - Zone of Environmental Innovations and Technologies" in the Uzbek city of Nukus on October 24-25, 2019.

The event cosponsored by the Government of Uzbekistan and the United Nations was attended by 250 participants from 28 countries as well as representatives of international organizations, academia, civil society and the private sector. The deputies of the Senate and the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, senior representatives of the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade, the Ministry of Finance, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan also attended the session. In his speech to the session ECO Deputy Secretary General, Huseyin Avni Bicakli highlighted the role of the Organization in environmental issues and expressed ECO's commitment to the environmental problems of ECO region including the Aral Sea and continued regional cooperation on the environment, climate, and the joint management of water in its region.

"ECO is always ready to work with international and regional donors who wants to support the sustainable development in Central

Asia, to develop and implement environmentally friendly projects, to increase synergy and complementarity of actions of individual partners for achieving maximum efficiency, to create opportunities of international cooperation in the donor assistance activities in the region, to the consolidate efforts of the governmental and international institutions," he added.

For the first time the idea of transforming Area Sea Area to a zone of environmental innovations and technologies was raised by the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev during the Summit of Heads of the Founder States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea on August 24, 2019 in Turkmenbashi city.

The Government of Uzbekistan and the UN agreed on a draft special resolution of the UN General Assembly on declaring the Aral Sea region as the zone of environmental innovations and technology. The Communique of the High-level International Conference called for targeted, multifaceted and systemic interactions between the states of the region, UN structures, financial and donor organizations to ensure the development of programmes and projects aimed at addressing the most acute problems in the Aral Sea region through attracting innovation and modern technologies.



ECO DSG Attends Regional WHO Committee in Tehran

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ECO
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Fifth Intl.

ECO-Silk Road Food Festival held in Zanjan

ECO
CHRONICLE

The Fifth
International

Economic Cooperation Organization -Silk Road Food Festival was held on April 18-21, 2019, in the northwestern Iranian city of Zanjan. The annual festival, hosted by Zanjan Provincial Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization and organized in cooperation with ECO Secretariat, seeks to celebrate the flavors and gastronomy of the region.

The festival was attended by the ECO Member States and Silk Road members including Afghanistan, Austria, Croatia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Indonesia, Oman, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan, as well as Commercial representatives of Russian.

The ECO Secretariat delegation including Deputy Secretary General, Kanan Nazarov, Director of Agriculture, Industry and Tourism, Memduh Unal, and Program Officer of Industry and Tourism, Nasrin Esmaeili participated in the event.

During the opening ceremony ECO Deputy Secretary General, Kanan Nazarov while emphasizing on the potential of the ECO region for being one of the major tourism destinations in the world, stated that ECO region is between and nearby two important global tourism markets Europe and China and revival of the Ancient Silk Road would contribute to the development of tourism industry in the ECO Region.



He further stated that more than 60 million International tourists travelled to ECO region in 2017 which constitutes 4.5 percent of total tourist movements in the World. He also highlighted that in the ECO region more than 3 million individuals directly and 6.2 million indirectly were engaged in tourism economy in 2017 and Tourism revenues of the region were around 42.7 billion dollars in 2017.

Mr. Nazarov also mentioned that ECO Secretariat is mandated by the Member States to promote tourism industry in the region through developing proper strategies and policies. In this regard ECO Secretariat prepared draft of the new projects in Tourism Sector and he believed that all ECO Member States will cooperate on these Projects to promote tourism in the region.

ECO DSG attends Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process in Ankara

ECO CHRONICLE ECO Deputy Secretary General, Huseyin Avni Bicakli has participated at the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process Senior Officials Meeting in Ankara on June 25, 2019.

While speaking at the meeting the Deputy Secretary General reiterated continuous support of the Economic Cooperation Organization regarding the regional and international efforts to assist the Afghan people and government. He also underlined the importance of several ECO projects in this regard namely the "ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan (EAPA)", "Modalities for the Operation of ECO Fund for Afghanistan", "ECO Regional Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction", "Construction of Railway from China to Europe through Kyrgyz Republic-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI)", "Establishment of road transport corridor between Islamabad-Tehran-Afghanistan-Istanbul", "Establishment of ECOPOL", "Establishment of ECO Regional Center for Cooperation of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsman", "Capacity Building Programme on Drug and Transnational Organized Crime", "Establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market".



The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) was founded on November 2nd, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Heart of Asia provides a platform for sincere and results-oriented regional cooperation by placing Afghanistan at its center, in recognition of the fact that a secure and stable Afghanistan is vital to the prosperity of the Heart of Asia region.

This platform was established to address the shared challenges and interests of Afghanistan and its neighbors and regional partners. The Heart of Asia is comprised of 15 participating countries, 17 supporting countries, and 12 supporting regional and international organizations.

In this meeting, the participating countries declared their support for the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process and emphasized furtherance of regional collaboration to jointly combat terrorism.

Additionally, it was decided that the next Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process Senior Officials Meeting, hosted by Turkey, will be held in Istanbul in late 2019. And it was decided as well the next Ministerial Meeting to be held in New York in September 2019 in the side-line of UNGA.





ECO Takes Part in Global Regional Sustainable Energy Centers Network Meeting



The ECO Director of Energy, Minerals and Environment of ECO Secretariat, Mr. Fuad Farzalibeyov has participated in the 4th Steering Committee Meeting of the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centers (GN-SEC) was held on October 25, 2019 in Accra, Ghana.

The GN-SEC represents an innovative south-south and triangular multi-stakeholder partnership to accelerate the energy and climate transformation in developing countries. Since 2010, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) assists the regional economic communities/organizations and their member states in the establishment and operation of regional sustainable energy promotion centers. The GN-SEC is currently becoming a formalized global platform to advocate for SDG-7, SDG-9 and SDG-13 and joint interests in international policy processes, and is hosted by UNIDO in Vienna, Austria.

The 4th Steering Committee Meeting brought together the GN-SEC members, supporting partners, and the representatives of international organizations. The Meeting marked the involvement of new members to the GN-SEC process, including ECO. Its proceedings addressed the achievements and next milestones of GN-SEC and its members, lessons learned from different regions across the globe,

and underscored the partnership opportunities within the GN-SEC. The Meeting also deliberated on the potential GN-SEC working groups and programmes.

Director of Energy, Minerals and Environment of ECO Secretariat, Mr. Fuad Farzalibeyov participated at the Meeting. ECO Director delivered the presentation on the Preparatory Phase of the Project of the establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre, being jointly implemented by ECO and UNIDO. Having briefed the audience on the background, objectives, recent status, expected benefits and impacts of the above Project in his presentation, ECO Director characterized the ECO Clean Energy Centre as a promising future element of GN-SEC being implemented across the globe that could complement and potentially interconnect other Centres within GN-SEC framework. He highlighted that the establishment of the Centre will be an explicit example on how the countries mostly endowed with hydrocarbons resolve on a regional level on contributing to the sustainable energy transition. He stated that the Project has been recently launched and is currently underway. ECO expects to successfully finalize the Preparatory Phase presumably in February/March of 2020, which will enable it to proceed to the next - Operational Phase of the Project.

ECO Secretariat takes part in World Health Summit in Kish



The ECO Director of Human Resources and Sustainable Development, Kaan Sayin has participated in the 7th World Health Summit on April 29-30, 2019, in northern Iranian Island of Kish.

The World Health Summit is the annual conference of the M8 Alliance of Academic Health Centers, Universities and National Academies. Through the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) for Health, it is organized in collaboration with all National Academies of Medicine and Science.

The World Health Summit aims to improve health all over the planet, catalyzing that process through collaboration and open dialogue, and steering tomorrow's agenda to improve research, education, healthcare, and policy outcomes. The program commenced with opening speeches of H.E. Es'hag Jahangiri,



First Vice-President, I.R. of Iran, and H.E. Dr. Saeed Namaki, Minister of Health & Medical Education, I.R. Iran, and then continued with many sessions on various topics; planetary health, climate change, medical education and health in the 21st century, global health in the transitional world, health in uncertain situation, mental health and non-communicable diseases as well as sustainable health development.

HRSD Director of ECO, Kaan Sayin participated in the opening ceremony and some further sessions of the program. He had the opportunity to meet the high level officials from the Ministry of Health & Medical Education of I.R. Iran, and WHO representatives. The event in particular, enabled the presentation of the newly revised draft ECO Plan of Action on Health, Minister of Healthcare of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Yelzhan Birtanov.





The
9th

International Congress on Health in Emergencies and Disasters was held on June 15-16, 2019 in Tehran. The Congress was organized by Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and among the participants were the academia, national and international researchers, stake-

holders from public and private sectors as well as representatives from UN and other international agencies in Tehran.

The Congress was inaugurated by Dr. Saeed Namaki, Minister of Health, Treatment & Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and then various topics were raised by participants in separate panels and meetings within 2 days in this International Congress.

At the panel under the theme of "Challenges of Disaster Risk Governance of the Sendai Framework" which was organized for International Agencies, ECO Director for Human Resources and Sustainable Development, Mr. Kaan Sayin, briefed the congress about ECO tasks, programs and progress on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) which is aligned with the Sendai framework on DRR. Mr. Sayin has also emphasized on the strong evidence that reveals disasters make poverty worse in the ECO region and told that, it is more likely

ECO Secretariat takes part in International Health Congress in Tehran

that the victims of these disasters will suffer more disasters in the future, unless proper measures are taken. Upon mentioning some regional challenges of DRR governance, he then concluded that the ECO Secretariat is committed to enhancing the implementation of the Sendai Framework on DRR to support the lives, livelihoods and critical infra-


structures of the region against disasters.

Dr. Asadi Lari, Deputy Minister on International Affairs at the Ministry of Health, briefed the audience about UN activities and achievements regarding humanitarian support to around 5 million Iranian people affected by the recent floods (March- April 2019 in 26 provinces of Iran).

The 2 days of 9th International Congress on Health in Emergencies and Disasters, concentrated on infrastructure, strategies, regulatory and legal requirements for disaster risk governance, the role of coordination, cooperation and coherence in the establishment of disaster risk governance, community based disaster risk governance and clarifying the role of community based and religious - social organizations, resiliency and the role of health - social components in sustainable development, challenges ahead pertaining to health, emergency situations and various aspects of disasters.



ECO participates in the Baku International Energy Charter Forum

 On the invitation of International Energy Charter, ECO Secretariat participated in the Baku International Energy Charter Forum held in Baku, Azerbaijan on October 23-24, 2019.

The forum was jointly organized by the Ministry of Energy of Azerbaijan and the International Energy Charter on the theme of "Enabling Energy Transformation through Technology and Policy Innovations". More than 200 participants, including Ministers, high-level officials and leading experts from Member and Observer countries, international organizations, the energy industry and academia participated in the Forum.

The opening remarks were delivered by

Minister of Energy of Azerbaijan, H.E. Parviz Shahbazov and Energy Charter Secretary General, Dr Urban Rusnák. This was followed by the high-level addresses from the representatives of the governments and international organizations. The Speakers highlighted different approaches to facilitate the energy transition while industry representatives shared their best practices and lessons learnt in terms of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.

The Forum aimed at discussing the role of regulatory frameworks and technologies in promoting sustainable energy. The ECO Secretariat was represented by Assistant





Director for International Relations, Muhammad Farooq.

During his speech to the session, Mr. Farooq briefed the session that Energy represents one of the highest priorities within ECO and ECO Vision 2025, a major strategic document of ECO, lays down "the enhancement of energy security and sustainability through wider energy access and trade" as an ECO's strategic objective. Inspired by this objective, the Vision has identified the "deployment of environmental-friendly energy technologies" and "promotion of energy investments through advocating innovative incentives" among key expected outcomes, to be achieved in the coming years.

He also informed the audience that ECO Region is endowed with the one third of the global hydrocarbon resources and it is one of the key suppliers of oil and natural gas to the world markets contributing to the international energy security. However, despite the rich oil and gas resources, the energy agenda of ECO has been undergoing the paradigm shift towards transformation to sustainable energy over the past few years.

He also underscored the significance of

establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre as a catalyst of both South-South and North-South cooperation dimensions as well as facilitator of technology and know-how transfer in the ECO Region. He also mentioned that establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM), aims at harmonizing and merging the electricity markets in our Region, has been identified as a key area for ECO-Energy Charter cooperation. He assured that ECO, as an important regional partner for global agendas, stands ready for any dialogue with international partners for accomplishment of this goal.

On the sidelines of the forum, the ECO representative also had the opportunity to meet the Secretary General of the International Energy Charter and high level officials of the various countries. During his meeting with Secretary General International Energy Charter, both sides stressed the importance of strengthening cooperative relations in the energy sector. In this regard, the Secretary General of the International Energy Charter also assured Mr. Farooq to organize a training/capacity building workshop for ECO Member States in the first quarter of 2020.



On the invitation of the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, a Representative of the ECO Secretariat attended the Geneva meeting on November 7-8, 2019.

While the meeting was organized by Convention Secretariat on Tobacco Control and the Protocol to eliminate illicit trade in the Tobacco products (the Secretariat), the Representatives of Intergovernmental Organizations from African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), Southern African Custom Union (SACU), Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also attended the meeting to raise awareness about both treaties to regional integration bodies and at the same time identify potential avenues for collaboration on this issue.

During a 2-days interactive meeting, the Convention Secretariat, which was created during the first Conference of the parties in 2003, highlighted the activities it had been making under the assigned task. Currently, there are 181 Parties of the WHO framework Convention on Tobacco Control including ECO Member States, covering more than 90% of the world population. The ECO Secretariat was also advised by the Convention Secretariat to work on accession to Conference of Parties (COP-Convention)) and Member of Parties (MOP-Protocol) as observer. To date 28 International intergovernmental organizations and 21 non-governmental organizations, accredited as observers to the COP, are committed to the purpose of the WHO Framework Convention

ECO takes part at WHO Tobacco Control

Meeting in Geneva



FCTC

WHO FRAMEWORK CONVENTION
ON TOBACCO CONTROL


on Tobacco Control, disregarding any sort of funding that has vested interest in the tobacco industry.

The ECO Representative Mr. Mojtaba Faraji briefed the meeting about the ECO Region and Member States as well as aims and objectives enshrined in the Izmir Treaty. While, explaining the ECO rules of procedures for getting observer status in other organizations, he underscored the specific segments of ECO Vision 2025 regarding trade, environmental and health issues which

are considerable by FCTC and Protocol of elimination of illicit trade of Tobacco products, as well. The ECO Representative also advised the Convention Secretariat to extend its support to IGOs for preparing regional frame works aligned with WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products for effective implementation of global agenda for Tobacco Control and Illicit Trade of its products.

The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of WHO, adopted by the World Health Assembly on May 21, 2003 that entered into force on February 27, 2005. It has since become one of the most rapidly and widely embraced treaties in the history of the United Nations. The WHO FCTC, developed in response to the globalization of the tobacco epidemic, is an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health. The Convention represents a milestone for the promotion of public health and provides new legal dimensions for international health cooperation.

ECO Secretariat Takes Part in UNCITRAL Meeting in New York

 On the invitation of the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), ECO representative from the Trade Section for the first time participated in its Working Group-I Meeting themed Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), 32nd Session, which was held on March 25-29, 2019 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It was well attended and contributed by the experts and representatives of the Member States, Observers and International and Regional Organizations.

The event was organized in two segments; First, the Colloquium on "Contractual networks and other forms of inter-firm Cooperation" with the aim to explore legal tools for facilitating/fostering MSMEs' cooperation by sharing of resources and enhancing access to businesses having a relatively low level of initial capital, low entry and exit costs, etc. Participants shared popular forms of business entities and cooperation modes in their countries. In this part, experts from governments, private sector, academia and the non-profit sector exchanged views on challenges in an informal environment.

Second, in the light of discussions in the first part and in furtherance of the previous work/draft of the UNCITRAL, the Working Group Meeting discussed the relevance of models developed and deliberated/ revised Draft Text for Legislative Guidelines for the UN Limited Liability Organizations (UNLLO) enabling legal environment for MSMEs in different countries. The Working Group expressed that the current draft



text of the Guide was a classical corporate model and after extensive discussion on several concepts and aspects of the UNLLO, revised the draft text and propounded recommendations related thereto.

Delegates from Member and Observer States and those intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations invited to participate attended this part of the event.

Noting that MSMEs are the backbone of the economies especially of the developing ones such as in the ECO region and representing 95 percent of the firms in the world in this category and providing nearly 70 per cent of the employment, there is greater need to develop legislations guidelines to promote and enhance potential of MSMEs to capture greater share in local production and exports.

These endeavors provide an enabling environment for better compete the markets leading to sustainable growth in the national economies and for realization of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set for 2030.



ECO Principles for Sustainable Tourism Development

Memduh UNAL
Director of Agriculture, Industry and Tourism

Introduction

ECO Region with an area of more than 8 million square kilometers stretching from central to south and to south-west Asia and a population of more than 480 million inhabitants is well-known for its natural beauty, as well as diversity of its historical-cultural heritage. In this respect the region has a significant potential to be one of the major tourism destinations in the world. The Region is one of the world's richest in terms of historical and cultural heritage

and echoes memories of the ancient Silk Road.

The honorable Presidents of the ECO Member States adopted the ECO Vision 2025 and its Implementation Framework during the 13th ECO Summit on 1 March 2017 in Islamabad. Within the ECO Vision 2025, the tourism industry has gained a very positive attention from the all ECO Member States and it has become a priority development field for the coming decade.

ECO regions is located among the top tourism spender coun-





tries except America Region. Among the east neighbors of ECO; China and Korea, west neighbors; European Countries, north neighbor; Russia and South neighbors; Gulf Countries are listed top tourism spenders. In

2017, these countries tourism expenditures more than 1.1 billion dollar and international departures from these countries reached to 830 million. Less than 20 million of this travels came to ECO Region.

Table: International Expenditures From Top Tourism Spenders

(Billion Dollar)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
China	54.9	72.6	102.0	128.6	227.3	249.8	250.1	257.7
United States of America	110.0	116.4	129.9	130.1	140.6	150.0	160.9	173.9
Germany	90.9	99.8	96.2	102.7	101.7	85.3	87.4	97.6
United Kingdom	66.7	70.3	71.4	81.6	85.9	90.0	87.8	86.0
France	46.7	55.5	50.1	52.4	58.4	47.7	48.8	50.3
Australia	27.9	34.0	35.2	35.2	32.5	28.6	32.9	39.5
Canada	37.0	41.2	43.0	43.1	41.7	36.4	34.6	38.2
Russian Federation	30.2	37.3	48.1	59.5	55.4	38.4	27.7	35.6
Korea, Republic of	20.8	22.2	22.9	24.5	26.1	28.0	29.8	33.4
Italy	26.9	28.7	26.2	27.0	28.9	24.4	25.0	27.9
Hong Kong (China)	17.4	19.0	20.1	21.2	22.0	23.1	24.1	25.4
Singapore	18.7	21.5	23.0	24.4	25.5	23.7	23.8	24.5
Spain	16.9	17.4	15.4	16.4	18.0	17.3	19.3	22.3
Belgium	18.9	20.7	22.4	24.5	26.4	21.1	21.5	23.0
Netherlands	19.0	20.7	19.7	21.0	23.7	20.2	20.5	22.0
Brazil	19.3	25.1	26.2	29.3	30.0	20.4	17.1	23.0
India	10.5	13.7	14.1	13.9	17.5	17.7	19.2	21.9
Japan	39.3	39.8	41.0	32.2	28.6	23.3	25.8	25.2
Taiwan Province of China	10.7	11.7	12.4	14.2	16.0	17.4	19.2	20.5
United Arab Emirates								
Saudi Arabia	22.1	18.2	18.0	18.6	25.1	20.4	17.7	18.7
Sweden	14.9	15.4	15.6	15.3	15.8	14.4	14.9	17.1
Switzerland	13.5	16.5	18.0	19.1	19.9	18.8	18.8	19.5
Norway	14.7	17.0	18.1	20.1	20.2	16.5	16.4	17.8
Kuwait	7.1	8.9	10.1	10.6	12.3	13.1	13.2	13.7

Source: UNWTO, WTTC

Table: International Departures From Top Tourism Spenders

(Millions)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
China	57.4	70.3	83.2	98.2	116.6	127.9	135.1	143.0
ECO's Share	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
United States of America	61.1	59.2	60.7	61.3	68.2	74.2	80.2	87.7
ECO's Share	1.3%	1.6%	1.6%	1.4%	1.2%	1.2%	0.6%	0.4%
Germany			82.7	87.5	83.0	83.7	91.0	92.4
ECO's Share			6.3%	5.9%	6.5%	6.9%	4.5%	4.1%
United Kingdom	55.6	56.8	56.5	56.1	58.4	64.2	69.4	72.8
ECO's Share	5.4%	5.2%	5.0%	4.6%	4.6%	4.0%	2.6%	2.4%
France	25.0	26.2	25.5	26.1	27.9	26.6	26.5	29.1
ECO's Share	3.8%	4.5%	4.2%	4.2%	3.9%	3.3%	2.3%	2.3%
Australia	7.1	7.8	8.2	9.1	9.5	9.8	10.4	10.9
ECO's Share	2.2%	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%	2.3%	2.5%	1.1%	0.9%
Canada	28.7	30.5	32.3	33.0	33.5	32.3	31.3	33.1
ECO's Share	0.7%	0.9%	0.8%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.4%	0.3%
Russian Federation	39.3	43.7	47.8	54.1	45.9	34.6	31.7	39.6
ECO's Share	12.7%	15.2%	13.0%	13.9%	16.7%	19.2%	11.9%	20.0%
Korea, Republic of	12.5	12.7	13.7	14.8	16.1	19.3	22.4	26.5
ECO's Share	1.2%	1.5%	1.5%	1.7%	2.0%	1.5%	0.8%	0.8%
Italy	29.8	29.3	28.8	26.3	26.9	27.5	29.1	31.8
ECO's Share	2.4%	2.7%	2.6%	2.9%	2.8%	2.1%	0.9%	0.9%
Hong Kong (China)	84.4	84.8	85.3	84.4	84.5	89.1	91.8	91.3
ECO's Share	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Singapore	7.3	7.8	8.0	8.6	8.9	9.1	9.5	9.9
ECO's Share	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Spain	12.4	13.3	12.4	11.2	11.8	14.4	15.4	17.0
ECO's Share	2.7%	2.3%	2.3%	2.7%	2.5%	1.7%	0.8%	0.7%
Belgium	8.8	9.7	9.6	10.8	11.0	10.8	13.4	12.2
ECO's Share	6.3%	6.2%	6.5%	6.1%	6.1%	5.8%	3.2%	3.6%
Netherlands	18.4	18.6	18.6	18.1	17.9	18.1	17.9	
ECO's Share	6.0%	6.7%	7.0%	7.4%	7.4%	7.0%	5.2%	
Brazil	6.5	7.8	8.5	8.9	9.6	9.4	8.6	9.5
ECO's Share	1.0%	1.2%	1.1%	1.3%	1.0%	0.9%	0.5%	0.6%
India	13.0	14.0	14.9	16.6	18.3	20.4	21.9	23.9
ECO's Share	1.1%	1.5%	1.6%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	0.9%	1.0%
Japan	16.6	17.0	18.5	17.5	16.9	16.2	17.1	17.9
ECO's Share	1.3%	1.3%	1.2%	1.1%	1.1%	0.8%	0.4%	0.5%
Taiwan Province of China	9.4	9.6	10.2	11.1	11.8	13.2	14.6	15.7
ECO's Share	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
Saudi Arabia	17.8	15.3	18.6	19.2	19.8	20.8	21.2	21.1
ECO's Share	0.8%	1.3%	1.6%	2.0%	2.6%	3.1%	2.6%	3.3%
Sweden	13.0	14.7	15.5	15.9				21.2
ECO's Share	3.5%	4.0%	4.1%	4.4%				1.5%
Switzerland	10.0	10.5	12.1	12.4	12.5	13.6	13.9	15.3
ECO's Share	2.8%	3.2%	3.0%	3.1%	3.2%	2.9%	1.7%	1.5%
Norway				9.3	9.2	8.8	8.0	8.2
ECO's Share				4.5%	3.6%	3.3%	2.0%	1.5%
Total	534.2	559.4	671.8	710.4	718.2	743.9	780.2	830.0
ECO's Share	3.7%	4.1%	3.4%	3.4%	3.5%	3.2%	2.0%	2.3%

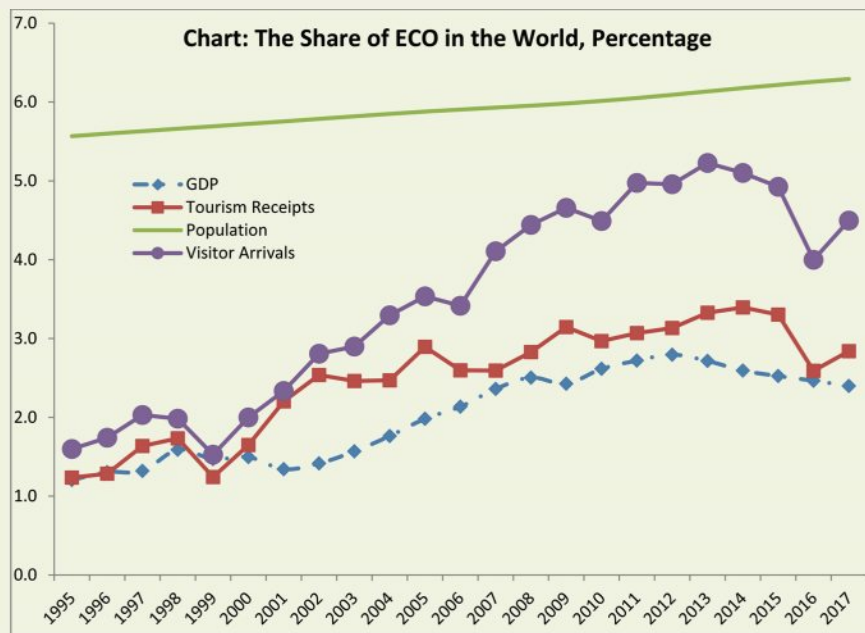
Source: National Statistical Offices of Member States, UNWTO, WTTC



Before the preparation of ECO-Vision 2025 the focus on tourism industry had been mainly about the economic growth side because tourism developments and realizations in ECO Member States were too low with respect to the its capacity. Around 5 percent of international arrivals and 3 percent of tourism receipts made in to ECO Region.

Although "undertourism" issue seems negative, ECO region is still untouched and pre-

served. During the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in the Khujand City of the Republic of Tajikistan on October 4, 2019, tourism sustainability has been discussed in detail. For future progress and development in tourism industry, ECO Principles for Sustainable Tourism Development were approved. Tourism industry can be built more environmentally, healthy, and sustainable basis.



Source: National Statistical Offices of Member States, UNWTO, WTTC

ECO Principles for Sustainable Tourism Development

Sustainable Tourism in the ECO region meets the needs of contemporary generation (tourism stakeholders) without compromising the ability of the region's future generation to meet their needs. It leads to manage all available resources in such a way that economic, social, cultural and aesthetic necessities can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, and biological biodiversity and life support systems in the Region.

Sustainable tourism in the ECO region should seek a balance among (a) economic benefit and investment; (b) social participation, including local communities, with direct earnings, and seeking preservation and consolidation of its cultural values and traditions; (c) conservation and protection of environment and biological diversity, taking into account the introduction of education and dissemination of information to promote an environmental consciousness among the local population and visitors.

ECO Sustainable tourism development is conducted (operate) in the framework of sustainable development while addressing the natural, cultural and human environments. It calls for special priority in the matter of cultural diversity and respect for the human dignity of both local communities and tourists. It should meet the economic expectations and environmental requirements of destinations. It is considered the establishment of stakeholders' alliances based on sustainability criteria, an integrated policy approach, consideration of regional culture and economy, participation of all actors including active role for industry in sustainable tourism development.

Sustainable Tourism Development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

ECO regional sustainable tourism develop-

ment, a mean to ensure country planning in each ECO Member States, is mutually supportive and a common approach for integrated tourism development to be observed in the region. It provides an overall regional framework for maximized economic benefits of tourism avoiding destinations degradation from tourism activities. It fulfills the strategic objectives identified by ECO Vision 2025 for "establishing a peaceful and green tourism destination with diverse products and high quality services in the Region" based on the following principles:

■ 1) Principle of Inter-generational Equity

This principle oversees the preservation of the natural and environmental resources for the benefit of the next generation and guarantees the safeguarding of the tourism resources of the Region (by present generation) for future generations. To observe Intra-generation Equity in regional tourism development, the Principle of Prevention Action and Precautionary Principle based on international law should be taken into consideration.

■ 2) Principle of Intra-generation Equality

This principle applies for fair use of natural resources by present generation to address their development needs and economic growth as well as social welfare. It also implies that use of shared natural resources by one State should fairly take into account the developmental needs of other State.

■ 3) Principle of Integration development and environment

This principle implies the need to ensure that environmental considerations are integrated into tourism development programs, with a view to achieving sound, continuous and sustainable economic growth as well as ensure tourism development proposals designed to meet international guidelines for sustainable development and integrate to national development plan. To observe the integration principle in regional tourism development, the principle of right to development, the polluter pays principle, principle of dissemination of environmental information; principle of environmental

impact assessments based on international law should be noted.

■ 4) Principle of sustainable use of natural and biodiversity resources

It considers the optimal use of environmental resources, maintain essential ecological processes and conserve aesthetic values as well as biodiversity resources of host communities. The principle of sustainable use of natural resources aims to ensure the exploitation of natural resources in a sustainable, appropriate, rational and/or prudent manner. Its approach is to focus on the adoption of standards governing the usage rate of natural resources in tourism development process, particularly rare and precious resources such as water and energy, rather than their preservation for future generations. To observe this principle, the principle of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity resources for considering ecosystem approach in tourism development plan in ecologically sensitive areas and protection and rational exploitation of ecosystem biodiversity, species diversity, and genetic diversity should be applied.

■ 5) Principle of preservation of cultural identity

This principle deals with the need to respect, preserve and support the identity, integrity and legacy of local and indigenous cultures in tourism destinations. This principle has a meaningful linkage with the principle of carrying capacity and should be analyzed with the principle of the participation of the local community in the management of tourism destinations.

■ 6) The principle of carrying capacity

This principle addresses the need to identify the limits of social and environmental capacities of tourism destinations and reflect them in relevant policy and planning, in order to absorb tourists without submerging and overwhelming local culture and causing environmental damage. The principle of carrying capacity often calls for a restriction (control) on tourism to avoid cultural and environmental degradation.

■ 7) Principle of cultural and natural heritage and landscape

This principle addresses the need for the collective protection of natural heritage sites of

outstanding universal value and promotes landscape protection, management and planning, in tourism destinations and their buffer zones, and to retain a harmony with the cultural and natural heritage of the area.

■ 8) The participatory principle and partnership of all stockholders

The principle of partnership addresses the need to provide an appropriate environment in which all stakeholders have the opportunity to conduct their affairs and hear and be heard. The participatory principle also implies the need to have shared responsibility at all levels and within all processes. It implies that the role of all stakeholders including ECO tourism industry, local and regional investors, local community, government representatives, international organizations, NGOs and environmental groups on the management and decision making process at tourism destination should be guaranteed. It also observes the need for active participation and involvement of local communities and indigenous peoples in the decision making process of tourism development and management at ECO tourism destinations.

■ 9) Principle of integrated sustainable tourism planning

This principle describes the need for the integration of ECO regional and national sustainable tourism strategies, policies and planning into overall national development plans. Such integration is crucial for the sustainability of tourism activities and development in destinations in the Region. It also focuses on the need for cross sectoral integrated planning and projects as well as creation of chain production in tourism industry across the Region.

■ 10) The principle of committed tourism industry

This principle applies to the participation, involvement, engagement, and commitment of the tourism industry to short, medium, and long-term policy setting and decision making and their implementation and management processes regarding sustainable tourism activities. It also considers that the sustainability of tourism activities in ECO tourism destinations depends on the approaches of the regional and international tourism industry and the types of

services and products to be offered at destinations and the fact that short term interests of tourism business should transform to mid and long- term one by the tourism industry through, inter alia, close partnerships with government and civil society, better environmental management and practices, higher commitments to engender a new culture of accountability and apply sustainable consumption and production patterns to tourism activities in ECO tourism destinations.

■ 11) **The principal of tourism safety and right to rest and leisure**

The principle of tourism safety addresses the need to ensure the security and safety of visitors and their belongings, as a necessary precondition to establishing a sustainable business in ECO tourism destinations and observes the need to respect law and value of the visiting country by tourists. This principle also implies the right of everyone to rest and leisure as an inalienable part of human rights and applies to the right of all persons to enjoy reasonable work hours, periodic holiday with pay and freedom of rest and movement without limitation. It also considers the right of visitors to have easy access to ECO tourism destinations while addressing seasonality of tourism.

■ 12) **The Principle of sustainable transport development**

This principle addresses the role of sound, safe and sustainable transport system in sustainable development of ECO tourism destinations. It also addresses the needs for reliable and economically viable connectivity system in the ECO region to provide market friendly access to these destinations through integrated destination access strategies in our Region.

■ 13) **The Principle of incentive measures and voluntary initiatives**

This principle addresses the use of incentive measures and voluntary initiatives as socio-economic tools to serve the participatory principle, and raises the issue of environmental consciousness, dissemination of information and capacity development in ECO tourism destinations.

■ 14) **The Principle of development of**

suitable indicators and standards

This principle addresses the need to develop basic indicators and standards to monitor the progress of the sustainable development of tourism, and to assist decision-makers and policy-makers in focusing on the sustainability of tourism activities and development in ECO Region.

By implying this principle, indicators and standards can translate physical and social science knowledge into manageable units of information that can facilitate the decision making process. They can help measure and calibrate progress towards sustainable development tourism goals as indicated in vision 2025. They can also provide early warning, sounding the alarm in time to prevent economic, social and environmental damage. This principle has links with the sustainability principle.

■ 15) **The Principle of sustainable consumption and production pattern in tourism industry**

This principle addresses the need to eliminate unsustainable production and consumption patterns in ECO tourism destinations, in order to minimize depletion and reduce pollution. It regulates consumers' behavior towards sustainable consumption and assists the tourism industry in fulfilling its responsibility and commitment to the environment.

■ 16) **The Principle of financial resources and investment protection in tourism**

This principle suggests an appropriate international and regional financial mechanism to address the investment needs of ECO tourism industry and alleviate the financial constraints of ECO sustainable tourism developments. It addresses the need for proper mechanism and national legislation to protect income investment and confront with financial constraints which affect the proper implementation of ECO tourism action plan.

Acknowledging the necessity to educate and mobilize the ECO community about sustainability and sustainable principles of tourism, the application of such principles should be made on all ECO Tourism Policies and Development Plans, enabling the pursuit of such targets in an effective and efficient manner.