



Statement by
ECO Secretary General,
H.E. Ambassador Halil İbrahim AKÇA

At the
High-Level Symposium on SDG 6 and Targets

9-11 August 2016, Dushanbe

Mr. Chair

Mr. Secretary General UN-DESA

Excellencies

Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Economic Cooperation Organization, it is a great privilege for me to address this High-Level Symposium on SDG 6 and Targets—Ensuring that no one is left behind in access to Water and Sanitation—where government officials, water policy makers and experts, business and civil society representatives have gathered to discuss how to implement SDG 6 and its related targets. The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), and other Organizers of this event deserve our commendation.

In 2015, UN Member States reached historic agreement and set 2030 Agenda, covering all dimensions of sustainable development. Sustainable Development Agenda Goal 6 is the centre of this new development agenda, which calls “to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, supported by targets on achieving universal and equitable access to water and sanitation, hygiene for all, improving water quality, increasing water-use efficiency, reducing the impact on populations of water scarcity, as well as investing in the preservation and restoration of water-related ecosystems.

Ladies and Gentleman,

ECO is committed to the Sustainable Development Goal 6, as this specific agenda is especially relevant for our ECO member States because our region is home to approx. 7 % of the total world’s population with an annual expected increase rate of 2 percent. Hence, it is of paramount important that water, sanitation and hygiene are integrated into Governmental policies and plans in the Region. Our shared prosperity and future growth depends very directly on water availability and equitable

access to water, as indicated in the Water Development Report of 2016, access to clean and affordable water supports health, livelihoods and the economy, while also creating decent jobs.

The effective utilization of the water resources as well as efficient and harmonious management of our trans-boundary waters will lead to greater food security, better harnessing of our energy sources, creation of diversified transportation means, including effective means of intra and inter socio-economic and political integration, peace and security. We stand ready to support our member countries in achieving these Goals through resource mobilization. I am pleased to inform you that ECO is currently developing ECO Vision 2025, a strategy which will enable to more effectively respond to the higher ambitions of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Similarly, ECO is supporting practical measures throughout the ECO Region, which will ultimately help member-states to make progress towards the SDGs. The establishment process of ECO Centre for Efficient Utilization of Water in Agriculture is a relevant example in this regard with the objective of promoting cooperation among member states for effective water resources management, especially to eliminate the risks of water scarcity. "Thorough this center and other measures, we are ready to cooperate with all international institutions, especially UN-DESA, to leave no one behind.

Ladies and Gentleman,

In conclusion, I would like to thank, once again, the Republic of Tajikistan and UN-DESA for their partnership in organizing this event; as such events highlight the centrality of water and sanitation to the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. I look forward to participants' reflections and proposals in the discussions ahead.

I thank you.