



Annex - IV

31st Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC)

“ECO Work Programme 2021”

January 12-21, 2021

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
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A. SECTOR: TRADE AND INVESTMENT

1.	<p>The Council profoundly appreciated the Republic of Tajikistan for announcing to host the 5th Ministerial Meeting on Finance/Economy in 2021 to evaluate the economic situation in the region as a whole. The Council accordingly requested the Republic of Tajikistan to convey the mode of the meeting, date (s), venue, and details of hospitality to the Secretariat at the earliest convenience so that the same may be communicated to the esteemed Member States.</p> <p>The RPC also requested the Member States to confirm their participation for this important meeting, and convey the high level composition of delegations to the ECO Secretariat once the meeting is announced. The Council expressed its desire to make it successful with active participation of the Member States.</p>	
2.	<p>The Council appreciated the project titled “ECO Regional Payment System (ERPS) Feasibility Study Phase-I” and recommended to be carried out in 2021 for enhancing monetary cooperation in the ECO region. The Council requested the Secretariat to circulate the outcomes of the study project among the Member States for their views and comments, by the end of first quarter of 2021.</p>	
3.	<p>The Council requested the Member States to announce hosting of the Experts Group Meeting on Banking and Financial Matters and Forming of ECO Clearing Union at an early date. The Council requested that once the meeting is announced, the Member States may actively participate in the meeting to make it a success.</p>	
4.	<p>In the wake of developments taken place at the global and regional level in the economic and trade spheres especially due to ongoing severe pandemic, the Council noted that it is imperative to hold 5th Ministerial Meeting of Commerce and Foreign Trade. The Council expressed its gratitude for the Republic of Turkey for continuing their commitment to hold this important event in the second half of 2021.</p>	

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5.	<p>Recalling the relevant decision of the 24th COM, the Council reaffirmed the commitment for implementation of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) for furtherance of the objective of regional integration through Free Trade Area as envisaged in ECO Vision 2025, and called upon the Contracting Parties to accelerate processes for its implementation as well as to devise mechanisms and solutions at the earliest convenience taking into account the concerns and views of the Contracting Parties for the maximal productivity of each of them. The Council recommended that other ECO Member States that are not a party to the ECOTA could be invited to ECOTA Cooperation Council Meetings as observers.</p>	
6.	<p>The ECO Secretariat, during the 8th ECOTA Cooperation Council Meeting presented sectoral approach prepared by the Secretariat for views and comments of the Member States. The Member States were also requested to provide their considered views about ways and means for operationalization of ECOTA to be discussed in the 9th ECOTA Cooperation Council Meeting. While the comments on sectoral approach proposed by the Secretariat are still awaited, three Member countries namely, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Republic of Tajikistan have shared their views and comments to operationalize ECOTA. The Council requested the remaining Member States to share their comments so that the Secretariat may circulate a Working Paper comprising comments of Contracting Parties and outcomes of the “Study on Impediments in Implementation of ECO’s Trade Tools and Measures to Resolve” before the 9th ECOTA Cooperation Council Meeting. The Council agreed that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan may hold 9th Meeting of ECOTA Cooperation Council virtually in April, 2021 before the Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade and all Contracting Parties should share their views in the first quarter of 2021. The Secretariat proposed to have nominations from the Contracting Parties, non-signatory members as well as observers for the meeting at an early date. The Council requested the Secretariat to follow up with the Member States for early nominations from the Contracting Parties.</p>	

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7.	<p>The Council appreciated the research study project launched by the Secretariat entitled “Study on Impediments in Implementation of ECO’s Trade Tools and Measures to Resolve” to identify scenarios for operationalization of ECOTA. The outcome of the study will be shared with the Member States and ECO-CCI for comments/views. The Secretariat requested the focal points on ECOTA from Member States to cooperate with the Specialist carrying out the Study on ECOTA, as their detail will be shared by the ECO Secretariat. The outcomes of the report will be discussed in the 9th ECOTA Cooperation Council Meeting for final decision.</p>	
8.	<p>The Secretariat informed the Council that the Draft of ECO Multi-Dimensional Trade and Investment Strategy and Prospects of Establishing a Free Trade Area in the Region to be revised and circulated among Member States for views/comments. It was informed that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have conveyed their comments. The Council requested the other Member States to send their comments/views, before the forthcoming 5th Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade.</p>	
9.	<p>The 1st Meeting on the Joint Working Group for Preparation of the draft ECO Trade Facilitation Agreement (ETFa) was volunteered by the Republic of Turkey in 2020 but could not be held due to Covid-19 pandemic. This meeting has been postponed at least six times. The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey’s commitment to this important area, and also welcomed its offer to host it in second quarter of 2021 in virtual mode.</p>	
10.	<p>The Secretariat also informed that as per decision of 28th RPC Meeting, a comprehensive Paper/Strategy titled 'Draft ECO Trade Facilitation Strategy' prepared by the Republic of Turkey in 2017 was circulated amongst the Member States to obtain the respective views of their Trade, Transit and Customs authorities. The Strategy was again circulated in 2020 among the Member States for their comments/views. So far the Republic of Azerbaijan has</p>	

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	provided their views/comments. The Council requested the Member States to provide their views in the first quarter of 2021 so as to discuss it in the 5 th Ministerial Meeting of Commerce and Foreign Trade in the second half of 2021.	
11.	<p>The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for volunteering to host the 2nd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Tax Administration in April, 2021 in virtual mode, and requested the Secretariat to circulate the three draft documents among Member States, so that the same could be endorsed in the Second meeting in the light of decisions of the First Meeting of the Experts of Tax Administration to be submitted to decision making organs of ECO for approval. The documents include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Charter for Establishment of ECO Tax Administration Cooperation Society (ECOTAX); b) ECO Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Taxation and Related Matters; and, c) Agreement on the Exchange of Information in Tax Matters among ECO Member States. 	
12.	<p>The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for volunteering to host the 1st Meeting of ECO Heads of Capital Markets Supervisory Authorities in October, 2021. The deliberations and decisions of the meetings will be submitted to the next ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance/Economy for decision/approval.</p>	
13.	<p>The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that so far two ECO Member States namely, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have ratified the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment (APPI) among ECO Member States along with the Amendment Protocol and had deposited the Instrument of Ratification. It was shared that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has informed in November 2019 about completion of its ratification process; however, formality of deposit of Instrument of Ratification is yet to be completed. The Council was informed that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan will deposit its</p>	

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	<p>Original Instrument of ratification to the Secretariat at an early date.</p> <p>Recalling that the APPI has been signed by five ECO Member States (namely, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Turkey) and entry into force requires ratification by four Member States; a ratification of one more Member State will result in coming into force of this vital Agreement. With this in view, the Council called upon the Member States, which have signed the APPI, to complete the ratification procedures along with its Amendment Protocol at the earliest convenience for its early implementation.</p>	
14.	<p>The Council requested the Member States to volunteer hosting the Second Meeting of ECO Investment Promotion Agencies (ECO-IPAs) Forum in 2021 and inform the ECO Secretariat through diplomatic channels. Considering the importance of investment promotion by and among the Member States of ECO Region, the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed to the Secretariat, cooperating with UNCTAD in preparing and publishing "The Investment Policy Review of the Member States of ECO Region". The Council recommended to the Secretariat to update the Investment Policy details from all the Members before initiating work on the proposal. Once the ECO Secretariat compiles the details on investment policies of ECO Region, collaboration with UNCTAD could be initiated/finalized.</p>	
15.	<p>The ECO Secretariat recalled the Council that during the 3rd Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy in Tehran, the Republic of Tajikistan was designated as the coordinating country for ECO initiatives on investment. The Council requested the Member States to volunteer hosting of the 4th ECO Investment Conference and accordingly convey the date, venue and other details at the earliest convenience.</p>	
16.	<p>The Council recommended that the ECO Special Business Forum may be held physically after improvements in the pandemic situation. The Secretariat will communicate with the Member States for hosting this Forum through diplomatic channels.</p>	

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17.	The Council expressed its gratitude to the ECO-CCI for announcing to hold the 4 th ECO Business Forum in 2021 in Turkmenistan, which could not be held in 2020 due to pandemic. The Council requested the Member States to encourage their National Chambers to actively participate, and make it successful, once the event is announced.	
18.	The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan volunteered to host the 4 th ECO Trade Fair in 2020 but the same could not be held due to pandemic. Accordingly, the Council requested the Member States to volunteer hosting this important event in 2021 with participation of their National Chambers of Commerce and Industries. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to provide exact date of the meeting.	
19.	The Council also appreciated the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host ECO Trade Exhibition namely “ECO-RAF” in 2021 in Yazd. The Council also requested the Member States and their National Chambers of Commerce to actively participate in this event for promotion of trade and regional integration. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to provide exact date of the meeting.	
20.	The Council appreciated the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to volunteer hosting of the 4th ECO Trade Promotion Organizations (ECO-TPOs) Forum in 2021 in virtual mode. The Council requested the other Member States to ensure participation of their Trade Promotion Organizations once the Forum is announced.	
21.	The Council noted that elimination of non-tariff barriers is imperative for increasing intra regional trade. With regard to this, it was further observed that promoting ECO Quality Infrastructure and Implementation of the Regional Quality Policy is essentially required. Hence, the Council requested the Secretariat to invite UNIDO, ECO Trade and Development Bank and IDB to provide financial and technical support in 2021 for the implementation of the fourth phase of the ECO-UNIDO Trade Capacity Building Project. The Council also requested all the Member States to give their full support to the Secretariat in its endeavors	

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	for the implementation of the fourth phase of Project. The Secretariat informed the Council that the Secretariat is pursuing with UNIDO to implement the fourth phase of the project. However, response from the UNIDO is awaited regarding financial and administrative matters. The Council requested to follow-up the matter with the UNIDO.	
22.	The Council thanked the Republic of Turkey for holding the ECO CCI Extra Ordinary Meeting virtually on May 5, 2020 and the 28th Executive Committee and 18th General Assembly of the ECO-CCI along with the six Specialized Committees and the ECO CCI Extra Ordinary Meeting in virtual mode on October 19, 2020. In 2021, upcoming 19 th General Assembly of the ECO-CCI, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture will undertake the ECO CCI Secretariat from the Union of the Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB). The Council suggested that the Member Chambers start negotiating to establish the Permanent Secretariat of ECO-CCI. It was highlighted that regular holding of these events will produce conducive impact on trade in the region especially through active participation and vibrant role of national chambers.	
23.	The Council, while highlighting that so far six ECO Member States are the members of the WTO, requested a full ECO support for the remaining four ECO Member States to become members of the WTO through capacity building to align the trade policies and laws for regulatory reforms as per WTO requirements.	
24.	The Council requested the non-WTO ECO Member States to inform the ECO Secretariat if they are interested in any training workshop/seminar related to their accession to WTO, to explore possibility of holding it. The Council appreciated the offer of Islamic Republic of Pakistan for volunteering to host and organize the 5 th Seminar on Trading patterns in ECO Region and Accession of ECO to WTO in 2021 and requested the ETDB to provide financial assistance for organizing the seminars in 2021. The Secretariat will follow up through diplomatic channels.	

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25.	The Council appreciated the fresh offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 9th Meeting of the ECO Council of Heads of Customs Administration (CHCA) and the 5th Meeting of the ECO Committee on Customs Cooperation (ECCC) in 2021 , and requested the Republic of Turkey to convey the mode, date and venue of the meetings. The Council also requested the Member States to actively participate in these meetings for sustainability of the benefits of previous meetings and realization of the related goals stipulated in the ECO Vision 2025.	
26.	The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey for setting up the ECO Smuggling and the Customs Offences Data Bank under the Agreement on Establishment and Operation of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank . The Council requested the Member States to fully cooperate with the Republic of Turkey for full operationalization of this institutional mechanism aiming to increase the governmental revenues and requested the Member States to provide the details of the focal points to the relevant authorities of the Republic of Turkey for early operationalization of the data bank. The Islamic Republic of Iran has informed that it has provided the details of their focal points and will share the same with the Secretariat.	
27.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that so far, four Member States i.e. the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Turkey and lately the Republic of the Azerbaijan have already ratified the Agreement on Establishment and Operation of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank . The Council requested the remaining signatories to expedite ratification of the referred Agreement. The Council requested the non-signatory Member States to consider signing and ratifying the Agreement for benefitting from this arrangement.	
28.	The ECO Secretariat informed that the draft text of the Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters was finalized in the 8 th Meeting of the	

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	<p>ECO Council of Heads of Customs Administration (CHCA). This adopted final draft text was circulated among the Member States for completion of formalities and internal governmental processes. The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have completed their internal procedures.</p> <p>The Council requested the Member States for early completion of their formalities and internal governmental processes. The draft Agreement will be submitted to the decision-making organs of the ECO for approval to be opened for signatures.</p>	
29.	<p>The Secretariat while recalling the 8th Meeting of the ECO Council of Heads of Customs Administration (CHCA) in Islamabad in November 2017 informed the Council that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan offered to support the capacity building activities of the Member States in Customs matters through a set of different trainings at the Customs Training Academy at Karachi. The Council welcomed the willingness and readiness of the Republic of Turkey to share its experiences on the themes such as Implementation of Common Transit Convention, e-TIR System, Simplified Procedures on Expedited Shipments, Customs Enforcement measures as well as Single Window System. Further, it was also suggested that the Member States may share their best practices in different thematic areas, and may communicate the proposed set of trainings with the ECO Secretariat. The Council requested the Member States, which have not provided yet the set of trainings to inform the Secretariat so as to conduct trainings on need basis.</p>	
30.	<p>The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for volunteering to host the 2nd Meeting of the Technical Committee on the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) in second quarter of 2021, and hoped to continue its great work for developing the EDI system for the region. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to share the mode, date, venue and other hospitality details of the meeting at the earliest and requested the Member States to actively participate in the 2nd Meeting of EDI for development of the system as per its mandate. The Council decided to merge this meeting with the 2nd Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on E-</p>	

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	Trade Cooperation to be held in Islamic Republic of Iran in 2021 largely on the pretext of similar/common agenda.	
31.	The Council requested ETDB to initiate to arrange the first Regional Partnership Forum (RPF) in 2021 in coordination with ECO Secretariat, and called upon the Member States to encourage their relevant national institutions and organizations to actively participate in the subject Forum, once it is announced.	
32.	The Council encouraged the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ETDB) as the regional institution of ECO to continue to fulfill to support the implementation of regional projects as per the development mandate based on the Agreement of Establishment ; the ETDB members to help maintain the operational effectiveness of the Bank, and the ETDB's own decision making bodies to continuously monitor the business generation ability and sustainability of the Bank.	
33.	The council recalled the relevant decision of the 24 th COM, the 30 th RPC assigned the ECO Secretariat the task to develop the Structure and Modalities of the ECO Vision Fund provided under ECO Vision 2025 and, if appropriate, collaborate with ECO Trade and Development Bank, and other relevant institutions. The Secretariat informed that a TOR has been prepared and shared with ETDB to initiate a consultancy to develop the Structure and Modalities of the ECO Vision Fund provided under ECO Vision 2025. The Republic of Turkey has informed that considering the extraordinary conditions created by the pandemic no healthy outcome would be expected from the necessary market survey and accessing and operationalizing the fund seems unlikely due to budgetary restrictions as all Member States are combating the pandemic. Therefore, such a consultancy under the exigencies of Covid-19 is not considered appropriate.	
34.	The Secretariat, informed that in order to meet the targets set in ECO Vision 2025, it is important to finalize the modalities for ECO Vision Fund through a study. So far the	

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	<p>contribution of the ECO Vision Fund, as given in the ECO Vision Fund document is on voluntarily basis, due to which it does not work so far. If the ECO Vision fund is not made operational at an early date, it may become difficult to meet the targets set in the ECO Vision 2025. So the Secretariat proposed a two-Phased approach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Study Phase. 2. The Implementation Phase <p>The Council, taking note of the objection raised by the Republic of Turkey and the recommendations' made by the ECO Secretariat recommended that the Secretariat may follow-up with the study phase and share the outcomes of the study with the Member States for comments.</p>	
35.	<p>The Secretariat informed that the nominations for the General Assembly of the ECO Reinsurance Company (ERC) stands completed. Insurance and Private Pension Regulation and Supervision Agency of Turkey informed the Council that Turkey is going to notify new representatives for the General Assembly and the Board instead of those who were nominated in 2018. The Secretariat further shared that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan had informed that prior to holding the 1st meeting of Board of Directors and General Assembly of ERC, it is imperative that the required ground work and completion of formalities, including release/transfer of paid-in capital of ECO-ERC is required, to make it more successful and result-oriented. It was further shared that response from the Contracting Parties regarding release of paid-in capital or decision thereon is awaited. The Council requested the Contracting Parties to decide on release on paid-in capital to proceed on operationalization of the ECO Reinsurance Company. Islamic Republic of Iran was further requested by the Council to provide requisite information in this regard, at the earliest. The Islamic of Iran agreed to provide the requisite information, enabling Islamic Republic of Pakistan to hold the 1st meeting of Board of Directors and General Assembly of ERC.</p>	

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36.	The Council also invited the remaining Member States to consider joining this important ECO institutional arrangement i.e. the ECO Reinsurance Company in order to utilize its immense potential and role in furtherance of businesses and economic activities in the region.	
37.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen and the Additional Protocol to the Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen and Transit Drivers of ECO Member States has been signed by three Member States namely, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, however, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, has also ratified the Agreement. The Council requested the Member States, which have not signed or ratified these legal texts, to sign/ratify for early implementation of the Agreement and complementing trade facilitation measures in the region.	
38.	The First Meeting of the Heads of the Commodity Exchange of ECO Member States has been scheduled and postponed a number of times, latest being on 12 th May, 2018 in Tehran. The Council requested the Member States to volunteer hosting this meeting in 2021.	
39.	The Secretariat informed the Council that the "ECO Trade and Investment Network Web Portal" is available on the main ECO Web-Site with the following address: <u>"www.eco.int/trade"</u> . The Secretariat further informed the Council that upon the request of the Secretariat, the ECO Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI) had circulated among the National Chambers of Commerce of the Member States to provide detailed information about importers and exporters in the ECO Region. So far the Republic of Azerbaijan and Islamic Republic of Pakistan have conveyed information to the Secretariat in this regard. The	

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	Council requested other Member States to share the information through their National Chambers at the earliest.	
40.	The Secretariat suggested that for the ECO Trade and Investment Network Web Portal , the Secretariat may work with the Member States and their national chambers to make the portal more productive and beneficial for the Member States. The Secretariat also proposed regular update of the relevant information of focal points on the web portal. The Council appreciated the suggestion of the Secretariat and called upon the Member States to designate their Focal Points in the areas of Trade, Investment, Customs, Trade Facilitation, WTO, Tax, Banking, Capital Markets, E-Trade and Visa, and provide their updated contact details to be placed in section for trade and investment of the ECO-Website.	
41.	The Council appreciated the project titled ' Strengthening Cooperation amongst Public and Private Sectors in the ECO Region ' and considered it useful in furtherance of trade and investment in the region and in line with the ECO Vision-2025.	
42.	The Council appreciated the project titled ' Study on Impediments in Issuance of 'ECO Business Visa Stickers to the Businessmen of the ECO Region' for greater collaboration between the Business community in the ECO Region' and encouraged the Member States and ECO-CCI to collaborate for its implementation.	
43.	The Council appreciated Islamic Republic of Iran for virtually hosting the 1st Meeting of the Heads of National Development Funds of the ECO Member States on 16 December 2020 and appreciated the project titled ' Study on preparation of the Road Map for Formulating a Comprehensive Plan among the Sovereign and National Development Funds of the Member States ' and requested the Secretariat to follow-up for conducting the study and share the outcome of the study with the Member States for their views and comments. The Council requested the Member States to implement the decisions of the 1 st Meeting of the Heads of National Development Funds of the ECO Member States.	

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44.	The Council appreciated Islamic Republic of Iran for virtually hosting 1st Meeting of the Heads of Economic Zone of the ECO Member States on 7 January, 2021 and appreciated the project titled ' Study on preparation of the guidelines and Joint Action Plan for the establishment of ECO Regional Network of Special Economic Zones/Free Trade Zones (SEZs/FTZs) in the ECO Member States and requested the Secretariat to follow-up for conducting the study and share the outcome of the study with the Member States for their views and comments. The Council requested the Member States to implement the decisions of the 1 st Meeting of the Heads of SEZs/FTZs of the ECO Member States.	
45.	The Council requested the Member States to volunteer hosting the 2 nd Meeting of the Heads of National Development Funds of the ECO Member States and Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on NDFs of the ECO Member States in 2021.	
46.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for proposing to host the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on SEZs and the Second Meeting of the Heads of SEZs of the ECO Member States in 2021 and requested the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to convey the exact dates, venue and mode of the meetings to the Secretariat and asked the Member States to actively participate in these meetings.	
B. SECTOR: TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS		
1.	The Council requested the Member States to implement the provisions of the Declaration adopted by the ECO Virtual Transport Ministerial Meeting, held on 15 December 2020.	
I. LEGAL FRAMEWORK: TTFA Implementation of Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA)		
2.	The Council requested the Member States to fully implement the ECO Transit Transport	

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	Framework Agreement (TTFA), and fulfill their commitments as per the provisions of TTFA.	
3.	The Council requested Turkmenistan to deposit its “Instruments of Ratification of TTFA” at ECO Secretariat and the Republic of Uzbekistan to consider acceding to the TTFA as soon as possible and periodically inform the Member States about its efforts towards accession to TTFA.	
4.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to convey to the Secretariat the proposed dates and other particulars of the 10 th TTCC virtual Meeting in first quarter of 2021 and before next Transport Ministerial Meeting.	
5.	The Council requested interested Member states to consider hosting the 10th Meeting of Road Committee of TTCC and the 7th Meeting of the Customs Transit Committee of TTCC separately in first half of 2021 in virtual mode.	
6.	The Council requested the Member States to provide their updated information on the ECO Railway and Road Maps to the Secretariat. The Council further requested the Secretariat to publish updated ECO Railway and Road Maps at the earliest.	
7.	The Council requested the TTCC to consider the proposals of the Member States on the expansion of ECO transport Railway and Road routes as well as the proposals for readjusting the current routs and report the results to the next Transport Ministerial Meeting.	
8.	The Council appreciated the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the meeting of the Insurance Committee of TTCC in July 2021 and requested the Secretariat to coordinate the particulars of the meeting with Member States.	
9.	The Council requested the Republic of Turkey to provide to the Secretariat with the proposed dates and other details of the Transport Ministerial Meeting in 2021.	

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	II. RAILWAY TRANSPORT	
10.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to convey to the Secretariat the proposed dates and other particulars of the 15th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Railway Authorities and the preceding 9th Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC in 2021.	
	Area Priority No. 1: Railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran (KTI Railway)	
11.	The Council recommended that MoU, Common Corridor Management Mechanism (CMM) and Marketing and Implementation Plan, prepared under the project for commercialization of KTI Railway, be executed and requested the en-route KTI Member States to expedite signing the MoU to facilitate the establishment of the permanent working group on KTI railway (PWG-KTI) for coordinated and sustained cooperation on the commercialization of KTI corridor and to convene its 1 st meeting in 2021.	
12.	The Council requested the Secretariat to conduct a small sized study project on “Development of economic corridor along ECO KTI Railway Corridor” in 2021 and recruit a specialist for implementation of the said Study Project in the first half of 2021.	
	Area priority No. 2: The Islamabad-Tehran–Istanbul (ITI) Train	
13.	The Council while noting the proposal of the Republic of Turkey on the naming of the Train, decided that it will hereafter be referred to as the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) Cargo Train.	
14.	The Council noted the Secretariat’s updates on the decisions of the 11th High Level Working Group Meeting on the ITI Cargo Train, held virtually on 27 October 2020, requested the en-	

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	route Member States to commit themselves to the resumption of the Train's regular operations in January 2021 and publicize the regular operation of the Train among the business community.	
15.	The Council requested the ITI en-route countries (except for the Republic of Turkey) to provide the Secretariat with the particulars of their focal points, (one operations and one on freight) for necessary coordination for operationalization of the Train.	
16.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to secure the provision of necessary wagons at Zahedan on time provided that cargo type, quantity, weight and wagon information be provided to the Pakistan Ministry of Railways one week ahead.	
17.	The Council appreciated the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 12 th ITI HLWG meeting and instructed the ECO Secretariat to coordinate the relevant particulars of the Meeting with the host country and other en-route Member States.	
18.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran and Islamic Republic of Pakistan to provide the Secretariat, with periodically progress reports on the construction of the Zahedan - Mirjaveh standard railway track and the rehabilitation of Quetta-Taftan segment of the railway track, respectively.	
19.	The Council mandated the ECO Secretariat to initiate a small sized study project on "Needs-based financial and technical assessment for installing the transshipment facilities, instruments and tools in Taftan railway station", and recruit a specialist for implementation of the said Study Project in the first half of 2021.	
20.	The Council requested the ITI en-route countries to consider inviting other interested ECO Member States to join the ITI Road and Railway corridor. The Council further encouraged the interested Member States to convey their willingness for joining the Corridors to the ECO	

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	Secretariat through official channels.	
	Area Priority No. 3: ECO Container Train on Istanbul-Almaty And Bandar Abbas-Almaty Routes	
21.	The Council considered the project titled: “ECO Container Train operationalization on Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty” as completed. However, the Routes still will remain as the ECO's main railway routes as stipulated in the ECO Railway Network Development Plan.	
22.	The Council requested the Secretariat to finalize the necessary arrangements for the new joint ECO-UNECE-IsDB project on the “Application of Unified Railway Law in the Routes” and circulate the formal project proposal among the Member States.	
23.	The Council requested the Secretariat to coordinate the organization of the 2nd HLWG Meeting in 2021 to discuss the suggestions of the en-route countries and new initiatives for further improvement of the routes.	
24.	The Council noted the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to launch a scheduled train along the Routes and requested the 2 nd HLWG Meeting to consider the Proposal and the movement of Iranian wagons within the CIS railway network and report to the upcoming RPC meeting.	
	Area priority No. 4: Railway Project for the Connection of China to Europe through Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran (KTAI)	

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25.	The Council appreciated the efforts and contributions of the Islamic Republic of Iran for completion of the construction of the Khaf (Iran) – Shantiq – Rozanak (Afghanistan) railway segment of KTAI Railway in December 2020, requested en-route Member States to complete construction of the remaining missing portions within their territories. The en- route Member States confirmed their commitment to construct the KTAI railway align with the 1435mm standard gauge size, based on the Protocol agreed and signed among the en-route KTAI Member States, in 2015 in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic.	
26.	The Council requested the KTAI en-route member states to regularly provide the Secretariat with the updated information regarding the progress on the construction of the KTAI Railway missing links within their territories.	
27.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to host the Ministerial Meeting and the preceding High Level Expert Group Meeting on KTAI Railway route via virtual means in 2021 and provide the Secretariat with the proposed dates and other details.	
28.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to consider convening the International Fund Raising Conference for attraction of possible investors for the construction of the KTAI railway missing links within the territory of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.	
29.	The Council requested the en-route Member States to consider re-structuring the KTAI Railway project into separate but easily workable segments, and provide the Secretariat with their suggestions in this regard.	
30.	The Council requested the TTCC to consider the possibilities of adjusting the KTAI Railway route and report to the upcoming Transport Ministerial Meeting.	
31.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to re-approach the Peoples Republic of China for further involvement in and development of the KTAI Railway Corridor.	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	<p>Area Priority No. 5: Railway Project on Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) Railway Route</p>	
32.	<p>The Council, while expressing its appreciation for progress on the construction of different segments of Qazvin – Rasht - Astara (Iran) - Astara (Azerbaijan) railway in 2019 and 2020, requested the Secretariat to negotiate with ECO international partners, including inter alia, UNESCAP, and IsDB the possibilities to commence a new study project for commercialization of the Route.</p>	
33.	<p>The Council requested the Republic of Azerbaijan to host the 6th HLWG Meeting on Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) in 2021 and provide the Secretariat with the proposed dates and other details.</p>	
	<p>III. ROAD TRANSPORT Area priority No.1: ECO Road Corridors on Kyrgyz Republic-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI) and Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) Routes</p>	
34.	<p>The Council acknowledged the Secretariat's update on the completion of the Study project on ITI and KTAI road corridors in 2020 and requested the en-route Member States to consider expediting the implementation of the Action Plan approved by the 4th and 5th HLWGMs on KTAI and ITI road corridors.</p>	
35.	<p>The Council requested the Secretariat to further cooperate with IRU and UNECE for promoting and implementing e-TIR transport operations in ECO Region.</p>	
36.	<p>The Council requested en-route Member States to consider joining and implementing the digitization of transport documents (eTIR and eCMR) within their territories and further requested the Secretariat to coordinate with UNECE, IRU and IsDB for organizing virtually the regional workshops for the Member States on e-TIR and e-CMR in 2021.</p>	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
37.	The Council appreciated the offer of the Republic of Turkey for organizing e-TIR training courses for the interested ECO Member States and requested the Country to provide the Secretariat with additional details of the Proposal.	
38.	The Council appreciated the en-route KTAI Member States, the ECO Secretariat and IRU for the successful test run of the loaded truck under TIR, conducted in July-August 2020 and requested en-route Member States to implement the recommendations of the report of the KTAI Test Run.	
39.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for completing the necessary procedures for accession to CMR in October 2020 and requested the Country to periodically provide the Secretariat with progress reports on the construction of the missing links, particularly road segments of Herat–Andkhoy and the Armalik–Laman segment of the Route.	
40.	The Council requested the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Tajikistan to provide the Secretariat with the proposed dates and other particulars of the 6th HLWGM on ITI road corridor and 5th HLWGM on KTAI road corridor to be held virtually in 2021.	
41.	The Council requested TTCC Road Committee to consider the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for the inclusion of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Turkey in the KTAI Road Corridor, and to report to the next RPC meeting.	
42.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to coordinate with the Member States for involvement of the ECO Chamber of Commerce in the future TIR operations of the loaded trucks along the KTAI road corridor.	

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	<p>Area priority No. 2: Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures</p>	
43.	<p>The Council requested Member States to implement the provisions of the ECO Guidelines on Cross Border Facilitation Measures under conditions of COVID-19 in a bid to secure the unhindered passage of goods and essential services throughout the region.</p>	
44.	<p>The Council noted the Secretariat's update on the implementation of the 5-year Action Plan for the modernization of border crossing points of ECO Member States and requested the Member States to keep the Secretariat informed of the progress made at their relevant border crossing points (BCPs) as per the provisions of the Action Plan.</p>	
45.	<p>The Council reiterated on the importance of the modernization of border crossing points (BCPs) in the region and once more requested interested Member States to convey a short list of at least two BCPs of regional significance and having potential for the transit of goods, for modernization to the Secretariat. for attracting investments of interested private companies.</p>	
46.	<p>The Council requested the Member States to consider establishing 'TIR-EPD Green lanes' in their border crossing points along the main ECO transport routes to facilitate the movement of general cargo particularly food stuff, medicines and essential humanitarian and rescue products. The Council mandated the Secretariat to initiate a Small Sized Project on "Establishing TIR Green Lanes for main ECO Crossing Points" and recruit a specialist for implementation of the Project in the first half of 2021.</p>	
47.	<p>The Council requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat with any rehabilitation needs of the areas between the border crossing points of any two neighboring Member States for consideration and implementation of a rehabilitation project by the ECO Secretariat.</p>	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
48.	The Council encouraged the Member States to unanimously support the candidature of the ECO Member States namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Uzbekistan, in the upcoming TIR Executive Board (TIR-ExB) election at TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2) scheduled for 11 th February 2021.	
	Priority area No. 3: “Joint ISDB/UNECE Project on Transport Geographical Information Systems-GIS”	
49.	The Council appreciated the efforts of the Member States for completion of the 1st phase of the joint ECO/UNECE/IsDB project titled “Benchmarking Study for Transport Infrastructure Construction Costs” in the ECO Member States using GIS and requested the Secretariat to finalize the negotiations with UNECE and IsDB for the commencement of the 2nd phase of the project on the “Creation of a comprehensive GIS database and related maps, including the maps of ECO Region, for displaying regional and sub-regional transport networks and geo-mapping of infrastructure projects along these networks”.	
	Area priority No.4: “ECO Unified Visa Sticker for Drivers”	
50.	The Council requested the ITI and KTAI en-route Member States, to expedite providing their confirmations/comments (except for the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Turkey) on the Visa Pilot Scheme to the Secretariat, latest by the end of February 2021. The Council announced that in the absence of any views/comments within the stipulated time, the proposed Scheme will be considered as approved/accepted by the Member States.	
51.	The Council recommended the “Visa Pilot Scheme” for practicing in en-route KTAI and ITI countries during 2021, along with their existing visa procedures. If successful, the scheme will	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	be extended to other ECO interested Member States as well.	
52.	The Council requested the interested Member States other than KTAI and ITI en-route countries to consider joining the Scheme.	
	Area priority No.5: ECO Logistics Provider Associations Federation (ECOLPAF)	
53.	The Council requested interested Member States to expedite conveying requisite ECOLPAF registration documents to UTIKAD and ECO Secretariat, at the earliest possible.	
54.	The Council requested the Republic of Turkey, as the agreed headquarters of the ECO Logistics Provider Associations Federation (Third ECOLPAF Preparatory Meeting, 2011), to provide an update on the current status of the ECOLPAF.	
55.	The Council requested the interested Member States (except for Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey) to expedite submitting necessary documents set for registration in ECOLPAF.	
56.	The Council requested UTIKAD to prepare and convey to the Secretariat the basic documents of the Federation (i.e. financial regulations, staff regulations, TORs and Rules of Procedures) for circulation among the ECO Member States, upon the establishment of ECOLPAF.	
	IV. MARITIME COOPERATION Area Priority No. 1: “Establishment of a Common Gateway among ECO Countries – ECO Gate”	
57.	The Council requested the Secretariat to hire a consultant/specialist for preparation of a bankable project proposal document to design ECO Gateways and their application to the	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	existing main ports in the ECO region as well as to explore the possible ways and means to link the existing regional sea ports in the ECO region with the landlocked and transit countries' dry ports, based on the "ECO Gate" concept proposal.	
58.	The Council requested the Secretariat to approach IsDB, UNESCAP, IRU and International Maritime Organization (IMO), for possible financial and technical support to implement the ECO Gate Project.	
59.	The Council requested Turkmenistan to provide the Secretariat with the proposed dates and other particulars of the 6th Meeting of Heads of Reference Maritime Organizations of ECO Member States, to be held virtually in 2021.	
60.	The Council noted with appreciation the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran for establishing Ro-Ro ship in Caspian Sea and encouraged the Member States to consider utilizing the service in order to enhance connectivity and intra regional trade within the region.	
	<p>V. CIVIL AVIATION</p> <p>Area Priority No.1: "Encouragement and Promotion of Combined and Multimodal Transport"</p>	
61.	The Council requested the Member States to provide to the Secretariat their detailed proposals on cooperation in Civil Aviation, provided during the 1st meeting of the ECO Working Group on Civil Aviation (WGCA) held on 23 November 2020 virtually.	
62.	The Council requested Member States to provide the Secretariat with their proposals and needs with regards to capacity building programs on civil aviation to be organized in 2021.	
63.	The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the 2nd meeting of the ECO Working Group on Civil Aviation (WGCA) as well as High Level Meeting of Private airlines of	

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	ECO Region in 2021 virtually.	
64.	The Council requested the Secretariat to implement a small sized study project on “The ways and means to establish direct flights among capital cities and the major tourist destinations within the ECO region with a priority to charter flights” and in this regard the Council may call the Secretariat for recruitment of a specialist for implementation of the said Study Project in 2021.	
65.	The council requested the interested Member States to provide the Secretariat with an informative and justification report for initiating an ECO Air Hub in the eastern ECO region especially in Central Asia.	
66.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran for preparation of the draft Action Plan for ECO Civil Aviation Cooperation and requested the Country to provide the Secretariat with the Draft Action Plan for circulation among the Member States.	
	VI. COMMUNICATIONS Area Priority No. 1: “Development of Information Society in the ECO Region”	
67.	The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the 1st Meeting of the Working Group on ICT in 2021. The Council further requested the Member States (except for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Turkey and Republic of Uzbekistan) to expedite providing the Secretariat with the contact details of their contact persons for necessary coordination on the Meeting.	
68.	The Council requested the Secretariat to enhance cooperation with ITU to seek institutional guidance for any new possible project to be implemented in 2021.	
69.	The Council requested the Secretariat to implement, in consultation with ITU, a small sized study project on “The ways and means to establish and develop ECO regional fiber optic	

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	network” and to recruit a specialist for implementation of the Study Project in 2021.	
70.	The Council requested the Member States to exchange information and the best practices on digital governance transformation. The Council further requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat with their updated information and progresses in the area of different modes of Transport and communication to be uploaded on the website of the ECO Secretariat.	
	VII. COOPERATION WITH REGIONAL/INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	
71.	The Council appreciated the Secretariat in promoting cooperation with regional and international organizations, including IsDB, UNECE, UNESCAP, IRU, UIC, OSJD, ITU, IMO, AIIF, OTIF, CAREC/ADB and others, and requested the Secretariat to seek financial and technical assistance from such organizations in order to facilitate the advancement of region’s mandated projects	
C. SECTOR: ENERGY, MINERALS AND ENVIRONMENT		
General Provisions		
1.	The Council reiterated that strengthening energy cooperation at the regional and sub-regional levels is critical to address unique challenges, promote energy innovation, investment and connectivity, as well as enhance capacity building, south-south cooperation and synergetic actions to advance energy, climate change, environment and others simultaneously.	
2.	The Council recognized and appreciated the steady efforts for mainstreaming the sustainable energy and regional electricity market in the overall energy agenda of ECO in pursuance of “ECO Vision 2025”, as well as the recent global and regional energy trends and developments. This regional focus was manifested in development of two flagship energy projects of ECO, namely the Establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market and	

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	Establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre. The Council also emphasized the importance of streamlining the environmental agenda of ECO to the needs and aspirations of the ECO Member States via multiple nexus approach and enhanced international outreach.	
3.	The Council called upon the ECO Secretariat and the Member States to jointly implement the Work Programme for 2021 as follows:	
Energy		
<i>Priority Area 1: ECO Plan of Action for Energy/Petroleum Cooperation</i>		
4.	The Council appreciated the initiative of the Secretariat to undergo development of ECO Strategy for Energy through implementation of Small Size bankable Project and recruit a specialist for its drafting. The Council may request all Member States to share their views to be merged in the final version of Document.	
5.	<p>The Council appreciated the readiness of Azerbaijan to host 4th Energy Ministerial Meeting in the first half of 2021 back to back with 4th HLEG Meeting serving as a Senior Officials Meeting for the Ministerial Meeting. At the same time the Council requested the Secretariat to communicate proposed agenda for the meetings, as well as expected outcomes. In this regard, the Council encouraged all Member States to submit their invaluable suggestions to the Secretariat to enrich the agenda of the subject meeting and actively take part in the said events.</p> <p>The Meetings, <i>inter alia</i> will address discussion and endorsement of ECO Energy Strategy 2030. In this regard, The Council called for all Member States to actively participate at the subject events within highest possible level.</p>	

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6.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to confirm the date(s) and other details for the 1 st Virtual Meeting of the ECO regional network of research institutions/centers and think tanks operating in the field of energy studies, to be organized preferably in the first half of 2021. The Meeting may also <i>inter-alia</i> discuss Energy Strategy document and advise efficient implementation of its relevant deliverables.	
Priority Area 2: Sustainable Energy Transition and particular focus on Clean Energy Sources		
7.	The Council encouraged to actively participating in ECO Experts Group on Renewable Energy Sources (EGRES) in view of mainstreaming sustainable energy in ECO agenda and ongoing development of the Project on establishment of ECO Clean Energy Center.	
8.	The Council appreciated the offer of a volunteer Member State to host 4 th EGRES Meeting expected to be held in 2021.	Preferably Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan
9.	The Council appreciated the initiative of the Secretariat to conduct as Small Size Project on Manufacturing and Marketing Opportunities for Promotion of the Sustainable and Advanced Phase Change Material-based Renewable Energy Technologies and invite Member States to closely cooperate with the Secretariat and selected specialist.	
10.	The Council called for the Islamic Republic of Iran to confirm hosting the 1 st ECO Working Group Meeting on Joint Investment in Construction of Renewable Energy Power Plants/Projects to be organized in 2021, and convey its date(s), and other details. The Member States are encouraged sharing their views with the Secretariat to enrich the agenda of the Meeting.	
11.	The Council took note proposal of Pakistan to include the issues such as generation of	

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	electricity from waste material and lean energy from geothermal resources in the agenda of clean energy projects. In this regard, the Council encouraged interested Member States to submit project proposals for further discussions and collaboration.	
Priority Area 3: Establishment of ECO Clean Energy Center		
12.	The Council requested Member States actively collaborate with the Secretariat, the project partners and other potential international partners with a view to move forward successfully to finalize the implementation of Preparatory Phase and support for launching of First Operational Phase of the Project.	
13.	The Council requested the Member States to share their views and comments with the Secretariat to finalize the legal and administrative document on the establishment of the Centre.	
14.	The Council referred the issue of selection regarding host country and approval of related legal and administrative document to the High Level Expert Group and recommended convening the meeting in first half of 2021 virtually. The Council requested the Secretariat to evaluate the potentials of candidates for hosting the Center and provide CPR meeting with its recommendation for final decision.	
15.	The Council took note the proposal of Islamic Republic of Iran to host the Clean Energy Center (CECECO) and allocation of necessary budget indicated in the Feasibility Study Report of Preparatory Phase of the Project. The Council invited all interested Member States to take active part once host country selection process will start.	
16.	The Council welcomed the Republic of Azerbaijan's full support to the initiative of establishment of ECO Clean Energy Center and requested the ECO Secretariat to continue consultations with the Member States, concerned stakeholders, including donors and development agencies for provision of financial support and early staged development of the	

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	Center.	
17.	The Council requested Member States to host EGRES (Expert Group Meeting on Renewable Energy Sources) Meeting on updating developments and possible follow up of first operational phase before submitting necessary undertakings to the HLEG and Energy Ministerial meetings.	
Priority Area 4: Establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM)		
18.	The Council called on the Member States to enhance their partnership within the Project on establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market and invite them to render all necessary support on implementation of flagship Project.	
19.	The Council requested the Republic of Tajikistan to confirm the dates and other details of the 2 nd Experts Group Meeting virtually on establishment of ECO-REM, suggested to be organized in the first half of 2021. The Meeting should evaluate and adopt the ToR for the project that involving all Member States for recruiting an international consultant to conduct necessary undertakings of the project and allocate necessary fund from FGPF.	
20.	The Council invited the Republic of Turkey and Iran to convene the 3 rd Iran-Turkey Bilateral Meeting in 2021 to implement pilot project in the framework of ECO Regional Electricity Market. The last meeting was hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran.	
21.	The Council recommended that if the format of Iran-Turkey Bilateral Meetings continues not to be able to accomplish its mandate, expected goals and outcomes, the 2 nd Experts Group Meeting on establishment of ECO-REM may propose and consider alternative mechanisms for speeding up the launching of ECO-REM Project in line with the “ECO Vision 2025”, and the project’s future roadmap.	

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Priority Area 5: Enhancement of role of private sector in regional energy cooperation		
22.	The Council requested Member States (except I.R. Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic) to provide their views and comments on the draft “Roadmap for Establishment of the ECO Energy Consortium” with a view to following up implementation of the key outcomes of the 1 st Meeting ECO Public and Private Sector Energy /Petrochemical Consortium/Companies (16-17 August, 2016).	
23.	The Council invited the relevant authorities of I.R. Iran or Pakistan to consider proposing, in consultation with the Secretariat, the new dates for the 2nd Meeting of the ECO Public and Private Sector Energy/Petrochemical Consortium/Companies.	
24.	The Council invited the Islamic Republic of Iran or any other volunteer Member State to consider and resolve on the possibility of hosting the combined meeting of the ECO Public and Private Sector Energy/Petrochemical Consortium/Companies, and establishment of ECO Refinery Association (ERA) from 2021 onwards. This combined meeting would encompass <i>inter-alia</i> both petrochemical and refinery agendas with participation of all relevant stakeholders. The Member States will ensure high-level participation at the subject meeting and extend their invaluable contribution to its outcome.	
25.	The Council requested the Secretariat to pursue the cooperation policy and engagements with international and regional organizations and other interested partners in the field of energy mix, after consultation with the Member States and setting out further roadmap for proceeding on it.	
26.	The Council recommended the Secretariat to invite representatives of international and regional organizations, and other interested partners to the relevant ECO events with a view to enhance cooperation for implementation of ECO Vision 2025.	

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27.	The Council asked the Secretariat to pursue the existing cooperation with the Energy Charter on the basis of reciprocal observer status and follow-up the aforementioned streamlined proposals with a view to developing joint comprehensive partnership framework, particularly in the context of the ECO-REM Project.	
Minerals		
<i>Priority Area 1: Streamlining the project-oriented cooperation in the field of minerals</i>		
28.	The Member States will consider the possibilities for increasing the economic competitiveness and sustainability of mineral sector in the ECO Region, <i>inter alia</i> via consolidation of production and distribution chain at the regional level. Given the cross-sectoral nature of the minerals, these possibilities will envisage the establishment of solid connectivity and transportation networks for minerals trade among the ECO Member States and beyond.	
29.	The Council requested all Member States to cooperate with the Secretariat for implementation of outcome decisions of the 7 th ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting (MEGM), held on 5-7 August 2018, in Sanandaj, I.R. Iran, aiming at enhancement of cooperation and preparation for next MEGM.	
30.	The Council requested the Secretariat with the initiator Member State to appeal one of the next CPR meetings for consideration of allocation of 50000USD from the ECO FGPF for the subject Project, according to the resolution of the Member states during the 30 th RPC Meeting to start the procedures for launching the Project on Preparation of ECO-Environmental Quality Index (ECO-EQI) Map (1:5M). In this vein, all Member States will render their utmost support to launching and efficient implementation of the subject project, which targets on evaluation of ecological qualities of environment across the ECO Region through collaborative efforts of the Member States.	

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31.	The Council welcomed the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 8 th ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting (MEGM) in the third quarter of 2021 and requested to convey the exact date and format of hospitality to the Secretariat. In this regard, the Council encouraged all Member States to submit their valuable proposals to the Secretariat to enrich the agenda of the meeting and actively participate in the 8 th MEGM.	
<i>Other activities/capacity-building efforts</i>		
32.	The Council requested the National Cartographic Center (NCC) of the Islamic Republic of Iran to communicate/propose the new dates for the Virtual Training Course on the Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) under the title “Reference Frames and GNSS Data Processing”, as well as other capacity building activities.	
33.	The Council urged all Member States to cooperate with the Secretary of the ECO Geomatics Committee and the ECO Secretariat for implementation of the decisions of the 2 nd Meeting of ECO Heads of Surveying and Mapping Organizations, and the 2 nd ECO Geomatics Committee (27-28 August 2018, Tehran, Iran) Meeting.	
34.	The Council welcomed the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 3 rd Meeting of the ECO Geomatics Committee virtually in 2021 and requested to convey the exact date and format of hospitality to the Secretariat. In this regard, the Council encouraged all Member States to submit their valuable proposals to the Secretariat to enriching the agenda of the meeting and actively take part in the said event.	
35.	The Council encouraged the Member States to provide the Secretariat with the requisite information on the ECO Economic Atlas, ECO Geomatics Journal, ECO Geomatics Committee, national focal points and working groups agreed upon at the 2 nd Geomatics Committee Meeting.	

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36.	The Council recommended the Member States to host the 3 rd Meeting of ECO Heads of Surveying and Mapping Organizations in 2021.	
37.	The Council took note the proposal of National Cartographic Center of Iran regarding a bilateral project between Iran-Azerbaijan and Iran-Turkmenistan on “Height Network Connection” in line with unification of Height Datum to resolve datum inconsistencies in Caspian area based on the 2 nd Geomatics Committee and CAPSCOM 24 th meeting resolution. The Council further requested National Cartographic Center of Iran to submit necessary information for clarification with proposed countries to cooperate	
38.	The Council offered the volunteer Member States to hosting/co-hosting the training courses for capacity building and sharing best practices in the ECO Region on various pertinent topics, such as Spatial Data Infrastructure; Scientific GNSS Data Processing; Local Geodetic Datum; Regional Deformation Study of the Earth; Orthophoto Generation; Cadastral, and Cartographic Maps and Atlas Production.	
39.	The Council appealed the Member States will regularly to present/update the particulars of their National Focal Points (NFPs) in minerals, ECO Geomatics Committee and ECO Economic Atlas with a view to enhance coordination as well as effective dialogue and feedback mechanism between the Secretariat and the national stakeholders.	
40.	The Council reminded the Islamic Republic of Pakistan or any other interested Member State to consider their decision by conveying response to the secretariat by the end of first quarter of 2021, to organize the capacity building training course on geomatics, which is approved by the 2 nd Meeting of ECO Geomatics Committee.	

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Environment		
<i>Priority Area 1: Framework Plan of Action on Environment Cooperation and Global Warming in the ECO Region</i>		
41.	The Council reiterated the importance of the decision of the 5 th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment (December 2014, Istanbul) on designation of environment and impacts of climate change as a cross-sectoral priority of ECO, to be considered by all ECO activities and events on different issues and levels.	
42.	The Council urged the Member States to express their views and comments to the Secretariat regarding the revision of the “Framework Plan of Action on Environment Cooperation and Global Warming for ECO Member States”; for updated/revised regional program for implementation of the subject PoA by the end of the first quarter of 2021.	
43.	The Council requested the Member States to consider allocation of appropriate contribution for launching the project profile for preparation of a regional program for implementation of the “Framework Plan of Action on Environment Cooperation and Global Warming for ECO Member States”.	
44.	With the view to achieve the shared interest of Member States in regional environmental cooperation, the Council proposed to take necessary actions by the Secretariat and relevant partners on launching project of regional program for implementation of the “Framework Plan of Action on Environment Cooperation and Global Warming for ECO Member States” through step by step approach within 50000USD budget allocated through FGPF during the relevant meeting of CPR.	
45.	The Council encouraged the Member States, which have not submitted their NPRs on environment to expedite providing them (the annual NPRs are requested to be submitted to ECO Secretariat during the first quarter of each calendar year).	

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46.	The Council asked the Member States (except Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan and Turkey) to provide the Secretariat with their National Adaptation Programmes; ECO Secretariat will then be set to prepare the draft proposal for developing ERAP.	
Priority Area 2: Launching and implementation of ECO LandCare Programme		
47.	The Council requested the Republic of Turkey to submit their decision by the fourth quarter of 2021 to organize the Workshop on Development of the Regional Project to Combat Desertification with a Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storms.	
48.	The Council invited the ECO Secretariat in cooperation with the relevant partners to take further steps for launching of the 1 st phase of the ECO LandCare Programme. In this regard, ECO Secretariat in cooperation with the relevant partners will explore the best possibilities for approaching the relevant international organizations and financial institutions/instruments, particularly UN System for their engagements as potential project partners as well as for subsequent financial and technical support.	
49.	The Council took note the proposal of the establishment of Coordination Mechanism as a key factor on implementation of the 1 st phase of the ECO LandCare Programme to appeal one of the next CPR meetings by the Secretariat for allocation of 50000USD from the ECO FGPF.	
50.	The Council requested the Member States to be actively involved in this flagship collaborative Program of ECO in the field of environment.	
Priority Area 3: Addressing serious threats to biodiversity and sustainability of ecosystems in the ECO Region		
51.	The Council encouraged the Member States for hosting the 4th Experts Group Meeting on	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	<p>Biodiversity in 2021 in order to review and discuss the progress and achievements of implementation of the Work Plan on Biodiversity and its Calendar of Events. These Meetings may wish to propose the extension of the Work Plan on Biodiversity to a new multi-year term or elaboration of a new Work Plan. Instead of the aforementioned extension/ elaboration, the Secretariat proposes to develop the strong biodiversity component, to be incorporated to the new/revised Framework Plan of Action on Environment Cooperation and Global Warming for ECO Member States for the next multi-year period. This incorporation will consequently streamline ECO environmental activities within one framework document in a coherent and cohesive manner addressing the nexus approach among multiple cross-cutting components of environmental cooperation.</p>	
52.	<p>The Council requested the Republic of Turkey, as the Coordinating Country of this Work Plan to inform the Secretariat and Member States on their arrangements for the follow up and implementation of the “Work Plan on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2016-2020)”.</p>	
53.	<p>The Council appreciated the initiative of Secretariat to address mitigation of pollution in the ECO region by introducing and following up Small Size bankable Projects to combat soil pollution by using best phytoremediation practices in the world.</p>	
54.	<p>The Council invited Iran, Turkey and Turkish Cypriot State as the co-host to communicate the dates, venues and formats of hospitality of the biodiversity-related events planned for 2021 according to the Calendar of Events for 2021.</p>	
55.	<p>The Council encouraged the Secretariat in cooperation with the Member States to continue its efforts and activities towards ensuring the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, access to genetic resources, fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization across the ECO Region; as well as promoting technology transfer, capacity building and enhanced cooperation in conservation and sustainable use and management of biodiversity at the national and regional levels.</p>	

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56.	The Council requested the Member States to nominate/update the particulars of their National Focal Points (NFPs) on Biodiversity for enhanced communication and proper implementation of the activities envisaged within the “Work Plan on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2016-2020)”. The Member States will also nominate/update the particulars of their NFPs in the relevant fields of environment, including climate change, forests, desertification and others.	
<i>Priority Area 4: Cooperation with the environment-related international organizations/entities/instruments</i>		
57.	The Council recommended the Secretariat to explore the need for reviewing the existing ECO-UNEP MoU for wider cooperation and requested the Secretariat to continue substantive consultations with UNEP officials to follow up agenda for bilateral cooperation, in particular the preparation of SoE Report for the ECO Region.	
58.	The Council called upon the Secretariat to continue its efforts to further enhancing cooperation with UNFF and other forest-related regional, sub-regional organizations and processes for soliciting technical and financial support and enhancing its visibility in forest-related issues.	
59.	The Council invited the Secretariat to continue interactions with UNCCD to benefit from its capacities and experiences to address desertification challenges in the Region, particularly in the context of UNCCD’s technical support to the launching and implementation of the ECO LandCare Programme.	
60.	The Council asked the Secretariat to continue its dialogue and communication with UNCBD for enhancement of mutual partnership, specifically in the context of implementation of the “Work Plan on Biodiversity in the ECO Region 2016-2020”.	
61.	The Council requested the Secretariat to establish working relationship with leading	

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	universities and environmental research centers within and outside of the ECO region to fulfill the task given by the ECO Vision 2025 on environmental issues.	
D. SECTOR: AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY		
Agriculture		
1.	The Council, while appreciating the offer of the Republic of Uzbekistan to host the 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture in 2021, encouraged the Member States to actively participate in the planned event.	
2.	The Council requested to the Secretariat to establish a dialogue forum in assistance of ECO-RCC for increasing partnerships through joint programmes with all stakeholders, and promoting coordinated action to enhance synergy in ECO regional efforts for improving food security by means of technical cooperation, including institutional capacity development, transfer of technology, and boosting agricultural productivity.	
3.	The Council appreciated the joint initiative of the ECO-RCC, FAO and the ECO Secretariat concerning the project titled "Support for the Transformation of the ECO-RCC for RPFS" from a programme-based organization to a self-sustainable institution of the ECO.	
4.	The Council appreciated the ECO-RCC for inception workshop to consider the national requirements of the countries and best practices for the ECO region during the update of the ECO-RPFS. It also requested the Member States to expedite the provision of their views and feedbacks for the update of the ECO-RPFS.	
5.	The Council while appreciating ECO-RCC for updating website " http://www.eco-rccfs.org/ ", invited Member States to contribute to it.	
6.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to organize the 4th Steering Committee Meeting of the ECO-RCC for Implementation of the ECO Regional Programme for Food Security (ECO-RPFS) in 2021 and requested the Member States to actively participate in the said meeting.	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
7.	The Council requested the ECO-CCI to develop a framework in collaboration with ECO-RCC for further cooperation on agricultural machinery and equipment industry and prepare a ground for exchange of best practices and technology in this field.	
8.	The Council encouraged the Member States to join in the campaign for 'Save Your Food' initiated by the Republic of Turkey and invited the other Regional partners to minimize food waste and loss in all levels of the agri-food value chains. The Council also appreciated Turkey for proposing a Workshop on Food Loss and Waste.	
9.	The Council decided to establish a taskforce for contributing to the process of organizing regional conferences, buyers/sellers meetings and trade forums as well as supporting such regional initiatives for the growth and development of the Regional Agricultural Trade in close collaboration with ECO-CCI.	
10.	The Council requested the Member States to host/organize a Regional Agricultural Trade Forums in their countries. The Council also requested the Member States to volunteer for organizing buyers/sellers meetings/forums (jointly with FAO and WTO/ITC) on wheat, cotton, bean and other agricultural commodities.	
11.	The Council requested the Member States to establish Cross Border Green Lane for smooth passage of spoilable food stuff based on ECO Practical Guidelines on Cross Border Facilitation Measures under conditions of COVID-19.	
12.	The Council requested the Secretariat to prepare a Policy Framework for Investment in Agriculture to evaluate and design policies to mobilize public and private investment in agriculture for steady economic growth and sustainable development. The Council also suggested through these policies to conduct an analysis to specifically identify and boost R&D initiatives and increase inflow of FDI in agriculture for seeds, machinery and food processing to optimize agricultural production.	
13.	The Council sought the cooperation of the Member States to ensure regional harmonization on validity of international quality standards, and standardization of the seed certification/registration/recognition systems for promotion of regional seed trade.	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
14.	The Council appreciated the ECOSA for proposals to host the 8th ECOSA International Seed Trade Conference and Seed Trade Fair and ECO Expert Meeting on Seed Sector Development in 2021. It also requested the ECOSA for organizing training courses on seed industry for ECO Member States in cooperation with FAO- SEC, Turkish Seed Union (TURKTOB)), IDB and ECO-TDB.	
15.	The Council, while appreciating the preparation of ECO Regional Seed Agreement as an outcome of the implementation of the ECO/FAO-SEC Project on Seed Sector Development in the Region, requested the remaining Member States to expedite their joining to this important instrument.	
16.	The Council appreciated the outcome of the small-sized project of "Establishment of standardized ECO Network of slaughter houses and reference laboratories." and strongly desired the Member States to implement the outcome of the project with close consultation of the ECO Secretariat to facilitate the smooth trans-boundary movement and trading animal and animal products economically. The Council invited the ECO-TDB to financially support relevant institutions of Member States to implement said project's outcome.	
17.	The Council sought consideration of the Member States to host the 4th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Veterinary Organizations and to ratify/sign the Statute of the ECO-VECO.	
18.	The Council urged the Member States to create a network among their relevant organizations regarding the establishment of the ECO Center for Efficient Utilization of Water, requesting them to nominate their national focal points/institutions for expediting the intended process. It also requested the Member States to expedite their confirmations for participation in the 3rd Working Group Meeting on the Establishment of the ECO Center of Excellence for Efficient Utilization of Water for Agriculture (ECO-CEEUWA), ensuring the accomplishment of the required quorum. The Council requested Pakistan to inform the Secretariat about the new dates for hosting this event most preferably in February 2021at Islamabad, in which the Draft Plan of Action and Draft Statute for establishment of the ECO-CEEUWA, amended and circulated amongst Member States for their views/comments will be finalized. The Council also thanked Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for submitting	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	their views/comments on the Draft Statute for establishment of the ECO-CEEUWA and requested other Member States for their response in this regard.	
19.	The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations and the Workshop/Training Course on Drought Monitoring and Seasonal Forecast in the ECO Region in November 2019 at Tehran.	
20.	The Council, while appreciating the offer of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to host the 4th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations in 2021, encouraged the Member States to actively participate in the said meeting.	
21.	The Council appreciated the ECO-RCRM for preparing the draft protocol for disaster data and information sharing and recommended that ECO-RCRM, in collaboration with the ECO Secretariat, may establish a task force committee, in cooperation of the relevant authorities of the Member States as well as the relevant international organizations, to finalize the draft protocol.	
22.	The Council requested the Member States to introduce national focal points to prepare the project proposal titled "Planning Mechanism for Delivering Data and Products" for implementing the protocol of "Data Sharing between ECO Member States."	
23.	The Council appreciated the ECO-RCRM for hosting the WMO-IRIMO-RCRM training course on seasonal prediction and short-term job training course on operational seasonal prediction in August 2020.	
24.	The Council urged the ECO-RCRM to coordinate the establishment of a task force group for coordination and conduction of country-specific meetings to develop agriculture trade-related risk maps. It further requested the Member States to cooperate with the ECO-RCRM for setting up a mechanism to access and operationalize raw data for designing & establishing of regional natural disasters database, to undertake a GIS based mapping of natural disasters, disaster risk indices developed and assessed for countries and for the ECO region and to develop a data database on disaster impacts and GIS based mapping of disaster indices and analysis of disaster risk indices.	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
25.	The Council decided that IRIMO, INCC and ECO-RCRM in collaboration with ECO-RCC and with coordination of interested meteorological organizations may lead a bankable project with the financial support of potential donors and the task force committee.	
26.	The Council appreciated the ECO-RCRM for hosting the Workshop/Training Course on "Natural Disaster Early warning and Loss Estimation System" offered by ECO-RCRM, in September 2021, in Mashhad, Iran and invited all the Member States to participate in actively.	
27.	The Council took note of project proposal for "Climate Change Risk Atlas over ECO Countries" by ECO-RCRM and requested from ECO-RCRM to send the details to the Secretariat.	
28.	The Council requested the Republic of Turkey to update the Draft Statute for the establishment of the ECO Meteorological Calibration Center (ECO-MCC) and requested the Member States to send their views/comments on the said document, for finalization.	
29.	The Council requested the Member states to actively participate in the 2ndExpert Group Meeting of the ECO-ABN and asked Iran to propose a new date for the meeting. The member states were requested to contribute to this project with sharing information and introducing their focal points and providing the country reports on biotechnology and related information to be uploaded to the ECO-ABN website. The Council requested the ECO-ABN to enhance and expand its activities and communicate with the Member States and the relevant International Networks and organizations.	
30.	The Council, while appreciating the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the Biotechnology Workshop on application of Nano technology in Agriculture and Agricultural Biotechnology on June 15, 2021, encouraged the Member States to actively participate in the said meeting. The ECO-ABN also invited the Member States the two significant scientific congresses including the 4th International and 12th National Biotechnology Congress of Iran, and the 3rd International and 17th National Crop Science Congress of Iran will be held from 22nd to 24th of August 2021 in Tehran, and 7th to 9th of September	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	2021 in the University of Kerman, respectively.	
Industry		
31.	The Council requested the interested Member States to host the Ministerial Meeting on Industry and the 3rd HLEG Meeting, informing the Secretariat regarding the date (s) and hospitality arrangements of the event (s) at their earliest convenience.	
32.	The Council invited the Member States to provide the Secretariat with the list of industrial priority sections for establishing regional production value chain to enhance regional investment and industrial cooperation.	
33.	The Council recommended the Ministers of Industry to take into consideration the ECO Vision 2025 in their decisions and make necessary measures and projects to contribute to the expected objectives of the Vision. The Council also requested the Ministers of Industry to consider more cooperation to implement the new projects in Industry sector.	
34.	The Council invited Member States to support the ECO Industrial Zone in Afghanistan and requested the Secretariat the develop idea in close collaboration with Afghan authorities. The Council requested the Government of Afghanistan to provide a feasibility study report as well as a detailed report on the facilities and advantages provided to the investors on this park. The Council appreciated the offer of The Ministry of Industry and Technology of Republic of Turkey's readiness to share its knowledge and experience in the area of Industrial Zones/Parks with the management of ECO Industrial Zone.	
35.	The Council recommended the ECO Member States to organize the meetings to initiate the process of the development of the Green industrial development strategy at regional level to contribute to 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agenda.	
36.	The Council requested the Member States to sign and ratify (except Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey and Pakistan) the Statute of ECO-RISCAM for paving the way for early functioning of the Institute. The Council also requested the signatory States of the Statute of ECO-RISCAM to ratify (except Pakistan) the Protocol Amending Article 5.4.1.10 of the Statute of	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	ECO- RISCAM. It also appreciated Afghanistan for ratifying the Statute of the ECO-RISCAM.	
37.	The Council requested the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to expedite establishment of Technical Management Board of Standardization and Accreditation and Technical Management Board of Metrology of ECO-RISCAM, respectively, having the completion of ratification process by four Member States. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan appreciated the idea of the Establishment of Technical Management Board on Metrology and shared their willingness regarding necessary resources, technical power, and physical assistance in this regard.	
38.	The Council, while appreciating the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Virtual Meeting 7th HLWG on Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology in December 2020, requested Member States to actively participate in the Virtual 8th Meeting of HLWG on Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology in September 2021.	
39.	The Council welcomed the offer of the ECO-RISCAM to hold a joint virtual meeting by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for discussion and decision about activation of Technical Management Boards in the March 2021.	
40.	The Council requested the Member States to introduce the national competent authority in charge of RISCAM and nominate the representatives of the national competent authority with a high-level position in their organization in the ECO-RISCAM. The Council urged the Member States to reflect their views on the basic documents of the Institute (i.e. Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations and Staff Regulations).	
41.	The Council requested the ECO-RISCAM to develop and implement measures and projects toward promoting green industrial development in line with ECO-Vision 2025 and contribute to the new growth paradigm in the region.	
42.	The Council appreciated the Central Secretariat of ECO-RISCAM for proposing two new projects namely; (i) Establishment of the Regional ECO/Green Labeling Systems and	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	Preparation of Technical Requirements and Data Base for Finished Textile Products (ii) Risk Management of Conformity Assessment Systems in International Trade by ECO Region Countries Food Products for First Step and Building Materials for Second Step.	
43.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Turkey to hold workshops in the fields of Standardization, Accreditation, Conformity Assessment, and Metrology. The Council appreciated Islamic Republic of Pakistan for its readiness in holding meeting/workshops on Accreditation, Conformity Assessment and Metrology.	
44.	The Council requested the Member States (except Islamic Republic of Iran) to reflect their views and comments on the roadmap and work programme for the ECO-RISCAM.	
45.	The Council thanked the Republic of Turkey for offering suggestion experience sharing of Turkish Standards Institution (TSE) with various international organizations and provide all the necessary support within the scope of its field of activity, with the foresight that no restrictive, obstructive or recurring situation will occur within the scope of the organizations' fields of activity.	
46.	The Council appreciated the joint cooperation between ECO-RISCAM and SMIIC on Halal Certification to facilitate trading of Halal productions.	
47.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 2nd Meeting of the Steering Committee and the Joint workshop on Nanotechnology and encouraged the Member States to actively participate in the events.	
48.	The Council encouraged the Islamic Republic of Iran for updating the study project on the situation of Nanotechnology in the ECO region.	
49.	The Council requested the Member States (except the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan) to designate and convey their relevant Focal Points for Establishing ECO Nanotechnology Network.	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
50.	The Council requested the Member States to convey their national policies towards this area of cooperation to the Secretariat and to ensure a more active involvement of their Nanotechnology related institutions in the ECO Nanotechnology Network.	
51.	The Council requested the Member States to take necessary actions to facilitate approval of the Project Proposal and allocate the requested amount in due time for its operationalization. In this regard, the Council requested the Member States to increase their cooperation in the field of new Nanotechnology projects in Energy sector.	
52.	The Council requested the Secretariat to establish a network among the leading scientists and institutions to prepare ground of exchanging views for using nanotechnology to control and combat Covid-19 disease pandemic.	
53.	The Council requested the interested Member States to host First High-Level Experts Group (HLEG) Meeting on Textile & Garments Industry for inter alia using Nanotechnology opportunities.	
54.	The Council appreciated the IPC of Iran, WIPO and ECO for holding a Regional Seminar on Geographical Indications' (GIs) productions on 18 November, 2020.	
55.	The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting of the 4th Coordination Committee Meeting on Industrial Property Rights in 2021, encouraging the ECO Member States to actively participate in the meeting.	
56.	The Council appreciated the offer of the Islamic Republic Afghanistan to host the 5th Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) on Entrepreneurship and SME Development Meeting and requested the ECO Member States to actively participate once the meeting is announced.	
57.	The Council also appreciated the Republic of Turkey to volunteer sharing best practice examples in terms of SME Support Mechanisms.	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
58.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to convene expert level meetings in cooperation of Member States to develop a financial mechanism to support start-ups, SME's and entrepreneurs, consisting establishment of special fund which may be managed with the help of ECO-TDB and funded through Member States, ECO-TDB and other International funding agencies.	
59.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat in collaboration with UNIDO and other donor institutions to develop start up projects in different sectors of industry focusing on SMEs and entrepreneurs in the Region.	
60.	The Council requested the Secretariat to convene the meetings of the experts and women entrepreneurs of the Member states to develop an implementation of action plan to promote and encourage women entrepreneurship in the region.	
E. SECTOR: TOURISM		
1.	The Council appreciated the Republic of Tajikistan for hosting the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Tourism Ministers and the 5th HLEG Meeting on Tourism in 2019.	
2.	The Council requested the Secretariat to allocate an appropriate amount to the Fund for the implementation decisions of the 3rd Ministerial Meeting on Tourism supported by the 24th COM.	
3.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Uzbekistan for hosting the 4th Meeting of the ECO Tourism Ministers and the 6th HLEG Meeting on Tourism in 2021 in Bukhara.	
4.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to take necessary action for conducting and finalizing a project for drafting tourism core documents including ECO Tourism Charter, ECO Tourism Strategy and ECO Tourism Action Plan based on the prepared Terms of Reference by recruiting specialist to be submitted to the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Tourism.	

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5.	The Council appreciated the contribution of MSs on drafting a strategy and plan of action on sustainable tourism and requested the remaining Member States to convey their views, plans and priorities in the relevant areas of tourism with special consideration of the circumstances developed in the aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic as soon as possible.	
6.	The Council requested the MS to participate on the HLWG organize virtually by the Secretariat and in presence of the specialist to elaborate and finalize Tourism Core Documents for further presentation to the Ministerial Meeting.	
7.	<p>The Council encouraged the Secretariat to consider seeking technical assistance from relevant international organizations i.e. UNWTO, UNIDO, UNESCO in preparation of ECO regional action plan and ECO Tourism Strategy.</p> <p>The council also requested the Secretariat to convene a meeting with the said international organizations to seek their support for devising the above mentioned action plan and strategy.</p>	
8.	<p>The Council welcomed the tourism projects in line with ECO Vision 2025 proposed by ECO Secretariat with the aim of implementation of the expected strategic objectives of the Vision and establishing nature based tourism destinations which were considered by the 24th Meeting of Council of Ministers on November 2019 in Antalya namely; (i) ECO Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development, (ii) ECO Tourism Routes and Packages, (iii) Tour operators chain and connectivity.</p> <p>The Council requested the CPR to allocate necessary funds from the ECO Feasibility and General Purposes Fund for implementation of the Projects.</p> <p>The Council requested the Member States to make voluntary contributions to facilitate implementation of proposed projects.</p>	
9.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to participate in Silk Road related meetings, conferences and events and coordinate participation of Member States in such events within and outside the ECO Region.	
10.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Fifth International ECO –	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	Silk Road Food Festival in 2019 and welcomed the offer of latter to host the sixth ECO - Silk Road Food Festival, in case if the situation improves in second half of the 2021. The Council also requested further engagement of the private sector of the host in organizing the said festival. The Council noted the request of the Islamic Republic of Iran that the Member States to dispatch professional and well known chefs to the festival.	
11.	The Council advised the Member States to form a contact group on the sidelines of Silk Road related meetings, conferences and events to effectively pursue the collective interests of ECO Region and enhance the role of ECO in such arenas and appoint their focal points to the ECO-Silk Road Contact Groups.	
12.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to organize the workshop on culinary tourism on the sidelines of the ECO-Silk Road Food Festival in 2021.	
13.	The Council requested the Secretariat to conduct a project on ‘Silk Road Tourism Pathway in ECO Region’ and invite Member States to provide the Secretariat with relevant information in this regard.	
14.	The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting tourism and handicrafts related exhibitions for the purpose of enhancing tourism cooperation in the Region.	
15.	The Council requested the Member States to offer their programs/proposals in field of Health/Medical Tourism in the ECO Region for promotion of this field of industry.	
16.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iranian Chamber of Commerce) for hosting the 2nd ECO Confobition on ECO Health Tourism in Ardabil, Iran on 18-20 June, 2019.	
17.	The Council requested Iran to consider holding the 3rd Conference on Health Tourism in 2021. The Council also requested Iran to convene the First Meeting of Major Hospitals Authorities in the region active in health tourism.	
18.	The Council requested the Member States to offer their views/ proposals in order to	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	contribute the Agenda of the 3rd ECO Conference on ECO Health Tourism.	
19.	The Republic of Turkey and Turkish Cypriot State renewed their offer to co-host the 4th EGM on Ecotourism in Nicosia on 4th quarter of 2021.	
20.	The Council reiterated its request to the Member States (Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) to provide all the necessary information (with high resolution photographs) for the “Ecotourism Catalogue for the ECO Region” to be prepared by the Republic of Turkey.	
21.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for preparation of the questionnaire on ecotourism and requested all Member States (except Kazakhstan and Pakistan) to fill it up and furnish the ECO Secretariat with the results, in order to establish the relevant database as early as possible.	
22.	The Council requested the Republic of Tajikistan to consider hosting ECO Nowruz Festival in 2021 in Tajikistan as well as the launching ceremony of proclaiming Dushanbe as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2020-2021.	
23.	<p>Taking into consideration the high capacity for job creation and income generation, the Council requested the Member States to consider organizing workshops on rural tourism and also requested the Secretariat to consider seeking technical assistance from relevant international organizations i.e. UNWTO, UNIDO, UNESCO, and UNEP.</p> <p>The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Tajikistan for hosting the workshops on rural tourism on sideline of the ECO Nowruz Festival in one week period beginning of Nowruz, 2021 in Dushanbe on the occasion of proclamation 2019-2021 as the years of Rural Development, Tourism and Folk Crafts.</p>	
24.	The Council requested the Member States to convey their views/ comments on “criteria of Tourism Destination Choice” which was circulated to MSs via 30th RPC Working Paper last year, as well as introducing at least five cities as tourist destinations according to the said criteria. The Council also request the Secretariat to establish a databank on selected ECO tourism destinations based on the information received from Member States.	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
25.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to consider hosting the First Forum of ECO Heads of Tourism Associations, Unions and other tourism stakeholders virtually or in person in 2022 with the Opening Ceremony of Sari as ECO Tourism Capital. This Forum will provide the good opportunity to connect the tourism agencies, tour operators, airlines, Hoteliers and all the Tourism related industries of the ECO region. The Council also requested the latter to convene workshop on Tourism Business Development back to back with the said Forum.	
26.	The Council requested the Secretariat to prepare a report on the issue of Joint Introduction of Public Private Partnership (PPP) System in ECO Member States to develop and introduce tourism destinations and register tour operators in a proper system. The said report will be submitted to the forum of the ECO Heads of Tourism Associations, Unions and other tourism stakeholders.	
27.	The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the ECO High Level Expert Meeting on Visa Facilitation virtually in 2021. The Council also suggested the Secretariat to work in coordination with the Member States to implement the project on ECO Tourism Visa.	
28.	The Council requested the Member States to join and contribute to the ECO Tourism Fund and participate in its activities.	
29.	The Council appreciated the ECO CCI for convening of the ECO CCI Tourism Committee Meeting on 6 July 2020.	
30.	The Council reiterated its request to the Member States to encourage the private sector involvement in the regional tourism activities through organization of and participation in the relevant meetings, events and initiatives. And in this connection, the ECO CCI was requested to explore the possibility of setting up regional cooperation modality on tourism to strengthen cooperation among the national private sector associations/forums/federations with the purpose of sustainable tourism promotion and propose its study to the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism.	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
31.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran convening of the 13th International Exhibition of Tourism & Related Industry 12-15 February 2020 in Tehran and welcomed the latter for convening 14th Tehran International Tourism and Handicrafts Exhibition in 2021. The Council requested all the Member States to actively participate in the Event.	
32.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for convening of the World Tourism Day-2020 under the theme of 'Tourism and Rural Development' on 27 September 2020 in Tehran.	
33.	The Council requested the Member States and the Secretariat to actively participate in the international conferences and meetings with the aim of introducing the tourism potentials of the ECO Region and also to increase the role of ECO in the international policy making trends.	
34.	The Council appreciated the Secretariat's efforts for institutionalizing relations with UNWTO through an MOU.	
35.	The Council also appreciated the Secretariat for establishing working cooperation with UNIDO and UNESCO for promotion of tourism in the Region and requested the latter to expand its relations with other international organizations and agencies as well.	
36.	The Council urged the Member States to expedite the appointment of their National Focal Points (NPFs) for prompt and smooth communication.	
F. SECTOR: HUMAN RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT		
1.	The Council stressed the importance of human development issues in the ECO region, including disaster risk reduction, health, education as well as attainment of sustainable development goals, and emphasized that the Member States and the ECO Secretariat need to work further to achieve human development objectives set by ECO Vision 2025.	
2.	The Council acknowledged the significance of collaborative engagements among Member	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	States on human development issues in the ECO region, noting that strong and effective cooperation is essentially required to meet the relevant objectives of ECO Vision 2025, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.	
3.	The Council underscored the importance of multilateral cooperation and assistance of the relevant regional and international organizations for an effective and smooth implementation of the ECO Work Programs for sustainable human development in the ECO region.	
PRIORITY AREA I: DISASTER RISK REDUCTION		
4.	The Council commended the Secretariat for its efforts regarding draft ECO Regional Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (ECO-RFDRR) and appreciated the Member States' support in this regard. Recalling that the ECO-RFDRR was supposed to be approved by the 8th Ministerial Meeting on DRR in Turkey, the Council noted that this event could not take place in 2020 due to the ongoing COVID crunch and the pandemic-related restrictions. The Council further appreciated the Republic of Turkey's readiness for virtually hosting this event in March 2021 to secure the Ministers' approval of ECO-RFDRR. In the given context, the Council requested the Republic of Turkey to formally convey the decision soon, including the event's proposed date, to enable the ECO Secretariat to achieve the meeting's required quorum.	
5.	The Council encouraged the Member States to sign the Protocol on "Real-Time Seismological Data Exchange" prepared by Turkey, which is expected to be discussed in the 8th Ministerial Meeting on DRR.	
6.	The Council also encouraged the ECO Secretariat to continue its effective interaction with relevant regional and international organizations and development partners, including UN organizations and international/regional development banks to seek their technical and	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	financial support, develop joint projects, organize events for implementation of the relevant frameworks and programs in line with the ECO Vision 2025.	
7.	<p>The Council requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Updated list of their relevant stakeholders, including local communities, non-governmental organizations, and private enterprises to facilitate and enhance regional cooperation on DRR b) Updated list of their national focal points to accelerate timely communication on DRR issues c) Information about their activities on DRR and related regulations for further circulation among the Member States to increase public awareness on the importance of DRR. 	
8.	The Council considered that after the ECO-RFDRR is approved, the Secretariat should conduct a feasibility study on the establishment of the regional disaster information system in collaboration of Member States as well as the office of Asia and Pacific Disaster Information Management in Tehran.	
9.	The Council requested the Secretariat and Member States to organize the "1st Senior Officials/Heads Meeting for Disaster Insurance Authorities" and the training workshop on "Disaster Risk Transfer through Insurance" to strengthen capacity of relevant stakeholders of the Member States. The Council noted that this meeting would help strengthen the capacities, boost skills, and increase knowledge of all stakeholders in the relevant field.	
10.	<p>The Council encouraged the Member States to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure their participation in the training events of the UNDRR on Sendai Framework Monitoring System b) Organize virtual or physical events/conferences/seminars/workshops in 2021 as per relevant provisions contained in the ECO Vision 2025 	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	c) Propose feasible regional projects for further evaluation and discussion by the relevant ECO organs.	
PRIORITY AREA II: HEALTH		
11.	The Council appreciated the Ministry of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran for holding the Virtual High Level Expert Group Meeting on Health on November 2, 2020.	
12.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to organize the 4 th Ministerial Meeting on Health in the second quarter of 2021 for adoption of the Declaration finalized by the High-Level Expert Group.	
13.	The Council encouraged the Member States to boost their cooperative activities aimed at defeating the COVID-19 pandemic and implementing the actions set-forth in the said Declaration.	
14.	The Council requested the Member States to support the initiative concerning the establishment of a regional consultation mechanism for technical cooperation on communicable diseases, specifically COVID-19, consisting of senior officials of Member States and WHO to elaborate on coordinated complementary actions for Country Preparedness and Response Plans, including operational mechanisms to secure critical supplies, prevent depletion of stocks as well as mitigate market disruptions and hoarding for all ECO Member States that need further support.	
15.	The Council requested the Member States to assist the most vulnerable countries to COVID-19 and develop a special medical project for enhancing the capacities of the existing hospitals in Herat city of Afghanistan.	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
16.	Recognizing the importance of international cooperation to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council encouraged the ECO Secretariat and ECO-TDB to continue interaction with the relevant regional and international organizations as well as development partners, to seek their technical and financial support, develop joint projects, organize events for establishment of a regional consultation mechanism for technical cooperation on communicable diseases, specifically COVID-19.	
17.	The Council welcomed the Islamic Republic of Iran for fourth revision of the draft ECO Plan of Action (PoA) on Health, and the regional cooperation issues on communicable (including COVID-19) and non-communicable diseases as well as Universal Health Coverage and the Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to share the draft Plan of Action with the ECO Secretariat for getting views/comments of the Member States for approval by the next 4th Ministerial meeting.	
18.	The Council encouraged the ECO Secretariat to follow up on the outcomes of the ongoing small sized pharmaceutical project and to propose and develop more feasible projects.	
19.	The Council re-emphasized the importance of the ECO Secretariat's continued interaction with international organizations, including WHO and other stakeholders to maintain the existing support and accelerate their further technical and financial backings in joint projects.	
20.	Emphasizing on the effective communication between the Secretariat and relevant focal points of the Member states on the implementation of relevant programs and activities, the Council requested the Member States to provide to the Secretariat updated lists of their national focal points for accelerating the pace of progress on health issues.	
21.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey on sharing experiences regarding Covid-19 through Covid-19 E- Learning Program for Healthcare Workers which will include specialized professors' lectures on different topics and the Council recommended Member	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	States to participate in the Covid-19 E- Learning Program for Healthcare Workers.	
PRIORITY AREA III: EDUCATION		
22.	The Council praised the scientific and educational activities of the ECOEI for enhancing cooperation on educational matters in the ECO region. The Council also acknowledged and commended the cooperative activities of the Secretariat and the ECOEI regarding the development of Plan of Action on Education, aimed at promoting the regional collaborative engagements for acceleration of activities on education and related trainings.	
23.	The Council requested the Member States (except those who have already provided inputs) for expediting the provision of their views/inputs to identify the need and necessity of developing a Plan of Action on Education in line with the ECO Vision 2025, along with particulars of their nominations for ECOEI Academic Council and relevant focal points.	
24.	The Council requested the ECOEI and the ECO Secretariat to engage with the international organizations, including UNESCO and initiate collaboration in the areas of technical as well as vocational education and training.	
25.	The Council expressed its gratitude to the ECOEI with collaboration of ECO Secretariat to organize a “High Level University Representatives Forum” to be scheduled in 2021 and encouraged all Member States to participate in this event.	
26.	The Council requested the Member States (except those who have already signed/ratified) to speed up signing/ratifying the ECOI’s Charter.	
PRIORITY AREA IV: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT		
27.	The Council noted that all United Nations Member States, including the ECO Countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, which provides a detailed	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	<p>plan for peace and prosperity for people and the planet. In this regard, the Council stressed the importance of attainment of SDGs and the important role that the ECO plays and can further play. Relevantly, it welcomed the ECO Secretariat’s initiative on the mapping study for alignment of ECO activities with SDGs, which will guide the ECO to progress in line with global development agenda.</p>	
28.	<p>The Council requested the ECO Secretariat for working on international good practices to set up some cooperation and integration qualities for the ECO, noting that the resilience, well-governed, green, inclusive, resilient, integrated, and prosperous can be considered, inter alia, as such qualities, to help ECO enhance its activities.</p>	
29.	<p>The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to conduct a study on developing and establishing an ECO Sustainable Development Performance Index, considering that this index may help Member States and ECO Secretariat to follow up the developments on SDGs in Member States.</p>	
G. SECTOR: JUDICIAL & PARLIAMENTARY COORDINATION AND ECO ADVOCACY PROGRAMME FOR AFGHANISTAN		
1.	<p>Acknowledging the importance of core objectives as per ECO Vision 2025 that require a multi-faceted and supportive policy environment, the 31st RPC considered the necessity of a well-thought and maintained judicial and law enforcement coordination. It emphasized on the need to accelerate the collaborative regional activities to address the common concerns of the Member States. In this regard, the Council realized the significance of the effective regional institutional arrangements on police and law enforcement, judicial and anti-corruption cooperation and fight against menace of drugs as well as capacity building and training programs amongst the Member States.</p>	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
2.	The Council requested the Member States to continue cooperation in judicial, law enforcement, anti-corruption, anti-drug and other cross-border crimes, parliamentary and Afghanistan related issues. The Council further mandated the Secretariat to ensure smooth cooperation in these areas.	
3.	Realizing the perceived aims and objectives envisaged in the ECO Vision 2025, the Council emphasized that cooperation on fight against illicit drugs remains as an area of interest. The Council mandated the Secretariat to continue performing all activities in Drugs and Organized Crime Coordination Unit (DOCCU) by JPC and EAPA Section under the new structure of the organization. The Council requested the Secretariat to keep pursuing the matter of improving effective technical cooperation with the relevant regional and international organizations to counter-act illicit drugs activities.	
4.	<p>The Council acknowledged the proceedings of earlier meetings of the ECO Attorneys/Prosecutors General, emphasizing on the necessity of an early establishment of the effective mechanism for judicial cooperation/legal assistance. While encouraging the continuity and maintenance of such interactions to secure the intended aims and objectives, the Council requested that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Islamic Republic of Pakistan to convey the draft framework agreement for judicial cooperation/legal assistance mechanism for the ECO Region and invited the Member States to share their views and comments on the draft framework agreement to be provided by Pakistan; • The interested Member States may convey their willingness for hosting the “1st Experts Group Meeting to establish judicial/legal cooperation mechanism”; • The interested Member States may express their willingness for hosting of the “4th Meeting of ECO Attorneys/Prosecutors General”; and • The Member States should convey updated particulars of their focal points in this regard. 	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
5.	<p>Taking into account the required and enhanced regional cooperation against corruption, the Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requested the State Parties to the ECO Regional Center for Cooperation of Anti-corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen (RCCACO) to take necessary steps for its early operationalization. • Encouraged the Member States, who have not signed the Statute of the Center as yet, to sign and ratify the statute of RCCACO; • Appreciated the offer of the Republic of Uzbekistan to host the “4th Meeting of Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen of the ECO Member States” and requested the relevant authorities of Uzbekistan to inform the Secretariat about the required arrangements; • Requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to consider necessary arrangements for the establishment of the headquarters of RCCACO in close consultation with the Secretariat and provide the Member Parties with relevant information; • Appreciated the Republic of Tajikistan for signing the Statute of RCCACO and requested the country for its early ratification. 	
6.	<p>Reiterating the importance of ECOPOL, the Council recalled that the relevant Working Group was expected to consider and finalize the draft Statute of ECOPOL, followed by approval of the Statute by 2nd Chiefs of Police Meeting and adoption by 4th ECO Interior Ministers Meeting. It requested the Secretariat to make necessary preparations and the interested Member States to designate liaison officers for the required coordination. The Council requested that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Member States may share their final views with the Secretariat on the draft Statute of ECOPOL; • The Secretariat will host a Virtual Working Group Meeting in the first half of 2021. 	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	<p>for consideration and finalization of the draft Statute of ECOPOL; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interested Member States may offer to host the “2nd Meeting of Chiefs of Police and the Heads of INTERPOL of the ECO Member States to approve the draft Statute of ECOPOL to be submitted to the 4th Meeting of the ECO Ministers of Interior for adoption. 	
7.	<p>The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for completing the ratification process of PAECO’s Charter, noting that at least four Member States were required to ratify the Charter to make it operational. In this regard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While commending Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Tajikistan and Turkey for signing the PAECO’s Charter, the Council requested the signatories of the Charter (except Pakistan) to convey to the Secretariat about their latest status concerning ratification of the Charter; • The Council requested the non-signatory Member States of Charter of PAECO to consider signing of the Charter; • While appreciating the offer of Pakistan to host the 2nd Meeting of PAECO in 4-7 April, 2021, the Council invited the Member States to actively participate in the event. 	
8.	<p>The Council encouraged the Member States to make adequate contributions to the ECO Fund for Afghanistan to support the efforts of the ECO and the Government of Afghanistan for reconstruction and sustainable development as well as economic growth in Afghanistan.</p>	
9.	<p>The Council requested the interested Member States to consider hosting “First Meeting of the Donors for the ECO Fund for Afghanistan (1st MDECOFA)” that could not be held in 2020.</p>	
10.	<p>The Council requested the Secretariat to keep following the issue as regards opening of a bank account for ECO Fund for Afghanistan in Kabul as well as transfer of the balance of money from the existing bank account in Habib Bank, London to the relevant bank account proposed to be opened in Afghanistan in collaboration/assistance with Afghanistan and</p>	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	Pakistan.	
11.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to introduce relevant projects based on EAPA for consideration of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR).	
12.	The Council called upon those Member States already pledged contributions to fulfill their commitments as soon as possible and also requested the Member States to boost the existing level of their assistance and monetary contributions to the ECO Fund for Afghanistan.	
13.	The Council requested the Secretariat to organize a meeting of the ECO Member/non-Member countries, International and Regional Organizations as well as NGOs, to find their support for facilitating the process of reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. The Council further encouraged the Member States to actively participate in such activities.	
14.	The Council requested the Republic of Turkey to provide with a detailed information as regards the implementation of the project titled "Reconstruction of Dr. Rafiqi Kamil Urga Sanatorium Hospital of Kabul Medical University. The Republic of Turkey informed the Council that the tender document for the Dr. Rifqi Kamil Urga Maternity Hospital Project has been prepared and an agreement has been reached between TİKA and the Ministry of Higher Education of Afghanistan on the protocol text. The Republic of Turkey also informed the Council that Tender will be made for the project once the protocol has been signed and Turkey will provide detailed information to the ECO Secretariat and relevant authorities of The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.	
15.	The Islamic Republic of Iran offered to host the "Second Virtual Workshop on Primary Prevention on Addiction" in 2021.	
H. SECTOR: ECO'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ECO SPECIALIZED AGENCIES/REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS/AFFILIATED BODIES		

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
a) INTER-REGIONAL ECO ACTIVITIES		
(i) ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies		
1.	The Council underscored the importance of promoting the broad objectives of the ECO Specialized Agencies and encouraged these key ECO bodies to synergize their activities to promote regional cooperation in the relevant fields.	
2.	The Council encouraged the Member States to join, where applicable, the ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies and Centres and support their activities in different areas for the shared goals.	
3.	The Council appreciated the ECO for establishing Ad-hoc Committee to look into the modalities and the efficacy/performance of the specialized agencies, regional institutions and affiliated bodies. The Council encouraged the Member States to actively participate in the ongoing activities of the Ad-hoc Committee.	
4.	The Council, while recalling its earlier recommendation to enhance coordination among the ECO Specialized Agencies, appreciated the ECO Secretariat and the Specialized Agencies for organizing their 3 rd consultation meeting in order to develop a coordination mechanism and sharing information about their activities of mutual interest. The Council encouraged the ECO Specialized Agencies to identify innovative and pragmatic joint activities in the relevant fields to further contribute towards socio-economic development of the ECO region.	
5.	The Council requested the concerned Member States to expedite the process of Host Country Agreement pertaining to ECO Science Foundation, ECO Cultural Institute and ECO Educational Institute.	
ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)		
6.	The Council while considering the impact of COVID-19 especially for holding cultural events appreciated the activities undertaken by the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) during 2020. The Council encouraged the Institute to broaden its current scope of activities in order to make	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	meaningful progress in achieving the goals outlined in its Charter.	
7.	The Council emphasized its earlier recommendation that the non-signatory Member States might consider signing the Charter of ECO Cultural Institute and requested the signatory Member States to ratify the Charter at the earliest.	
8.	The Council requested the concerned Member States to take necessary steps to ensure timely transfer of mandatory annual budgetary contributions to the ECI's budget. Timely payment of annual contributions would facilitate the Institute carry on its activities for realizing its aims and objectives.	
9.	The Council acknowledged the ECI's proposal to include Cultural Weeks in its calendar of events for 2021 in order to promote regional culture. The Council also requested the relevant authorities of the Member States to share their proposals for organizing such events with the ECI.	
10.	The Council asked the Institute to work out a strategy for regular follow-up on all relevant matters with the concerned Member States. The Council also requested the Member States to nominate their Focal Points to the Institute for effective coordination.	
11.	The Council welcomed the offer of Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting 7 th Meeting of ECI's Board of Trustees (BoT) to be held virtually in 2021 and requested the IR Iran to convey the exact dates of the meeting at the earliest convenience.	
<u>ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF)</u>		
12.	The Council appreciated ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) for carrying out various important activities in 2020 for developing and promoting cooperation among the Member States in the field of science and technology.	
13.	The Council acknowledged the recent efforts of the ECOSF for arranging several capacity building events for ECO Member States in collaboration with other regional and international organizations. The Council also encouraged the Member States to actively participate in the	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	activities of the Foundation.	
14.	The Council took note of the postponement of the 6th Meeting of ECOSF Executive Committee in 2020 due to lack of quorum. The Council asked the ECOSF to announce new dates of the Meeting in the first half of 2021 and requested the concerned Member States to attend this important meeting once rescheduled.	
15.	The Council urged the concerned Member States to expedite the process of ratification of the ECOSF Charter and its Additional Protocol at the earliest to benefit from its activities.	
16.	The Council considered the financial problems being faced by ECOSF due to non-payment/late payment of the annual contributions by some of the member states and requested the concerned Member States to pay their mandatory contributions in a regular and timely manner.	
17.	The Council expressed its satisfaction on the recent developments made by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan pertaining to the process of signing the Host Country Agreement with the ECOSF and requested the country to expedite the required process for signing/ratification of this agreement.	
18.	In order to ensure effective coordination between the ECOSF and the Member States, the Council requested the relevant authorities of the Member States to designate their focal points for the ECOSF at their earliest.	
ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI)		
19.	The Council took note with appreciation of activities organized by the ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI) in 2020 in the relevant areas and called upon the Member States to actively participate in the activities of the Institute to take full benefit of its potential.	
20.	The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey for successfully organizing the 3 rd Meeting of ECOEI Board of Trustees (BoT) and 3 rd Meeting of the High Level Expert Group (HLEG) of the ECOEI held virtually in August 2020. The Council appreciated the ECOEI Work	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	Programme 2020-2022 adopted at the Third Meeting of the ECOEI Board of Trustees and invites Member States to peruse the document and participate actively in the planned activities.	
21.	The Council warmly congratulated Prof. M. Akif Kirecci on his re-appointment as the President of ECOEI for a term of 3 years by the 3 rd Board of Trustees Meeting and subsequent approval of the COM.	
22.	The Council took note of the delay in completion of ratification by the non-ratifying member states and requested the concerned Member States to ratify the ECOEI Charter at the earliest. The Council also requested concerned Member States to pay their mandatory contributions to ECOEI for smooth functioning of the Institute.	
23.	The Council requested the Member States to nominate their fresh National Focal Points to the Institute, as this would help in ensuring effective coordination between the ECOEI and ECO Member States in the relevant matters.	
24.	The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey and the ECOEI's President for signing the Host Country Agreement Between the Government of Turkey and the ECOEI in July 2020 and requested the Republic of Turkey to expedite the ratification process.	
Other ECO Institutions/Affiliated Bodies		
25.	While reiterating its earlier recommendations, the Council urged the ECO Engineering and Consultancy Company (ECOCEC) to prepare a detailed report highlighting its core competencies in the field of engineering which would be shared with the relevant agencies and authorities of the Member States for enhanced understanding of the ECO-CEC.	
26.	The Council recalled the commitment made by the ECO College of Insurance during the 30 th RPC and requested the College to share its updated activities and latest academic offers for the Member States. The Council also called upon the relevant authorities of the Member States to convey their proposals for enhancing cooperation in the fields of insurance and	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	regional studies.	
(ii) <u>New Proposals</u>		
27.	The Council welcomed the proposal of the Secretariat to organizing special events in 2021 as a part of celebrations of the 30 th independence anniversary of the six Central Asian ECO States. The Council, while taking into account the ongoing situation of COVID-19 pandemic, encouraged the Secretariat to seek further recommendations of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) on the subject proposal.	
28.	Considering the significance of scientific innovations, the Council appreciated the I.R. of Iran for its fresh offer to host the First Meeting of ECO Heads of Scientific Innovation Bodies/Funds in 2021 in Tehran.	
29.	While recalling the offer of the I.R. of Iran to host the First Meeting of Heads of Broadcasting Organizations (Radio and Television) of ECO Member States, the Council acknowledged the willingness of Iran to organize the meeting in 2021. The Council further requested the Member States to actively participate in meeting.	
30.	The Council appreciated the I.R. of Iran for considering the proposal of the ECO Secretariat to involve sports activities as a soft and effective tool of regional integration and in this regard welcomed the offer of Iran to host the First Meeting of Heads of ECO Football Federations in Kish Island in 2021.	
(b) <u>ECO'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS</u>		
31.	The Council appreciated the efforts of the ECO Secretariat to promote its cooperative relations with international and regional organizations and UN bodies as well as relevant non-ECO States. The Council also requested the Member States to support the Secretariat in this regard and share substantive proposals for promoting ECO's cooperative relationship with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, funds and programmes.	

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32.	The Council underlined the importance of Contact Groups and requested the Member States to send fresh directives to their respective missions based in New York, Vienna, Geneva, Bangkok, and Jeddah for better utilization of the contact group mechanism for mustering the financial and technical support from different specialized agencies of the UN system for ECO's programmes/projects. The Council emphasized the importance of pre-determined agenda of the contact group meetings.	
33.	The Council encouraged the Secretariat to take further steps in accordance with the Treaty of Izmir and the relevant decisions reached at different fora to strengthen the existing cooperation with the regional and international partners.	
34.	The Council appreciated the recent approach of the Secretariat to revise the existing MoUs signed between ECO and international/regional organizations in accordance with latest global developments and relevant objectives of the concerned organizations.	
35.	The Council urged the Secretariat to give special focus to establish contacts and expanding relationship with funding agencies/institutions like the World Bank, Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in order to enlist their support for ECO projects/programmes.	
36.	The Council took note with appreciation that in accordance with recommendation of the 30 th RPC the I.R. of Pakistan had scheduled the Training Workshop/Course for foreign services officers from ECO Member States at Foreign Service Academy of Pakistan in November 2020. Since the scheduled Training Course could not be held due to ongoing COVID-19 situation and travel restrictions, the Council further appreciated the fresh offer of Pakistan to organize the said Training Workshop in 2021 either virtually or in person.	
I. SECTOR: ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND STATISTICS		

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
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Statistics		
1.	<p>The Council recommended that the Secretariat take necessary actions for strengthening: (i) ECO Data Bank, (ii) “ECO Five - Year Strategic Plan on Statistics” (previous title has been adjusted upon the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran) and, (iii) project implementation capacities in the ECO Member States to create an enabling environment for and facilitate economic growth in the ECO region. In this regard, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan requested that the “ECO Five Year Strategic Plan on Statistics” should be shared with the I. R. of Afghanistan. It also stated that the I.R. of Afghanistan is ready to share the related data with ECO Data Bank for strengthening of the latter.</p>	
2.	<p>The Council encouraged constructive involvement of the ECO National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and Economic Research Institutes/Centers of Ministries of Economy and relevant authorities of Member States to essentially contribute to the implementation of the 2021 Work Programme on Economic Research and Statistics.</p>	
3.	<p>In regard of the Work Programme 2021, the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed interactive webinar sessions, online seminars, training courses and workshops focusing on sharing experiences and expertise among the ECO NSOs during COVID-19 pandemic. The above suggested online events were asked to be organized by the Secretariat (Economic Research and Statistics Section). It particularly suggested holding the 5th Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistical Offices (HNSOs) and 7th ECO High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting as virtual/online events to be arranged by the Secretariat (Economic Research and Statistics Section). The following themes have been suggested for statistical trainings as: "Current Status of Statistical Operations under COVID-19 pandemic-inflicted Challenges and Best Practices". Likewise, the development of online questionnaires with realistic deadlines for feedbacks was suggested to be set - for time & cost efficiency.</p>	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
4.	The Council invited interested Member States to hold the 5th Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistical Offices (HNSO) and 7th ECO High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting on Statistics in 2021 in virtual mode.	
5.	The Council instructed the Secretariat to draft the agenda of the aforementioned Meetings, in close consultations with Member States, to include, in addition to the discussion of the “ECO Five - Year Strategic Plan on Statistics”, acute statistical issues such as: (i) defining of methodologies for documenting and publishing ECO concepts, definitions, classifications and metadata used by the Organization in international statistical activities, (ii) dissemination of the ECO regional statistics outputs to original source and using agreed quotation standards when reusing statistics, originally collected by partner international statistical organizations, (iii) distinction, in statistical publications, between statistical and analytical comments versus policy-prescriptive and advocacy comments.	
6.	<p>The Council recommended that all Member States, except the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan and Islamic Republic of Pakistan, provide, by latest 15 April 2021, their relevant official statistics data inputs designated for “ECO Data Bank” via questionnaires that were reformatted under a qualitatively new framework. To meet such a request, the Member States asked the Secretariat to re-circulate all pertinent questionnaires in regard of: (i) ECO Data Bank, (ii) Statistics and (iii) Economic research.</p> <p>In the above regard, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan proposed that the justification should be given for excluding Afghanistan since it already provided inputs and, although, it avails of rich dataset of different socio-economic indicators, unluckily, it did not receive any corresponding feedbacks from the Secretariat on its data or other relevant documents.</p>	
7.	The Council requested interested Member States to forward to the Secretariat their concrete project proposals targeting the following prerequisite items: (a) selective focus	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	<p>areas of CountryStat Development that may require further improvements; (b) pilot country or a group of countries for project implementation; (c) an estimated amount of technical assistance for proposed improvements to formulate a request to project's partnerships-subject for consideration by the 7th HLEGM on Statistics.</p> <p>In the above regard, the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed that the Secretariat develop a soft questionnaire (in an excel/word format) instead of an on-paper questionnaire and circulated it amongst the Member States. Further on this matter, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan noted that the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) of Afghanistan wishes to measure Informal Economy, which is one of the burning research issues of today. Besides, full technical and financial support of the ECO member countries was said to be needed for this purpose.</p>	
8.	<p>The Council requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat with nominations of their assigned National Focal Points (NFPs) on Statistics. In the above regard, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan informed the Member States that the process of appointing the NFP is different in Afghanistan, and therefore asked the Secretariat to send an official email to the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) of I.R. of Afghanistan for appointing the relevant person.</p>	
9.	<p>To facilitate Official Statistics' processes, the Council requested the Contact Points in the Member States to be prepared for compiling required data on ECOKSIs. It also noted that the Contact Points in NSOs of Member States had previously been assigned for the following operations: (i) to key in the primary input data items of ECOKSIs onto ECOSTAT from their designated data access/entry points of the system and (ii) to monitor the ECOKSIs-for accuracy, fairness and quality of data.</p> <p>In the above regard, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan suggested that the Contact Person can be assigned after sending an official email to the NSIA of I.R. Afghanistan and that, till date, no specific email regarding this issue has been received by the NSIA. Therefore, the</p>	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	I.R. of Afghanistan requested the Secretariat to fully update it regarding ECOKSIs, and its relevant issues.	
10.	In view of the above suggestions, the Council invited the interested Member States to attach a formal groundwork for data collection process on ECOKSIs and, in that regard, suggested that the Secretariat may circulate online questionnaires to the designated Contact Points in Member States for ECOKSIs. Such circulars will then require to be expeditiously filled-in within the time frame of one month (60 days) from the date of the 31 st RPC Meeting.	
11.	The Council recommended that the Secretariat, in its turn, take up steps by inputting primary datasets by using displayed data & information on official portals of ECO NSOs as a common point of reference, based on the concept that NSOs do publish their country statistical data therefore the latter is accurate and is for public view. In that regard, the Council noted that aggregated ECO regional statistical data is subject for verification by Member States, prior to display and dissemination of data across the region.	
12.	<p>The Council also requested all Member States, except the Republic of Azerbaijan and Islamic Republic of Pakistan, to provide their relevant updates of ECOKSIs for purposes of compilation of ECO's uniform Compendium. To that effect, the Secretariat was instructed to circulate: data collection plans, data release calendars and, simplify the questionnaires as well as review statistical procedures to optimize the burden on data providers.</p> <p>In the above regard, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan stated its readiness to assist fully in the provision of ECOKSIs, if the Secretariat provides all the relevant documents and the procedure.</p>	
13.	The Council requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat with their relevant country statistical yearbooks or other yearly online publications like statistical bulletins,	

Paragraph #	Programmes/Activities	Actions to be taken
	<p>consolidated thematic reports reflecting their annual statistical indicators. To that effect, the Council indicated that a special emphasis in such statistical reporting may be on publications that focus (if possible) on the following ECO's core activity areas: (i) Trade & Investments, (ii) Transport & Communications, (iii) Energy, Minerals and Environment, (iv) Agriculture & Industry and (v) Tourism.</p> <p>In the above regard, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan stated that, if the ECO Member States have some specific format, "we can share the data according to that format otherwise we can share the different statistical books according to the NSIA format". In regard of the above-stated format, the I.R. of Afghanistan shared the reference link to the NSIA's website (for more those can be retrieved from www.nsia.gov.af).</p>	
14.	<p>The Council instructed that the Secretariat work on systematic improvements to minimize the time lag between the reference period and the publication date of its international statistical publications such as ECO Statistical Report, sector-specific statistical reports and statistical bulletins.</p>	
15.	<p>The Council also instructed that the Secretariat, in its part of responsibilities for regional statistical reporting, has to: (i) compile, (ii) consolidate and (iii) circulate the draft ECO Statistical Report, subject for verification by the Member States, availing of the principles governing international statistical activities. The Member States requested that, along with circulation of Notes Verbale regarding the statistical issues to the Member States via diplomatic channels, the same Notes and all kind of statistical data requests should also be circulated to the National Focal Points (NFPs), Contact Points on Statistics by e-mail.</p>	
16.	<p>The Council instructed the Secretariat to use the best national data sources in compiling international statistics, and in that, follow the UN "Recommended Practices on the Use of Non-Official Sources in International Statistics".</p>	
17.	<p>The Islamic Republic of Iran highlighted the importance for ECO of reviving the work of its</p>	

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	<p>core activity area such as Economic Research and Statistics. To that impact, statistics was noted as the axis area which draws in other economic sectors' interdependencies. As such it was said to be universally recognized as the core basis for comprehensive decision-and-policy making. In recognition of revitalizing the area of Economic Research and Statistics and as a good omen, the Statistical Centre of Iran (SCI) informed the Meeting about its readiness to continue its collaboration with international organizations including the ECO within the national statistical regulatory frameworks.</p>	
18.	<p>The Council has recommended the following developments on statistics in 2021: (i) Implementing the “ECO Five - Year Strategic Plan on Statistics” in the ECO-NSOs; (ii) Updating ECO Statistical Network with ECOKSIs under new framework of ECO Data Bank and ensure international statistical reporting through ECO Statistical Report, and (iii) Ensuring adequate capacity building among the ECO-NSOs of Member States. In the above regard, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan suggested supplementing the contents of the “ECO Five - Year Strategic Plan on Statistics” by such components as: knowledge sharing and statistical capacity building.</p>	
19.	<p>In regard of the capacity building statistical programme, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan stated a need for full support from ECO Member States, especially in the field of Applied Statistics, Demography, Applied Research, GIS and System Development by providing exposure visits, specialized trainings and workshops.</p>	
20.	<p>The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan further noted the importance of the statistical capacity building programme for the regional statistics and, in that regard, suggested that a special programme be designed such as offering fully funded master and PhD degree program to the ECO NSOs staff. Further on statistical capacity building, the NSIA of the I. R. of Afghanistan stated that it will prepare an extensive Concept Note, which will be officially shared with the Secretariat.</p>	

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21.	<p>In regard of statistical trainings, the Statistical Center of Iran (SCI) informed the Member States that all interactive web-based training courses and workshops are regularly held by the Statistical Research and Trainings Centre, which is the training and research facility of the Statistical Centre of Iran. The SCI informed the Member States that it hosted 9 training course/ workshops and meetings for ECO Member States, including the 1st Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistical Offices (HNSOs) and 1st ECO High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting.</p>	
22.	<p>The Council noted the turbulent times that the ECO NSOs are experiencing, at present, in their statistical activities. In this regard, the Member States acknowledged the update provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran about the developments under pandemic necessitating the collection of COVID-19 relating statistical data. In this regard, the Member States appreciated a series of virtual workshops/seminars on COVID-19 Statistics that has recently been conducted by the SCI. Further on this matter, the use of such digital data collection tools as mobile handsets, smart outlets, online questionnaires, given social distancing requirements, have been suggested for further study in terms of use of their related high-tech applications for surveys.</p>	
23.	<p>The Secretariat re-iterated the working papers provided for the 31st Regional Planning Council Meeting (12-21 January 2021) highlighting the impressive capacity building potentials of regional statistical centers of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan, among others, that are capable of initiating comprehensive statistical studies of pandemic and post-pandemic statistical survey tools, methodologies, and techniques.</p> <p>In the above regard, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan stated a need to learn more from the aforementioned Member States' professional statistical staff in order to advance the trainees' skills in the above-listed areas.</p>	
24.	<p>The Member States acknowledged that the ECO Statistical Network - ECOSTAT - was</p>	

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	established in 2011 based on the decision of the 149 th Council of Permanent Meeting of ECO. The network was to offer an integrated and comprehensive system for recording and retrieving statistical data of the ECO Member States.	
25.	The Council appreciated that the Statistical Center of Iran significantly contributed to the establishment of the uniform statistical system of ECOSTAT. Since then, ECOSTAT successfully functioned as a regional statistical information sharing hub effectively bridging the ECO Member States in their search of a firm groundwork for informed decision-making at the national as well as ECO regional levels. In recent years however the updating of ECOSTAT has gone thin therefore the system had to temporarily halt.	
26.	In the above regard, the Council recalled that, at the onset, the ECOSTAT's main goal was to function as a common mechanism for the implementation and development of the "ECO Plan of Action on Statistics". As per the 28 th RPC-endorsed Work Programme (paragraph-40, Sector E: Projects, Economic Research and Statistics), the ECOSTAT was recorded as being activated in February 2011 by the Statistical Centre of Iran as Host. The ECOSTAT has been serving as the main source of statistics for all users inside and outside the region.	
27.	The Secretariat affirmed that it will make every effort to provide the updated input data for ECOSTAT given that four ECO Member States have already succeeded in fully responding to input data questionnaires and the remaining six will be approached with data collection requests soon after the 31 st Regional Planning Council finalizes. As with the incoming data updates, the Secretariat posted the request to the esteemed Statistical Center of Iran if the latter would be willing to re-activate the ECOSTAT.	
28.	The Islamic Republic of Iran proposed that the Secretariat forward the formal request to the Statistical Center of Islamic Republic of Iran to consider reactivating the functioning of the ECOSTAT whereas the Secretariat should appoint an IT statistician to upload the updated	

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	statistical datasets onto the system.	
29.	<p>The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan shared its expectation that, after it previously provided all requested input data for ECOSTAT, it has yet received no corresponding notification from the Secretariat. In this regard, Afghanistan has asked the Secretariat to provide the Member States with shared information & data and, to also provide the draft version of the “ECO Five - Year Strategic Plan on Statistics” at no delay.</p>	
30.	<p>In line with the observation of the Council in regard of the currently prevailing developments under pandemic, the Islamic Republic of Iran noted the still persisting unprecedented outbreak of Covid-19 that hugely challenged the routine of many the organizations and businesses including (NSOs). In this context, the Statistical Centre of Iran (SCI), like other NSOs of Member States, has been adequately adjusting its activities to develop resistance against coronavirus-inflicted irregularities as follows:</p> <p>(i) Conducting of planned surveys has not been halted due to COVID-19 rather the use of telecommuting (work-from-home) modalities by the SCI staff has elsewhere been encouraged;</p> <p>(ii) By applying alternative methods such as filling-in web-generated questionnaires, telephonic interviews and, in some instances, re-scheduling of delivery deadlines of surveys, the SCI has succeeded in mitigating adverse impacts of the pandemic to the extent possible while, at the same time, minimizing the adverse effects on people; the SCI also considered it as its duty to inform the planners, decision-makers and the public- at-large about measures undertaken, in the above regard. The full report about the SCI’s resiliency actions to COVID-19 inflicted challenges is available on UNSD Website (https://unstats.un.org/).</p> <p>In regard of sharing experiences on surveys, the Statistical Centre of Iran (SCI) informed the Member States about its intention to conduct the Register-Based Census in 2026 and, in to that effect, the SCI posted its request to the Secretariat to approach the ECO Member</p>	

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	States like Turkey to share the latter's relevant experiences and knowledge on surveys with the SCI.	
Economic Research		
31.	The Council appreciated the recent developments in finalizing the preparation of the ECO Economic Research Center's (ECR) Charter and initiation of signing procedures and, in that regard, recommended that the ECR start functioning at the earliest.	
32.	The Council requested interested Member States to deliver on the aforementioned matter and, considering the esteemed view of the Republic of Azerbaijan, recommend that the Member States identify next steps along the path of establishing the Centre, at the earliest.	
33.	The Council requested the Member States (except for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan) to forward to the Secretariat, by 15 th March 2021, their respective country economic reports or other economic analyses for the period of January–November 2020, for further consolidation of collected inputs and preparing ECO Annual Economic Report 2019/2020.	
34.	The Republic of Turkey proposed that the data & information template for the reports follow the uniform format as in previous years thereby containing economic indicators on: growth, inflation, employment, trade (international trade, trade in services), fiscal balance, FDI inflows, external debt, international reserves etc. The Council requested that the Secretariat provide a format for collecting inputs and preparing ECO Annual Economic Report 2019/2020.	
35.	The Council recommended that the Secretariat avail of already accessible official data sources and/or online official publications of relevant authorities (mainly, Ministries of Economy and Planning) of the Member States in areas of economic research and country	

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	strategy development.	
36.	With reference to the 29 th RPC (17-20 December 2019, Tehran) requesting the Member States to nominate their relevant Focal Points (FPs), the Council recommended that the FPs to be appointed by Member States will be in lieu of the previous two years-termed Members of the ECO PSCER. In that regard, the Council requested the Member States to forward to the Secretariat their respective nominations of Focal Points for the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (PSCER).	
37.	The Council recommended that the 3 rd Meeting of the Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (PSCER) be organized during 2021 and, in that regard, instructed the Secretariat to compile and provide the Member States with the List of Focal Points on Economic Research based on respective nominations of the Member States along with the tentative draft agenda of the aforementioned Meeting.	
38.	The Council recommended that the ECO Editorial Board meet during 2021 to consider the abstracts of the three projects completed under the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP) and share key findings of aforementioned study projects for the purposes of publishing and disseminating them at broad ECO regional level.	
39.	The Islamic Republic of Iran proposed to establish a useful platform for sharing among the Member States the knowledge and expertise particularly on the tangible outcomes/results of ECO's economic research projects. Such platform could also be used for hands-on approbation of new and innovative analyses methodologies as well as economic modeling. It was also noted that the suggested platform should be embedded within the framework of the ECO Economic Research Programme following the pattern practiced in the UN.	
40.	The Council also recommended reinvigorating the process through active involvement of the Editor-in-Chief and deputies and Members of the ECO Editorial Board by fulfilling	

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	concrete assignments/tasks in pursuit of objectives to obtain the ISSN index for the journal; develop editorial policy highlighting requirements for manuscripts/papers/articles in line with Terms of reference of the Editorial Board.	
41.	The Islamic Republic of Iran proposed that economic research projects be more topic-specific and concentrate on pressing issues of economic research and policy support, including on preferential tariffs, regional post-pandemic investment flows, distributive trade, digital currency, economic diplomacy i.e. the issues that represent mutual and thus commonly beneficial, core interests of all ECO Member States.	
42.	The Council similarly recommended that the ECO Economic Journal via its ECO Editorial Board continue its previously started work on obtaining the ISSN code for the journal and ensure high quality editorials.	
43.	The Council, in the above regard, requested the Member States to nominate their respective representatives to the ECO Editorial Board (one from each Member State) and instructed the Secretariat to revive the Terms of reference (ToR) of functioning of ECO Editorial Board in order to ensure coherence and continuation in editorial/publishing activities as stipulated in the Board's ToR.	
44.	The Council also instructed the Secretariat to develop: (i) a sample online Format of Forum; (ii) a set of requirements for online selection of papers of Forum; (iii) a set of unified requirements for IT-moderated conferencing tools to fit the needs of auditorium expectations provided that the ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum holds in virtual mode.	
45.	The Council instructed the Secretariat to explore in greater detail the usefulness of a prerequisite tool of economic forums such as science laboratories (labs) to see whether it could be deployed in its prospective application at the ECO regional level.	

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46.	The Council also recommended that the ECO Secretariat develop jointly with SESRIC the ECO Economic Research Programme in line with provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between ECO and SESRIC on 16 January 2018.	
47.	The Council recommended that the Secretariat may as well approach other interested international economic research Centers/Institutions/Organizations, having esteemed analytical and strategizing span—for broad cooperation in the area of economic research.	
48.	The Council has foreseen the following key developments in 2021 on economic research: (i) Disseminating good study projects' examples at ECO regional level based on the successful completion of the ECO Economic Research Programme (EERP); (ii) Developing, jointly with SESRIC, a new content of the ECO Programme on Economic Research (as envisaged in the MoU between ECO and SESRIC in 2018); (iii) Ensuring full-fledged functioning of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (PSCER); (iv) Organizing the 3 rd preparatory Meeting of the ECO Economic Think Tanks Forum (virtual mode); (v) Re-activating the functioning of ECO Editorial Board in line with its Terms of reference, and (vi) Ensuring yearly release of the ECO Annual Economic Report (AER) as envisaged in the Treaty of Izmir.	
