

**Statement by the ECO Secretary General H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri
on the occasion of 30th Anniversary of Iran-Tajikistan Diplomatic Relations
10 January 2022**

**H.E. Nizomiddin Zohidi,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Tajikistan to
the Islamic Republic of Iran,
Excellencies,
Honourable Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a matter of great pleasure and profound honour for me to attend this important session organized on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Iran-Tajikistan diplomatic relations. On behalf of ECO, I would also like to thank the organizers for their sincere efforts for arranging this important event. Before proceeding further, I wish to extend my heartfelt felicitations to the governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic Tajikistan on this historic moment.

Excellencies,

The history of Iranian-Tajik fraternal relations with a thousand-year history is a valid basis for mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries. Iran and Tajikistan established their diplomatic relations on January 9, 1992. Iran was one of the first countries to extend diplomatic recognition of the newly independent Tajikistan in 1991. The traditional friendly relations between Tajikistan and Iran are based on the principles of mutual respect and equality. At the same time, Tajikistan and Iran effectively cooperate with each other to support their initiatives to develop regional and international relations in order to find harmonious solutions to important issues of the time within the framework of reputable international organizations, including the United Nations.

Excellencies,

ECO attaches highest respect to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Tajikistan as the leading members of the ECO and acknowledges the significant role of the two brotherly countries in the Organization for enhancing regional cooperation in the various fields. ECO is a geo-economic organization and relationships among the Member States of the Organization are based purely on economic cooperation and cultural ties. Fostering economic cooperation among its Member States is an integral part of ECO's agenda for sustainable development. In view of that ECO Secretariat has taken tangible steps to boost cooperation amongst the Member Countries through Legal Frameworks. For instance, ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), a flagship agreement or legal framework of the Organization, has been initiated for enhancing intra-region trade. It is a source of great satisfaction and pleasure that both Iran and Tajikistan are the parties to this key agreement of the ECO.

Excellencies,

Conducive economic environment and connectivity in the region is a prerequisite for stimulating national economies of the Member Countries, boosting intra-regional cooperation and integration of the Member States' economies with the global economy. Since my assumption of responsibility as the ECO Secretary General, cooperation in transport is at the core of ECO agenda as I believe trade and connectivity are mutually reinforcing. Special attention is being given to developing efficient and reliable road and rail communications networks in the region. I am privileged to mention few of our recent achievements in this sector.

1. The long awaited ECO-ITI (Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul) Road Corridor has been activated on 7 October 2021 with the arrival of two loaded trucks from Karachi to Istanbul.
2. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among the Railway Administrations of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran on the implementation of the KTI Railway Freight Corridor was signed on the sidelines of the 15th ECO Summit held in Ashgabat in November 2021. As per the MoU, a trilateral Corridor Management Mechanism (CMM) will be established to coordinate its operation and tariffs.
3. Most recently, another long awaited project i.e. Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) Cargo started its operation on December 21, 2021.

Specifically, here I would like to express my appreciation to the supporting role of Iran for realization of the these projects of regional connectivity and shared economic prosperity of the Member States.

Excellencies,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that ECO appreciatively acknowledges the guidance and the significant role of Iran and Tajikistan in the ECO aim to strengthen the regional cooperation and realization of goals and objectives of ECO. Within the framework of the ECO, I am confident that the support of the two countries will continue in order to secure the interest of the member states of the Organization as well as accomplishment of economic and sustainable development in the region.
