

**Statement by**  
**Amb. Khusrav Noziri, ECO Secretary General**  
**at the Event on Iran & the 30- year-old BSEC - Prospects for Cooperation**  
Tehran, May 30, 2022

**H.E. Mr. Mahdi Safari,**  
**Honourable Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran,**

**H.E. Mr. Lazar Comansecu, Secretary General of the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC),**

**H.E. Mr. Stefan Priesner, the United Nations Resident Coordinator for the Islamic Republic of Iran,**

**Excellencies,**  
**Distinguished Participants,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a matter of great honour and privilege for me to attend and speak at this important conference. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere congratulations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran for arranging this conference and providing an opportunity to the relevant stakeholders for offering their recommendations and roadmap for the future cooperation.

ECO represents a unique intergovernmental platform that brings together countries from Central Asia, Caucuses, South and West Asia. Because of its diverse membership, location and the potential to contribute to the economic growth of the member countries, ECO is drawing renewed interest of the regional and global partners for jointly addressing the socio-economic development needed of the region.

Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) aims to achieve the dual objectives of strengthening economic cooperation among its member countries and connecting them to global markets. To achieve these objectives, ECO has attributed as a suitable platform for mobilizing policy makers and other relevant stakeholders across the region and beyond to formulate the coherent, equitable and sustainable frameworks need to achieve the sustainable development.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In the face of COVID-19, the regional organizations and sub-regional groupings have a crucial role to play for bringing swift socio-economic recovery. In line with regional priorities and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit held in Ashgabat on 28 November, 2021 assessed the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of the region and provided a strategic

direction and a way forward under the “Ashgabat Consensus for Action” for achieving the Member States’ common objectives and prosperity in the ECO region.

### **Excellencies,**

There are various commonalities between the ECO and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). Both are regional organizations focusing on socio-economic development of their respective regions. ECO and BSEC regions are immediate neighbors and two members of the ECO namely Azerbaijan and Turkey are also the members of the BSEC. The process of the establishment of the BSEC was initiated by Turkey which is also a one of the key founding members of the ECO and in fact the Treaty of Izmir which is the origin document for the establishment of ECO was signed at the city Izmir in Turkey.

The adoption of ECO Vision 2025 set out the long- and mid-term regional objectives and expected outcomes in six priority areas including Trade, Transport and Connectivity, Energy, Tourism, Economic Growth and Productivity and Social Welfare and Environment.

### **Excellencies,**

As far as connectivity and cooperation in Transport within the ECO is concerned, here I would like to mention very briefly some of our projects in the field.

- *Railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran (KTI Railway)*

The project’s first milestone was realized through the official launch of the test container train on 3 December 2014. The project’s goal is to connect the Republic of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran to the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and develop “a replicable model of the common corridor management mechanism in order to bring in greater efficiency in the ECO railway network”.

After extensive follow-up sessions, the Memorandum of Understanding Between Railway Administrations (railways) of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Implementation of KTI railway Freight Corridor was finalized and signed on the sidelines of the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit on 26 November 2021 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

The en-route countries agreed that the future phases of the Study Project should be resulted in transforming the present KTI railway corridor into an economic corridor.

- *ECO Container Train on Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) route*

The project on the ITI Container Train along Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul railway route was initiated by the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Ministers of Transport in Antalya on 17-18 April 2008. The overall length of this railway route is 6,543 km (1,990 km in Pakistan, 2,603 km - Iran and 1,950 km - Turkey). The project's goal is to provide railway connectivity for Pakistan and Iran to reach European railway junctures via Turkey. In this regard, Turkmenbashi Declaration (3 May 2018) urged to speed up the process of rehabilitation of the existing rail segments of the main ECO rail corridors and routes crossing through the Member States' territories.

- *ECO Container Train on Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty routes*

The project titled "ECO Container Train on Istanbul-Almaty and Almaty-Bandar Abbas routes" was initiated in March 2001. The route's overall length is 5,626 km (Turkey - 1,950 km, Iran - 2,016 km, Turkmenistan – 449 km, Uzbekistan – 732 km and Kazakhstan – 956 km). The project's first milestone was realized via formal launch of the container train on 20 January 2002.

The project's initial goal designed at its onset was to enable rail-based multimodal connectivity till sea outlets in Turkey and Iran for the en-route landlocked countries (LLCs), including Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Apart from the cooperation in railways, ECO has initiated parallel road corridors. For instance, the ECO-Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul ITI Road corridor was successfully activated under TIR system on 8 October 2021 on the route between Pakistan (Karachi), Iran (Mirjaveh - Bazargan BCP) and Turkey (Gurbolag - Istanbul) with two Pakistani trucks fully loaded on return trip as well.

### **Excellencies,**

Being the neighboring regions, there is a tremendous potential of cooperation between ECO and BSEC especially in transport sector. Both the regions can play complementary roles through extending transport corridors in connecting the whole Europe to Central Asia, West Asia, South Asia and China in the East.

### **Distinguished Participants,**

Towards the end, I am confident that the spirit of cooperation which has inspired us to this moment would grow in the years to come and would further strengthen the regional cooperation in the field of transport and regional connectivity.

Finally, I would thank all the distinguished audience for the kind attention and wish fruitful deliberations during today's event on prospects for cooperation between Iran and BSEC.