

**Statement of the  
ECO Secretary General, Mr. Khusrav Noziri  
at the Fifth Meeting of Board of Trustees of the  
ECO Science Foundation  
Isfahan, February 14, 2023**

**Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Eminent Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is an immense pleasure to participate in the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Board of Trustees of ECO Science Foundation. I extend my sincere appreciations to the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran, University of Isfahan, and Isfahan Chamber of Commerce and Industries for hosting this important meeting as well as their warm hospitality.

Before further proceed with the statement, I would like on behalf of the Economic Cooperation Organization express our deep condolences over the loss of precious human lives during the devastating earthquakes on February 6, in the south-eastern region of the Republic of Türkiye that also left many people injured and caused severe damage and destruction in various cities. While sharing profound sympathies for this tragic occasion, the ECO stands with the Government and People of the Republic of Türkiye at this time of suffering and great discomfort.

I would like to specially acknowledge the generosity and benevolent approach of the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of Iran which stands always ready, receptive and forthcoming to host the Science Foundation's Board of Trustees Meetings. The Ministry kindly hosted the Fourth and last Meeting of the BoT in this beautiful city of Isfahan in 2019.

While congratulating Professor Seyed Komail Tayebi for assuming responsibilities as the President of ECO Science Foundation, I wish him the best for the success of his fresh assignment as well as current and future endeavours. Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the services of his predecessor Professor Manzoor Hussain Soomro who rendered excellent services to enrich and develop agenda of the institute for the continued promotion of regional cooperation in science and technology.

**Dear Participants,**

The three Specialized Agencies of the ECO: ECO Science Foundation, ECO Educational Institute and ECO Cultural Institute, play a monumental role in advancing our agenda of multifaceted cooperation. The role that ECO Science Foundation plays as an incubator of Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) in the region cannot be overemphasized.

Let me recall that the 26<sup>th</sup> COM Meeting recently held in Uzbekistan adopted the Tashkent Communiqué. I am pleased to note that this important document, while recognizing the significance of all our Specialized Agencies and assuring continued support to their operations, called for serious consideration by all Member States to join these key ECO organs with a view to increasing the level of their ownership and partnership.

The ECO Science Foundation was established to patronize, support and develop highly skilled, scientific and technical manpower in the region, as well as to help strengthen the scientific and research institutions in the Member States.

While commending the efforts of the Science Foundation to foster scientific cooperation amongst the Member States, we optimistically believe that the institution would continue with its meaningful role and contribution to support our region's sustainable advancement in the progressive world of science and technology.

By virtue of being replete with hydrocarbons and mineral resources, the ECO region direly needs science and technology for exploration and exploitation of such resources. The ECO is fertile and stretches up to eight million sq. km and is all set to be breadbasket for Asia and beyond if the enormous potential of science and technology is availed in letter and spirit.

The ECO sheltering half a billion population, mostly youngsters and almost equal to that of entire Europe, has the absolute capability and capacity to contribute tremendously to global human resources and earn huge sum as remittances. This bright-future scenario is liable to be transformed into a reality if the focus is genuinely given to make our people skilled and science-literate.

Keeping these facts in mind, the role of ECO Science Foundation becomes and appears to be indispensable. Moreover, the onslaught of ever-increasing globalization, advent of unprecedented and severe challenges, and last but not least, the more and more applicability and incorporation of science and technology into daily life, reinforce the contention that the ECO Science Foundation has a lot to do to gain on our shared targets for the collective betterment of the region.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the endeavors of the Science Foundation for its outreach to various regional and international organizations of its kind with a view to meeting its development goals.

However, let us not forget that the Science Foundation is in dire financial straits. This has been a recurring issue. Member States need to sincerely and timely fulfill their financial commitments and obligations towards this very important institution. An organization cannot function desirably if it continuously lacks financial resources.

**Dear participants,**

During the recently-held 33<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) on January 16-19, 2023 the ECO Secretariat was entrusted to jointly devise a mechanism for timely transfer of remittances to the Science Foundation. Appreciating the decision, we are set to initiate discussions to this end, in coordination with the Member States.

At present, all ECO Member States are signatory to the Charter of the Science Foundation; however, only the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have ratified the Charter so far. Five ECO Member States are yet to ratify it.

Suffice it to say that the Science Foundation, as a Specialized Agency of the ECO is partially or semi-patronized by the Member States. The Foundation has the potential to function more efficiently and more effectively and serve as an incubator of innovation in the region provided that all Member States stand up to receptively join the institution and support as well as patronize it with increased owner-and-partner-ship.

The ECO Secretariat frequently brings into the notice of the Member States the budgetary issues facing Science Foundation, ratification process by remaining Member States, and pending nominations of respective focal persons.

The ECO Secretariat is obliged and obligated to make fresh calls to the Member States who have yet to ratify the ECOSF's Charter, looking forward to receiving their quickest response with regard to the ratification of the said document.

Moreover, we welcome signing of Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the ECO Science Foundation in 2021.

The ECO Secretariat has always committed itself to the Science Foundation and other Specialized Agencies of the Organization. We are ready and doing our best to extend maximum possible assistance to the ECO Science Foundation.

I am confident that this important BoT's Meeting will secure productive and desired outcomes to support and facilitate the functioning of the ECO Science Foundation.

Wish you all the best. Thank you.