

**Statement of Mr. Khusrav Noziri, the ECO Secretary General
at the International Conference on the theme
“Transportation Highways of the SCO Member States,
also “North-South” and “East-West” Corridors are Base
for Mutual and Joint Development”
23 December 2022, Baku (virtual mode)**

**Excellency Mr. Rashad Nabiyeu,
Honourable Minister of Digital Development and Transport of
the Republic of Azerbaijan,
Excellency Mr. Zhang Ming, Secretary General of Shanghai
Cooperation Organization,
Distinguished Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Having the pleasure and privilege to attend this very important International Conference titled “Transportation Highways of the SCO Member States, also “North-South” and “East-West” Corridors are Base for Mutual and Joint Development”, I am sincerely grateful to the Honourable Minister of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan for inviting and giving me the opportunity to speak on the important issue of North-South and East-West transport connectivity of our region.

I also would like to acknowledge that this important Conference is being organized at the right time and truly manifests the importance and urgency of sustainable connectivity and transport for the world in general and our region in particular.

As we are celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Economic Cooperation Organization expansion, we are glad to renew our commitment for making all Member States, especially the landlocked countries strongly integrated through enhanced connectivity by establishing an advanced regional transport network in line with the ECO Vision 2025 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals and in doing so we are very much interested to share our experiences and synergize our efforts with like-minded organizations and other partners. In this context, I would like to highlight the growing

importance of cooperation between the two regional organizations with shared membership - ECO and SCO.

To achieve the progressive targets of ECO Vision 2025 as well as those of SDGs, the ECO has adopted a holistic approach entailing policy making, establishing legal framework, implementing international standard procedures and conventions, development of infrastructure, capacity building, technical cooperation, coordination and collaboration with relevant international partners and banks.

The connectivity policy of ECO has always prioritized corridor development approach over isolated initiatives and in this regard, enhancement of regional and international connectivity has been a guiding principle for infrastructure development. In this connection, infrastructure development has remained one of the main priorities of the Organization and to this end various regional and inter-regional connectivity projects have been successfully implemented that include:

- Completion of missing links and establishment of Almaty - Bandar Abbas and Almaty - Istanbul Rail Corridor;
- Establishment of Kazakhstan - Turkmenistan - Iran Railway Corridor;
- Completion of missing links and establishment of Islamabad - Tehran - Istanbul (ITI) Rail and Road Corridor;
- Establishment of the Kyrgyz Republic - Tajikistan - Afghanistan - Iran Road and Rail Corridor;
- Construction of Qazvin - Rasht and Astara - Astara railway within the framework of North-South Corridor.

The two following road Corridors are also in the initial phases of establishment within the ECO framework:

- Kyrgyz Republic - Uzbekistan - Turkmenistan - Iran Road Corridor (KUTI);
- Tajikistan - Uzbekistan - Turkmenistan - Iran - Turkiye Road Corridor (TUTIT).

Meanwhile, harmonization of the standards and transport procedures has also been pursued simultaneously with the infrastructure development and almost all the Member States have joined the essential road and rail international agreements and conventions, and in particular, TIR Convention. The ECO Secretariat in close collaboration with the UNECE and IRU, has been effectively active for accession of the Member States to the necessary international transport conventions, and is also pursuing for digitalizing the transit documents particularly the TIR and CMR ones, and in this connection, it is enjoying the support of the Islamic Development Bank.

Dear participants,

The ECO as a regional intergovernmental development organization shares all common values, targets and priorities envisaged in the SDGs and while taking stock of the past experiences, will continue to be part of any regional and international initiatives, plans and activities for development of the trade and transport connectivity, particularly for its Members.

Excellencies,

I am confident that outcome of the deliberations in this Conference will contribute to more effective cooperation towards sustainable transport and connectivity for our common membership and will also help us plan a better and prosperous future.

In conclusion, I would like to, once more, express my gratitude and appreciation to the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting this important event. I also thank H.E. Mr. Rashad Nabiyeu, for the excellent chairmanship and his team for the necessary arrangements for successful organization of this important Conference.

I thank you all for your attention.