



**Statement of the
ECO Secretary General H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri
at the Dinner Reception of the Permanent Mission of the
Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN
Geneva, 21 February 2024**

**Ambassador Bahreini, Distinguished Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN,
Honorable Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Assalam-u alaikum and good evening,

It gives me immense pleasure to join this prestigious gathering. I am also pleased to acknowledge your commitment and dedication to fostering international relations and cooperation in multifarious domains. I also thank our hosts for offering excellent hospitality and this splendid dinner.

Availing this unique opportunity, I am pleased to recall that the Islamic Republic of Iran has very kindly assumed the ECO Chairmanship for 2024 under a luminous yearly theme, that is, **“The Year of Enhanced and Resilient ECO Region through Expansion of Intra-Regional Trade”**.

I would also like to avail this opportunity to appreciate the valued role of our Permanent Missions in Geneva, especially concerning the global promotion of ECO and its agenda of regional cooperation.

Distinguished Ambassadors,

Our planned initiatives have yielded tangible and positive results. Our policies and programs are crafted to align with global development policies and agendas while catering to regional necessities. Despite some technical assistance from international systems and global partners, our resources have not been enough to fully meet our needs and requirements.

However, amidst escalating challenges, the Organization is diligently advancing towards realizing the **ECO Vision 2025** and the targets set forth by our leaders. ECO Secretariat is tasked with fostering regional economic and social development and integration, spanning areas such as trade, investment, transportation, communication, energy, minerals, environment, tourism, agriculture, industry, parliamentary cooperation, and combating drug trafficking, among others.

Let me also recall that 2023 was declared the “**Year of Green Transition and Interconnectivity**” under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan. A number of important activities were made, projects were implemented and events were held during that year, particularly aimed at enhancing our intra- and inter-regional road, railway and air connectivity to create greater transport and trade links, encompassing all ECO Member States, particularly our landlocked nations. In this regard, we sincerely acknowledge the role and contribution of our regional and global partners, most significantly the relevant UN Agencies and the IsDB.

Eminent Participants,

As you are kindly aware, the environmental concerns are growing at global scale. Relevantly, the environment and impacts of climate change has been designated as a cross-sectoral priority of our Organization. In this regard, we have recently developed the **ECO Cooperation Framework on Environment** and its two work programmes on climate change and biodiversity.

ECO has also been mainstreaming sustainable and clean energy transition in its overall energy agenda over the past few years. The establishment of **ECO Clean Energy Centre (CECECO)** in Baku, being jointly implemented with UNIDO and the establishment of the **ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM)** are two significant steps forward to securing such progressive ends. Moreover, following discussions with our international partners, we have concluded to align the ECO-REM with UNESCAP’s Regional Roadmap on Power System Connectivity and the joint UNECE-UNESCAP Programme on Energy Connectivity in the Region.

While reaffirming the dedication of **ECO Member States to the Paris Agreement**, it is essential to acknowledge that the implementation of relevant activities in our region relies significantly on adequate means of implementation. What we require is not solely an environment-friendly transition but also a fair one that ensures inclusivity. In pursuit of this goal, we must delve deeper into opportunities for regional organizations and platforms, such as ECO, to enhance collaboration for tangible actions by formulating regional roadmaps and prioritizing actions. In this context, we closely follow up the reforms in the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), where UNECE plays a vital role.

Regional food insecurity is on the rise due to several factors, including climate shocks, loss of biodiversity, disruptions in marine and coastal ecosystems, global water crisis, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing disputes. These factors collectively intensify food insecurity in the ECO Region.

ECO Regional Program for Food Security (ECO-RPFS) serves as the region's premier initiative for fostering food security and agricultural progress. It is currently undergoing implementation in line with deliberations of the Steering Committee Meetings of the ECO Regional Coordination Center for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS).

On industrial development, standard harmonization and quality management are pivotal for enhancing trade flow in the region. ECO-RISCAM, as the **Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology in the ECO Region**, has diligently pursued these objectives. The inaugural General Council Meeting of the RISCAM is imminent, aiming to establish Technical Management Boards and initiate necessary steps for the institute's activation.

We also support the establishment of a **High-Level Human Resources Development Working Group** to devise an action plan aimed at enhancing policy coherence for sustainable development in the region. Furthermore, we are eager to engage in closer collaborations with important international organizations, particularly the concerned UN Agencies to explore all potential avenues for achieving the UN SDGs.

Distinguished Ambassadors,

I understand that there is a strong need of enhanced **coordination between the ECO Secretariat and the Permanent Missions of the Member States in Geneva** on all issues of relevancy. In this regard, a contact group may be established to explore views and ideas in connection with developing international relations of the ECO. Besides, I consider that our Member States need to make bilateral and multilateral promotion of ECO as a vibrant regional economic forum and specify maximum areas of possible cooperation with regional and international entities.

Concluding my remarks, I look forward to seeking your valuable suggestions on better ways and means to promoting regional economic cooperation and consolidating global standing of the ECO in light of the prevailing issues and challenges.

Thank you.