



**Statement by Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, ECO Secretary General
at the Seventy-ninth Session of the
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Under agenda item:
Strengthening sub-regional cooperation
Bangkok, 16 May 2023 (hybrid mode)**

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

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for inviting me to attend this important session. Acknowledging the significance of the event as well as the relevance of its theme that is “accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development”, I congratulate the UNESCAP for organizing this inclusive interaction.

Based on Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report this year, although we have had strong progress in the region on some goals, climate change continues to regress and must be given priority to reverse negative trends. I hope this meeting’s deliberations will lead to a convergence of views on climate action priorities and bolder action at the regional and sub-regional levels.

The Economic Cooperation Organization, in line with the aspirations of its member nations and their leadership, is determinedly set to reinforce the environmental and climate change cooperation in the region through enhanced collaboration amongst the ECO countries while consolidating their actions and efforts in this sphere. ECO is committed to promoting development that is more resilient to climate change and has already had some collaborations in this respect within the region and beyond, including with the Asian and Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM) on disaster risk reduction and management for cascading risks; however, we have to continue considering more and more mutually developed and policy-oriented guidance to meet the challenges that appear to emanate from the growing climate change issues.

At regional and sub-regional levels, we have to identify and agree on one or two priorities as a common denominator for climate action and collaboration. As possible key areas of cooperation on climate change between sub-regional organizations and ESCAP are concerned, we can think of raising public awareness of climate action, sensitizing leaders to move from short-termism to long-term

thinking, focusing on the ways and means of adaptation to climate change and transition to sustainable agriculture as well as low-carbon industries, mobility, logistics, and urban development.

While thinking of accelerating climate action in the regional context, it is of great importance not to lose sight of the global scale and aspects of the subject matter, the significance of issues related to historical responsibility, and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) as a guide to future action. South-South and Triangular Cooperation are necessary, but in no way can be a substitute for North-South cooperation.

Shifting to low-carbon growth is easy to say but a quite complex issue as far as its practical implementation is concerned especially in a region with huge dependence on fossil fuels from one side and limited resources and capacity from the other. This is why the national capacities and circumstances of different countries for climate action should carefully be taken into account, mainly in order to refrain from negatively affecting their development visions in various ways.

Our region for reversing the aforesaid regressing trend and focusing on priority areas for collaboration requires proportionate means of implementation including adequate technical and financial assistance. The absence of such proportionate support is a huge threat to all efforts to achieve different SDGs and could be a recipe for falling developing countries in our region even further behind. Let's not forget that we need not only a green, but also a just and inclusive transition.

In such a context, we believe that the urgent priority is boosting investments for climate action in the region by multilateral development partners and banks while bridging the increasing gap between countries that can access affordable financing for development, and those that cannot. Sustainable climate finance access, mobilization, and capacity-building for developing countries in our region should be assured by the United Nations relevant bodies and multilateral development partners and banks. This is crucial to initiatives on reducing the devastating effects of climate change and financing eco-friendly projects. Adequate and appropriate access to technologies is also requisite for climate change action which cannot be realized only through purely market-based approaches.

Closing my remarks, I consider it very much essential to have a dedicated and robust mechanism for predictable and reliable means to efficiently and effectively secure our green transition targets, in special consideration of the UN SDGs on environment and climate change.

Thank you.