



**Statement by**  
**ECO Secretary General H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri**  
**at the Third International High-Level Conference on the International**  
**Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028**  
11 June 2024, Dushanbe

**Honourable Co-Chairs,**  
**Excellences,**  
**Distinguished Participants,**

It is a privilege to address this important international conference on behalf of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

I extend my profound gratitude to the Government of Tajikistan for organizing this event and to the United Nations for supporting the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028.

**Excellences,**

Globally, increasing demand and climate change are straining water resources. Sustainable management could reduce this pressure, but improvements are lagging behind. Addressing the water needs for agriculture, safe supply and sanitation is essential for public health.

Water is crucial for sustainable development and peace, affecting human life, the environment and the economy. Prioritizing the water-environment nexus involves protecting ecosystems, preventing pollution, using eco-friendly technologies and effective wastewater treatment.

Tajikistan, with abundant water resources and strong support for the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”, can lead the ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM) project. This would enhance market integration and sustainable development in the ECO Region. ECO, in turn, can champion the goals of “Water for Sustainable Development”.

**Distinguished Participants,**

To achieve sustainable development, we need a holistic approach that transforms a linear economy to a circular one, considering environmental and water-related interdependencies.

In this regard, I am pleased to announce our new Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability and Circular Economy in the ECO Region, abbreviated as RESCUE. This initiative aims to create a regional cooperation platform for a just transition to a resource-efficient, circular and regenerative economy. RESCUE will complement existing global initiatives by ECO Member States, such as Tajikistan's "Water for Sustainable Development", Türkiye's "Zero Waste" initiative, and Kyrgyz Republic's "Sustainable Mountain Development".

### **Eminent Delegates,**

Water is crucial for food security, with agriculture accounting for about 70% of all freshwater use. However, water availability has declined, affecting agriculture and food security, leading to environmental instability. Sustainable agricultural development must protect resources without causing degradation and be technically, economically and socially viable.

Climate change worsens water security by increasing variability in the water cycle, causing extreme weather events, altering rainfall patterns, reducing water quality and impacting social, economic and environmental stability.

Water is a vital tool for cooperation and dialogue in sustainable development, but it requires effective, integrated actions and strong political will. The ECO region faces significant water challenges, making sustainable water use practices essential for long-term security.

ECO supports Member States in implementing integrated water resources management strategies that balance environmental and economic needs. Strengthening partnerships within the ECO Region and with global stakeholders is a key for effective water governance. The ECO Vision 2025 encourages Member States to undertake activities aligned with SDGs, and we are open to collaborating with the UN and other international organizations to share best practices and resources.

### **Excellencies,**

In conclusion, I believe this Forum will highlight the importance of managing water resources for sustainable development. I thank the organizers for this significant event on behalf of my institution and on my own behalf.

Thank you.