

**Statement by
Mr. Yerbol Akhmedov
Head of the Republic of Kazakhstan's Delegation
at 29th Meeting of RPC (17-20 December 2018)**

**Dear Chairman!
Ladies and Gentlemen!**

I welcome all participants of the 29th meeting of the Regional Planning Council of the Economic Cooperation Organization and I want to express my gratitude to the Secretary General and the ECO Secretariat for such a good organization of the event.

I am confident that the agreements reached at the end of this forum and the plans agreed upon its results will contribute to the strengthening of mutually beneficial cooperation within the ECO.

Dear participants of the event!

Kazakhstan considers ECO as a multilateral platform for the development of cooperation in the trade, economic, transit, energy and other areas that contribute to the stability of our region.

Within the Organization, we attach particular importance to the partnership in the field of transport and logistics, trade, investment, energy, environment and others, which are reflected in the ECO Vision 2025. In these areas, projects are already being implemented that can play a significant role in enhancing a mutually beneficial partnership. In this context, I would like to highlight the launch of the ferry complex in the port of Kuryk on the east coast of the Caspian Sea and the increase in traffic on the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran rail route.

However, it must be recognized that the current ECO practice of creating numerous specialized institutions has not yet shown its effectiveness in facilitating interaction. Therefore, we urge ECO members to refrain from creating a large number of specialized regional institutions.

Instead, we should have more flexible regional networks guaranteeing very favorable conditions for cooperation. In this context, I would like to inform about the initiatives of Kazakhstan, which will promote cooperation within the ECO.

One of such initiatives is the **Astana International Financial Center (AIFC)**, which was officially launched in July 2018. This Center operates in accordance with the principles of English common law with a preferential tax regime, an independent financial court, an arbitration center and a regulator. It is intended to become an important financial center in our region.

Astana International Financial Center develops key areas of capital markets, private banking, Islamic finance and financial technologies. It consists of several components, including the Astana International Exchange, created together with leading foreign partners.

Over 60 companies are already registered in the Astana International Financial Center. It is expected that by 2020 this number will reach 500. We think that there is

significant potential for the development of cooperation of this Center with various partners in ECO member states.

Another important project is **the International Center for the Development of Green Technologies and Investment Projects** (*Center for Green Technologies*), which contributes to the practical transition to a green economy by creating a sustainable structure necessary to promote renewable energy and clean technologies. This will ensure regional cooperation in the transfer of “green” technologies and increased use of “green” projects.

We call on specialized international organizations and companies of the ECO member states, which are currently developing the green sector, and establish partnerships with the Center for Green Technologies. I am confident that in the future this Center will contribute to global sustainable development through the use of green technologies.

In addition, the recently established **Astana Hub [International] Technopark** provides a number of advantages for its members, such as tax breaks, developed infrastructure, affordable rent, favorable legal and visa regime, and access to funding sources.

Our countries have great potential to strengthen cooperation in the agricultural sector within the framework of the **Islamic Organization for Food Security**, established within OIC framework. As you know, the main goal of this Organization is to coordinate the efforts of Islamic countries in the field of food security, as well as developing strategies and programs for agricultural development, providing technical assistance to countries in need.

I hope that the ECO Member States will fully use the opportunities of the Astana International Financial Center, the Center for Green Technologies and the Islamic Organization for Food Security for further mutually beneficial cooperation.

Dear participants of the event!

We are interested in enhancing our cooperation on the basis of a pragmatic and constructive approach that meets the interests of all Member States.

At the same time, I would like to specially note that the existing potential in the ECO framework is not fully used due to certain shortcomings.

Therefore, the Republic of Kazakhstan has made a number of proposals for the reform and the new scale of assessments of the ECO. In particular, Kazakhstan expressed its willingness to increase its contribution from 16% to 18%, subject to the following conditions.

First, the cancellation of the so-called "debt" of Kazakhstan.

Secondly, the inclusion of Kazakhstan in the list of rotation of the Secretary-General on the rights of the founding countries.

Third, the provision of a separate permanent position of Deputy Secretary-General to Kazakhstan.

Fourth, the provision of 7 positions of category "P".

In this context, we highly appreciate the work done by the CPR and the ECO Secretariat on these issues, and welcome **the decision of the CPR to provide the position** of Deputy Secretary General. At the same time, it is regrettable that consensus was not reached on the remaining points of Kazakhstan’s proposals.

In this regard, I would like to emphasize once again that Kazakhstan considers all the above conditions as one indivisible package.

Therefore, we would like to ask colleagues to fully support our proposals and complete this issue by the end of 2018.

At the end of my speech, I would like to emphasize that improving the efficiency of work within the Organization framework is in the interests of all ECO member states.

Therefore, we urge to focus on the implementation of specific projects that will be effective for the development of the entire region.

I hope that, following the 29th meeting of the CPR, we will be able to reach consensus on many issues that will enhance cooperation within ECO.

Thank you for attention