

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

**Dear ECO Secretary General, Mr. Hadi Soleimanpour, Esteemed Council members,
Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

At the outset, let me express my sincere gratitude to You for excellent reception and organization of the 29th meeting of the Regional Planning Council of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Representatives of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan - Bozorali Bekmatov (Head of Trade policy and services' Department), the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Tajikistan - Mrs. Shoista Saidmurodova (Chair of Analysis and Economic forecasting Department) and the Ministry of foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan - Mr. Bahodur Rakhmonov (Second Secretary of the Foreign economic cooperation Department) are representing the Republic of Tajikistan in this meeting.

Tajikistan's relevant government offices studied materials, developed and sent by the ECO Secretariat on Draft Working Papers on the main aspects of regional cooperation. Including the following directions:

Transport and communications sector, which gives a concise information on the major activities of the Directorate of Transport and Communications (TC), implemented during 2018 and represents a summary of project proposals and recommendations that could be accepted at the 29th Regional Planning Council (PSA) regarding the ECO Work Plan for 2019.

trade and investment sector holds a key position and is one of the major priority areas that could play a significant role in improving the economic systems of ECO Member States, especially through the expansion and simplification of intra- and inter-regional trade procedures; regarding **energy, mineral resources and environment sector**, we are aware that the ECO region is endowed with one third of the world's hydrocarbon deposits.

It is one of the key suppliers of oil and natural gas in the global market and contributes to international energy security. Energy is one of the priorities of cooperation within the ECO and in this regard, years of 2013-2022 proclaimed the "ECO Decade to enhance energy cooperation".

Current global perspectives demonstrate constant pressure on resource production systems, increasing environmental problems and rough competition for the access to resources.

Global issues linked with environment and climate change stresses the need for intensified cooperation in the ECO region through the integration of regional and global approaches to designing project and creation of collaborative frameworks.

- **Agriculture and industry** are the next key areas of regional cooperation, which can stimulate economic growth in the region by increasing productivity.
- As you may be aware, dear colleagues, seven out of ten ECO member countries were low-income and food-deficit countries 15-16 years ago. To the date, the number of these countries has now dropped to four due to the improvement and expansion of the level of health, education and culture.
- **Tourism development** in the ECO Member States through effective means at the regional, national and international levels is represented by accelerating the Silk Road revival, cooperation with the international community and facilitating visa procedures for citizens in the region to attract tourists visiting the country for the first time and repeatedly.
- The other sector - **Economic research and statistics**, in the Working Papers provided by the ECO Secretariat, we got acquainted with the priority projects aimed at monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the ECO projects' progress on economic research coordinating economic research activities, as well as on statistical data providing and updating data and statistical reports in the ECO Statistical Network (ECOSTAT) implementing statistical capacity building programs, monitoring the implementation of state projects and organizing regular statistical activities.
- The draft Work Program for 2019, including Working Papers on international relations as a whole, has been approved by our country's relevant line-ministries and agencies.

Information on implementation of the decisions of the 28th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council was previously submitted to the Secretariat of the economic cooperation Organization. As a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Republic of Tajikistan actively participates in trade liberalization process through gradual elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and expresses its willingness to cooperate and find ways to strengthen this process.

Foreign trade analysis in Tajikistan with the ECO Member states over 11 months of 2018 shows its growth by 2017.

In general, the share of Tajikistan's trade turnover with ECO countries increased from 41.3% to 44.3%, i.e. by 3.4%, while the share of ECO Member states in Tajikistan's export structure over 11 months increased by 15.8% versus the entire 2017.

During the 11 months period the current year, the trade turnover with Uzbekistan has increased by 132.5 million dollars or 2.1 times in comparison of the annual volume of the last year.

Trade turnover with Turkey for the same period increased by \$ 31.4 million or 109.3%, with Pakistan by \$ 18.3 million or 144.2%, with Kyrgyzstan by \$ 10.1 million and with Azerbaijan by 2, 8 million dollars. It is hoped that based on 2018 year outcomes, Tajikistan will increase trade turnover with other ECO countries rather than it was in 2017.

This positive trend is the outcome-oriented cooperation of our countries within the Economic Cooperation Organization in which intraregional trade constitutes about 7.5% of the total trade among the ECO member states.

I wish you, dear colleagues and esteemed representatives of the participating states and the ECO Secretariat fruitful work at the ECO meeting.

Thank You for your attention!

STATE AID

(With reference to Article 18 of ECOTA)

The criteria for the assessment of the practices as well as rules of their implementation, as referred to in paragraph 3 of Article 18 of ECOTA on State Aid, shall be based on domestic laws and/or rules and procedures of concerned Contracting Parties.

Each Contracting Party shall provide a copy of its national state aid laws and/or rules and procedures to the ECO Secretariat for the perusal of other Contracting Parties.

Annex-III

PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

(With reference to Article 19 of ECOTA)

Keeping in mind Paras 1 and 2 of Article 19 of ECOTA, the Contracting Parties agree to gradually improve the protection of Intellectual Property Rights and, before the end of the eighth year after the entry into force of the Agreement, correspond to the substantive standards of the multilateral agreements such as enumerated as follows:

Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS); or

Paris Convention; or

Rome Convention; or

Madrid Convention; or

Berne Convention.

The correspondence to the above-mentioned Agreements does not necessarily require a Contracting Party to accede to these Agreements.

Annex-IV

ANTI-DUMPING MEASURES

(With reference to Article 20 of ECOTA)

In order to counteract or prevent dumping, the Contracting Parties have the right to apply their internal laws and/or rules and procedures on dumping.

- Each Contracting Party should provide copies of its national antidumping laws and/or rules and procedures to the Eco Secretariat for review by other Contracting Parties;
- Any disputes regarding application of aforesaid laws and procedures should be deferred for decision to the meeting of the Cooperation Council.

The obligation to develop regional cooperation for the benefit of their peoples, in the spirit of mutual consent, with full respect for the principles of sovereign equality, independence and territorial integrity of all states;

The ECO objectives laid down in its Charter - the Treaty of Izmir, and the provisions of the Economic Cooperation Strategy in the ECO region and, in particular, in the articles of the ECO Framework Agreement on Trade Cooperation; and recognizing the importance of the principles of a market economy and the pursuit of a coherent economic policy, to the extent necessary to achieve the objectives of these agreements;

It is important to comply with generally accepted international regulations, as well as free trade regimes in order to deepen economic development.

Contracting Parties, which are non-members of the WTO, will continue their work in joining it and the Contracting Parties that are members of the WTO, will provide them with the necessary support in this regard;

Relevance of promotion of intra-regional trade, which is currently constituting a small share in the total trade turnover between ECO member states.

Since 1992, ECO activities have been significantly intensified due to the voluntary accession of 7 new States –Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The 50th session adopted a Resolution on cooperation with ECO and since that time ECO has enjoyed observer status at the UN. ECO also enjoys observer status in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is a regional interstate economic organization established by the Central Asia and the Middle East countries and is the successor of the Organization for Regional Cooperation for Development, acting based on the Charter of the Izmir Treaty signed by the three founder-states - Iran, Pakistan and Turkey.

ECO Trade Cooperation Agreement

The ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) was signed on 15-17 July in Islamabad, Pakistan and was ratified by the Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli Decree of the Republic of Tajikistan in Dushanbe on 23 June 2004. This Agreement covers issues related to the export and import of goods from member states to reduce these targets to 15 per cent, compared with 80 per cent in the list of goods destined for mutual trade for the period of eight years. The Group of experts on trade and investment held its meeting in Ankara in January 2004 to implement the ECOTA (Economic Cooperation Organization Trade Agreement) with a quick approach to reducing the maximum tariff rates from 15% within 5 years, and should be included in the relevant Reform Agreement.

It should be noted that more than 4 ECO member countries, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Azerbaijan Republic, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Uzbekistan could not agree on bilateral and multilateral negotiations in the process of joining the WTO. Other countries are members of this Agreement and at the same time are members of the WTO, and all these countries operate in accordance with the WTO Agreement.

It should be noted that the Republic of Tajikistan is a full member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on March 2, 2013. For signing other agreements within regional organizations, legal and regulatory issues should be carefully analyzed and discussed. The foreign trade sector in Tajikistan meets modern standards and does not interfere with trade relations between the member states.

At the same time, no export restrictions exist on goods and vehicles in the Republic of Tajikistan or other equivalent export measures that comply with the provisions of Articles 8 and 9 of the Agreement on commercial cooperation of the Republic of Tajikistan. At the same time, customs duties are set at 7.8 percent of the customs value of goods.

Issues associated with the ECO Trade Agreements implementation include developing the list of goods for the mechanisms both for export and import, the approval of Trade Agreements in the ECA region, as well as issues related to trade agreements with distant countries and free trade agreements of the states-participants of the Commonwealth of Independent States within the framework of

the Republic of Tajikistan. Tajikistan is being introduced into the World Trade Organization, and there is no need to re-implement it. The Republic of Tajikistan does not need to provide individual preferential treatment in foreign trade, considering its obligations under WTO to protect its economic interests. At the same time, the issue of changing customs duties based on the obligations of the Republic of Tajikistan on the World Trade Organization is being addressed.