



ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANISATION (ECO)

Khujand Declaration 4 October, 2019

We, the Minister for Tourism and Heads of Delegation of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Uzbekistan, participating in the Third ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, on October 4, 2019, in the Khujand city, the Republic of Tajikistan, and keeping in view the Article II of İzmir Treaty, relevant parts of Quetta Action Plan, and other ECO documents including ECO Vision 2015 – 2025, as well as:

Recalling the Declarations of the First and Second ECO Ministerial Meetings on Tourism in Tehran (2008) and Antalya (2009);

Acknowledging the contribution of tourism industry to the economic development of the societies and as a tool for promoting understanding, peace and prosperity among nations;

Highlighting the contribution of sustainable tourism to the economic growth and development of the ECO Region and its role in strengthening economic cooperation among ECO Member States and enhance socio-economic ties within our societies and promote understanding, peace and prosperity among the nations;

Underlining the vast potential of the ECO region in the field of tourism and its ability to increase the region's share in global tourism and calling upon the need for protection and conservation of its natural and cultural heritage and safeguarding cultural richness, natural beauty, social values as well as local communities and traditions of the indigenous peoples.

Have decided to:

- 1- **Implement** the ECO Plan of Action on Tourism to promote regional cooperation in this important field and **call upon** the Member States to take necessary measures for their national tourism plans of action to make them in harmony with ECO Plan of Action on Tourism.
- 2- **Observe the** ECO Principle for Sustainable Tourism Development in the formulation of national tourism strategy and all ECO tourism Plan, programmes and projects;

- 3- **Announce** Dushanbe the Capital of the Republic of Tajikistan as ECO Tourism Capital for the years 2020-2021. Cities of Sari and Ardabil in the Islamic Republic of Iran are decided as the next ECO Tourism Capital(s) for the years 2022-2023 respectively;
- 4- **Take initiatives** to develop coordination between transit transport, tourism sectors and strengthen intra-regional and international connectivity through all modes of transportation in order to ensure comfortable, economical, accessible and secure travel in ECO Region;
- 5- **Develop** ECO tourism destinations particularly in the well known tourist-destinations of the Member States, creating a joint network to attract the tourists flow in the region;
- 6- **Consider** introducing tax holiday policy similar to the Republic of Tajikistan for tourism industry at ECO Tourism Destination for a stipulated time to encourage and support the tourism industry to invest in such destinations;
- 7- **Recall** the Member States as the main inheritor of the Silk Road to develop ECO Tourism Projects to consider common cultural heritage and luminaries of the region in promotional activities and marketing for regional tourism.
- 8- **Call upon** the Member States to co-organize events for celebration of common cultural festivals, Eids as well as rituals for ECO tourism promotion and in the given context initiative for joint celebrations such as Nowruz;
- 9- **Reactivate** ECO Tourism Promotion Fund through CPR and COM to allocate sufficient budget from savings of the Secretariat and invite Member States to fulfill their pledges to this Fund, request the other Member States to expedite their contributions to the ECO Tourism Promotion Fund, enabling the ECO Secretariat to help implement the tourism objectives contained in the ECO Vision 2025;
- 10- **Re-emphasize** the importance of training and human resource development as well as sharing knowledge and practices invite the Member States, in collaboration with ECO Secretariat, to organize training courses and workshops for this purpose including private sector with cooperation of relevant international bodies and Member States;
- 11- **Encourage** the national, regional and international (public and private) organizations/institutions to support programs, projects and plans contributing to development of tourism industry in the region and in this connection support the ECO Secretariat initiatives to establish working relations with UNWTO, UNIDO and UNESCO for the purpose of promotion of tourism in the region;
- 12- **Identify and introduce** new products, routes and packages to attract the intending explorers/tourists towards various areas of tourism including, urban and rural, social and cultural, medical etc.
- 13- **Express** deep appreciation to the Committee of Tourism Development under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and the warm hospitality extended to all participants, and also thank the ECO Secretariat for its contribution to successfully organize the meeting.