

**Report of
The 6th High Level Experts Group (HLEG)
Meeting on Tourism**

**(Virtual Mode)
12 December 2022**

REPORT

1. The 6th High Level Experts Group (HLEG) Meeting on Tourism was held virtually on 12 December 2022. It was hosted by the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan virtually. The meeting was attended by the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Türkiye and Turkmenistan. It was also attended by the ECO Secretariat. The list of participants is enclosed as **Annex-I**.

Agenda Item No. 1

Inauguration of the Meeting

2. The representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan (the host) inaugurated the Meeting and delivered his welcome address.

Agenda Item No. 2

Election of the Chairman

3. The Head of Delegation of the host country was elected as the chairman of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No. 3

Statement by the Chairman

4. After being elected, the Chairman delivered a short statement.

Agenda Item No. 4

Adoption of the Agenda

5. The Draft Agenda of the Meeting was adopted. The agenda is enclosed as **Annex-II**.

Agenda Item No. 5

Appointment of Drafting Committee

6. An open-ended Drafting Committee comprising the delegates of the Member States and the ECO Secretariat were appointed to prepare the draft report of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No. 6

Preparation for the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism

a) Draft Agenda of the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism:

The Draft Agenda of the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism was drafted by the HLEG Meeting. The agenda is enclosed as **Annex-III**.

b) Review of the Decisions of the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism

Mr. Jasur Rajabov, Director for Tourism in ECO Secretariat briefed the Meeting on the implementation of the decisions of the 3rd Ministerial meeting. It is enclosed as **Annex-IV**.

c) Decision on 'Draft Road Map on Facilitating Accelerated Recovery, Safe and Sustainable Development of Tourism after Covid-19 in the ECO region'

The Meeting discussed and finalized the “Draft Road Map on Facilitating Accelerated Recovery, Safe and Sustainable Development of Tourism after Covid-19 in the ECO region. It will be submitted to the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism for its consideration. It is enclosed as **Annex-V**.

d) Drafting the Samarkand Declaration for adoption in the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting

Samarkand Declaration was drafted by the Meeting for the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism. It is enclosed as **Annex-VI**.

e) Selection of the ECO Tourism Capital

The Representatives of ECO Member States briefed the Meeting on their proposals on ECO Tourism Capital for year 2024 and 2025 based on the Selection Criteria for “ECO Tourism Capital” which was circulated among ECO Member States through its Note Verbale No. T/4th MM on Tourism 2022/1400 dated 12/10/2022. Member States deliberated in this regard and expressed their views/ proposals about selecting the ECO Tourism Capital for 2024 and 2025. Finally, all delegates agreed on **Shakhrisabz** in Republic of Uzbekistan to be proposed as ECO Tourism Capital for year 2024 and the city of **Erzurum** in Republic of Türkiye for 2025 to be submitted for the approval of the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism.

f) Presentation of the ECO Secretariat on implementation of the ECO Vision 2025 Tourism mandates

The Representative of ECO Secretariat gave a comprehensive presentation on the current status and activities being held on the ECO Vision Tourism mandates. The presentation is attached as **Annex VII**.

Agenda Item No. 7

Designation of National Focal Points (NFPs)

7. The Member States were committed to designate their National Focal Points on tourism and inform the Secretariat by diplomatic channels. The heads of delegation will accelerate sending the required information on the subject to the Secretariat.

Agenda Item No.8

Any other business

8. Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran has informed about the upcoming Tehran International Tourism Exhibition (7-10 February 2023) and allocation of booths for the ECO Member States free of charge. They also offered special discount for accommodation for the participants (public and private sector) of the ECO Member States. Detailed information in this regard will be shared with the ECO Secretariat for further circulation among ECO Member States.

Agenda Item No.9

Date and venue of the next Meeting

9. Distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed their willingness to host the next Meeting in May or June 2023 in Ardabil.

Agenda Item No.10

Consideration and endorsement of the Draft Report of the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism

10. The draft report of the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism was drafted and endorsed by the participants.

Agenda Item No.11

Closing and Vote of Thanks

11. The delegates thanked the Republic of Uzbekistan, in particular, the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, for virtually hosting the meeting and making excellent arrangements. They also appreciated the able chairmanship by Mr. Feruz Dodiev, Head of International Affairs Department, Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
