

29th Meeting of ECO Regional Planning Council

17 December 2018, Tehran-İran

Statement of the President of the ECO - Educational Institute,

Prof. M. Akif KIRECCI

Mr. Chairman,
Hn. Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentelman,

Before I start, I congratulate and wish great success to H.E. Hadi Sulaimanpour, Secretary General and Mr. Hüseyin Avni BIÇAKLI as a duputy for their term of mission.

This 29th Meeting of RPC is a great occasion for ECO Educational Institute to join and contribute to the deliberations and discussions.

On behalf of the Educational Institute, It is a pleasure for me to share some information here with you about the Institute's latest achievements and activities in the area of education.

As its first international event, ECO Educational Institute held "Language Teaching and Learning Workshop" on October 19-20, 2018 in Ankara as scheduled in Institute's Work Plan 2017-2019 approved by the 2nd BoT. A wide range of stakeholders contributed to the thematic discussions in teaching and learning the languages of ECO Member States. The workshop was organized based on the idea that trade and cooperation starts with understanding each other; and that is possible only by learning each others language.

The major objective of the workshop was to shed lights on the challenges of teaching and learning Turkish, Urdu, Persian, Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Uzbek languages. Workshop was organized around four major themes each of which was held on a separate session

- issues and problems regarding the teaching and learning languages of the member states,
- Best practices and models,
- Methods used and or developed,
- New approaches and new technologies

Academicsians, linguists, practitioners (language teachers/students), translators, and language experts with experience or interest in the Language Teaching and Learning actively contributed both written and orally to sessions and shared the language teaching materials within the scope of the agenda. In addition, students from these countries were invited to witness discussions and share their experiences when learning these languages.

The Educational Institute aims at publishing a policy recommendation encompassing the results of the sessions held during the workshop.

This Meeting also remind us how important to receive the information of focal points as we have received just one from Tajikistan so far and invite other member states urgently to cooperate on this issue.

Besides, next year on June, The Institute is planning to organize a conference on the teaching of history, literature and cultural heritage in ECO Member States in the Republic of Turkey and in order to provide a clear communication, we call Member States to inform us about their focal points in an urgent manner.

Within the framework of the MoU signed between the ECO and UNESCO, the Institute has contacted some local actors and a preliminary progress has been made towards cooperation fields in SDG-4 Quality Education. ECO EI is expecting further expansion of collaboration and seeking for a collective offer of insight from ECO Secretariat and Member States into this new initiative.

Educational Institute is looking forward to develop projects and joint activities with other bodies of the ECO, especially with the ECO Science Foundation and ECO Cultural Institute.

In addition, let me remind you that the success of the Institute heavily depends on the ownership of the member states, for that I urge the member states to guide the Institute by asking researches, projects, activities related to their need in the field of education and higher education.

ECO Educational Institute is very pleased to extend collaboration to achieve the common goals and objectives of the ECO Vision.

I would like to remind all members that economic cooperation would matter only when and if supported by cooperation in education. Let us remember again that one dollar invested in education can contribute back fifteen-fold in economy.

And, last but not the least, I would like to remind all members that your continuous support is crucial through financial and technical instruments for all planned activities to come real. ECO EI still lacks an abundant amount of the resources of its approved budget, including the mandatory payments of the Member States, which constitutes an impediment to perform its activities.

I appreciate the ECO Secretariat for their kind hospitality in Tehran and look forward to close cooperation in the near future.