

ANNEX-I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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24th Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting

(09 November 2019, Antalya, Republic of Turkey)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ECO MEMBER STATES	
No.	Name & Designation of Delegate
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN	
1.	H.E. Mr. Meerwais Nab, Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Head of Delegation)
2.	Mr. Amir Mohammad Ramin, Director General for Regional Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3.	Mr. Mohammad Alem Hakimi, Acting Deputy Director General for Regional Cooperation, MFA
4.	Mr. Siar Ehsan, Official of Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5.	Mr. Ahmad Khalid Omary, Official of Ministry of Foreign Affairs
REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN	
1.	H.E. Mr. Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Head of Delegation)
2.	H.E. Mr. Bunyad Huseynov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Permanent Representative to ECO
3.	Mr. Parvin Mirzazade, Head of the State Protocol Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4.	Mr. Ulvi Bakhshaliyev, Head of the Eastern Europe and Central Asian Department, MFA
5.	Mr. Rashad Novruz, Deputy Head of the Economic Cooperation Department, MFA
6.	Mr. Javid Musayev, Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Iran
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN	
1.	H.E. Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Head of Delegation)
2.	Mr. Golamreza Ansari, Deputy Minister for Economic Diplomacy, MFA
3.	Mr. Abdullah Nekonom, Director General for Press and Information, MFA
4.	Mr. Abulqhasem Tahmasebi Shahrababak, Director for ECO Affairs, MFA
5.	Mr. Seyed A. Rasool Shabibi, ECO Senior Expert, MFA
6.	Mr. Hassan Darvish, Security Officer
7.	Mr. Saeed Izadan, Security Officer
REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN	
1.	H.E. Mr. Shakhmat Nuryshev, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Head of Delegation)
2.	H.E. Mr. Askhat Orazbay, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Permanent Representative to ECO
3.	Mr. Gamzat Khairov, Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Islamic Republic of Iran
4.	Mr. Berik Tulendiyev, Head of Division, Department of Asia and Africa, MFA
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC	
1.	H.E. Mr. Nuran Niyazaliev, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Head of Delegation)
2.	Mr. Erkin Mukaev, Deputy Director, MFA
3.	Mr. Rustam Isabekov, Staff, MFA
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN	
1.	H.E. Ms. Andleeb Abbas, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Head of Delegation)
2.	H.E. Mr. Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Republic of Turkey
3.	Mr. Hasan Afzal Khan, Director General (ECO & CARs)
4.	Mr. Arshad Jan Pathan, Minister, Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Republic of Turkey
5.	Mr. Mian Azmat Farooq, First Secretary (Political), Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran
6.	Mr. Salman Khalid Chaudhary, Assistant Director (ECO), MoFA
REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN	
1.	H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Head of Delegation)
2.	H.E. Mr. Mahmatali Rajabiyon, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Republic of Turkey
3.	Mr. Bakhodur Rakhmonov, Head of Section of Economic Cooperation Department, MFA
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY (HOST)	
1.	H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs (Head of Delegation)

2.	H.E. Ambassador Mr. Faruk Kaymakcı, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs
3.	H.E. Ambassador Mr. Derya Örs, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Permanent Representative to ECO
4.	H.E. Ambassador Mr. Ömer Güçük, Director General for Multilateral Economic Affairs
5.	H.E. Ambassador Mr. Koray Ertaş, Special Advisor to the Minister
6.	Mr. Mustafa İpek, Chief Advisor to the Minister
7.	Mr. Hami Aksoy, Speaker of the Ministry, Minister Plenipotentiary, Deputy Director General for Information
8.	Mr. Rıza Kağan Yılmaz, Head of Department
9.	Mr. Sinan Kuzum, Deputy Chief of Cabinet of the Minister
10.	Mr. Soner Kök, Advisor to the Minister
11.	Mr. Gökay Daşdelen, Advisor to the Minister
12.	Mr. Onur Okudan, Third Secretary
13.	Ms. Canan Bilecen, Attaché
TURKMENISTAN	
1.	H.E. Mr. Vepa Khadjiev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Head of Delegation)
2.	H.E. Mr. Ahmed Kurbanov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Permanent Representative to ECO
REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN	
1.	H.E. Mr. Ilkhamdjan Nematov, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Head of Delegation)
2.	H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullaev, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Permanent Representative to ECO
3.	Mr. Ashraf Khodjaev, Head of Directorate General for Foreign Economic Cooperation, MFA
4.	Mr. Ikramboy Khayitbaev, First Secretary, Department for Cooperation with Countries of South Asia, Middle , Near East and Africa, MFA
5.	Mr. Umid Babaev, 3rd Secretary, Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran
ECO OBSERVERS	
TURKISH CYPRIOT STATE	
1.	H.E. Prof Kudret Özersay, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
2.	Mr. Güneş Onar, Undersecretary, Deputy Prime Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3.	Mr. Sonat Altuğ, Private Secretary, Deputy Prime Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4.	Mr. Fahri Yönlüer, Director of the Department of Relations with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Deputy Prime Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs
5.	Mr. Mustafa Beyazbayram, Consul General, TRNC Consulate General, Antalya
6.	Ms. Begüm Tuncalı, Third Secretary, Deputy Prime Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
COOPERATION COUNCIL OF THE TURKIC SPEAKING STATES	
1.	Mr. Baghdad Amreyev, Secretary General
2.	Mr. Gismat Gozalov, Deputy Secretary General
3.	Mr. Ersin Aydoğan, Project Director
ECO SPECIALIZED AGENCIES INSTITUTIONS/AFFILIATED BODIES	
ECO SCIENCE FOUNDATION (ECOSF)	
1.	Prof. Dr. Manzoor H. Soomro, President (Head of Delegation)
ECO-EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE (ECO-EI)	
1.	Prof. M. Akif Kirecci, President (Head of Delegation)
ECO TRADE & DEVELOPMENT BANK (ECO-TDB)	
1.	Mr. Fazli Sak, Director (Head of Delegation)
ECO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (ECO-CCI)	
1.	Mr. Adem Kula, Secretary General (Head of Delegation)
ECO REGIONAL COORDINATION CENTER FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR FOOD SECURITY (ECO-RCC)	
1.	Mr. Ahmet Volkan Gungoren, Deputy Coordinator (Head of Delegation)
ECO SECRETARIAT	
1.	H. E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, ECO Secretary General (Head of Delegation)
2.	Mr. Kanan Nazarov, Deputy Secretary General
3.	Mr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
4.	Mr. Fuad Farzalibeyov, Director (Energy, Mineral & Environment)
5.	Mr. Memduh Unal, Director (Agriculture, Industry & Tourism)

6.	Mr. Duran Simsek, Chef d’Cabinet
7.	Mr. Salohiddin Kiromov, Assistant Director (Coordination and Follow Up)
8.	Mr. Muhammad Farooq, Assistant Director (International Relations)
9.	Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Advisor
10.	Mr. Muhammad Safdar, In-charge Trade/Research Officer
11.	Mr. Mohammad Ahmed Raza, Steno-Secretary
12.	Mr. Chaudhry Hadees Muhammad, Steno-Secretary
13.	Mr. Mohammad Akbar Azizi, Steno-Secretary
14.	Ms. Aynur Mammadova, Russian Translator
15.	Ms. Nurgul Duissenova, Russian Translator
16.	Ms. Dilbar Muminova, Russian Translator

ANNEX-II

**Welcoming Remarks by H.E. Mr. Hadi Soleimanpour,
ECO Secretary General during the Senior Officials Meeting**

Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)
(Preceding the 24th Meeting of the Council of Ministers)
(8 November, 2019- Antalya, Turkey)

The Secretary General's Statement

Ambassador Faruk KAYMAKCI, Deputy Minister
of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey and distinguished Chairman of SOM
Excellencies, Deputies Minister, Ambassadors,
Heads of delegations, Distinguished Delegates,

It is a pleasure to join the host authorities in welcoming the distinguished delegates to this Senior Official Meeting Preceding the 24th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers. Availing myself of this occasion, I would like also to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the people and the Government of the Republic of Turkey, especially Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for the impeccable organization of the meeting and warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us.

Excellencies,

We have an ambitious agenda before us which contains both regular and fresh issues covering all aspects of ECO's activities, especially regarding the transformation of the ECO to a project-oriented organization. My detailed report to the meeting presents a comprehensive assessment of ECO's progress since the last meeting of SOM in Dushanbe, last year. I would like to share briefly some important highlights with you.

A recent study conducted by the Secretariat, presents a snapshot of the economy of our region which provides significant inside for the coming period for how to achieve the sustainable development of the region, the primary objective of the organization. Accordingly, the population in the ECO region reached to 496 million with a rate of 12.3 percent increase between 2000-2018. Whereas its share in global GDP increased from 2 percent to 3 percent in the same period. Remarkably, the FDI share of the region in the global FDI flows increased tenfold, from 0.2 to 2 percent in the last 18 years. The total trade of the region reflects a 50 percent increase in the global trade, since the beginning of 2000s, which has reached to US\$ 804 billion in 2018. This included exports of US\$ 393 billion and imports of US\$ 411 billion. On the other hand, we do not see the same

increase in intra regional trade which stagnated around 8 percent. Interestingly however, findings of the said study reflects that intra regional trade amongst the Central Asian Republics is substantially high which edged up to 28.01 percent in 2018 from 26.19 percent in 2014, implying an inner circle within the region, which is much more integrated than the outer circle.

However, the current level of intra-ECO trade is still below its potential and the study reflects a significant point worth highlighting that our region has a potential to increase its intra regional trade tenfold. In this regard, Secretariat has three concurrent actions to increase intra regional trade, over the past year, addressing ECOTA, enhancing collaboration among ECO private sectors by institutionalizing the activities of ECO Chamber of Commerce and attending to the region's financial-banking system.

Firstly, the most effective way to pick up a momentum and the fruitful results in the area of trade and investment is to start operationalisation of the ECOTA (ECO Trade Agreement), which also remains the key to economic integration of the ECO region. In this regard, it is heartening to mention that with the holding of the 8th ECOTA Cooperation Meeting in Tehran, in August of this year, we have achieved a significant breakthrough to overcome the bottleneck. The Council deliberated on how to implement ECOTA or upgrade its mechanisms in the light of the views of the contracting parties. In the meeting, the Parties agreed to consider the proposal of the Secretariat, the sectoral implementation of ECOTA and start parallel negotiations for its up-grading, along with inviting other ECO MSs to join it so that a comprehensive and fully-fledged economic bond, which covers the whole region rather than only five members would be established. The Republic of Turkey, also offered to prepare a new agreement, incorporating views and concerns of the Contracting parties, in case the Sectoral approach is not acceded by the concerned government.

Secondly, The Secretary General attended the meetings of the ECO Chambers of Commerce in Turkey, and in consultation with the Head of the Chambers of Commerce of the MSs, including Mr. Rifat Hisarcıklioğlu, proposed a solution to end the two-decade-old issue over the Secretariat's headquarters and the appointment of the Secretary General and his deputy. With a permanent headquarters of the Secretariat, election of the Secretary General and his Deputy, the activities of the private sector will be particularly effective in the area of trade and investment in the region. The proposal was well received and it will be considered in their meetings later in this month. They also agreed to have an ECO Business Forum as sideline event in the next ECO Summit.

Thirdly, regarding the region's financial-banking system, it is a matter of satisfaction that ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECOTDB) is functioning progressively and professionally. Further to this, the Bank is endeavoring to expand its operations. As per the CPR mandate, the proposal to extend the Bank's mandate to provide assistance for implementing regional projects has been presented to the Board of Governors. Taking this opportunity, I would also like to request the remaining MSs to join the bank to expand its membership and current MSs to increase its resource base to enable the bank to play a greater role in regional projects.

Our efforts, in region's financial-banking system, however, is not limited with the activities of the ECOTDB. Based on the CPR mandate, the Secretariat is also endeavoring to start another initiative addressing the costly financial and banking transactions in the region, the "ECO Clearing Union". The draft has been distributed among the members, and I hope it will be approved by the Working Group on Banking Issues at ECO Ministerial Meeting on Economy in Dushanbe, and strengthen the regional financial and banking system in ECO. Moreover, the project to establish a Vision Fund is also on the agenda of the Secretariat and the ECO Bank for submission to the Summit with the view of creating more appropriate conditions for better implementation of the Vision.

Here, it is also worth reminding that the early operationalisation of other agreements are also being awaited to achieve further progress in regional integration. The Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment (APPI) was done in 2005, and only the ratification of two more MSs signatory to the agreement is needed for its entrance in to force. Similarly, Statute of the ECO Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology (RISCAM) done in 2009, needs only one more instrument of ratification by Afghanistan in order to come into force. This is also the case for the Statute of ECO Regional Center of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen (RCCACO), which was done in 2012, in case of deposition of one more instrument of ratification, it will enter into force.

In the area of Transportation, the implementation of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) is in progress. In this regard, Secretariat concentrated its efforts to the realization of the recommendations of the Turkmenbashi Declaration that has been adopted in the 9th Meeting of the Transport Ministers in May 2018. There were twelve important decisions adopted in this meeting, whose report will be provided to you, under agenda item Number 5, including commercializing the existing rail networks in seven corridors of ECO region, improving railways infrastructure and commercializing a segment of ITI Corridor, focusing on the unfinished segments of railways in

ECO Corridor such as Mazar Sharif – Herat segment in KTAI corridors, and Rasht – Astara segment on the Qazvin-Rasht-Astara railway, and linking dry ports to seaports, establishing logistic centers at borders in ECO region, establishing ECO Zone in seaports, and extending facilities to all ECO Member States in these zones. High-Level Expert Group Meeting of Heads of Marine and Railway Organizations have pushed these decisions forward into projects. Some of these projects (at least 4) are included in the Agenda No. 4 (d).

Roads account to nearly 65 percent of ECO's overall transport. In this regard, It is worth highlighting that the field studies on KTAI (Kyrgyz-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran) and ITI (Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul) have been completed which provided a clear picture of the existing routes and opened new perspectives on how to make them functioning. The final report of the study will be discussed and endorsed along with the Action Plan in the upcoming 5th High Level Working group Meeting to be held on 25-26 November 2019.

The Secretariat perceives Complementary Networking as the core task in the area of maritime transport, accounting to 72% of overall general cargo handling. This is a supportive amalgam of gains and benefits to be reaped by ECO countries from the integrated transport logistic systems. Secretariat developed ECO Gateway Project, to this end. In it, the core pillars are seaports, air terminals, land border terminals and logistics areas of the ECO countries. The MSs will be able to benefit from this project in terms of reduction of the aggregate transport costs, effective linkages to multimodal transport, and multiple connections to all-mode transport. The project has been endorsed for implementation in the Meetings of heads of reference Maritime organizations of the ECO Countries held in March 2019 in Tehran.

We have also made progress in the energy sector. Your Excellencies are aware of the fact that energy, in our region, is managed as a national sovereignty concern. It is difficult for regional organizations such as ECO to enter this area because of its complexities. Nevertheless, the Secretariat has begun implementing the energy sector relevant plans and objectives of the Vision by focusing on non-fossil fuels. Over the past year, two projects, to create ECO Joint Electricity Market (ECO-REM) and the establishment of the ECO Clean Energy Center have been in the works. ECO-REM project, in coordination with the RPC, and in collaboration with Energy Charter, will soon be implemented by hiring an international consultant once its ToR is finalized so that the unique Casa-1000 business can expand in the region.

The ECO-CEC project is also being implemented in partnership with international partners, UNIDO and the Austrian Government and with the

employment of a Canadian consultant and will come to fruition in February 2020. Then, with the establishment of the Center at one of the member states as the second phase of the project, the work will begin on the creation of ECO Clean Energy Corridors. The Ministers of Power of ECO will review and decide on the achieved results in 2020. Alongside these actions, the ECO Energy Plan of Action (POA) is being revised for approval at the 2021 ECO Ministerial Meeting of Energy in Baku. Creating a gas pipeline ring between members to facilitate gas trade and transit in the region is part of this POA. Progress in this field and the enhancement of cooperation in the energy sector more than any other area require the support of Your Excellencies. The Secretariat is also ready to cooperate with members in conducting market studies and establishing mechanisms for cooperation in trilateral or multilateral energy projects among some members.

There have also been significant developments in the implementation of other areas of the Vision, including the completion of Land Care Project studies, and Regional Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction developed in collaboration with MSs, UNESCAP, IDB, UNDRR and other development partners, which will be submitted to the ECO Ministerial meeting in Turkey for approval.

Last year, the Secretariat has also focused on the tourism sector for the realization of the objectives set forth in the Vision in the area of tourism, and following the views of Mr. Minister Qureshi and Mr. Minister Mammadyarov, and with the support and guidance of President Rahmon.

Developing Sustainable Tourism Principles for ECO Region as a basic document for tourism development was one of the results of the focus, which was adopted at the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Khujand in October this year. Obtaining an agreement on formulating a tourism action plan, implementing a single ECO visa system for foreign tourists, designating special ECO tourism zones and providing tax and investment facilities, establishing an economically justifiable air link between the main tourism destinations in the ECO region and establishing a tour operators chain network among major tour operating companies of member states were among the achievements of the recent ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism. They are determined to transform the tourism industry in the region into one of the fastest-growing and most profitable economic sectors and have agreed to come together in Uzbekistan in 2020 and in Iran in 2021. They have requested Your Excellencies to authorize the allocation of a part of the Secretariat's savings in 2019 to the Tourism Development Fund set up by the Second Ministerial Meeting of Tourism for the implementation of these projects. The Secretariat is also supporting this request.

We must support and facilitate the social and economic development of Afghanistan, deeply suffering from violent conflict. I appreciate the donation of Republic of Turkey for the project on reconstruction of Dr. Rafiqi Kamil Urga Sanatorium Hospital of Kabul Medical University and encourage other Member States and stakeholders to utilize ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan as a platform to develop projects, including enhancing vulnerable people's access to basic services, food, water and shelter.

Excellencies,

While we are making steady progress, there still remain significant challenges to overcome. I am confident that the spirit of cooperation will guide us to reach common understanding on all issues on the agenda. In this regard, as you are well aware we have focused a great deal of our efforts during the last few years to take necessary and effective measures to bring about necessary Reforms in the Organization. The new "Scale of Assessment" and "ECO Reform" documents have been prepared which are on the agenda of the today meeting. Regarding the Scale of assessment, it is worth mentioning that the Secretariat proposed alternative scales of assessments for the years 2020-2025, in view of the positions of the different member states as to their share of contributions. Regarding the ECO reform, in line with the mandates of the 23rd COM regarding finalization of the reform process, during last year we have focused our efforts to this issue. The current state of affairs on this issue is presented in the report for the consideration of the COM. I hope that a consensus will be reached soon on these issues as the early resolution on them will have significant impact on the functioning and efficiency of the organization.

I would like to complete my remarks by wishing all the success to the participants of the present meeting in the achievement of their objectives and also wish them a very comfortable and enjoyable stay in Antalya during the next two days.

Thank you.

ANNEX-III

Statement by H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Chairman of the 23rd COM

Statement

by the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan,
Mr. Khusrav Noziri at the 24th ECO COM Meeting

(09 November 2019, Antalya, Republic of Turkey)

Distinguished Mr. Chairman
Honourable ministers,
Dear participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to address today's Meeting of the Council, which provides opportunity to exchange views on latest regional and global developments, particularly concerning our cooperation within ECO Region.

I wish to congratulate H.E. Mr. Cavusoglu on assuming the Chair of the Council and once again express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Turkey for hosting us in the beautiful city of Antalya. I am sure that the results of this meeting will bring the ECO member states to a new level of cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the 23rd Meeting of the COM in Dushanbe, remarkable breakthrough is seen in promoting cooperation in various sectors of ECO activities. But it is obvious that in some sectors, we are successful in achieving our goals; while in others we need more focused efforts to overcome difficulties and achieve assigned tasks and objectives.

I would like to underline that Republic of Tajikistan attaches great importance to the multifaceted relations amongst ECO countries. We are satisfied with the existing level of cooperation in trade, transit and transport, tourism, as well as the strengthening cultural and humanitarian ties.

We emphasize on Tajikistan's commitment to further strengthening the comprehensive cooperation in trade, investment, energy, transport and communication, industry, agriculture, environment and tourism sectors with the other ECO member states.

Tajikistan during its chairmanship and according to the ECO Action Plan in 2019 hosted the following high level events in Dushanbe and Khujand respectively:

- 14th Meeting of the ECO heads of Railway authorities (20-21 June 2019 Dushanbe);
- 3rd Meeting of ECO Tourism Ministers 5th High level expert group meeting on tourism (4-5 October 2019, Khujand)

We are very pleased that the constructive meeting of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon with the ECO Secretary General was held in August of this year and a range of issues related to cooperation of Tajikistan and ECO were discussed.

The Leader of Nation, President of the Republic of Tajikistan supported the proposal made by the ECO Secretary General to convene the meeting of Ministers of

Economy of ECO countries in 2020 in Tajikistan. We hope that the planned meeting of the ECO Ministers of Economy in early 2020 will give a strong impetus to the development of economic relations between the Member States.

Dear participants,

It is further to be mentioned that Chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan coincided with ongoing reform process in the Organization, which is particularly aimed at enhancing the efficiency of the ECO, as well as sense of equal ownership amongst the Member States.

In spite of the fact that almost 20 years passed since the signing of ECO Trade Agreement, it still remains non-operational. Moreover, there is a deadlock since 2015. Based on our proposal ECOTA Cooperation Council is reviewing the ECOTA Agreement given the changing space for its implementation and the new goals of the organization.

Taking this opportunity I would like to express my appreciation to the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives, as well as ECO Secretary General and his team, who spare no efforts in these endeavors.

Excellencies,

It should be noted that ECO Member states possess vast potential for development of regional tourism. The expansion of cooperation in tourism sector is amongst the priorities of the Organization, which is envisaged as important objective for ECO under the ECO Vision 2025.

In this regard, the Republic of Tajikistan volunteered to host the 3rd Meeting of ECO Tourism Ministers and 5th High level expert group meeting on 3-4 October 2019 in Khujand city of Tajikistan that played a significant role, paving fresh avenues for further development of tourism in the ECO region. Appreciating the selection of Dushanbe as ECO's Tourism Capital for the years of 2020-2021, we are in the process of developing an Action Plan in this regard and we urge the Secretariat to be involved in this process.

Mr. Chairman,

With a view to the significant economic power, huge human and natural resources, we firmly believe that our Organization will use its vast potential for sustainable development of our countries, as well as to the benefit of all our nations.

We sincerely hope that our Organization will realize this potential and achieve its objectives by pursuing regional cooperation, enhancing mutual relations and strengthening economic ties and connectivity among the Member States, as well as creating a favourable environment by removing existing constraints on flow of goods and services.

In today's rapidly changing world with its precarious economic conditions, ECO must look ahead to emerging challenges and take efficient steps to address them.

Concluding, I would like to reiterate that the Republic of Tajikistan has always been and remains adherent to the objectives of ECO and will continue to support this Organization towards the achievements of its goals.

I am confident that the outcome of this meeting will open for the ECO Member States a new avenues of cooperation.

And finally I wish the new Chairman success in achieving the goals and objectives of the Organization for the greater integration of the countries and well-being of the people in ECO region.

I thank you for your attention

ANNEX-IV

**Statement by H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, ECO Secretary General
during the 24th COM Meeting**

**Statement of H.E Dr. Soleimanpour,
ECO Secretary General at the Council of Ministers
(Antalya, 9 November 2019)**

Excellencies,

I am highly honoured and extremely delighted to convey, Your Excellencies, the activities and achievements of the organization followed by 23rd Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM). I am also privileged to extend my profound gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Turkey and H.E. Çavuşoğlu, the honorable Foreign Minister for extension of kind invitations and warm hospitality to the respected delegates in the beautiful city of Antalya. I also express my sincere appreciation to the esteemed Foreign Ministers as well as the Heads of delegations for their valued participation in this 24th Session of the COM.

Over a year and a half of the Republic of Tajikistan's chairmanship, the Economic Cooperation Organization, inspired by supreme leadership of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, H.E.Mr. Emomali Rahmon, went through a prominent period of productivity. During this time, H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon was pleased to receive the ECO Secretaries General twice, and followed-up the detailed progress of the organization in consideration of the assigned tasks under his seasoned guidance and kind patronage.

The Republic of Tajikistan, though hosted several important events during its ECO's chairmanship, the recent was 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in the historical city of Khujand. In March 2020, Tajikistan would also be hosting an ECO Ministerial Meeting on Economy which is believed to be a landmark, conceptual and technical economic event, expecting concrete contribution to substantiate the agenda of next ECO Summit in Turkey.

I also deeply thank H.E. Mr. Sirojiddin Mukhriddin, the honorable Foreign Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan for excellent and extensive cooperation and effective consultations as well as valued contribution to secure the ECO's aims and objectives.

Today, I am also privileged to cordially congratulate the Republic of Turkey and His Excellency, Minister Çavuşoğlu to assume the chairmanship of the ECO. I assure Your Excellency and the esteemed Government of the Republic of Turkey that the ECO Secretariat would

continue its best to secure all aims and objectives of the Organization enshrined in the Treaty of Izmir as well as the ECO Vision 2025 in close collaboration and consultation with the chair of the Organization. I am sure that the Turkey's leadership would certainly help and contribute to further flourishing the Organization as well as prosperity and development in the ECO Region.

Excellencies,

I would like to underline that the Secretariat has been pursuing the organization's objectives during the last year in line with the outcomes of the 23rd COM, focusing **firstly** on the implementation of ECO Vision 2025, **secondly** making the ECO a project-oriented organization, and **finally** fueling the spirit of ownership, partnership, and commitment to mutual obligations by implementing the organizational and institutional reforms.

As regards the implementation of ECO Vision 2025, approved during the 13th ECO Summit in Islamabad, the Secretariat, in collaboration with the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC), has focused on the activities in six priority areas set out in the Vision (trade, transit transport, tourism, energy, economic growth and sustainable development and social welfare).

In 2018-19, the Organization has been making efforts to manage its activities within the available resources with a view to realizing the priority areas in a synchronized and integrated manner. The progress report on ECO Vision activities has been provided to your Excellencies in a document under the title of "ECO Vision 2025 Implementation: Progress and Assessment". **Recently**, two ministerial meetings on Transit-Transport and Tourism were convened, producing the Turkmenbashi declaration on Transport and Khujand declaration on sustainable tourism development. Our ministers in these two declarations mapped out concrete projects in line with policies and programs of the vision. Also in other high level technical meetings held in 2018-19, the same approach was followed. Having the same direction, the ECO would be holding three other ministerial meetings on agriculture and disaster risk reduction and Economy in the coming months.

Such approach provides the basis to Secretariat for adjusting its activities to make the ECO a more project-oriented organization. It is noteworthy that during the recent years, the Secretariat, in cooperation with RPC and by approval of the CPR, has been focusing primarily on organizing priority meetings and events to achieve result in line with the

decisions of the Ministers. The outcome of each meeting was believed to include project-oriented decisions so that the capacities of the organization could be utilized on projects, even small and medium. As you would kindly acknowledge, this year for the first time, the Agenda No. 7, entitled "ECO Regional Project", has been included in the COM's agenda to receive guidance as well as support of Your Excellencies. Thus, for the period of 2019-2020 some projects, approved by sectoral meetings are underway. In transit transport area, priority is given to three Corridors namely: Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan segment of (KTAI), Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran (KTI), Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) as well as establishing between dry ports in landlocked countries to the seaports in the ECO Region and initiating ECO Zones in these ports.

In the field of tourism, a number of projects have been defined such as the Project of ECO Unified Visa System for Foreign Tourists, ECO Tour Operators Network Project and the project of developing tourism routes among ECO tourist destinations.

In the field of agriculture, the creations of a Reference Laboratory Network in the area of food safety with the aim of facilitating the border crossing of animal products were finalized during the Meeting of ECO Heads of Veterinary Organizations. It would be finally approved together with new FAO-ECO partnership Program in next ECO Ministerial Meeting of Agriculture in Baku.

Excellencies,

This is the beginning of the way. Shifting to a project-oriented organization requires appropriate actions and a lot of efforts. I would like to call on the respected ministers to support the implementation of forgoing narration, which would help the organization to transform itself into a more result-oriented one. Nevertheless, some steps are needed to be taken to effect this transformation. Financial System in the region should be improved and to this end, ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB) should be able to fulfill its core task of supporting the implementation of regional projects. Modalities need to be developed for this purpose. The bank's resources require to be increased. The Vision Fund is required to be established on the basis of the decisions of the ECO Heads of States to support the implementation of ECO projects in the region. Moreover, a proper mechanism should be set up to facilitate transactions in the Region.

Excellencies,

Now, I would like to turn to the issue of reform process under which more efficient and effective organization, equipped with required capabilities and resources along with the enhanced sense of ownership, has been envisaged. I am honored to inform that as per the mandate given by the Council at its 23rd Meeting, the Council of Permanent Representatives with the assistance of the Secretariat embarked on a thorough reform process aiming at reviewing all structures, systems, process and staffing arrangements. Under this process, the first stride addressing the status of non-represented Member States i.e. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan was taken successfully with the constructive approach adopted by the Member States.

Yesterday, the Senior Officials Meeting, chaired excellently by H.E. Ambassador Kaymakci, also reviewed the reform proposal (s) which have been worked out during the past year and effectively concluded the reform of the organizational structure of the Secretariat, addressing successfully the status of Kazakhstan and Afghanistan as well as Scale of Assessments for 2020-2025.

Under the reform process, ensuring of strengthened coordination among the Specialized Agencies and Regional Institutions of ECO for the fulfillment of the objectives enshrined in the treaty of Izmir has been envisaged. To this end, the Secretariat has already provided the Member States with the draft modalities.

Excellencies,

While concluding my statement, I would like to once again thank the Republic of Turkey and Minister Çavuşoğlu for offering warm hospitality and the excellent arrangements that they made to facilitate the participating dignitaries. I also reiterate my deep gratitude for esteemed Ministers and the Heads of Delegations who very kindly ensured their participation in this important event. I am confident that this event would prove to be another milestone, pushing the organization towards the accelerated pace of progress for overall development in the entire ECO Region.

Thank you.

ANNEX-V

Statement by H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, as Chairman of the 24th COM Meeting

Statement by H.E. Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey
In the 24th COM
(Antalya, 9 November 2019)

Mr. Secretary General, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and gentlemen,

-I am pleased to host you for the 24th Council of Ministers Meeting in my hometown Antalya.

-We are assuming the Chairmanship of the Organization for the fourth time. We look for a successful term **with your support**.

-With **8 million square kilometers** land area and with a population of nearly half a **billion** we have a huge potential in economy and commerce.

-However, due to the lack of result-oriented projects, we were **unable to utilize the potential**.

-**Intra-ECO trade figure is below 100 billion Dollars**. We clearly fell back in our integration aspirations.

-Therefore, we need more **ownership and enthusiasm**.

-Together we should **(i)** increase intra-regional trade, **(ii)** connectivity, **(iii)** enhance energy security, **(iv)** promote tourism, **(v)** forge new partnerships.

-We have a strong road map to achieve these objectives: **ECO Vision 2025 is important** and should be implemented. During our Chairmanship, we will pursue its implementation.

-**Let me highlight some concrete steps that should be taken:**

-First priority should be given to trade. Our ultimate target is to realize a **Free Trade Agreement**. But we should operationalize ECOTA (*ECO Trade Agreement*) first.

-Indeed, existing instruments of cooperation such as **ECOTA**, transport-logistics corridors, and **ECOBANK** are not utilized.

-A Trade Facilitation Strategy, followed by a **Trade Facilitation Agreement** would be useful initial steps.

-We should assist non-WTO members in their efforts to be part of the WTO.

-We should also take concrete steps to **ease customs procedures**. Regular meetings of our authorities are essential.

-ECO Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters should be put into effect.

-We need to have joint **promotional activities on trade**. The Agreement on Joint Promotional Activities (ECO-AJPA) should be concluded.

-**Visa facilitation, easing reinsurance procedures, and taxation cooperation** are also essential.

-We have worked with the Secretariat on concrete proposals and mechanisms on all these areas. We should put them in practice.

Dear Colleagues,

-**Digital divide should be bridged** through affordable high-speed internet access and enhancing the abilities of individuals.

-**Connectivity** is also vital to reach our objectives. Regional transit transport infrastructure should be improved to bridge gaps and connect us to international markets.

-Missing links should be completed with roads, rails, and high-speed trains.

Dear friends,

- To achieve these ambitious targets, we should first make our organization more efficient.
- We should increase **ECO's visibility, efficiency and reputation.**
- We should adopt a **project and result-oriented, innovative and inclusive approach** to achieve our goals.
- During our Chairmanship, we will elaborate the ways to engage in a **real reform process that will enhance the efficiency of the organization.**
- For a real reform, we should not spend our energy on **gaining positions in the Secretariat.**
- Therefore, Turkey has acted constructively by **keeping its representation at minimum** to enable others to get further representation.
- We want *(i)* to **strengthen the ownership of the underrepresented countries** and *(ii)* to **expand the opportunities** provided by our Organization on a broader Asian scale.

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Asia is emerging** as the geopolitical and economic center of gravity.
- ECO can and should benefit from the dynamism in the wider continent.
- Our Chairmanship coincides with my Ministry's "**Asia Anew Initiative**".
- This initiative focuses on promoting cooperation on **education, defense industry, investments, trade, technology, culture and political dialogue** to take better advantage of the dynamism in the Asian continent.

-We will try to **create a synergy between ECO and other similar platforms** such as **Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)** and **D-8**, where we also assumed the chairmanships.

Dear Friends,

-**We can achieve these goals together**, with the essential support of the ECO Secretariat.

-Before concluding, I would like to express my **appreciation to Tajikistan, and Deputy Minister Hüsrev (and by brother Sirojiddin), for their successful chairmanship.**

-I hope together with your support, we could make meaningful contributions to ECO to the benefit our nations. Thank you.

ANNEX-VI

**Statements by Ministers of Foreign Affairs/Heads of Delegation of
the ECO Member States**



**Statement of the Deputy Foreign Minister
of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**

H.E. Mirwais Naab

at

**24th Meeting of the ECO Council of
Ministers**

Antalya, Turkey, 9 November, 2019

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey,

H.E. Sirodjiddin Aslov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan,

Honorable Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, Secretary General of Economic Cooperation Organization,

Distinguished Ministers, Esteemed colleagues,

First, let me express my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization for the warm hospitality and the organization of this important meeting in this beautiful city of Antalya.

I also would like to congratulate Turkey for assuming the chairmanship of the ECO for the year 2020, and thank the Republic of Tajikistan for its successful chairmanship for the year 2019.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Regional cooperation is an integral part of our policy in Afghanistan, and we cherish our membership with the ECO as a regional platform bringing an important geography together to enhance cooperation for win-win outcomes.

We believe that with the implementation of the ECO Vision 2025, our transport, connectivity, trade and people to people exchanges will be improved extensively.

Our project based economic activities will expand and the ECO role will be further strengthened in our region.

With the full realization of this vision, ECO Region has the potential to turn into a hub for effective cooperation and integration expanding partnerships on many vital areas of interest to all of us.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Colleagues

Over the past few years, Afghanistan has pursued an economic-centric foreign policy and promoted regional cooperation for a prosperous Afghanistan and the ECO Region.

The Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process and REECA are two Afghanistan centric platforms that complement the efforts of our cooperation in the ECO.

We are of the belief that ECO as one of the firstborn platforms in our region can play an effective role in our socio-economic development focusing on regional projects and exploring new investment opportunities in different sectors.

In this regard, we appreciate the ECO Secretariat and our Member States for reiterating their full support for the implementation of the ECO Advocacy Program for Afghanistan, and highly value the establishment of the ECO Trust Fund.

These initiatives aim to provide financial support for the implementation of essential programs and projects of the ECO Vision.

The transfer of the existing financial commitments to a bank in Kabul for the ease of access and effective implementation will be another important step toward this goal.

We are also very keen to see the meeting of the ECO Trust Fund taking place soon.

In this regard, we will work closely with the Secretariat and the member states to host this meeting in Afghanistan or one of the ECO member states' capitals at the earliest time possible.

I therefore urge your active and high-level participation in this meeting.

We are also happy to be increasing our share of contribution to 2% to support the functions and activities of the ECO Secretariat.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We recognize that trade and transit is the engine of national and regional growth, and continues to be a major factor in generating employment, encouraging innovation, and contributing to the well-being and welfare of our nations.

It is, therefore, imperative to address the existing trade barriers in our region, and expand regional and trans-regional trade among our countries, especially among our ECO Member States.

In this respect, ECOTA is an important agreement for all of us. We believe that its implementation will help increase our trade volume and advance the ECO objectives to the benefit all Member States.

We appreciate the efforts of the ECOTA Cooperation Council and request the Parties to consider the sectoral approach for operationalization of the ECOTA.

Distinguished Delegations,

Connectivity within the region is also crucial for the socio-economic development of our nations, which in turn also help build trust, foster cooperation and exchange between various segments of our societies.

It is important for all of us to recognize the significance of transport connectivity in the ECO Region and implement the required policy and regulatory frameworks for making it more effective.

Considering the geographical location of Afghanistan and the ECO region, we can play an important role in facilitating connectivity and transportation in the region, specially connecting the ECO countries with each other.

We believe that with connectivity, we can ensure economic sustainability and social prosperity. Projects such as TAPI, CASA 1000 and Lapis Lazuli Route Agreement are important for deepening connectivity and trade including in the area of energy between South and Central Asian.

We also would like to extend our invitation for the next meeting of the Transit Transport Coordination Council. Our Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Afghanistan is ready to host the meeting in February, 2020 in Kabul so we can further discuss these important topics.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Economic development is directly connected with peace and security. The war in Afghanistan has been going on for decades now, and the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces have been fighting international terrorism on behalf of the region and the world.

While a sustainable peace is essential through a negotiated settlement, and we in the Government of Afghanistan have taken concrete steps to solidify efforts in reaching a political solution with the Taliban, we see no real commitment on the part of the Taliban for ending violence and reaching peace.

Past experiences show that only direct and inclusive talks between the Taliban and the Afghan Government can lead to sustainable and dignified peace. Such talks must start under a verifiable ceasefire as an important confidence building measure, and an indication of Taliban's commitment for peace.

Distinguished colleagues,

Let me conclude that Afghanistan is highly committed for joint efforts aimed at strengthening cooperation on trade, transit, energy and transport together with other ECO Member States and will work with the Secretariat to accomplish peace, stability and economic prosperity in the ECO region.

We believe it is time for all member states to bring further momentum and new energy into the work of our organization so that we can achieve more tangible results in the year ahead and review them positively in our next meeting.

Thank you very much for your attention!

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**Speech of H.E. Elmar Mammadyarov,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan,
Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs
of the Economic Cooperation Organisation**

9 November 2019 Antalya

**Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

First of all, I would like to greet all participants and express my utmost gratitude to our dear host, my brother Mevlut Çavuşoğlu and his devoted team from Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for having all of us here in beautiful Antalya. I hope our meeting will produce interesting exchange of opinions on where we stand and where we should be going during the near future.

I also would like to use this opportunity to convey our gratitude to the ECO Member States and Secretary General for their participation at the 18th Summit of the Non-Alignment Movement recently held in Baku, Azerbaijan. It was the success, and I am proud we did it also as ECO. NAM Summit also served as a high platform for us to connect to the bigger world out there.

As we always reiterate at our ministerial meetings, Azerbaijan considers ECO as one of the important platforms of regional cooperation in our bigger neighbourhood. We certainly attach a high importance to a further development of economic and trade ties. We do so politically, because this is our political will.

By having a strong political will, we should emphasise that goal-oriented projects and practical results should be the priority within the Organisation. In our view, there is a need to short-list priority areas for cooperation based on the measurable results and comparative advantages of the region. Trade, transportation, agriculture, information and communication technologies and tourism are areas of our primary interest of cooperation and any initiatives and projects within ECO can serve the idea of a deeper regional interaction.

Through active participation in regional and inter-regional initiatives, Azerbaijan has always provided its support to various economic cooperation efforts in the region and beyond. In this context, I would like to stress the importance that our country gives to cooperation activities within ECO and the development of trade and cooperation in the region.

Being a land-locked country, Azerbaijan strives to fulfil our transit and trade potential by transforming the transportation services into one of the key comparative advantages of

our economy. With this in mind, Azerbaijan diversifies and modernizes its transport infrastructure, which will serve to the interconnection of the Trans-European and Trans-Asian railway networks. The backbone railway line Baku-Tbilisi-Kars, which already attracts the attention of several Chinese and European logistics companies, New International Sea Trade Port, along with an ambitious investor-friendly Free Economic Zone concept, East-West Trans-Caspian International Transport Route as the Middle Corridor for China-led Belt and Road Initiative, Lapis Lazuli trade route with its aim to unlock the potential of Afghanistan, as well as North-South and South-West trade corridors are the key infrastructure projects directed toward increasing transit capacity of the entire ECO region. If you just visualise the map of these routes, you can see a whole inter-connected web of trade arteries and capillars across our region. This is our living ambition of trade facilitation.

Another area of cooperation with great potential in ECO region is in the field of information-communication technologies. Azerbaijan cooperates with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to implement Trans-Caspian fiber-optic cable connection to build broadband connectivity in a bid to put our countries' names on the Eurasian ICT map. In doing so, we will actually further contribute to UN's bridging the digital divide initiative. That also will help to digitalise trade across the ECO region.

This brings me to a point which links trade with ICT. We need to come up with projects that may also give rise to an e-trade hub concept across the region. Here, I would like to note that one of possible joint projects, which could be implemented in the framework of ECO, is the digitalisation of trade. This can attract more trade volumes. We could jointly promote such e-trade platforms with our partners in the region. In today's world, you don't just wait until someone sends a containers or a wagon. We need to think creative and connect to the best available technologies or applications which maximise trade. Today, online trading platforms in fact have more trade volumes than our state companies trying to transport goods in a conventional manner. So, maybe we really should look deeper into opportunities which may lie in our cooperation format with ASEAN.

In the field of agriculture, Azerbaijan and other ECO Member States have made significant progress. Nevertheless, I believe that cooperation should be further enhanced in this area. With this in mind, Azerbaijan proposed to hold the 6th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture of ECO on December 3-4 this year. We are looking forward to see high-level delegations from your countries at this important ministerial event in Baku.

Next is tourism. Cooperation in the field of tourism is important in terms of people-to-people contacts. We also consider tourism projects within ECO as a means of facilitator of people to people contacts.

Furthermore, we also appreciate ECO's ongoing unwavering endeavours to mainstream the sustainable energy and energy-environment nexus in its regional energy agenda in line with "ECO Vision 2025" and UN 2030 Agenda. We reckon that this regional focus could unlock ECO Region's cooperation opportunities in renewables and energy efficiency. The establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre could fit in well with these trends. And please, let's not forget natural gas, because it actually is a clean fossil fuel and can act as a "transition fuel" in our economies as we try to move to better energy-efficient solutions.

"ECO Vision 2025" document, which was adopted in 2017, should enrich ECO economic and social agenda and set the strategic direction of the Organization for the coming decade. Azerbaijan supports this reforming process via joint efforts that can enhance efficiency of current institutions and provide a possibility for further development of ECO.

ECO has to keep pace of current realities. Having said that, it is important to underline the existence of need to revise the activity of the organization, estimate the value added so far by relevant ECO bodies. We should strengthen the capacity of the organization as a project oriented and more visible regional player. Program or project orientation may help in enhancing cooperation between the member states, as well as in economic and social development of the region. We look forward to come to concrete results and adopt documents to be laid at the base of future reforms.

Along with the economic cooperation Azerbaijan attaches an importance to the cooperation in other spheres as well. We have signed and ratified the Statue of the ECO Regional Centre for Cooperation of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen (RCCACO) recently in 2019.

ECO constituency is a friendly family for Azerbaijan. We highly value our history-long relations. They are and should even more be grounded on the principles of solidarity. No regional economic cooperation is possible if political and military challenges, including the cases of occupation and illegal activities in the occupied territories are not removed. That's why what the Declaration of Islamabad Summit of 2017 emphasized in respect to this very issue should be streamlined in ECO Member States own national and regional activities.

Thank yo



Islamic Republic of Iran
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Statement by H.E Dr. M. Javad Zarif

**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran
at the 24th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM)**

Antalya - 9 November 2019

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to express my appreciation to the Government and people of Republic of Turkey for warm hospitality and excellent arrangements for this meeting. I would also like to pay tribute to our outgoing Chairman and our Secretary-General and his colleagues in the Secretariat for their valuable efforts.

Distinguished Friends,

"ECO" remains an untapped potential for economic integration and cohesion in our Region. Our top agenda should be realization of an "ECO Community", where peace and stability are promoted, the

well-being of our people is further improved, and our common rich values prevail. With a population of half a billion people, incredible geographical location, abundant energy and mineral resources, rich human resources, huge trade market, and historical and cultural affinities, the Economic Cooperation Organization possesses what it takes to be a success story for multilateral cooperation among nations.

However, the continued challenge for us is first and foremost the lack of fitting models for regional economic cooperation; a paradigm for regional economic development. Accordingly, the existing ECO regional architecture should be re-configured to this effect. "ECO Vision 2025" is our latest endeavor to enhance regional integration and connectivity in different areas of common interest, including transit and transport, energy, trade and tourism. We need to accelerate effective implementation of Vision 2025 through its devised schemes and mechanisms. The Council of Ministers should give full support to our sectoral ministers as well as the Secretariat to make the "Vision 2025" a significant step towards realization of the ECO noble goals and objectives.

Corridor development and corridor management activities are considered as an institutional priority in the transport sector. We in Iran have invested huge amounts to develop the missing links. However, there are major projects awaiting implementation by the

Member States, particularly Transit, Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA).

Dear Colleagues,

In order to increase total trade of the ECO Member States which is far below our expectations, bilateral and multilateral procedures for simplification and harmonization of regional trade are necessary to help make trade in the region faster, cheaper and more predictable. Carrying out financial transactions with national currencies, bartering, cutting costs and reducing delays and speeding up customs clearance are some approaches which need to be strengthened.

Establishing green tourism destination with diverse products and high-quality services in the region is an objective of ECO Vision 2025. significant potentials for tourism cooperation, requires a smart plan of action. We welcome any initiative which can strengthen networking of all tourism stakeholders, establishing an e-based platform using new technologies and sharing knowledge and best practices to organize co-creation based activities.

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ICT related activities can also serve as catalyst for further progress. In this regard we attach great importance to the implementation of the "2025 ECO Regional Strategy for Information

Society Development” and Plan of Action, which was approved by 2nd Meeting of ECO Ministers of ICT on December 2017 in Baku.

Mr. Chairman, Dear Colleagues,

No success can be envisaged unless all Member States are actively involved. The “less than full membership” arrangements/agreements have revealed their negative structural and institutional impacts on the Organization. We need to have all Member States on board in ECO activities. This in turn requires ECO to prove its added value for each and every single Member State.

The very objectives of the ongoing reform process, kicked-off in 21st COM meeting in Tehran in 2013, was to enhance institutional, regulatory and operational capacities of the Organization. This can potentially lead to incredible and enhanced effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and performance of the Organization and its Secretariat. As an ECO founding member, the Islamic Republic of Iran has fully supported the reform process and rendered maximum flexibility to accommodate interests and concerns of non-founding members. This is time to regenerate the needed momentum and agree on a promising reform outcome.

Dear Friends,

In the time of rampant blow to multilateralism, the decades-old Economic Cooperation Organization is, more-than-ever, the first best option for economic cooperation among our countries. Notwithstanding

the hardship Iranian people are experiencing in the time of blatant and cruel unilateral coercive measures and economic terrorism, the Islamic Republic of Iran continues its commitment to ECO and its programs and projects. We consider ECO inter-connectivity projects in transport and transit; energy, including ECO electricity market; ICTs and digital connections; and tourism industry as the most feasible and yielding joint ventures among our countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran remains ready and active in sharing with ECO countries its huge capacities in these sectors. This is an open call also on behalf of our private sector to its counterparts in the ECO Region.

ECO trade-related arrangements are also of great importance to the Islamic Republic of Iran. ECOTA and other required complementary intra-regional arrangements need to be operationalized, enabling "trade" to make its full contribution into the overall development and prosperity of our Region and peoples, as has been the case in other regions across the globe. Iran is fully committed to make this happen through activating, or devising, necessary regional arrangements in trade-related areas such as customs and trade facilitations, monetary and banking, multi-modal transport, security and border arrangements, combating illicit trade and smugglings, etc.

To conclude **Mr. Chairman**, let me remind the very important role that should be played by the ECO Secretariat in our joint journey ahead. We as the Member States need to provide necessary financial

and human resources and capacities enabling Secretariat to fulfill its mandate. We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary General and his fellow colleagues in the rest of ECO institutional machinery, namely ECO regional specialized agencies and institutions, to ensure that no approved mandate is left behind, no available resources are unexploited, and no partnerships with our traditional and new partners, particularly in the UN family, is unattended. We expect them to take more resolute measures in these areas.

I thank you for your attention.

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,
Esteemed Heads of delegations,
Honorable Secretary General,

On behalf of the Kyrgyz Republic delegation, I would like to welcome all participants of the 24th meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers and thank the Turkish side for the excellent organization of this meeting, for warm welcoming and hospitality.

I also Express my deep appreciation for the arrangements which have been undertaken for this meeting, for the efforts you are making as Secretary-General and for your contribution to the prosperity of the organization

Dear colleagues,

Given today's reports, it is clearly demonstrated that the development of the state economies in the region differ from each other. In some countries, it developed rapidly, trade grew with the high speed, investment attractiveness and financial opportunities had increased, and we cannot witness the same development in some countries of the region. At the same time, our integration strivings sometimes face difficulties in the practical application of decisions in the main activity directions. Within present circumstances, all ECO countries should reach a new level of cooperation, develop collective and preventive measures to reduce the impact of the expected new wave of financial and economic stagnation in the global economy.

Economic welfare of ECO member states is not necessarily linked to the establishment of regional institutions. However, such platforms encourage member countries to strengthen cooperation and join resources for projects which will be beneficial for all countries. At the same time, member countries are opening their markets to international investors, and the ECO region became more attractive for investment during last decade.

Transport is one of the areas that should still be focused on in order to emphasize the importance of ECO. Within the framework of the joint projects, ECO provides a platform for member countries that are already participating in regional infrastructure initiatives. The regional efforts of ECO members to improve trade and transport through the implementation of infrastructure projects such as the North-South transport corridor, the TRANS-Caspian transport route, the China-Pakistan economic corridor, the ports of ECO countries complement each other. All of these projects are better able to operate in parallel with a broad and comprehensive initiative, namely the Chinese initiative of "One belt and one road". Considering geographical location of the ECO member countries, we can say that the success of the Silk Road-like projects depends on their aspirations for cooperation and integration. In that sense, the basis was already established three decades ago. Since 7 out of 10 ECO members are landlocked, so, it is vital for these countries to develop and enhance mutual cooperation in the fields of transportation and communications.

In this regard, Kyrgyzstan attaches great importance to China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway construction project of, which is included in the ECO plan of action program on the development of transport and communications in the region.

Dear colleagues,

There are some problems that ECO should overcome. For example, the influence of external factors and players in the region should not be underestimated. The EAEU is one of the largest economic organizations. Since Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are also members of the Eurasian economic Union (EAEU), it may be difficult or almost impossible to simultaneously adjust tariffs and regulations with both organizations. Therefore, it is necessary for the ECO and the EAEU to find a way for combining technical requirements with mechanisms such as free trade agreements, which would allow both organizations to benefit from a win-win position.

Once again, I would like to draw your attention to a determining role of energy capacity development. In this sense, CASA-1000 is aimed

at contributing to the formation of the regional Central and South Asian electricity markets. Energy resources and energy transport corridors should become one of the ECO milestones in the future.

We also need to continue to enhance cultural ties, which have a positive impact on the tourist destinations for all countries of the region. A social dimension conducive to integration is on the agenda of ECO members, taking into the fact, common history and interaction between peoples in the region.

Dear colleagues,

As I was informed, the issue of the scale assessments and the allocation of posts in the ECO Secretariat as part of the ECO reforms, was a critical issue during the Senior officials meeting (SOM). The Kyrgyz delegation maintain its position on keeping the existing contribution fees in the ECO budget.

At the same time, I would like to note that the discussion of the above-mentioned issues is discriminatory and infringes the rights of ECO member states, as the opportunity to claim for directing and professional positions without linking to the increase in the budget.

We express the hope that the reform of the ECO system will eliminate the existing negative costs and invite to support the Kyrgyz Republic in the position on the scale of assessments in the ECO Secretariat.

Dear colleagues,

In conclusion, I would like the Antalya Declaration to meet the expectations of all members of the Organization and demonstrate a common desire to take concrete steps in mutually beneficial cooperation.

Let me once again thank the Turkish side for the excellent organization of the Meeting and wish success to new COM Chairman - represented by H.E. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Foreign Minister.

Statement

by the Head of Delegation of the Republic of Kazakhstan

**24th Council of Ministers' Meeting,
Antalya, Turkey
9th November, 2019**

Statement by Pakistan

Thank you very much, Honourable Chairman of the 23rd Council of Ministers Meeting, the Republic of Tajikistan,

H.E Mevlut Cavusoglu, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey, Chairman of the 24th Council of Minister Meeting,

Distinguished Ministers,

H.E. Dr HadiSoleminpur, Secretary General ECO,

Excellences,

Ladies & Gentlemen,

Aslam-o-Alekum,

Please allow me to express my compliments to the people and the Government of the Republic of Turkey for arranging the wonderful meeting in this beautiful city of Antalya.

I would also like to avail this opportunity to congratulate the Republic of Tajikistan, the Chairman of the 23rd Council of Ministers for leading the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) since April, 2018. During this time ECO has made progress and has had achievements.

I would like to extend my appreciation to H.E. Dr. HadiSoleminpur for providing able stewardship for the organization.

Excellences

The world has changed and though this looks like a very clichéd sentence, I think the pace of change is extraordinary. We in ECO have so much in common; we have common history; we have a common culture; we have common values; we

need to understand that this organization is not just a forum, it is a corridor and it is a destination. Ladies & gentlemen, international diplomacy and international politics have all shifted towards the economy; the powerful and the superpowers are all dependent on economic power and the military might is also dependent on economic power. We in this region are blessed with economic resources but our individual efforts need to synergize and we need to make more than commitments and we need to put things into action. So, I will be talking about four elements that we need to do to keep-up with what's happening in the world.

The first, Excellences, is that less is more. All over the world, the amount of resources is becoming less and their productivity and demand are getting more. We have a laptop which was used to be made in about four months is now being assembled in four minutes. At that speed, when we talk about our collective efforts, we need to see that with 480 million people in this region, we are more with less; we are going the opposite direction. We need to be less with more but we are more with less. We are 6.2% of the population in the world but our global trade is only 2.1% in the world.

The second part is that vision is a very important to prosper because the world is changing fast and if we don't have the foresight to keep-up with the changing world, we will be left behind. The Vision document 2025 is an excellent document made in Islamabad, but the problem with vision is that if a vision is not accompanied by action, it is a wish-list. Today, we need to reflect. I was very glad that so many of the Excellences have been reflecting over it that where are we on the vision? Because we were supposed to double up the trade according to that vision document I was looking at. We have not been able to do that and that's the potential but that is also our problem.

Excellences,

It's not just the global trade; the intra-regional trade is also a problem; we are trading with each other just 8%. If we want to go ahead of European Union (EU) as a regional block, it is important to note that their intra-regional trade is 70%. So, we need to have feasible, achievable milestone for every year where we could all contribute and all benefit by it. We have these flagship preferential trade agreements such as ECOTABut it has not become operational since its inception in 2003. How do we push it? Because without ECOTA becoming operational and vibrant, we cannot achieve our potential and be a regional block which the world looks at with interest.

The third part of my speech is about connectivity; connectivity is prosperity to this world. The world is becoming smaller and we geographically are at the best place in the world. So how do we link with each other? How do we link with the world? Wonderful examples have been given and we have seen as well. We have framework like Transit Trade Framework Agreement which is very much crucial and which can be expanded upon to be more vibrant. We as a country really believe in that. We have transit trade agreement with Afghanistan and ever since we have removed the barriers, trade has doubled and tripled through that framework. Today we have a historic day in Pakistan because we are opening the Kartarpur Corridor and that too with India with whom we have a conflict. Despite that we want these corridors should be the bridge of not only trade but peace also because once countries pick-up interdependence and start trading with each other, they start connecting with each other; differences dissolve, conflicts become less. So, that's my point over there that projects like the container train and re-insurance company are very important and we need to make them viable.

Similarly, the ECO Trade Development Bank (ECO-TDB) which needs to have a capital of 1 billion dollars. Member Countries need to sign for that Charter, ratify that Charter so that this Bank can start financing projects in the Member countries, in meaningful projects because without that support available, these projects will be on the paper but not on the ground.

Excellences

The fourth part I want to talk about is that in today's world, Excellences, knowledge is power; the only sustainable, competitive advantage which cannot be copied is intellectual capital. All the trading blocks in the world and the countries in the world which have gone ahead is because they invest in knowledge. So, we have wonderful platforms such as ECO Cultural Institute (ECOCI), ECO Science Foundation Institute (ECOSF), ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI). We need to ratify their Charters and we need to give them priority not just as accessories to the main agenda but 'The Agenda'. Once you have science and such wonderful brains of this region coming up, we can compete with anybody in the world.

Excellences,

Finally, my fourth element is that peace is a pre-requisite for prosperity and I agree with my Excellences over here that we have had problems in our neighborhood, we

have had problems in the world and we as region need to ensure that peace takes place. The problems in the Persian Gulf, we need to raise a voice for our fellow beings. Pakistan has played a role of a peace facilitator in the Persian Gulf and also with Afghanistan. We are trying that with India as well. But we need to raise voice against the violation of international laws against the Muslim communities i.e. Rohingyas, Palestinians and Kashmiris. As a region, as a block, we need to raise for peace in the world and that is why I will be talking about Kashmir where the UN Charter has been totally violated by brutalities over there. Women, children being blinded by pallet guns; thousands of them for one hundred days caged in a prison with no communication; no access and it's a violation of international law; it's a violation of human value. We need to raise this through this forum because violence anywhere is violence everywhere. As they say that countries are destroyed not just by violence of the bad people but by the silence of the good people as well. So that's where we need to focus on.

Mr. Chairman, under your able guidance, I would at the end, request that we capitalize on our natural resources, we synergize on them. We in our country say, one plus one should not be two, one plus one should be eleven, that's what sanity is.

Promoting labour facilitation all across the region, removing visa issues, increasing border facilitation, eliminating barriers of bureaucracy and expediting transport, logistics, tourism in order to deliver concrete, measurable and accountable deliverables on ECO. We have a vision, we all share that but if we need results, we never got before, we need to do things we have never done before. So, we need to re-think, review and reform. As Paulo Coelho said and I would like to end my statement with that, he said that if you really believe in the vision, then you could do anything to remove all barriers and then the whole universe will conspire to make it come true.

I thank you!

**Statement of Turkmenistan Deputy Foreign Minister in the 24th of
Council of Foreign Ministers of Economic Cooperation Organization
(ECO)**

(Antalya, 09 November 2019) 4

Esteemed Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Heads of delegations,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to convey my gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Turkey for its hospitality and to the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization for the excellent arrangements of today's meeting.

Honorable Mr. Chairman,

The Turkmen side expresses confidence that the current meeting will be one of the next stages for consolidating all efforts aimed at the implementation of proposed plans and will give a new impetus to the activation of partnership between the member States of the economic Cooperation Organization

Distinguished colleagues,

Over the past period since the last COM meeting of Economic Cooperation Organization, the countries have done significant work to implement ECO Vision 2025. Despite the trend of economic stagnation observed in recent years in the Eurasian space, the ECO member States, however, have made a number of concrete efforts to implement major infrastructure projects, strengthen regional economic integration, and create new transport routes, as well as new economic dialogue platforms.

It should be noted the ECO Secretariat's work and its specialized agencies, regional institutions and affiliated bodies, which undertook intensive activities and contributed to the implementation by member

countries of their national and regional projects in the scientific, cultural and humanitarian spheres.

The Secretariat's work on holding sectoral meetings for implementing the work plan contained in the ECO Vision 2025, which includes the 9th ECO Ministerial Meeting of transport and communications held in Turkmenbashi on May 1-3, 2018, is positively evaluated.

Esteemed meeting attendees,

Currently, countries of the Caspian Littoral States are making greater endeavors to increase mutual trade and economic cooperation.

As you are aware, on 12 August 2018 at the Summit of the Heads of State of the Caspian Littoral States in Aktau, the initiative of conveying the First Caspian Economic Forum was taken by the President of Turkmenistan, H. E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov. On August 11-12, 2019, the First Caspian Economic Forum (CEF) was held in Turkmenbashi, which was attended by 127 official delegations, 535 companies from 50 countries and 1073 foreign participants.

The forum was focused on building up the partnership between the region and the rest of the world, greater and fuller disclosure the potential of the Caspian sea in the global context.

57 international documents related to cooperation in such areas as information technology, investment cooperation, trade, economic and financial spheres, transport, electricity, light industry, agriculture and water resources management and other sectors were signed during the CEF.

The forum has demonstrated its relevance and has attracted the economic communities' attention. Availing myself of this opportunity, let me express my gratitude to the ECO Secretary-General for his participation in aforesaid Forum.

Исходя из позитивного опыта участия ОЭС в подобных форматах, туркменская сторона предлагает Секретариату ОЭС в будущем проработать механизмы взаимодействия с Каспийским Экономическим форумом.

Based on the ECO participating positive experience in such formats, the Turkmen side proposes the ECO Secretariat to develop interaction mechanisms with the Caspian Economic forum in the future.

Honorable colleagues!

The development of transport and communication connectivity continues to be Turkmenistan's priority sector in enhancing regional cooperation.

Here, emphasis is placed on the expansion of transport and transit connectivity along the East-West and South-North lines, between the Caspian basin and the Black sea regions with access to Europe and the Middle East. First and foremost, this involves promotion of Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman, Afghanistan-Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan -Georgia-Turkey "Lapis Lazuli" and the Caspian Sea - Black Sea transport corridors.

In late 2017, the agreement on creation of the Afghanistan-Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey (Lapis Lazuli) transport and transit corridor was signed in Ashgabat. I would like to note the successful dispatch of the first test caravan on this route in 2018.

The "Lapis Lazuli" route's attractiveness was shown in practice through the commissioning of a modern multifunctional Turkmenbashi international seaport. It is a multidimensional infrastructure with high transport potential.

Currently, intensive efforts has been undertaken to create Turkmenistan-Azerbaijan-Georgia-Romania corridor. In March 2019, the Bucharest Declaration was signed by the Foreign Ministers of 4 countries in

Bucharest. Here, the European structures' concerned participation in this project within the "Europe-Asia interconnectedness Strategy" framework, adopted by the European Union in 2018 should be emphasized particularly.

On the basis of outlined above, the Turkmen side proposes the ECO to explore possibilities for ECO transport experts' attendance at the meetings of ministers of transport of the member states, involved in the aforesaid 3 corridors to be held prior the end of 2019 and early 2020. The Turkmen side is ready to coordinate attendance in these meetings and convey their dates and venues.

I would like to particularly emphasize the importance of participation of brotherly Afghanistan in economic projects, which thus becomes the economic regional partnership's integral part.

It should be pointed out that in 2016 Turkmenistan completed and commissioned the Kerki-Imamnazar-Akina railway with a length of 88 kilometers using its own resources and funds. In July 2019, the inaugural ceremony of the 10 km branch railway line at Akina station was held and the construction of the 35 km Akina-Andkhoy railway line was launched in parallel.

We encourage You to seriously consider the possibilities of ECO member states' active participation in these corridors.

In conclusion of my statement, I would like to emphasize that economic cooperation within the ECO framework should also be accomplished by leveraging cultural and humanitarian cooperation.

Esteemed participants,

The Turkmen side is of a firm believe that effective regional economic cooperation in our countries, based on the principles of sustainability, interconnectedness and mutual respect, should be a factor in the development of the organization of the region.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate our fraternal country, the Republic of Turkey, on assuming the chairmanship of the Economic Cooperation Organization and wish success for the presidency period, as well as good health and great success to all attendants of today's meeting.

Thank You for Your kind attention!

ADDRESS
by H.E. Ilhom Nematov,
First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Uzbekistan
at the 24th ECO Council of Ministers Meeting
(Antalya, November 9, 2019)

Dear Mr. Chairman!

Mr. Secretary General!

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Turkey for warm welcome and traditional hospitality in the beautiful city of Antalya.

Taking this opportunity, I sincerely congratulate His Excellency Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey on his election as Chairman of the 24th Council of Ministers of Economic Cooperation Organization and wish all the success.

It is my pleasure to extend my appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Hadi Soleimanpour, the ECO Secretary-General for his excellent work and valuable contribution to the development of the Organization.

Distinguished delegates,

It is an honor for me to represent the Republic of Uzbekistan at today's Ministerial Meeting. I am confident that with your valuable contribution and support we can discuss the most important issues for our regional cooperation.

Uzbekistan is strongly in favor of enhancing the role of the Economic Cooperation Organization, the goals of which correspond to the new policy of Uzbekistan pursued by the President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

Today, Uzbekistan is conducting large-scale reforms and positive transformations based on the **Action Strategy** on five priority areas until 2021. Our country moving towards open and free market economy, liberalization of trade, favorable investment climate, promoting privatization and ensuring private property.

Thanks to the well-thought-out foreign policy of the President Shavkat Mirziyoyev over the last two years the cooperation in **Central Asia** has significantly improved on the basis of good-neighborhood and mutual consideration of interests. The constructive foreign policy of Uzbekistan brought the concrete results as the achievement of mutually acceptable solutions to the most complicated issues, such as the delimitation of state borders, the use of water and energy resources, transport communications and others.

Uzbekistan actively cooperates with its partners in the framework of international and regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Asia Cooperation Dialogue, Turkic Council, Economic Cooperation Organization and etc.

One of the important results of this interaction was the adoption the UN General Assembly resolution "Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian Region" in 2018.

Given the importance to bring peace and stability to **Afghanistan**, Uzbekistan had started a joint implementation of large scale projects in transport and connectivity, energy, trade and education. These projects include the construction of the Surkhan-Puli-Khumri power distribution line, railroads Mazar-i-Sharif – Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif – Kabul – Peshawar. Uzbekistan is considering creation of Free Trade Zone on the border with Afghanistan.

Dear friends,

Speaking about the prospects of our cooperation within the framework of the ECO, one of the most urgent tasks is the development of **transport and economic corridors in Eurasia**.

Uzbekistan attaches great importance to the development of transport communications and multi-modal logistics and supports the efforts of the ECO in this direction.

The International Conference "Central Asia Connectivity: Challenges and New Opportunities" held in Tashkent in February 2019 attended by more than 130 political scholars and economists from 50 countries and international organizations.

Uzbekistan fully supports such important regional projects, as "One Belt One Road", the International Trans-Afghan Transport Corridor, "Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman" transport corridor and the "Uzbekistan-Kyrgyzstan-China" railroad. These strategic projects can open up enormous opportunities for our countries to enhance connectivity, develop trade and economic ties.

Uzbekistan has made a principal decision to become a member of World Trade Organization and eager to diversify its **trade links**. In this regard, we share proposals to extend our trade relations in the ECO region, to comprehensively promote mutual exchanges in this area and remove unnecessary trade barriers.

The ECO region has tremendous **tourism potential** that allows Member States, including Uzbekistan to derive its own benefit.

ECO region with a population of more than 460 million people and vast territory is well known for the diversity of its historical and cultural heritage. The Great Silk Road passed through the territories of the ECO member countries.

Uzbekistan highly appreciates the outcomes of the 3rd meeting of the Ministers of Tourism of the ECO member countries in Tajikistan on 3-4 October 2019. In this context, we believe that the next – 4th meeting of the ECO Ministers of Tourism in 2020 in Bukhara city will serve as another excellent platform for establishing business contacts, exchanging experience, identifying priority areas for cooperation in the sphere of tourism.

Dear colleagues,

I am confident that the exchange of views in the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization becomes another important step in deepening understanding of the processes taking place in our region, contributing to joint efforts in addressing today's challenges and outline plans for cooperation for the future.

It is worth to mention that Uzbekistan has significantly intensified its interaction with the Organization and eager to further develop our economic cooperation.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Mr Soleimanpour, ECO Secretary General for allocating two posts for the Republic of Uzbekistan at ECO headquarters.

I wish you all a successful meeting and I thank you for your attention.

ANNEX-VII

Statements by ECO Observers

**Statement by H.E. Baghdad Amreyev, Secretary General of the
Turkic Council at the 24th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of
the Economic Cooperation Organization
(Antalya, 9 November 2019)**

Distinguished Chairman,
Esteemed Ministers,
Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,

It is a great honor to address Council of Ministers Meeting (COM) of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). I also would like to express my deepest gratitude to Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu and my Brother, Hadi Soleimanpour for their kind invitation to this important gathering.

Dear Ministers,

Turkic Council has witnessed dramatic developments in its agenda since last year. Between the Summit in Cholpon-Ata in 2018 and the Seventh Summit of the Turkic Council in Baku last month, which marked our 10th year in action, first enlargement of our Organization took place with Uzbekistan joining the Council as full member and Hungary as observer. We opened the European Office of the Turkic Council in Budapest on September that will further our cooperation with European countries, EU and other European institutions.

You know that the activities of the Turkic Council cover a wide range of areas ranging from politics economy, transport and logistics to tourism, youth, education and even sports.

In recent years, economy has become our top priority and many important steps have been done in this regard by the Turkic Council.

For starters, we have established Joint Turkic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TCCI) of the Turkic Council on May in Nur-Sultan and opened its Secretariat on July in Istanbul, which will make significant contributions and add further momentum to economic and trade relations among our countries.

8 out of 15 meetings that we convened in the last year were ministerial level meetings in various economic fields. 2 large scale Business Forums were organized; one in Tashkent and other in Baku with the participation of more than 1000 businessmen from the Member States.

Recently, the Member States also agreed to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding with a view to establishing an effective collaboration basis for the founders and users of various types of Economic Zones.

Excellencies,

Turkic Council is observer organization to ECO since 2012. Since the Member States of the Turkic Council are concurrently members of ECO, we highly value our partnership and ready to further develop cooperation in the upcoming period, in order to achieve shared goals in our shared geography.

We have initiated last year the first step for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between our organizations in 2014 and I paid the first-ever visit carried out by the Turkic Council Secretary General to ECO Secretariat in Tehran on 7-8 April. We signed a Work Program for the period of 2019-2020, to strengthen close relations between two organizations and implementing the items envisaged in the said MoU.

In the field of **economy and commerce**, we are ready to implement joint projects in cooperation with ECO CCI in the framework of the MoU that signed last year in Tashkent with ECO CCI. We are also working on establishing Turkic Investment Fund which aims to

mobilize the real economic potential of our Member States by mainly providing financial resources to the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

Turkic Council Secretariat can also explore the potential and best practices of ECO in trade facilitation and investment promotion activities. In this regard, we are ready to establish relations with ECO Trade and Development Bank.

We can conduct joint programs/activities on process of harmonization of customs and border crossing procedures in conformity with the national legislations, with the aim of facilitating the movement of goods and people across national boundaries.

The importance of our region in the field of **transportation** is also increasing. First freight train from China to Europe, after passing through Trans-Caspian East West Middle Corridor, made a stop-off in Ankara just a couple of days ago and continued to Europe. As the Turkic Council, we have made a considerable contribution to this route.

The development of an efficient transport system in our region will promote the reduction of transit and transportation costs, and, ultimately, the economic development of member states.

We both have existing projects on linking sea ports with dry ports: ECO Maritime Cooperation and Turkic Council Sister Ports Cooperation. We can cooperate and exchange views in this area which will be mutually beneficial for both organizations.

Since we are in Antalya, tourism capital of Turkey, I would like to emphasize our perspective in the field of tourism.

We launched a concrete project, called **“Silk Road Tourism Capitals Initiative (TCI)”** together with ECO to deepen partnership and create

network opportunities among the Silk Road cities of our Member States.

We believe, this initiative will enhance tourism exchange and increase tourism arrivals to the region, as well as raise global awareness of the significance of the Silk Road.

Excellencies,

I am convinced that together, our contribution to the socio-economic development of our region would be greater than ever.

Thank you.

ANNEX-VIII

Statements by Heads of ECO Specialized Agencies and Regional Institutions

Statement of the President of the ECO Educational Institute
Prof. M. Akif KIRECCI
24th Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers

9 November 2019,
Antalya-Turkey

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, HE Cavuşoğlu,
His Excellency Secretary General,
Honorable Ministers,
His Excellencies, Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I salute the ECO family here as a whole and present my sincere thanks to the Government of Turkey for its kind hospitality in this beautiful hotel and the beautiful city of Antalya. I am sure that the results of this meeting will bring the ECO member states to a new level of cooperation.

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 since the last CoM meeting.

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 of 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 better education, trade and cooperation start with understanding each other; and that is possible only by learning each other's 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.

Academicians, linguists, practitioners (language teachers/students), translators, and language experts actively contributed both written and orally to sessions and shared the language teaching materials and their experiences 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 is working on publishing a policy recommendation encompassing the results of the sessions held during the workshop.

To promote effective publication and dissemination of scientific knowledge produced in ECO Member States, ECOEI has organized a workshop on “**How to Write and Publish Articles for International Journals**” in cooperation with Azerbaijan’s Ministry of Education, Education Institute, Directorate of PhD. Programs in Baku on 3 May 2019. The main purpose of the workshop was to improve the academic writing skills of graduate students who pursue a PhD degree in Azerbaijani universities and introduce ways of submission, evaluation and publication procedures of scholarly journals to them. Around 40 PhD students participated in the workshop. ECOEI plans to hold similar workshops for graduate students in other ECO Member States.

As its latest biggest international event, ECOEI organized a two-day International Symposium, **Common History, Culture, Education and Civilization** on 27-28 September 2019 in Ankara (in cooperation with Turkish Historical Society), as approved by the 2nd of BoT of the ECOEI. The major objective of the symposium was to highlight and explore the ways in which the fates of the neighboring peoples of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey have been entwined throughout history. Even in the presence of a vast scholarly corpus on this heritage, the shared cultural and historical legacies and connectivities in the Turkic and Persian worlds still offer important aspects and problems that invite close study. Bearing in mind this fact, ECOEI has issued a call for papers. More than 300 abstracts have been submitted to the Symposium. In the symposium, 80 papers on historical and contemporary examples of connectivities among ECO member countries were presented. Scientists from 15 different countries discussed their research from a wide range of fields such as Philosophy, Science, Education, Religion, Literature, History, Language, Politics, International Relations, Economics, Urbanism and Museology. The symposium was composed of 18 thematic panels. ECO Educational Institute aims at publishing a volume of the papers presented at the symposium, and updating Member States with the outputs gained through the intensive collaborative work.

In its 29th Meeting, ECO RPC recommended that the ECO Secretariat and ECOEI, in collaboration, shall organize a meeting/workshop with ECO Member States to initiate a draft **Plan of Action for Education**, on specific activities and outputs of ECO Vision 2025.

I would like to invite member states to consider the aforementioned Plan of Action for Education and kindly request their input for the review of the next BOT. I have also convened consultation meetings with Education Attaches of ECO Member States in Ankara and urged them to convey their needs in the field of education to

ECOEI to facilitate the development of an initial draft outline for the aforementioned Plan of Action. However, the most important step to be taken would be to establish consistent and **institutionalized channels**. Therefore, we call Member States to nominate their **focal points** in an urgent manner. The focal points may ideally be officials at the respective Ministries of Education of Member States. ECOEI is expecting further expansion of collaboration and seeking for a collective offer of insight from ECO Secretariat and Member States into this initiative.

Another step would be -if recommended by the 24th Meeting of ECO CoM- for ECOEI to form a Scientific Committee to prepare a series of "State of Education" reports (in selected layers of education or fields) in Member States, provided that member states make relevant funds available for the use of such projects. I believe such series of reports would be tremendously helpful in laying the groundwork for the Plan of Action for Education by highlighting the strengths –as well as weaknesses—in the field of education in Member States.

ECO Vision 2025 Statement, highlights the central place of education in the attainment of ECO goals: "ECO will pave the way to a territory of integrated and sustainable economies as well as free trade area achieved by *highly educated* societies and improved governance through enhanced cooperation." ECOEI is ready to take on this task and establish regional networks on higher education, regional exchange and scholarship programs/mechanisms, but it heavily depends on the ownership of the member states.

Let me remind you that your continuous support through financial and technical instruments is crucial for all planned activities to come real. ECOEI 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.

ECOEI appreciates the Government of Turkey for its continued financial support and urge other Members to make mandatory budgetary contributions at their earliest.

Educational Institute is currently operating in a flat rented by its own means i.e. from its operational budget. ECOEI respectfully urges the Turkish Government to allocate a separate location to the Educational Institute to continue its operations in its own location. This was the promise of the Turkish Government in the 2nd BOT and confirmed in the 23th COM.

Educational Institute requests also from the Republic of Turkey to finalize the ratification process of the Host Country Agreement signed between the Government of Turkey and ECOEI in 2015.

Last but not least please remember that economic cooperation would be meaningful when and if supported by cooperation in education. As I repeat in ECO meetings: Every dollar invested in education can contribute fifteen-fold in economy.

Thank you.



Economic Cooperation Organization Science Foundation (ECOSF)

24th Meeting of Council of Ministers (COM) of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)

**Antalya, Republic of Turkey
(9 November 2019)**

Statement by the President ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) Prof. Manzoor Hussain Soomro

Excellency, the Chairman,
Excellencies the Ministers and delegates from ECO Member States
Excellency the Secretary General of ECO
Excellencies, the Delegates from ECO Specialized Agencies,

Assalam-o-Alaikum!

At the outset, I congratulate the Chairperson of 24th Meeting of ECO COM, on assuming the Chair of the Forum. It is indeed a great honour and pleasure for me to address this august forum for the 5th time!

Excellencies, on behalf of ECO Science Foundation and on my personal behalf, I express my deep gratitude to all the Member States and ECO Secretariat for their cooperation extended to the Foundation. Our special thanks to the Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan for patronizing ECOSF through its Ministries of Science & Technology and Foreign Affairs.

Ladies and gentlemen, ECO Science Foundation fully recognizes that the investment in Science & Technology builds strong foundation and helps in sustaining the economic growth, boosts community well-being and integrated development of any country or region. ECO region can achieve global competitiveness, if it ensures that the region has qualified and capable human resource, to develop and maintain the infrastructure and capacity, along with technology. Thus there is a convincing need to build a strong S&T base for economic development in the region.

The Foundation continues to pursue the promotion of scientific and technological research and related activities with an end goal to raise socio-economic standing of its member states. However, Excellencies, we must realize that ECOSF cannot achieve its intended goals and function at its maximum potential, without adequate budgetary support from the Member States.

Over the last two years, the Foundation has been facing serious financial crisis; so much so that we had to cut down our core activities and are not able to even pay the salaries and medical bills to the staff. Contracts of a couple of persons could not be renewed! At the moment, we only receive the full mandatory budgetary contribution from the Government of Pakistan, and that too in local currency at conversion rate much less than

the market! Nevertheless, the Foundation greatly appreciates the support of Pakistan in keeping the organization alive.

But the contribution from just one Member State could not sustain the Foundation for long! This I believe is a discouraging trend and negatively affects the motivation and morale of scientific community of the region and my small team; who have been working very diligently. **I therefore urge the Member States to pull the Foundation out of serious financial challenge on immediate basis by paying their outstanding budgetary contributions. That is the only way forward to allow the Foundation to continue its functions.**

It is important to mention here Ladies and Gentlemen, that in spite of budgetary difficulties, the Foundation undertook numerous important scientific activities during year 2018 and 2019 and the comprehensive report is with the delegations. I highly appreciate the Government of Pakistan for paying their full annual mandatory budget contributions since our inception in the year 2012. We are also grateful to Islamic Republic of Iran for supporting some of ECOSF activities in Iran during 2018 and 2019; we look forward to their due mandatory support.

I very much hope that Iran and Pakistan will soon sort out the money transfer mechanism so that Iran can pay their remaining share of budget contribution for the last few years. I also call upon the remaining three ratifying member states- Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to kindly make their mandatory contributions to strengthen the Foundation. I take this opportunity to urge those Member States who have not yet ratified the ECOSF Charter and its Additional Protocol, to kindly do so at their earliest so as to benefit from Foundation's programs and let it function at the fullest.

Excellencies, you know that the Foundation has established a "Science & Technology Fund" for financing the collaborative research projects. As per requirement, all the modalities for utilization of this Fund had been worked out and approved by the ECO COM in 2012. We launched the program two years ago and received 21 projects from: Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkey. The proposals have been evaluated by Technical Evaluation Committee but not a single project could be funded because no member state has contributed any finances to the "S&T Fund" of ECOSF, though pledged by the Governments of; Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan!

Excellencies, ECOSF has established strong collaboration and partnership with leading STI international and regional organizations in the UK, France, China, Korea, Malaysia and Thailand to bring their expertise and build the capacity of scientific community in the Member States. And the Foundation has been able to bring funds and in-kind support from various global partners & donors including; UNESCO, EU, IsDB, ISTIC, IAP SEP and CAST China, but our efforts can be strengthened only if the ECOSF's S&T Fund has some seed money put in by the member states. Member States are therefore humbly requested to make contributions towards the S&T Fund for the success of the initiative.

Dear Delegates, despite numerous difficulties, the Foundation has achieved many significant milestones but due to paucity of time, I could not highlight them all. However, our progress has been provided in the detail report. Nevertheless, I would like to share that ECOSF held its 4th BoT Meeting recently; wherein, its progress was thoroughly reviewed; and I am pleased to report that the BoT greatly appreciated the activities and initiatives of the Foundation for promoting cooperation among the Member States and with the international organizations in the field of science, technology and innovation.

I would like to emphasize here that the Foundation considers "Inquiry Based Science Education (IBSE)" as the root of S&T Development- leading to economic development.

Thus the Capacity Building Program in IBSE was launched in Nur-Sultan-Kazakhstan in 2015; which is continuing nicely in Iran and Pakistan; however it could not take root in Kazakhstan where it was originally launched. I therefore urge Kazakhstan to support us in reviving the programme in there. I am pleased to report that Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of Tajikistan through their National Academies of Sciences have requested us to organize IBSE Capacity Building workshops there; and we are in process to hold the workshops but financial constraints are the main hurdle. I take this opportunity to invite and request ECO Educational Institute to join hands with ECOSF in this programme.

Dear Delegates, the Foundation has won the cooperation of China Association of Science and Technology- CAST and have signed MoU with them for cooperation in STI education research and youth science areas. Under the MoU signed in 2017, ECOSF is focal organization for STI and science education in ECO region for One Belt One Road (OBOR) programmes and sends young talents from ECO member states to attend science events in China each year. So far, ECOSF has facilitated the participation of 163 young students and teachers/coordinator/ officials from Member Countries in the Belt and Road Teenager Maker Camps, Teacher Workshops and contests held in China.

Ladies and Gentlemen, ECOSF contributed towards the development of unique; "Fusion of OBOR Civilization" school curriculum in collaboration with IAP-SEP, the China Association of Science and Technology (CAST) under the mega initiative of China- One Belt One Road. The curriculum is focused to promote global peace and harmony through education and technology. The curriculum development has been completed and is being pilot tested in the schools of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand in the first phase.

Excellencies, I have the pleasure to share that the Foundation is collaborating with Academy of Engineering and Technology of the developing World- AETDEW and SUGON Education China to build the capacity of universities in the ECO Region in emerging technologies. So far, ECOSF has nominated 13 universities from six ECO Countries; Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Turkey under this program. Other Member States are also being pursued to nominate their relevant institutions to get the benefit of the project.

Finally, I would like to say that the Foundation is making all possible efforts to promote science, technology, innovation and scientific education activities in the region with the collaboration and support of International Organizations.; however, the greatest difficulty we are facing is the non-payment of mandatory budgetary contribution by the member states. I assure you that if the mandatory budget is provided; the Foundation could do much better.

I hope that the Members States will consider my requests positively in the interest of promoting connectivity and knowledge based socio-economic development in the region.

I express my sincere thanks again to the Government of Republic of Turkey and ECO Secretariat for the commendable efforts in convening and organizing this 24th Meeting of COM at beautiful resort city of Antalya.

I thank you Excellencies!

(Prof. Dr. Manzoor H. Soomro)

President ECOSF

Statement by the Director (Mr. Fazlı Sak)
of the ECO Trade and Development Bank
24th ECO Council of Ministers
Antalya-Turkey (8-9 November 2019)

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished Ministers/Heads of Delegations,
Mr. Secretary General,
Honourable Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on the behalf of the ETDB, I would like to convey my sincere thanks and gratitude to the organizers for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for this meeting.

It is a great honor and pleasure for me to be here today and to have this opportunity to make this brief statement.

Excellencies,

The perspective for sustainable global economic growth still faces many interrelated challenges. And despite this challenging operating environment, I would like to underline that ETDB is growing steadily as a prominent international financial institution to provide well focused development assistance and solutions.

With its modest paid-in capital amounting to USD 450 million, the Bank continues to assist the member countries in financing developmental projects and supporting trade activities.

We have developed necessary products and services for enhancing trade, development of Micro and Small and medium enterprises, meeting the financing and technical assistance needs of corporates and projects. In this respect, over 1,500 SMEs and 65,000 micro-entrepreneurs benefitted from our funds. Recently, our involvement in realizations of various projects in the areas of wind power, transport, infrastructure and energy efficiency have been remarkable.

Specially, we have a dedicated trade finance programme to foster the growth of intra-regional trade. About 60 percent of our disbursed funds are extended for financing trade, making the Bank's involvement in the region's trade more inclusive.

Since 2008, when the Bank started its operations, the total amount of loans disbursed to various operations in the member states reached to USD 1.7 billion as end of October 2019. Notably, the quality of our well-diversified portfolio remains high.

We have been concluding co-financing arrangements with other Multilateral Development Banks such as IFC, EBRD, ADB, IDB and ITFC for the benefit of our region. We would be further enhancing this cooperation in the coming years.

Excellencies,

I would like to inform that we continue to maintain positive financial results. Although profit maximization is not our priority but as a financial institution we have to sustain a healthy financial profile to expand the operations and safeguard our capital base. According to audited results our net operating income was USD 13.2 million in 2018. We expect a fairly similar level of income in 2019 as well.

Excellencies,

As I move towards my closing remarks, I would like state that the Bank has established itself professionally in last 11 years and its expertise and abilities have been earning ever increasing recognition from the regional and global development community. However, considering the challenges and substantial development needs of the region we are aware that there are a lot more ground for us to cover.

Currently we have majority of ECO member states on the board and we expect the remaining four ECO countries namely Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to join soon. Accession of new members would support the Bank to further expand its operations and influence in the region.

I am confident that with the support of the member states, ETDB would further mobilize its skills and experience in supporting development of our region in the years to come.

Thank you very much.

**Statement by Ahmet Volkan GÜNGÖREN,
ECO Regional Coordination Centre
for the Implementation of the Regional Programme for Food Security
ECO 24th SOM and COM Meeting
(8-9 November, 2019 / Antalya)**

Honourable Chairman, Secretary General,
Distinguished Representatives of Member States and ECO Institutions,

It is a great honour for me to participate in this meetings.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Turkey and the ECO Secretariat for their great efforts and generous hospitality in organizing this meeting.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to provide brief information about the ECO Regional Coordination Centre for the Implementation of the Regional Programme for Food Security.

Esteemed participants,

ECO-RCC was inaugurated by the fifth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture in 2012 in Turkey to facilitate the identification, prioritization and to address the main impediments to food security at national and regional levels.

Since its establishment, ECO-RCC implemented a number of activities.

Our main goal is to help to achieve food security in a sustainable and consistent way as well as raise awareness in the region.

Distinguished participants,

When we look at the current nutritional state in our region, it is estimated that almost 59 million people are still suffering from the undernourishment, revealing that about 13 percent of the regional population (475 million) is still undernourished.

The current nutritional state of the region, points to the need to effectively govern actions to consolidate progress and eradicate undernourishment in our region.

Minimizing the food security problem will be possible not only by increasing the production of food, but also by obtaining a balanced sharing of qualified products. In addition, a strong agriculture sector and a developed intra-regional trade will improve and sustain economic stability.

I am pleased to announce that as a step to find effective solutions for food security in the region, RCC has developed a study in this year in order to analyse the food security situation of ECO Region.

This report will be submitted in the Agricultural Ministerial Meeting, which will be held in Baku, in December. Now I would like to share some important findings from this report;

- The ECO region has significantly reduced the prevalence of undernourishment during 1999-2017; however, most recent years show an overall stagnation in almost all member states.
- The ECO region has substantially reduced undernourishment over time, but malnutrition remains as a key challenge especially in countries that achieved large reductions in undernourishment. The nature of the problem calls for policy interventions based on the food systems approach.
- Food losses and wastes are high. A rough estimate of 29,6 million tons of cereal losses that took place in the ECO region during the period 2000-2013 implies that if the losses did not take place, an additional 3,1 million people could have access to sufficient food each year.
- Progress has been made in creating healthy food consumption environments.
- Incidence of transboundary animal diseases is increasing with serious risk for food security.
- Incomes increased across the ECO region; however, its impact on access to food during the past 7 years has not been proportional.
- ECO countries have institutions and structures governing social access to food, but stronger political commitment is needed to strengthen social protection programs for vulnerable groups.
- Undernutrition has declined, but overnutrition is rising in many ECO countries.
- Agricultural exports declined recently in almost all countries.

Esteemed participants,

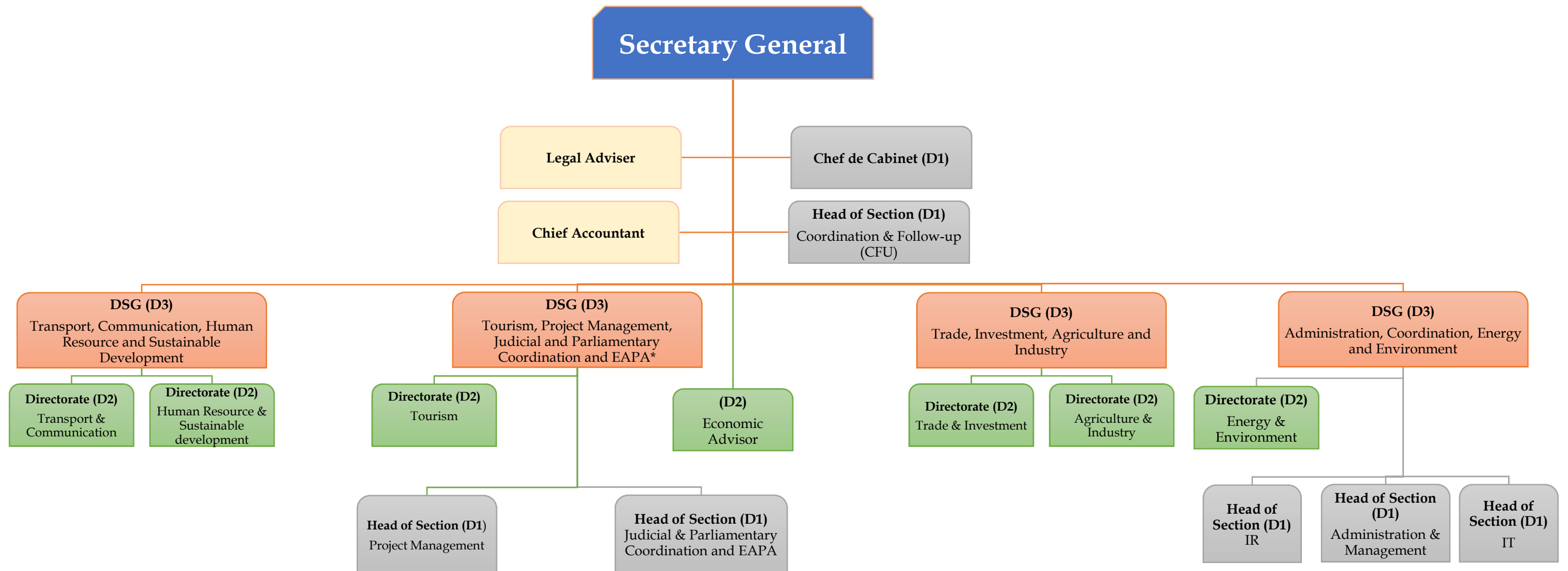
Although some progress has been made, we need to collaborate more in the future than in the past on food security as the food security promotes not only agricultural production but also peoples' lives and the futures of our societies. Access to adequate, affordable, diversified and nutritious food is the key to ensure food security and healthier lives. Investment in food security drives the changes needed for a more prosperous future.

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to invite each Member State to participate in all our activities and to collaborate more in ensuring food security. I wish you all a successful meeting and hope it will pave the way for a sustainable and productive regional collaboration.

Thank you for your attention.

ANNEX-IX

ECO Secretariat's revised Organizational Chart



*EAPA: ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan