

**Antalya Communiqué**  
**for**  
**24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM)**  
*(Antalya, Republic of Turkey, November 9, 2019)*

**We**, the Foreign Ministers/Heads of Delegation<sup>1</sup> of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization, gathered in Antalya on November 09, 2019 to participate in the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, while:

**Reaffirming** our resolve towards ECO's principles and objectives as enshrined in the Izmir Treaty; **Reiterating** the implementation of the objectives set forth under the ECO Vision 2025 for enhanced economic cooperation, advanced social welfare, improved quality of life of the people, increased economic growth and secured sustainable development in the ECO Region;

**Reaffirming** the timely implementation of strategic objectives envisaged in the ECO Vision 2025 and supporting the ongoing efforts of the Organization on their fulfillment;

**Appreciating** the steps taken for enhancement of sense of ownership in bringing about stronger collaboration amongst the Member States for fulfilling mutual responsibilities;

**Encouraging** the project and result-oriented approach of the Organization, enabling it to be more responsive to the current regional and global economic developments as well as the needs and requirements of our peoples;

**Acknowledging** that trade as a principal driver of the national and regional economies continues to play an instrumental role in generating wealth and employment opportunities leading to the collective welfare of our peoples;

**Reiterating** the prominent role and importance of trade and connectivity for regional integration which is a pre-requisite for socio-economic development;

**Calling upon** the Member States to consider ways to further increase the share of intra-ECO trade with a view to augment its role in development of the ECO Region, as well as increase share in the global trade in the coming decades;

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<sup>1</sup>Turkmenistan disassociated from Antalya Communiqué.

**Emphasizing** the importance of undertaking sustained efforts for boosting trade and investment in the region; and **Calling Upon** the Member States to further strive for deepening cooperation to liberalize trade to unlock the full potential of the ECO Region;

**Commending** endeavours made for increasing cooperation in the areas of Trade and Investment and supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); and **Encouraging** the further improved conditions and more conducive environment for attracting investments among ECO Member States;

**Acknowledging** the importance of border crossing points and facilitation of customs procedures to expand intra-regional trade and make it economically viable and commercially justified;

**Recognizing** the importance of further expanding and interlinking the transport connectivity in the ECO Region and to that end; **Encouraging** and supporting the result-oriented initiatives and projects to enhance regional connectivity;

**Supporting** the full implementation of Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) as a major means to connect dry-ports to the seaports and establish economic zones in the ECO Regions well as address the transit transport issues amongst Member States;

**Encouraging** the paradigm shift towards mainstreaming sustainable energy and regional electricity markets in ECO's overall energy agenda, which goes hand in hand with regional and international objectives to promote deployment of clean energy in the region which will also significantly contribute to addressing environmental and climate concerns;

**Recognizing** the importance of stronger and more coherent institutional and cooperative relations with the international organizations active in the priority areas of the organization, notably the International Energy Charter (IEC), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), International Railways Union (IRU), International Road Transport Union (IRU), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), The United Nations Economic and Social Commission (UNESCAP), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Asian Development Bank (ADB);

**Reiterating** full support for implementation of the ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan (EAPA);

**Highlighting** the contribution of sustainable tourism to the economic growth and development of the ECO Region and its role in strengthening economic

cooperation among ECO Member States and enhance socio-economic ties within our societies and promote understanding, peace and prosperity among the nations;

**Underlining** the vast potential of the ECO Region in the field of tourism, inter alia, in terms of increasing the region's share in global tourism; and **Calling upon** the Member States to enhance cooperation and coordination to support tourism industry in line with the objectives outlined in the ECO Vision 2025;

**Acknowledging** the important role of agriculture sector and food security for sustainable growth and welfare of the people of the region while considering the need for enhanced food safety regulations in the ECO Region;

**Appreciating** the efforts made by the Secretariat to initiate, strengthen and expand ties with the United Nations system and other international and regional bodies; and **Recognizing** the need to further promote ECO as a dynamic and resilient regional organization at all relevant regional/international fora;

**Encouraging** greater ownership of the Member States and more focused engagement of the ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated Bodies in promoting cooperation within the ECO in their respective fields;

**Have agreed to:**

1. **Emphasize** the need for effective functioning of the ECO in the coming decades as a more project and result-oriented, innovative and inclusive organization;
2. **Recognize** the importance of the ECO platform to forge regional links and partnerships with similar organizations;
3. **Prioritize** the need for increasing intra-ECO trade through gradual trade liberalization, implementing existing trade agreement, harmonization of standards, dissemination of market information, enhancing trade facilitation and removal of measures which hamper trade flows and make better use of instruments at hand on our priority areas of cooperation;
4. **Endorse** efforts for preparation of ECO Trade Facilitation Agreement and **Urge** Member States to actively participate in and contribute to relevant meetings;
5. **Emphasize** the need for finalization of the draft ECO Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Custom Matters;

6. **Recognize** the established role of investment for enhancing trade and fostering economic growth in the region; **Emphasize** the Member States who have signed the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment (APPI) to complete the ratification procedures for its early effectuation; and **Invite** other Member States, to sign and ratify the Agreement to benefit from this vital agreement for promotion of trade and investment in the region;
7. **Appreciate** the establishment of the ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Databank in Ankara, the Republic of Turkey, under the Agreement on the Establishment and Operation of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank; **Call Upon** the Contracting Parties to actively cooperate for successful operation of the Data Bank; also **Encourage** remaining Member States to join this Agreement;
8. **Encourage** the ECO Trade and Development Bank as the regional institution of ECO to continue to develop appropriate modalities, to finance and support the implementation of regional projects; **Emphasize** the need to further support the Bank through strengthening its role and expanding its Membership;
9. **Reaffirm** our support to the accession of all ECO Member States to WTO, and in this context, we denounce any effort for restricting accession of the remaining ECO Member States to the WTO;
10. **Reaffirm** the commitment for implementation of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) for furtherance of the objective of regional integration through Free Trade Area as envisaged in ECO Vision 2025; **Call upon** the Contracting Parties to accelerate processes for its implementation; **Devise** mechanisms and solutions at the earliest convenience taking into account the concerns and views of the Contracting Parties for the maximal productivity of each of them; also **Invite** the remaining Member States to join ECOTA;
11. **Encourage** the Member States and the Secretariat to consider ways for establishing a system of clearing payments through means such as developing cooperation with the Asian Clearing Union (ACU) or, where appropriate, by establishing an ECO Clearing Union, taking into consideration the existing models, experiences and challenges;
12. **Assign** the task to the ECO Secretariat and, if appropriate, ECO Trade and Development Bank, with collaboration of relevant institutions, to develop the Structure and Modalities of the ECO Vision Fund provided for under ECO Vision 2025;

13. **Call** for consideration of the establishment of a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the ECO Vision 2025 with a result-based approach;
14. **Emphasize** on the significance of the role of private sector in regional development and the need for increased interaction among the businessmen of the region and to this end, **Instruct** ECO Secretariat to include ECO CCI in its work impacting the business community, **Encourage** the Member States to strengthen and support ECO-CCI to enhance its activities for strengthening of private sector activities in the Region;
15. **Reaffirm** our commitment to further strengthen the ECO multimodal transit and transport network to be aligned with the ongoing transformation in the ECO countries' transport networks;
16. **Underscore** the importance of the Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM) project aimed at strengthening a sustainable cooperation by creating of information (internet) infrastructure for the establishment of regional digital information society and bridge the digital divide across the wider region;
17. **Invite** the public and private sector stakeholders to contribute to the development of the ECO regional transportation network, particularly conveyance of passengers by rail and provision of railway freight services by introducing new and innovative and thus more effective and commercially reasonable transport transit technological solutions;
18. **Recognize** the importance of the initiatives that are developed within and outside the framework of ECO which are contributing to inter-regional connectivity and cooperation, including inter alia, Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran and Oman Corridor, Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (Turkey-Georgia-Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan-China) Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Gwadar Port, Belt and Road, Iran-Republic of Azerbaijan's portion of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) i.e. Qazvin – Rasht–Astara (Iran)–Astara (Azerbaijan), West-China and West-Europe Expressway, Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran (KTI) Railway, Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI) Rail and Road Corridors, Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Turkmenistan Project, Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) Rail and Road Corridors, Almaty-Bandar Abbas, Istanbul-Almaty Railway Container Trains, CASA-1000, TAPI Corridor, 5 Nations Railway Corridor (China, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Iran, Afghanistan), Lapis-Lazuli Trade and Transit Corridor, China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan Railway Corridor,

Development of Chabahar Port, Kunar Dam Project, Peshawar-Kabul Express Highway, Khost-Miran Shah Railway, Chaman-Spin Boldak Railway, Mazar-E-Sharif-Herat Railway, Khaff-Herat Railway, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipeline, South Caucasus Pipeline, Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline (TANAP) and Iran-Azerbaijan-Russia electricity transmission line;

19. **Renew** the commitment for full implementation of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) to facilitate regular and commercially justified operation of transnational transport corridors in the ECO Region and modernization of border crossing points, and to provide the necessary facilities and related installations needed for multimodal transport in ECO Corridors, as well as logistic centers and ECO Zones in seaports; also **Invite** Turkmenistan to complete and the Republic of Uzbekistan to accelerate the consideration of accession process to TTFA;
20. **Acknowledge** the need for implementation of major international conventions/agreements aimed at simplifying procedures for smooth travel of people and transportation and transit of goods within the region and beyond;
21. **Appreciate** preparation of “2025 Regional Strategy for Information Society Development”, a strategic framework to develop the digital economy within ECO region by creating world-class information society to ensure access to affordable higher-speed broadband, e-services, digital knowledge/skills, and an enabling environment for cross-border flow of goods, services and digital products and designing an Action Plan to be followed-up/implemented through devising a mechanism under ECO;
22. **Support** the steady progress in promoting the project of establishment of the ECO Clean Energy Centre (CECECO) in view of the launching and implementation of its preparatory phase, as an explicit endeavour to contribute to the sustainable energy transition in the ECO Region; and **Task** the Secretariat to map out and implement the first operative phase of CECECO;
23. **Reiterate** the crucial role of alignment towards regional electricity market within the ECO Region; and **Call for** renewed impetus for launching of the Project of establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO REM), which remains one of the flagship project initiatives within the Organization, as a means to consolidate the long-term regional energy sustainability;

24. **Encourage** the Member States, relevant international organizations, financial institutions, national development funds and other stakeholders to actively support the inclusive, multi-dimensional connectivity projects and associated infrastructure in energy, transport, communications and industry that could potentially transform into economic corridors in the long-term perspective;
25. **Acknowledge** the importance of enhanced engagement of the Organization on addressing the environmental and climate challenges at global and regional level where appropriate;
26. **Assign** the Secretariat to expand its ties with the United Nations and its affiliated bodies and specialized agencies, relevant international Organizations and peer regional organization including ASEAN, SCO, EU, CIS, ACD etc. and some potential partners including European and Asian countries to further promote mutually beneficial partnerships in the sphere of international relations;
27. **Encourage** all Member States to participate for finalizing the Regional Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction in Turkey in 2019, to strengthen regional and international cooperation in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction; and **Call for** development/review of national strategies for disaster risk reduction and report it through the online Sendai Framework Monitoring System;
28. **Encourage** the ECO Member States to make adequate contributions to the ECO Fund for Afghanistan, to support efforts of the ECO and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, particularly ECO related projects, aiming at promoting stability, reconstruction, sustainable development and economic growth in Afghanistan and to actively participate in the ECO Donors Conference on Afghanistan;
29. **Reaffirming** our commitment to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan in support of the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.
30. **Acknowledge** the importance of enhanced cooperation in the field of agriculture targeted on addressing the food security challenges at global and regional level; and **Realize** the need for harmonized, science-based food safety regulations and requirements on the basis of international standards and formulation of mechanisms for achieving mutual recognition and certification in and outside the ECO region to catalyze agricultural growth and cooperation and to facilitate smooth trade;

31. **Reiterate** the support for ECO Coordination Center for Food Security (ECO-RCC); **Support** the Center's efforts for ensuring food security; **Emphasize** enhancing and strengthening the regional cooperation in the field of food security and **Encourage** more coordination and cooperation amongst ECO Member States in the field of agriculture;
32. **Encourage** all Member States to participate in the upcoming Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture to be held in the Republic of Azerbaijan in December 2019 to discuss the regional agricultural challenges and opportunities, food safety and security situation in the region;
33. **Realize** the need for harmonized, science-based food safety regulations and requirements on the basis of international standards and formulation of mechanisms for achieving mutual recognition and certification in and outside the ECO region to catalyze agricultural growth and cooperation and to facilitate smooth trade;
34. **Acknowledge** the efforts of the Secretariat in developing ECO Regional Strategy on Tourism; and **Encourage** the Member States to play an active role in the activities of the Secretariat aimed at promoting regional Tourism;
35. **Support** the steady implementation of tourism related projects to facilitate the movement of tourists to the region and enhance the capacity of regional tourism industry;
36. **Reiterate** the support for ECO Regional Strategy on Industrial Cooperation; Encourage more coordination and cooperation amongst the Member States in the field of industry; and **Emphasize** the importance of preparing an Action Plan including knowledge, experience and expert exchange programmes to increase cooperation between Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and related organizations;
37. **Support** harmonized privatization approach amongst Member States to enhance the role of private sector in economic development of the region and increase mutual investment amongst Member States by networking of the Privatization Organizations ford ata and knowledge sharing as well as Privatization Investment Forum;
38. **Encourage** all Member States to participate in the upcoming Ministerial Meeting on Economy to be held in the Republic of Tajikistan in the first half of 2020 to discuss the regional economic challenges and opportunities,



address financial and banking system in the region, and to consider the draft document on the ECO Clearing Union;

39. **Reiterate** concerns about the existing unresolved conflicts in the ECO region, including Armenia – Azerbaijan conflict, which hinder the economic growth and realization of the full economic potential of the Region and impede the development of economy cooperation on regional as well as broader level, and stress the importance of making increased efforts for the earliest resolution of these conflicts based on the norms and principles of international law, in particular, the principles of respect to sovereignty and territorial integrity;
40. **Reiterate** concerns about the existing unresolved conflicts, disputes, threats and biased measures and pressures against some of the Member States in the ECO Region and in this context **Express** solidarity for each other in line with the relevant resolutions of the UN and International Law; **Condemn** all forms and manifestations of terrorism; and **Support** ECO Member States in their counter terrorism efforts;
41. **Express** profound gratitude to H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, to host and chair the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers in an excellent manner.