

Statement by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic
H.E. S.N. Zhaparov
14th ECO Summit

Honorable Chairman,
Honorable Heads of State and Governments,
Honorable Secretary General,
Dear friends,

On behalf of the delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic and on my own behalf, I sincerely greet all participants in today's Summit.

I thank the Republic of Turkey for the excellent organization of this event and the successful chairmanship in the ECO.

It is a great honor for me to personally take part in the work of the Summit and I am very pleased with this meeting.

Honorable Chairman,
Honorable Heads of Delegations,

As you are aware, important political events have recently taken place in Kyrgyzstan, such as the presidential elections and the referendum on the form of the government.

The people of Kyrgyzstan have determined their path of development.

The corresponding constitutional amendments will be put to a vote soon and the work on reforming the public administration system will begin.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to assure that Kyrgyzstan will continue to fulfill its international obligations in accordance with the previously reached agreements.

We reaffirm our commitment to maintaining continuity in the development of friendly relations with our International partners.

Kyrgyzstan is open for dialogue and to mutually beneficial cooperation with all states on the principles of friendly relations, mutual understanding and mutual respect of interests.

Honorable Chairman,
Honorable Heads of Delegations,

Today's Summit provides us with a good opportunity to sum up (summarize) the main results of our cooperation and discuss the prospects for further regional cooperation within the ECO.

The year 2020 was a hard challenge for the whole world and our region was no exception. All ECO countries suffered significant economic losses from the pandemic and the restrictive measures that came with containing the spread. This has made significant adjustments to the plans of all member countries of our Organization. The pandemic has shown that no one is able to fight the virus alone.

Even the world's largest powers have failed to stop it (Struggled) Therefore, we must act together and get out of the economic and social crisis caused by COVID-19.

In this context, I would like to note that the Organization could actively work in this direction and combine the available resources of the health systems of the member countries, to exchange best practices, latest achievements in the area of medical science in the fight against "COVID-19", early (vaccine) development, registration and the introduction of a vaccine, as well as vaccination of the population throughout the ECO countries.

**Honorable Chairman,
Honorable Heads of Delegations,**

The ECO region has all the necessary potential, including large human capital, scientific resources, natural resources, and an extensive communications network. Our countries are united by common historical and cultural roots that date back centuries during the flourishing of trade cooperation along the entire Silk Road.

We expect that the ECO will be able to become an effective instrument of regional integration in modern conditions for the benefit of the prosperity of our people.

Assessing the activities of our Organization over the past period, and determining the prospects for the future, we see that the countries of the ECO region over the past few years have reached new heights, reached a new level of development and can solve more complex issues and tasks.

At the same time, the recent consequences of the global economic crisis, as well as modern challenges and threats to international security, pose completely new objectives for us.

Our Organization must be better prepared for new challenges. This will allow promoting the fundamental principles of ECO by expanding economic activities, developing and strengthening its institutions, and playing an active role in realizing the future goals of the Organization.

It should be admitted that at present, the role of the ECO in the system of regional economic and bilateral ties does not yet correspond to the existing real potential of our countries.

Unfortunately, the growth of trade between the ECO countries is impeded by the presence of tariff and non-tariff barriers and high transport costs, the difference in the approaches of the participating countries to protect their markets and producers, the instability of the world financial markets, as well as political crises that undoubtedly impact economic and social stability.

In these conditions, our common integration aspirations and regional economic projects face even more difficulties in their practical implementation.

It must be recognized that the Organization must reach a completely new and qualitative level by searching for the necessary and acceptable solutions to optimize the ECO's activities.

It is important that the Organization corresponds to modern conditions and serves to fulfill the integration tasks necessary for all participating countries, which we face at the current stage.

**Honorable Chairman,
Honorable Heads of Delegations,**

In order to realize enhanced regional cooperation, economic growth and development of our region, we must be determined to develop and implement strategies in such priority areas for our economies as trade, transportation, communication, energy, tourism and the protection of the environment.

For the Kyrgyz Republic, as a landlocked country, one of the priority areas for cooperation within the ECO is the transportation sector.

The Kyrgyz Republic, together with other ECO countries, participates in the development of the East-West and North-South transportation corridors. This gives the countries of Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan, the opportunity to access the open seas through Iran.

We also attach great importance to projects of railway construction designed to connect the transportation routes of the ECO member countries with access to the external markets of Europe and China, which were included in the ECO Action Program for the development of transport and communications in the region.

For the Kyrgyz Republic, the implementation of railway lines in the ECO region is of great strategic importance, including a project for a new railway through Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to the border with China. In this regard, the coordinated development of multi-modal routes takes on strategic importance.

The development of energy in the ECO countries, by expanding trade in energy resources between the ECO countries, will create the potential for economic growth for many years.

For instance, today, four countries, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, have begun the construction of the CASA-1000 project. This project aims to create an interregional energy market for Central Asia and South Asia, thereby developing electricity trade across the continent as a whole.

The CASA-1000 project widens the possibility to attract additional investments to the hydro power plants and the large potential of the rivers of Kyrgyzstan. All this and further cooperation in the energy sector will favorably affect the further macroeconomic stabilization of the countries of the Organization.

The ECO Secretariat is implementing a number of important projects in the field of food security and sustainable agricultural development in the region. This direction should be further developed and strengthened.

Cooperation between countries in the tourism sector is becoming more and more active. The countries of our region have significant tourism and recreational potential and present great opportunities for the development of international tourism. The Kyrgyz Republic is ready to collaborate and assist in the further development of this promising area for all of us.

As you know, the initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic to hold the World Nomad Games in 2014, 2016 and 2018 was met with great interest by the world community. We are confident that the next World Nomad Games, scheduled in 2021 in Turkey, will be held at the highest level.

**Honorable Chairman,
Honorable Heads of Delegations,**

In conclusion, of my speech, I would like to confidently emphasize that the ECO countries, having all the necessary potential, and being in the center of the Eurasian continent, are sufficiently capable of independently fulfilling and realizing their goals and objectives.

The goals of our Organization today are to make our region one of the worthy and important players in the global economic system, with the presence of goodwill among our countries.

Let me once again thank the Republic of Turkey and personally President Recep Tayyip Erdogan for organizing this excellent ECO Summit. I would also like to take this opportunity, express my warm wishes in conjunction with upcoming Nooruz, and wish you all peace and prosperity.

Thank you for your attention.
