

**H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, ECO Secretary General's Statement**  
**Mid-Term RPC - 2021**  
**July 28, 2021**

**Honourable Chairman, H.E. H.E. Mr. Toyli Malikov, the Deputy Minister of Finance and Economy of Turkmenistan**

**H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov, the Chairman of Council of Permanent Representative and Ambassador of Turkmenistan**

**Excellencies,**

**Dear Participants**

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to brief on our recent activities.

As you are kindly aware, the 24<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers supported the ECO's fresh approach of making the organization more project-and-result-oriented one. It authorized the ECO Secretary General to ensure the implementation of 10 small sized bankable projects on annual basis. Therefore, our focus remained on development and implementation of small sized projects.

Projects' execution rate has remained positive as progress in implementation of the decision of the 24<sup>th</sup> COM based on results which is 7 out of 10 mandated projects implemented in 2020-21. Project completion rate increased by 42.9% and project progress ration by 42.3% by mid-year 2020-21. Projects progress implementation rate appears to gear up reaching 26% whereas it was 4% three years ago. The Organization is expected to secure more efficient and effective outcomes to this end. I would like to precisely convey sector-wise status of implementation of some important ECO Projects.

- **In trade and Investment Sector**, we have been able to complete 2 small sized projects including (i) Study on the Impediments in the Impediments in the implementation of ECO's Trade Tools and Measures to Resolve, as well as (ii) ECO Regional Payment System (ERPS) Feasibility Study Phase-I. However, the number of ongoing projects in this sector is 6 that include (i) Study on Preparation of the Guidelines for the Establishment of ECO Regional Network of SEZs in the ECO Member States and (ii) Study on

Preparation of the Roadmap for formulating a Comprehensive Action Plan among the Sovereign Wealth and National Development Funds of the Member States.

- **In Transport and Communications Sector**, we have been able to complete 5 projects, while one small sized project was completed in the sector i.e. “Resumption of ITI Container Train’s Regular Operation”. There are 2 ongoing and 7 proposed projects in this sector. The proposed projects include (i) Development of Economic Corridor along ECO KTI Railway Corridor (ii) Needs-Based Financial and Technical Assessment for installing Transshipment Facilities, Instruments and Tools in Taftan Railway (iii) Establishment of a Common Gateway among ECO-Countries-ECO Gates (iv) Establishing Direct Flights among Tourist Destinations within ECO Region, (v) Establishment of ECO Regional Fiber Optic Network.
- **In Energy Mineral and Environment Sector**, there is one completed i.e. “ECO Energy Strategy” while 6 projects are under stage of proposal in this sector that include the “Feasibility Study on Manufacturing and Marketing Opportunities for Promotion of the Sustainable and Advanced Phase Change Material-based Renewable Energy Technology (ECO-PCM).
- **In Agriculture and Industry Sector**, there are 2 completed small sized projects i.e. (i) Establishment of Standardized ECO Network of Slaughter Houses and Reference Laboratories and (ii) Support to Development of Organic Agricultural Production Certification and Market Integration. There are 4 ongoing and 3 proposed projects in this sector.
- **In Human Resource and Sustainable Development Sector**, one small sized project i.e. Intra-Regional Capacity in Trade of Pharmaceuticals in the ECO Region is completed in this sector. However, another project is under stage of proposal in this sector.
- **In Tourism, PM, PJC and EAPA**, there is one ongoing project while four projects are under stage of proposal that include (i) ECO Regional Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism Development, (ii) Tourism Routes and Packages, (iii) Tour Operators’ Chain and Connectivity and (iv) Tourism Visa.
- **In Economic Research and Statistics**, there is one ongoing project.

Presently, the ECO Secretariat is working on the expansion of scope of small sized projects to pre-feasibility and feasibility studies as 31<sup>st</sup> Meeting of RPC proposed. The proposal is under process and consideration of the ECO decision making bodies.

## **Distinguished Delegates,**

I may offer a few suggestions to the esteemed RPC in line with the undergoing process of enhancing the efficiency of our organization. The RPC may take into consideration the Nexus Approach in designing future plans for ECO. Nexus approach is complementary to project oriented approach and regional project prioritization. It is a requirement for adjusting ECO activities with the new and emerging issues in contemporary regional and international affairs. As an example, the Nexus Approach on trade and transport will lead the region to the creation of economic corridors. The nexus approach on water-energy and food-security is vital for GDP increase as well as human well-being, poverty reduction and sustainable development.

RPC also may take into the consideration the creation of Regional Production Chain to improve and enhance regional productivity and facilitate movement of capital-technology-skilled workforce as well as easing barriers in market access.

I also hope that RPC would kindly support the idea of expanding the scope and number of SSPs when it will be discussed in next SOM/COM in Ashgabat.

The ECO Secretariat is more than ready and receptive to receive any proposals that bring added value to the Organization. I wind up my briefing with reiteration of deep gratitude for your kind participation in this mid-term RPC Meeting. I wish we secure the desired and intended aims of this interaction, removing shortcomings, if any in our programs and activities for regional development and growth.

**Thank you all**

\*\*\*\*\*