



# 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit

Ashgabat, November 28, 2021,

## Ashgabat Consensus for Action

We, the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization, gathering to attend the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit for reviewing the progress and implementation status of the ECO programmes, activities and projects and to make an exchange of views on regional and international issues of the ECO's common interest aimed at fortifying the ECO as a vibrant organization, enhancing and expanding cooperation among its members as well as building on common values and shared interests, and while:

**Reaffirming** our commitment to the principles and objectives of the ECO enshrined in the Treaty of Izmir and realization of the goals of the ECO Vision 2025 for mutual economic development, peace and progress, prosperity and enhanced integration of the region;

**Recognizing** the multilateralism as an international legitimate framework and an imperative to promote and strengthen the sustainable development, peace and security among nations as well as; **Stressing on** the role of international and regional organizations in upholding and further promoting multilateralism as enshrined in the UN Charter;

**Highlighting** the importance of the UN General Assembly Resolution dated September 9, 2021 on cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization;

**Acknowledging** the significance of regional cooperation, integration and connectivity as a vital way to fast-track economic and social progress, development and stability in the Region and; **Adhering** profound importance to the cooperation frameworks developed under the different agreements amongst the Member States;

**Noting** with appreciation the midterm review of ECO Vision 2025 under the Chairmanship of Turkmenistan that sets comprehensive and core principles as well as guidelines to further enhance ECO cooperation and revival in key areas;

**Encouraging** further collaboration amongst the Member States and emphasizing the imperative of accession to the existing ECO agreements and institutions by ECO Member States, and accelerate their implementation and functioning;

**Recalling** our commitment to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including in particular, the respect for political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognized borders of the states, development of friendly relations among the nations, and pacific settlement of disputes;

**Noting** the political, economic, cultural and technological developments that can facilitate the realization of the cherished objective of connectivity within the ECO Region and beyond, including the Trans-Eurasian connectivity; and welcoming operationalization of Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) Road Corridor;

**Underlining** the significance of fully exploiting the complementarities offered by shared geography, history and culture, and the comparative advantages and diversity of resources of the Member States to bring about greater connectivity and economic integration in the ECO Region;

**Desiring** to stand side-by-side with each other to address the post-COVID repercussions on the region's economies for the resumption of normal activities, particularly in trade, transit, transportation and tourism;

**Stressing** the importance of digitalization of transportation and border crossing procedures, as necessary measures in the context of international trade within the ECO region to ensure smooth and unhindered trade flows through fast, efficient and electronic customs and transport operations during pandemics;

**Recognizing** the need to increase the sustainability and resilience of the supply chains and cargo transportation, within the framework of a rule based approach, in order to carry out free, fair and uninterrupted trade as envisaged in ECO Vision 2025 and tackle the economic adversities of COVID-19;

**Acknowledging** regional connectivity and integration as cornerstone for mutual economic growth and a dynamic concept that encompasses multiple dimensions, including the digital infrastructure, e-commerce, energy, and transit and multimodal transportation systems;

**Encouraging** the establishment of a constructive dialogue on energy issues among producers, consumers and transit states in the ECO Region;

**Emphasizing** on the significance of enhanced energy security for economic stability and sustainable development and the need for close cooperation to realize major energy projects in this regard;

**Underscoring** the need for expanded efforts towards power/electricity market within ECO Region for harnessing benefits of larger integrated electricity systems;

**Reiterating** the importance of environment cooperation in the ECO Region as a cross-cutting issue to all aspects of development in line with “ECO Vision 2025” and UN Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nation Framework on Climate Change as well as the objectives of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, based on national policies and circumstances of each Member State, especially for a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 in the Region;

**Recognizing** that just and equitable energy transition will be an important pillar of global and regional energy security in the coming decades;

**Appreciating** the efforts for increasing the share of the renewable energy sources in the national energy mixes of ECO members, and for enhancing sustainable energy production, energy efficiency and energy security;

**Commending** the growing interest of Member States to join ECO Trade and Development Bank and; **Emphasizing** the need for enhanced role of the Bank in supporting and financing ECO projects and programmes, including by forging cooperative ties with international development partners;

**Emphasizing** the need to strengthen educational, cultural and scientific linkages among the Member States and fostering the ECO’s Specialized Agencies in these fields;

**Acknowledging** the important role of Parliamentary Cooperation in promoting greater collaboration among Member States in giving effect to the agreed frameworks;

**Noting** with concern the challenges in ensuring food security and agricultural development in the Region as a result of water shortages, land degradation, drought and other natural disasters;

**Underlining** the importance of enhanced regional cooperation in the field of agriculture aimed at addressing the food security challenges at global and regional level and; **Emphasizing** on supporting the efforts of ECO Coordination Centre for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS) in this regard;

**Reiterating** the joint commitment to establish a free trade area in the ECO Region to ensure maximum intra-regional trade as an instrument of enhanced economic recovery, development, and growth in the Region;

**Acknowledging** the key importance of the implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) in achieving strategic objectives of ECO Vision 2025, including doubling intra-regional trade and increasing share in the global trade;

**Recognizing** the importance of moderation as an approach to counter all forms of extremism and promote dialogue, mutual respect, understanding and social harmony, thereby contributing towards the achievement of sustainable and inclusive development, equitable growth, stability and prosperity in the ECO Region;

**Acknowledging** the importance of peace and stability in Afghanistan for ECO Region and reiterating our continued support to the national, regional and global efforts for reconstruction and sustainable development in Afghanistan;

**Expressing** deep concern with the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, emphasizing the importance of peace and stability in Afghanistan for ECO Region and reiterating our support for an inclusive and representative political system that protect fundamental human rights of all components of the Afghan people, particularly women;

**Felicitating** the Central Asian ECO Member States on the occasion of their 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence, and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Restoration of Independence;

**Congratulating** the Government and the People of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the liberation of its occupied territories and restoration of territorial integrity of the country; and **Believing** that this development will pave the way for sustainable peace and economic prosperity in the Caucasus region through establishment of good-neighborly relations;

**Being** fully cognizant of the constantly evolving global and regional environment and new developments that pose multiple challenges and opportunities as well as the need for enhanced regional economic cooperation in the ECO Region;

## Have agreed to:

1. **Accelerate** the pace of existing cooperation amongst the Member States in all areas of shared interests, including to explore every possibility to achieve the aims and objectives of the ECO and to promote the ECO as an effectual regional organization;
2. **Reaffirm** our pledge for enhanced effective and efficient implementation of ECO Vision 2025 in its six key areas of cooperation that are trade, transport and connectivity, energy, tourism, economic growth and productivity, and social welfare and environment and; **Re-emphasize** realization of the core principles of sustainability, integration and conducive environment of the Vision 2025 which are prerequisite to secure desired goals of the organization;
3. **Decide** to enhance mutual cooperation to fight against the COVID-19 for effectively, efficiently and jointly dealing with the impacts of the pandemic on the region's economies, inter alia, by sharing information and capacity building in prevention and vaccination as well as in order to revive the socioeconomic activities in the region for collective betterment of our peoples;
4. **Ensure** an accelerated implementation of the long-term sectoral priorities of ECO for development of transport and communication infrastructure; facilitation of trade and investment; effective use of the region's vast energy resources, economic integration and; **Chalk out** the ways and means to promote ECO's connectivity with other regions in these areas;
5. **Encourage** the Member States to accede to relevant agreements concluded within the ECO framework aimed at achieving the objectives enshrined in the Treaty of Izmir and the ECO Vision 2025 and; **Task** our relevant Ministers and authorities to consider joining these agreements;
6. **Decide** to increase the low intra-regional trade and increase our region's contribution in overall global trade by harnessing trade potential of the ECO region to achieve sustainable economic growth as stipulated in the ECO Vision 2025 through implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and other ECO trade-related arrangements and; **Task** hereby our relevant authorities to expedite removal of unnecessary technical and operational barriers, including due to the COVID-19 to effectuate these arrangements and to start trade negotiations with involvement of Member States in a position to do so for an ECO Free Trade Area;
7. **Enhance** ECO-wide connectivity in terms of transport and transit, trade and investment, telecommunications, digital infrastructure including cyber security and all forms of energy, as well as people-to- people exchanges, including through regional tourism arrangements;

8. **Commend** the operationalization of ITI Road Corridor, noting the successful cargo dispatch from Pakistan to Azerbaijan and Turkey through Iran under TIR Convention and; Take practical measures for the full implementation of other regional projects and transport corridors, as envisaged in the objectives of the Transit Transport Frame Work Agreement (TTFA) and Vision 2025, as well as consider expanding the network of transport corridors put forward by the member states of the Organization at the 14th ECO Summit;
9. **Stress on** the importance of strengthened and continued cooperation among all stakeholders to build and run information structures in order to bridge the digital divide in the Region;
10. **Strengthen** cooperation with other international organizations and relevant stakeholders in supporting the Member States in their efforts to digitalize transport, customs and border crossing procedures through implementing e-TIR/e-CMR and other relevant mechanisms with a view to creating digital transport corridors among the interested Member States;
11. **Cooperate** closely to harness the benefits and mitigate the negative impact of the ICTs and implement the decisions and outcomes of the Second ECO Ministerial Meeting on Information and Communications Technology in 2017, having in mind the importance of participation of all stakeholders to ensure unhindered and equal access to ICT benefits by all;
12. **Collaborate** strongly in such areas as e-government, digital economy, artificial intelligence, telecommunications and inter-operator interaction, as well as through national postal operators and technology parks of software products of the member countries of the organization;
13. **Assign** Tourism Ministers of the Member States to take urgent measures in coping with serious challenges of the ECO tourism industry arising from covid-19 pandemic in line with other regional and global post-COVID initiatives;
14. **Reinforce** cooperation in the field of environment and climate change, disaster risk reduction and education and; **Unite** the efforts of the ECO member states in the direction of creating concrete effective mechanisms of regional cooperation in this sphere.
15. **Intensify** the work on the creation and implementation within the Organization of a health care system for monitoring the epidemiological situation and advance planning of appropriate measures in the ECO region;

16. **Support** the initiative for the establishment of ECO Clean Energy Center and; **Encourage** the ECO Member States to take result-oriented steps for the full-fledged and optimum functioning of the Center as contribution to modern, affordable and reliable energy services in the Region;
17. **Encourage** cooperation among the ECO Member States and relevant international organizations on issues related to sustainable and clean energy, including the realization of renewable energy projects and green energy financing;
18. **Consider** the importance of the issue of ensuring food security for all ECO member states, together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and ECO-RCC, to expedite efforts in updating the ECO program in the field of food security; Task the ministries of agriculture of the ECO member states to prepare for their next meeting to develop measures for implementation of the ECO Program, once updated, to ensure food security in the ECO Region;
19. **Consider** the issues of cooperation in the field of industrial cooperation on the basis of the principle of complementarities of the economies of the member countries of the Organization. Task our relevant ministries and officials to develop a joint “Road map”, including specific areas and projects;
20. **Enhance** the role of micro, small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs) in the economic growth of the Member States and the Region as a whole and; **Task** our relevant authorities to undertake necessary measures to strengthen the MSMEs and promote joint cooperation, including those that enhance women entrepreneurship, innovation-driven and knowledge-based enterprises;
21. **Affirm** the need for collaboration in energy sector, including oil and gas, electricity, renewable energy, including hydro etc., focusing, inter alia, on energy efficiency, energy and renewable energy infrastructure development, as well as oil and gas pipelines, intra-regional energy trade; **Stress on** the establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM) in the ECO Region for increasing energy trade and supplies, facilitating the electricity exports and imports and boosting economic growth, as well as contributing to the energy security of the Region;
22. **Be cognizant** of the changing global economic realities under COVID conditions and; **Work** towards developing medium and long-term economic development strategies for an inclusive growth and more resilient recovery in the Region;
23. **Set** measurable and quantifiable targets using effective and efficient project tools, including monitoring and evaluations systems and techniques with the aim to ensure implementation of result-oriented projects and programmes in the Organization;

24. **Reaffirm** our commitment to implement the ECO activities, with the primary focus on executing the annual work plan, in a prioritized manner for enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization and attaining speedy outcomes towards higher welfare impact in our Region;
25. **Ensure** that the existing regional arrangements and programmes within ECO to combat the menace of drugs and different kind of transnational organized crimes, including, inter alia, trafficking in persons, drugs and arms, crimes committed through digital means and ICTs, as well as financing of terrorism and money laundering are in place and continue to function and that effective regional mechanisms for cooperation in law enforcement, judicial issues, and capacity building, as well as other relevant areas are established;
26. **Reject** unilateral coercive measures, sanctions and economic pressures as breach of the "Right to Development of the people", which hamper the stability and prosperity in our region, particularly during the pandemic situation and; **Express** support to the ECO Member States affected by such measures;
27. **Encourage** the Member States to explore the opportunities to invest in rebuilding and reconstruction projects in the liberated territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
28. **Renew** our strong desire for a secure, prosperous and peaceful Afghanistan and while appreciating the ECO Secretariat and the Member States for developing a comprehensive ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan (EAPA) and; **Urge on** the Member States and the international community to further strengthen EAPA and carry out developmental and assistance projects in Afghanistan;
29. **Express** support to international efforts to provide urgent humanitarian aid to Afghanistan through effective, transparent and accountable mechanisms and take measures to protect the livelihoods of the Afghan people, as well as to show solidarity with countries, which are hosting large number of displaced Afghans and; **Underscore** the importance of political inclusivity, protection of fundamental human rights of all components of Afghan people, particularly women and to keep taking effective actions in counter-terrorism;
30. **Praise** the Member States and the ECO Secretariat for making progress on ECO reform process;
31. **Welcome** the new ECO Secretary General, H.E. Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, wishing him and his team success in accomplishing the important duties while tasking the Secretary General to undertake a comprehensive capacity building programme for the Secretariat and; in this regard, **Encourage** the CPR to assist the Secretary General in utilizing the existing and required resources from within and outside ECO;



32. **Appreciate** the ECO Secretariat and the former Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour for excellent management of the Organization's affairs, particularly during the ongoing COVID crunch;
33. **Express** our deep gratitude to the People and the Government of Turkmenistan for extending warm hospitality and making excellent arrangements for the COM and the Summit and; sincerely **Thank** H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the honorable President of Turkmenistan and the Chair of the 15<sup>th</sup> Summit for successfully presiding over the event;
34. **Welcome** the ECO Chairmanship of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2022 and; **Express** confidence that during its chairmanship the organization will be further strengthened and the regional cooperation will be further advanced, as well as the role of organization in the international arena will be promoted.

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