



**32<sup>nd</sup> MEETING OF  
THE ECO REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL (RPC)**

**Report**

**January 17-26, 2022**

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) was organized in hybrid format from January 17-26, 2022. During the event, the relevant sectoral committees met to discuss and consider their specific areas as well as make appropriate recommendations to the RPC concerning the Work Program and Calendar of Events for 2022.

2. The delegations of the ECO Member States, including the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. Moreover, the Representatives of the Turkish Cypriot State and Energy Charter attended the Meeting in the capacity of Observers. The ECO Secretary General along with the Deputies Secretary General and other relevant staff of the Secretariat, as well as the Representatives of ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated Bodies also attended the Meeting. The list of participants is enclosed as Annexure.

### **Plenary Session**

#### **Agenda Item No.1** **Opening of the Meeting**

3. The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri while welcoming the participants highlighted the significance of RPC in consideration of its essentially important role of analyzing and evaluating the Organization's ongoing activities as well as considering and developing some new projects and programs to be implemented to shoulder, support and continue the regional development process. Referring to the situation emerged in the aftermath of COVID, he noted that it was highly exigent for the ECO to plow ahead with its cooperative agenda for the continuity of regional development process. Despite the post-pandemic challenges, the Organization managed to convene several important meetings in 2021, both in virtual/hybrid and physical formats. Moreover, the Secretary General congratulated the Republic of Uzbekistan for assuming the Organization's Chairmanship for 2022, assuring his complete support and cooperation to ensure the implementation of any initiatives by Uzbekistan which are aimed at maintaining and accelerating the Organization's performance for smooth socioeconomic progress in the region.

4. In citation of 25th COM, the Secretary General expressed his deep pleasure over the COM's approval for expansion of scope of small-sized projects to pre-feasibility/feasibility study projects. He added that the 25<sup>th</sup> COM also allowed the execution of 10 more small-sized projects each within the cost of US \$ 10,000, making the number of projects total 20 to be annually financed from General Reserve Fund (GRF). In addition, the COM desired the ECO to also focus on some mega and long-term projects, alongside carrying out the short term small and medium-sized projects, he intimated. The Secretary General considered that this would be quite supportive to broaden our view and policy for large-scale development in the region.

5. The Secretary General also briefed the Council on some of the ECO's sectoral activities made during 2021 that included the areas of trade and investment,

transport & communication, energy, minerals & environment, human resources & sustainable development, agriculture & industry, tourism etc. While appreciating that the Republic of Uzbekistan and the current ECO Chair came up with a proposal to adopt a regional programme on developing a safe tourism in the post-pandemic period at the 4th Tourism Ministerial Meeting in Bukhara during 2022, he encouraged the member countries for enhancing their efforts and contributions to achieve the tourism targets as envisaged in the ECO Vision 2025. His detailed statement is attached as Annexure.

6. In his inaugural remarks, the Chairman Mr. Ashraf Khodjaev, Director of the Department of Economic Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan welcomed the participants and thanked them for joining the Plenary Session of the 32<sup>nd</sup> RPC to consider, review and finalize the ECO's Work Program and Calendar of Events-2022. Expressing deep pleasure over the first-time assumption of ECO's Chairmanship by the Republic of Uzbekistan, he assured that his country is well-determined to effectively meet the assigned responsibility for further strengthening regional cooperation within the ECO framework.

7. Referring to the objectives of ECO Vision 2025, the Chairman underlined that Uzbekistan considers it fundamentally important to practically exploit the existing regional potential and the available opportunities for the shared progress and prosperity of the entire ECO Region, particularly, in the fields of trade, transport, energy, investment and tourism. He further stressed the importance for the fortification of trade and economic relations for the collective socioeconomic development in the region, including through the elimination of trade barriers, as well as consistent facilitation of trade procedures.

8. The Chairman noted that joint and coordinated actions were required to systematically restore the pre-pandemic conditions aimed at normalizing the trade, transport and other important activities which are pivotal for unwavering progress. He recalled that a number of proposals to contribute to the development of multilateral partnership were propounded by the honourable President of the Republic of Uzbekistan during 15<sup>th</sup> Summit, for ensuring sustainable socioeconomic progress in the ECO Region. In particular, the Uzbekistan side proposed the 2022 to be declared as the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity", he added. Copy of his statement is attached as Annexure.

#### **Agenda Item No. 2**

##### Election of the Chairman

9. As per ECO's rules and procedures, Mr. Ashraf Khodjaev, Director of the Department of Economic Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan was elected to chair the 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of RPC.

#### **Agenda Item No.3**

##### Adoption of the Agenda

10. The Council adopted the agenda of its meeting with unanimity.

#### **Agenda Item No. 4**

##### Statements by the Heads of Delegation on the implementation of the decisions of the 32<sup>nd</sup> RPC

11. The Heads of delegations of the ECO Member States delivered their statements in alphabetical order outlining their countries' policies and views on the programmes and activities of the Organization. They also highlighted the progress made on the implementation of the decisions taken by the 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of RPC. Copies of their statements are attached as Annexure.

12. The Heads of delegations of the Turkish Cypriot State and the Energy Charter also made their Statements as observers. Copies of their statements are attached as Annexure.

13. The Heads of delegations of the ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated Bodies submitted their statements/reports highlighting their activities and progress made since last RPC's meeting. Copies of their statements are attached as Annexure.

#### **Agenda Item No.5**

##### Report on the progress of implementation of the ECO approved programs/projects and consideration of proposals for new programs and projects for the year 2022

14. The Council took note of the progress on implementation of the ECO approved projects and programs, as well as proposals concerning some new programs and projects for 2022, which were discussed and addressed by the following Sectoral Committees:

- Trade and Investment
- Transport & Communications
- Energy, Minerals and Environment
- Agriculture and Industry
- Tourism
- Human Resources & Sustainable Development
- Judicial and Parliamentary Coordination and EAPA
- International Relations and ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies
- Economic Research and Statistics

15. The Council appreciated and thanked the Sectoral Committees and their Chairmen for effectively reviewing and addressing the existing and the proposed ECO projects and programs. While acknowledging the progress made on such activities despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, the Council encouraged the Secretariat to maintain and accelerate the pace of regional development process in coordination and collaboration with the ECO Member States.

#### **Agenda Item No. 6**

##### Endorsement of the draft outcomes

###### *i. Annual Work Programme- 2022*

16. Reviewing all Sectoral Work Programs developed by the Sectoral Committees during their Meetings, the Council endorsed the ECO Work Programme-2022 to be considered/approved by the COM. The same is placed at Annexure of this Report.

*ii. Calendar of Events- 2022*

17. Annual ECO Calendar of Events for 2022 finalized by the Sectoral Committees Meetings was also reviewed and endorsed by the Council for final consideration of approval by the COM, which is placed at Annexure of this Report.

18. The Council authorized the Secretariat to organize those of the meetings scheduled in the Calendar of Events 2022, for which no Member State volunteers to host.

19. The following delegates from the Member States chaired the meetings of the Sectoral Committees:

No.	COMMITTEE	CHAIRMAN
‘	Trade & Investment	Ms. Maria Kazi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Islamic Republic of Pakistan
‘	Transport & Communications	Mr. Sayfulllo Qodirov, Head of Department for International Relations, Ministry of Transport, Republic of Tajikistan
‘	Energy & Environment	Mr. Iman Rahmati, Manager of Economic Studies & Development Company, Ministry of Energy, Islamic Republic of Iran
‘	Agriculture & Industry	Mr. Ali Kiyani Rad, Head of the Research Institute for Planning, Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture Jihad, Islamic Republic of Iran
‘	Tourism	Mr. Kanan Firdovsioglu, Head of the Division of Cooperation with International Organizations, State Tourism Agency, Republic of Azerbaijan
‘	Human Resources & Sustainable Development	Mr. Gökten DAMAR, Expert, Presidency of Strategy and Budget, Republic of Turkey
‘	Judicial and Parliamentary Coordination and EAPA	Mr. Mansoor Agha Mohammadi, Senior Expert, Inspection Organization, Islamic Republic of Iran
‘	ECO Regional Institutions/ Specialized Agencies/ Affiliated/ Bodies International Relations	Mr. Erhan SIRT, Head of Multilateral Development Cooperation Department, Presidency of Strategy and Budget, Republic of Turkey
‘	Committee of Economic Research and Statistics	Ms. Gülüzar GÜLEÇ, Expert, Presidency of Strategy and Budget, Republic of Turkey

**Agenda Item No. 7**

Any other business

20. No issue was raised under this agenda item.

**Agenda Item No. 8**Date and venue of the next Meeting

21. The Council decided to organize the next (33<sup>rd</sup>) meeting of RPC on January 16- 19 January 2023 at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran, if no Member State volunteers to host the event.

**Agenda Item No. 9**Adoption of the Report of 32<sup>nd</sup> RPC Meeting

22. The Report of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council was unanimously adopted.

**Agenda Item No. 10**Closing

23. The **Chair** expressed his sincere appreciation and thanked the delegates for their active participation in the Meeting.

24. The Council appreciated and thanked the ECO Secretary General and his team for making necessary arrangements for successfully holding the meeting in hybrid format of the RPC and preparation of relevant documents.

25. The Council concluded the meeting with a vote of thanks to the Chair for managing the meeting in a proactive, smooth and efficient manner. The Council also acknowledged and thanked the Chairmen of various Sectoral Committees for successfully conducting their tasks.

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