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ECO CHRONICLE

ECO New Momentum on Environment

25 June 2014
Nairobi



ECO Enhanced Connectivity



1st ECO Meeting of
the High Level Working Group
of Communications
Regulatory Authorities
11-12 August 2014-Tehran



"ECO in Reform"

Since the last edition of the "ECO Chronicle" and following the 21st Meeting of its Council of Ministers in November 2014, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) has been involved in a range of activities of importance to the cause of regional economic cooperation. The ECO intergovernmental machinery and the Secretariat alike have re-acted responsibly to the call by the Council of Ministers for necessary fine-tuning in the Organization. The Organization is now in a process of reform to ensure that ECO, in line with regional and global developments, continues to fit its purpose. The reform process involves regulatory, institutional and other aspects of the Organization. The greater visibility and enhanced efficiency of the Organization and its machinery, as well as reinforcing ECO's *raison d'être* are among objectives the reform process pursues. It is very fortunate that this yet ongoing reform process has already yielded some promising results.

The orthodox mantra of "three main priority areas of ECO" is now re-composed to include other areas of priority with real impact on the Region and the Member States. For instance, ECO is now more credibly involved in addressing wider environmental challenges than ever before, which is necessary while pursuing the sustainable development of the region. ECO Ministers of Environment convened, for the first time, their meeting in Nairobi, on the sidelines of the United Nations Environment Assembly in June this year, where expanded environmental agenda for ECO as well as enhanced ECO-UNEP cooperation were discussed. Also, our Organization is now more committed to address the imminent threat of natural disasters in the Region with their huge potential loss for economic and social development of the Region and the Member States. The recent ECO Conference on disaster risk reduction in Gabala, Republic of Azerbaijan generated strong momentum in ECO to give natural disasters serious attention they deserve through cooperation and partnership within and outside the Region. A follow-up process for partnership on disaster risk mitigation with relevant international agencies has since been started.

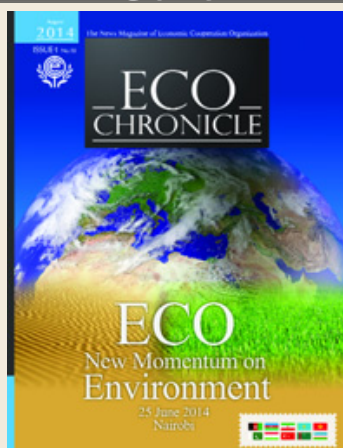
Another important development is the way ECO is weighted by the international community. The role of ECO as a unique inter-governmental platform covering countries from Central Asia, Caucasus, South and West Asia is now more acknowledged by outsiders. Recent expansion of ECO external relations clearly attests to this promising enhanced visibility of ECO. ECO and its comparative advantages as a regional partner for global agendas are now much more visible as clearly illustrated in this edition of ECO Chronicle. More promising developments are expected ahead as ECO Member States ensure their continued support to the Organization and its evolving agenda.

Dr. Shamil Aleskerov
Secretary General

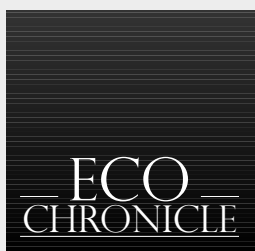
S. Aleskerov

In The Name Of God

Cover



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Eid ul-Fitr Greetings
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 Ruza Eid Kabyl Bolsyn
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 Ozaa baýramy
 Ramazon hayitingiz muborak bo'lsin
 Idi mohi Sharifi Ramazon muborak
 اختردی مبارک شه
 С Праздником Разговения



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ECO
CHRONICLE

The 24th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) was held on 23-26 February 2014 at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran. The Meeting was attended by delegations from technical and planning ministries of the ECO Member States as well as representatives from ECO specialized agencies, regional institutions and affiliated bodies such as ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Science Foundation, ECO Educational Institute, ECO Trade & Development Bank, ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ECO College of Insurance, ECO Regional Coordination Center for implementation of the ECO Regional Programme for Food Security and ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology.

At the opening session of the Council, the ECO Secretary General H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov presented a comprehensive report on the main activities of the Organization during 2013. He apprised the Meeting about the progress achieved by the Organization in various areas as well as the challenges ahead, which require special attention by the ECO Member States. He underscored the need to implement the directives of the decision-making

ECO Planning Council in Tehran



bodies to enhance regional cooperation in ECO region.

The Meeting was inaugurated by His Excellency Dr. Seyed Abbas Araghchi, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the

Islamic Republic of Iran. In his inaugural address, Dr. Araghchi expressed hope that the Meeting will help in initiating result-oriented activities, compatible with the available resources and the priorities of the Member States which would in return increase the overall efficiency and performance of the Organization. While highlighting the importance of the geographical location of ECO region, he stated that the ECO can utilize its immense potential to promote regional cooperation and integration.

Under the chairmanship of Ambassador Majid Bizmark of the Islamic Republic of Iran and assisted by 8 preparatory review committees, the Council discussed different issues related to the envisaged future programme of ECO and adopted its final Report focusing on the work programme of the Organization for 2014-2015 as well as list of meetings to be organized by the Organization. There was also a brainstorming meeting on the ongoing ECO reform process where heads of delegation and the

Secretary General and his team discussed ways and means to conduct the mandated reform as well as the implementation of the recommendations made by ECO Eminent Persons Group (EPG). ■

4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy

ECO
CHRONICLE

The 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy was held on 22-23 May 2014 in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan. It was attended by Ministers and high level representatives of Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Republic of Uzbekistan. The ECO Secretary General and the presidents of the Islamic Development Bank and the ECO Trade and Development Bank also attended the Meeting. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Bakhyt Sultanov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of

Republic of Kazakhstan.

In his address, H.E. Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov, the ECO Secretary General, presented an overview of the ECO cooperation in Finance and Economy. He said that the two decades of economic cooperation of the Member States have laid strong foundations for the realization of goals and objectives of ECO, as envisaged in Treaty of Izmir. He underlined the need for building on those foundations by putting into effect the agreed legal instruments, increasing the effectiveness of the institutional mechanism and undertaking joint projects.

The Ministerial Meeting provided strategic guidelines and took important

decisions for strengthening cooperation among ECO Member States in various areas pertaining to finance and economy, including trade, investment, banking, customs, taxation and re-insurance. The Meeting also adopted the "Astana Declaration" embodying the Member States' commitment to jointly respond to regional and global economic challenges. The ECO Secretary General, along with the heads of other intergovernmental organizations also attended the "VII Astana Economic Forum" where world leaders and representatives of business and academic communities discussed possible solutions for challenges international community is facing. ■

ECO

Ministerial Meeting on Environment in Nairobi

ECO CHRONICLE The "ECO Consultative Ministerial Meeting on Environment" was held on 25 June 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya on the sidelines of the "United Nations Environment Assembly" (UNEA). The Meeting was attended by the Ministers/High Level Officials from the ECO Member States as well as a delegation from the ECO Secretariat. Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) also attended the Meeting.



The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Dr. Ma'soumeh Ebtekar, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Head of Department of Environment. In her opening remarks, the Chairperson considered the UNEA meeting in Nairobi as an opportunity for ECO Member States to discuss the common regional strategy on environment. She emphasized on the need for implementation of ECO plans of action on environment, including the current "ECO Plan of Action on Environmental Protection and Global warming 2011-2015" and highlighted also the need for revisiting them in the light of new developments at the regional and global levels. The Chairperson also referred to the cross-sectoral nature of environment and called for proper approach to environment within ECO.

While emphasizing on sharing the experiences and knowledge among ECO Member States, the Chairperson called for enhanced relations and cooperation among ECO and international organizations, including UNEP and requested UNEP to expand its support to ECO.

In his statement, ECO Deputy Secretary General briefed the ECO Ministerial Meeting on the state of play of ECO cooperation on environment and underlined the imperative of environment for ECO as an Organization dealing with economic cooperation and requested the Ministerial Meeting to give new momentum from policy perspective to the ECO profile on envi-



ronment. He also referred to the timeliness of this ECO ministerial consultation on the sidelines of the UNEA and considered it as an opportunity to both upgrade ECO visibility at the international level and link up its regional prospects with global trends.

Mr. Achim Steiner, UNEP Executive Director, praised ECO and its individual member states for their active and pioneer role in environment and ensured the ECO Ministers of continued support and advisory services to ECO by UNEP. He highlighted the complementary role of agreed global context for national and regional programmes on environment and called for ECO support to UNEA meeting.

The Ministers/Heads of delegation of ECO Member States in their statements informed the Meeting about the current status of environment in their countries and shared their views on the possible ways of enhancing regional cooperation on environment and instructed the ECO Secretariat to undertake necessary measures to conduct a study on the "State of Environment (SoE) for ECO Region, to define, in collaboration with relevant international bodies, a sound and synergic ECO regional approach to "green economy", to continue to expand its outreach through enhanced cooperation/partnerships with relevant international organizations, particularly UNEP, to address natural disasters in ECO Region from environmental impacts perspective, to explore the possible collaboration with UNFCCC to develop a regional ECO Strategy on combating climate change, and to explore possible ways to establish permanent contact with UNEP Secretariat. The ECO Environment Ministers also requested the ECO Council of Foreign Ministers to designate

"Environment" as a cross-sectoral priority of the Organization to be seriously considered by all ECO activities and events on different issues and at different levels. The Ministers decided to have their 5th regular meeting in Istanbul in October 2014. ■



2nd Meeting of ECO Heads of Surveying & Mapping Organizations



The 2nd Meeting of ECO Heads of Surveying and Mapping Organizations was held on 8-9 May 2014 in Ankara. The Meeting was organized as a follow-up to discuss the initiatives and decisions taken at the first Meeting of ECO Heads of Surveying and Mapping Organizations in 2011.

During the Meeting, the mapping and surveying authorities of the ECO Member States along with their technical teams shared their views and experiences on the latest developments and technologies of the field and discussed the possible measures to expand regional cooperation among ECO countries in surveying and mapping, including the cadastral ones. The participants especially emphasized the key and undeniable role of mapping and surveying in the overall context of eco-

nommic development of the individual countries and the Region as a whole. They also expressed their readiness and interest to contribute to the ECO sectoral cooperation frameworks. The participants also visited the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre of Republic of Turkey and got acquainted with its capacities and achievements in technical related matters. ■



ECO Secretariat Hosts the UN Workshop on Forest Financing



The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Secretariat and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) co-organized the "Tehran Workshop on Harnessing Climate Change Financing for Sustainable Forest Management in the ECO Region" from 29 April-1 May 2014 in Tehran. The representatives of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as representatives from UN Forum on Forest Secretariat, UNDP, FAO, "Secretariat of Low Forest Cover Countries" (LFCCs) and "ECO Institute for



Environmental Science and Technology" also attended the Workshop. Following extensive discussions and series of national, regional

and global presentations, the Workshop was concluded on the common understanding on possible joint actions. The Workshop agreed on range of key actions to be implemented by United Nations, ECO and other stakeholders to ensure proportionate financial resources, from existing global ones, for the sustainable forest management in the ECO Region. Establishment of a "joint inter-agency group" with the participation of the UN, ECO, FAO, Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other relevant regional and global stakeholders was among the recommendations of the Workshop. Tehran

workshop was the first UN regional workshop on the topic.

Two more regional workshops will be organized by UN in Africa and the Pacific region. ■



7th ECO International Conference on Disaster Risk Management



ECO CHRONICLE The 7th ECO International Conference on Disaster Risk Management was held on 4-5 June 2014 in Gabala, Republic of Azerbaijan. The Conference, organized by the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Republic of Azerbaijan in collabora-

tion with the ECO Secretariat, was attended by high level delegations from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan. The representatives from interested regional/international organizations and UN bodies, including UNISDR, UNOCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCAP, GIZ and THW from Germany, JICA from Japan, ECO-RCRM, Central Asian Institute of Applied Geosciences, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center, Asian Disaster Reduction Center and International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology also participated in the Event.

Participants in this two-day Conference explored areas of enhanced regional cooperation/exchange of best practices in management, prevention and elimination of disaster emergency situations. The Conference adopted series of recommendations on regional cooperation and mechanisms for addressing disasters as a crosscutting and complex development issue.

In the course of the Conference, and given the interest shown by the regional and international organizations, the need for ECO partnership with relevant international agencies and bodies on disaster reduction measures was also emphasized and follow up steps were accordingly discussed and decided.

The 8th ECO International Conference on Disaster Risk Management will be hosted by Republic of Turkey in 2015. ■



Foreign Secretary of Pakistan Visits ECO Secretariat

ECO CHRONICLE On 28 April 2014, the Foreign Secretary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Aziaz Ahmad Chaudhry, accompanied by the Pakistani Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Noor Mohammad Jadmani, visited the ECO Secretariat and met with ECO Secretary General, Dr. Shamil Aleskerov. At the outset, ECO Secretary General presented a brief overview of ECO performance and activities in different fields and highlighted some information about the ECO flagship agreements and activities. He also briefed the Pakistani Foreign Secretary on the ongoing reform process in the Organization and gave some concrete examples of steps to be taken in the near future. He also expressed Secretariat's readiness to cooperate with Pakistan in preparation of the 22nd meeting of ECO Council of Ministers and 13th ECO Summit to be held in Islamabad, Pakistan later this year. The Foreign Secretary of Pakistan acknowledged the important role of ECO and the regional economic cooperation for the Member States and the whole Region. He also ensured ECO Secretary General on continued support of Pakistan for ECO and its activities. ■

New Kyrgyz Ambassador Visits ECO Secretariat



ECO
CHRONICLE

The new Kyrgyz Permanent Representative to ECO Ambassador Asanbek Osmonaliev paid a visit to the ECO Secretariat on 6 May 2014 and presented his credentials to the ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov.

The ECO Secretary General congratulated the Ambassador on his new assignment as his country's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Permanent Representative to the Economic Cooperation Organization.

He also expressed his appreciation for the role played by Kyrgyz Republic in the ECO activities.

The Kyrgyz Ambassador in return expressed his readiness to continue and enhance support by Kyrgyz Republic towards ECO and its activities. During the Meeting, the two sides also discussed a number of issues of mutual interest and the ways and means to enhance ECO's role in the Region. ■

ECO Secretary General Meets with Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

ECO
CHRONICLE

On April
08, 2014 the

ECO Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov paid a formal visit to the Department of Environment (DoE) of the Islamic Republic of Iran and met with H.E. Dr. Masoumeh Ebtekar, Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Head of DoE. During the Meeting, ECO Secretary General underscored that for



an organization like ECO whose ultimate goal is the sustainable development of the countries and the people of the Region, environment deserves particular attention and careful planning. He further briefed the high dignitary about the Organization and its various environmental activities, including upcoming ECO events, the ongoing projects and the institutional capacity of ECO in the field of environment. He also appraised positively the contribution by the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO IEST) to the overall ECO environmental profile. The Secretary General sought the continued support of the Islamic Republic of Iran to ECO environmental activities.

While appreciating the activities done by the ECO Secretariat, H.E. Dr. Ma'soumeh Ebtekar elaborated on the new emerging environmental challenges at the global level that necessitated the environmental governance. She further referred to the huge environmental impacts on the economy and economic development and emphasized on the imperative of the prioritization of the activities within the ECO. She also proposed that a State of Environment (SoE) study for ECO region may be conducted which can serve as the basis for any future ECO plan of action on environment. She also stressed on the need for putting environmental matters on the agenda of other ECO ministerial meetings on trade, transport, energy, agriculture, etc. Both sides agreed that the upcoming ECO environmental events, including the ministerial meeting in Nairobi would serve as a suitable platform to elaborate further the future of the environmental cooperation within ECO Region. ■

ECO CHRONICLE On 2nd March 2014, the third Meeting of the Tripartite Coordination Committee (TCC) on Construction of Railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran was held in Tehran.

The Meeting reviewed the main progress in the construction works of the railway segments in the territories of the enroute Member States. Iranian Segment with total length of 92 km (including additional lines) has been constructed according to the UIC standards and was officially inaugurated during May 2013. The bridge at the border point of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan is

Tripartite Committee on Construction of ECO Railway Project

to be constructed by Turkmenistan.

The segment in Kazakhstan has been completed with total length of 146 km. Kazakhstan has also completed the construction of infrastructure of Bolashak Border Station and crossing points. Following the opening of

crossing point with Turkmenistan, approximately 400,000 tons of cargo, has been transported along this corridor. In Turkmenistan, the segment from Border of Kazakhstan up to the Bereket has been completed including through construction of 16 stations and locomotive depo (equipped with technical facilities). From Bereket to Atrek 256 km of the main line has been completed and only 32 km out of this segment has been left over, which will be completed by

September/October, 2014. The Meeting also agreed to inaugurate operation of the train along this route at the same time when the remaining construction segment of 32 km (Atrek-Bereket) is completed. ■

High Level Working Group on Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul Container Train

ECO CHRONICLE The 8th High Level Working Group (HLWG) Meeting of the ECO Container Train on Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul route (ITI) was held on 4 March 2014 in Tehran to address the issues and obstacles for smooth and regular operation of the train. The ECO ITI Container Train (6543 km) started its scheduled and regular operation on 2 August 2010. So far 29 operations have been executed along this route. In the course of talks between the participating countries, Pakistan agreed to curtail the total travel time from 10 to 8 days. The travel time of the train in Iran and Turkey remained as 4 and 3.5 days respectively. Iran agreed to reduce its tariff rates to the level of Pakistan and Turkey. Since Pakistan has acceded to COTIF as of September 2013, the



application of consignment note (CIM) would be possible along the whole route.

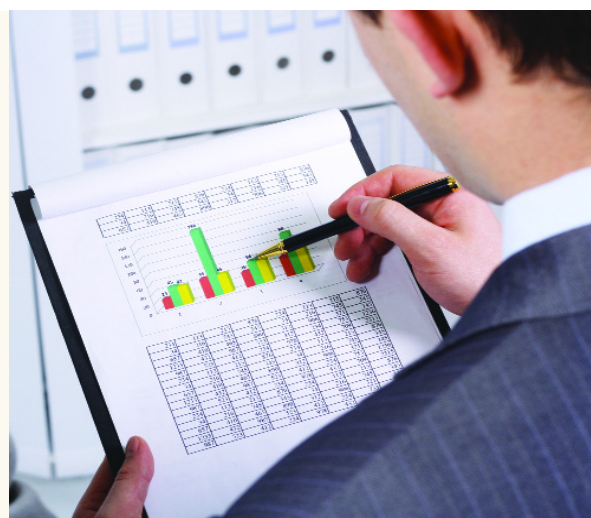
The Meeting also discussed in details marketing arrangements for the train and the recent developments and measures in this regard. Pakistan informed the Meeting that they will dispatch the train to Turkey in 2014. ■

Second Meeting of ECO Coordination Committee on Industrial Property Rights



ECO CHRONICLE The second meeting of "ECO Coordination Committee on Industrial Property Rights" was held on 16 June 2014 in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan. The Meeting was co-organized by host authority, State Committee for Standardization, Metrology and Patent of Republic of Azerbaijan (Azpatent) and the ECO Secretariat. Delegates from Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and the ECO Secretariat attended the Event. During the Meeting participating delegations introduced the institutional and regulatory structures and activities of their national organizations in charge of industrial property rights and expressed their interest for regional cooperation in this important field. The ECO Secretariat also presented a progress report on the activities regarding implementation of the respective ECO Action Plan and relevant decisions.

The Meeting further reviewed the latest international and regional trends and discussed the priority areas for future course of action. The third Meeting of the Committee will be hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2015. ■



ECO Experts Meeting on Tax Cooperation

ECO CHRONICLE The First ECO Meeting of Experts of Tax Administrations was held on 26-28 May 2014 in Tehran.

The Meeting was attended by delegations of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Turkey.

The Meeting discussed and finalized the three draft documents for consideration by the Second Meeting of ECO Heads of Tax Administration (to be held in 2014) with a view to strengthening cooperation among Member States in the area of taxation, namely, "Charter of the ECO Tax Administration Cooperation Society (ECOTAX)", "ECO Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Taxation and Related Matters", and "Agreement on the Exchange of Information in Tax Matters among ECO Member States". ■

ECO Workshop on "Drug Registration and Counterfeit Medicines"



The ECO Workshop on "Drug Registration and Licensing, Counterfeit Medicines and Good Manufacturing Practices" was held on 8-9 May 2014 in Ankara.

The event, organized by the Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency (TDMDA) in cooperation with the ECO Secretariat, was attended by delegations from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Turkey.

In the two-day workshop, participants were briefed about the activities and structure of the "Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency", particularly as relate to drug registration and licensing, counterfeit medicines and good manufacturing practices.

The representatives of other Member States also presented information on the structure and profile of their relevant bodies responsible for drug manufacturing, registration and licensing as well as counterfeit medicines. The Workshop concluded its meeting with some recommendations for future course of action in the ECO Region.

The participants also visited the "Turkish National Reference Laboratory" where a briefing, depicting its history, laboratory capacity as well as organizational charter was presented. ■

Workshop on Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology

The ECO workshop on "Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology", organized by the Turkish Standards Institution (TSE) in cooperation with the ECO Secretariat was held in Izmir on 10-11 February 2014.

The Workshop included 3 sessions on "Standardization", "Conformity Assessment" and "Accreditation" jointly conducted by Iranian and Turkish delegations.

During the Workshop the participants from ECO Member States became familiar with the latest developments in the fields of standardization, conformity assessment and accreditation within the ECO Region.

Representatives of Turkish Standard Institute (TSE), Institute of Standards & Industrial Research of Iran (ISIRI), Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK), as well as participants from Afghanistan and Kyrgyz Republic made presentations on the topics of the workshop.

The ECO Secretariat also made a presentation on areas of cooperation as well as the state of play of Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology (RISCAM) and highlighted the importance of standardization, conformity assessment, accreditation and metrology as the basic preconditions for expansion of trade relations in the Region. ■



The 2nd Meeting of the Editorial Board of ECO Economic Journal was held on 26 April 2014 in Baku.

The high ranking academic members of the Board participated in the Meeting. Mrs. Sevinc Hasanova, the Deputy Minister of Economy and Industry of Republic of Azerbaijan while highlighting the key importance of ECO briefed the participants on the accelerating trends of economic exchanges between Republic of Azerbaijan and other economies in the ECO Region.

She further emphasized the dynamism of the ECO Economic Journal as it sets theoretical framework for prospective sustainable economic growth in the Region.

During the Meeting, the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal (representative of Republic of Azerbaijan) presented a conceptual framework for the Journal

2nd Meeting of ECO Economic Journal Editorial Board

followed by presentations by Board vice-presidents (representatives of Kazakhstan and Pakistan) on the thematic layout of the forthcoming issue of the Journal, as well as the proposed plan on its global ranking.

The other Board Members also provided detailed overview of their own work during the period of 2013-2014.

The participants agreed that the Journal, apart from providing a theoretical foundation for the Region's economic growth, should upgrade "ECO visibility, efficiency, and dynamism", in pursuit of decisions of 21st Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers.

The Board also concluded that it will select the best academic thoughts from the pool of papers, to be brainstormed at ECO Economic Forum in October 2014, and will consolidate them in the 5th issue of the Journal, which will seek international indexing.

The Board also decided to invite Nobel Prize Laureates in economics to the "ECO Economic Forum-2014". Turkey was assigned to develop a Five Year Plan of Action for the Journal (2015-2020). ■



ECO Regional Training Workshop on Practical Modeling



The first "ECO Regional Training Workshop on Practical Modeling with GAMS" was conducted on 21-25 April 2014 in Baku.

The primary objective of the

Workshop, co-organized by ECO, EcoMod, and ISRER (Institute for Scientific Research on Economic Reforms of Republic of Azerbaijan), was to provide hands-on training to expert economists from the ECO

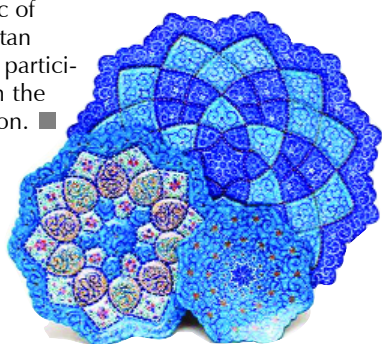
Member States on utilizing modern economic modeling tools, needed for economic systems analysis. Participants from ECO Member States were also become acquainted with practical skills necessary for using EcoMod 1 to 7. ■



First ECO Handicrafts Exhibition

ECO CHRONICLE The first "ECO Handicrafts Exhibition" was held in Tehran from 9 to 15 June 2014 on the sidelines of the "24th International Handicrafts Exhibition".

The Exhibition was organized and hosted by "Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization" (ICHTO) in collaboration with the ECO Secretariat. Six ECO Member States, namely, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Republic of Uzbekistan actively participated in the Exhibition. ■



ECO Regional Training Workshop on Project Assessment and Evaluation

ECO CHRONICLE The regional training workshop for the ECO Member States on "Project Assessment and Evaluation" was held on 12-16 May 2014 in Ankara. It was the fourth in the series of the training programs on project management and implementation, where the representatives from ECO Member States were provided with in-depth and comprehensive knowledge on project assessment and evaluation, specifically on methodologies, techniques, norms, and standards, practiced by ECO, IRTI, IDB, SESRIC, and COMCEC. Likewise, the trainees were updated on project assessment and evaluation practices of World Bank, IMF and IDA as the policy relevant and applicable for ECO and IDB. The trainees also learned the ways to conceptualize the system of integration of all project activities, and how to execute project integration, in compliance with internationally standardized project assessment and evaluation methodologies, techniques, norms and standards.

The Workshop was hosted by the Social Economic and Statistical Research Islamic Center (SESRIC) of Islamic Cooperation Organization (OIC). ECO Secretariat and the Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI) of IDB were also involved in co-organization of the Workshop.

This fourth regional training workshop was the first step towards the setting up of a much needed link between the Project Implementation Units (PIUs) in the ECO Member States, and project coordination processes at the ECO Secretariat, as mandated by the 24th meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC). Most importantly, the trainings seem to kick-start the process of creating the necessary grass-root level support for project management and implementation in the Member States for clear objectives of prospective automation of project operations in the ECO region.

With this fourth regional workshop and in the period 2010-2014, the total of 76 training sessions have been conducted in ECO covering the details relating to integral components of the project management and implementation within the entire "Project Cycle". ■

Visit by Ambassador of China to ECO Secretariat



ECO
CHRONICLE

Chinese Ambassador in Tehran, H.E. Mr. Yu Hongyang, visited the ECO Secretariat on 17 February 2014 and was welcomed by the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov. During the meeting, the ECO Secretary General briefed Ambassador Hongyang about the Economic Cooperation Organization and its areas of activity as well as the main initiatives pursued by ECO in various sectors.

Ambassador of the People's Republic of China expressed interest in the activities and projects of ECO in different sectors and as well as willingness to promote cooperation between the ECO Region and China, especially in the trade and transport sectors. He also informed the ECO Secretary General about President Xi Jinping's strategic vision to develop a Silk Road economic belt with the

Chinese
Ambassador in

Central Asian countries, which aims to connect East, West and South Asia and promote trade and investment in the region. He also handed over a letter by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China to the Secretary General, inviting ECO to participate in the Fourth Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Shanghai. The ECO Secretary General emphasized the importance of the role being played by CICA for promoting security dialogue and trust in Asia and for fostering cooperation in other areas as well. In the light of the Memorandum of Understanding between ECO and CICA signed in 2008, the Secretary General mentioned that ECO attaches great significance to its cooperative relationship with CICA. ■

German Ambassador visits ECO Secretariat

ECO
CHRONICLE

H.E. Mr. Michael Von Ungern-Sternberg, the German Ambassador in Tehran paid a formal visit to the ECO Secretariat on 15 May 2014 and was received by the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Ambassador Shamil



Aleskerov. At the beginning of the meeting, the ECO Secretary General briefed the Ambassador about ECO activities and performance as one of the largest regional bloc in the world.

He also informed Ambassador on the latest developments as regard the ECO-EU project on "drugs trafficking from/to Afghanistan", which is now being implemented through partnership with international partners. He further appreciated the role played by German GIZ as the technical coordinator of this project. ECO Secretary General also informed the



Ambassador about the potential areas where new partnerships may be considered with a view to assisting ECO Member States and the Region as a whole.

German Ambassador in Tehran also presented a brief introduction on its government activities

and interests in the Region and supported any effort to upgrade ECO-EU cooperation.

He also highlighted the importance of regional ownership for the envisaged partnerships with outside world and expressed hope that individual members of the European Union, including Germany, consider ECO comparative advantage for their activities within the Region. Two sides agreed to continue bilateral contact with a view to preparing the ground for enhanced cooperation. ■

ECO & UNIDO Sign Agreement

ECO
CHRONICLE

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) signed on 18 March 2014 a technical assistance agreement to upgrade quality policy formulation infrastructure in the ECO region.

The agreement was signed by ECO Secretary-General

Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov and UNIDO Director General, Li Yong in Vienna, Austria. The agreement, which aims to develop a Regional Quality Policy Framework for ECO and guidance documents for ECO Member States to formulate National Quality Policies, will be instrumental in upgrading the capacity of the ECO Member States' standardization and quality control institutions, removing non-tariff barriers (NTBs) as well as in increasing intra-regional and global trade of ECO Member States, thus boosting regional economic integration.

The ECO-UNIDO Quality Policy Formulation Project will be co-funded by ECO and UNIDO and will be implemented over three years. Under the project, workshops and expert group meetings will be held and Master Trainers from Member States will be trained.

The Project will also contribute to the accession of ECO Member States to the WTO and the implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA).

The current cooperation agreement marks the continuation of cooperation between ECO and UNIDO, which started in 2007 when the two organizations began joint training activities and institutional capacity building to strengthen quality infrastructure, and harmonize regional standards, metrology and testing practices.

On the occasion of the signing ceremony, ECO Secretary-General Shamil Aleskerov said that "a Regional Quality policy will provide ECO Member States with a framework for the development of quality infrastructure and services not only to boost global and intra-regional trade, but also to contribute to the cooperation and enhancement of sustainable economic and social development in the ECO region."

UNIDO Director General Li Yong stated "UNIDO is keen to expand its cooperation with ECO, a region that has a lot of potential for industrial and economic development, with trade as an important engine of growth and prosperity." ■



ECO and UNISDR Discuss Cooperation

ECO
CHRONICLE

Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) discussed the areas of enhanced cooperation on disasters-related issues on 12 June 2014. In a meeting in the UNISDR office in Geneva, Mrs. Margareta Wahlström, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Disaster Risk Reduction and the ECO Deputy Secretary General Mr. Seyed Jalaedin Alavi Sabzevari discussed the state of play of bilateral cooperation since conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding in 2007.

In the meeting, the ECO Deputy Secretary General presented a brief report on the recent ECO activities in the areas relating to the disasters and on the very recent "7th ECO International Conference on Disaster Risk Management" in Gabala, Republic of Azerbaijan.

While acknowledging the imperative of disaster risk reduction for ECO region as one of the disaster-prone regions in the world, the UN Special Representative emphasized the need for giving the priority to the risk reduction where monitoring and reporting systems at the national levels play important roles. She highlighted the role regional organizations such as ECO can play in this regard. Mrs. Wahlström also referred to the ongoing preparatory process for the next UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (March 2015, Sendai Japan) which also entails regional components. She proposed that ECO, as a regional arrangement for economic cooperation, may also work on the economic impacts of disasters. The two sides agreed to continue coordination for better cooperation. ■

ECO and GIZ Examine Expanded Cooperation

ECO CHRONICLE During a visit by ECO Deputy Secretary General to Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) headquarters in Eschborn, Germany, the two sides discussed the potential areas for further cooperation.

ECO and GIZ are currently cooperating in the context of a project funded by European Union addressing illicit trafficking from/to Afghanistan. In a meeting with GIZ officials in charge of Caucasus and Central Asian region on 16 April 2014, the ECO Deputy Secretary General presented an overview of ECO performance in different areas and highlighted some areas for potential cooperation with GIZ.

The GIZ officials in return acknowledged the important role of ECO in the Region and expressed interest to consider enhanced cooperation with ECO.

The two sides agreed that a GIZ delegation may visit ECO Secretariat in order to develop possible framework for cooperation among two organizations. ■

ECO Secretary General Meets UN-Habitat Representative in Tehran

ECO CHRONICLE ECO Secretary General H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov received Mr. Siamak Moghaddam, the new Representative of the "United Nations Human Settlements Programme" (UN-Habitat) in Tehran on 10 June 2014 where the two sides reviewed the existing cooperation between two organizations and discussed the possible areas of further cooperation.

At the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Moghaddam briefed the Secretary General on activities of the UN-Habitat office in Tehran, including improving urban governance, reducing urban poverty and managing disaster mitigation in the region. He further explained about activities of UN-Habitat regarding the urbanization as engine for growth.

He also acknowledged ECO as proper framework to enhance cooperation in the Region with a view to mitigating disaster and enhancing capacity in addressing all kinds of disasters in the ECO Member States. Mr. Moghaddam also highlighted the importance of cooperation on a joint project titled "The State of the ECO-Region Cities 2015: Cities at

Risk".

Referring to the core ECO activities in disaster risk management and joint activities of ECO and UN-Habitat, Ambassador Alaskerov expressed readiness to expand cooperation between the two organizations especially in disaster risk reduction in a result oriented and tangible manner.

The Secretary General informed the UN-Habitat Representative in Tehran of the 7th ECO International Conference on Disaster Risk Management in Gabala, Republic of Azerbaijan which was attended by some regional/international organizations and UN Bodies.

He emphasized that cooperation between ECO and UN-Habitat has already been started and we need to explore the financial support for enhancing cooperation and implementing joint projects.

Both sides agreed to collaborate on addressing disasters in the ECO Region as a high priority. The two organizations will soon develop outline for future cooperation based on the outcomes of the previous activities. ■



ECO & IRU Discuss Ways for Enhancing Cooperation



ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of "International Road Union" (IRU), H.E. Mr. Umberto de Pretto de Pretto, accompanied by a high level delegation visited the ECO secretariat on 20 January 2014 and met the ECO Secretary General and the concerned ECO Secretariat's senior staff. The ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov while welcoming the IRU Secretary General and appreciating the IRU's support and contribution to the ECO activities underlined the importance of this Meeting for achieving the aims and objectives of both organizations and shared with IRU delegation some priority areas of cooperation.

He further emphasized the significance of cooperation in the fields of transport and communications. The IRU Secretary General appreciated the efforts of ECO Secretary General and the ECO Secretariat for having an excellent record and a forward-looking strategy.

The visit also provided an excellent opportunity for exchanging views to expedite the implementation of various ECO projects.

Increasing role of cooperation of ECO with multilateral organizations was highlighted during the Meeting and various important issues were discussed. The IRU delegation expressed their readiness to support ECO projects and to help in capacity building and other joint activities in future. The two sides also deliberated upon the current status of the ongoing projects and activities between the two organizations and discussed the ways and means to enhance mutual cooperation, including through organization of the 3rd Regional Conference on TIR Convention, joint measures for pre-feasibility studies on ITI and KTAI Corridors, technical assistance to Afghanistan for utilizing TIR Carnets, organizing awareness workshops on TIR in Pakistan, implementation of TIR Pilot Project on ITI Road Corridor, technical assistance for developing the EPD and Green Lane, preparing the concept paper for the prefeasibility study for application of IRU Model High Initiative (MHI), road safety and security initiative, and participation in the UNECE WP30 meetings. ■

ECO and UNEP

Explore Further Cooperation

ECO CHRONICLE The ECO delegation headed by Deputy Secretary General attended the high level segment of the first "United Nations Environment Assembly" on 26 and 27 June 2014 in Nairobi. On the sidelines of the Assembly, the ECO delegation also visited the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and held bilateral talks with UNEP officials on the future cooperation. In his different meetings in the UNEP premises



es in Nairobi, ECO Deputy Secretary General briefed the UNEP officials about the ECO environmental profile and expressed readiness to help UNEP implement its agenda in the ECO Region and its Member States. He also referred to the mandate by the ECO Ministers and requested UNEP to prepare a "State of Environment" (SoE) Report for the ECO Region which would serve as the basis for any ECO plan of action in the future. He also requested UNEP to recognize "ECO Region" in UNEP studies and publications, including in the "Global Environment Outlook". In return, UNEP officials showed interest to expand the existing cooperation to address areas and challenges such as forest and biodiversity; sustainable consumption and production patterns; dust storms, air quality and air pollution; green industries; sustainable cities and construction; and sustainable transport. The two sides agreed to continue contacts with a view to developing a new framework for cooperation. ■

Secretary General of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Visits ECO Secretariat

ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), H.E. Mr. Dmitry Fedorovich Mezentsev, visited the ECO Secretariat on 27 February 2014 and was received by the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov. During the meeting, the SCO Secretary General was given a detailed briefing about the Economic Cooperation Organization and its activities in various key areas including transport, trade, energy, environment and drugs control. The ECO Secretary General noted the increasingly important role being played by SCO at regional and global levels and acknowledged its active contribution to the cause of promoting regional peace, stability and development. In view of the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the two sides, the ECO Secretary General underlined the significance attached by ECO to its interaction with SCO.

The SCO Secretary General appreciated the initiatives launched by ECO in different sectors aimed at promoting economic cooperation and regional integration among the member states. Taking note of the overlapping membership and convergence in objectives of the two organizations, the two sides stressed on the need to adopt necessary measures to further develop and enhance cooperation between the two organizations in the coming period. ■



ECO Secretary General attends CICA Summit

ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov represented the Organization at the 4th Summit of the "Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia" (CICA), held in Shanghai, China on 21 May 2014. In his statement delivered during the Summit, the ECO Secretary General stressed the importance of security and stability for the development of the Asian region and acknowledged the contribution of the CICA for the promotion of dialogue, cooperation and common prosperity of the countries in Asia and expressed the readiness of the Economic Cooperation Organization to work closely with CICA for promoting cooperation in the areas of mutual interest. The Secretary General also highlighted recent developments in the ECO region, including in the areas of trade, transport, food security and drugs control. ■



Japan Chargé d'affaires Visits ECO Secretariat

ECO CHRONICLE The Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of Japan in Tehran, Mr. Akira Chiba visited the ECO Secretariat on 2 March 2014 and was received by ECO Secretary General, Shamil Aleskerov.

Dr. Aleskerov welcomed the Japanese delegation and made brief introductory remarks on the ECO and its activities in various spheres. The Secretary General highlighted the importance of ECO in view of its geographical location and the advantages and opportunities it enjoys as compared to its neighbouring regional blocs. He also addressed some of the challenges being faced by the Organization.

The Secretary General also expressed interest in developing cooperative relations between ECO and Japan for implementation of

projects in a number of key fields.

Mr. Chiba in return expressed the willingness of his Government to explore the areas of possible cooperation and partnership between the two sides.

He enumerated some areas where Japan is actively supporting the countries of the Region, notably Afghanistan, including in drugs control and human capital building. He raised the possibility of adopting a multilateral approach for coordinating these measures through ECO. The two sides reiterated their interest to explore areas in which cooperation between ECO and Japan can be established with a view to helping ECO and Japan fulfill their development-related programmes in the Region and agreed to maintain contacts and to exchange further information. ■



ECO Secretary General Meets Delegation of Turkish Cypriot State



ECO CHRONICLE ECO Secretary General H.E.

Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov on 25 February 2014 received a delegation led by Ambassador Oktay Öztürk from Turkish Cypriot State (TCS). The TCS delegation informed Secretary General about the current economic situation and the most developed economic sectors in Turkish Cypriot State and expressed views about possible cooperation between the ECO Secretariat, the Member States and the TCS.

The delegation also briefed the Secretary General about the current negotiations between the two communities in Cyprus which are continuing under the UN supervision.

The TCS delegation showed readiness and willingness to undertake any type of activity in order to improve relations with ECO. The Secretary General showed his satisfaction about the current status of TCS as an observer in ECO and appreciated their willingness for further cooperation. ■

ECO Secretary General attends the UN Commission on Narcotics Drugs

ECO CHRONICLE On the occasion of fifty Seventh Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotics Drugs on 13- 21 March 2014, the ECO Secretary General visited Vienna and addressed the Commission's "High-Level Review of the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem".

The high-level review was organized by the Commission as the preparatory meeting for the "Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on World Drug Problem" to be held in 2016.

In his Statement to a broad high-level audience from UN Member States, regional and international organizations, UN bodies, civil society and media, Dr. Aleskerov presented a brief report on the ECO contributions to the global campaign against drug and its affiliated organized crimes.



Underlining ECO as one of the most drug-affected regions in world, the Secretary General emphasized that drug control policies shall be treated as an "economic development" issue and all development-related mechanisms shall be on board when new arrangements will be crafted for post 2016.

He specifically underscored ECO capacity to involve in "alternative development' related projects and elaborated on the other relevant capacities and experiences within ECO to play increas-

ing role in any possible "Global Development Agenda for Drug Control".

ECO Drug and Organized Crime Coordination Unit also participated in an international exhibition on the sidelines of the Commission Meeting where ECO drug-related activities as well as the EU-ECO project on "Fight against Trafficking from/to Afghanistan" were displayed through publications and other presentations. ■

ECO Secretary General Meets UNODC Representative

ECO CHRONICLE ECO Secretary General, Dr. Shamil Aleskerov, received Mr. Leik Boonwaat, the new Representative of the "United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime" (UNODC) in Tehran on 4 February 2014. While reviewing the existing cooperation between ECO and UNODC, the two sides discussed the possible areas of further cooperation.

Referring to core ECO activities, Ambassador Aleskerov expressed readiness to expand cooperation between ECO Drug and Organized Crime Coordination Unit and UNODC.



Swedish Special Envoy for Afghanistan & Pakistan Visits ECO Secretariat

ECO CHRONICLE The Special Envoy of Sweden for Afghanistan and Pakistan, H.E. Ambassador Niclas Trouvé, accompanied by the Swedish Ambassador in Tehran, visited the ECO Secretariat on 4 March 2014 and was received by ECO Secretary General. Dr. Aleskerov welcomed the Swedish delegation and made a brief introductory remark on the Economic Cooperation Organization and its performance. He specifically apprised the Swedish delegation of the projects and initiatives being pursued within the Organization's framework aimed at Afghanistan's reconstruction and development. Referring to the importance attached by the ECO Member States to Afghanistan while crafting regional projects, the Secretary General highlighted exemplary projects related to transport connectivity and trade facilitation having direct bearing on Afghanistan. The visiting delegation was also briefed about the ECO Special Fund on the Reconstruction of Afghanistan where ECO Member States have funded a number of projects prioritized by the Government of Afghanistan, includ-

ing the construction of maternity hospital, a primary school and a public park. The Swedish delegation was also informed about the EU-financed project on fight against illicit drug trafficking to/from Afghanistan, coordinated jointly by ECO Drug and Organized Crime Control Unit and German International Cooperation Agency

(GIZ), in cooperation with some other relevant leading international agencies. The Secretary General also briefed the Swedish delegation about ECO involvement in the Istanbul Process initiatives on Afghanistan. The Swedish Special Envoy explained his role as a special envoy of the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs for issues related to the security and development of Afghanistan. He also appreciated the role of ECO in promoting Afghanistan's development. With reference to the Istanbul Process, the Special Envoy mentioned that there was a growing realization that the regional countries and organizations should play a more active role in Afghanistan's development. He also briefed about the Swedish efforts being made in collaboration with the EU and UN agencies for the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan, especially in the areas of education, economic integration, infrastructure building, empowerment of women and support for democracy and civil society. While acknowledging the merit of cooperation with ECO Secretariat, he expressed interest to explore the possible areas of joint actions. ■



Mr. Boonwaat also briefed the Secretary General on global activities of the UNODC, including in West and Central Asia. He further explained about the situation of crops production in Afghanistan and its impacts on the neighbouring countries and ECO region. The Secretary General informed the UNODC Representative in Tehran of ECO targeted activities and projects for Afghanistan through "ECO Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan" and proposed that two organizations may develop joint projects in the framework of UNODC "Alternative Development Project for Afghanistan".

The exchanges between ASEAN, ECO and UNODC on the best practices for addressing drugs related challenges was another issue raised by the Secretary General and welcomed by Mr. Boonwaat. Furthermore, both sides agreed to collaborate on public awareness raising on the menace of the illegal drugs in the ECO region.

The two organizations will soon develop outline for future cooperation based on the provisions of the existing Memorandum of Understanding as well as the outcomes of this meeting. ■



Afghan Photos- Handicrafts Exhibition in ECI

ECOECI: The exhibition of Afghan photos and handicrafts kicked off during a ceremony held at ECI Headquarters on January 8, 2014 which was attended by Iftikhar Husain Arif, President of the ECO Cultural Institute, Noor Mohammad Noor, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Javanshir Akhundov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Noor Mohammad Jadmani, Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and a number of Afghan artists residing in Iran.

At the ceremony, President of ECO Cultural Institute appreciated the close cooperation between the Institute and Afghanistan.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Tehran also appreciated the Institute for mounting the exhibition and said today's world is the world of commonalities. The commonalities of the ECO countries are deep-rooted in history and last forever. Later at the event, excerpts from Afghan classical music were performed by a young Afghan artist. ■

Antique Gabbeh & Kilim Exhibited in ECI

ECOECI: The exhibition of antique Gabbeh & Kilim and Modern Art kicked off during a ceremony held at ECI Headquarters on Tuesday January 14, 2014 which was attended by Iftikhar Husain Arif, President of the ECO Cultural Institute, Dulatali Hatamov, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan, Fadi Hajali, Ambassador of the Republic of Lebanon and a group of art enthusiasts.

Emphasizing on introducing the art, culture, civilization and literature of the peoples of the ECO Region as a priority of the Institute, the President of ECI said inhabitants of this region share so many cultural, civilizational and especially artistic commonalities. Down the ages, peoples of each part of this vast area have tried to reproduce their treasured traditions within the spirit of their precious artworks.

Among these artworks, the floor coverings, art of which dates back to

antiquity, enjoy a unique position in the everyday life of all the strata of the society.

Turaj Jooleh, an author and researcher on carpet, addressing the ancient art of carpet weaving in the region, said the art of Woven is one of the most popular, widespread arts and Kilim was the first Oriental artwork displayed in Western exhibitions.

He referred to Germany as the leading country in recognizing Oriental Kilim and Gabbeh and said German artists have taken advantage of Oriental Kilim designs in their modern paintings.

Pouya Ariyanpour, a contemporary artist, explored the similarities between the designs in Oriental and Western artworks and stated that Oriental art has an unpretentious feature, not seen in the Western art. Later at the event, excerpts from modern music were performed. ■



ECI Hosts Kashan Cultural Week



ECOECI: In cooperation with the Municipality of Kashan, ECO Cultural Institute organized the "Cultural Week of City of Kashan" in Tehran. The event was inaugurated on Thursday, 20 February 2014 at ECI Headquarters in the presence of Iftikhar Husain Arif, ECI President; Seyed Mohammad Nazem Razavi, Kashan Mayor; Ebrahim Rahimpour, Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran as well as several Ambassadors, including Ambassadors of the Philippines and Indonesia. The Week featured a variety of programs including traditional music, narration, poetry reading, photo, books, carpets and handicrafts exhibitions. ■

Board of Governors of the ECO Bank Convenes its Meeting in Istanbul

ECOTDB: The thirteenth Meeting of the Board of Governors of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ETDB) was held on 20 June 2014 with the participation of Governors of the ETDB, namely, H.E. Noorullah Delawari, Governor of the Central Bank of Afghanistan; H.E. Shahin Mustafayev, Minister of Economy and Industry of Azerbaijan; H.E. Gholamali Kamyab, Vice-Governor of the Central Bank of Iran; H.E. Asraf M. Wanthra, Governor of State Bank of Pakistan and H.E. Ibrahim H. Çanakç, Undersecretary of the

Treasury of Turkey.

The Board of Governors reviewed the 2013 External Audit Report and approved 2013 Financial Statements. President of the Bank, Dr. Hossein Ghazavi presented the 2013 Annual Report and gave information regarding the recent activities of the Bank.

The Board of Governors selected the external auditor for 2014. H.E. Gholamali Kamyab, the Vice-Governor of the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran has been selected as the Chairman of the Board for one year. ■



Tajikistan in 40 Frames in ECI

ECOECI: Organized by the ECO Cultural Institute in cooperation with the Embassy of Republic of Tajikistan, the Exhibition was held on March 9, 2014 and showcased a collection of forty images of the social life throughout Tajikistan, taken



by Mojgan Sayyadi, an Iranian photographer, along with calligraphy works by Hakim Hassan, contemporary Tajik calligrapher as well as the Country's traditional clothing and handicrafts. ■



President of ECOSF Visits ECO Cultural Institute

ECOSF: President of ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) made a visit to ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) in Tehran. He was welcomed by the ECI President Iftikhar Hussain Arif, a renowned writer and intellectual.

During the visit, both the Presidents briefed each other about the various ongoing and future plans of their organizations and shared mutual interests to collaborate for the benefits of ECO region as has also been advised by the ECO's Regional Planning Council (RPC) during its meeting held in Tehran on 24-26 Feb 2014.

Both ECO affiliated bodies agreed to jointly organize various activities, involving also ECO Educational Institute. ■



European Union envoy Meets ECOSF President

ECOSF: EU Deputy Ambassador in Pakistan, Mr. Mayaudon, met President of ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) Mr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro and discussed areas of mutual interest. Mr. Soomro explained the aims and objectives of ECOSF and expressed interest to interact with European Union with a view to seeking EU support for newly established ECOSF to implement its regional programmes.

While promising to facilitate ECOSF contact with EU in Brussels, Mr. Mayaudon shared information on EU's HORIZON-2020 programme for research cooperation and encouraged ECOSF to study the programme and take advantage for scientific collaboration. ■

Pakistani Minister for Science & Technology Visits ECOSF

ECOSF: H.E. Mr. Zahid Hamid, Minister for Science and

Technology of Pakistan visited the ECO Science Foundation. The President of ECOSF briefed the Minister on the Foundation and highlighted the progress made so far focusing on ratification of ECOSF Charter

by the member states, the budgetary contributions, the current activities and collaborations and the future plans. The Minister appreciated the efforts made by the ECOSF and expressed hope that the Foundation

would play its role in the field of scientific development in ECO region. The options for provision of office accommodation to ECOSF on long term basis were discussed in the meeting. The Minister also assured the continuation of full support of Government of Pakistan to ECOSF. ■

ECO-IEST Team Meets Ambassadors of Pakistan and Turkey

ECO-IEST: President of the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST), Dr. Asghar Mohammadi Fazel and his team had a meeting with H.E. Mr. Umit Yardim, Ambassador of Republic of Turkey in Iran and discussed different issues regarding activities of the IEST and the process of upgrading legal status of the Institute. Dr. Fazel briefed the Ambassador on the process of establishing ECO-IEST and acknowledged constructive and supporting role of Turkey



in this process. Ambassador of Republic of Turkey while appreciating the volume and diversity of activities conducted by ECO-IEST since its establishment hoped that Turkey and ECO-IEST would be able to continue their cooperation on the environmental issues in the future. The President of the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology had also a meeting with H.E. Noor Muhammad Jadmani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Tehran. Dr. Fazel briefed the Ambassador on the activities of the ECO-IEST during the last three years. He explained that despite

some challenges ECO-IEST has been very active in pursuing its goals including professional training, information sharing, networking and resource mobilization. Pakistani Ambassador put emphasis on further strengthening the cooperation and partnership between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and ECO-IEST and appreciated the close relations between ECO-IEST and ECOSF and assured ECO-IEST of the continued support of his government. ■



ECO Bank Membership Expanded



ECOTDB: Republic of Azerbaijan signed the Articles of Agreement establishing the Bank followed by ratification by Milli Mejlis.

Accordingly, and following the completing the other membership procedures, Republic of Azerbaijan has become the fourth member of the ECO-TDB.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has also completed the domestic legislative processes for full membership of the Bank. The membership of Republic of Azerbaijan and Afghanistan will strengthen the endeavors of the Bank to become a premier development institution of the Region. ■

ECO Bank Signs Loan Agreement with Metro Power

ECOTDB: ECO Trade and Development Bank signed a loan agreement with Metro Power Company Limited for the amount of USD 98.6 Million jointly with International Finance Cooperation, and a consortium of banks namely National Bank of Pakistan, United Bank Limited, Bank Alfalah Limited and Askari Bank Limited in 50 MW Wind Power Project in Sindh, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Electricity generated by Metro Power will be sold to the National Transmission and Dispatch Company under a 20 year fixed price Energy Purchase Agreement. It will consist of 20 Nordex N100 2.5 MW wind turbines from Germany. The project is equally owned and has been jointly developed by the Iqbal Alimohamed & Family and Infracore Asia Keenjhar Wind Pte Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary of Infracore Asia Development Pte Ltd). ■

Delegation of Turkish Embassy Visits ECO- DOCCU

ECO-DOCCU: On the occasion of launching the new DOCCU Report on "Drug Situation in the ECO Region 2008-2012", a delegation from Embassy of Republic of Turkey in Tehran visited the ECO-DOCCU on 18 May 2014.

In a meeting with ECO-DOCCU team, Fahrettin Coskun, the Security Counselor of the Embassy and his deputy, Harun Basli were briefed about ECO-DOCCU activities, including the EU-funded project on "Drug Trafficking from/to Afghanistan" and the newly published Report on Drug Situation in the ECO Region 2008-2012. Fahrettin Coskun also explained about their responsibilities in the Embassy which cover duties as Drug liaison Officer in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The two sides agreed to continue contacts with a view to preparing the ground for possible enhanced cooperation. ■



ECO- DOCCU Participation in the EU-funded Project Meeting



ECO-DOCCU: ECO-DOCCU delegation headed by ECO Deputy General attended the Meeting of the Steering Committee of the ongoing project of "Fight against Trafficking from/to Afghanistan" on 15 April 2014 in Berlin where the state of play of the project were reviewed by the main stakeholders, namely, ECO, European Commission, GIZ and BKA of Germany, Interpol and UNODC.

In the Meeting, the ECO delegation presented a report on the activities related to the Component I of the Project which relates to the capacity building in the ECO-DOCCU.

The ECO delegation and the other participants also discussed the possible future actions to make Project outcomes sustainable as of beginning of 2015 when the Project will be completed. ■

Business Recorder: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and President of Iran Hassan Rouhani on Sunday May 18, 2014 agreed to continue with the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline project as it was beneficial for the peoples of both countries. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif informed the Iranian President that he was there with his team of finance, petroleum and interior to resolve all the matters which were creating hindrance in the project.

Both leaders reiterated their commitment to enhance the bilateral trade between the two countries during the meeting, held at Saadabad Palace. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said there was lot of scope of increasing the trade volume and they wanted to enhance it to new levels of \$5 billion.

"I am here to open a new chapter in Pakistan-Iran relationships", he said, adding "As a Prime Minister, I visited Iran firstly in 1999 and have always found the Iranian more affectionate on every visit to Iran."

President Rouhani said Iran-Pakistan relations had historical connections. Apart from being neighboring countries, both Muslim countries have the common traditions and relations. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said "We want security for development and develop-

ment for security". President Rouhani also affirmed his government's support, adding that peace in the region was their common goal.

He said they would support Pakistan to develop and become more secure. Both the leaders also discussed the border security matters between the two countries.

They agreed that better border management and improved security measures would result in increased bilateral trade and strengthening relationship and co-operation between the two countries. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif extended invitation to President Rouhani to visit Pakistan which was accepted by the President. ■

Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline comes under sharp focus



IMF predicts economic growth for Iran

Iran Student News Agency: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has released a report saying that Iran's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would rise by 1.5 percent in 2014. According to the International Monetary Fund's report, Iran had achieved considerable progress in raising per capita income and living standards in previous decades. The report said the figure would rise by 2.3 percent in 2015 and 2.4 percent in 2019. IMF said that gross foreign assets of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) rose to about \$105 billion by end-

2012/13. According to the report, since the Presidential election in mid-2013, there have been some signs of stability.



"The exchange rate has appreciated markedly in the bureau/parallel market. The CBI has kept a lid on base money growth thanks to tighter credit to the banking system and some fiscal consolidation, and inflation has declined to about 29 percent in January 2014".

It is projected that economic activity would begin to stabilize in 2014/15, with real GDP projected to increase by 1-2 percent. In the meantime, the authorities are taking steps to make the regulatory framework for foreign investment in the oil sector more attractive. ■

Foreign Investment grows in Republic of Azerbaijan

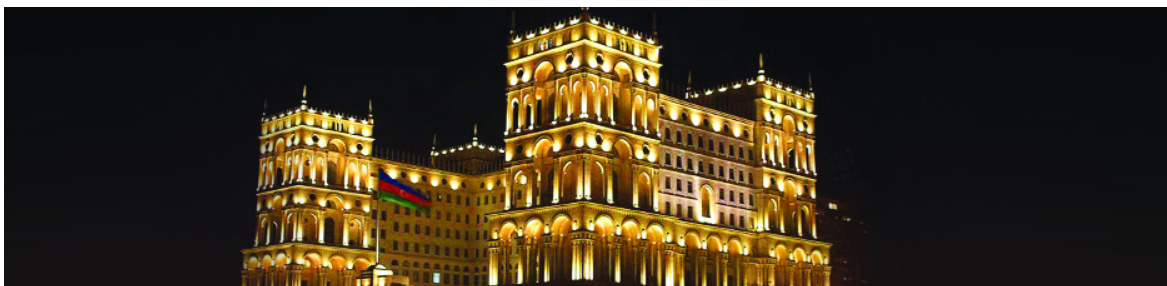
Trend: The total volume of foreign investments in Azerbaijan's fixed capital amounted to 1.44 billion manat in January-April 2014 which is 22.26 percent more than the same period back in 2013, the Azerbaijani State Statistical Committee said on May 17. Some 85.4 percent (1.231.9 billion manat) of foreign investments in Azerbaijan's fixed capital in January-April 2014, fell to investors from Great Britain, the US, Norway, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Japan and France, according to the report.

Great Britain continues to hold a leading position. Its specific weight in the total volume of foreign investments in Azerbaijan amounted to 29.1 percent in the mentioned period while its investments amounted to 420.1 million manat.

During the reporting period, the US investments in the Azerbaijani economy amounted to 162.11 million manat (with specific weight of 11.2 percent) Norway - 246.22 million manat (17.1 percent), Turkey-144.91 million manat (10.1 percent), France - 88.39 million manat (6.1 percent), France - 81.25 million manat (5.6 percent) and the Czech Republic-88.91 million manat (6.2 percent).

The largest volume of investments among international financial institutions was made by the

World Bank (WB)-23.53 million manat (with specific weight of 1.6 percent). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) allocated some 17.9 million manat (1.2 percent) for the implementation of projects in Azerbaijan in January-April 2014.



Kyrgyzstan first steps in mobile banking

Kabar: Kyrgyzstan starts to take its first steps in the field of mobile banking. Deputy chairwoman of the National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic Baktygul Zheenbaeva said today at an international financial forum BIFF-2014 in Bishkek. "Mobile banking and payments are new area for the Country. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development will help us in this area," she said. Zheenbaeva



stressed that at this forum there will be the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and new experience

in this direction.

This forum is an annual international event involving financial and credit institutions, leasing companies, international organizations, medium and large businesses. The event is organized by the Union of Banks of Kyrgyz Republic with the support of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). ■

Bloomberg: Kazakhstan's largest copper miner has received \$1.25 billion after completing the sale of its power unit to the nation's sovereign wealth fund.

The company sold its remaining 50 percent interest in Ekibastuz LLP to Kazakhstan's Samruk-Kazyna fund, Kazakhmys said in a statement today. It bought Ekibastuz in 2008 for \$1.26 billion and sold a 50 percent stake to Samruk-Kazyna for \$681 million in 2010, Kazakhmys said. The holding in the power unit "has provided a sound return for investors," Chief Executive Officer Oleg Novachuk said in the statement. "The disposal will strengthen our balance sheet and allow us to focus on our core copper business and proposed restructuring." Kazakhmys plans to spin off its lower-margin operations into a private company run by former Chairman Vladimir Kim this year, shrinking operations by two-thirds and the workforce by 80 per-

cent. It's selling assets to focus on mines with better earnings and to curb losses.

The company reported a second straight full-year loss in February because of slumping prices. ■

Kazakhmys Completes

Sale of
Power-Unit
Stake for
\$1.25 Billion



Afghanistan's maiden satellite launched

Pajhwok Afghan News: Afghanistan's first satellite-
AFGHANSAT-1-was formally launched on 10 May 2014, with officials expecting a \$15 million addition to the government's annual revenue. Eutelsat Communications (NYSE Euronext Paris: ETL), one of the world's leading satellite operators, and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) had signed a memorandum of understanding to the effect in February 2014. First Vice-President Mohammad Yunus Qanuni, addressing the inaugural ceremony, called the launch a great achievement in Afghanistan's history. He said it would cover all provinces and some regional countries as well. He added: "The launch of the satellite will not only help improve the quality of media but will also boost government revenue."

Minister of Communications and Information Technology Amirzai Sangin said they

paid \$4 million to Eutelsat annually but the income of the satellite would add \$15 million to the country's income. He added the satellite was launched into space in 2008, with each spacecraft having 15 years operational ability. The Eutelsat Company has assured the MCIT the AFGHANSAT 1 should work for at least seven more years, Sangin added.

The AFGHANSAT 1 is capable of meeting Afghanistan's communication needs and a second satellite 'AFGHANSAT-2' would be launched in the coming seven years. Sangin continued the AFGHANSAT 1 would cover all urban and remote areas of the country and improve the quality of media broadcasts besides enhancing communications among government organs.

"Now Afghans can install a small dish antenna to get access to all TV and radio channels across Afghanistan and central Asian countries", Sangin said. ■





Interview with German Ambassador in Tehran

Germany is one of the most active developed countries engaged in overseas development activities in targeted countries in the different regions and corners of the world. Germany has also been leading some projects and initiatives in some ECO Member States. Ambassador Michael Von Ungern-Sternberg was kind enough to accept ECO Chronicle request for an interview which is reproduced below:



■ What is the German government approach to regional cooperation arrangements among developing

countries?



In light of Germany's own very positive experience of regional cooperation in the framework of the European Union, which has brought unprecedented levels of peace and economic prosperity to the European continent, we are strong advocates of regional cooperation and support such initiatives in all regions of the globe. Peace and security are strengthened by regional cooperation, but it is also means to enhance trade and economic development, thereby bringing great advantages to all countries that engage in regional cooperation. With a view to this immense potential for fostering economic growth and development, it is evident that regional cooperation can bring great benefits especially for developing countries. ECO is a very promising organisation of regional cooperation, bringing together a number of key countries in the region and forming a network that spans from the Mediterranean to Central Asia.

■ What are the main areas of interest for the German government in West and Central Asia and the Caucasus?

The German government attaches great importance to good relations with Central Asia and the Caucasus. The EU Central Asia Strategy, put forward during Germany's presidency of the EU in 2007, identified three key areas of strategic interest and partnership for the EU and thereby Germany: rule of law, environment/water management and education. These are areas, in which the sharing of expertise among regional actors but also with the EU can bring great benefits to all countries of the region. We follow developments in the region with a special interest not least in light of our engagement to stabilise Afghanistan. Neighbouring Central Asia and the Caucasus will play a key role in ensuring lasting peace and stability for Afghanistan; these countries will also benefit most directly from an improvement in Afghanistan. It is therefore important for us to engage with all countries in the region, including Iran of course.

■ What kind of partnership and in which area(s) can one expect cooperation between Germany and ECO?

In light of our own commitment to fostering regional cooperation and our strategic interest in the region, there are multiple possibilities for cooperation and the sharing of expertise. Next to a common interest in stability and peace in the region, there are a number of fields that can benefit from the sharing of expertise and practical cooperation. Environmental issues and education are just two which come to mind immediately. Our support of the EU-ECO project on "drug trafficking to/from Afghanistan" is a good example of such cooperation.

■ Given the fact that 5 out of 6 of Afghanistan's neighbours are members of ECO, and the important role Germany intends to play in post-2014 Afghanistan, do you see any critical value for German-ECO partnership on addressing Afghanistan development challenges and needs, in post-2014 era?

The fact that the post-2014 fate of Afghanistan is of such concern also to the neighbouring countries, which form the core of ECO, underlines by itself the great potential for cooperation on this issue between all major actors, including ECO. Germany is committed to assisting Afghanistan also after 2014. Civilian and economic development are the key challenges for Afghanistan in the transformation decade 2015-2024. The central forum of development assistance coordination between the Afghan Government and the international community is the Tokyo Process and the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework, in which

Germany has played and will continue to play a very active role. Regional cooperation clearly remains a precondition for economic development in Afghanistan. We, therefore, support the Heart-of-Asia Process as one of the most promising regional initiatives and also welcome the role Iran has taken on in leading the Confidence Building Measure on Education. In the framework of our regional engagement and our commitment to regional cooperation as one of the most promising guarantors of peace and development, Germany is open to take into consideration further cooperation with ECO and welcomes proposals for concrete projects, which can help to bring a better future for Afghanistan and its neighbours.

■ On drug trafficking and given the special role of Germany in ECO-EU project on "drug trafficking from/to Afghanistan", do you see any room to expand Germany-ECO cooperation in related areas, including alternative development?

Germany is a staunch and reliable supporter of the UN work on international drug control as it is evident that the serious harm and threat of drug trafficking can only be addressed by means of international and regional cooperation. We will continue to support UNODC and NGOs in the field of drug prevention. We consider cooperation with ECO in this field based on a constant review of the progressive approach on drug prevention projects in Iran. ECO can certainly be helpful as a forum for dialogue and cooperation in this regard. The ECO member states' health authorities in particular could benefit from more cross-border cooperation. Together with its partners in the European Union, Germany regards drug demand reduction and drug supply reduction as mutually reinforcing elements in our drug policy approach. In Afghanistan both national authorities and the international community should therefore concentrate on creating incentives to stop the cultivation and production of drugs.

■ Thank you for your time. ■

On the occasion of the first ECO/UN regional meeting on financing sustainable forest management in the ECO Region in Tehran, ECO

Chronicle had the opportunity to make a short interview with Mr. Hossein Moeini Meybodi, the Senior forest policy officer and the officer in charge of the United Nations Forum on Forest Secretariat:

■ What is the "United Nations Forum on Forests" (UNFF) about?

Established by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in 2000, the

coordination and development among Governments, relevant international and regional organizations, institutions, instruments and other interested parties on all issues related to all types of forests.

Through its comprehensive network, UNFF fosters international cooperation, including North-South and pub-



UNFF Secretariat (UNFFS) was established alongside the UNFF to provide substantive support from its location at UN Headquarters in New York.

The UNFF has made key achievements since its inception. One of its key achievements is the adoption of the Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests (the Forest Instrument) and the four shared Global Objectives on Forests (GOFs).

This Instrument is the only globally intergovernmental agreement on all types of forests which was negotiated, agreed and adopted by UNFF, and subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly.

Announcement of the year 2011 as the International Year

Interview with Mr. Hossein Moeini Meybodi

United Nations Forum

UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) has the key mandate to promote the management, conservation, and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end. This establishment of the UNFF was a clear indication by the United Nations of the significance of forests for a sustainable future of all people and the planet.

As the only subsidiary body of 197 countries, the UNFF provides a global framework for continued and coherent policy implementation, policy

lic-private partnerships, as well as cross-sectoral cooperation at the national, regional and global levels to enhance the contribution of forests to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, and encourages and assists countries to maintain and improve their forest resources with a view to enhancing the benefits of forests to meet present and future needs.

The UNFF is composed of: (1) Member States, (2) relevant intergovernmental organizations - many of which comprise the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), and (3) regional organizations and processes, together with Major Groups. The

of Forests, designation of 21 March of each year as the International Day of Forests, raising the profile of forests in major world summits and conferences, and carrying out substantive analytical studies and reports in important areas of financing forests, forests and economic development, forests and livelihoods are only a few achievements of the UNFF.

■ The ECO Secretariat in Tehran recently hosted a UNFF-sponsored regional workshop

on financing possibilities for sustainable forest management. Can you please elaborate on the concept of "sustainable forest management" and its relation to the overall UN agenda/mandate in the context of climate change?

The Forest Instrument defines "Sustainable Forest Management (SFM)" as a dynamic and evolving concept that aims to maintain and enhance the economic, social and environmental values of all types of forests, for the benefit of present and future generations.

SFM is characterized by

seven thematic elements: (i) extent of forest resources; (ii) forest biological diversity; (iii) forest health and vitality; (iv) productive functions of forest resources; (v) protective functions of forest resources; (vi) socio-economic functions; and (vii) legal, policy and institutional framework.

Sustainably managed forests play a

key role in mitigating the harmful effects of climate change. Forests remain a critical component in climate change negotiations, and will remain so until other sectors produce

economically viable and scalable technologies for removing greenhouse gases (GHG) from the atmosphere. In fact, climate change forest-based measures are now considered the most efficient, cost-effective near- and mid-term actions to mitigate GHG emissions.

Moreover, expansion of sustainably managed forests enhances the resilience and adaptive capacities of communities to confront adverse impacts of climate change.

It is important to add that the



on Forests Secretariat



benefits of forests go far beyond addressing climate change. Forests are crucial for poverty eradication and economic development of countries and societies. Forests are key ecosystems that protect water resources, land and biodiversity, and provide energy resources, to name a few. Therefore, the significance of forests should not be viewed only from the lens of climate change.

■ ECO is the only regional organization involving countries from West and Central Asia and the Caucasus.

As environmental challenges and vulnerabilities are concerned, particularly climate change and forestry challenges, can we perceive some commonalities in the ECO Region? If that is the case, what is the best collective regional strategy to address these challenges?

There are numerous commonalities among member countries of the ECO region. Most countries of the ECO region are low forest cover countries.

The limited forest resources in this region play a crucial role in the socio-economic development and sound functioning of its ecosystems. On the other hand, all member countries of this region are vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The 2012 Study on Forest Financing by the Advisory Group on Finance of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests indicates that the primary functions of forests in West and Central Asia were for 'multiple uses',

which includes some mix of the following functions: (1) production, (2) biodiversity conservation, and (3) social services. The second primary function of forests in this region is for soil and water protection.

The flow of external financing for sustainable forest management to the ECO region has also been low. Further analysis is required to find out the best strategy to address the challenges in the ECO region. Through the UNFF Facilitative Process Project on Harnessing Climate Change Funding for Forests, we hope to be able to help countries of this region to promote a common regional strategy and vision in regard



to climate change and sustainable forest management.

■ ECO is now emerging as a regional partner for global initiatives. What kind of UN-ECO partnerships on forest management may be projected in the mid- and long-term perspectives? What kind of financial resources may be available for these envisioned partnerships?

Member countries of the ECO region have always been active in the UNFF process. Indeed, the last ses-

sion of the UNFF was held in Istanbul, Turkey, which is a member country of the ECO.

In addition to member countries of this region, active participation and involvement of the ECO Secretariat at the UNFF meeting will enhance closer collaboration between both sides.

The UNFF is a policy body and not a funding or implementing agency. Nevertheless, UNFF includes a wide network of stakeholders including member organizations of the CPF and various regional organizations and processes, as well as major groups and the private sector.

The involvement of these stakeholders in the work of the UNFF provides a great opportunity for various regions, including the ECO region, to connect to these stakeholders and to identify areas for further collaboration.

At the same time, along its mandate, the UNFF Facilitative Process continues to play its "catalytic role" in assisting countries to mobilize financing for forests and to take advantage of various opportunities.

This is one of the main objectives under the current project on Harnessing Climate Change Funding for Forests.

We hope through this project to enable countries to determine how climate change financing can contribute to the implementation of SFM, (ii) to build capacity at national and regional levels to better harness climate change financing for forests, and (iii) to impact policy decisions on funding climate change in the respective global fora, making those decisions more inclusive, equitable and beneficial for SFM.

■ Thank you. ■

Three years with ECO Chronicle

August 2011-August 2014



Coming soon

New Series of ECO Chronicle

Interview with Ms. Jacqueline Begerow

From Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)



The Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit or GIZ is the German Federal body for international cooperation. It primarily works with states, state agencies, and the private sector. Its headquarters is located in Eschborn, Germany. GIZ was established on 1 January 2011 through a merger of the three German organizations Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), and Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung (InWEnt). GIZ has been a key player in the implementation of a EU-funded project on "fight against trafficking to/from Afghanistan" which aims to assist Afghanistan and its neighbouring ECO Member States as well as ECO Secretariat in their dealing with menace of drug trafficking. Ms. Jacqueline Begerow, a GIZ agent and the Technical Coordinator of the EU Project has kindly accepted to participate in an interview with ECO Chronicle:

■ Would you please briefly introduce "GIZ"?

The services delivered by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH draw on a wealth of regional and technical expertise and tried and tested management know-how. As a federal enterprise, we support the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

We offer demand-driven, tailor-made and effective services for sustainable development. To ensure the participation of all stakeholders, we apply a holistic approach based on the values and principles upheld in German society. This is how we facilitate change and empower people to take ownership of their own sustainable development processes. In doing this, we are always guided by the concept of sustainable development, and take account of political, economic, social and ecological factors. We support our partners at local, regional, national and international levels in designing strategies and meeting their policy goals.

GIZ operates in many fields: economic development and employment promotion; governance and democracy; security, reconstruction, peace-building and civil conflict transformation; food security, health and basic education; and environmental protection, resource conservation and climate change mitigation. We also support our partners with management and logistical services, and act as an intermediary, balancing diverse interests in sensitive contexts. In crises, we carry out refugee and emergency aid programmes. GIZ operates throughout Germany and in more than 130 countries worldwide. We have more than 16,000 staff across the globe, some 70 per cent of whom are employed locally as national personnel.

Most of our work is commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. GIZ also operates on behalf of other German ministries as well as German states and municipalities, and public and private sector clients in Germany and abroad. These include the governments of other countries, the European Commission, the United Nations and the World Bank. We work closely with the private sector and promote synergies between the development and foreign trade sectors.

■ **Is there any regional approach in GIZ outreach? If yes, how it works in regions like ECO Region?**

Yes, there is the regional cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) secretariat. The objective is to strengthen the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC). One of the most important challenges facing the ASEC is the effective coordination of ASEAN bodies, such as the ASEAN councils, the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and the National Secretariats. Moreover, it is also responsible for achieving the vision of an ASEAN Community in the areas of security policy, socio-cultural and economic development by 2015. The project's methodological approach draws on typical elements of international cooperation, with a particular focus on professional development of specialists and managers, in-process organizational development and political dialogue. Project partners include the ASEC, ASEAN bodies and relevant regional and national actors. With a view to achieving a citizen-oriented community, the involvement of civil society and public and private actors is essential.

■ **ECO secretariat, specifically its Drug and Organized Crime Coordination Unit, has been involved in the last 5 years in implementation of EU-funded project on "drug trafficking from/to Afghanistan", where GIZ has also been a leading stakeholder. Would you please elaborate on the Project profile and the role of GIZ?**

The project to fight trafficking from and to Afghanistan is being financed by the European Commission. GIZ is coordinating the intervention on behalf of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). Partners in the project are the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA). The main cooperation partner is the Drug and Organized Crime Coordination Unit (DOCCU) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

The principal focus of the project is on Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. It assists the ECO member states with the identification, documentation and prosecution of all drug-related incidents. To this end it is providing capacity building support in the fields of forensics, information dissemination and border controls. The DOCCU is expected to collate and evaluate the data acquired, and to make it available to all ECO member states through regular reports.

The project has three areas of focus:

■ Strengthening the communication, analysis and investigation capacities of the receiving states, for the fight against drug trafficking and international organized

crime

■ Promotion of regional cooperation among relevant authorities and institutions

■ Capacity building support for the DOCCU as a distributor of information and as a coordination platform for the member states for issues related to drug trafficking and organized crime.

■ **A regional bloc of countries in West and Central Asia and the Caucasus, ECO has emerged as a prominent potential regional partner for global initiatives. ECO enjoys a critical**



mass of experience and capacity in different areas of regional cooperation with global significance. What is your view on the possible expansion of partnership between GIZ and ECO to cover other areas of mutual interest and benefit?

As we can already see in our daily work there are many different topics where both organizations are engaged. To name the potential ones: disaster risk management, climate change and environment protection, migration.

■ Thank you. ■

Opportunities & Challenges for Development of Electricity Trade in ECO Region

by Orkhan Zeynalov

As an intergovernmental organisation ECO has become an important regional entity covering an area rich in natural resources in particular energy resources. It is worth mentioning that ECO region contains countries that are richly endowed in energy resources but have relatively low energy demand and others that



have high and growing energy demand but whose indigenous supply options are relatively limited. Currently, in some ECO Member States energy demand growth is far outstripping domestic supply, and in the foreseeable future, the demand-supply gap will become even wider unless the domestic supplies are supplemented by imports.

Enhancement of national energy security depends on various factors, including diversification of energy forms and supply sources and lowering the cost of energy supply.

It has been recognized that there is a lack of regional analytical studies which would quantify and evaluate the potential for regional energy trade, estimate cost of transnational physical infrastructure and investigate non-physical barriers to regional energy cooperation, especially in the field of electricity trade. Back in 2005, ECO along with World Bank and Islamic Development Bank (IDB) organized a workshop on regional electricity trade (June, 2005, Tehran). As an outcome of the workshop it was agreed that the lack of clear understanding of the comparative costs and benefits of electricity trade opportunities, institutional and regulatory issues that govern electricity trade were among the key barriers to increasing cross-border electricity trade.

Electricity sector is capital intensive and it is therefore prudent that efforts for infrastructure development are extended beyond the physical boundaries of a given country. Seeking participation for gainful utilization of resource potential in a region by taking advantage of peak diversity is a world-wide trend and several countries are already exchanging power with the neighbouring countries.

Today the existing electricity trade in ECO region with the exception of some Central Asian countries is conducted mainly in island mode, in which part of the national electricity system of one country is synchronously connected with the power system of the other country, but disconnected from the rest of its own power system. The electricity trade is typically done through short-term arrangements, agreed on bilateral basis, rarely involving more than two countries. It is obvious that for full realization of regional potential, trading arrangements should become multilateral, longer term and technically more comprehensive.

In this regard, the following factors could be taken into account as a basis for future electricity trade in the ECO region.

■ 1. Energy trade picture of the region

Regional electricity trade development could initially be in respect of strengthening intra-regional trade within the Central Asian countries, where an interconnected grid already exists but much needs to be done to ensure adequate supplies of energy

and security of supply. By strengthening existing links with Iran, and through Iran to Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkey, the benefits of larger integrated systems can be accessed. Another important element in interconnecting the power systems of the ECO countries is the potential of regional power exchange, rather than a power export opportunity for the Member States. The electricity demand and supply situation in the region may be divided generally into different groups with each country having potential as a predominantly exporting, importing or transit state.



- Afghanistan is an importing and transit country and has existing interconnections with Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan
- Pakistan is an importing country with rapidly growing demand
- Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are exporting countries with fossil-fuel based generation
- Tajikistan and Kyrgyz Republic are exporting countries with hydropower based generation
- Turkmenistan is an exporting (mainly oriented to Iran) and transit country
- Turkey is an importing country
- Iran is an importer of electricity, but is also a

major exporter of electricity. Iran is also a transit route to Turkey. With such versatile role Iran may be classified as a market integrating country

■ Azerbaijan is an exporting country with fossil-fuel based generation

■ 2. Legal arrangements/supportive documents

There is scope to build on the following existing energy related and general ECO documents.

■ Treaty of Izmir: Treaty provides the framework for the possible establishment of a regional institution for electricity trading

■ Economic Cooperation Strategy for the ECO region

■ ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA)

■ ECO Vision 2015

■ ECO Plan of Action for Energy/Petroleum Cooperation 2011-2015



■ 3. Possible risks

Possible risks in regional electricity trade issues can be divided into 3 main areas - country risks (political, regulatory and legal), commercial risks and financial risks. Complex risk mitigation is quite a challenging task. Still a starting point for risk mitigation is to strengthen intercountry coordination as a potential political risk reducer.

The complexity and various commitments in international electricity trade issues requires strict monitoring, coordination among the parties to reach consensus and effective dispute resolution mechanism.

The risks are compounded when projects span more than one country and involve cross-border transmission lines. Fundamental risks related to political, legal and regulatory environment can be reduced by strengthening the institutions and enhancing favorable investment climate.

■ 4. Capacity building and enabling framework

Regional electricity trade in ECO region will most likely begin as a government-to-government initiative than a pure commercial venture, requiring government commitments. These two things put together



would certainly help bring in the multilateral financial institutions and the private sector investors on board of these projects to see the culmination of the tightening of loose ends. Many of the electricity trade options will inevitably take a long time to come to fruition, but still there is much that ECO Member States can do immediately to create the favorable environment. In this regard establishment of comprehensive legal framework for commercial investments in power sector is essential.

There is a vivid need for legally enforceable comprehensive commercial documentation to facilitate long term regional power trade. Improving the competitiveness of the domestic power sector in each country is also an important prerequisite for regional trade. Many ECO Member States have already undertaken extensive electricity sector reforms, but there is still room for further progress.

■ 5. International experience

Development of interconnections of large electric power system is a worldwide phenomenon but varies between countries and regions. Since the first trans-country interconnection between Sweden and Denmark established in 1915, numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements on cross-border interconnection and electricity trade have been made. New and potential interconnections developed in different parts of the world are the evidence of economic benefits for all trading partners.

NORDPOOL Spot represents Northern Europe interconnections and runs the largest market for electrical energy in the world. It has gone a long way since founding of Nordel in 1963. It currently operates in 7 countries and more than 77% of the total electrical consumption is traded through it. It offers both day-ahead (Elspot) and intraday (Elbas) markets.

Prices are determined through a transparent pooling mechanism that matches demand and supply for the common reference price and taking into account available transmission capacity.

South African Power Pool (SAPP) is the first formal international power pool in Africa. SAPP consists of interconnections among the utilities of the 12 countries in Southern Africa - Angola, Botswana, Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa,



Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

These countries have a diverse mix of hydro and thermal power stations. SAPP partners have signed an Inter-Utility Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding adherence to common standards, participation and operation of regional power pool through the various committees. Currently Short-Term Energy Market (STEM) for hourly, day ahead and longer-term contracts functioning within SAPP.

ASEAN Power Grid, as ASEAN region, similar to ECO region, is known to be rich in energy



resources on one hand and experiencing fast economic growth which drives power demand on the other. The optimization plan for power development of these countries has recommended various high voltage direct current (HVDC) and high voltage alternating current (HVAC) interconnections, based mainly on three principles-power exchange, power purchase and emergency exchange. 16 priority cross-border projects have been selected for implementation up to 2020.

Of course, the task of development ECO regional electricity trade is quite challenging and is not limited to just following policy recommendations and

roadmaps. Financial support from international financial institutions is essential to undertake complex and ambitious multinational projects.

ECO's role in facilitation of regional electricity trade shouldn't be underestimated, as it seems most appropriate organization for promoting and facilitating regional energy trade.

The 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum held on March 2013 in Tehran called for the optimal use of capacity of existing ECO power grids interconnection for electricity trade. The 1st Experts Group Meeting on "Establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market" held on 5-6 November 2013 in Tehran revealed a great potential for future electricity trade in the region. Hopefully this kick-off meeting will help define future strategy/roadmap for regional electricity trade and stimulate proper follow-up activities.

The Meeting agreed to hire local and international consultants for conducting the feasibility study.

This study should be conducted with the cooperation of the financial and technical support of interested international financial institutions/donors. The meeting established an initial agreement between Turkey and Iran to set up a joint electricity market that could lead to trading possibilities, although the exact details of such a project are to be clarified.

The ECO Secretariat is in constant contact with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). The IDB seems to be interested in and keen on realization of this project and in this regard financial support from IDB for hiring an International Consultant and local Consultants from Iran and Turkey for preparation of the feasibility study for harmoniz-

ing and merging the electricity markets of Iran and Turkey, may be explored.

The 2nd Experts Group Meeting on "Establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market" is scheduled to be held at the end of September 2014 in Turkey. ■

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About the author: Orkhan Zeynalov is the Director of Energy, Minerals and Environment in the ECO Secretariat.

Common Challenges, Common Responses:

Fighting Narcotics as a Harbinger of International Cooperation

by Ebrahim Afsah

Popular and elite attitudes towards the production and trade in opium and its derivatives have undergone drastic changes over the last two hundred years. Introduced to the region as a cash crop by colonial powers controlling its international trade routes, opium had become by the mid 20th century a regular feature both of agricultural production -often under government regulation if not instigation-, as well as recreational drug use of the well-heeled sections of society throughout the region but especially in Iran, Afghanistan, and in that part of the British Raj that comprises the territory of today's Pakistan.

Never an unproblematic product, the nefarious effect of opium during these periods were primarily connected with the perpetuation of colonial and semi-colonial domination, balance of payment issues, the displacement of food crops for drugs, as well as the influence of addiction on public health and cultural attitudes. But the trade and production of opium was generally regulated if not controlled by state or semi-state entities, more potent derivatives had not yet been popularized and, thus, addiction patterns and public health concerns remained relatively benign. Most importantly, however, production and trade were not yet controlled by organized crime and as such opium's impact on state and social



stability remained relatively low.

It is easy to portray this relatively tranquil period in a overly nostalgic vein, so one needs to guard against the temptation to look at drug abuse in that period with rose-tinted glasses. Still, in light of the revolution in global attitudes towards drug production, trade, and use that occurred in the second half of the 20th century, the problems of that era do stand out as somewhat quaint compared with the massive dislocations caused by opium in later years.

Fuelled by changing cultural attitudes towards recreational drug use in Europe and North America since in the 1960s, the closely connected search for ever more potent psychotropic agents, the massive abuse of opium and its derivatives by American soldiers during the

Vietnam war (a process later repeated by Soviet troops in the Afghan theatre), and the generally proscriptive response by governments shown towards narcotics led to a paradoxical outcome: just as the demand for opium and its derivatives began to explode, the product became 'securitised', i.e. treated (generally for the first time) as a criminal infraction.

The simultaneous rise in global demand and the closure of lawful avenues to meet it, led, quite predictably, to the rise of powerful transnational criminal enterprises attracted by the promise of exorbitant profits. The challenge for governments and publics has been two-fold and qualitatively different from that posed by drug use in earlier periods: on the demand side, the widespread use of ever more potent opiates such as especially heroin has vastly exacerbated the social and public health implications of drug abuse; and on the supply side, the criminalization of production and trade has strengthened well-organized criminal networks and undermined legitimate governance structures through corruption, violence, tax evasion, and links to armed conflict.

The endemic conflict in Afghanistan is a case in point. The effective collapse of effective governance institutions during the decades of conflict has enabled armed opposition groups to turn to nar-

cotics as a source of financing, whose entrenched interests have, in turn, proven a formidable challenge for government authority since 2002. Predictably, given the global market for opiates, the problem has not been confined to Afghanistan but has massively affected its neighbouring countries, especially Iran and Pakistan through whose territories the bulk of Afghan opium and heroin passes to its end markets in Europe and elsewhere. It is, therefore, these two countries in particular which have borne the brunt of global efforts to stem the rising tide of Afghan opiate production. Consequently, the member states of ECO account for over 90% of the global seizures of Afghan opiates.

In contrast to relatively tranquil earlier periods, narcotics present government and societies with a truly explosive, if not outright existential challenge: the availability of abundant supplies of very potent narcotics at -given their proximity to the source along the global trafficking chain- fairly cheap prices has created an epidemic of addiction in all three countries. Furthermore, large profits have created increasingly heavily armed criminal organisations and/or opposition groups with a vested interest in undermining governmental authority and social stability. This existential threat is widely recognised among governments in the region, and links them to the vital interests of governments in the main consumer markets in Europe.

Two elements are noteworthy here and inform the current EU-funded counter-narcotics project with ECO-DOCCU. First, by its very nature illicit drugs is a transnational problem which cannot be effectively tackled by any one national government in isolation. Rather, close inter-governmental operational collaboration, intelligence sharing, common training, and regulatory harmonisation are required to counter criminal transnational networks. Second, while relations of Western governments with the those of the regions have not always been easy, marked as they have been by the legacy

of colonial domination, bipolar confrontation, economic inequality, and geopolitical concerns, the existence of important shared concerns and common interests is equally undeniable. The fight against narcotics production, traffic, and, ultimately, consumption is one of these powerful shared interests where neither side can address this dangerous problem on its own. The strong support of the EU in ECO's counter-narcotics programme is indicative of this mutual realisation.

The aim of the project is, consequently, to strengthen stability and security throughout the region and to protect the population along the major heroin traffic routes from the wicked social effects of drug abuse and a narco-economy. The EU-funded project on the fight against trafficking to and from Afghanistan is being implemented in collaboration with the ECO Member States and a consortium comprising Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), ECO-DOCCU, Interpol, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Bundeskriminalamt (BKA), Germany.

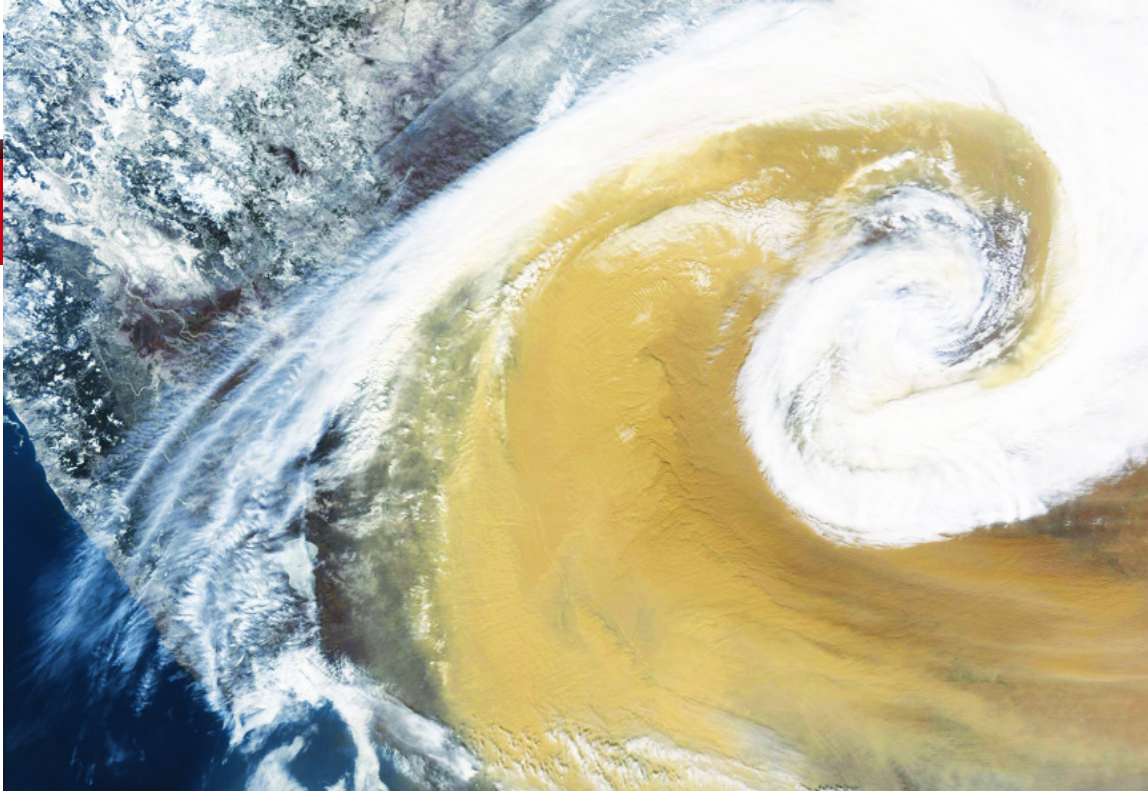


Under the project, the European Commission is providing 9.5 Million Euros for the provision of technical and operational support required by the ECO Member States to fight drug trafficking in the region and beyond. The underlying philosophy reflects the insight that just as countries reacted to the globalization of the economy by developing regional economic integration, ECO countries are responding to the globalization of crime and terrorism by increasingly developing similar integration schemes in the area of security in order to regain their capacity to efficiently protect their citizens.

One of the four components of this

multi-annual inter-agency endeavour concerns strengthening the capacity of ECO's Drug and Organized Crime Coordination Unit (DOCCU) at its headquarters in Tehran, in cooperation with GIZ staff in Berlin and Tehran, and the author who has been contracted by GIZ as an independent legal consultant to work together to increase DOCCU's capacity as a coordination platform for member states; to enable it in disseminating information and regional training measures; and to enhance visibility in the specialist public. This component, among others, focuses on providing member states and the ECO secretariat with advice on better ways to harmonise the penal and regulatory environment in the three main affected states, namely Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. A particular emphasis lies on soliciting the views of the national officers tasked with carrying out the counter-narcotics mandate in order to identify those areas where the legal framework currently presents obstacles for effective international cooperation and collaboration across the region and beyond. Only after eliciting the crucial views of national authorities and officers, will recommendations for joint action and regulatory harmonisation be made. ■

About the author: Dr. Ebrahim Afsah is an Associate Professor of Public International Law at the Faculty of Law, University of Copenhagen. Prior to joining this, he has served for a decade as a legal expert inter alia for the World Bank, UNODC, GTZ, EU, USAID, etc. on administrative reform, public and constitutional law, and state-building. His research interests include general international law, comparative constitutional law, international relations theory, administrative law, and Islamic law. Educated at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London; Trinity College Dublin; the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; and the Max Planck Institute of Comparative Public Law and International Law, Heidelberg. Dr. Afsah speaks seven languages and is an avid fan of Islamic architecture and Middle Eastern cuisine.



Disaster Risk Reduction in ECO Region

By: Javad Heidari

Disasters have been around since well before recorded history and they appear to be increasing in both frequency and intensity. Disasters are often described as a result of the combination of the exposure to a hazard; the conditions of vulnerability that are present; and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce or cope with the potential negative consequences. Disaster impacts may include loss of life, injury, disease and other negative effects on human physical, mental and social well-being, together with damage to property, destruction of assets, loss of services, social and economic disruption and environmental degradation.

In 2012, 357 natural triggered disasters were registered. This was both less than the average annual disaster frequency observed from 2002 to 2011 (394), and represented a decrease in associated human impacts of disasters in 2012, which were at their lowest level compared to previous years. However, natural disasters still killed a significant number, a total of 9,655 people were killed (annual average 2002-2011:107,000) and 124.5 million people become victims worldwide (annual average 2002-2011:268 million). In 2012, 53% of victims were from floods, 27 % from droughts and 16 % from storms. The number of people killed by earthquakes (711) is particularly low compared to a 2002-2011 average of 67,974. However, hydrological disasters took the largest share of natural disaster fatalities in 2012, causing 3,574 deaths, and representing 39% of global disaster mortality. In 2012, the rate was lower than the average, where hydrological disasters killed 5,757 people per year from 2002 to 2011.

Economic damages from natural disasters did show an increase to above average levels (USD 143 billion in 2012), with estimates placing the figure at US\$ 157 billion. The estimated economic losses from natural disasters in 2012 (US\$ 157 billion) surpassed by almost 10% the annual average damages from 2001 to 2010 (US\$ 143 billion).

Looking at the geographical distribution of disasters, Asia was the continent most often hit by natural disasters in 2012 (40.7%), followed by the Americas (22.2%), Europe (18.3%), Africa (15.7%), and Oceania (3.1%). This regional distribution of disaster occurrence resembles the profile observed from 2002 to 2011. In 2012, disaster occurrence in Europe was more than three times the one for 2011 and surpassed its 2002-2011 annual average. Inversely, in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Oceania, disaster incidence were below the decade annual average.

■ Asia and Pacific Region

The Asia-Pacific region is very prone to natural hazards. People in the Asia-Pacific region are four times more likely to be affected by natural disasters than those in Africa and 25 times more likely than those in Europe or North America. Between 1970 and 2011, almost 75% of all world deaths from disasters were in the Asia-Pacific region.

Even more worrying, between 1970 and 2010, the average number of people exposed to yearly flooding in Asia more than doubled, from 29.5 million to 63.8 million; and the number of people living in cyclone-prone areas grew from 71.8 million to 120.7 million.

Table1- Region Profile for Natural Disasters from 1980 – 2008

Regions	Disasters	No of Events	No of people killed	Average killed per year	No of people affected	Average affected per year	Economic Damage US\$*1000	Economic Damage Per year US\$*1000
Africa		1,699	708,712	24,438	319,465,876	11,016,065	24,141,032	832,449
America		2,101	154,662	5,333	165,729,935	5,714,825	604,210,264	20,834,837
Asia-Pacific		3,721	1,148,459	39,602	4,761,487,228	164,189,215	699,262,808	24,115,510
Europe		1,190	121,644	4,195	33,031,632	1,139,022	266,918,923	9,204,101

Source: www.preventionweb.net

Asia accounted in 2012 for 64.5% of global disaster victims, followed by Africa (30.4%). Compared to their 2002-2011 annual averages, the number of victims in 2012 increased in Africa and Oceania, but decreased in the Americas, Asia and Europe. In 2012, the Americas suffered the most damages (65.7% of global disaster damages), followed by Asia (17.8%) and Europe (15.4%).

This distribution of disaster damages between continents differs from the distribution seen over the last decade when Asia experienced the most damages, followed by the Americas and Europe. Damages in the Americas increased the most in 2012 compared to the 2002-2011 annual average, but damages in Europe were also higher. In contrast, damages in Asia decreased.

Table2 –Natural disaster occurrence and impacts: regional figures No.

No. of Natural disaster	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	Global
Climatological 2012	16	12	12	45	0	85
Avg. 2002-11	14	14	12	17	1	59
Geophysical 2012	0	6	23	3	0	32
Avg. 2002-11	3	7	22	2	2	36
Hydrological 2012	30	26	71	16	7	150
Avg. 2002-11	46	41	82	23	5	197
Meteorological 2012	11	35	39	1	4	90
Avg. 2002-11	9	34	39	14	7	102
Total 2012	57	79	145	65	11	357
Avg. 2002-11	72	95	156	56	16	394

No. of Victims(millions)	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	Global
Climatological 2012	28.01	1.82	6.37	0.45	0.00	35.21
Avg. 2002-11	23.86	1.36	76.80	0.27	0.00	102.57
Geophysical 2012	0.00	1.41	1.48	0.03	0.00	2.91
Avg. 2002-11	0.08	0.83	7.13	0.01	0.07	8.12
Hydrological 2012	9.34	1.54	53.52	0.10	0.24	64.74
Avg. 2002-11	2.08	4.26	111.05	0.28	0.06	117.71
Meteorological 2012	0.47	0.80	18.93	0.00	0.02	20.22
Avg. 2002-11	0.37	2.19	37.05	0.11	0.04	39.75
Total 2012	37.82	5.57	80.29	0.58	0.26	124.52
Avg. 2002-11	26.38	8.64	232.03	0.66	0.17	267.88

No. of Damages(US\$ bn)	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	Global
Climatological 2012	0.00	22.46	0.02	4.15	0.00	26.63
Avg. 2002-11	0.04	2.79	3.50	2.76	0.39	102.57
Geophysical 2012	0.00	0.68	2.14	15.80	0.00	18.62
Avg. 2002-11	0.57	4.08	36.73	0.53	2.47	44.36
Hydrological 2012	0.83	0.58	19.25	4.24	0.70	25.61
Avg. 2002-11	0.31	3.95	13.51	4.73	1.16	23.66
Meteorological 2012	0.10	79.67	6.56	0.01	0.15	86.48
Avg. 2002-11	0.07	39.14	8.19	3.64	0.77	51.81
Total 2012	0.93	103.38	27.97	24.20	0.85	157.34
Avg. 2002-11	0.99	49.96	61.93	11.66	4.78	129.33

Source: <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/annual-disaster-statistical-review-2012-numbers-and-trends>

■ ECO Region

The ECO Region is also one of the most disaster-prone regions of the world. Most countries in the region are highly vulnerable to disasters such as earthquakes, floods, landslides and drought. In this region, every year natural disasters result in huge and considerable loss of human lives and livelihoods.

The environmental, economic and social impacts of catastrophic disasters have been severe. Over the past few decades, natural and man-made disasters in the ECO Region have been aggravated by relentless urbanization, rapid population growth, and increasing economic exposure.

Table3- ECO Region Profile for Natural Disasters from 1980 – 2010

Countries	No of Events	No of people killed	Average killed per year	No of people affected	Average affected per year	Economic Damage US\$*1000	Economic Damage Per year US\$*1000
disasters							
Afghanistan	130	19,655	634	6,820,793	220,026	378,120	12,197
Azerbaijan	12	63	2	2,552,774	82,348	211,200	6,813
Iran	146	77,998	2,516	42,664,157	1,376,263	21,374,696	689,506
Kazakhstan	16	228	7	748,879	24,157	213,270	6,880
Kyrgyzstan	23	422	14	2,243,077	72,357	205,760	6,637
Pakistan	138	87,053	2,808	58,098,719	1,874,152	18,402,814	593,639
Tajikistan	51	2,163	70	6,719,808	216,768	1,593,624	51,407
Turkey	97	21,964	709	7,730,453	249,396	25,013,300	806,881
Turkmenistan	2	11	0	420	14	99,870	3,222
Uzbekistan	6	74	2	652,048	21,034	50,000	1,613
Total	621	209,631	6,762	128,231,128	4,136,488	67,548,654	2,178,795

Source: www.preventionweb.net

In fact earthquake has shown itself to be the most fatal of all hazard as the seismic belt goes through the ECO Region. Flash floods due to irregular heavy raining in different parts of the region cause considerable damages. In the past decade, drought has become a serious threat to the region.

Most countries of the region, suffered from consequences of drought. Landslide is another frequent hazard in ECO Region which imposes huge damages at community and national levels.

It may be recalled that Iran and Pakistan are among top 10 countries in terms of number of deaths in 2012. Pakistan is also among top 10 countries in terms of victims and economic damages.

Table4- Natural Disaster Occurrence in ECO Region from 1980-2010

Disasters	Flood	Earthquake	Drought	Epidemic	Storm	Others
Countries						
Afghanistan	57	26	3	20	4	20
Azerbaijan	7	3	1	-	-	1
Iran	62	68	1	1	-	1
Kazakhstan	7	1	-	3	1	4
Kyrgyzstan	3	6	1	3	1	9
Pakistan	58	20	1	9	18	32
Tajikistan	21	7	2	5	2	14
Turkey	30	35	-	3	7	15
Turkmenistan	1	1	-	-	-	-
Uzbekistan	1	1	1	1	-	2
Total	274	168	10	45	33	98

Source: www.preventionweb.net

Despite the significant efforts in reducing vulnerability of disasters, the vulnerability of many individuals and communities to natural hazards continues to increase considerably. Thus there is an emerging perceived need to strengthen significantly collaboration and to facilitate learning and information exchange among ECO Member States.

Baku Declaration, adopted in 9th ECO Summit on May 2006, highlighted the importance of regional cooperation on these issues and recommended consideration of regional programmes and projects for early warning, preparedness and management of natural disasters and the need for strengthening collaboration within and beyond the region in this regard, and putting in place a permanent regional response mechanism dedicated to disaster preparedness, earthquake safety and drought management, etc.

The First ECO Interior Ministers Meeting held in Tehran on 1st November 2006 was a positive step forward to strengthen cooperation in the face of natural disasters. The meeting accepted the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to set up a Regional Centre for Natural Disasters Management in Iran. The meeting also suggested establishment of a Fund for disaster relief and rehabilitation and possible prevention of natural calamities.

Based on these recommendations and understanding the regional implications of disasters, ECO has embarked on different initiatives to address the issue and in this regard a number of steps have been taken towards cooperation among the Member States and some very useful events/activities regarding disaster risk reduction in recent years have been organized:

- 7 ECO International Conferences on Disaster Risk Management from 2006 to 2014 in Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Republic of Azerbaijan respectively. The Conference, held annually in the ECO Region, is one of the main ECO forum for discussing and developing policies and guidelines on disaster risk reduction in the ECO Region. In the 7th Conference held in June 2014 in Republic of Azerbaijan, relevant high level authorities of the Member States and heads/experts of international/regional organizations as well as organizations of the United Nations system related to disaster management attended the event.

- Signing MOU between ECO and the United Nations Secretariat of International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, UNOCHA and UNESCAP and closed cooperation with UNISDR and UNHABITAT.

- Several workshops in collaboration with the United Nations Agencies on Disaster Risk Reduction.

However, for addressing vulnerability of disasters, ECO needs to develop a regional disaster risk reduction strategy/framework. This strategy should provide the basis for any action plan in the future and needs to be developed by academics specialized in climate change, disaster response and development. Development policy and disaster response are intricately linked. Development affects the capacity of individuals, communities and governments to prevent, cope and rebuild from natural disasters. Efforts to strengthen resilience are most effective when they are integrated into strategies for development. Hazards become disasters in the absence of development, and without adequate investment in risk reduction.

Exposure to disaster risk is growing faster than our ability to build resilience. Economic losses are rising, and communities are continuously threatened. Rapid regional economic growth is also partially responsible for the rapid growth of disaster exposure.

Gains made through development are highly vulnerable when disaster prevention is ignored. The disaster risk reduction strategy/framework will address disaster mitigation by integrating the risk reduction frameworks into development policies and practices.

ECO shall also accelerate the efforts to strengthen its capacity and capability to deal with various kinds of natural, human-induced and complex disasters. Member States should continue collaboration on a new strategy to further enhance disaster risk reduction initiatives. ■

Resources:

- UNISDR Terminology on Disaster Risk reduction, 2009,
- The Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2012, UNISDR and UNESCAP
- Debarati Guha-Sapir, Philippe Hoyois and Regina Below, "Annual Disaster Statistical Review 2012, the numbers and trends", Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), Institute of Health and Society (IRSS) Université catholique de Louvain-Brussels, Belgium, pp 1-3
- Schipper, L. and Pelling, M. (2006). Disaster risk, climate change and international development: Scope for, and challenges to integration, Disasters, pp. 19-38.
- UNDP, Reducing disaster risk: A challenge for development
- About the author: Javad Heidari is the Programme officer of the Directorate of Human Resource and Sustainable Development in the ECO Secretariat

ECO Publications

"Drug Situation in the ECO Region 2008-2012"

■ The illicit drug phenomenon has been characterized as one of the main impediments to economic development of the affected countries. This makes anti-narcotics campaign even more complex. Any attempt to tackle this menace shall address the cultivation, production, manufacturing and trafficking dimensions. ECO region, with a population of about 440 million (57% under 24 years old), and eight million square kilometers in area, is one of the most affected regions in the world. This region is home to major trafficking routes in the world. More than 95% of the global opium seizure as well as 66% of the global heroin seizure take place in ECO region. ECO-Drug and Organized Crime Coordination Unit publishes a periodic flagship report titled "Statistics and Analytical Report of Drug Situation in the ECO Region". The purpose of this Report is to give an update on the drug-related state of play in the Region based on the data received through the networked national authorities in the Member States as well as relevant international organizations and resources. This year's report, "Drug Situation in the ECO Region 2008-2012", is the first compendium of statistics and analytical account covering 2008-2012. It is a product of ECO-DOCCU in collaboration with ECO Member States under the framework of EU-funded project titled "Fight against Trafficking from/to Afghanistan". The preparation of this Report benefited from the generous financial contributions by the European Union within the context of the above mentioned project, excellent coordination by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and sharing of firsthand data and sources by the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) and Paris Pact. ■



"ECO Statistical Report 2014: ECO Trade"

■ Review by
Mohammad
Hossein Amini

Statistics is the science of learning from data, and of measuring, controlling and communicating uncertainty; and it thereby provides the navigation essential for controlling the course of scientific and societal advances. Statistics is applicable to a wide variety of disciplines and increasing usage of data has made statistics an important tool in implementing strategies, policies and programmes of any organization. In achieving its main objective of expansion of economic cooperation in the region and bringing together the members for closer economic ties, ECO places special importance to reliable and updated statistics and establishment of regional harmonized statistical system in the Region with a view to supporting policy making bodies of the Organization. The Directorate for Projects, Economic Research and Statistics (PERS) of the ECO Secretariat in fulfilling its mandate and implementation of the "ECO Plan of Action on Statistics" has operated the ECO Statistical Network (ECOSTAT) since February 2011 to pave the way for intensifying statistical cooperation among the ECO National Statistical Offices (www.ecosn.org). The Network is disseminating the latest updated data, statistics and information collected from the ECO NSOs. "ECO Statistical Report" is a periodic publication of the Organization that intends to give a comprehensive picture of the Region through presenting and analyzing the main socio-economic indicators of countries of the Region. The Report introduces the main characteristics of the ECO Region in different statistical domains by reviewing and analyzing the most updated data of Member States supported by tables, charts and maps. The third report in the series of "ECO Statistical Report",



namely, "ECO Trade 2014" reviews the trends of regional and international trade activities of countries of the region through providing and analyzing the most important indicators of their foreign trade statistics. An Appendix consisting of time series of major indicators is attached to the Report to support regional socio-economic research/studies by interested researchers and users. The PERS Directorate makes its endeavors to compile and publish same reports for other priority areas of the Organization. ■

"ECO Regular Monitoring of Trucks"

■ Review by
Fereshteh
Khorsandnia

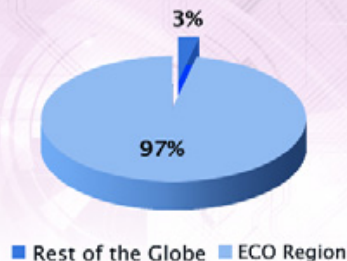
The final Report of the ECO/IRU Project for Regular Monitoring of Trucks provides analytical information about the conditions of road transport, such as border waiting times, customs procedures, controls and road checks as well as existing transport infrastructure along major transport routes in the ECO region and beyond. Data of around 140 commercial journeys of trucks from different national territories has been collected and analysed through NEA Institute (the Netherlands) using UNESCAP Time-Distance-Cost" methodology, to serve the above mentioned purpose. The results of the survey shows the exact situation in various aspects of transit operations including visa, permit, fuel, speed, costs, customs procedures, and application of the TIR Convention. For example, average speed is only 15 km/h., waiting time in queues takes 30% of the total travel time, and fuel costs are about 40% of the total costs. Final chapter of the Report also provides the concrete recommendations to improve transit operations in the Region. The soft copy of this report in two languages (English and Russian) is accessible at the ECO Website: (www.ecosecretariat.org). ■



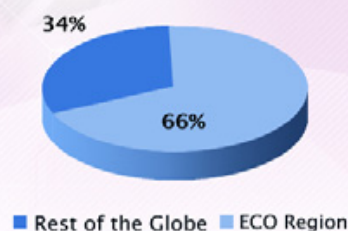
EU-Funded Project on Fight against Trafficking from/to Afghanistan



Opium Seizures 2008-2010



Heroin Seizures 2008-2010



Component I

Strengthening the political and technical capacities of the ECO-DOCCU



Component II

Establishing I-24/7 as the central communication system for information and intelligence exchange at the regional and trans-regional levels.



Component III

Developing a network of border control cooperation at Land/Air/Sea Ports of Entry for container control to stem the flow of drugs, precursors and other illegal trafficking



Component IV

Establishing a network of forensic laboratories in the ECO region, notably with regard to drugs, precursors and forged documents, but possibly also other elements of evidence

Drug seizures in the ECO Region (2008-2012)



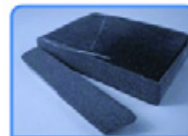
2,695,568 kg
Opium seizures



238,431 kg
Heroin seizures



624,857 kg
Cannabis seizures



1,792,671 kg
Hashish seizures



UNODC
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



Bundeskriminalamt



UN World Conference on
Disaster Risk Reduction
14-18 March 2015, Sendai, Japan

Towards an ECO Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction



ECO

Economic Cooperation Organization

<http://www.ecosecretariat.org>