

2019

The News Magazine of Economic Cooperation Organization

Series 8 No.19



ECO CHRONICLE





Foreword



ECO draws inspiration from its historical heritage, geographical location and is geared to achieve the objectives of enhanced economic cooperation, advanced infrastructure development and secured sustainable development in the region.

This present issue of ECO Chronicle highlights the major activities of the ECO for the period autumn 2018 to spring 2019. Economic cooperation is assuming greater importance in planning and execution of ECO's objectives. To realize the enormous economic potential exists in the region, ECO Secretariat has laid increased emphasis on boosting trade and investment activities in the region. In order to strengthen the private sector cooperation in the region, ECO Heads of Privatization Administrations

met in Baku in October 2018 and agreed to establish a networking system to enhance coordination among Privatization Organizations of Member States.

At the same time we remained committed and focused for connectivity in the ECO region through several initiatives as the improvements in means of communication and information flows can be effectively utilized to establish networking and leverage regional advantages with the potential investors looking for sustainable and profitable investment destination. Apart from road and rail infrastructures, Special emphasis has also been given to maritime linkages and Meeting of the Heads of Reference Maritime Organizations of ECO Member States has been organized in March 2019 at the ECO Secretariat which finalized the future plan of action in the relevant fields.

In the context of policy and planning, 29th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) has been organized in December 2019 at ECO Secretariat. The Council adopted the Work Program of the organization for the year 2019. The delegates of the Council also recognized the ECO's new approach of transforming ECO as a project oriented organization.

The same period also witnessed important strides in strengthening and expanding ties with the United Nations system and other international and regional organizations to tap ECO's full potential and to develop it into a viable and vigorous regional organization capable of channeling the aspirations of the people of the region. With this view, ECO maintained active participation at several international fora and remained engaged with relevant regional partners.

We are hopeful that the present issue of the Chronicle will prove useful to all those who follow with interest the developments in the region and activities of the ECO and introduced a new project for establishing a network to connect ECO dry ports to sea ports that would further lead to develop ECO Zones on selected sea port of the region.

Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour
ECO Secretary General



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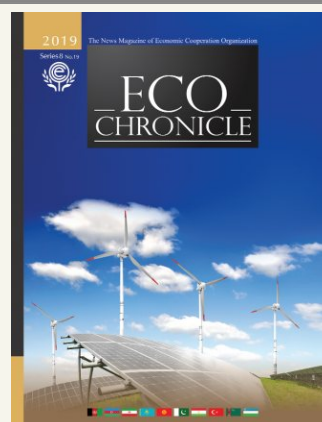
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In The Name Of God

Front Cover



New ECO
Strategy on Energy
Cooperation

ECO
CHRONICLE

Published by
Economic Cooperation Organization

Patron & Supervision

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ECO Regional Planning Council

concluded
in Tehran
(December 20, 2018)



(Tehran, Iran) The 29th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) has concluded its four day deliberations on December 20, 2018 at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran. The closing session of the meeting was attended by delegations from the ECO Member States and observers, as well as heads and officials of the ECO Regional Institutions, Specialized Agencies and Affiliated Bodies.

During the sessions, eight sectoral committees discussed various issues related to Trade and Investment, Transport and Communications, Energy, Mineral and Environment, Agriculture, Industry and Tourism, Projects, Economic Research and



Statistics, Human Resources and Sustainable Development, Drugs and Organized Crime Coordination, and ECO Regional Institutions/Specialized Agencies/Affiliated Bodies and International Relations. At the closing session the Work Program and the Calendar of Events for the year 2019 were adopted by the Council.

On the sidelines of the session, ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour held consultations with the heads of delegations of the Member



States, observers as well as ECO regional institutions, specialized agencies and affiliated bodies. Speaking at the closing session, Dr. Soleimanpour touched on the issues of importance such as moving the Organization towards a project oriented approach and appreciated Member State proposals to hold Ministerial Meetings in the coming year.

Speaking as the Chairman of the Organization, the Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Emomzoda Nematullo, thanked the participants and ECO staff for the successful organization of the meeting. The representatives of the Member States also expressed their commitment to the Organization and appreciated the Secretariat for the successful organization of the meetings.

The next Regional Planning Council (RPC) has been scheduled to be held on January 14-17, 2020 at the ECO Secretariat.



(Tehran, Iran) ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour has met Afghanistan's Deputy Minister of National Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs, Qasim Haidari, on the sidelines of ECO-UNHabitat joint workshop on "Urban Resilience, Habitat Improvement, Disaster Risk Management and Built Environment" which was held from 11 to 14 November 2018 at ECO Secretariat in Tehran.

Reduction, he added.

The Deputy Minister in turn while emphasizing on the adverse effects of natural disasters to the economy and people of his country, requested the ECO region to

ECO SG, Afghan Deputy Minister meet in Tehran

(November 11, 2018)



During the meeting the ECO Secretary General while emphasizing on the priorities, objectives and mission of the organization for promoting economic solidarity in the region, underlined that the Organization would welcome any proposals from the government of Afghanistan on natural disasters.

These proposals can be completed in partnership with the partners of the Organization based on the prioritized needs of Afghanistan on Disaster Risk

assist the country to reduce the impacts which have imposed heavy social effects as well as economic costs on the government and nation of Afghanistan.

ECO Day 2018 celebrated in Tehran

(November 28, 2018)

ECO
CHRONICLE (Tehran, Iran)
ECO Day 2018
has been commemorated on
November 28, 2018 with the
presence of ambassadors and

representatives of the Tehran
diplomatic corps, high-ranking
authorities from the host country,
as well as representatives of
Member States.





ECO Foreign Ministers meet in New York

(September, 24, 2018)

ECO
CHRONICLE

(New York, United Nations)
The highest policy and decision-making body of the Economic Cooperation Organization Organization (ECO), the Council of Ministers (COM), have met on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly to discuss relevant regional and global developments within the ECO framework.

The 25th Informal Meeting was chaired on September, 24, 2018, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, Sirodjiddin Muhriddin, who in his speech briefly touched upon vital issues for the Organization, noted that the economic climate at a regional and global scale requires an effective and collective response within the Organization.

During the meeting the Foreign Ministers spoke of their commitment to enhance regional trade and improve socio-economic conditions within the region. They also expressed hope that the ECO region's transit potential could be fulfilled through the expansion of East-West, North-South and South-West trade corridors.

On the ECO Advocacy program for Afghanistan, the Ministers expressed hope the program can serve as a means to assist the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to



reinforce economic initiatives for sustainable development.

They also emphasized on regional cooperation as a means to achieving long-lasting peace and stability adding that friendly relations can be further strengthened with projects that ensure regional connectivity.

The issue of the ECO Transit Transport

Framework Agreement (TTFA) was also high on the agenda with participants agreeing that it would enable the region to function as a bridge between the North and the South and Europe and Asia. Member States emphasized that an upgrade in the region's rail and transport infrastructure would lead to facilitated trade and broadened economic and environmental collaborations.

The Council congratulated Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour for assumption of the post of ECO Secretary General and wished him every success in his activity. The Council also expressed its gratitude to outgoing ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khalil Ibrahim Akca for his accomplishments during his time in the Secretariat. The Council also expressed appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, for the excellent arrangements in organizing the Informal Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting.



(Islamabad, Pakistan)

The Secretary General of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour has met with the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan during his first visit to the country after assuming office in August 2018.

During the meeting on March 13, 2019, the Secretary General while congratulating the Prime Minister on his election, appreciated his vision on regionalism and underlined the significance of ECO as geo-economic regional organization. Dr. Soleimanpour touched on the historical importance of Silk Route as the backbone of the economic integration of the region in the past and discussed the background and activities of the Organization on Trade, Regional Connectivity, Energy, Tourism and External Relations.

The Secretary General also presented an update on the following key initiatives/proposals:

1. Latest developments on the implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA)

2. ITI Corridor and up-gradation of Quetta-Taftan railway track and possibility of inviting interested countries including China to invest in corridors/projects for regional connectivity.

3. Proposal for enhancing the mandate of the ECO Bank (ECOTDB)

4. ECO Clearing Union as a significant regional framework for increasing trade growth of the member states

5. Enhancing the sense of ownership through ECO Reform process finalized by the Islamabad ECO Summit in 2017.

The Prime Minister underscored the

ECO SG makes Official visit to Pakistan

(March 13, 2019)

importance of ECO for its tremendous potential for regional cooperation in trade, communication and other sectors



and appreciated progress made on ECO Clearing Union, reform agenda and regional connectivity. The Prime Minister, while acknowledging the role of ECO, ensured the Secretary General of full support of his Government. He also hoped that under the able leadership of Dr. Soleimanpour the Organization will achieve its objectives and goals set in the vision 2025.

ECO

Maritime Organizations meet in Tehran (March 6, 2019)

ECO
CHRONICLE

(Tehran, Iran) The 5th Meeting of the Heads of Reference Maritime Organizations of ECO Member States

was held on March 6, 2019 at the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

While addressing the session ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpur, stated that the implementation of decisions of the 9th Meeting of ECO Transport Ministers in Turkmenistan is one of the foundations required for the establishment of complimentary beneficial networks amongst dry ports in landlocked countries and sea ports in coastal countries of the region. The Secretary General proposed that the connection of major Caspian Sea seaports such as Baku in Azerbaijan, Aktau in Kazakhstan, Turkmenbashi in Turkmenistan and Anzali in Iran with coastal sea ports in the Persian Gulf via ECO's railway links can serve this purpose.

Iran's Deputy Managing Director for Ports and Economic Affairs of Ports and Maritime Organization, Mohammad Ali Hasanzadeh, said that to date only around 20% of Iran's existing potential for cargo transit with the neighboring countries has been realized. Tapping into this potential could create opportunities for countries of the region, he added. The simplification of customs administration and removal of tariff barriers were named as effective tools to augment transit

transport in the ECO region.

As practical steps towards mandatory implementation of decisions of ECO's Transport Ministers, the meeting consid-

ered the project proposal on establishing the complementary networking amongst ECO countries by utilizing their logistics in seaports of coastal countries and in dry ports of landlocked countries (LLCs). Upon the detailed deliberations, the proposal was agreed for implementation purposes.

The concept idea of launching the tourism cruise liner in the Caspian Sea was favored by all ECO Member States. The suggested cruise liner was commissioned for a test run to start in the coming summer.

The meeting provided an insightful space for the Member States to exchange thoughts and empirical, practice-based recommendations on near future developments in the maritime cooperation area while, at the same time, it has preserved strong coherence with past achievements. Thus, the meeting decided that the scope of oversight of reference marine organizations of ECO Member States be widened to include port authorities given today's realities associated with urgency of addressing LLCs' needs, and also, out of commonalities being pursued along similar international path by Almaty Plan of Action, Vienna Program, and Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports.





(Tehran, Iran) The Republic of Azerbaijan has signed the "Statute of the ECO Regional Center for Cooperation of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen (RCCA-CO)", which seeks to coordinate regional efforts against corruption, money laundering, and other financial crimes.

The ceremony which took place on the sidelines of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) on September 11, 2018 saw Azerbaijan's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Bunyad Huseynov, formally sign the document.

"This document is a crucial step in promoting law enforcement, judicial and intelligence cooperation on detecting and deterring financial and economic crimes within the region," he said.

A decision for the Center was made by the first meeting of Heads of Anti-corruption agencies and Ombudsmen of ECO Member States in Tehran on May 21-22, 2011 and its statute was that was adopted in 2012 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Among the objectives of the center are

to strengthen measures within the region to prevent and combat corruption and enhance cooperation among ECO Member States in order to adopt common standards for the fight against corruption.

Currently the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan,



Azerbaijan Signs ECO

Anti-Corruption Agency Statute

(September 11, 2018)

the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Tajikistan are signatories to the Statute. The Statute will enter into force after the deposition of 4 Instruments of ratification with the depository.

So far the Instruments of ratification by Iran and Pakistan have been deposited.

(Baku, Azerbaijan) The 6th Meeting of ECO Heads of Privatization Administrations was held on October 26, 2018 with the aim of expanding cooperation in the field of Privatization.

The meeting, preceded by the 5th High Level Working Group (HLWG) Meeting on Privatization and Private Sector Development, was attended by the delegations from all ECO Member States, ECO Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI), Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI),

ernize the property management sector in line with international standards."

While speaking at the event, ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, emphasized that the privatization process within the context of global economy may enhance the region's place on the international capital cycle. He also highlighted the importance of intra-regional investment, regional markets links and privatization harmonization.

ECO Director for Agriculture Industry and Tourism, Memduh Unal, also presented a brief progress report on implementation process of the decisions taken since the

last Meeting, as well as the status of ECO activities on Privatization. He also delivered a presentation on the role of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the ECO Region.

During the Meeting, the Heads of delegates from the Member States delivered their statements on policies challenges and future plans on the Management of State Property and Privatization. The Secretary General of the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI) and the Representatives from Iranian Privatization Organization and IFC delivered their respective statements on the issue.

While underlining the importance of comprehensive follow-up and review of the implementation of the ECO Vision 2025, the participants agreed on the establishment of a networking system to enhance coordination among Privatization Organizations of Member States and the need to explore the possibility of the introduction of Production Chain Mechanism in the region. They also expressed interest in plans to enhance intra-

regional trade through multiple measures, including implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and the creation of an Investment Forum with the participation of Privatization Organizations of the ECO Member States and International Investors.

The Meeting concluded with the adoption of the Baku Declaration on Privatization which was prepared by the 5th HLWG Meeting.



ECO Head of Privatization Administrations Meeting in Baku

(October 26, 2018)

International Finance Cooperation (IFC), European Union as well as the delegation from the ECO Secretariat.

In his inaugural speech, Azerbaijan's Chairman of State Committee on Property Issues, Karam Hasanov, highlighted the progress and potential of privatization in Azerbaijan adding that "as a result of these reforms, measures are being taken to mod-



(Baku, Azerbaijan)

The 5th meeting of the High Level Working Group on Privatization and Private Sector Development was held in preparation for the 6th Meeting of ECO Heads of Privatization Administrations on October 25, 2018.

The Meeting was attended by the delegations from the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, ECO Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI), Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), International Finance Cooperation (IFC), European Union as well as the delegation of ECO Secretariat.

During his inaugural speech, the Deputy Chairman of State Committee on Property Issues of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Rafiq Jalilov, called for coherent cooperation among the Member States in the field of state property management and privatization. The ECO Director for Agriculture Industry and Tourism, Memduh Unal, delivered a presentation on the role of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the ECO Region and the

ECO Privatization Working Group held in Baku

(October 25, 2018)

Programme Officer of the ECO Secretariat presented a progress report on implementation process of the decisions taken since the last Meeting, as well as the status of ECO activities in the field of Privatization.

During the Meeting the delegates from ECO Member States as well as the representatives from IFC, ECO-CCI and FPCCI discussed the subject which was accompanied by extensive deliberation on overall key issues, Q&A sessions and idea sharing. Member States emphasized on enhancing collective cooperation and coordination in the field of state property management and privatization and discussed the means for enhancing coordination on privatization and intra-regional trade.

At the end of the Meeting, draft report of the 6th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administrations and Baku Declaration were prepared for the approval of the subsequent Meeting of ECO Heads of Privatization Administrations.



ECO SG visits Azerbaijan

(October 25-26, 2018)

ECO
CHRONICLE

The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour has conducted his first visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan on October 25-26, 2018 and held meetings with Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister, Elmar Mammadyarov, in a bid to discuss ways and means to enhance economic cooperation in the ECO region.

While appreciating the Minister's hospitality towards the ECO delegation, the Secretary General praised Azerbaijan's active role in ECO activities. The two sides also discussed latest developments within the Organization and exchanged views on the prospects of the relations for socio-economic development in this resource-rich region. Dr. Soleimanpour also underlined ECO's institutional reforms for more ownership of the organization to perform its effective role in realization of the ECO Vision 2025 and emphasized on coordinated efforts to get more concrete results in main priority areas.

The Secretary General discussed the Organization's core agreements such as ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), Agreement



of Protection and Promotion of Investment (APPI), Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) and its potential impact on the Republic of Azerbaijan as a transit country. He appreciated Azerbaijan's recent initiative namely the ECO Research Centre (ERC). Both parties also discussed the significance of tourism in the region and agreed to work more closely on some new ideas to tap immense potential of the region. Considering an accelerated effort and closer cooperation as imperative to the region, both sides agreed to further intensify constructive engagements for regional development.

During the meeting Mr. Mammadyarov highlighted that the ECO member states might benefit from the projects initiated jointly and observed that

there are immense opportunities for cooperation between the Member States especially in the areas of trade, transport, information and communication technologies, tourism, energy, etc and it can yield dividends for all economies in the region.

Prior to this Meeting, Secretary General also met the Deputy Foreign Minister, Mahmud Mammad-Guliyev, and discussed Azerbaijan's role in enhancing organization efficiency and reform

process. Trade, investment, ECO-TDB, transport and communication potential as corridor hub were also discussed at the session, with the Deputy Minister underlining that Azerbaijan assigns special significance to ECO affairs due to its great contribution in the regional development.

Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour also met with Azerbaijan's Minister of Economy, Shahin Mustafayev, on 26 October, 2018 to discuss the latest developments within the Organization and exchange views on means to improve the economic conditions and trade prospects between ECO and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The Minister while discussing the economic performance of Azerbaijan gave a brief overview of Azerbaijan's economic growth, trade and investment

and its role in ECO-Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB).

ECO Secretary General highlighted current status of cooperation between ECO and the Republic of Azerbaijan with focus on future plans for realization of the ECO Vision 2025. He highlighted Azerbaijan's trade volume with its neighboring countries and emphasized to enhance it to its potential through more meaningful cooperation within the ECO framework especially through ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) for enhanced market access. He appreciated Azerbaijan's role in the ECO-Trade and Development Bank and need to enhance its contribution in future.

During the Meeting, agreements such as Agreement of Protection and Promotion of Investment (APPI), Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) also came under discussion. The Secretary General said that ECO's connectivity projects



can have a favorable impact on Azerbaijan's economy in a way that results in the country becoming a transit corridor/hub which in turn could increase trade and overall development in the region. The ECO Electricity Market initiative was also high on the agenda.

Both sides agreed on the signif-

icance of increasing trade, investment, energy and tourism in the region through enhanced connectivity and to enhance commercial viability of projects through increased trade. They also discussed on-going and future projects in the area of research and praised the contri-



bution of Azerbaijan in its furtherance, and further agreed to make use of Azerbaijan's potential and improve the pace of regional development.

The Secretary General also met Azerbaijan's Minister of Transport, Communications and High Technologies, Ramin Namiq Oglu Guluzade. The two sides discussed the importance of connectivity and communication for the Republic of Azerbaijan which has immense potential as a transit hub. The significance of the proximity of the Republic of Azerbaijan to huge market of the ECO Member States and its beneficial role in fostering economic growth and development through enhancing volume exports was also deliberated. In addition, the ways and means to enhance economic cooperation particularly through improving regional connectivity were considered in the meeting.

Dr. Soleimanpour also discussed the current state of various road and rail connections

and projects passing through Azerbaijan. Both sides concurred that better connectivity, physical and electronic, is imperative for result-oriented cooperation by providing a strong base for enhancing intra-regional trade and commercial activities in the region through better inflow of investments. More projects will be launched in future in priority areas including Transport and Communications in the light of the ECO Vision 2025, he said. The overarching legal framework of Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) and its potential impact on the Republic of Azerbaijan also came under dis-



cussion. Current state of the main road and rail routes connecting the North-South, East-West of the Region particularly (Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) and its possibility of connectivity with the eastern part of the ECO region was also discussed. The developments with regard to infrastructure project connecting Azerbaijan and Iran through Astara which is the part of ECO project "Gazvin -Rasht -Astara (Iran) -Astara (Azerbaijan) was also high on the agenda, with the Minister emphasizing the need for cooperation with the objective of assisting Azerbaijan to reach its righteous place as one of the transit and electronic hub of the region.

Pakistan ECO Representative Presents Credentials to ECO SG

(August 16, 2018)



ECO CHRONICLE (Tehran, Iran) The recently appointed ambassador of Pakistan to Iran, Ms. Riffat Masood presented her letter of credence to the Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour at the ECO Secretariat on August 16, 2018.

During their meeting, the ECO Secretary General, while extending warm felicitations for the formation of a new government in Pakistan, stated that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, being a founding, proactive and vocal member of the organization, holds a very prominent position in the ECO's affairs.

Dr. Soleimanpour lauded Pakistan's receptiveness for hosting several important events, including the 13th ECO Summit and the 28th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) in 2017. He also expressed his sincere gratitude to the ambassador for the excellent contributions made by Pakistan during its chairmanship.

The two sides took into account the implementation process of the ECO trade Agreement (ECOTA) and the positions of the Member States on the agreement signed on July 17, 2003 at Islamabad. They also discussed the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA), which seeks to provide access to land-locked

member countries in the ECO region. Dr. Soleimanpour underlined that the agreement witnessed a wave of pleasure and enthusiasm amongst member states in view of its character to increase interconnectedness and facilitating access to major sea ports of the region.

The Secretary General emphasized on the significance of regional cooperation among member and neighboring states to boost the national and regional economic growth and development, adding that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) could serve as a model for future cooperation within and outside the ECO region.

Ambassador Masood underlined that the ECO is well-poised to handle the challenges and avail future opportunities prevailing in the region, assuring the Secretary General of Pakistan's full support to secure

organization's aims and objectives. Ambassador Masood, who holds considerable experience of working with United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris (1998-2001) and the relevant expertise in both multilateral and bilateral diplomacy, also mentioned the importance of multilateralism in the economic development. Besides, she served as Staff Officer to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (late) and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (1994-1998), respectively.



Turkey Permanent Representative Presents Credentials to ECO SG

(February 4, 2019)

 (Tehran, Iran)
The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour has received the Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey, Derya Ors, as the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the Organization.

During the meeting on February 4, 2019, Dr. Soleimanpour acknowledged Turkey's role as a founding, proactive and vocal member of the organization.

Turkey holds a prominent position within the affairs of the Organization, he added while appreciating the country's receptiveness for hosting several important ECO events within its borders.

Ambassador Ors while emphasizing on ECO's capability to handle the challenges and avail future opportunities prevailing in the region, assured the Secretary General of Turkey's full support to secure organization's aims and objectives. Ambassador Ors invited the Secretary General to pay visit Turkey in the coming months and the kind invitation was welcomed by the Secretary General.

The two sides also exchanged views on the current issues of the Organization including the implementation process of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and the positions of the Member States on the Agreement signed on July 17, 2003 in Islamabad.



Uzbek Permanent Representative Presents Credentials to ECO SG

(November 27, 2018)



ECO CHRONICLE (Tehran, Iran) The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour has received the Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Bakhodir Abdullaev, as the Permanent Representative of Uzbekistan to the Organization.

During the meeting on November 27, 2018 the Ambassador acknowledged the importance of Organization in promoting regional economic cooperation, adding that the strong relations with neighboring countries and the emphasis on regional organizations have been prioritized in foreign policy of the new Government of Uzbekistan.

While expressing his pleasure to receive ambassador's credentials, the Secretary General considered the gesture of the Government of the

Republic Uzbekistan as an evidence of its willingness to further fuel the level of existing cooperation with ECO.

The Secretary General added that under the visionary leadership of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has been playing a dynamic and pivotal role at regional level as well as in the activities of the regional organizations such as the Economic Cooperation Organization. Considering the geopolitical, geo-economic, historical, social and cultural richness of Uzbekistan, the outcome of this new policy undoubtedly will increase the role of Uzbekistan in regional and international arenas, Dr. Soleimanpour added.

The two sides also discussed the ECO reform process and role of the Republic of Uzbekistan in this regard. They further reviewed the capacities and methods for operationalization of basic agreements such as TTFA and ECOTA.

Uzbekistan is a key member of the organization with 32.4 million of population. The foreign trade's turnover of the country in the year 2017 amounted to 733 billion US dollars, while it plays an essential role in the areas of transit transport and regional development.

ECO SG New Kazakh Permanent Representative Meet in Tehran

(February 3, 2019)

ECO CHRONICLE (Tehran, Iran) The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour has received the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Ashgat Orazbay, as the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the Organization.

During the meeting of February 3, 2019, the ECO Secretary General, while extending warm felicitations to the visiting Ambassador for assuming his new post, stated that the Republic of Kazakhstan, being fourth biggest contributor to the ECO budget holds a very prominent position in the ECO's affairs.

The Secretary General emphasized on the importance of regional cooperation among Member and neighboring states to

boost the national and regional economic growth and development, adding that in this regard the increasing participation of Kazakhstan in the Organization carries a particular significance. The ECO Secretary General also thanked Ambassador Orazbay for his valuable contributions to the ECO for his efforts during his tenure as the ECO Secretary General.

Ambassador Orazbay highlighted the great importance that Kazakhstan attaches to ECO as a significant organization at a strategic location. He particularly underlined the importance of multilateral relations in the ECO region and willingness of Kazakhstan to make significant contributions to the realization of the objectives of the Organization in the coming period.



ECO
CHRONICLE

(Tehran, Iran) The 3rd ECO Head of Veterinary Organizations Meeting and the First Technical Steering Committee Meeting for early establishment/Operationalization of the

ECO Veterinary Heads meet in Tehran

(October 6, 2018)

ECO-VECO has been held in the Iranian capital in a bid to increase trade of animal and animal products within the ECO region.

The three-day event was inaugurated on October 6, 2018 by the head of Iran's veterinary organization, Alireza Rafieipour with the participation from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan and representatives from

the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

In his speech to the session the ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, emphasized on the need of the countries of the region to cooperate in areas such as the prevention and control of diseases which threaten animal production, public health and trade through regional networks. Member States should strive to formulating roadmaps and allocating certain budgets to combat the spread of dangerous livestock dis-



eases within and across international borders, he said.

The session saw representatives from ECO Member States, review the scale of Transboundary Animal Disease (TAD) and their eradication in the ECO region. They also discussed the means for effective functioning of the ECO-VECO, including initiating practices that lead to increased trade in animal and animal products in the ECO region. The delegates elaborated on the priority areas of the ECO-VECO for the years 2019 to 2024.

ECO SG visits Uzbekistan on Transport Talks

(September 20-21, 2018)



ECO CHRONICLE (Tashkent, Uzbekistan) The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour has taken part in the International High-Level Conference on "Central Asia in the System of International Transport Corridors: Strategic Perspectives and Unrealized Opportunities" on September 20-21, 2018.

Recognizing the increasing role of Uzbekistan in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Secretary General accepted the invitation of the first Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr Achilbay Ramatov, to attend the meeting in a bid to promote the development of the transit-transport potential of the region.

Speaking at the session, Dr. Soleimanpour underlined the prominent role of the President

of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev in the development and progress of his country, particularly his role in turning Uzbekistan into a strategic transport and transit hub for the region.

The Secretary General also emphasized on the role of the Economic Cooperation Organization in coordinating and promoting cooperation between Member States and provided the latest developments with regards to the ECO Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA). The Secretariat has also plans to reinforce cooperation with regional and international organizations in order to improve regional connectivity and trade within the ECO Region and beyond, he added.

During the trip, the Secretary General also met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Abdulaziz Kamilov, Minister of Foreign Trade, Khodjaev Jamshid Abduhakimovich and other senior officials from Uzbekistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Economy. In his sessions Dr. Soleimanpour presented the "ECO Transit Transport Framework Agreement & Non-Paper on benefits for the Member States on signing ECO-TTFA" and the "Non-paper on benefits for Uzbekistan on signing ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA)" which was produced specifically for Uzbekistan.

ECO DSG takes part in **Intl. Tourism Exhibition** in Tehran (February 12-15, 2019)



ECO CHRONICLE (Tehran, Iran)
ECO Deputy of
Secretary General has attended the
largest tourism specialized event in
Iran with the presence of 660
Iranian companies as well as 57 for-
eign companies from 12 countries.

The 12th Tehran International
Exhibition of Tourism and Affiliated
Industries held on February 12-15,
2019 in Tehran International Permanent
Fairground was sponsored by Iran Trade
Promotion Organization (ITPO), Iran Cultural
Heritage, Handicrafts & Tourism Organization
(ICHHTO) and Iran International Exhibition Co.
(IIEC).

The event registered by World Tourism
Organization (UNWTO), saw Travel agencies,
hotels, banks and insurance services, Air lines, sea
and rail road lines and other tourism related
Industries come together to introduce the capabili-
ties of organizations, unions, and companies relat-
ed to the tourism industry.

The ECO Secretariat delegation including Deputy
Secretary General, Ambassador Huseyin Avni
Bicakli and Director of Agriculture, Industry and



Tourism, Memduh Unal participated
in the inauguration of the
International Exhibition on Tuesday,
12 Feb 2019.

In his inaugural speech, Head of
the Iran Cultural Heritage,
Handicrafts & Tourism Organization,
Aliasghar Monesan with mentioning
to the statistics of international
tourists stated that the number of

international tourists in 2017 was one billion and
323 million people, reaching a billion and 400
million in 2018. It is anticipated that there will be
two billion tourists in the world by 2030 and Iran
as a rich country in cultural and historical places
with four season weather definitely can be one of
the important destinations in this regard.

While visiting the various sections of the exhibi-
tion on 12 & 13 Feb 2019, the Director of
Agriculture, Industry and Tourism and concerned
Program Officer, had several beneficial and con-
structive meetings with the representatives of
Tourism Private Agencies of ECO Member States,
the relevant authorities of Cultural Heritage
Handicrafts and Tourism of some Provinces such
as Zanjan and Mazandaran.



ECO DSG takes part in FM OIC meeting in UAE (March 1-2, 2019)

ECO CHRONICLE The Deputy Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization Ambassador Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli has taken part in the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on 1-2 March 2019 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

The session which was convened under the theme of "Fifty Years of Islamic Cooperation: Roadmap for Prosperity and Development" saw dignitaries discuss a wide range of topics including cooperation among the ECO & OIC member

countries, combating terrorism & fighting transnational organized crime.

Present at the meeting were Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Beibut Atankulov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyz Republic, Chingiz Aidarbekov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Sedat Onal who respectively addressed the participants and emphasized regional issues on the OIC agenda.

The Deputy Secretary General also came together with the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to discuss the current activities of the Economic Cooperation Organization as well as the possible areas of cooperation and current joint projects between the two organizations.

Ambassador Bicakli also held talks with the Secretary General of the Turkic Council, Baghdad Amreyev and exchanged views on the observer status of ECO and Turkic Council within their respective organization.

Furthermore, Deputy Secretary General Bicakli congratulated Amb. Musa Kulaklikaya (Turkey) and Amb. Askar Mussinov (Kazakhstan) for their assumption of duties as the newly-elected OIC Assistant Secretary General for Financial and Administrative Affairs and the Assistant Secretary General for Science and Technology, and wished them success in their new positions.

All ECO member states are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) while ECO itself has been granted an observer status in the OIC since 1995.



ECO DSG takes part in **International Financing Symposium** in Turkey (November 22-23, 2018)



(Istanbul, Turkey) ECO Deputy Secretary General, Huseyin Avni Bicakli, has attended an International Symposium on Financing for Development which has been held under the theme of "Thinking Innovative Solutions to Persistent Development Challenges" in the Turkish City of Istanbul.

The meeting of November 22-23, 2018 was organized by SESRIC and the Islamic Development Bank and attended by representatives of national institutions, international organizations, private sector and academia. While elaborating the opportunities for innovative financing mechanisms, as well as effective utilization modalities of existing resources for financing development in developing countries, the meeting highlighted the growing role of some OIC member countries as devel-



opment financiers and emerging donors in achieving global development goals.

During the Plenary Session related to South-South Cooperation in Financing for Development, Ambassador Bicakli delivered a presentation which covered main economic and sectoral indicators, and also investment and project

opportunities of ECO Member States. He also underlined that ECO is willing to intensify cooperation on SDGs with all stakeholders, especially for making partnership and advocacy for sustainable development of Afghanistan.

Aside from the Panel, the Deputy Secretary General has met with the Secretary General of SESRIC, Musa Kulaklıkaya, during which the two sides agreed on meeting in the near future to discuss further tangible collaboration projects based on the MoU signed between ECO & SESRIC.



ECO Technical Committee on Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)

Meets in Tehran

(October 22, 2018)



(Tehran, Iran)

Deputy Secretary General, Kanan Nazarov, has participated in the First Meeting of ECO Technical Committee on Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) on October 22, 2018 in Iranian capital city of Tehran.

The meeting was attended by delegates from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey.

The Deputy Secretary General underscored the significance of the Paperless trade/ EDI system in the competitive global environment, and maintained that paperless trade has become one of the most effective ways of trade facilitation, connectivity and proven mean of reducing cost of doing business. He emphasized on benefitting from success stories of EU, ASEAN, etc. in speeding up the process of regional integration. He highlighted that ECO is endeavoring to work in multiple areas including Trade, Investment, Customs facilitation, etc and ECO Vision 2025 provides guidance in this regard.

He affirmed that EDI adoption is not an option but indeed a compulsion. He called upon the participating experts and professionals to develop such system as it would lead to expansion in the volume of trade and investment in the region and will help foster economic growth of regional and national economies which are



under stressful conditions. He expressed his hope for deepening cooperation and develop a uniform format and solutions and increasing their capabilities by exchanging their expertise and experiences.

In his inaugural speech, the Director General of International Cooperation Department of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRICA), Hossein Kakhki, underlined the benefits of EDI and called upon Member States to strengthen their efforts for developing such system. He expressed the hope that the Meeting would provide a new structure in the field of Data Exchange through a meaningful discussion and deliberations.

Experts and professionals of the Member States held thorough discussions and completed important work on the subject. Deputy Secretary General profoundly appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) for hosting and making excellent arrangements this important Meeting and termed it a successful step.

KTI Railway Corridor Meeting held in Tehran

(April 10-11, 2019)

**ECO
CHRONICLE** The

inception meeting for the Study Project on Commercialization of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran Railway Corridor (KTI) was held at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran in a bid to share expertise and discuss the current status and future steps of the project.

The meeting of April 10 -11, 2019, was attended by the delegations from the concerned authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, including the private sector. Delegations from the Republic of Turkey and the Russian Federation were also in attendance to share their expertise in running Europe-Asia corridors.

The meeting co- organized

by Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP), International Consultants and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), saw the proposed study outlines, presented by the international consultants, supported by en-route countries. In addition the participants agreed to organize test run along the KTI railway corridor.

As the corridor management

mechanism is a critical component of the study project, it was agreed that the study team would draft possible options for corridor management mechanism for consideration of the countries so that to find out the most acceptable frame at the end.

The preliminary analysis on possibility of developing KTI railway corridor to an economic corridor among the countries was on the agenda with participants agreeing to would be incorporate analysis within the Study, thus including the identification of the criteria for establishing Special Logistic/Economic Zones (such as one between Kazakhstan and China in Khorgos) along railway border crossings of the en-route counties.



ECO, UN-Habitat Co-Host Workshop in Tehran

(November 11-14, 2018)

 (Tehran, Iran) The ECO Secretariat and the UN-Habitat office in Tehran have organized a four day workshop on "Urban Resilience, Habitat Improvement, Disaster Risk Management and Built Environment" for ECO Member States.

The workshop was held at ECO Secretariat in Tehran from 11 to 14 November 2018 while about 40 participants from Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Tajikistan.

In the opening session, ECO Deputy Secretary General, Huseyin Avni Bicakli, highlighted ECO activities and commitments on reducing disaster risks. He emphasized that disasters are a major contributor to entrenched poverty in low- and middle-income countries attempting to recover from extreme weather events amplified by the effects of climate change.

The Deputy Secretary General also extended his gratitude to UN Habitat office in Tehran for co-organizing this workshop and adding that the agency has been a



major partner for the Economic Cooperation Organization. The UNESCO-Habitat Project on Seismic Hazard and Risk Analysis focuses on 4 ECO Member States, namely, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan, and has been jointly done before, he added. Mr. Bicakli also highlighted that the ECO Secretariat has been pursuing cooperation and partnerships with potential relevant regional and international stakeholders with a view to sharing technical and other assistance and resources.

The head of UN-Habitat office in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Siamak Moghaddam, also underlined that the agency's approach is to strengthen urban resilience within the region as a key determinant for ensuring the effectiveness of response interventions during times of crisis and subsequent sustainable development. He added that since 2010, UN-Habitat has had close collaboration with ECO with the aim of promoting sustainable development and mitigation of disasters in all its forms within the region.

The Deputy Minister of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), Mohammad Qaseem Haidari, called on for more effective cooperation to reduce and manage the risk of natural and man-made disasters. He also expressed that his country expects more attention and support from neighboring countries and ECO member states as well as international organizations to accelerate its activities in this field.

ECO Experts meet in Turkey on **Access, Benefit Sharing**

(March 11-13, 2019)



(Antalya, Turkey) The First ECO Experts Group Meeting on Access and Benefit Sharing has been held with the participation of the Secretariat of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The meeting of March 11-13, 2019 saw representatives from Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkey as well as the representatives of the ECO Secretariat discuss the ABS Framework on as a Trans-Boundary Cooperation and Global Multilateral Benefit-sharing Mechanism.

Turkey's Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Forestry, Hasan Kanca, inaugurated the meeting by highlighting the importance of enhancing synergy and coherence among key stakeholders in the field of biodiversity in the ECO Region. He called upon the Member States to enhance their efforts for close collaboration in the field of economic, social, technological, sustainable forest management and other related environmental areas. Furthermore, the Deputy General Director expressed the hope that the Meeting would provide ample opportunities to build on existing arrangements and frameworks in the field of biodiversity, bio-smuggling and bio-piracy.

In his opening statement, ECO Director for Energy, Minerals and Environment, Fuad



Farzalibeyov, briefed the audience on the environment profile of ECO, and expressed hope that the subject Meeting would map out common result-oriented and coherent regional approaches and policy guidance for future roadmap of ECO in the field of ABS and related areas of biodiversity.

The CITES Secretariat also briefed the Meeting on illegal trade in wildlife; regional wildlife enforcement cooperation and information enforcement support; ongoing and potential role of ECO Member States in CITES process, its international legal framework and common procedural mechanisms for an effective regulation of international trade.

The Meeting highlighted the importance of monitoring export and import of species, particularly endangered species, integrated genetic resources management, combating illegal wildlife trade and transnational organized wildlife crime, use, registry and access to traditional knowledge and sharing of the benefits arising from its utilization. Furthermore, following extensive discussions, the Meeting finalized the Terms of Reference for ECO ABS Experts Pool.

ECO Secretariat attends FAO-OIE Advisory Committee (October 4-5, 2018)



(Rome, Italy) The ECO Secretariat has participated in a United Nations sponsored PPR Advisory Committee (PPR AC), aimed at eradicating sheep and goat plague around the globe.

The event sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), took place on October 4-5, 2018 at FAO Headquarters in Rome and saw representatives from civil society organizations, intergovernmental organizations, regional economic communities, PPR World Reference Laboratory (WRL), funding partners, FAO and OIE as well as independent PPR experts come together to pave the way for a PPR-free world by 2030.

ECO Director for Agriculture Industry and Tourism, Memduh Unal, attended the meeting which was officially opened by OIE Director General, Monique Eloit, and FAO Director of Animal Production and Health Division, Berhe Tekola.

During the meeting the participants discussed and agreed on the terms of reference of the PPR AC while elaborating the overview on the PPR GEP as well as the PPR Secretariat work plan 2016 - 2021. The PPR GEP Resource Mobilization and Marketing Strategy were also examined.





The proceedings of the two-day meeting enable the participants to address the various topics in the agenda that included the overview of the PPR GEP, Resource mobilization and marketing strategy, PPR Secretariat organization and work plan, terms of reference and modus operandi of the PPR AC and the Potential activities of the PPR AC in support to the PPR GEP implementation.

Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), is a highly contagious animal disease affecting small ruminants. The virus can infect up to 90 percent of an animal heard, and kill from 30 to 70 percent of infected animals. Since its first outbreak in Côte d'Ivoire in 1942, the disease has spread to large regions in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Today, more than 70 countries have confirmed PPR within their borders, and many countries are at risk of the disease being introduced. These regions are home to approximately 1.7 billion heads - roughly 80 percent - of the global population of sheep and goats.

The Joint Secretariat to guide PPR eradi-

cation was set up in 2016. An initial five-year PPR Global Eradication Programme (PPR GEP) for 2017-2021 has been developed in collaboration with key partners and launched in October 2016. The programme aims to lay the foundations for and commences the PPR control and elimination effort in infected countries by developing capacity; understanding the epidemiological situation and defining appropriate implementation strategies to reduce the prevalence of PPR and eventually eradicate the disease. For non-infected countries, the programme will assist in developing capacity to demonstrate the absence of PPR virus and move towards OIE official PPR free status recognition. The programme will also support countries to reduce the prevalence of other prioritized small ruminant diseases and strengthen veterinary systems.

The PPR GEP governance includes the establishment of an Advisory Committee to provide strategic guidance for the programme implementation and ensure effective oversight.

ECO
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(Vienna, Austria) The ECO Secretariat has participated in High Level Conference on Sustainable Energy and Development under the guiding theme of "Regional Cooperation to Accelerate Sustainable Energy Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Developing Countries" was held on October 3, 2018 in Vienna, Austria.

The Conference held under the auspices of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of European Union (EU), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) featured a series of other sustainable energy events between 1st and 5th of October.

The major goal of the Conference was to accelerate global efforts to enhance regional cooperation and integration as a catalyst for scaling up renewable energy and energy efficiency investment, innovation and entrepreneurship in

ECO Secretariat Attends Sustainable Energy Events

in Vienna
(October 3, 2018)

developing countries. The Conference addressed recent case studies and lessons learned from different regions across the globe and highlighted the partnership opportunities within the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centers

(GN-SEC). It brought together selected key players from international organizations, development banks, utilities and regulatory bodies, private sector, academia and senior officials from EU Member States.

Director of Energy, Minerals and Environment of ECO Secretariat, Fuad Farzalibeyov participated in the High Level Conference, as well as at the 4th Meeting of GN-SEC Platform titled "UNIDO GN-SEC Joint Programming Initiatives

under GEF-7 and the Green Climate Fund", held on 1 October and the Meeting on Creating Opportunities for Sustainable Energy Investments and Businesses in Developing Countries, held on 2 October.

The ECO Director delivered the presentation on the joint

ECO-UNIDO initiative on the Preparatory Phase for the establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre as a panelist in "Session 2: Regional Cooperation Innovations - Case Studies" of the High Level Conference. Having briefed



the audience on the above initiative in his presentation, ECO Director characterized the ECO Clean Energy Centre as a promising future element of GN-SEC being implemented across the globe that could complement and potentially interconnect other Centres within GN-SEC framework. He highlighted that the establishment of the Centre will be an explicit example on how the countries mostly abundant with hydrocarbons resolve on a regional level on contributing to the Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) Initiative.

On the sidelines of the event, ECO Director had the meeting with UNIDO Director of Energy, Tareq Emtairah, and his team in charge of GN-SEC activities. They deliberated on the ways and means of implementation of the Preparatory Phase for the establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre, its fund-raising aspects and technical design, as well as synergies with potential partners. Meanwhile, ECO Director had consultation with the officials of the European Commission in charge of development cooperation and sustainable energy, and exchanged views on collaboration opportunities within the establishment of ECO Clean

Energy Centre and ECO Regional Electricity Market, as well as ECO's possible support to EU Strategy for Central Asia. ECO Director proposed the European Commission to consider rendering continuous technical support during preparatory and implementation phases of the joint ECO-UNIDO Project, and advocate this project among EU Member States with a view to mobilize a portion of necessary funds for implementation of the next - Operational Phase.

ECO Director also held the meeting with Acting Director for Strategic Planning and

ment in the joint ECO-UNIDO initiative on establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre, as well as proposals for study projects/surveys in ECO Region.

The Director of Energy, Minerals and Environment underscored ECO's readiness to contribute to OFID's "Energy for the Poor" initiative (EPI) in its 10th Anniversary and support OFID's efforts towards eradication of energy poverty in the ECO Region. Both sides also shared views on collaboration opportunities in the framework

of the Water-Energy-Food Nexus, which is the central theme of OFID's Corporate Plan and has also the critical importance for ECO Region.

It is worth mentioning that the ECO Vision 2025 - a key strategic document of the Organization - stipulates the establishment of an ECO Clean Energy Centre up to 2025 by the ECO Secretariat and Member States. This joint endeavor is also a result of UNIDO's

long-lasting cooperative relationship with ECO, based on a 1994 Agreement. UNIDO is a long-standing partner of ECO countries regarding the promotion of cleaner and resource efficient production practices, as well as renewable energy and industrial energy efficiency.



Economic Services of OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), Fuad Siala, during which the parties followed up on the ECO-OFID high-level meetings between Heads of institutions in 2014, which laid ground for the dialogue between two institutions. Notably, they discussed the possibilities for building strong and continuous institutional linkages, OFID's possible engage-

Meeting of ECO Geomatics Committee

held in Tehran

(August 27-28, 2018)

ECO CHRONICLE (Tehran, Iran) The 2nd Meeting of ECO Geomatics Committee, hosted by the National Cartographic Center (NCC) of Iran was held on August 27-28, 2018 in Tehran. The delegates from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran (host), Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Turkey, as well as ECO Secretariat delegation attended the Meeting.

In his opening remarks, Director General of NCC of Iran, Masoud Shafiei, expressed satisfaction over successful organization of the first Meeting of the ECO Geomatics Committee in October 2015 followed by two consecutive capacity building Training Courses for ECO Member States on Unification of Height Datums in 2016 and 2017. The Director General called

for establishment of Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) for ECO Region, which would act as a catalyst in regional efforts for promotion of knowledge sharing, research and training in various fields of Geomatics, including geodesy, cartography, photogrammetry, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, spatial information science, and hydrography.

In his opening statement, ECO Director for Energy, Minerals and Environment (EME), Fuad Farzalibeyov, touched upon ECO's profile and policy priorities with respect to ECO Geomatics Committee and other related areas, as well as the progress achieved in advancing regional agenda for surveying and mapping, notably geomatics.

While delivering country presentations and



statements, the delegates showcased their national policies, activities, programmes and



opportunities for regional cooperation in the field of geomatics, including photogrammetry, digital mapping, geodesy, topographic mapping, remote sensing activities, image processing, geo-spatial information system, geo-database, spatial data infrastructure (SDI) and research & development, relative gravity measurements, as well as disaster management. The Representatives widely stressed on the need in intensification of collective efforts in formulating ECO regional roadmap on surveying and mapping with a view to enhancing cooperation among the relevant stakeholders of the Member States through unification of height datums in

the framework of ECO Geomatics Committee.

The Meeting made amendments and approved the revised Terms of Reference (ToR) of the ECO Geomatics Committee and elected General Manager of Hydrography & Tidal Analysis of NCC of Iran, Ali Soltanpour, as the new Secretary of the Committee till convening of the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Geomatics Committee.

The Meeting extensively reviewed the ongoing initiatives within the ECO Geomatics Committee, notably designing of ECO Geomatics Publication/Journal,

appointment of National Focal Points and establishment of special Working Groups. Furthermore, the Meeting took into account a wide array of issues and decided on organization of more capacity building training programmes in the field of Geomatics; establishment of Geodetic Datums of different types (Gravity Datum; 3-D Geodetic Datum; and Height Datum) for carrying out joint activities at regional level; designing of ECO Regional Disaster Risk Maps; establishment of ECO Regional Portal for sharing data on Disaster Management; strengthening of cooperation among

surveying and mapping organizations of Member States to deal with disasters and effects of hazards in the neighboring countries; reflection of pragmatic contribution of the ECO Geomatics Committee in the ECO policy making bodies including ECO Vision 2025, as well as highlighting key contributions of ECO Geomatics Committee in implementation of the UN Development Agenda 2030.

On 28 August 2018, the host arranged a technical visit to premises of NCC of Iran, where the participants became familiar with main activities, functions



and capacities of NCC in areas of photogrammetry, image processing, geodesy and GNSS processing, geo spatial information services and others.



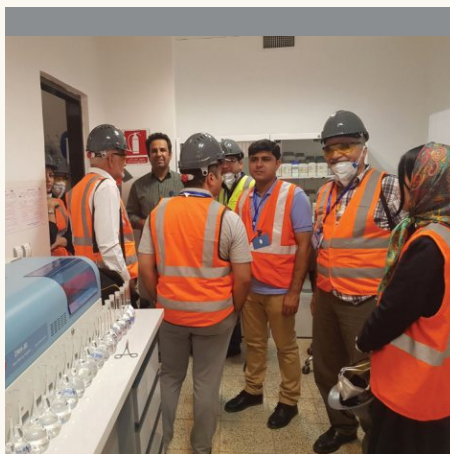
ECO Minerals Experts meet in Iran

(August 5-7, 2018)

ECO
CHRONICLE

(Sanandaj, Iran) The 7th ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting was held on August 5-7, 2018 in the western Iranian city of Sanandaj, with the presence of representatives from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as the ECO Secretariat.

Speaking at the session, ECO Director for Energy, Minerals and Environment (EME), Fuad Farzalibeyov, while elaborating on ECO's overall profile and policy priorities, emphasized on the need for pragmatic efforts for formulating regional policies within the region that are in line with the



UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's). Member States' need to accelerate collective efforts to address the challenges within the production and distribution chain of raw materials, and establish a solid transportation network for the trade of minerals, he added.

The Director of International Affairs for the Geological Survey of Iran (GIS), Seyed Hadi Mir Muhammad Meigouni, pointed out that the overarching goal of the Meeting is to exchange best practices and expertise among the Member States in order to adopt a fresh approach to key challenges and boost collaboration. He expressed satisfaction that through the collaboration of the GSI and the ECO Secretariat, three ECO Projects, namely, the

Mineral Distribution Map (MDM) Project of the ECO Region, ECO Geosciences Database Project and the ECO Seismic Hazard Reduction Programme (ECO-SHARP) have been finalized.

Also present at the meeting was Iran's Director of the Industry, Mine and Trade Organization of the Kordestan Province, Muhammad Darevazmi, who discussed the overall potential of mineral reserves, the current status and future plans for the Province. He also elaborated on the investment opportunities and incentives within the area in minerals and geology.

During the course of the Meeting, Member States discussed national policies, activities, developments, programmes and opportunities for regional cooperation in the field of minerals, inter alia, minerals exploitation, production of data and maps, metallogenic zones, regulatory framework, investment opportunities in mineral sector, tectonic zones, best practices, recent developments, challenges and future roadmaps. Key proposals for future action were put forward on the initiation of lasting, self-sustainable and efficient networks of relevant stakeholders within the region and beyond.

The active intergovernmental and inter-sectoral collaboration for the development

of ECO minerals policies and strategies within the framework of the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals, and Sustainable Development (IGF), UNEP's International Resource Panel (IRP) and other international forums was also defined as a crucial factor to boosting mining sector's contribution to sustainable development within the ECO Region. The delegates also proposed the preparation of diagrammatic representations of the Region namely the Geodynamic and present-day Crustal Stress (ECO-GeoDyS) Map, the ECO-Environmental Quality Index (ECO-EQI) Map; the Mineral Deposit Types and Metallogenic Map and the Piroclast Map of mobile belt between Gondwana and Eurasia.

The Geological Survey of Iran (GIS) proposal on two new projects on the Landslide Hazard Zonation (LHZ) and the Geochemical Exploration of Precious and Industrial Minerals in Desert lands of the ECO Region was met with enthusiasm by the participants. Delegations were also given a guided tour of the Sarigooni Gold Mine in the city of Sanandaj and also visited the Angooran Lead and Zinc Mine in the northwestern province of Zanjan.



(May 1-2 2018)

ECO, NIOC

hold Oil and Gas Training Course in Iran

ECO
CHRONICLE

(Mahmoudabad, Iran)
The ECO Training Course on Metering and Proving was held on May 1-2 2018, in the Northern Iranian city of Mahmoudabad. The event, organized by Iran's National Oil and Gas Company (NIOC) and Oil and Gas



International Training Center (OGITC) gathered representatives from Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkey, who engaged in intensive discussion and

activity on Metering and Proving in the Oil and Gas industry.

During his inaugural speech, ECO Director



for Energy, Minerals and Environment, Fuad Farzalibeyov, emphasized on the Secretariat's commitment to capacity-building activities within the region as a means for exploring new avenues for future collaboration and strengthening intra-regional relations through learning and sharing best practices.

The Director of the Mahmoudabad Training Center, Abbas Madraky, highlighted the significance of enhanced cooperation among the ECO Member States through training programmes, which evidently serve to boosting know-how, knowledge sharing and capacity building.

In addition to discussing the different aspects of flow metering/measurement and meter proving, the participants also visited the main laboratory of the Training Centre and were educated on the overall process of measurements and proving within the oil and gas sector. They also discussed property

and types of fluid; viscosity and its key characteristics; volume flow rate; mass flow rate; direct & indirect rate measurement; volume & mass direct measurement; classification and properties of flow measurement devices & flow meters; petroleum fiscal measurement; custody transfer

measurement; legal approvals and standards of the measurements; operating principles, pertinent theories, advantages and disadvantages of various meters; flow meter selection, verification processes and technology specifica-

tion; types of provers, proving systems and their requirements, etc.



ECO SG, Turkic Council SG meet at ECO Headquarters (April 8, 2019)



(Tehran, Iran) The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour has met the Secretary General of the Turkic Council, Baghdad Amreyev on April 8, 2019, in a bid to strengthen cooperative relations between the two organizations.

During the meeting, both sides resolved to translate relations between the two organizations into tangible actions in the spirit of friendship, cooperation and mutual benefits. They also conveyed their appreciation to the concerned officials of the two Secretariats for their efforts and contributions in finalizing the Work Programme that would be proved a beginning of new era in the relationship between the two sister organizations.

The delegation consisting of Deputy Secretary General, Dr. Ömer Kocaman, also held a joint meeting with ECO Deputies

Secretary General, Ambassador Huseyin Avni Bicakli and Mr. Kanan Nazarov, during which the Turkic Council delegation was briefed on the ongoing activities and possible ECO-Turkic Council cooperation in various sectors including trade and investment, infrastructure

development, tourism promotion and education. The two sides emphasized the need to render the relationship more productive and meaningful in the light of the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the two sides in 2014.

During the technical bilateral meetings, both sides held a detailed discussion on potential areas of cooperation in line with the MoU between ECO and Turkic Council and finalized a comprehensive plan of action for the next two year in the form of first ever Work Programme between the two organizations covering key areas of trade and investment, transport and customs, tourism, education, agriculture and energy.



Turkic Council SG visits ECO Secretariat

(April 7-8, 2019)



ECO
CHRONICLE

The Turkic Council delegation led by H.E. Mr. Baghdad Amreyev, the Secretary General of Turkic Council, has visited the ECO Secretariat on 7-8 April 2019 in a bid to facilitate cooperative relations between the two organizations.

On 7 April, 2019 the visiting delegation headed by Deputy Secretary General, Dr. Ömer Kocaman, held a joint meeting with ECO Deputies Secretary General, Dr. Hüseyin Avni Bıçaklı and Mr. Kanan Nazarov, followed by the bilateral meetings with Directors and Program Officers of ECO.

During the joint meeting, Turkic Council delegation was briefed by ECO Deputies Secretary General about the ongoing ECO's activities and possible ECO-Turkic Council cooperation in various sectors including trade and investment, infrastructure development, tourism promotion and collaboration in education field. The Turkic Council delegation also shared information and experience in specific areas such as trade and investment, customs and transport, tourism, agriculture and education. The two sides emphasized the need to render the relationship more productive and meaningful in the light of the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the two sides in 2014.

During the technical bilateral meetings, both sides held a detailed discussion on potential areas

of cooperation in line with the MoU between ECO and Turkic Council and finalized a comprehensive plan of action for the next two year in the form of first ever Work Programme between the two organizations covering key areas of trade and investment, transport and customs, tourism, education, agriculture and energy.

On 8 April 2019, the Secretary General of Turkic Council, H.E. Mr. Baghdad Amreyev, paid visit to the ECO Secretariat and held a meeting with the Secretary General of ECO, H.E. Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour. Dr. Soleimanpour welcomed the Secretary General of Turkic Council and thanked Mr. Amreyev to visit the ECO Secretariat in order to strengthen cooperative relations between the two organizations. Expressing his gratitude for the hospitality extended by the ECO Secretariat during the visit, the Secretary General of the Turkic Council highlighted the potential of cooperation between the ECO and Turkic Council. The two leaders resolved to translate relations between the two organizations into tangible actions in the spirit of friendship, cooperation and mutual benefits. They also conveyed their appreciation to the concerned officials of the two Secretariats for their efforts and contributions in finalizing the Work Programme that would be proved a beginning of new era in the relationship between the two sister organizations.



ECO
CHRONICLE

(January 24, 2019)

ECO SG, UN Resident Coordinator meet in Tehran

(Tehran, Iran)
The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour has met the UN Resident Coordinator to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ugochi Daniels on January 24, 2019.

During the meeting, the ECO Secretary General briefed Ms. Daniels about the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and its main areas of activity, including trade, transport, agriculture, energy, social welfare, tourism, environment and drugs control. The ECO Secretary General apprised the UN Resident Coordinator

about ECO Vision 2025 and highlighted the main initiatives being pursued by ECO in order to materialize the Vision.

The UN Resident Coordinator expressed keen interest in the activities and projects of ECO in different sectors and expressed willingness to promote cooperation between the UN and the ECO especially in the areas of sustainable development and drugs control. She also informed the ECO Secretary General that ECO being a regional organization can provide an excellent platform to implement various UN programs especially under the umbrella of South-South

Cooperation and Country Exchange Program.

The Secretary General informed the UN Resident Coordinator that ECO gave special importance to its relations with UN

due to the shared objectives and goals of the two organizations. The Secretary General briefed about the ongoing ECO-UN cooperation in different sectors and emphasized the importance of technical and financial assistance of UN Agencies for ECO's programs and activities. He also underlined the significance of UN assistance in transforming ideas into well defined project proposals and asked

the UN Resident Coordinator to arrange a training workshop on Project Management for the relevant staff of ECO.

The UN Resident Coordinator, while expressing her readiness to arrange such training course and stated that she would be looking forward to working together with ECO and its member countries to address the regional challenges and to reinforce regional economies. She thanked the Secretary General for his visit to UN Resident Office expressed her confidence that cooperation between the two organizations would further enhance in the coming period.



(Turkmenbashi, Turkmenistan) The Deputy Secretary General for Energy, Minerals & Environment (EME), Huseyin Avni B?cakl? has participated in the International Conference of member countries of the Lapis Lazuli Agreement on Transit and Transport on November 28, 2018.

The Lapis Lazuli Corridor agreement signed in 2017 in Ashgabat, seeks to involve road, rail, and maritime transport routes to connect the Aqina and Turghundi ports in the Afghan provinces of Faryab and Herat to the Turkmenbashi port in Turkmenistan. It then crosses the Caspian Sea and heads to Baku in Azerbaijan and the Georgian capital Tbilisi, reaches Poti and Batumi ports on the Black Sea, and finally crosses via Turkey to Europe. The agreement which seeks to enhance transit and trade cooperation in the region was finalized after three years of negotiations.

The Lapis Lazuli Agreement Conference was opened by Turkmenistan's Deputy Prime Minister, Mammethan Chakiyev, who indicated the need for developing effective transport infrastructure and large-scale logistic centers. Speaking at the session Ambassador Bicakl? noted that the implementation of the transport corridor would assist the Economic Cooperation Organization to increase the capacities of the region's key transport routes and in turn facilitate the implementation of the Lapis Lazuli agreement. The Deputy Secretary General also emphasized on the imperative role of Turkmenistan in ECO's transport policies and the importance of documents such as the Turkmenbashi Declaration, the Dushanbe Communiqué and the Transit Transport

ECO DSG takes part in Lapis Lazuli Rout Meeting in Turkmenistan

(November 28, 2018)

Framework Agreement (TTFA).

The Dushanbe Communiqué adopted by 23rd ECO Council of Ministers Meeting in 2018 reinforces the importance of regional connectivity for regional development in order to transform the ECO into a vibrant prosperous and progressive region, while the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) is the main vehicle to enhance cooperation in the field of transit transport in the region. The 9th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport in 2018 adopted the Turkmenbashi Declaration which outlines concrete actions required to enhance the connectivity, mobility, and accessibility of the region's transit and transport infrastructures.

The ECO delegation, which also included Director for Transport and Communications, Ahmad Saffari, conversed with participants which included first Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister, Yagub Eiyubov, Uzbekistan's First Deputy Prime Minister, Achilbay Ramatov, Turkmenistan's Deputy Prime Minister, Mammethan Chakiyev, Turkish Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Mehmet Cahit Turhan, Afghanistan's Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Mohammad Hamid Tahmasi and the Georgian Deputy Minister for Economy and Sustainable Development, Akakiy Sagirashvili. Also present at the meeting were representatives from International organizations such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and International Road Transport Union (IRU).





ECO SG, UN Assistant Humanitarian SG meet in Tehran (November 19, 2018)

(Tehran, Iran) ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour has met with United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Partnerships with the Middle East and Central Asia, Rashid Khalikov at the ECO Secretariat to consult on increasing humanitarian cooperation between ECO and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

During the meeting of November 19, 2018, Dr. Soleimanpour, while expressing pleasure for meeting the Assistant Secretary General, said that ECO based on its rule of procedures and prioritized program and plans, as envisaged in Vision 2025, is eager to cooperate with UNOCHA and any relevant UN agencies as well as developing partners to meet the global targets and goals in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The Secretary General added that to this aim, the Organization is inviting UNOCHA to assist on the proper implementation of recently drafted ECO Regional Framework on DRR.

During the meeting Mr. Khalikov highlighted the high vulnerability of ECO Member States against most aspects of



natural disasters and called on for more cooperation between ECO Secretariat and UNOCHA in this field. He hailed the fundamental measures by ECO Secretariat for preparing a regional framework on Disaster Risk Reduction and announced that OCHA is keen to work with ECO to enhance the implementation of its framework and to help ECO Secretariat to build the responding capacities for any kind of possible disasters in each member states.

(November 11, 2018)

ECO SG, ETBD President meet in Tehran

(Tehran, Iran) The ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour held a meeting with the President of ECO Trade and Development Bank, Javaid Aslam along with the Vice President of ETDB and the Representative of the Branch of the Bank at Tehran, at the premises of the Secretariat, on November 11, 2018.

During the meeting the sides discussed the latest developments in ECO Region in the areas of finance and economy and exchanged of views on the existing positions of the remaining four, non-member ETDB, ECO Member States of becoming members of ETDB. Both sides agreed that in order to pave the way for ETDB to be more efficient in contributing to development of ECO Member States, these ECO Member States should be encouraged to join the Bank at the earliest convenience. With the same understanding, the Meeting also agreed that the capital of the Bank should be increased.

During the Meeting, the parties exchanged agreed on the ways and means of harmonization of activities and promoting cooperation for implementation of Regional ECO Projects including provision financial and technical supports of the Bank for ECO Regional Projects.

They also agreed that holding an ECO Experts Group Meeting comprising of the focal points of the Member States to find out more efficient ways and means of involving the Bank and the ECO Secretariat in implementing regional projects is required.

The ETDB was established on 3 August 2005 with its headquarters located at Istanbul, Turkey and started its operations in 2008. The representative offices of the Bank at Tehran, Iran and Karachi, Pakistan are fully functional. The current shareholders are now six members of ECO, namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan and Turkey. The authorized capital of the Bank is 1.089 billion SDR and total paid-in capital is 326,75 million SDR.

The ETDB offers a range of medium-to-long term products i.e. project finance, corporate finance, trade finance and loans to support small and medium-sized enterprises directly or through financial intermediaries to private and state owned entities. In this context, sectors such as infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture, energy, transport and communications, which have potential impact on the development of the member states, are given special attention.





ECO Secretariat attends IRENA Assembly

(January 10-13, 2019)

(Abu Dhabi,
United Arab
Emirates) The 9th
session of the

Assembly of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and related meetings were held from 10 to 13 January, 2019 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The session brought together ministers and other delegates from 160 IRENA Member States, representatives of intergovernmental organizations, civil society, academia, business leaders and other stakeholders in the field of renewable energy. ECO participated in the event as an observer of the 9th session of the



Assembly.

IRENA is an
intergovernmen-
tal organization

supporting transition to a sustainable energy future, and serving as the principal global platform for international cooperation on renewable energy with a membership approaching near-universality. ECO and IRENA have been collaborating since 2014. Nine ECO Member States are Members of IRENA, while one is in accession process. Despite its young age, IRENA has proved itself as a well-recognized international institution advanced in realization of successful projects in renewables with regional focus. The Assembly represents the supreme decision-making body of IRENA convening annually.

At the opening session, statements by the President of the Assembly, the Host Country and high-level guests highlighted the latest trends and developments in the field of renewable

energy. The Assembly featured several key discussions in numerous plenary and thematic sessions on critical issues related to the advancement of renewable energy and key drivers of the ongoing energy transformation. Notably, two ministerial roundtables provided for high-level discussion on the role of renewables in achieving universal electricity access, and the transformative impact of innovation in accelerating renewables deployment. Furthermore, three regional ministerial meetings, the launch of a first of its kind report on the geopolitical implications of energy transformation in the age of renewables, presentation of a ground-breaking new IRENA

streamlined priorities for cooperation between ECO and IRENA while both sides resolved on continuing result-oriented interactions that would pave the way in launching collaborative activities. Both sides expressed their intention to build strong institutional linkages, and ways/means for further enhanced engagement through policy framework documents. IRENA emphasized its encouragement by the ongoing prioritization of sustainable energy in ECO's energy agenda and forthcoming launch of the preparatory phase of the project on establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre. ECO invited IRENA to consider the possibilities for becoming one of the partners of the subject project and supporting it in its preparatory and operational phases, as well as for conducting study on establishment of 'Clean Energy Corridor' in the ECO Region that could target, among others, the identification of potential coherence, synergies and complementarities among the CECECO Project, ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO REM) and the possible establishment of 'Clean Energy Corridor' in the ECO Region. Both sides also expressed their willingness in designing and implementation of joint bankable projects and programmes that could contribute to energy transformation in ECO Region, as well as in subsequent supporting ECO Member States in renewable energy financing and risk mitigation. With this in mind, ECO and IRENA could engage in on-demand and tailor-made joint activities and projects. Likewise, IRENA invited ECO to support the process of implementation of the "Regional Action Plan unlocking Renewable Energy Potential in Central Asia".



study on 'Gender in the Energy Transformation' and other activities took place.

On the sidelines of the 9th Assembly session, ECO Secretariat networked with the representatives of the ECO Member States, IRENA and other stakeholders in the field of renewable energy (EU, SolarPower Europe, REN21, Enel, etc.) on the ongoing and potential areas of cooperation. Most notably, ECO Director of Energy, Minerals and Environment, Fuad Farzalibeyov, held the consultation meeting with Director of Country Support and Partnerships, Gurbuz Gonul, and his team. The consultation meeting

(Bucharest, Romania) The ECO Secretariat has participated in the meeting the 29th Meeting of the Energy Charter Conference on November 27-28, 2018 in the Romanian capital city of Bucharest.

The meeting hosted by the International Energy Charter (IEC) and the Romanian Chairmanship of the Energy Charter Conference (ECC) resulted in the adoption of the Bucharest Energy Charter Declaration, which focuses on the importance of modernization process within the Energy Charter, investment protection, combating energy poverty through energy efficiency investments, integrated energy markets via innovation,

cross-border energy flows and the enlargement of the Energy Charter Treaty Membership.

The ECO Secretariat participated at the 29th Meeting in its capacity as observer in ECC. The Organization and ECC has been granted the reciprocal Observer Status on the basis of which they maintain strong relationship sought to enhance synergies; offer policy advice and international consultancy, as well as facilitate exchange of experiences and capacity building.

ECO Director of Energy, Minerals and Environment, Fuad Farzalibeyov, participated in the Ministerial Session and delivered the



ECO Secretariat Takes Part in Energy Charter

Conference Meeting
(November 27-28, 2018)



statement on behalf of ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour, on "The role of

innovation in furthering the energy transition and facilitating sustainable growth". Mr. Farzalibeyov highlighted the priority role of energy cooperation within the Organization, transformation of its energy agenda towards sustainable energy and policies being pursued by ECO under the current arrangements on innovations. Having emphasized the recent project on establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre, the Director described the initiative as a catalyst for South-South and North-South cooperation, and a facilitator for the transfer of technology and know-how within the ECO Region. He further discussed the track of cooperation between ECO and ECC and the initiative for the establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM).



ECO Secretariat takes part in UN Forests meeting in Thailand

(January 7-8, 2019)

(Bangkok, Thailand) The ECO Secretariat has participated in the Expert Group Meeting on Regional and Sub-Regional Input to the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) on January 7-8, 2019 at UNESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand.

The Meeting was jointly inaugurated by Ms. Barbara Tavora-Jainchill and Ms. Afsa Rothschild from the UNFF Secretariat and Mr. Peter Csoka from Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). They presented delegations with information on regional, sub-regional and global forest developments, notably UNFF agenda, key outcomes of UNFF13, and role of regional/sub-regional organizations in promoting and advocating enhanced global forest policy coherence.

During the 2-day Meeting, the participants discussed and deliberated on various key issues, specifically the contributions of the regional and sub-regional partners to the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forest (UNSPF), regional and sub-regional contributions to the UNFF14 agenda item 6 on enhancing global forest policy coherence and a common understanding of sustainable forest management, exchange of ideas on the SDGs to be addressed by HLPF 2019.

Following extensive discussions, the Meeting finalized the format of the regional and sub-regional inputs to UNFF, agreed on organizing the Regional and Sub-regional's panel on the margins of the UNFF14 (May 2019, New York), and recommended to the UNFF and Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN) to continue organizing the capacity building workshops for

designing and submitting bankable forest-related projects to the multilateral financial mechanisms.

On the sidelines of the Expert Meeting, Programme Officer of the ECO Secretariat, Abolfazl Azizipanah, held consultation with the UNFF representatives, notably on preparation of the "Regional Strategy for mobilizing climate change financing for sustainable forest management in the ECO Region". The continuation of ECO cooperation with the UNFF in providing ECO Member States with special tools for preparing and submitting forest-related projects to the relevant multilateral financing mechanisms was also discussed during the meetings.

It is noteworthy that ECO and UNFF have been collaborating since 2014. As an outcome, two workshops on regional capacity building have been co-organized in April/May 2014 and October 2015 in Tehran, as well as in-length consultations were held in March 2015 on project proposals on the Regional Strategy for mobilizing climate financing for Sustainable Forest Management in the ECO Region. These two workshops demonstrated common understanding between two organizations and strong interest of UNFF in building on sustainable forest management agenda for ECO Region. Furthermore, UNFF and ECO jointly organized the similar Expert Meeting on 26-28 September 2016 in ECO Secretariat, which identified 13 priority actions for enhancing involvement of regional and sub-regional organizations and processes in the UNFF and IAF Strategic Plan for 2017-2030.



Requirements for Successful Regionalism

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One of the characteristics of the international system after the World War II was the growth and development of regional cooperation and convergence within the framework of regionalization and regionalism. However, the process of regionalism has been intensified and exacerbated after the end of the bipolar system and the collapse of the Soviet Union. As such, intra-regional relations

have gone beyond the developed regions and have turned into a pattern of interaction and common relations in the developing regions. Consequently, regionalization and regionalism, which were once defined only in the form of European integration, are now found in institutions, structures, and organizations such as the Organization of American States, the African Union, ASEAN, NAFTA, and the ECO. These developments reflect the regionalization of international politics



and the development of international order based on regional disciplines.

However, the reality indicates that, despite the spread of regionalism in different parts of the world, this process and the model of regional interaction in all regions are not of equal quality and success. In some regions, such as Europe or even ASEAN, regionalism has become institutionalized and has become a dominant regional policy model, as the countries of the region define and pursue their goals and interests in the form of regional policies. In some other regions, regionalism has been formed at its primary and rudimentary levels and has not been qualitatively and fully implemented. The difference in the quality and success of regionalism in different regions is due to the fact that regionalism has certain theoretical and practical requirements that will vary according to their realization, and level and degree of success.

The most important requirements of regionalism are: single regional identity, single discourse on the regional level, single dominant regional concept; the adoption of appropriate regional roles; single regional understanding and perception; the originality and priority of multilateralism; interaction with globalization; seeking reconciliation on the basis of benefits and positive summation, positive regionalism based on shared interests; institutional and structural regionalism; balance in

the intergovernmental and the international relations; the originality, priority and preference of regional policy for members; the definition and pursuit of national interests in the direction and form of regional interests; nonexistence of radical nationalism and ethnocentrism; tension removing and confidence building.

■ 1- Single Regional Identity

The first requirement for effective and successful regionalism is the formation of a single regional identity at the level of governments and nations of the region. Because regionalism precedes and more than anything else entails and requires a sense of "Regionness" and "Weness", in a sense that if a single regional identity does not develop on the basis of this sense of Regionness and unity of governments and nations of the region, regionalism will not be formed, or if it is formed, it will eventually fail.



■ 2- Single Regional Discourse

The second requirement for successful regionalism is unity in discourse at the regional level which means a single discourse about regionalism in the countries and nations of the region. To realize this, firstly, a single discourse must dominate the regional foreign policy of the countries of the region;



secondly, all countries in the region must, within the framework of a single regional discourse, define and understand the same and equal regionalism. Because diversity and difference in defining and understanding discourse at either national or regional level, or at one of these levels, impede regionalism or direct it to failure.

■ 3- Dominating Regional Concept

Another requirement for successful regionalism is to define and pursue the dominant regional concept in a region in such a way that regional policies are developed and implemented on the basis of a single concept. The dominant regional concept is a broad, comprehensive, short, indicative, transparent, and persistent idea that shapes and directs the nature and general policies of regionalism in a region. For example, some of the dominant regional concepts are a regional superpower, an economic superpower, normative power, strong region, the civil power.

■ 4- Appropriate Regional Roles

The fourth requirement for successful regionalism is to define and pursue regional roles which are appropriate and compatible with the identity, discourse, and dominant regional concept of a region. The regional role is the definition that countries in a region make of a variety of decisions, commitments, rules, policies and actions appropriate to their region, and the duties and functions that must be performed in different geographical and thematic contexts, and recognized by other countries and regions. Regional roles reflect and consolidate the basic needs, trends, expectation, and hopes of a region to the international system, other regions, and countries, and the systemic, geographical and economic variables. For example, a region such as Europe may adopt and implement a "human rights" or "regional development model" regional role.

Similarly, ECO may adopt and play the role of the "bridge" linking the North-South and East-West which is compatible with its conditions.

■ 5- Single Regional Understanding and Perception

The success of regionalism in a region requires that all countries of the region have a precise and almost unified understanding of goals, interests, preferences, and priorities of each other and other countries, the regional system and its place in the

international system and, ultimately, the nature and structure of the international system and the power relations at the global level. Because an inappropriate perception and understanding of one or all of these causes a split between the psychological environment and the operating environment of regionalism and makes it unfavorable and flawed.

■ 6- Regional Strategic Thinking

Successful regionalism requires strategic planning and development and long-term development of doctrine and regional policy based on the strategic and long-term interests of a region and its countries. In other words, the success of regionalism requires that countries of the region, regardless of their short-term and transitory interests, and the region, formulate and pursue a clear and long-term strategy for the region. In that way, the causes, goals, orientations, and means of realizing regionalism and the tasks of each country are defined and determined on the basis of the regional division of labor. Naturally, this regional strategy has the necessary flexibility and tactical and contingent policies and actions are also being adopted within it.

■ 7- Regional Omnidimensional Outlook

Another important requirement of regionalism is its quality to have an omnidimensional outlook. Regionalism, especially modern regionalism, is not merely limited to one specific dimension and aspect, but includes all aspects of its political, security, cultural, social and economic aspects in such a way that the key to the success of regionalism is to create a balance between its various dimensions, because the dominance of one aspect and a particular logic of regionalism, such as political or security logic, make it unsuccessful.

■ 8- The Originality and Priority of Multilateralism

Another necessary requirement for a successful

regionalism is that multilateralism must be dominant in the mentality and thinking of the countries of that region. In other words, countries of the region must believe in the logic of multilateralism and prefer it to unilateralism, because a country that does not believe in multilateralism, even within a multi-faceted regionalization, acts unilaterally and effectively leads it to failure in practice. Hence, the success of regional-



ism depends on the thought and practice of multilateralism in the countries of the region

■ 9- Interaction of Regionalism and Globalization

There are different perceptions of the nature and capability of regionalism and its relation to globalization. Some see the philosophy of

regionalism as the confrontation of a region with globalization to the extent that the countries of the region have no alternative to acting in the form of regionalism in order to secure their own interests in the globalization. Hence, regionalism is a strategy and mechanism for securing national and regional interests in the era of globalization. The other group, on the contrary, argues that regionalism is not a means to confront globalization and is also itself an introduction and a first step in the process of globalization, therefore, countries must first start with regionalism to enter globalization and adapt to it. The experience of regionalism, especially in Europe, shows that the success of regionalism depends on the planned and calculated interaction with globalization and not confrontation with it.

■ 10- Seeking Reconciliation on the Basis of Benefits and Positive Summation

Regionalism will succeed if the countries of the region, based on the logic of the game, look at the positive sum of regionalism and interact with each other. All countries must behave in the same way in the format of regionalization and regional cooperation so that the interest of other and regional cooperation for the best interests of other countries. In other words, successful regionalism requires that the regional policies and cooperation do not provide the interests of a country at the cost of losing the interests of other countries. The game with positive regional summation also requires negotiation and reconciliation in the sense of adapting and matching the best interests of the countries of the region with each other.

■ 11- Positive regionalism on the basis of common interests

There are two types of regionalism which are conceivable and realistic. Negative regionalism is realized on the basis of a common threat and the attempt to repel common evil, or in the form of anti-unity and anti-coalitions. Positive regionalism is based on the long-term interests of the countries. Historical experiences of regionalism show that the sustainability and success of positive regionalism are more than those of the negative regionalism.



■ 12- Institutional and structural regionalism

Regionalism will be successful if it is institutionalized in the form of institutions, organizations and regional structures. Regionalism, beyond inter-governmental cooperation, requires a level of supranationalism so that part of the national competencies of the members is delegated to these regional institutions and they decide on behalf of the countries of the region. Therefore, the more structural and institutionalized the regionalization, the more successful it will be.

■ 13- Balance between Intergovernmental and International Relations

Successive regionalism requires that there be a balance between relations between states and governments on one hand and the relations and interactions between nations and people in the region on the other hand. Particularly, intergovernmental regionalism should be supported by the people of the region in order to succeed. Non-democratic regionalism, which suffers from a democratic deficit, will fail in practice.

■ 14- Originality, priority, and preference of regional policy

Another requirement of a successful regionalization is that the regional states have priority and preference for their regional policies. In the first place, the issues, problems, and interests of the region must be the priority of their foreign policy. Secondly, the countries of the region must define and pursue their national interests in line with regional interests.

■ 15- Nonexistence of radical nationalism and ethnocentrism

Realistic and practical regionalism requires and guarantees the regional identity and collective decision-making at the regional level, which sometimes necessitates the transfer of a part of national sovereignty and competencies.

Therefore, regionalism will succeed if it does not have to face the extreme nationalism and ethnocentrism. Needless to say that ethnocentrism and radical nationalism are not compatible with regionalism, and also deny it.

■ 16- Removing Tension and Building Trust

Since regionalism requires the cooperation of countries in one region, it will be successful if the interaction patterns between them are co-operative and maximally competitive. If there is tension between countries and at the level of a region, regionalism will not be formed or will be practically defeated. Therefore, if tensions arise, regional states must first try to resolve them. Beyond tension resolving, regional trust building is one of the essential and crucial requirements for the formation and success of regionalism.

■ 17- Economic Synergy among Countries of the Region

Except for the lack of ideological conflicts and political tensions at the regional level, regional economies must also complement each other for the emergence and success of regionalization of national economies. Especially if economic regionalism is on the agenda of a region, this requirement becomes more important and necessary. This economic requirement becomes important even for achieving other types of regionalism.

Mapping out the New ECO Strategy on Energy Cooperation: Agenda to Action

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Rationale for a New Regional Energy Agenda-Setting

The energy orientations of ECO Member States are divergent given their development plans and levels, resource endowments as well as energy infrastructure. This divergence leads them to set national energy priorities and targets

contrasting with each other. Developing regional goals and translating them into tangible steps relevant for all ECO Member States necessitate mapping out regional energy policies in an integrated manner by finding synergies and complementarities between global, regional and national dimensions. This three-dimensional model

could enable ECO to design inclusive and agile energy strategies responsive to the needs of all Member States and to the rapidly evolving global energy landscape.

To accomplish this integrated model, the energy policies should be guided by the bottom-up approach and driven by local and national realities. In other words, pertinent energy partnership frameworks should be tailored to the needs and aspirations of all voluntary energy stakeholders in the Member States from grass-root levels, so to say the voluntary national stakeholder engagement. Secondly, it has to focus on activities that have high relevance for leveraging trade and investments in infrastructure, services, businesses and industries. Third, it should additionally create spillover effects across expected outcome areas and national borders to a maximum extent possible.

In this vein, the national dimension would maintain the ownership of the ECO Member States, while the global imperatives stem from the long-term vision shared by the international community, such as the targets and indicators of "Sustainable Development Goal 7 - Ensuring access to affordable, reliable and modern energy for all", as well as the UN Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) Initiative. This approach is also sought to encourage multi-stakeholder endeavours in different levels to galvanize financial and technical support to the activities to be set in line with targets.

It is evident that SDG 7 with its objectives of ensuring universal access to modern energy, doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency and doubling of share of renewable energy sources in the global energy mix by 2030 triggered a call for re-formulation of regional energy policies and elaboration of cross-cutting frameworks for holistic regional energy dialogues. In

this rationale, it is noteworthy that "ECO Vision 2025" sets out, as 'Expected Outcome iii.', the encouragement of enhanced policy coherence for mainstreaming objectives of the SDGs and SEforALL.

The coherent and transparent long-



and mid-term policies are thus critical to promote regional energy cooperation. Uptake of global and national agendas in regional policy-making with necessary adjustments and innovations represents a pivotal task, whereas it would reflect the strong international and government support.

Current state of play in ECO Energy Agenda

The adoption of "ECO Vision 2025" laid down the long- and mid-term regional objectives and expected outcomes in the energy sector, while

within the Organization.

The last ECO PoA for Energy and Petroleum Cooperation (2011-2015) was adopted at the 2nd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum (1 October 2010, Dushanbe). The 27th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (5-8 December 2016, Tehran) extended this PoA until the next - 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum, which is still expected to be organized.

The last PoA envisaged the following priority cooperation areas of common interest: ECO power grid; ECO oil and gas pipelines; energy security and trade; coal; energy efficiency and conservation; renewable energy; and regional energy/petroleum policy and planning. Reviewing this PoA reveals that it essentially maintained the previous ECO Plan of Action on Energy/Petroleum for 2001-2005 (extended to 2010) with incorporation of certain new elements as the regional energy policy and planning with particular focus on the ECO water resources management (including hydroelectric generation and water required for petroleum industry), as well as on renewable energy sources. This roughly means that current PoA is formally guided by the energy agenda set in 1990th with certain adjustments. Consequently, there is a dire need to revisit the current PoA, whereas it does not reflect the recent trends and developments in national and global agendas.

Henceforth, ECO has to undergo the process of development of its fundamentally new Strategy on Energy Cooperation for the period of 2020-2025 in lieu of the revised PoA. This new Strategy should build on the achievements and shortcomings of the existing PoA, and reflect on the national and global agendas, "ECO Vision 2025" and trending UN SDGs. The Strategy



Vision's Implementation Framework identified the required action, time-frames, result areas and accountabilities. Meanwhile, ECO Plans of Action (PoA) for Energy and Petroleum Cooperation have long served as the mid-term policy framework documents and umbrellas for energy cooperation

has to grab the progress in advancement of important regional initiatives, findings and conclusions, capture major constraints that have negatively impacted implementation of the objectives of previous PoA and a way forward. The Strategy will serve as a roadmap to ensure continuity in key on-going energy cooperation activities and initiatives, while addressing the challenges faced by the ECO Member States related to



sustainable economic development and sustainable energy.

Multiple Pillars of a Potential New ECO Strategy on Energy Cooperation

In view of its perspective formulation, the new ECO Strategy on Energy Cooperation may focus on the following five key pillars/clusters as bench-

marks, all of which are interlinked with each other to certain degrees:

1. Energy access;
2. Energy innovation and technologies;
3. Regional electricity markets;
4. Renewables, "green economy", energy efficiency and conservation;
5. Downstream energy.

Energy access

Having reaffirmed energy as a priority area of cooperation, "ECO Vision 2025" stipulates the enhancement of energy security and sustainability through wider energy access and trade as one of ECO's core strategic objectives. Energy access is therefore in the very heart of the Vision's objective.

The strong inter-linkage between the modern energy access and human well-being is widely acknowledged by empirical studies. Furthermore, the notion of energy security has evolved in recent years to encompass such challenging issues as eradication of energy poverty and energy innovation along with security of supply, demand and transit. Due to relatively low pace and dynamics of energy transition to renewables, ECO Region will continue to ensure energy access via conventional energy sources in long-term perspectives. Promoting energy access in ECO Member States requires leapfrogging the technologies, and innovation in financing, regulation and business models with a view to extend the energy supply to remote areas and increase energy productivity potentials.

Energy innovation and technologies

Inspired by its above-mentioned core objective, "ECO Vision 2025" has identified the "deployment of environmental-

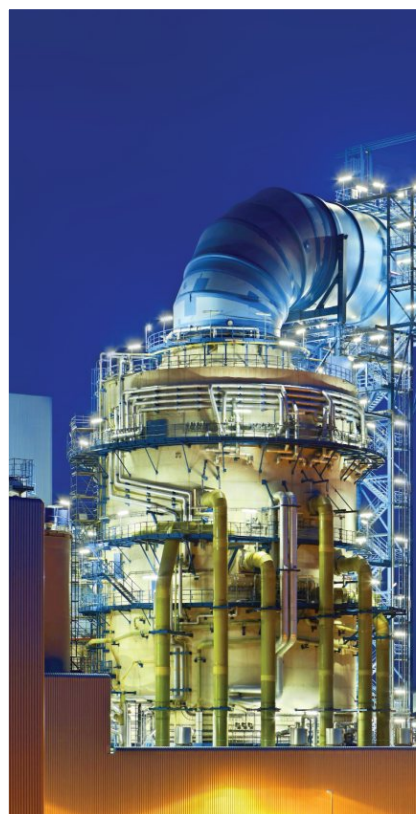
friendly energy technologies" (Outcome iv.) and "promotion of energy investments through advocating innovative incentives" (Outcome vi.) among major expected outcomes in the energy sector, to be achieved in the coming years.

ECO Region is endowed with enormous energy resources, but mostly encompasses the land-locked developing countries in need of energy access, and innovations for energy transition and sustainable growth. The sustainable economic development in the ECO Region underpins increasing demand for more efficient, higher-quality energy industry and services in our Member States. Our regional energy markets are becoming increasingly international and evolve dynamically in line with the technological, economic and political changes. Therefore, driving innovation in energy sector plays a fundamental role for ensuring energy security and sustainability, notably efficient use of natural resources in the ECO Region. Promoting foreign investments is a key to support new technologies, enable resource and technology transfer as well as increase productivity and innovation in the ECO Region; however it requires investment-friendly business climate.

Regional electricity markets

"ECO Vision 2025" envisages, as its first expected outcome to be achieved in the energy sector, "the efforts for harmonisation and alignment towards regional electricity market within the ECO Region for harnessing benefits of larger integrated systems". This makes it evident that the project on establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM) still represents a

flagship project for our Organization notwithstanding certain challenges being faced by this undertaking in the past few years. Notably, it is expected that this project will transform electricity trade among the interested Member States into the multilateral character via integrating the fragmented projects and initiatives in the ECO Region; enhance the long-term regional power exchange; boost gas-to-power; and



potentially expand towards markets beyond ECO. This pivotal project that will contribute to the long-term energy sustainability of our region needs to be promoted by creating synergies and benefiting from complementarities.

Renewables, "green economy", energy efficiency and conservation

It is remarkable to observe the nascent

evolution of ECO's regional energy agenda towards clean and sustainable energy. This regional mainstream targets on unlocking ECO Region's tremendous cooperation opportunities in renewables and energy efficiency.

"Transformation to renewable, as well as cleaner and sustainable energy sources" represents the 'Expected Outcome v.' of energy sector in "ECO Vision 2025". Meantime, its 'Outcome vii.' marks "the achievement of relevant energy efficiency goals and objectives at the ECO regional level to the widest extent possible". The joint ECO-UNIDO Project on establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre is an explicit example of these transformation efforts.

We must confess that this process represents an explicit example on how the countries mostly endowed with hydrocarbons resolve at a regional level on contributing to the global SDGs, in particular those related to sustainable energy and cross-cutting environmental challenges (energy-environment nexus), which need focused attention by all stakeholders, including IGOs.

Setting targets for energy efficiency and conservation is also becoming increasingly crucial particularly for such emerging economies as ECO Member States, which require efficiency-raising in industries and utilities.

Downstream energy

Ample opportunities exist in ECO Region to build upon partnership frameworks in downstream energy sector, particularly in establishment of public and private sector energy consortia, and refinery association among the Member States.

Unlocking these opportunities requires steady efforts towards the 'Expected Outcome ii.' of "ECO Vision 2025" to underpin "enhancement of energy trade, production, consumption and transit patterns".

Role of Strong Governance and Means of Implementation

To promote ambitious energy targets, national governments require strong support by international institutions for

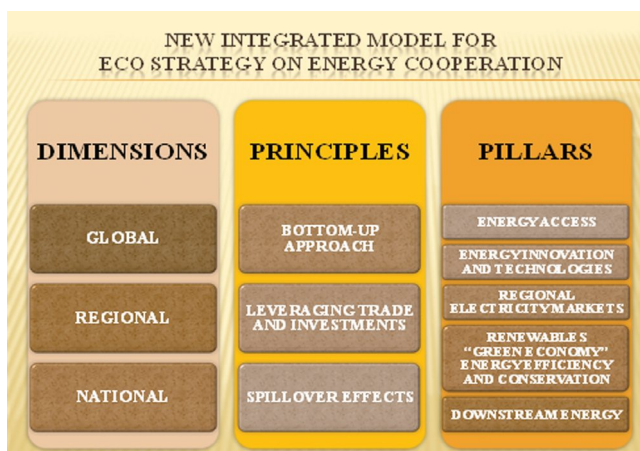


building necessary institutional capacities, and raising accountability and effectiveness of the relevant authorities. In parallel, the regional intergovernmental organizations are sought to design their own sophisticated advisory support mechanisms to respond to the needs of their Member States.

In its broader denotation, governance is the cornerstone of sustainable development and enabler of environment conducive to energy trade and investments per se. With this in mind, governance could be a key to accomplish the goals of all above six pillars, as well as to provide for integrated approach and multi-stakeholder inclusiveness. Notably, this governance should first envisage the integrated cross-sectoral policy-making through managing the

inter alia, broad political consensus and involvement of all stakeholders from public and private sectors, while identification of energy mix is the independent decision of countries according to their national circumstances and priorities.

In the light of this imperative, there is an expectation from ECO for streamlining its energy agenda and re-assessing the Organization's niche in the compli-



linkages between and among diverse elements of the new Strategy. Secondly, it has to be inclusive and encompass multi-stakeholder engagement, notwithstanding the benefits and costs of this participatory approach and supplementary to governmental leadership, command-and-control and compliance.

The "ECO Vision 2025" postulates that the accomplishment of its strategic energy objective requires a supportive policy environment which shall entail,



cated energy architecture of the ECO Region.

As mentioned, these activities should aim at developing sustainable frameworks, particularly in energy trade and investments for enhanced contribution of regional energy cooperation to the existing patterns in the ECO Region.

The new multi-year ECO Strategy on Energy Cooperation could fit well for this revision.



Mapping out the
**New ECO Strategy
on Energy Cooperation**



Economic Cooperation Organization

