

## ECO Plan of Action on Combating Transnational Organized Crimes

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COMBATING TRANSNATIONAL  
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## 1) INTRODUCTION

The Interior Ministers/Heads of Delegations of the Member States of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), in the First ECO Interior Ministers Meeting held in November 1, 2006 in Tehran, and in the second ECO Interior Ministers Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 2008 in Ashgabat and as part of efforts to realize the common goals as defined in the Treaty of Izmir (1996), the Declarations of the Eighth and Ninth ECO Summit Meetings held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2004 in Dushanbe and 5<sup>th</sup> May 2006 in Baku, Re-affirming the significance for strengthening cooperation among the Member States in their combat against all forms of transnational crimes including illicit drug cultivation, drug trafficking, weapons and ammunition smuggling, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, smuggling of goods, counterfeiting, cyber crimes, money laundering, terrorism and renewing their commitment to promote such cooperation.

It was recalled that the 1<sup>st</sup> ECO Interior Ministers' Meeting (Tehran, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2006) had decided to establish a High Level Experts Group (HLEG) to prepare a comprehensive cooperation plan to launch a coordinated and integrated campaign against drugs, terrorism and other trans-national organized crimes. In line with that direction, the HLEG (Ankara, 29-30 April, 2008), prepared a Joint Regional Strategy to combat drugs, terrorism and trans-national organized crimes. The Ministerial meeting approved the Joint Regional Strategy to combat Drugs, Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crimes.

In line with direction of the Joint Regional Strategy, the Republic of Turkey hosted an Experts Group Meeting (EGM) to evolve a Plan of Action on combating Trans-National Organized Crime in Ankara on 6-7 May, 2010. This Plan will be effective after approval by the Second High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting on Drugs, Terrorism and Trans-national Organized Crimes in Iran and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Interior Ministerial Meeting in Turkey.

## 2) GENERAL OVERVIEW OF TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME AND TERRORISM

Transnational organized crime is considered as one of the major threats to human security, impeding the social, economic, political and cultural development of societies worldwide. It is a multi-faceted phenomenon and has manifested itself in different activities, such as, drug trafficking, trafficking in human beings; trafficking in firearms; smuggling of migrants; money laundering; etc. In particular drug trafficking is one of the main activities of organized crime groups, generating enormous profits.

As the globalization, with the help of new communication technologies, has expanded international trade paving the scale and scope of goods, capital and human movements to an unprecedented level so the range of organized crime activities has broadened and diversified. The traditional hierarchical forms of organized crime groups have diminished; replaced with loose networks who work together in order to exploit new market opportunities. For example organized crime groups involved in drug trafficking are commonly engaged in smuggling of other illegal goods. The link between drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crimes calls for a more integrated approach to address this nexus. The signing of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (TOC) in 2000 was a historic step forward in countering this threat.

Terrorism together with other transnational organized crimes such as production of narcotics, human trafficking and gunrunning, smuggling of goods, artifacts and species of preserved animals and plants as well as financial crimes such as money laundering, corruption and cyber crimes, have posed serious threats and challenges to ECO Member States. Considering this fact the ECO Member States should cooperate on tackling this predicament. Any fight against these sinister phenomena, i.e. terrorism and drug trafficking requires international and regional cooperation. ECO Member States will also need to organize coordinated actions with effective regional strategies to fight against this security challenge through a uniform approach.

In order to have same understanding among Member States, the definitions recognized by United Nations will prevail.

### **3) OBJECTIVES**

#### **a) General Objective**

The general objective of the Action Plan is to encourage ECO Member States to expand their efforts in combating transnational crimes at the national and bilateral levels to the regional level.

ECO Member States will focus on ECO collaboration that will strengthen regional commitment and capacity to combat transnational crimes. This is in recognition of the fact that tackling transnational crime requires a concerted regional effort in view of its global dimension and pervasive nature. Besides, such efforts will assist in complementing and contributing to the national and bilateral efforts undertaken by Member States in combating such crime.

#### **b) Specific Objective**

The specific objectives of the Plan of Action are to urge the ECO Member States to:

1. Develop a more cohesive, regional strategy aimed at preventing, controlling and neutralizing Transnational Organized Crime;
2. Foster regional cooperation at the investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial level as well as the rehabilitation of perpetrators and assistance to the victims,
3. Enhance coordination among ECO Focal Points (bodies) dealing with Transnational Organized Crimes;
4. Strengthen regional capacities and capabilities to deal with sophisticated nature of transnational crime;
5. Encourage sub-regional and regional arrangements on cooperation in criminal justice, including mutual legal assistance and extradition among the ECO Member States.

6. Examine and assess the impacts of the threats of the Transnational Organized Crime on the socio-economic situation in the ECO region.

#### 4) **PRIORITY AREAS**

The Action Plan will focus interventions on specific priority areas listed below.

##### a) **Illicit Drugs**

Since the ECO Plan of Action on Drug Control had already been approved by the Second ECO Interior Ministers Meeting (Ashgabat, 2008), all aspects related to illicit drugs will be referred to the said Plan of Action.

##### b) **Strategic Police Cooperation**

Strategic police cooperation in various fields is one of the core elements in building confidence among police units and in tackling with transnational organized crimes, and terrorism effectively. Practical and constant police cooperation in the member countries in different fields especially in combating organized crimes are among the means to enhance security and stability in the ECO area.

The followings are considered as the tools of police cooperation which ECO and member states would contribute:

1. Exchange of experiences between police forces of the Member States through holding workshops, meetings and seminars,
2. Arranging programs and activities for enhancing informative and practical cooperation among police forces,
3. Promotion of educational cooperation including specialized trainings to provide necessary standards in the police activities in the Member States,
4. Promotion of cooperation and exchange of information among the ECO Member States through the Interpol's I 24/7 System.
5. To encourage Member States for fostering cooperation with other international bodies such as INTERPOL, OIC, OSCE, IOM, CARRIC and CICA.
6. If required, holding sessions between police authorities and submitting their report to the meeting of the ECO Interior Ministers and ECO Summit.

7. To hold annual meetings of Chiefs of Police, Heads of Anti-narcotics Police, Heads of Interpol and Chiefs of Border Authorities of ECO Member States.

### **c) Terrorism**

Today terrorism is not only one state's problem but all states'. It causes to lose a great amount of source in economic development and to weaken regional stability. Terrorism is one of the major threats of the world but there is no precise or widely accepted definition of the term up to now. So ECO needs to provide a comprehensive definition of terrorism through UN. Fighting against terrorism should be carried out in accordance with international rule of law and regulations.

The source of terrorism cannot be identified and connected with any religion, ethnicity or a specific geographical area. ECO Member States condemn all terrorist acts regardless where happen and who carries out.

ECO stresses that fighting against terrorism needs very strong coordination and exchange of experience with the Member States and the international organizations related the issue. To harmonize the policies and regional action plans of ECO on combating terrorism affects the solution on the issue positively.

ECO Member States should have coordination and cooperation on the following titles;

1. Having a common approach to coordinate policies and regional programs on fighting terrorism,
2. Considering problems of the countries at fighting terrorism and promoting cooperation with UN and its affiliated organs,
3. Exchanging of information and experiences related to new techniques, effective ways of combating terrorism and the new methods of terrorist acts,
4. Identifying elements and factors of the terrorist groups involved in illicit drugs and arms smuggling,
5. Preventing terrorist groups to misuse the facilities of refugee situation in the third countries,
6. Finding appropriate measures to prevent financial support of terrorist groups in their own countries,

## **d) Border Control and Management**

Following measures are considered vital to ensure the security of borders and enhance cooperation between the Border authorities of ECO Member States;

Security problems, drug-trafficking, human trafficking, illegal immigration and smuggling of goods in the region are the main reasons for the need to cooperate in border control and security in the region. In connection with the above-mentioned need, ECO Member States should have the following coordination and cooperation in border control and management;

1. Stressing on the use of border controlling systems, computer facilities and data banks to facilitate recognition of the criminals and exchange of information regarding lost passports,
2. Development of cooperation to prevent organized criminal groups to exploit travel agencies in human trafficking and migrant smuggling.
3. Stressing the need to identifying border points which are used by smugglers,
4. Exchange of information on effective techniques and measures in preventing borders from all kinds of smuggling activities.
5. The need to promote the level of technical trainings for experts and border police, exchange of information and border surveillance through holding workshops in ECO Member States,
6. Strengthening the border control and management by increasing technical, institutional and personnel capacities to effectively prevent illegal crossing and smuggling activities.
7. Special measures and exchange of experiences and information to prevent activities of terrorist groups, smugglers, and preventing them to travel among the Member States,
8. To prevent movement of terrorist groups by using land of one of the ECO Member State for criminal activities against the other Member States.
9. Facilitating instant contacts by border authorities in their capacities to exchange information and taking specific measures to prevent crimes or follow up any crime,

## **e) Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking**

Migrant smuggling and human trafficking are the two types of crimes which damage the human dignity more than any other form of international crimes. Although, they have different definitions and characterizations, the main motivation of these problems is same which is to have a better future. Economic and political instability and insecurity and the gap between the developing world and developed countries breed these problems. Also, the enormous gains that the migrant smugglers and human traffickers derive are another factor in the rapid increase in these kinds of illicit activities throughout the world including ECO region.

As a result, ECO Member States should take the following measures to prevent migrant smuggling and human trafficking:

1. Need for studying the origins of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, its formation and outgrowth.
2. Exchange of information on activities of criminal groups who are engaged in these kinds of crimes.
3. Coordination and cooperation of Member States in harmonizing rules and regulations relevant to fight against migrant smuggling and human trafficking
4. Promote efforts of all ECO Member States in establishment of National Data Banks.
5. Encouraging ECO Member States to constitute Re-admission Agreements among countries in the region.
6. Identifying and neutralizing the smugglers networks.

## **5) THE MEASURES ADDRESSING ALL KINDS OF TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIMES**

Member States offer the following as the areas of cooperation to fight against Transnational Organized Crimes;

1. Experiences of Quadrilateral Working Group comprising Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Greece (with Afghanistan also added) shall be studied and disseminated by the IOM for sharing of best practices among the ECO Member States.
2. The Member States who have not signed the "Palermo Convention and its supplementary Protocols are encouraged to sign the Protocols and also enact domestic legislation in comply with these international instruments, if not legislated already.
3. In order to curb violence in Member States, weapons/ammunition smuggling shall be strictly controlled by sharing of information through focal points dealing with trans-national organized crimes.

4. Member States will cooperate in exchanging information and experiences on Cyber Crimes and also share best practices regarding legislation and regulations made in their respective countries.
5. Member States will cooperate in curbing smuggling of rare species of animals/plants as well as historical relics/architects.
6. In combating trans-national organized crime, Member States are recommended to strengthen legislative/regulatory frameworks in conformity with the relevant UN Conventions.
7. To cooperate in combating money-laundering to eradicate the criminal proceeds of trans-national organized crimes.
8. Member States will foresee the necessary actions to promote the cooperation between the judicial and law-enforcement authorities in the field of trans-national organized crimes.

## **6) IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM**

This Plan will be effective after approval by the Second High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting on Drugs, Terrorism and Trans-national Organized Crimes and the 3<sup>rd</sup> ECO Interior Ministerial Meeting scheduled to be held in Tehran and Istanbul, respectively. The implementation of this Plan of Action shall be the responsibility of Steering Committee (SC) comprising the ECO Coordinating Countries (Iran, Turkey & Pakistan), ECO Secretariat and other volunteer members. This Steering Committee will meet once a year prior to Ministerial Meeting.

1. A Working Group (WG) may be established for the implementation of this Plan of Action.
2. The Parties shall take the required policies to implement this Plan of Action.
3. Each Party may take into consideration any formal requests by the other Party for funding specific activities that fall within their respective mandates and priorities laid out in this Plan of Action.