

7th ECO Working Group Meeting on Environment

20 November 2023

(10:00 hrs, Tehran (GMT+3:30))

ECO Secretariat (Hybrid format)

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Agenda Item No. 1

Inauguration of the Meeting

1. The meeting will be inaugurated by Dr. Fuad Farzalibeyov, Director for Energy, Minerals and Environment of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Agenda Item No. 2

Election of the Chairperson

2. The Chairperson will be elected in accordance with Chapter V, paragraphs 22-26 of the ECO Rules of Procedure.

Agenda Item No. 3

Adoption of the Agenda

3. The Provisional Agenda of the meeting was circulated among the Member States vide ECO Secretariat's Note Verbale No. EME/Environment/2023/1849 dated 14 November 2023. The Provisional Agenda of the Meeting may be considered and approved.

Agenda Item No. 4

Preparation for the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Environment, to be held on 9 December 2023 on the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28 of UNFCCC)

4. Following the postponement of two major environmental events of ECO for 2023, namely 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment and the 7th Working Group Meeting on Environment (see ECO Secretariat's Note No. 1332 dated 5 September enclosing the self-explanatory Note Verbale of the Kyrgyz Republic), the 7th Working Group Meeting on Environment was rescheduled to be held in the Secretariat vide ECO Secretariat's Note Verbale No. EME/Environment/2023/1525 dated 27 September 2023. Further on, the ECO Secretariat suggested to hold the Working Group meeting in a hybrid format (in-person and virtual) via its Note Verbale No. EME/Environment/2023/1758 dated 29 October 2023.
5. In the meantime, the Republic of Azerbaijan extended an invitation for the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Environment, to be held on 9 December 2023 on the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28 of UNFCCC) in Dubai, UAE. The invitation letters by the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan addressed to his counterparts were conveyed to the Member States via ECO Secretariat's separate Notes Verbales on 18 October 2023.
6. The Ministerial Meeting may provide suitable platform to pave the way for adoption of the ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2023-2030) and its Annexes (see under the next agenda item), and consolidation and advancement of ECO's environmental agenda in the light of the rapidly evolving global environmental and climate agenda.
7. The Host Country / ECO Secretariat are invited to update the Working Group Meeting on the preparations for the Ministerial Meeting on Environment.

Agenda Item No. 5

Consideration of the draft ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2023-2030) and its Annexes:

- I. Work Program on Climate Change in ECO Region (2023-2030)**
- II. Work Program on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2023-2030)**
- III. Draft Roadmap for implementation of the first phase of ECO Landcare Initiative (2023-2025)**

8. The Secretariat in cooperation with the ECO Institute for Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST), has examined the former Framework Plan of Action in view of "ECO Vision 2025", recent global and regional environmental patterns, and rapidly evolving global environmental agenda. As an outcome of this process, the draft

of the ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment and its annexes have been elaborated. These documents have been disseminated to the ECO Member States vide ECO Secretariat's Note Verbale No. EME/MM on Environment/2022/995 dated 7 July 2022.

9. Only the Republic of Türkiye has so far transmitted its views and comments on the above-mentioned draft. Most notably, the Republic of Türkiye conveyed its dissenting position on the ECO Land Care project proposal (Annex III of the ECO Cooperation Framework) and submitted an alternative project proposal. The latter project proposal was circulated among the Member States for their views and comments vide ECO Secretariat's Note Verbale No. EME/Environment/2023/1697 dated 13 December 2023.

10. Following the lack of any feedbacks from the Member States, the Secretariat shared its own views and comments in respect with the relevant project proposal of the Republic of Türkiye. Later on, the ECO Secretariat received another project proposal titled "Capacity building of countries in the ECO Region on desertification, land degradation and erosion monitoring system", developed by the Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change of the Republic of Türkiye. The Secretariat conveyed its subsequent views and comments in this regard for consideration by the relevant Turkish authorities in early 2023. The reaction and update on this matter is awaited.

11. The Member States are expected to share their views and comments on the draft ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2023-2030) and its Annexes. Upon the consent of the Member States the draft ECO Cooperation Framework may be submitted to the Ministerial Meeting on Environment for endorsement.

12. The Member States are also required to hold detailed consultation and coordination with a view to find a way to agree upon a common ground document for guiding the regional activities on the significant issue of land degradation.

Agenda Item No. 6

High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation: deliberation on the way forward

13. Following the initial proposal by the Republic of Uzbekistan at the 15th ECO Summit in Ashgabat in 2021, as well as the consequent communications and meetings for consideration of this proposal by the Member States, the Terms of Reference for the

High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation, prepared by the ECO Secretariat after incorporating the Member States' amendments was approved through silence procedure (see the ECO Secretariat's Note Verbale No. LA/2023/1813 dated 7 November 2023).

14. Taking into account that the High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation was finally established in the course of the 16th ECO Summit in Tashkent in November 2023, deliberating on the way forward is quite significant. The Working Group meeting is an appropriate opportunity for all the Member States, particularly the initiator to share their views on this matter and holding the first meeting of High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation in 2024.

15. The Republic of Uzbekistan is thus invited to share its insights on the way forward with respect to modalities and promotion of the High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation.

Agenda Item No. 7

Exchange of views on the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability and Circular Economy in the ECO Region (RESCUE)

16. ECO Secretariat in partnership with the Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan have developed the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability and Circular Economy in the ECO Region (RESCUE). Its Concept Paper was circulated among the Member States for due consideration and review vide ECO Secretariat's Note Verbale No. EME/2023/1614 dated 8 October 2023.

17. The consideration of RESCUE is sought to be one of the key agenda items of the Informal Ministerial Meeting on Environment, to be held on 9 December 2023 on the sidelines of the UN Climate Change Conference (see para 5 of the Annotated Agenda). This Ministerial Meeting is dedicated to the relevant topic of "Accelerating the Transition Towards a Resource Efficient, Sustainable and Circular ECO Region".

18. ECO Secretariat is expected to make a briefing/deliver a presentation on the subject Regional Initiative at the Working Group Meeting on Environment. The Member States are invited to share their initial views and comments on the RESCUE. The Working Group Meeting may wish to welcome the Regional Initiative at the expert level.

Agenda Item No. 8

Exchange of views on the National Progress Reports on Environment

19. The ECO Secretariat, in accordance with the ECO Work Programme adopted by the Regional Planning Council (RPC), requests the Member States on an annual basis to submit their National Progress Reports (NPRs) on the environment. The NPRs are sought to be submitted during the first quarter of each calendar year. The last communication in this regard was the ECO Secretariat's Note Verbale No. EME/Environment/2023/1081 dated 26 July 2023, to which only one Member State, namely the Republic of Azerbaijan replied and transmitted its NPR for 2022 (circulated via ECO Secretariat's Note Verbale No. 1832 dated 12 November 2023).

20. The Member States are expected to update on the status of their respective NPRs. The Meeting may request the Member States, which have not done so, to submit their National Progress Reports to the Secretariat, preferably in a unified format/template.

Agenda Item No. 9

Date and venue of the 8th ECO Working Group Meeting on Environment

21. Under this Agenda item, an interested Member State may announce its readiness to host the 8th Working Group Meeting on Environment in 2024. The exact date and venue could be notified later on.

Agenda Item No. 10

Any other business

22. The Member States may wish to decide on creation of a standing virtual group on an efficient and trustworthy application, which may improve the speed and quality of communication between the ECO Secretariat and the Member States.

23. Under this agenda item, the Member States may also deliberate on ways and means to enhance regional cooperation on environment, including identification of priority solutions and best practices in regional partnerships that provide opportunities for strengthening capacities of ECO to address ECO Region's environmental challenges.

24. The Member States may share any proposals for hosting the events in the field of environment for inclusion in the draft Calendar of Events 2024, to be adopted at the Regional Planning Council meeting on 18-21 December 2023 in ECO Secretariat, Tehran.

25. The Meeting may consider any other issue not covered by the Agenda.

Agenda Item No. 11

Closing Remarks

26. The Chairman, ECO Secretariat and any interested Member State may deliver closing remarks.