

27th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM)

Report

*October 10, 2023
Shusha - Azerbaijan*

Report

The 27th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) was held on October 10, 2023 in Shusha, Republic of Azerbaijan. The Honourable Foreign Ministers/Heads of Delegations of the ECO Member States, including the Republic of **Azerbaijan** (host), Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Kazakhstan**, **Kyrgyz** Republic, Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**, Republic of **Tajikistan**, Republic of **Türkiye**, **Turkmenistan** and Republic of **Uzbekistan** participated in the meeting. The Delegations from ECO Observers, namely; the Turkish Cypriot State and the Organization of Turkic States, as well as the ECO Secretary General along with his team also participated in the meeting. Moreover, the Presidents of ECO Cultural Institute (ECO-CI), ECO Educational Institute (ECO-EI), ECO Science Foundation (ECO-SF) and ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB), as well as Secretary General of CICA also attended the event. **Annexure-I** contains the list of participants.

Senior Officials Meeting (SOM)

2. A Senior Officials Meeting (SoM) was held on October 9, 2023 to review and finalize the contents of draft (s) Agenda and Report as well as the Shusha Declaration to be considered and adopted by the COM.

3. Briefing the participants, the ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri presented an inclusive report on activities and engagements as well as the Organization's efforts for enhancing its relations with ECO's international partners. His Excellency's complete statement is placed at **Annexure-II**.

4. The Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Yalchin Rafiyev welcomed the delegations and thanked the ECO Secretary General and his team for their facilitative approach and effective coordination to ensure successful organization of the meeting. He also highlighted the main deliverables and events held during the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan in 2023. His Excellency's complete statement is placed at **Annexure-II**.

Council of Ministers Meeting (COM)

Inauguration

5. Inaugurating the meeting, the Honourable Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov read out the message of the Honourable President of the Republic of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev. In his message, President Aliyev welcomed the participants of the 27th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM), noting that Azerbaijan is an active member of the Economic Cooperation Organization and attaches particular significance to developing relations with its Member States. His Excellency's complete address is placed at **Annexure-III**. The reflection of President's address in the Report is based on the proposal of the ECO Secretary General.

6. As current Chairman of the ECO, the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov inaugurated the 27th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) in Shusha and presided over the event.

7. The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Bakhtiyor Saidov in his capacity as Chairman of the COM in 2022 delivered his statement. His Excellency's complete statement is placed at **Annexure-III**.

8. Chairing the event, H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov welcomed the Honourable Ministers/Heads of Delegations and other distinguished participants. H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov in his statement highlighted the key deliverables, initiatives and events realized during the Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2023 under the theme of "*Green Transition and Interconnectivity*". His Excellency's complete statement is placed at **Annexure-III**.

9. The Honourable Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran H.E. Mr. Mehdi Safari also delivered his statement on behalf of the Honourable Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the next ECO Chairman under the theme of the year of "*Enhanced and Resilient ECO Region through Expansion of Intra-Regional Trade*". His Excellency's complete statement is placed at **Annexure-III**.

10. The ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri extended his sincere gratitude to H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov and his team for hosting the 27th Meeting of the COM in Shusha. Moreover, he underlined a number of important activities made within the stimulating concept of "*Green Transition and Interconnectivity*" introduced by Republic Azerbaijan for their ECO Chairmanship in 2023. He also welcomed the Islamic Republic of Iran as the ECO Chair for 2024. His Excellency's complete statement is placed at **Annexure-III**.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

11. As proposed by SoM, the Council considered and adopted the following Agenda of its meeting along with the addition of an agenda item; "Finalization of ECO Award Winners":

Draft Agenda

1. Adoption of the Agenda;
2. Statements by:
 - Ministers/Heads of Delegation of Member States;
 - ECO Observers;
 - Heads of International Partners;
 - Heads of ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions.
3. Consideration of the Report of ECO Secretary General on activities of the Organization;
4. Finalization of ECO Award Winners;
5. Review, and Approval of:

- Reports of ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) Meetings;
 - Reports of Sectoral Ministerial Meetings;
 - Reports of Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions.
6. Administrative and Financial Matters of ECO Secretariat:
 - Audit Report for 2021 and 2022;
 7. Adoption of Shusha Declaration.
 8. Treaty Event
 9. Any other business:
 10. Date and Venue of the next COM meeting;
 11. Adoption of Report of the 27th Meeting of Council of Ministers;
 12. Vote of thanks and closing of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No.2

Statements by:

Ministers/Heads of Delegations of the Member States

12. In their remarks, the Honourable Ministers of Foreign Affairs/Heads of Delegation of the ECO Member States emphasized that more concerned efforts were required to enhance regional cooperation especially in order to meet the growing global challenges which appear to impede overall economic progress. Regarding the developmental activities of the Organization, they underscored the importance of ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated Bodies that, they considered, quite effective for promoting and implementing the ECO's multifaceted agenda, including the Organization's engagements on cultural, educational and scientific areas. Within the scope of ECO framework, they also briefed on their national programs and policies. Their Excellencies' complete statements are placed at **Annexure-III**.

ECO Observers

13. The Representatives of the Turkish Cypriot State and the Organization of Turkic States also delivered statements in their capacities as ECO Observers. Their complete statements are placed at **Annexure-IV**.

ECO International Partners

14. As ECO International Partner, the Secretary General of the CICA also delivered the statement. His complete statement is placed at **Annexure-IV**.

Heads of ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions

15. The Heads of ECO Specialized Agencies and Regional Institution, including ECO Cultural Institute (ECO-ECI), ECO Educational Institute (ECO-EI), ECO Science Foundation (ECO-SF) and ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB) also provided their statements in written, encapsulating their programs and activities. Their complete statements are placed at **Annexure-IV**.

Agenda Item No.3

Consideration of the Report of ECO Secretary General on activities of the Organization

16. The Council expressed satisfaction over the comprehensive Report presented by ECO Secretary General on the post-26th COM sector-wise activities of the organization and:

Follow-up of the decisions of 27th COM Meeting

17. Due to emerging challenges at regional and global scales, the Council encouraged the Member States and the ECO Secretariat to enhance cooperation and coordination for minimizing their adverse impacts on the region's socio-economic progress.

18. In this regard, the Council required every collective effort and activity to be in line with the Organization's policy-guided and action-oriented approach, making expeditious follow-up of the COM's recommendations and decisions for smooth implementation of the progressive economic agenda of the ECO.

ECO Agreements/Treaties concluded among Member States

19. Reviewing the status of the existing ECO legal frameworks, the Council urged for an increased cooperation by the signatories/non-signatories Member States to expedite their internal processes for signing/ratifying all ECO agreements.

Implementation of ECO Projects and Programmes

20. The Council appreciated the ECO projects implementation rate, wishing and expecting early accomplishment/finalization of all the current and future programs and projects based on the sector-wise economic priorities of the Organization as reflected in the previous decisions and recommendations of the Council.

ECO Relations with International Partners

21. Acknowledging the activities of the Organization regarding expansion and intensification of its ties with regional and global partners, the Council noted that ECO multilateral interactions at international fora could also be very effective, alongside their concerted efforts for enhancing visibility and outreach of the Organization.

22. Moreover, the Council emphasized the importance of the biennial Resolution adopted on August 25, 2023 by 77th UNGA Session on ECO-UN Cooperation that encourages an increased nexus and coordination between the ECO and UN Agencies on certain issues. In this context, the Council encouraged the ECO Secretariat to strongly maintain this institutional approach for the continued promotion of ECO and its regional economic agenda in the global landscape.

Agenda Item No.4

Finalization of ECO Award Winners

23. As proposed by the SoM, the Council authorized the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to finalize the ECO Award's Winners and endorse their names for announcement by the 16th ECO Summit scheduled to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on November 9, 2023.

Agenda Item No.5

Review and Approval of:

- Reports of ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) Meetings;
 - Reports of Sectoral Ministerial Meetings;
 - Reports of Specialized Agencies/ Regional Institutions.
- i. Reports of (272nd to 279th) Meetings of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR);
 - ii. Reports of the 5th Ministerial Meetings on Health (Geneva, May 24, 2023), 3rd Ministerial Meeting on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (Tehran July 13, 2023) and 5th Ministerial Meeting on Tourism (Ardabil October 5, 2023).
 - iii. Annual Reports of the ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated bodies.

24. The Council adopted all the Reports presented for its consideration.

25. Moreover, the Council acknowledged the importance of ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated Bodies, considering their activities augmentative in implementing the ECO's agenda of promoting multifaceted cooperation. The Council encouraged them to keep working on their progressive programs and activities for a shared and sustainable advancement in all socio-economic spheres.

Agenda Item No. 6

Administrative and Financial Matters of ECO Secretariat

- **Audit Report for 2021 and 2022**

26. The Council examined and approved the Audit Reports for the years 2021 and 2022 along with the ECO Secretariat's comments circulated amongst the Member States on September 12, 2023.

Agenda Item No. 7

Adoption of Shusha Declaration

27. As recommended by SOM, the Council adopted the Shusha Declaration that contains policy instructions and guidelines of the COM on various sectoral activities of the Organization. The Shusha Declaration is placed at **Annexure-V**.

Agenda Item No.8

Treaty Events

28. The Council welcomed the signing of the Charter of the ECO Clean Energy Centre by the Republic of Türkiye. Copy of the Charter is placed at **Annexure-VI**.

29. Moreover, the Council encouraged the remaining Member States to sign /ratify the Charter for early operationalization of the Center.

Agenda Item No. 8

Any other business

30. No issue was discussed under this Agenda item.

Agenda Item No. 9

Date and Venue of the next Meeting

31. The Council appreciated and welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to organize the 28th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) in Tehran during the second half of 2024.

Agenda Item No. 10

Adoption of Report of the 27th Meeting of Council of Ministers

32. The Council unanimously adopted the Report of its 27th Meeting held on October 10, 2023 in Shusha, Azerbaijan.

Agenda Item No. 16

Vote of Thanks and Closing of the Meeting

33. The Council extended sincere gratitude and appreciation to H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as to Mr. H.E. Mr. Yalchin Rafiyev, Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan for chairing the 27th COM and the Senior Officials Meetings in efficient manners. The Council also commended the excellent hospitality provided by Azerbaijan to the participating delegations in Shusha and Baku.

34. Moreover, the Council appreciated participation of the Heads/Members of the Delegations and their fruitful contribution to the meeting.

35. The Council also acknowledged the facilitative assistance rendered by distinguished ECO Secretary General and the members of his team, ensuring smooth preparations and successful organization of this 27th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) in Shusha, Azerbaijan.
