

STATEMENT
ECO Summit

(Tashkent, 9.11.2023)

**Distinguished Heads of State, heads of delegation,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Let me first of all thank His Excellency Mr. Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, for the excellent organization of the 16th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization, warm hospitality and cordiality.

This Summit is taking place in the context of serious geopolitical challenges that have a direct impact on the course and direction of global economic processes. Despite all their complexity, they also bring new opportunities. To use these opportunities in a constructive and creative manner, to exercise the considerable potential of ECO in the context of the current geo-economic shifts - that, in our view, should be the main task of the Organization in the near future. I believe that there are all the necessary prerequisites for this.

In this context, the 15th ECO Summit held in Ashgabat on November 28, 2021 was a milestone event. It was full of important initiatives and events and gave a new energy to our joint activities. The **Ashgabat Consensus for Action** adopted at the Summit is a mainline document that includes all key areas of cooperation particularly trade, transport, connectivity, energy, industry, economic growth, as well as social welfare, environment, climate change, and a number of others.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to all ECO Heads of State for their active participation in the work of the Ashgabat Summit and their valuable contribution to its success.

At the same time, I express my gratitude to the ECO Secretariat for taking effective measures to fulfil the goals and objectives arising from the document entitled "Ashgabat Consensus for Action".

Dear participants of the meeting,

I believe it would be appropriate to dwell on some fundamental aspects that Turkmenistan believes are particularly important today.

First of all, we are talking about expanding mutually beneficial **trade, economic and investment ties**. Today, this vector should be the main direction of our cooperation.

During the chairmanship in the ECO in 2021, Turkmenistan proposed to start work on the creation of economic corridors in the ECO region. We see them as a system of sustainable main routes for the movement of goods, services and financial resources. For this purpose, it is necessary to establish and put on a systematic basis co-operation between the leading industrial enterprises, investment companies and banks of our countries. This process should be accompanied by a broad introduction of modern technologies. In this regard, we propose to develop the **ECO Framework Agreement on Digital Technologies and E-Commerce**.

In order to increase trade turnover between ECO countries, it is important to actively utilise the **potential of cross-border and regional trade**. Here our peoples have centuries-old traditions and valuable experience, which needs to be revived, applied and enriched taking into account modern realities. It is necessary to create a comfortable cross-border environment for this purpose and to stimulate regional co-operation through an agreed system of privileges and preferences.

We attach due importance to the intensification of business ties through **small and medium entrepreneurship** and the establishment of partnerships in such segments as the production of certain types of industrial goods, agricultural products, the provision of services and other areas.

In order to raise awareness of the opportunities and intentions in our countries in the context of expanding multilateral co-operation, we propose to consider the idea of developing an **"Information Portal"**, including specific data, proposals, business projects and other necessary information.

Dear participants,

It is obvious that our economic cooperation can develop successfully and be truly effective only if there is a modern transportation and communication network covering the entire ECO space. The importance of Eurasian transport corridors as a locomotive for the development of the entire continent is obvious and will only grow. Our organization is called upon to play one of the key roles in this process.

Therefore, we prioritize cooperation in the construction of **significant infrastructure facilities** - roads, bridges, interchanges, warehouses, terminals and others. In practical terms, we propose to consider the creation of **Joint Transport and Logistics Centers** with the participation of relevant state core sectors and private companies.

In general, I am convinced that today we need greater consistency and mutual complementarity in the work of our transport agencies. Here I would like to emphasize the importance of the coordinating function of the Secretariat in the context of the implementation of the ECO Transport and Communications Development Programme.

Turkmenistan pays special attention to the creation of interregional transport and transit corridors with the participation of ECO countries.

We also consider the prospects for organizing multimodal freight transport from China through Central Asia with access to the ports of the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Black Sea to be a subject of priority discussion.

We believe it is important for our Organization to conduct more focused and coordinated transport diplomacy in the international arena, to work more actively with specialized structures - the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, international and regional transport organizations.

Another key area **is energy**.

In the context of general instability of the world energy markets, the task of building an effective model of ECO cooperation is particularly urgent. This is necessary, first of all, to meet the growing energy needs of our countries as new industrial and agricultural capacities and infrastructure facilities emerge and joint production projects are launched.

Turkmenistan, as is known, has initiated several large joint energy projects in which a number of ECO countries are involved. We urge our partners to expand energy cooperation in order to create a system of energy supplies covering the entire ECO area. For my part, I can state that Turkmenistan is ready to increase the volume of natural gas and electricity supplies to the ECO countries, both in terms of existing capacities and those with a promising future.

Dear participants of the Summit,

Today at the meeting we will discuss a number of issues of vital importance for our countries. Their solution will make it possible to ensure prospects for cooperation within the framework of ECO, define specific plans and mechanisms for their implementation.

Turkmenistan is convinced that at the current difficult stage of global development, the ECO States and leaders of our countries will display their inherent wisdom and foresight for the common good, strengthening good-neighborliness, mutual understanding, friendship and cooperation among brotherly peoples.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the important role and high responsibility entrusted to the ECO Secretariat for the practical implementation of the priority areas of cooperation.

I wish the Secretary-General, Mr. Khusrav Noziri, and all the staff of the Secretariat success in this field and express my gratitude for their valuable contribution to the effective conduct of this meeting.

And now, in accordance with the ECO Rules of Procedure, I propose to elect the distinguished President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev as the Chairman of the 16th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

Please, esteemed Shavkat Mironovich, I ask you to chair the 16th ECO Summit. Thank you for your attention.