



SPEECH
OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN
H.E. MR. EMOMALI RAHMON
AT THE 16TH ECO SUMMIT
Tashkent, 9 November 2023

*Excellency Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Dear friends!*

At the onset, I would like to extend my profound gratitude to His Excellency Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev for the traditionally warm and cordial hospitality and the high level of organization of our Summit.

May I also congratulate you – Excellency Shavkat Miromonovich, on your election as the Chairman of the 16th Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

We highly praise the efforts of Turkmenistan's chairmanship under the Presidency of His Excellency Serdar Gurbangulyevich Berdimuhamedov aiming at implementation of decisions taken at the previous Summit.

I am confident, that outcomes of today's meeting will give a new and powerful impetus to the mutually beneficial cooperation among the Member States of the Organization.

Distinguished colleagues,

Issues of systematic, consistent development of interaction within the ECO are of paramount importance in the foreign policy of Tajikistan.

Despite the crisis trends in the global economy, an aggregate Gross Domestic Product of the ECO Member States, which currently exceeds two trillion US Dollars, generally has a growing dynamic.

It is expected that GDP growth in most ECO countries at the end of this year will compose more than 5% in average.

In terms of declining economic activity in certain regions of the world, such a positive trend inspires optimism about the prospects for the progressive development of our countries.

The ECO Member States are important trading partners of Tajikistan.

Today they account for more than 35% of the total foreign trade turnover of our country.

Along with this, we are of opinion, that the existing potential for economic interaction between our countries still remains untapped.

It seems relevant to build-up efforts to create flexible system of cooperation in all sectors of the economy with an increase in the production of competitive products.

This helps strengthen the export potential of the member states individually and the ECO Region upon the whole.

Taking into account current realities, building genuine regional transport and transit system through the implementation of joint infrastructure projects aimed at connecting the transport networks of the ECO Member States would be an effective element in expanding trade.

It seems important to pay increased attention to the development of multimodal transport, logistics, creation of green transport corridors and the digitalization of transport systems in our region.

We also believe it is important to provide comprehensive assistance and give an unwavering support to the landlocked

member countries of the Organization in building strong inter-regional transport links in the region.

In this context, we welcome the development of the International North-South Transport Corridor.

We are confident, that this step will significantly contribute to increasing the transit potential of the region.

Along with this corridor, the construction of an integrated transport and logistics system of the ECO will be facilitated by ensuring the reliability of other transport hubs.

Being actively involved in this process, Tajikistan continues construction and renovation of modern highways.

Thus, we intend to make a remarkable contribution to the development of the sector, including the East-West and Central Asia – South Asia directions.

The First Consultative Meeting of the High-Level Working Group of the Multimodal Transport Corridor along the route Tajikistan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey (TUTIT) with access to China was held this September in Tajikistan.

The early launch and effective use of this route, developed within the framework of our Organization, may give added impetus to the increase in cargo transportation between our countries.

Furthermore, our Chinese partners and we agreed to create the China-Tajikistan-Afghanistan Economic Corridor, which can be an effective example of the interconnectedness of East, Central and South Asia.

Dear colleagues,

Along with building transport infrastructure, in our opinion, promotion of cooperation in the field of industry and the production of goods and services is essential for the expansion of trade.

I in this context believe it is necessary to encourage investment in the establishment of manufacturing facilities, given all factors ensuring their balanced and concerted operation.

Against the backdrop of rising prices for basic food, production and processing of agricultural products, increasing productivity and yield in the agricultural sector deserve special attention as an important component of the region's food security.

Climate change today is one of the major global topics and poses serious challenges to the national economies of countries.

In this connection, the rational use of renewable energy sources as one of the main components of the development of a "green economy" is an important factor in adaptation to climate change.

Considering this, Tajikistan is currently striving to actively use its water and energy potential in accordance with the currently relevant concept of "green energy".

Our country in the near future intends to increase the generation of environmentally friendly electricity from renewable sources and contribute to the energy supply of the ECO Region.

We believe that further implementation of the goals of the ECO Strategy for Energy Cooperation 2030 will help meet the growing needs of the region for electricity.

In our view, an implementation of projects for the construction of interstate power transmission lines, including the CASA-1000 Project, could significantly increase the energy potential of the ECO.

Tourism sector is yet another promising area of our cooperation.

Considering our existing opportunities in this area, we have adopted and are implementing a number of government programs aimed at tourism development.

These programs provide for significant privileges and preferences for tourism activities and the development of tourism infrastructure.

The active expansion of humanitarian ties meets the interests of all countries of the Organization.

In this context, it is necessary to fully use the potential of the structures and cooperation mechanisms created within the ECO in the field of culture, science and education.

We propose to further consistently promote the framework of intercultural dialogue and effectively use different forms of humanitarian exchanges.

Dear colleagues,

Despite a positive shift in the work of our Organization, we are still unable to achieve desired result in certain segments of cooperation.

I in this regard, propose to instruct the ECO Secretariat, with the involvement of the relevant departments of our countries, to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the state and prospects of cooperation in all areas and present a report on the results of these studies.

At the same time, we consider it necessary to intensify mechanisms for monitoring the practical implementation of agreements we reached within the Organization.

I sincerely express our readiness to further strengthen the partnership of our countries within the Organization in all areas of mutual interest.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the Republic of Azerbaijan on its successful chairmanship of the ECO and wish

every success to the Islamic Republic of Iran, which assumes the presidency in the Organization.

I thank you for attention!