

TASHKENT COMMUNIQUE
Partnership for Economic Stability and Development

Final Conclusion by Chairman of the 16th ECO Summit
(November 9, 2023, Tashkent)

On the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the following Heads of State/Governments of the ECO Member States participated in the 16th ECO Summit held in Tashkent on November 9, 2023.

H.E. Mr. **Ilham Aliyev**, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan;
H.E. Mr. **Sayyid Ebrahim Raisi**, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
H.E. Mr. **Sadyr Zhaparov**, President of the Kyrgyz Republic;
H.E. Mr. **Anwaar ul-Haq Kakar**, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan;
H.E. Mr. **Emomali Rahmon**, President of the Republic of Tajikistan;
H.E. Mr. **Recep Tayyip Erdoğan**, President of the Republic of Türkiye;
H.E. Mr. **Serdar Berdimuhamedov**, President of Turkmenistan;
H.E. Mr. **Alikhan Smailov**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan
H.E. Mr. **Shavkat Mirziyoyev**, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan
(Chairman/Host).

The Chairman expressed gratitude to the delegations for their active participation, proposals and initiatives aimed at deepening and expanding regional economic cooperation, as well as enhancing the effectiveness and international status of ECO. During the Summit, the Chairman concluded that we:

Reaffirmed our commitment to the fundamental principles of the Treaty of Izmir and to the objectives set forth in the ECO Vision 2025 as well as reconfirmed previously made statements on strengthening multifaceted cooperation for sustainable progress and economic development in the region;

Reassured our shared commitment to further deepening cooperation in all spheres, noting the traditional strong economic, cultural and historical ties among ECO Member States;

Taking into account the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on cooperation between the UN and ECO dated August 25, 2023, recognized the importance of further development of systemic and comprehensive ECO relations with international and regional organizations;

Noted the need to proceed with the process of trade liberalization in the ECO Region as a driving force for the full realization of its development potential;

Emphasized, in particular, the importance of taking a number of decisive measures aimed at removing customs and administrative barriers in mutual trade and the recognition of certificates which will, in turn, significantly facilitate the access of goods to our markets;

Called for effective use of innovative potential, first of all, to develop new forms of industrial cooperation between our countries in the field of high technologies;

Recognized the importance of intensifying cooperation in the implementation of transport and communication projects connecting the ECO region with major port hubs and world markets, including the construction of new China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan and Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railways;

Underscoring the transport and communication connectivity enhancement as one of the priorities for all of us, welcomed the Uzbekistan's accession to the multilateral Transit Transport Framework Agreement aimed at increasing the potential of the ECO countries in the field of transport;

Stressed the importance of intensifying efforts on establishment of ECO Regional Electricity Market as well as transition to renewable and clean energy sources given the need for increasing energy security and ensuring stability in the region as one of the ECO's strategic goals;

Highlighting the relevance of strengthening cooperation in the field of environment, recognized the importance of transition to low-carbon development and adaptation to climate change in the ECO Region;

Voiced the need of ECO Member States for the development of digital economy and widespread use of digital technologies, development of technological industry and creation of innovations in all areas;

Underscored the key role of agriculture and water resources management as a driving force in the economies of regional countries in ensuring food security, reducing poverty, improving rural well-being and sustainable economic development;

Underlined the important role of tourism as a means of sustainable socio-economic development in the region, and taking into account its rich cultural and historical heritage, called for the intensification of joint efforts to promote tourism potential of ECO area;

Expressed grave concerns over the escalation of bloody conflict in the Middle East as a result of prolonged occupation of the Palestinian territories. The threat of a large-scale war spreading across the region is becoming more and more real. The current situation in Gaza Strip poses a serious challenge to security and stability worldwide;

Noted with a sense of deep sorrow that as a result of hostilities, 73% of almost 11 thousand victims of Gaza residents are women, children and the elderly;

Reaffirmed our commitment to continuing political and diplomatic efforts aimed at ensuring a ceasefire, establishing humanitarian aid delivery routes as soon as possible, launching peace negotiations and reaching a reasonable compromise;

Reiterated the firm position of the Economic Cooperation Organization Member States that the only and fairest solution to this problem should be the implementation of the principle of "Two States for Two Peoples." The people of Palestine have the right to establish their own independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions;

Welcomed Türkiye's initiative to hold an International Meeting with the Spouses of Heads of State and Government in Istanbul on November 15, 2023, which aims to demonstrate solidarity with the Palestinian people and help alleviate the suffering of our brothers and sisters in the Gaza Strip.

The Chairman also:

Reiterated gratitude to the Heads of Delegation of the Member States for their active participation in the Summit and their huge contribution to the development of multilateral partnership;

Put forward a proposal to develop a conceptual document "Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation - 2035", defining the future priority areas and sectors of the Organization, based on an in-depth analysis of the large untapped opportunities within the ECO;

Emphasized the importance of adopting the Trade Facilitation Agreement within the ECO in order to streamline trade in goods and services; eliminate technical and non-tariff barriers; digitalize customs, phytosanitary and veterinary procedures; increase at least twice the volume of mutual trade by 2035 through the development of e-commerce in the Organization's area;

Called upon other Member States to join the document on the development of transport corridor «Uzbekistan - Turkmenistan - Iran - Türkiye» adopted at the meeting of ECO Transport Ministers in Tashkent on November 2 this year , as well as to optimize mutual tariffs and charges;

Proposed the initiative to establish a "Digital Transport and Customs Office" of the Organization in the city of Tashkent aimed at large-scale implementation and effective coordination of modern systems to accelerate cargo transportation;

Drew attention to the fact that Uzbekistan has developed a "Joint action program" to increase the flow and protection of mutual investments, deepen industrial cooperation, distributed by the Secretariat among the Member States of the Organization;

While highlighting the importance of promoting new joint projects in the field of chemistry, energy, geology, textiles, leather and footwear, food, pharmaceutical and

construction industries, expressed our readiness for expansion of partnerships with the Organization's Trade and Development Bank;

Expressing interest in reinforcing ties between business circles, put forward a proposal to organize an Interregional Industrial Exhibition within the framework of the Organization and hold its first event in Uzbekistan in 2024;

Taking into account the growing importance of harmonizing national energy strategies, developing interregional energy transmission networks, and widespread introduction of energy efficient technologies, proposed to establish a Council of Energy Ministers within the Organization to comprehensively discuss issues of cooperation in this direction and conduct work on a systematic basis;

Put forward the following initiatives with a view to intensify our ties in combating climate change and protecting the environment:

- Expressing gratitude to all countries for supporting our idea of creating a High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation, proposed to organize its first meeting within the framework of the Samarkand Climate Forum in 2024;
- To jointly develop the "Samarkand Declaration" in order to combat sand and dust storms, which are becoming a serious problem;

Bearing in mind the fact that the enhanced cooperation in the field of tourism is a factor of rapprochement between our peoples, and cross-border destinations are becoming increasingly popular, proposed to develop joint tourist routes and increase the number of common tourist programs under the Silk Road tourism brand;

Put forward the initiative to create a separate Tourism Advisory Committee consisting of tourism administrations and leading experts of the Member States within the ECO Secretariat and hold its first meeting in 2024 in the city of Shakhrisabz, which was declared the ECO tourist capital;

Proceeding from the pertinence of trainings for the tourism sector personnel of the ECO Member States, improving their professional skills, called for extensive use of the opportunities offered by the International Tourism Academy of the World Tourism Organization opened in Samarkand;

Considering cultural and humanitarian cooperation as an important area of interaction, specifically emphasized that arranging annual "Culture, Art and Cinema Weeks" in the Member States, establishing "Creative Youth Festivals" and "Platforms for Innovative Cooperation", as well as strengthening cooperation in fundamental scientific areas, will give a powerful impetus to the development of our relations;

Drawing attention to the fact that the current Summit is being held without the participation of Afghanistan, one of the members of our Organization, urged not to leave this country alone in the face of today's challenging problems, to actively involve it in regional integration processes, to increase the provision of humanitarian assistance to

the Afghan people, to solve acute socio-economic problems on the basis of collective responsibility and acceptable mechanisms.

Thanked the ECO Secretary General and the Secretariat of the organization for their efforts in coordinating cooperation between member countries;

Expressed gratitude to Azerbaijan for the effective ECO Chairmanship in 2023 under the slogan "Green Transition and Interconnectivity";

Conveyed best wishes to Iran for success of the country during its ECO Chairmanship in 2024 under the theme: "Enhanced and Resilient ECO Region through Expansion of Intra-Regional Trade", assured full support of the member countries;

Welcomed the proposal of Azerbaijan to host the 17th ECO Summit in 2025 and agreed to coordinate the dates of its organization by the Secretariat through diplomatic channels.
