

2023

The News Magazine of Economic Cooperation Organization

Series12 No.31



ECO CHRONICLE

ECO DAY

30th

CEREMONY
1992/2022





Foreword



Introducing ECO Chronicles is a unique privilege that I enjoy while reflecting on every such publication. This sequel of our Chronicle envelops most prominent events, activities and engagements that the Organization held and maintained between July and December 2022.

The given period encapsulates some significant developments, including ECO's endeavors to enhance its global visibility as well as relations with other regional and international organizations, information on various expert and ministerial level meetings, business & tourism expos, commemoration of ECO enlargement, etc. I believe the readers

will find this Chronicle interestingly informative, having the highlights of ECO's current affairs.

I sincerely acknowledge the invaluable guidance, role and contribution of the esteemed Member States in supporting our mutually developed regional economic agenda. Besides, I thank and appreciate them for receptively hosting and generously organizing important events of the organization during this time.

Availing this opportunity, I would also like to reiterate that ECO provides us a unique opportunity to work together for securing a shared and sustainable future of our region. In this pursuit, we are mutually required to be increasingly cooperative, coordinative and forthcoming in facets and magnitude.

With this constructive approach and continued support of our member countries, the Organization will not only expand but also stand as a more effective, vibrant and relevant regional economic forum.

Khusrav Noziri
ECO Secretary General



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In The Name Of God

Front Cover



Published by
Economic Cooperation
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ECO
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Economic Cooperation Organization

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10th Meeting of Road Committee of Transit Transport Coordination Council

 The 10th Meeting of the Road Committee of Transit Transport Coordination Council (TTCC) was held virtually on July 5, 2022 in Tehran co-organized by the ECO Secretariat and the Iran Road Maintenance and Transportation Organization.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran (host), the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Türkiye, and Republic of Uzbekistan. The representative of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) also participated at the meeting.

Mr. Akbar Khodaei, Director of Transport and Communications, ECO Secretariat, elaborated the challenges and opportunities of the road transport during the Pandemic and highlighted that the menace of the Pandemic underlined the vital role of the road transport in sustainable food security and global supply chains. He also outlined the arrangements of the Secretariat after the outbreak of the Covid 19, including preparation and circulation of the "ECO Practical Guidelines on Cross Border Facilitation Measures under Conditions of Covid-19" to help ease the truck movements to ensure that all the Member States maintain access to food and medicals during the hard times, joint project with UNECE and IsDB to promote



the eTIR and eCMR in the region and cooperating with the IRU on digital TIR pilot project in the ITI Road Corridor.

He further elaborated the major achievements in ECO region particularly in operationalization of the ITI and KTAI Corridor, ECO Visa Pilot Scheme, establishment of the TIR Associations Consultative Group (ECO-TIRACG) and so on.

The Director also emphasized on the development of the road transport in the current "Year of strengthening Connectivity" and implementation of initiatives that further facilitates the transport operations.

Mr. Khodaei appreciated the international partners particularly IsDB, UNECE, UNESCAP and IRU for their highly important contributions to the development of transport in ECO region.

Workshop on Establishment of Spatial Data Infrastructure



A Capacity Building Workshop on Establishment of Spatial Data Infrastructure was jointly organized by the Survey of Pakistan and the Geological Survey of Pakistan in collaboration with Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) on July 5-7, 2022.

Experts from the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (host), and the Republic of Türkiye as well as professionals from international organizations and leading universities delivered presentations.

Major General Saeed Akhtar, Surveyor General of Pakistan, highlighted his country's continuous involvement in and devotion to enhancing the capacity building of the ECO Member States on geospatial infrastructure development. He conveyed strong hope that ECO region had potential to develop its agriculture sector through application of new technology. Director for Energy, Minerals and Environment ECO Secretariat, Mr. Rovshan Mirzayev mentioned that harnessing geospatial technologies for sustainable agriculture was a special opportunity to improve productivity in the sector.



Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture

ECO CHRONICLE The Republic of Uzbekistan hosted the Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture in Tashkent on July 5-6, 2022.

Delegations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan (Host) attended the meeting. The Turkish Cypriot State, as an ECO Observer, also participated in the meeting. The Representatives of FAO, ECO-RCC, ECOSA, and IOFS as well as the delegation of ECO Secretariat headed by The Secretary General attended the meeting.

H.E. Mr. Jamshid Khodjaev, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan highlighted the essence of Uzbekistan's policy and measures to promote agricultural development. He appreciated Uzbekistan's fast developing relations with the ECO Member States and expressed desire to further strengthen its international relations. He

stressed that the climate change and environmental degradation resulted in severe consequences on agriculture development in the region. He also underscored the need for farming community to adapt to the climate change to develop the agriculture sector on modern lines.

The ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri highlighted that based on the stipulations of ECO Vision 2025, the ECO was determined to establish a robust institutional framework for long-term cooperation among Member States, international organizations and financial institutions to fast execute national/regional projects for sustainable agricultural development.

The ministerial meeting also mulled over aspects of food security and improving agricultural productivity. Food security was considered a major challenge to the region. The participants agreed to resort to a more coordinated and synergic approach to address the food security and various challenges in the region.



ECO Secretary General Meets Agriculture Minister of Tajikistan



ECO CHRONICLE On July 6, 2022' the ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri had a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan, H.E. Mr. Karimzoda Saadi Gafor on the sidelines of the Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture.

Acknowledging Tajikistan's supportive approach to promote ECO agenda of agricultural development in the region, the Secretary General emphasized on the need for more coordination and collaboration amongst the Member. He noted that technology was very critical



to agriculture production.

The Minister reiterated Tajikistan's continued support to the ECO framework. He also underscored the importance of Member States' increased collaboration on sharing of knowledge, expertise and agricultural machinery. The training of the farmers was also very important to meet the development targets in agriculture sector, the Minister underlined.

Given the emerging regional and global environment that could endanger food security, the two sides agreed to encourage favourable working environment in the region.

ECO Secretary General Meets Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister



ECO CHRONICLE On July 6, 2022, on the sidelines of the Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri had a bilateral interaction with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Umurzakov Sardor Uktamovich.

The ECO Secretary General appreciated role of Uzbekistan in ECO and acknowledged the proclamation of 2022 as the Year of Strengthening Connectivity. He emphasized the significance of ECO legal mechanisms including the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment (APPI) and the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA), adding that Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan were expected to sign the

TTFA during the 12th Transport Ministers Meeting, which was to be held in January 2023.

The Secretary General also updated the Deputy Prime Minister on recommendations of the ECO Brainstorming Session and establishment of the Working Group proposed by H.E. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to evaluate the performance of ECO.

The Deputy Prime Minister informed the Secretary General about railway network to be constructed between Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. He also briefed on preparations to the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) and the 16th ECO Summit.

ECO Secretary General Meets Agriculture Minister of Kazakhstan

ECO CHRONICLE On July 7, 2022, on the sidelines of the Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri met with the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan H.E. Mr. Yerbol Karashukeyev on the sidelines of Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture; the two sides took into account the regional cooperation on agriculture and food security issues.



Acknowledging the commendable contribution of Kazakhstan to promote regional cooperation, the Secretary General encouraged the country to join the Regional Coordination Center for Food Security, the Biotechnology Network, the ECO Seed Association, and ECO Veterinary Organization. Moreover, he invited the Minister to participate in the Eighth International Seed Fair and Conference, which was to be organized by the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) in Baku in 2022.



The Minister emphasized the importance of regional cooperation on agriculture and food security and reiterated his country's continuous support to tECO. He assured that Kazakhstan was considering joining the ECO Veterinary Organization.

ECO Secretary General —— Meets Acting —— Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan

ECO CHRONICLE On July 7, 2022, on the sidelines of the Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, the ECO Secretary General had a bilateral meeting with the Acting Foreign Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Vladimir Norov on the sidelines of the Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture; the two sides discussed issues of regional cooperation, opportunities and challenges in post-pandemic conditions.



The Secretary General expressed deep appreciation over the role of Uzbekistan in the activities of ECO, especially its chairmanship of the Organization in 2022. He noted the hosting the Ministerial Meeting was a reflection of Uzbekistan's strong commitment to support ECO in its agenda of greater regional cooperation. He also briefed the Minister about the implementation status of ECO Vision 2025 as well as the declarations made by ECO Leaders in the Ashgabat Consensus for Action. Moreover, the Secretary General conveyed ECO's desire for expanded

collaboration with Uzbekistan in areas of mutual interest that include trade & investment, transport, energy & environment, tourism, agriculture and industry.

The Acting Foreign Minister invited the ECO Secretary General to attend the International Conference on Afghanistan, which was hosted held in Uzbekistan in July 2022.

The meeting also evaluated the preparations to the 26th Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers, which was held on January 23-24, 2022 in Tashkent.

ECO Secretary General Calls on Uzbek Prime Minister



ECO CHRONICLE Ambassador Khusrav Noziri called on the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Abdulla Aripov.

The high-level interaction, held on the sidelines of the Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture held in Tashkent on July 5-6, 2022, discussed cooperation amongst the ECO Member States.

The Honourable Prime Minister underlined the importance of ECO. He emphasized on transport and connectivity to make the region more integrated, noting that a strongly interconnected region could lay a foundation for enhancing trade and investment activities in the region. He confirmed that Uzbekistan was working for

the establishment of the Regional Center for Trade and Innovation. A Concept Paper would soon be shared with the ECO Secretariat, he said. The Honourable Prime Minister valued the assistance of the ECO Secretariat to ensure successful holding of the Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting in Tashkent, adding that the country was keenly waiting to host the 12th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport in January 2023.

The ECO Secretary General commended the role of Uzbekistan in ECO. The Secretary General expressed deep felicity over the warm hospitality extended facilitate the participants of the Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture.

Working Group Meeting on Data Elements of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)



ECO Secretariat headed by the Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Seyed Mohsen Esperi, attended the Meeting.


Ambassador Esperi underscored the importance of the EDI system to increase the prospects of intra-regional trade. He mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic had changed our lives including the way we trade across borders. He invited strengthened collaboration of the ECO Member States for better adaptation to emerging realities.

Mr. Zafar Olimkulov, Head of Delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan stressed the importance of enhanced cooperation in digital trade with electronic data exchange.

The meeting decided to continue discussion for finalization of recommendations for data elements and requested the Secretariat to

schedule the second Working Group, in virtual mode. It is pertinent to mention that the Working Group has been tasked to finalize its recommendation for presenting to the 3rd Meeting of the Technical Committee of the EDI, in 2022.

The Electronic Interchange of Trade Data is an important step in trade facilitation aiming at reducing the cost and time of trade transaction in the region.

 The First Working Group Meeting of the Experts for finalization of Data Element of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) was hosted virtually by the ECO Secretariat on July 19, 2022.

The Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. The

Second Training Workshop for Disaster Risk Transfer through Insurance



ECO CHRONICLE The Second Training workshop for Disaster Risk transfer through Insurance Authorities was virtually hosted by the Central Insurance of Islamic Republic of Iran (CII) on July 19, 2022. The meeting was attended the delegations from there public of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and the Republic of Türkiye.

Mr. Mohammadian, Deputy Chief of Insurance Research Centre, the Islamic Republic of Iran inaugurated the meeting and stressed the importance of comprehensive insurance system to help cover the disaster losses and abate the damaging impacts of natural hazards on human societies.

The ECO Deputy Secretary General, Dr.



Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi expressed concerns over the increasing natural hazards that continue to pose serious threats to the human lives and livelihoods. Referring the objectives of the ECO Vision 2025, he said that the Organization attached great importance to cooperation amongst Member States in the field of disaster risk management.

The meeting deliberated extensively on strengthening regional and interregional connectivity and joint action with regard to "Application of Natural Hazards Risk Assessment in Catastrophe Insurance, Rapid Loss Assessment in Earthquake, Necessity of employing novel methods in developing exposure models to reduce the cost of disaster risk insurances studies in developing countries and Development of an Insurance Earthquake Risk Model (IREQ) for Buildings in Iran.

International Conference on Afghanistan



ECO CHRONICLE On the invitation of the Government of Uzbekistan, the ECO Secretary General Amb. Khusrav Noziri participated in the International Conference on Afghanistan held in Tashkent on July 26, 2022 to address economic and security woes facing Afghanistan.

The international event held under the title "Afghanistan: Security and Economic Development" was attended by the representatives from the ECO Member States, the US, Russia, China, India, some European and Middle Eastern nations, relevant UN agencies, the EU, regional and international organizations, as well as the members of

diplomatic community based in Uzbekistan. Afghanistan delegation was represented by the country's Acting Foreign Minister, Mr. Amir Khan Muttaqi.

The event was chaired by the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Vladimir Norov. The Acting Foreign Minister underscored the inevitability of inclusive efforts by the global community to facilitate smooth socio-economic recovery, restore stability and create secure environment in Afghanistan. While mentioning the global multifunctional hub in Termez being utilized by various UN bodies to transport essential humanitarian aid into Afghanistan, he stressed

the significance of the proposed "Mazar-i-Sharif - Kabul - Peshawar" railway track, which, he stressed, could result in collective well being of the region.

The Special Representative of the President of Uzbekistan on Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov read out the message of H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In the said message, the President believed that the forum would help promote and build constructive approaches to lead interactions with the Afghan authorities based on the common interest of Afghan people and the world community as a whole. Highlighting the shared Uzbek-Afghan cultural, spiritual and historical values, he emphasized that the region's wellbeing, progress and socioeconomic development were impractical without securing an inclusive and across-the-board peace, security and stability. The President expressed concerns over the lack of or diminishing global attention towards Afghanistan, noting that such neglect will intensify the socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis in the country. He said that the world should endorse and encourage the efforts of the current Afghan administration for reconstruction and economic development in their country, establishment of friendly relations with neighbouring nations and the mutually beneficial cooperation with international community. Meanwhile, he expected the Afghan side to form a broad-based representation, including all segments of their society for governance, to ensure the application of basic human rights, especially for women and ethnic-confessional groups that remains a pre-requisite for durable peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The ECO Secretary General felicitated Uzbekistan for organizing and hosting the gathering of global magnitude, hoping that this significant interaction would discover some feasible remedies to address Afghanistan's crucial issues of security and economic development. He also appreciated the UN Security Council for deciding to extend the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in

Afghanistan (UNAMA) for the accomplishment of their envisioned targets, particularly the coordination for provision of humanitarian assistance and ensuring essential human needs and requirements, bridging contact between Afghan stakeholders and the international community, as well as continuing efforts to promote good governance and rule of law in Afghanistan. He mentioned that ECO considers the restoration of peace, security and stability fundamentally necessary for maintaining the process of reconstruction, development and socioeconomic progress in Afghanistan. Such factors also play key role to upkeep an unimpeded regional connectivity and promote sustainable trade and investment activities in Afghanistan, the region and beyond, ECO Secretary General underlined. Referring some relevant ECO initiatives on regional connectivity, he stressed that an unhindered implementation of such projects will not only serve the larger regional interest, but also their smooth execution can support the overall economic development in Afghanistan. Lamenting the country's continuously deteriorating situation, the ECO Secretary General stressed that isolated efforts cannot work or achieve any sane aim to bring relief to the sufferings of Afghan people, adding that more coordinated, mutual and strong response is required for the preservation of human prestige and dignity there. Moreover, he expected an accommodative approach to be resorted by both the international community and the country's current regime to stave off further economic and human crunch in Afghanistan.

The prime goal of the Tashkent International Conference was to blend the global efforts targeted at countering the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, ensuring effective and emergency assistance to the people of the country. The event was further aimed at establishing an effective dialogue of the international community and developing coherence and synergies to oppose any postures that seem to sabotage the overall process of peace, stability and development in Afghanistan.

President ECO Science Foundation Visits ECO Secretariat



On August 3, 2022, the newly appointed President of the ECO-Science Foundation (ECOSF), H.E. Dr. Syed Komail Tayebi, was received by the ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri at the ECO Secretariat.

Ambassador Noziri briefed the President about the specialised and subsidiary organs of ECO. The meeting also touched upon the importance of the ECO Science Foundation and the role it could play in the uplift of the region. Furthermore, the financial issues confronting the Foundation were also spotlighted.

The President hoped to enhance the Foundation's sphere of cooperative relationship with various regional and international institutions of its kind. Moreover, in order to make Science Foundation more vibrant and dynamic, he hoped to put efforts for the expansion of the membership of the ECOSF.

The ECO Secretary General extended felicitations and hoped that the presidency of Dr. Syed Komail Tayebi would usher in an era of progressive developments in the field of science and technology.



Ministerial Transport Conference of Landlocked Developing Countries



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At the invitation of the Government of Turkmenistan and the UNOHRLLS, the ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri virtually participated at the Ministerial Transport Conference of Landlocked Developing Countries held in Awaza on August 15-16, 2022 dedicated to the connectivity of landlocked countries.

The Conference, chaired by H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan and held under the theme of "Ashgabat process:

Financing for Better Connectivity", was attended by heads of international organizations and banks, ministers of

transport of the various countries, representatives from different countries, including ECO Member States also participated in the Conference.

The ECO Secretary General underlined the importance of the Conference at this juncture of time and venue as manifestation of urgency of sustainable connectivity and transport for the world in general and the LLDCs in particular. He further elaborated that for achieving the progressive target, the ECO had adopted a holistic approach entailing policy making, establishing legal framework, implementing international standard procedures and conventions, development of infrastructure, capacity building, technical cooperation, coordination mechanism and collaboration with relevant international partners and banks.

He highlighted the ECO had accomplished tangible transport projects in the field of transport. He described the ECO Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) as the main regional legal instrument that covered almost all components of transport and regulates the cooperation of the Member States through its Coordination Council and the technical committees.

Ambassador Khusrav Noziri proposed development of border crossing facilities for safe passage of trucks and passengers with least personal contact, digitalization of transit procedures, standard health protocols, diversified transit routes, electronic visa, elimination of permits and quotas, elimination of costly transshipment measures at some borders and establishment of joint border monitoring systems for facilitation of transit to LLDCs.

NMC Delegation Visits ECO Secretariat



ECO CHRONICLE On 21 August 2022, a delegation from the National Management College (NMC) of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan visited the ECO Secretariat as a part of study tour. The visiting delegation comprised senior members of civil bureaucracy of Pakistan.

Ambassador Khusrav Noziri welcomed the delegation and briefed them about ECO and various activities being undertaken under its umbrella. Afterwards, the delegation was informed comprehensively about trade and transport activities in the region under the framework of ECO.

The ECO Deputy Secretary General Trade & Transport, Ambassador Seyed Mohsen Esperi, while underlining the potential of the organisation,

highlighted that intra-regional trade in the ECO region had been mere at nine per cent, which is far less than the global average. Apart from this, the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) and its implementation also came under limelight. Pakistan's role in ECO as a founding member and important contributor in the Organisation was also highlighted.

The ECO Director Transport and Communication, Mr. Akbar Khodai touched upon ongoing transport and connectivity projects by ECO Member States. He also highlighted lingering issues in transport sector in the ECO region.

ECO Heads of Supervisory Authorities Meeting



ECO CHRONICLE First Meeting of ECO Heads of Capital Markets Supervisory Authorities was virtually hosted by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on August 29, 2022. The delegates from the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. ECO delegation headed by the Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Seyed Mohsen Esperi attended the Meeting.

Mr. Esperi highlighted that the common goal should be the establishment and formation of Capital Market Supervisory Authorities' Forum for expanding monetary collaboration at regional level. While alluding to the fact that Covid-19 severely shocked financial markets, he

suggested that the financial system needed to be further enhanced.

The Executive Director of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, Ms. Musarat Jabeen reaffirmed the potential of the forum for sharing ideas and perspectives among regional stakeholders, particularly in the area of capital markets that are currently at different development stages.

The meeting ended with demonstration of readiness of the ECO Member States to vehemently follow the required process towards formation of the Capital Market Supervisory Authorities' Forum of ECO Members. Islamic Republic of Iran volunteered to host the Second Meeting of Capital Market Supervisory Authorities.

Kish Island hosts International Cultural Tourism Expo

ECO
CHRONICLE

On the invitation of the National Cultural Industries and Science and Technology Park of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the delegation of the Economic Cooperation Organization, headed by ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, participated in the opening ceremony of an International Cultural Tourism Exhibition organized in the Kish Island on September 5-6, 2022.

A number of other important invitees,

including the Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran, the Ambassadors of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in Tehran, Representatives of the Embassies of Türkiye, Pakistan and Japan, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran attended the event.

Moreover, the Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of Iran Mrs. Maryam Jalali inaugurated the Expo activities. She underlined the geographic



importance of Iran and said that her country was committed to promoting culture of peace, adding that this cultural tourism EXPO was also a manifestation of rich Iranian culture. Referring the selection of Ardabil as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2023, the Member of Iranian Parliament Mrs. Hajar Chenarani highlighted the possibility of holding a similar exhibition in Ardabil sometime in 2023.

The ECO Secretary General noted that the Kish Island or the Pearl of the Persian Gulf was famous for its attractive beaches, appealing nature, huge economic and tourism potential, improved infrastructure as well as tourist facilities. He highlighted that the promotion of tourism remains on top of their cooperative agenda, briefing on some important initiatives and activities of the Organization, including the annual selection of ECO Tourism Capitals as well as the events regarding declaration of the Dushanbe City of Tajikistan and Sari City of Iran as the ECO tourism Capitals for 2021 and 2022 respectively.

Regarding the proclamation of Ardabil City of Iran as ECO Tourism Capital for 2023, the Secretary General apprised that the ECO Secretariat was working closely with the Iranian authorities to arrange different tourism and cultural activities on the occasion. He also conveyed that the Fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Samarkand, Uzbekistan was expected to adopt a Road Map on Facilitating Accelerated Recovery, Safe and Sustainable Development of Tourism after COVID-19 in the ECO Region.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Executive Manager of Kish Free Zone Organization, Mr. Mehdi Keshavarz informed that Iran was trying to exclude

the word "solitary season" from Kish tourism literature by using new tools of marketing and tourism advertising. He further said that the development of tourism infrastructure could be materialized through facilitating the investment of private sector. He underscored that strengthening of scientific tourism and the establishment of branches of the national and international universities in the Island would transform



Kish into a regional scientific and research center. He added that the development of the brand of Kish Island and the title of a top tourist destination based on the concept of halal tourism among target countries, especially Muslim countries, was one of the organization's priorities.

Kish Island, benefiting from its natural beauty and attractions, has established its position as a top tourist destination and a pilot for holding prestigious national and international events and exhibitions.

ECO Delegation Visits Kish Free Zone Organization



The ECO Secretary
General Ambassador

Khusrav Noziri accompanied by members of the ECO delegation visited the Kish Free Zone Organization (KFZO) on September 6, 2022.

The ECO delegation held a meeting with tourism, economic and construction representatives of the KFZO, which was also attended by Tehran-based Ambassadors of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan.

The Deputy Director for Tourism, KFZO briefed the participants on the potential of the Island and ongoing activities and development in the tourism industry of the Island.

The ECO Secretary General highlighted that the direct flights between the ECO Member States and the Kish Island would enhance tourists flows and promote people-to-people contacts in the region. He assured that the proposals put forward by Kish authorities would be taken up during the Fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, which was scheduled on November 1, 2022 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. The ECO delegates informed the participants about their ongoing activities in tourism, including transport and tourism facilitation, enhancement of cooperation among the private and public tourism stakeholders through establishment of tour operators' network and promotion of investment incentives and opportunities.




Stakeholders from private sector taking part in this important interaction expressed their views and presented suggestions to promote tourism.

The Ambassadors of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan as well as the Representatives of the Embassies of Türkiye, Pakistan and Japan also touched upon the potential of tourism in the region, emphasizing on the necessity of increasing mutual cooperation amongst the Member States to boost sectoral activities and engagements.

ECO-UNECE

Round Table on Almaty-Istanbul and Trans-Caspian Corridors

 The ECO Secretariat and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) jointly organized the Round Table designed to take stock of the Operational Rail Capacity of Almaty-Istanbul and Trans-Caspian Corridors" on September 6, 2022 in Geneva.



The meeting was attended by the high ranking railway and customs officials of the en-route countries of Almaty-Istanbul Railway and trans Caspian Corridors, i.e. Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Türkiye and Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. Delegations from Europe and Caucasia and a few international organizations also attended the event.

The delegations of the ECO Secretariat and the UNECE were headed by Mr. Akbar Khodaei and Mr. Yuwei Li, Director Sustainable Transport Division, respectively.

Mr. Akbar Khodaei elaborated the capacities of rail and road networks for enhancing transit transport regionally and internationally and in particular between East and West. He also underlined that Covid Pandemic and changing geopolitical order coupled with some other economic factors had fundamentally affected the transport dynamism around the globe and particularly the East -West routes connecting China to Europe. He also underscored that the two Corridors had to be managed in a way to



be complementary and mutually supportive to re-enforce each other through engaging all the stakeholders towards full development and operationalization.

The Meeting also discussed on follow up mechanism among all the stake holders regarding operational and commercial aspects of the Corridors.



Fifth Steering Committee Meeting of Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centers



The Delegation of ECO Secretariat took part in hybrid mode in the Fifth Steering Committee Meeting of the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centers (GNSEC) convened by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization on September 5-8, 2022.

Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, ECO Deputy Secretary General pointed out ECO-UNIDO collaboration in establishment of the ECO Clean Energy Center as a promising future element of GNSEC, which also complements south-south triangular cooperation agenda. The Deputy Secretary General stressed significance of the meeting in enhancing partnership among GNSEC members to find synergies, exchange of experience and establishing global

community of good practices in mainstreaming clean energy sources.

Director of Energy Minerals and Environment Mr. Rovshan Mirzayev represented ECO Secretariat as a key co-initiator of the ECO Clean Energy Center (CECECO). Mr. Mirzayev made a presentation on establishment process of the CECECO, challenges and achieved targets during past three years as well as way forward to operationalise the Center along with possible cooperation potential within GNSEC members.

The GN-SEC Steering Committee members invited UNIDO and the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization to co-host the next meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan during the inauguration of the Clean Energy Centre of ECO (CECECO).

Meeting of ECO Tourism Transport Task Force



ECO CHRONICLE Meeting of the ECO Tourism Transport Task Force was held in virtual format on September 12, 2022. The event was attended by delegates from the Tourism and Transport Ministries of Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan and Türkiye.

Mr. Jasur Rajabov, Director for Tourism Directorate of the ECO Secretariat highlighted the meeting as being the first regional event that intended to bring regional tourism and transport sectors together under one platform. He further mentioned that due to the crosscutting nature of the tourism and transport sectors, a close coordination across relevant national stakeholders was essential to reach the regional tourism objectives by

achieving strong regional connectivity and seamless transport. He further stated that transport connectivity was closely linked with the development of tourism and a key contributor to the overall appeal of a destination, which could lead to increased demand and sustained tourism performance. Therefore, accessibility of the ECO region was the primary requirement for promoting tourism to and within the region.

Upon the proposal of Pakistan, Mr. Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director of PTDC, it was agreed to set up a working group to draft a joint regional strategy for facilitation of transport for advancement of tourism for regional travelers and non-ECO Member States. Aftab ur Rehman Rana also highlighted the significance of travel and visa facilitation at the borders and establishment of international bus routes in the ECO region as a cost-friendly travel option for lower income travelers.


Mr. Mustafa Aladag, Deputy Head of Section of Turkish Railways mentioned that ongoing Trans Asia Railway project between Istanbul and Almaty and Ankara-Tbilisi - Kars passenger line project would contribute to enhancement of regional tourism.

The representative of the ECO Secretariat gave a brief presentation on ECO Regional Rail Pass Initiative and requested Member States to kindly send their nominations to the working group to discuss the details on the arrangement of this initiative among the ECO Member States.

Mr. Vahid Shamlou, Head of International Cooperation Group of Iran Airports proposed setting up a working group jointly with the Ministries of Health of ECO Member States to prepare a regional joint plan for managing post-pandemic limitations applied at the airports. The meeting proved to be an efficient platform to discuss issues concerning bottlenecks and proposals for advancement of transport connectivity in the ECO region for facilitation of tourism.



ECO Secretary General Meets Executive Secretary UNESCAP

 On the sidelines the 22nd Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), held in Samarkand on September 15-16, 2022, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri had a bilateral interaction with the UN Undersecretary General and Executive Secretary of UNESCAP, H.E. Ms. Armida Salasiah Alisjahbana.

The Secretary General stressed on cooperative partnership between ECO and UNESCAP. He acknowledged UNESCAP's technical support to ECO. He highlighted that trade and connectivity remained on

top of the regional agenda, mentioning that ECO has declared 2022 as "year of Strengthening Connectivity". "Since 2022 marked the 30th Anniversary of the Organization's enlargement, ECO intends to invite its cooperative partners as well as observers to attend the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM)", said the Secretary General. In this regard, he invited the Executive Secretary to grace the ECO ministerial event with her participation as a special guest.

The Executive Secretary highlighted significance of ECO's transformation into more progressive and result-based economic forum. She reassured her Organization's full cooperation to ECO, adding that the two sides could further collaborate and conduct feasibility studies on mutually beneficial projects.

ECO Secretary General Meets Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan



Ambassador Khusrav Noziri visited the Republic of

Uzbekistan to participate in the 22nd Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, held on September 15-16, 2022 in Samarkand. On the sidelines of the visit, the ECO Secretary General had a bilateral meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Aziz Abdukhamidov.

The ECO Secretary General highlighted that the tourism was booming industry worldwide, therefore, its speedy recovery was essential. While mentioning that Uzbekistan, under the framework of ECO, had declared the year 2022 as "Year of Strengthening Connectivity", the Secretary General appreciated the Republic for hosting the Fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism on November 1, 2022 in Samarkand. He further briefed the Deputy Prime Minister that the ECO Member States had finalized the draft Roadmap on Facilitating Accelerated Recovery, Safe and Sustainable Tourism after Covid-19 in the region.

"The ECO Secretariat is preparing draft Samarkand Declaration which focuses on regional




tourism and other areas of mutual interests among ECO Member States", said Ambassador Noziri. The initiative of the ECO Secretariat for declaring ECO Tourism Capital also came under limelight.

The Secretary General congratulated the Republic of Uzbekistan for hosting the 25th Session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization in 2023. It was conveyed that the ECO Secretariat welcomed the Tashkent International Tourism Fair, which was held in December, 2022.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism and Cultural Heritage applauded the efforts of the ECO Secretariat, opined that the tourism and connectivity were interlinked with each other. "The number of flights between various cities of Uzbekistan has been increased. The Republic is erecting necessary physical infrastructure and in process to relax visa regime attract large number of international tourists into the country" said the Deputy Prime Minister.



ECO Secretary General Participates in SCO Summit

 The ECO Secretary General, Amb. Khusrav Noziri participated in the Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), held under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Uzbekistan on September 15-16, 2022 in Samarkand.

The Heads of SCO Member States, Observer States, Dialogue Partners, Representatives of Regional and International Organizations attended the event.

The highest SCO event featured discussions on important regional and global issues, including trade, energy security, food security, climate change and other common challenges confronting SCO Member States. Moreover, the efforts for making the SCO an

epitome of effective multilateralism, ensuring peace and stability in the region as well as combatting non-traditional security threats also came under limelight.

The Shanghai Five, established in 1996, transformed into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2001 following the admission of the Republic of Uzbekistan as a regular member of the body. The Islamic Republic of Iran was also accepted a full-fledged member of the Organization.

The Member States welcomed the newly-enrolled Observers and hoped that the expansion of the Organisation would make it more pluralistic and vibrant.

The 23rd SCO Summit will be hosted by India in 2023.



77th Session of UNGA

ECO CHRONICLE The ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri participated as an observer in the opening of the Seventy-Seventh Annual Session of the United Nations General Assembly, held on September 20, 2022 in New York.

The Heads of State and Government of 193 UN Member States, Observers, and Representatives of Regional and International Organizations attended the event.

The Seventy-Seventh session in 2022 came as countries continued to suffer from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. It focused on the challenges the world confronted, renewing attention on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which aim to eradicate poverty by 2030, and preparing a Pact for the Future to be unveiled next year, ensuring the UN system to deal with future issues effectively.



Regional Issues and Development

ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General expressed deep concerns over the emerging global conflicts, giving special attention to the recent unrest and skirmishes in border areas of some ECO Member States.

The Secretary General stated that only application of inclusive tranquility and friendliness could secure a durable peace and stability which was mandatory to move together for our shared progress and prosperity as well as sustainable socioeconomic development in the ECO Region and beyond.

The Secretary General wished for early and peaceful settlement of all such regional and global disputes, considering that maintenance of conflicting approaches would achieve no sane aim, but sabotage all our efforts that were meant to achieve greater integration and harmony.



ECO Secretary General

Meets Foreign Minister of Turkish Cypriot State



visited New York on September
19 - 24, 2022.

On the sidelines of visit, the
Secretary General had a bilateral
interaction with the Foreign



In connection
with attending the
77th Session of
the UN General
Assembly, the ECO
Secretary General,
Ambassador
Khusrav Noziri

Minister of the
Turkish Cypriot
State, H.E. Mr. Tabsin
Ertugruloğlu.

During the meeting,
the two sides
reviewed the scope
of cooperation
between ECO and
the Turkish Cypriot State and other
issues of mutual interest.

The Turkish Cypriot State enjoys
the status of ECO Observer.





ECO Secretary General Meets Foreign Minister of Tajikistan



ECO
CHRONICLE

In connection with attending the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, the ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri visited New York on September 19-24, 2022.

On the sidelines of his visit, the Secretary General held a meeting with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, H.E. Mr. Sirojiddin Muhridin.

The bilateral interaction, held on September 23, reviewed the cooperative partnership between ECO and the Republic of Tajikistan, touching on several important issues in special consideration of the developing regional

and global scenarios, as well as ways and means of enhanced multilateralism in the region.

The two sides also discussed some upcoming ECO events, including the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM)

which is scheduled to be held at Tashkent on November 30 - December 1, 2022.

A special emphasis was given to the implementation of economic agenda of the Organization, focusing on further improvement of regional connectivity through an augmented and strong transport and communication network that, they considered, quite essential for the overall progress, prosperity and economic growth in the region.



ECO-ASEAN

Secretaries Generals Meeting



ECO CHRONICLE On the sidelines of his participation in the 77th UNGA Session at New York, the ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri held a bilateral interaction with the Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), H.E. Mr. Dato Paduka Lim Jock Hoi.

During the meeting, Ambassador Noziri briefed the ASEAN Secretary General about ECO structure as well as the Organization's activities and engagements in various development sectors, including trade & investment, transport & communication, agriculture, energy, social welfare, tourism, environment and regional cooperation on cross-border issues. He also underscored the significance of ECO-ASEAN collaboration and the importance of the MoU, signed between the two sides in 2006 that institutionalized their cooperative relationship. He recalled that their various joint ministerial meetings emphasized on the

importance of strengthening and expanding the existing level of cooperation between ECO and ASEAN. Moreover, ECO Secretary General informed the ASEAN dignitary about the preparations of the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM).

The ASEAN Secretary General thanked Ambassador Noziri for his informative presentation on ECO and its activities. He also acknowledged the importance of ASEAN-ECO partnership for greater inter-regional cooperation, exchange of knowledge and expertise. Assuring his complete support and willingness to further improve the ASEAN-ECO working partnership, he expressed optimism that the two sides' joint activities in all identical areas would enhance based on their existing MoU. In this regard, he seconded the initiative of ECO for revitalizing their framework of cooperation in line with the ASEAN-ECO existing MoU.

ECO-ITI Train Forwarders Meeting



ECO CHRONICLE The First meeting of the ITI Train freight forwarder companies was organized by the ECO Secretariat virtually on September 26, 2022.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of the designated freight forwarder companies from the ITI en-route countries (the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Türkiye) as well as the officials of the railway administrations. The delegation of the ECO Secretariat was headed by the Director of Directorate of Transport and Communications Mr. Akbar Khodaei.

The Meeting was organized as per the decision of the 12th High Level Working Group Meeting on Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul Train (April 25, 2022) to discuss on the tariffs, pricing formula for forwarders and timetable for regular operation of the ITI Train.

Freight Forwarder companies of the

ITI Train and the officials of the railway administrations of the en-route countries delivered their viewpoints on the various technical and operational issues of the ITI Train services and sorted out the challenges and recommended necessary solutions for alleviation of concerns.

The participants expressed their satisfaction on the results of the Meeting and requested the Secretariat to continue such meetings.

The ITI train's initiative was made upon the decision of the 8th Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications held on June 28-29, 2011 at Ashgabat. Subsequently, the relevant High-Level Working Group consisting of representatives from en-route Member States was established for further coordination to help materialize the ITI initiative. The ITI Train resumed its operation in December 2021 after almost 10 years of its last move in the Corridor.

WORLD TOURISM DAY



The ECO Secretariat joins the rest of the world to mark World Tourism Day on September 27, 2022. This year's theme "Rethinking tourism" advocates for global attention on taking urgent actions needed to recover the tourism industry after pandemic and make it more sustainable, inclusive and resilient sector.

Tourism has over the last few decades become one of the largest and fastest growing industries. However, this sector was one of the hardest hit industries by the corona virus pandemic. As the ECO Member States look to recover from the pandemic, they increasingly recognize the economic and social benefits associated with tourism growth and the fact that there is a need to take the initiative to improve the tourism potential of the region and seek new ways to attract tourists and most importantly promote the exchange of tourists within the region.

The ECO region with its natural beauty and historical and cultural heritage is blessed with the most important tourism destinations in the world. The tourism sector has significant contributions towards the socio-economic development of the region and it can be a powerful tool for regional development, as it stimulates new



economic activities and has a positive economic impact on employment and community development in reducing inequalities. Considering the tourism sector as a driver for economic and social development, ECO has afforded prime significance to this industry as one of the main priority areas of regional cooperation and therefore has set the strategic goal of establishing a peaceful and green tourism destination with diverse products and high quality services in the region.

In order to achieve above mentioned goals the Organization has underlined some objectives to help development of the tourism potential including strengthening ECO-tourism brand, reviving Silk Road tourism, visa facilitation, diversification of tourism activities, utilization of electronic media, human resource development and capacity building, adoption of relevant rules and procedures, establishment of standardization and accreditation bodies, establishment of sustainable and green tourism monitoring mechanisms, strengthening involvement of private sector and local community in the tourism activities and development of diverse means and new solutions to address emerging issues and range of markets to best serve the ideals and goals of sustainable tourism in the region.



Third Ministerial Conference on **Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific**



The ECO delegation participated in the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and Pacific organized by the UNESCAP and ADB on 28-30 September 2022 in hybrid mode.


The ECO representatives, including the Director (Trade & Investment) and the Director (Transport & Communications), sensitized the participants about various initiatives undertaken by the Secretariat to enhance regional integration.

The ECO Director (Trade & Investment) explained the nexus between the Global Supply Chains, Global Value Chains and delivery of the finished products at the doorsteps for consumer, how natural calamities like pandemic and geo-political conflicts cause disruptions in complex supply webs and affect our lives causing shortages of essential items, higher costs etc. He elaborated the role of regional market integration to meet these challenges by promoting Regional Value Chains (RVCs), promoting conditions to create trade flows by

reducing tariff and Non-Tariff costs, channelizing more funding in MSMEs/ SMEs, introducing new clauses in Trade Agreements for tariff and National Treatment (for frontline workers) harmonization of policies etc. He invited inter-regional cooperation among South Asia, South East Asia and Central/ West Asia in connectivity and trade facilitation to offset future challenges to the regions.

Mr. Akbar Khodaei, Director (Transport & Communications), ECO Secretariat touched upon the global and regional challenges affecting the seamless and sustainable connectivity including, inter alia, over-dependence on single mode of transport, global uncertainty, increasing expectations for rapid delivery, technology adaptation and integration, enhancing data networking, pro-activeness and responsiveness, environment and climate change, safety and security. He also briefed the session on the policies of the Organization for promotion of sustainable connectivity and invited the international stakeholders to join hands to collaborate for a better and well connected region.

4th Consultation Meeting among — Heads of ECO — Specialised Agencies

 On October 3, 2022, ECO Secretariat coordinated the 4th Consultation Meeting among the Heads of ECO Specialized in video conference format.

ECO Secretariat was represented by H.E. Ambassador Hüseyin Avni Biçaklı, Deputy Secretary General (Energy, Minerals and Environment & International Relations & Administration & Informative Technologies) and Mr. Alim Ullah, Head of Section International Relations.

While welcoming the participants of the meeting, Ambassador Hüseyin Avni Biçaklı highlighted the importance of the ECO Specialised Agencies and regular contacts among them. He further highlighted that the 4th Consultation Meeting was the manifestation of the fulfillment of the recommendation of the 32nd Meeting of the RPC, which recommended regular contacts among ECO Specialised Agencies to boost cooperation among them. He further noted that the main object of this meeting was to shed light on the role of Education, Science and Culture in making ECO Region interconnected and enhance linkages among ECO Specialized Agencies.

ECO Deputy Secretary General also

extended felicitations to Dr. Syed Komail Tayebi for assuming Presidency of the ECOSF and hoped that his Presidency would usher in an era of progressive developments in the field of science and technology.

Prof. Akif Kireççi, the President of the ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI) in Ankara, while chairing the meeting, presented a detailed overview of the activities undertaken by the Institute. He further noted that the Institute was in process of accumulating information on educational problems faced by ECO Member States. The events that ECOEI will organize in future also came under limelight.

The President of the ECO-Science Foundation (ECOSF), Prof. Seyyed Komail Tayebi, mentioned that the Foundation is in process to enhance the sphere of cooperative relationship with various regional and international institutes of its kind. Moreover, in order to make Science Foundation more vibrant and more dynamic, he hoped to put efforts for the expansion of the membership of the ECOSF.

The 5th Consultation Meeting among Heads of ECO Specialised Agencies will be held on October 17, 2022.

World Tourism Day Ceremony in Iran



ECO
CHRONICLE

A ceremony to mark the "World Tourism Day" in the attendance of H.E. Mr. Zarghami the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of the Islamic Republic of Iran was held on Monday October 3, 2022 in the National Museum of Iran. The ECO representatives, including Amb. J.Asanov, the ECO Deputy Secretary General and Mr. J.Rajabov, Director for Tourism participated in this meeting. Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International Agencies along with other guests also attended in this event.

In his opening remarks H.E. Mr. Zarghami expressed his appreciation for the support of the government and the parliament to the tourism industry and all the public and private sector activists in Iran. The Minister of


Cultural Heritage stated that Tourism Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding with three other ministries during the tourism week, which shows the importance of Tourism for all. He emphasized, while 20% of students' time should be devoted to education outside of school, part of this 20% can be devoted to tourism and travel agencies should organize specialized tours in this regard. Concluding his remarks he added: "We should all be together, join hands and be connected like a chain. We should support the private sector, and whenever an investor or a person from the private sector approaches us, we must follow up their request seriously. This support should be done in such a way that the regulatory bodies doubt that this public administrator may have a stake in the project.

Mr. Zorab Pololikashvili, the Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization had also sent a video message for this ceremony. In his message he mentioned that the Islamic Republic of Iran is a valuable member of our organization (World Tourism Organization) and is also an emerging tourism destination that is famous for its rich history, culture, warm and sincere hospitality and is a main hub for science and innovation in the region. He added: "Rethinking tourism is our commitment in order to do our duties in a better ways on the basis of previous achievements to restore and create opportunities, both in Iran and throughout South Asia. I wish you all a happy and inspiring World Tourism"

In the continuation of this ceremony, Ali Asghar Shalbafian, Deputy Tourism Minister of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts also considered the tourism week as an opportunity for planning and thinking together for the coming years.

*Since 1980, the United Nations World Tourism Organization has celebrated World Tourism Day as international observances on September 27. This date was chosen as on that day in 1970, the Statutes of the UNWTO were adopted. The adoption of these Statutes is considered a milestone in global tourism.

ECO Secretary General participates in **ECOCCI** Meeting - New Approach of ECOCCI 2022-2025

 A delegation of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), headed by H.E. Khusrav Noziri, participated in the virtual meeting of Presidents of the Member Chambers of ECO CCI under the theme "New Approach of the ECO CCI-2025", on October 3, 2022. While thanking the President ECO CCI for invitation and welcoming the delegates, the ECO Secretary General, congratulated Dr. Sama Farkhondeh Nezhad for assuming the office of the Secretary General ECO CCI. He expressed his gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Adam Khula for his valuable contribution to the organization in his tenure as Secretary General ECO CCI.

The virtual event was also attended by the Presidents of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Republic of Türkiye, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Tajikistan, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Kazakhstan Turkmenistan, and Republic of Uzbekistan.

Amb. Khusrav Noziri highlighted the significance of the role of private sector as an engine of growth and assured continued support and cooperation of the ECO Secretariat to the private sector in all initiatives for economic integration and sustainable growth of the region. He stated that the business communities of the Member States have an important forum to voice themselves through - ECO CCI. Whilst, dilating on trade facilitation in the region he made special mention of the follow up on the initiative of

visa facilitation to the business community through Visa Stickers, upcoming Meetings like 9th ECOTA Cooperation Council Meeting to be hosted by Islamic republic of Pakistan in last quarter of 2022 and 6th Ministerial Meeting on Finance/Economy to be hosted by Republic of Azerbaijan on October 24-25, 2022. He invited the contribution of the National Chambers of the ECO Member States to pursue Operationalization of ECOTA, ECO Reinsurance Company and implementation of Regional Payment System. He appreciated the Operationalization of the Agreement on Protection and Promotion of Investment (APPI) after ratification by four parties and urged the business community to pursue signing and ratification of the agreement by the remaining Member States.

He underscored the indispensable role of the private sectors through National Chambers to meet targets set in the ECO Vision 2025 and remove the impediments in regional trade integration, in trade liberalization to reduce customs tariffs and eliminate Non Tariff Barriers (NTBs) and implementation of trade facilitation measures in customs procedures, trade related payment systems etc. and proposed that the ECO-CCI may consider setting up a regional task force to coordinate with private sectors and business communities across the ECO region and identify.

The ECO CCI aims to facilitate trade and economic cooperation and promote closer commercial relations among the business communities of the Member States.

ECO Secretary General Meets Deputy Minister on Agriculture of Türkiye and FAO ADG



making due contribution for the continued development of ECO to secure an ultimate and greater regional integration. Recognizing the hunger and food security issue as a major problem, the Deputy Minister noted that the Regional Coordination Center for Food Security, an outcome of the joint efforts by the Republic of Türkiye, the FAO and ECO, could play a significant role and meet our perceived targets to counter regional food security issues. He welcomed the adoption of Regional Program for Food Security (RPFS) by the Seventh ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, adding that vigorous contribution by all Member States was required to effectively implement the RPFS. While highlighting the importance of the ECO Seed Association, he looked forward to the ECO Member States and the Secretariat for ensuring successful organization of the Eighth ECO Seed Fair to be held at Baku in February 2023. He stood poised to share their relevant experiences with the Member States. In addition, he emphasized that the issues appeared to cross national borders and bear regional and global magnitude. ECO could be a very effective forum to deal with our common problems, the Minister expressed.

ECO CHRONICLE On the sidelines of the Regional Conference on Food Loss and Waste in Europe and Central Asia "Enabling the Change" held at Istanbul on October 5-6, 2022, the ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri met the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Türkiye H.E. Mr. Ebubekir Gizligider and the Assistant Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Mr. Vladimir Olegovich Rakhmanin.

During the meeting, H.E. Mr. Ebubekir Gizligider stated that Türkiye closely followed and appreciated the ECO's efforts for expanding cooperation amongst the Member States. He said that their country was genuinely committed and interested in

The ECO Secretary General congratulated the Deputy Minister for organizing the important Regional Conference in collaboration with the FAO. He informed that in line with its agenda, ECO was determined to promote cooperation, especially in the wake of COVID-19, for making tangible developments in food and agriculture sector as well as addressing the food security issues in the region. Underlining the significance of Tashkent Declaration adopted by the Seventh Ministerial Meeting

on Agriculture, he extended his sincere gratitude to the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Türkiye for attending the event. Moreover, the ECO Secretary General thanked the Government of Türkiye for hosting and funding the ECO Regional Coordination Center for Food Security, acknowledging the country's role in agricultural planning and development. Besides, he underscored the need for cooperation for implementing the Regional Program for Food Security, considering it highly important to ensure smooth progress towards the Organization's food security objectives. Furthermore, he sought Türkiye's expertise to support the ECO Seed Association, noting that the seed policies were quite instrumental in ensuring the food security. He also looked forward to active



contribution of Türkiye to address the issues and create conducive environments for unhindered working of ECO VECO and the ECO ABN.

In the meeting with the Assistant Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Mr. Vladimir Olegovich Rakhmanin, the ECO Secretary General, while praising the FAO's global efforts and activities for the development of food and



agriculture, acknowledged the Organization's support to various ECO initiatives and activities, including the FAO's assistance for establishing the ECO Regional Coordination Center for Food Security, the ECO Seed Association, the ECO Veterinary Commission and the ECO Center of Excellence for Efficient Water Utilization for Agriculture. Representing a region of more than half a billion population that is mostly based on agrarian economy, the ECO looks forward to FAO's continued back up for its ongoing and future projects.

The FAO's dignitary appeared quite receptive and ready for enhancing collaboration with ECO. He said that the FAO regarded the ECO as an important regional partner, reiterating their complete support to such ECO programs and projects which were aimed at creating sustainable conditions for the improvement and development of food and agriculture sector. Noting the significance of Regional Program for Food and Security (RPFS), he said that the two sides should, now, be focused on practical activities and certain dimensions to meet their envisioned targets. Considering the RPFS as a comprehensive study, he stressed the need for enhancing its visibility of RPFS at greater level.

ECO Secretary General Attends Regional Conference in Türkiye

ECO
CHRONICLE

On the invitation of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, the ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri participated in the Regional Conference on Food Loss and Waste in Europe and Central Asia "Enabling the Change". The event held on October 5-6, 2022 was jointly organized by FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Türkiye, the ECO Regional Centre for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS) and in assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture of Netherlands.

The prime objective of the Conference was to explore ways and means of widening regional and global cooperation aimed at identifying essential elements of enabling environments and tools, including legislative and business innovations, food loss and waste reduction strategies and practical interventions that support the transition to sustainable food value chains. The event mulled over the recent conditions, developments and challenges in food loss and waste within Europe and Central Asia while offering opportunity for interactive exchange of relevant knowledge and exposures, common practices, raising awareness about intricate nature of food loss and waste as well as its impact on value chains, consumers, service providers, environment and sharing doable solutions.

Speaking at the Conference, the ECO Secretary General acknowledged the importance of the event and emphasized on all-inclusive and concerted efforts to address the inflationary trends in food products and the issues of food security. He highlighted some significant aspects of economic problems, impacts of COVID-19



and political escalation on food security that appear to pose severe challenges for the millions of people who are undergoing acute food insecurity and shortage. Underlining the importance of "Black Sea Grain Initiative", he commended the mediation of the honourable President of Türkiye H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan to this end. The agreement is a major step forward to overcoming the global food crisis, the ECO Secretary General noted.

The ECO Secretary General categorically mentioned that ECO is devotedly committed to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, especially its perceived targets to end hunger and poverty, achieve food security, improve nutrition, promote and ensure sustainable agriculture, consumption and production patterns. Moreover, he briefed the forum on ECO Regional Program for Food Security and the institutional transformation of ECO Regional Center for Food Security, summarizing the aims and objectives of these significant and instrumental tools of the Organization.

The Conference also included a rigorous roundtable activity on Food Loss and Waste Reduction in the context of sustainable food systems and Zero Waste Kitchen Workshop at Gastronometro.

Ministerial Meeting on Transit Cooperation



ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the ECO Ambassador Khusrav Noziri participated in the Ministerial Meeting on Transit Cooperation among Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, organized by the Islamic Republic of Iran on October 9, 2022 in Tehran.

The Secretary General underlined the regional cooperation for strengthening integrated regional markets and supply chains and promoting transport and digital connectivity. He also briefed the session on the projects and policies of the Organization for promotion of transport connectivity through construction of missing links and implementation of various initiatives for digitalization of transit procedures.

Ambassador Khusrav Noziri to the ECO Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) it as the main regional legal instrument that covers almost all components of transport and regulates the cooperation of the Member States through its Coordination Council and the technical committees.

He also drew the attention of the participants to the two major studies titled "ECO Railway Network Development Plan" and "ECO Road Network Development Plan" that have identified all regional connections as well as missing links in the ECO region with estimation of investment needs and invited the international financial and aid institutions as well as banks to consider them for possible investment and development assistance.

He further outlined the study projects, conducted by the ECO Secretariat, to sort out the opportunities, challenges and bottlenecks of connectivity in the region that have provided a pool of knowledge and bankable data for the international community.

The Ministerial Meeting on Transit Cooperation among Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan that was organized by the Islamic Republic of Iran on October 08- 09, 2022. The delegations of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Russian Federation also joined the Meeting in the Meeting in the second Day.

ECO Secretary General Participates in Sixth CICA Summit



The ECO Secretary General, Amb. Khusrav Noziri, participated in the Sixth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), held in Astana on October 12-13, 2022.

The Summit marked the attendance of Heads of State/Government, Foreign Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Representatives of CICA Member States. Several important Regional and International Organizations also participated in the event. The CICA Summit coincided

with the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of CICA.

The Summit was hosted and chaired by the Republic of Kazakhstan. While chairing the Summit, the President of Kazakhstan, H.E. Kassym-Jomart K. Tokayev, mentioned the growing importance of CICA, referring to the fact that membership of the organisation had risen to 28 which was limited to 15 in 1998. The President stated that the prestige of CICA in Asia and among global community of nations had increased tremendously. The CICA Summit also witnessed the State of Kuwait



becoming new member to the Organisation.

Discussions during the Summit revolved around extraordinary challenges confronting Asia and approaches to resolve them timely and successfully. The engaging discussions shed light on regionalism in Asia, security in Asia, inter-civilization dialogue, environmental disasters, decarbonization of economy, ongoing military conflicts, increasing protectionism, revival of the economies in the post-Covid world, growing global food insecurity, increasing cost of living, conducting trade in local currencies, optimization of supply chains, uncertain and unpredictable situation in Afghanistan, combating extremism, terrorism and drug trafficking, etc..

The ECO Secretary General acknowledged the extraordinary organisation of the Summit by the Republic of Kazakhstan and appreciated the reform process and up-gradation of the Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures carried out during its Chairmanship of CICA.

The Secretary General emphasized that the importance of multilateralism, at present, was more than ever before and the problems humanity faced had long ago transcended national frontiers.

The Secretary General stated that it was beyond the capacity of an individual to resolve the issues which were no longer national in character and dimensions. While commending the role CICA had been playing over the years, the Secretary General stated that multilateralism was the best antidote and the only viable solution to the challenges of modern world.



At the end of his statement, the Secretary General highlighted partnership relationship between ECO and CICA and stated that the object of the two Organizations was identical which socio-economic development of the region.

CICA is an important external partner of the Economic Cooperation Organization and the institutionalization of ties between both Organizations took place when MoU was signed in August 2008.

First Meeting of the Sub-Working Group for Commercialization of **KTI Corridor**



ECO CHRONICLE The First meeting of the Sub-Working Group for Commercialization of the KTI Corridor was organized by the ECO Secretariat virtually on October 12, 2022.

The meeting was attended by the representatives of the railway authorities from the KTI en-route countries (the Republic of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran) and representative of ESCAP. The ECO Secretariat was represented by the Director of Transport and Communications, Mr. Akbar Khodaei.

The Sub-Working Group was established as per the decision of the First Meeting of the Permanent Working Group on KTI Railway Corridor (December, 25, 2021) with the participation of public and private sectors

including freight forwarders and other relevant stakeholders.

Mr. Akbar Khodaei recalled the decision of the First Meeting of the Permanent Working Group regarding creation of a sub-working group and holding its meetings to finalize the two important issues related to the formulation of the mechanism /roadmap and finalization of tariff rates between the en-route countries.

The meeting deliberated, inter alia, the ways and means for the formulation of the mechanism/ roadmap for commercialization of the KTI corridor and finalization of tariff rates between the en-route countries.

Fifth Consultation Meeting of Heads of **ECO Specialised Agencies**



ECO
CHRONICLE

On October 17, 2022, the ECO Secretariat organized the Fifth Consultation Meeting among the Heads of ECO Specialized Agencies in virtual format.

The ECO Secretariat was represented by Ambassador Dr. Hüseyin Avni Biçaklı, Deputy Secretary General and Mr. Alim Ullah, Head of Section for International Relations.

Prof. M. Akif Kireçci, Prof. Seyed Komail Tayebi, and H. E. Mr. Bubriboev Murodjon Khayrulloevich represented the ECO Educational Institute, ECO Science Foundation, and ECO Cultural Institute respectively.

The Deputy Secretary General welcomed the participants of the meeting and highlighted that the basic object behind this forum was to create a strong network of relations among the ECO Specialised Agencies and to learn from the best practices and experiences of one another.

During the meeting, the Presidents of the each ECO Specialised Agencies apprised their counterparts of the activities undertaken by their respective Institutes. It was agreed among the Heads of Specialised Agencies that a catalogue of common challenges confronted by these bodies would be prepared and a coherent strategy would be devised to overcome them. The expansion membership of these bodies and their financial matters were also spotlighted. A mechanism to ensure better coordination was also agreed upon among the Heads of Specialised Agencies.



ECO-IRU Secretaries Generals Meeting

ECO CHRONICLE The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization Ambassador Khusrav Noziri and the Secretary General of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) held a bilateral meeting on October, 18, 2022 at the ECO Secretariat, Tehran.

Ambassador Noziri reviewed result-oriented relations between the two Organizations and acknowledged the constructive role that the IRU played in development of road transport in the region. He also highlighted some flagship projects that had produced visible results for the region and recognized the role of the IRU in those projects.

Ambassador Noziri pointed out that as the result of close cooperation between ECO and the IRU, the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) Road



Corridor had been operationalised under TIR System in October 2022. He described this development as a strategic achievement of the ECO and the IRU that was also commended by the 15th ECO Summit held in Ashgabat in 2021.



UNIDO Representative Visits ECO Secretariat

ECO CHRONICLE Ms. Maryam Javan Shahraki, the representative of United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in Tehran paid a courtesy call to Ambassador Khusrav Noziri on October, 19, 2022 at the ECO Secretariat.

The Deputy Secretary General Seyed Mohsen Esperi and relevant directors also participated in the discussion.

Ambassador Noziri appreciated the role played by UNIDO in promoting sustainable economic development in the region. The contribution of UNIDO and its

continued collaboration with the ECO in implementing the multi-year ECO-UNIDO Trade Capacity Building Project was discussed with a view to initiate for implementation of its fourth phase. Moreover, the ongoing collaboration of UNIDO in the ECO Green Energy Centre and the industrial sector were also highlighted.



The representative of the UNIDO emphasized that UNIDO was looking forward to support the projects in the areas of technical assistance, consultancy and building coordination/ national hubs in different fields such as

Agriculture & Industry, Trade & Investment, and Energy & Environment, to undertake the priority projects.



ECO Secretary General Meets Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister

ECO CHRONICLE Ambassador Khusrav Noziri attended a ceremony, organized on October 23, 2022 in Tehran, to mark the 25th Anniversary of the establishment of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). On the sidelines of his participation in the event, Ambassador Noziri met with the Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr. Mahdi Safari.

The bilateral interaction reviewed the issues of mutual concerns as well as the prospects of regional cooperation in special consideration of the recommendations made during the Brainstorming Session that

was held at the level of ECO Deputies Foreign Ministers on May 23-24, 2022.

The ECO Secretary General acknowledged the notable contribution of the Islamic Republic of Iran in developing and promoting the agenda of the Organization, not only in country's capacity of being host of the ECO but also as an important founding member of the Organization. Moreover, Ambassador Noziri briefed on the status of preparations with regard to 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers which was held on January 24, 2023.

The Deputy Minister praised Ambassador Noziri for pushing forward ECO in its efforts to secure inclusive development and greater integration in the region. He re-assured Iran's unwavering support to facilitate the Organization and its agenda of shared progress and prosperity in the Member States.

International Conference on Iran & IORA: Prospects and Opportunities



On October 22, 2022, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, participated in the International Conference on "Iran & IORA: Prospects and Opportunities", organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), an inter-governmental organisation of 23 Member States and a host of Dialogue Partners, commemorated 25th Anniversary of its establishment in 2022.

The conference provided an opportunity for exchange of views on existing and potential prospects and opportunities for enhanced and enriched participation of Iran in IORA.

While delivering statement at the opening session of the conference, the ECO Secretary General congratulated the IORA Member States on silver jubilee of the Organization and

commended the Islamic Republic of Iran for successful organisation of the event. Since Iran sits just at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz and possesses huge coastline with deep sea ports, the Secretary General shed light on the important role of Iran in IORA, mentioning the fact that Iran hosts the Regional Center of Science and Technology (RCSTST), which is one of the two Specialised Agencies of IORA.

The Secretary General mentioned that ECO always welcomed partnership relations with organizations of its kind and highlighted commonalities between IORA and ECO especially in the fields on Trade & Investment, Disaster Management, and Tourism. It was opined that with the assistance from Iran which is member to both Organizations, ECO and IORA could come into collaborative partnership with each other via signing a Memorandum of Understanding.

IORA Secretary General Visits ECO Secretariat

ECO CHRONICLE On October 24, 2022, H.E. Salman Al Farisi, Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) was received by Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, Secretary General of Economic Cooperation Organisation at the ECO Secretariat.

While welcoming the visiting dignitary and appreciating the excellent organisation of the recently-held International Conference titled "Iran & IORA: Opportunities and Prospects", hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the ECO Secretary General briefed his counterpart on overall functioning of the Organization. Ambassador Noziri also touched upon ECO's broadening international cooperation with different organizations across the globe.

The Secretary General pointed out the immense importance of trade and connectivity in regional cooperation agenda of Organization. The IORA Secretary General was also detailed about the preparations to the upcoming 26th Meeting of ECO Council of Ministers in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

The IORA Secretary General, while appreciating the statement of the ECO Secretary General delivered at the "Iran & IORA: Opportunities and Prospects" International Conference, highlighted that there were areas such as Trade & Investment, Tourism and Disaster Management,



where both Organizations could establish partnership relations with each other.

The IORA Secretary General mentioned that the ECO Region was producer and IORA was a consumer of agricultural products. In the wake of recent shift in geo-political conditions, changing cuisine culture, and skyrocketing prices of grains, the prospects of cooperation between both Organizations in the area of food security were more than ever before.

During the meeting, it was agreed that the focal persons would start working on exploring options for cooperation in areas of mutual interest and put efforts for institutionalization of relations between the two Organizations.

ECO-SIAP Training on Register Based Population and Housing Census



The participants from the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan took part in the workshop.

The ECO Secretariat was represented by the Deputy Secretary Ambassador Jandos Asanov.

The Training lasted for three days. Its interactive framework allowed the participants to receive first hand information and technical expertise on a wide range of statistical topics relating to conducting register based PHC in which Türkiye and Iran lead through notable expertise in handling high tech-driven statistical tools and applications.

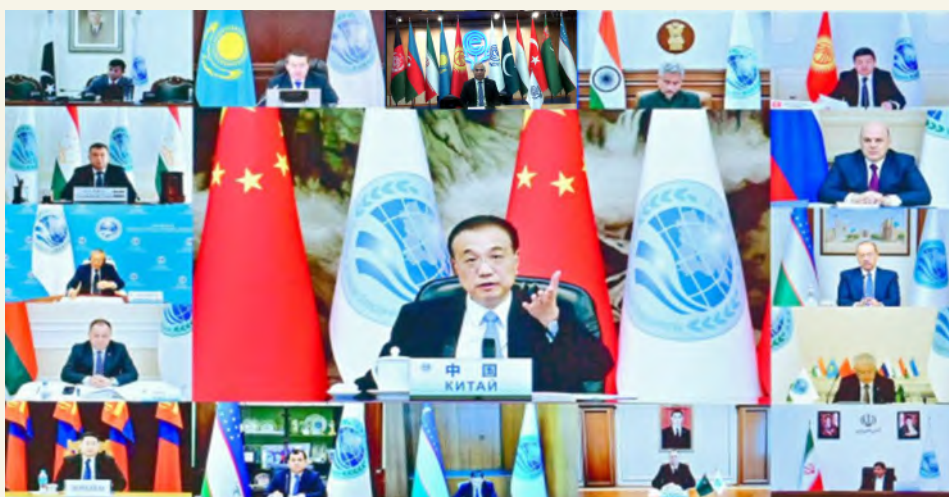
The resource persons from these countries as well as from Australia, Indonesia and Norway effectively rendered their hands-on skills and shared best practices with participants.

The event was certified based on fair evaluation and active interaction among experts.



On October 25, 2022, the ECO Secretariat, in close cooperation with the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD), the United Nations Economic Council for Europe (UNECE), and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) organized the virtual training workshop on Register Based Population and Housing Census (PHC) for ECO Member States.





SCO Council of Heads of Government Meeting

ECO CHRONICLE On November 1, 2022, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri participated in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of Government Meeting, held under the Chairmanship of the People's Republic of China in video conference format.

The event witnessed participation of SCO Member States, Observers, Dialogue and External Partners.

While making opening remarks, Mr. Li Keqiang, the Premier of the People's Republic of China and Chair of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, welcomed the participants and briefed them about the activities undertaken by the People's Republic of China during its Chairmanship of the

SCO. The Chair also highlighted growing importance of the SCO in the region and beyond.

Discussions, during the event, revolved around extraordinary challenges faced by the peoples of SCO Region. The engaging discussions shed light on prevailing tense geopolitical situation, ongoing military conflicts, terrorism, extremism and separatism, transition and transformations in international system, poverty, climate change, clean energy, etc...

The Economic Cooperation Organization regularly participates in the major events hosted within the framework of the SCO. The ECO also attended the 21st Summit of the SCO, held in 2022 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

The next SCO Council of Heads of Government Meeting would be held in 2023 under the Chairmanship of the Kyrgyz Republic.

ECO Secretary General Videoconference with Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan



ECO CHRONICLE On November 2, 2022, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri held a Videoconference with the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov.

The interaction was aimed at discussing issues and prospects of cooperation in the region, as well as exploring ways and means for creating more synergies amongst the Member States.

The ECO Secretary General briefed the Minister about the preparations to the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) in Tashkent. Underscoring the significance of the event in view of the fact that it marked the 30th Anniversary of the



ECO Enlargement, he emphasized and encouraged all Member States to ensure their Minister-Level participation in the meeting. Valuing the role of Turkmenistan as ECO Chair in 2021, he thanked the Minister for excellent contribution to enrich the agenda of the Organization. The Secretary General also acknowledged the importance of Ashgabat Consensus for Action adopted by the ECO Heads of State/Government during 15th ECO Summit in Ashgabat.

The Minister appreciated the Secretary General and his team for facilitating the holding of the 26th Meeting of COM in Tashkent. He reaffirmed Turkmenistan's continued support to the Organization, assuring his country's high-level participation in the upcoming COM event.

Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas- Almaty Railway Corridor

ECO
CHRONICLE

The Second
High Level

Working Group (HLWG) Meeting on Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty Railway Corridors was held virtually on November 7, 2022. The meeting was attended by the representatives of the railway authorities from the en-route countries (the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Türkiye) as well as the Secretary General of the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and high level representative of the UNECE.

Mr. Akbar Khodaei, Director of Transport and Communication of ECO, underlined that the connectivity policy of ECO had always prioritized corridor approach over isolated initiatives and in developing the infrastructure, inter-regional and international connectivity had been a guiding principle. Highlighting the importance of the Corridors, as the most direct transport route between East-Asian with Europe through Central Asia, the Director also shared his views regarding the solutions and the way forward for a well-developed and reliable policy



making and mechanism to manage them to enable full utilization of their potentials.

In the course of the meeting, the participants exchanged their views on the recent developments regarding the railway sector and deliberated on the issue of tariffs, travel time, corridor management mechanism and commercialization of the Corridors.

The representatives of the UNECE and OTIF expressed their support towards full utilization of the capacities of the Corridor by the international stake holders through the recently established coordination mechanism between ECO and the UNECE.

Visit of Turkmen Delegation to ECO

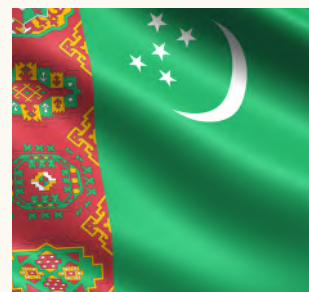


On November 8, 2022, Head of the International Economic Cooperation Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, H.E. Mr. Silapberdi

Nurberdiev along with the Ambassador of Turkmenistan accredited to the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Gurbanov, visited the ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri in connection with the preparations for the Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM). Mr. Silapberdi Nurberdiev highlighted the importance

Turkmenistan attaches to ECO.

He stressed that the cooperation in the regional transport and energy sectors would remain a priority for Turkmenistan.



The ECO Secretary General briefed on the status of preparations to the Foreign Ministerial Meeting, which was held in Tashkent in January 2023.

Ambassador Noziri also acknowledged the contributions of Turkmenistan during its chairmanship of ECO in 2021.





ECO-CCI Visit

ECO CHRONICLE Ambassador Khusrav Noziri and the officials of Trade & Investment Directorate, ECO Secretariat visited the ECO-Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI), Tehran on November 8, 2022.

The President of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines & Agriculture (ICCIMA)/President ECO-CCI, Mr. Gholamhossein Shafei highlighted the travel and investment potential in the region. He emphasized the need for an active persuasion to materialize the ongoing initiatives taken by ECO in areas like Visa Stickers Scheme for the Businessmen, creation of Regional Value Chains for promotion of trade and Investment, etc... The ECO-CCI appreciated the role of the ECO Secretariat and called for a continued pursuance of the implementation of the agreements and MoUs signed by ECO to realize the objectives of the Organization through greater trade facilitation, investment promotion, better connectivity etc.

Ambassador Noziri highlighted the

achievements of ECO and briefed the ECO-CCI delegation about initiatives taken by the Secretariat in priority areas. Highlighting the pivotal role of ECOTA in furtherance of the objectives of doubling the intraregional trade and increasing the share of ECO in global trade, he invited the ECO-CCI to play a proactive role in effectuation of ECOTA through the National Chambers of the ECO Member States. He alluded to the operationalization of the Agreement on Promotion and Protection Investment (APPI) in 2022, hoping that it would boost investor confidence.

Appreciating the proposal of the ECO-CCI about creation of Regional Value Chains (RVCs) to manufacture product with ECO origin like 'Made in ECO' in automobile and maritime sectors, the Secretary General shared the details of the initiatives for wooing investment in the region. The Secretary General also highlighted the advances in the transport sector and invited the ECO-CCI to actively participate in the initiatives for promotion of tourism sector.

Telecon with Uzbek Foreign Minister



ECO
CHRONICLE

Ambassador Khusrav Noziri and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr.

Vladimir Norov held a telephonic conversation on November 8, 2022.

The two sides discussed the issues concerning the 26th Meeting of the

ECO Council of Ministers (COM), held on January 24, 2023 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. They further exchanged ideas on ensuring Minister-level participation in the 26th COM meeting since the event coincided with celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the ECO Enlargement.





Call on Foreign Minister of Iran



On November 9, 2022, the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri called on the Minister of Foreign

Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

The interaction was aimed at discussing the issues and prospects of regional cooperation, as well as reviewing the status of preparations to the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM), held on January 24, 2023 in Tashkent.

Underscoring the importance of the 26th COM Meeting event which marked the

30th Anniversary of the ECO enlargement, the ECO Secretary General desired Minister-level participation in the meeting. He also commended the invaluable

contribution of Iran in ECO. As host of the ECO Secretariat, the receptive and welcoming approach of Iran was also deeply appreciated by all Member States, the Secretary General enunciated.

The Minister reaffirmed Iran's commitment, assuring the country's continued cooperation to support ECO with a view to ensuring greater connectivity and integration in the region.



Eighth ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting



regional cooperation through conducting new projects.

The inaugural statement was delivered by the ECO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli. He expressed that cooperation in minerals was a key component of ECO's strategy on sustainable economic growth that would enable our region to work together to build minerals investment, grow the minerals sector, expand trade and ensure sustainable approaches towards minerals development.

The meeting mandated the Secretariat to work with international partners to adapt existing leading practices on sustainable minerals development within ECO region; design and adopt non-financial incentives to promote; knowledge

sharing and capacity building activities to assist government & other stakeholders as well as to work and involve all driven NGOs companies, governments and international organizations to support the ECO Member States in the field of minerals.

The host authorities also arranged the visit of delegates to the 17th Specialized Exhibition of Stone, Quarries & Related Industries at Isfahan International Exhibition Center and BAMA MINE Company (Lead and Zinc) in Isfahan, where all participants were acquainted with the main facilities and infrastructure, operating capacities and mineral processing activities.

Local media representatives took interviews from the ECO Secretariat officials on the outcome of events.

ECO CHRONICLE The Eighth ECO Minerals Expert Group Meeting was held on November 13-17, 2022 in Isfahan City of Iran. The Meeting was jointly organized by the Geological Survey of Iran and the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mining and Agriculture in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The meeting reviewed latest developments in the field of minerals in ECO Member States and discussed prospects of strengthening



ECO Secretary General Meets UNEP Executive Director

ECO CHRONICLE On November 15, 2022, the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Amb. Khusrav Noziri on the sidelines of the high-level segment of the 27th Session of Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 27) in Sharm el-Sheikh had a meeting with Ms. Inger Andersen Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

In the course of this meeting, the possible ways for strengthening relations between two Organizations were discussed. The ECO Secretary General after referring to the environmental challenges and opportunities in the region highlighted the environment and impacts of climate change as a cross-sectoral priority of ECO and mentioned that the ECO Vision 2025 underscored sustainability as one of its core principles.

He also pointed out the existing MoU between ECO and the UNEP and expressed readiness for updating the document to reflect global and regional developments during last decade. Mr. Noziri underscored the need for

capacity building and assistance from the international community and the UNEP for strengthening climate action in the region. He emphasized importance of the UNEP in extending enhanced assistance to ECO region.

Ms. Anderson in response, while appreciating high interest in environmental cooperation highlighted the significance of ECO and the region. She expressed preparedness of the UNEP regional office in Asia and the Pacific and the office in Almaty for further engaging with the ECO Secretariat to discuss possible areas for strengthening cooperation. Ms. Anderson stressed importance of meaningful regional interaction and necessity to explore more details of what could be done beyond the existing bilateral cooperation that the UNEP had already been with the countries in the region.

The UNEP Executive Director, while hoping for ECO's participation in the next meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly, invited the Secretary General to have a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the UNFCCC COP 28, to be held in Dubai in 2023, in order to review and assess progress in the bilateral cooperation in 2023.

ECO Secretary General Meets Representatives of ECO Member States

ECO
CHRONICLE On November 15, 2022,
the Secretary General of the
Economic Cooperation Organization,
Ambassador Khusrav Noziri on the sidelines
of the high-level segment of the 27th Session
of Conference of the Parties of the United

Nations Framework Convention
on Climate Change (COP 27) in
Sharm el-Sheikh met with H.E.
Ms. Tanzila Narbaeva, Chairperson
of the Senate of the Republic of
Uzbekistan and Mr. Bahodur
Sheralizoda, Chairman of
Environmental Protection
Committee of the Republic of
Tajikistan.

During the meetings, the
ECO Secretary General stressed
importance of enhanced ownership
and vigorous engagement by the
Member States to expand
environmental profile of ECO
region. Moreover, the sides
discussed possibility of organizing
environment ministerial meeting
in soonest period. It was acknowledged
as a necessity to strengthen environmental
agenda of the region to align with
recent global priorities taking into
the consideration of each country's
environmental concerns.




ECO Secretary General Meets UNFCCC Director of Mitigation



were the most significant topics which needed special attention.

Mr. Noziri expressed ECO's interest to benefit from expertise and experience of the UNFCCC in enhancing more enabling environment for climate-related cooperation in the region and assistance of the UNFCCC to the countries in the region to further interact and cooperate to promote sustainability and climate action.

In response, Mr. Grabert, UNFCCC Director of Mitigation highlighted the

 On November 15, 2022, on the sidelines of the 27th Session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 27) in Sharm el-Sheikh, the ECO Secretary General met Mr. James Grabert, UNFCCC Director of Mitigation.

Ambassador Khusrav Noziri underscored the importance of environment and climate-related issues in the Organization's main vision and perspective. He clarified that mitigation was a significant issue in climate action, however, as far as developing countries like the ECO member states were concerned, adaptation and means of implementation

roles and responsibilities of the six UNFCCC regional offices. He articulated the importance of regional offices, especially in Dubai and Bangkok to prepare a sound and appropriate bilateral framework for cooperation in different areas related to climate change in the region. He further mentioned UNFCCC activities and cooperation with a few countries in the region on finance strategy, national adaptation fund, and carbon pricing projects. Mr. Grabert expressed confidence in opportunities for cooperation and interest to collaborate on a regional scale.

The two sides agreed to follow up on the post-COP 27 processes.

Sharm El Sheikh Climate Change Conference

ECO CHRONICLE On November 16, 2022, the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri delivered a statement at the 27th Session of Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The Secretary General highlight the increasing number of extreme weather events likes floods, droughts and sand and dust storms in the ECO region, which regrettably affect the poorest the hardest. While referring to the capacity constraints of the developing countries and their immediate needs to access adequate means of implementation such as climate finance, capacity building and technology transfer and development, he highlighted the necessity of multilateral cooperation and fulfillment of financial pledges as a requisite ingredient for transformative action on climate change adaptation and mitigation. While reiterating commitment of the ECO region to the Paris Agreement, he clarified that the activities in the region were, to a great extent, tied to proportionate means of implementation.

The ECO Secretary General articulated "what we need is not only a green, but also a just transition that leaves nobody behind. We need to keep in mind that if the green transition doesn't work for all, in the end it will work for none."

Mr. Noziri also emphasized the potential role which could be assigned to the regional organizations. Drawing the attention of the participants to the Paris Agreement, he elucidated that the regional and sub-regional organizations like the ECO, if empowered, could function as a coordination hub.

In his concluding remarks, the ECO Secretary General while inviting the global development community to strengthen project preparation activities to increase the pipeline of investable projects in the ECO region, expressed the Organization was prepared for facilitating cooperation among the member states, and with other national governments, regional and international organizations to enhance the global climate agenda and resilience in the region.



Interview to Akhbar Misr TV Channel



ECO CHRONICLE On the sidelines of the 27th Session of Conference of the Parties (COP 27) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at Sharm el-Sheikh, the ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri was interviewed by the Egyptian Akhbar Misr TV Channel.

In the interview, the Secretary General elaborated the importance of the ECO as an inter-governmental organization. He mentioned that humanity could not turn a blind eye to that sad fact that some regions especially in the global south including parts of the ECO region were extremely vulnerable to the catastrophic consequences of climate change, whereas those regions were hardly responsible for causing climate change.

The ECO Secretary General underscored that more action was needed to ensure the developing countries have effective strategies in place and the adequate global assistance to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

18th Meeting of Project Monitoring Group



ECO CHRONICLE The 18th Meeting of the Project Monitoring Group was convened to review the ongoing projects and deliberate on the new proposals. The representatives of the Embassies of the ECO Member-States located in Tehran and the directing staff of the ECO Secretariat attended the meeting.

The Secretary General of the Organization Ambassador Khusrav Noziri urged the participants to pay attention to the goals and objectives envisioned in the ECO Vision-2025 and immediate priorities of the Member-States expressed at the 14th and 15th ECO Summits. The Secretary General also referred to the Plan of Work on the proposals and initiatives of the 15th ECO Summit held in Ashgabat on November 28, 2021, which was adopted by the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR).

While exchanging views, the representatives expressed desire to expedite ongoing projects and raise their quality in order to address the urgent needs of the ECO region.

First Meeting of ECO Tourism Operators

ECO CHRONICLE The First Meeting of the ECO Tourism Operators was held virtually on November 22, 2022 with the participation of tourism stakeholders from Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Mr. Jasur Rajabov, ECO Director for Tourism, highlighted the significance of the meeting by virtue of being first of its kind. While highlighting the significance of private sector in tourism industry, he maintained that due to the crosscutting nature of the tourism sector, a close coordination network among stakeholders was essential to reach the regional tourism objectives.

The participants discussed proposals on the operationalization of the ECO Tour Operators Network. The meeting discussed technical aspect of creating such network

and development of ECO tourism packages. The participants shared their concern and sought ways of facilitation of a regional visa for travelers to the region to ease free movement in the region. They came up with some proposals regarding joint tour packages in health tourism and nature based tourism to promote cross border travel. It was also proposed to include national handicrafts dealers into the Network to facilitate community based tourism in the ECO Member countries.

The tour operators sought ways and means to increase connectivity among the members of the Network and suggested face-to-face meetings would increase the synergy and partnership. The meeting was an efficient platform to discuss many joint cooperation areas for the regional tourism sector and it was agreed to collaborate and have monthly meetings for further enhancement of regional tourism industry.



33rd Meeting of Energy Charter Conference



The 33rd Meeting of the Energy Charter Conference was held virtually on November 22, 2022.

The ECO Secretariat, as an observer, attended the Ministerial and High-Level session.

The ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri delivered statement on prospects of regional cooperation in transition to renewables. He also noted that regional cooperation to mobilize resources, exchange knowledge, technology and investment, as well as to establish regional markets was an essential part of



the sustainable energy transition in the ECO region. He particularly highlighted partnership with the Energy Charter regarding creation of electricity market in the region.

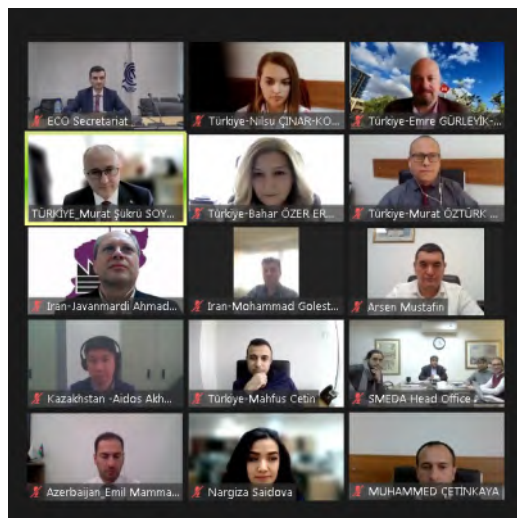
Ambassador Noziri mentioned that ECO could play a bridging role in fulfilling the aspirations of its Member States to develop their own energy transition pathways and reaffirmed the commitment to boost partnership with international partners to draw synergies for energy security in the region.



INTERNATIONAL
ENERGY CHARTER



Sharing Best Practices on SME Support and Evaluation



On November, 23, 2022, the workshop on Sharing Best Practices on SME Support and Evaluation Mechanisms was jointly organized in video conference format by the ECO Secretariat and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization (KOSGEB), Republic of Türkiye.

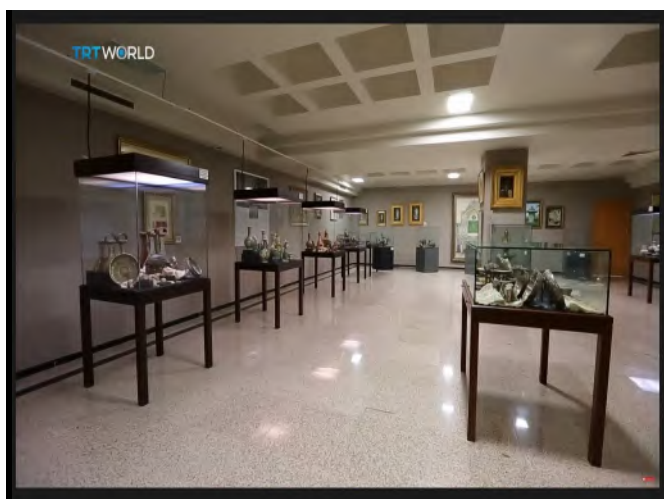
The online event was attended by the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Islamic Republic of

Pakistan, the Republic of Türkiye, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The main purpose of the workshop was to provide an avenue to exchange information on issues pertaining to SMEs and entrepreneurship in the Member States and to discuss prospects of strengthening regional cooperation.

The participants from ECO Member States exchanged views on initiatives concerning implementation of SME Policies and promotion of business-friendly practices.

The ECO Member States touched upon the potential of SMEs to promote sustainable economic development and raise living standards. The participants appreciated the forward-looking SME policies of Member States and welcomed the proposal of holding such events regularly.



ECO- INTERPOL Meeting



ECO
CHRONICLE

On November 23, 2022, online meeting was held between the ECO Deputy Secretary General Amb. Jandos Asanov and the INTERPOL Acting Executive Director for Partnerships and Planning Ms. Roraima Ana Andriani.



The main objective of the meeting was to brief the ECO Secretariat about convening Dialogue Working Group (DWG) on Strategic Aspects of the Global Policing Architecture and the agenda of the Dialogue on an Effective Multilateral Policing Architecture against

Global Threats which took place on December 8-9, 2022 in New York.

Ambassador Asanov briefly introduced the Economic Cooperation Organization and its overall functioning. He further added that the ECO Member States had an agenda of security and police cooperation.

INTERPOL invited the ECO Secretariat to participate in 'Effective Multilateral Policing Architecture against Global Threats'.



ECO Secretary General Receives Algerian Ambassador

ECO
CHRONICLE

The ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri received the Algerian Ambassador in Iran, H.E. Mr. Ali Arroudj at the ECO Secretariat on November 23, 2022.

The bilateral interaction was aimed at exploring options for partnership between ECO and Algeria.

The Algerian Ambassador highlighted the prospects of Algeria's foreign economic relations, expressing his country's interest to develop a working relationship with ECO.

The ECO Secretary General briefed the visiting dignitary ECO and its working. The issue of granting observership also came under limelight.

Asia-Pacific Stats Café Series: Measuring Economic Loss from Disasters

ASIA-PACIFIC STATS CAFE SERIES:
MEASURING ECONOMIC LOSS FROM DISASTERS
21 November 2022 | 12:00 - 13:30 (Bangkok Time, UTC+7)

The Stats Café will provide a forum to share experiences and practices on measuring economic losses from disasters. Conceptual perspectives on economic losses from disasters will be highlighted including the measurement of disaster related statistics. Specific cases on the measurement of economic losses from disasters will be discussed.

REGISTRATION
<https://rb.gy/waewv2>

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OPENING & CLOSING
Rikke Munk Hansen
Chief, Economic and Environment
Statistics Section
ESCAP Statistics Division

MODERATOR
Alick Mjuma Nyasulu
Statistician
ESCAP Statistics Division

SPEAKERS
Lutfi Alfia
Statistician
BPS Indonesia
Daniel Clarke
Statistics and Data
Directorate
Organization of Economic
Cooperation and
Development (OECD)
Alper Aras
Economic Affairs Officer
UNDRR

STATISTICS
Good coffee makes your day,
but good data helps you decide.
ESCAP
MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

ECO CHRONICLE The ECO headed by Mr. Husnu Tekin, Director of the Human Resources and Sustainable Development of the Economic Cooperation Organization, participated virtually, as an observer, in Asia-Pacific States Café Service Forum, held on November 21, 2022.

The Forum was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) under the theme 'Measuring Economic Loss from Disaster'. The Forum was attended by participants from 22 countries including Government, Non-Government and Intergovernmental organizations.

The forum highlighted the conceptual perspectives on economic losses from disasters including the measurement of disaster-related statistics. Specific cases on the measurement of economic losses from disasters were also discussed.

The speakers of the forum accentuated that the Asia-Pacific region is prone to various disasters every year and incline to a huge cost to economies, countries, and individual households.

The Speakers also made presentations on the countries' compilations including the compilation of inter-regional input-output tables and the applications in policy making.

The speakers also pointed out that the National statistical agencies have not been at the forefront to measure losses from disasters in the Asia-Pacific though they have made strides to produce disaster-related statistics. Other statistical systems are simply in the process of setting up systems to compile disaster-related statistics. Disaster management agencies have been at the forefront to measure potential economic losses from disasters.

Revitalizing Regional Cooperation for Green, Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery

ECO CHRONICLE On November 24, 2022, at the invitation of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri took part in the 21st CAREC Ministerial Conference dedicated to the theme 'Revitalizing Regional Cooperation for Green, Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery'.

Ambassador Noziri underscored importance of conducting reforms to enable developing countries for better access to adequate finance which is requisite for the implementation of the SDGs. He also added that regional and subregional coordination can help build and restore resilience in supply chains. While emphasizing on the enhancing regional cooperation and policy coordination on air pollution, climate change, biodiversity conservation, water resources management and land degradation he highlighted that strengthening of regional normative frameworks to deal with transboundary risks and strengthen environmental resilience is

another opportunity represented by COVID crunch.

Mr. Noziri revealed vision of revitalization of regional cooperation within forging a stronger consensus on green growth and climate-resilient development cooperation and bolstering the drivers for sustainable development. He called audience for centering regional cooperation on five lines of efforts, namely trade and investment liberalization and facilitation through boosting connectivity, industrialization, digitization, low-carbon development and agricultural modernization.

The key participants of event were the ministers of CAREC member countries, the President of ADB, and high-level representatives of development partners. In addition to the dialogue with international partners the conference's objective was to seek ministerial guidance on the CAREC 2030 implementation and endorsement of the 2022 CAREC deliverables.



ECO Celebrates 30 Years of its Expansion

ECO
CHRONICLE

The Economic Cooperation Organization Day is celebrated every year on November 28. On this day in 1992, ECO experienced an enlargement.

Founded as the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) in 1964 by the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the Republic of Türkiye, the RCD was rechristened as the Economic Cooperation

Organization (ECO) in 1985. It became operational in January 1991, with permanent headquarters/Secretariat in Tehran. The Treaty of Izmir is the basic constituent document of ECO.

The vision behind establishment of ECO was to expand trade amongst Member States, promote favorable conditions for sustained economic growth, achieve continuous improvement in the living standards of the peoples of the region, consolidate cultural affinities and spiritual and fraternal ties that bind the peoples of the region, and contribute to the growth of world trade.

ECO, being a dynamic Organization, has expanded over the years in terms of membership and mandate. Its membership, initially limited to three, has risen to ten. ECO enlarged in the early 1990s, welcoming the historically and culturally identical states of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The ECO region is home to more than half a billion inhabitants and stretched across eight million square kilometers. Composed of some



ECO 1992 - 2022 30 YEARS OF COOPERATION



Caucasus, South, West and Central Asian countries, ECO is one of the oldest intergovernmental organizations in the world. ECO has all essential elements to become one of the most prosperous regions of the world with its rich human and natural resources and deep-rooted culture and traditions.

Over the past few decades, the Organization has emerged as an effective forum of economic diplomacy and multilateral activism. The ECO Member States, sharing cultural and historic affinities, are ready to complement one another, intensifying their collaboration with action and result-oriented motives to be interconnected and integrated.

The year 2022 is special for ECO as it marks the 30th Anniversary of Expansion. In order to commemorate the 30th Anniversary in a special manner, ECO has planned to hold a ceremony and a Photo Exhibition at the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS), Tehran on December 11, 2022. The invitees include diplomatic corps based in Tehran, high-ranking officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and staff of the ECO Secretariat.

H.E. Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, being Guest of Honour, will grace the ceremony.

The ECO Secretariat will also issue special edition of ECO Chronicle, comprising articles of the honorable Foreign Ministers of ECO Member States. Another special edition of Chronicle highlighting rich tourist destinations, especially 74 UNESCO registered World Heritage Sites in ECO countries, will also be issued.

Today, ECO is into fourth decade of its existence. It has enlarged. It has expanded. It has enhanced its scope of cooperation. It has developed a system of bodies that assist the Organization in functioning and carrying out its goals. It has established a strong network of relations with several regional and international organizations. Considering the trajectory of the evolution of the Organization and emerging regional and international scenarios, we are hopeful and motivated that in times to come, ECO would emerge as more developed, more beneficial and an effective platform for multilateral diplomacy.

Seventh Session of the Committee on Environment and Development of ESCAP



ECO CHRONICLE On December 1, 2022, the ECO Secretary General Mr. Khusrav Noziri virtually participated in the Seventh Session of the Committee on Environment and Development of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

Ambassador Noziri delivered statement during the ministerial segment of the Committee under the theme 'protecting Our Planet through Regional Cooperation and Solidarity in Asia and the Pacific'. The Secretary General highlighted that the key question in transition to the cleaner sources of energy was how developing countries in the region should reconcile such a transition with their urgent and immediate development needs. He emphasized ECO's interest in improving the environmental performance of Asia and the Pacific and commitment to promote sustainable development in the region through multilateralism.

Ambassador Noziri also referred to the potential of the region to be leader in enhancing the resilience of the planet and enumerated some of the local, national,

regional, and international prerequisites to exploit such potential. He highlighted the necessity of raising local awareness, national policy coordination, regional initiative, and global adequate technical and financial assistance.

The Secretary General underlined the potential of regional organizations like the ECO to strengthen integrated approaches and increase collaborative regional action to achieve the SDGs, enhance the resilience of the region and societies, and promote the global environmental agenda. He also expressed the ECO Secretariat's preparedness for facilitating such cooperation amongst the Member States and with other national governments, regional, and international organizations.

The Seventh Session of the Committee on Environment and Development of ESCAP was held in Bangkok on November 29-December 1, 2022. The last day of the event was devoted to the ministerial segment and convened with the participation of the Asian Ministers and Deputy Ministers holding portfolio of environment.

Risk Data Governance and Disaster Information Management



ECO CHRONICLE On December 6-7, 2022, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Asian and Pacific Center for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM), and the Türkiye Disaster and Management Authority (AFAD) organized a High Level Consultative Meeting 'Risk Data Governance and Disaster Information Management and their Role in Enhancing Monitoring, impact-based Forecasting and Early Warning' in Istanbul.

The meeting was attended by the experts from the different countries including Bangladesh, the Maldives, the Republic of Türkiye, Cambodia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of India, Mongolia as well as the experts from the international organizations such as the APDIM, the AFAD, UNESCAP, the ESCWA, the FAO, and the OECD.

Ms. Neda Moshref Javadi, Program Officer, Human Resources and

Sustainable Development (HRSD), ECO Secretariat, Tehran, participated in the event. Ms. Javadi made a presentation 'Role of ECO in Enhancing the Governance for Disaster Risk Management in the Region'. She also acknowledged the level of cooperation between UNESCAP and ECO, especially in the area of disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.



10th Meeting of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity



Mr. Rovshan Mirzayev briefed on the latest information related to the electricity trade and exchange in the ECO region and touched upon flagship project to establish fully-fledged regional electricity market. Mr. Mirzayev called upon international partners for enhanced

 On December 7, 2022, at the invitation of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Mr. Rovshan Mirzayev, Director for Energy, Minerals and Environment delivered presentation on the ECO Regional Electricity Market at the 10th Meeting of the Expert Working Group on Energy Connectivity.

The event presented ongoing areas of work related to the implementation of the Regional Road Map on Power System Connectivity: Promoting Cross-border Electricity Connectivity for Sustainable Development ("Regional Road Map"). Experts provided feedback on UNESCAP Work Programme to ensure the coherence and its implementation.

partnership to draw synergies in the region, pertinent to the commonalities and joint interest by addressing energy access, security and affordability, which will contribute economic, social and environmental benefits for the region. Besides, the Member States were invited to take more active steps toward addressing challenges towards realization of the subject project.

The outcome of the 10th EWG-EC meeting was to deliver finalization of the Green Power Corridor Framework, as well as to strengthen engagement with partnerships and future work on multilateral power trade and mobilizing finance for power system connectivity.



UNODC Representative Visits ECO Secretariat



ECO CHRONICLE The Country Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Iran, Mr. Alexander Fedulov visited the ECO Secretariat on December 7, 2022. During his meeting with the ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, the issues, ideas and scope of mutual interests were discussed.


While acknowledging the importance of ECO-UNODC ties, Ambassador Noziri briefed the visiting dignitary on activities of ECO to address the problems emanating from illicit drugs

and organized crimes in the region. He stressed the need for enhancing the level of cooperation. While referring to the ECO Observer Status at the UN General Assembly, the Secretary General recalled the UN resolution on ECO-UN cooperation would be adopted in 2023.

The two sides also underscored the significance of joint efforts and actions on anti-corruption matters as well as realized the relevance of the ECO Regional Centre for Cooperation among the Anti-corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen (RCCACO) to overcoming any such issues and practices in the region.

The UNODC Country Representative summarized the next-stage status of UNODC Country Programme for Iran in 2023.

Kenyan Ambassador Visits ECO Secretariat

 The Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya to the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Joshua I. Gatimu visited the ECO Secretariat on December 7, 2022. The purpose of his visit was to understand the functioning of ECO and share his exposure of the East African Community (EAC) with a view to exploring possibility of future cooperation between the two Organizations.

The ECO Secretary General briefed the visiting dignitary on the activities, engagements and overall functioning of ECO. The Organization pursued an open-door policy in connection with its relations with the regional and international organizations which share identical aims and objectives, the ECO Secretary General apprised Ambassador Gatimu.



The Kenyan Ambassador underlined some salient features and role of the East African Community (EAC). He explained that, like ECO, the EAC was focused on regional development, uttering that the EAC aimed to strengthen ties among member states through a common market and customs union.

The two sides appeared willing and receptive to organize a Joint ECO-EAC Ambassadorial Meeting in Tehran explore possible ways for establishing ECO-EAC partnership.





Dialogue- Guarantee of Peace

ECO
CHRONICLE

The ECO Secretary General, Amb. Khusrav Noziri delivered a video statement during an International Conference "Dialogue - Guarantee of Peace", held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on December 11, 2022.

The Conference was chaired by H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov, the honourable Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan.

The ECO Secretary General highlighted that the dialogue process was indispensable for peace. He noted that there was an inextricable link between peace and progress and the idea of progress without peace remained impracticable. He further highlighted that mobilizing international community was a genuine need of the yesterday to secure sustainable peace,

harmony and solidarity amongst the nations. He appreciated Turkmenistan and the United Nations Office in Turkmenistan for co-organizing this important event.

Ambassador Noziri, while acknowledging the importance of Turkmenistan as a vital Member of ECO, expressed his pleasure over the country's increasing role and contribution to support and create conducive environment for international peace and security.

During the event, the message of the UN Secretary General, H.E. Mr. António Guterres was also read. The UN Secretary General reiterated the significance of dialogue for peace, commending Turkmenistan's role to strengthen international cooperation for global peace and trust.



Fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism



The Fourth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, preceded by the Sixth High-Level Experts Group (HLEG) Meeting on Tourism, was convened on December 12-13, 2022 in video conference format.

The virtual events were hosted by the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Delegations from the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and the ECO Secretariat attended the events. The Fourth ECO Tourism Ministers Meeting was also attended by the delegations of the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) and the Turkish Cypriot State as an observer.

The Meeting was inaugurated by Mr. Aziz Abdukhakimov, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In his inaugural statement, the Minister highlighted the

potential and progress of the Republic of Uzbekistan in tourism sector. He highlighted that the Uzbekistan wished to turn the tourism industry into a powerful tool for sustainable economic growth. He further stated that instead of general approach, Uzbekistan was now focusing on improving the tourism infrastructure, service quality and diversity in each district, city, and region of Uzbekistan.

The Minister further mentioned that tourism served as one of the main growth catalysts and the strongest bridges that united people of the region. He highlighted the necessity of increasing direct flights among the Member States and increasing collaboration amongst the stakeholders to boost tourism in the region. He emphasized the significance human resource development in tourism sector and informed that 25 students from the ECO Member States received scholarship for studying at the Silk Road International University of Tourism in Samarkand. The Minister also informed the delegates about the 25th Session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism

Organization (UNWTO) that would held in Samarkand and invited all the ECO Member States to attend that important event.

Mr. Aziz Abdukhakimov, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Republic of Uzbekistan, was elected as Chairman of the Fourth Meeting of ECO Tourism Ministers.

The ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri stated Uzbekistan under its presidency of the ECO declared 2022 as the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity" in the ECO region and to that Uzbekistan hosted major events. He highlighted that the tourism sector was placed among one of the ECO's important areas of interest, prioritized for development under the ECO Vision-2025. He underscored that ECO region was home to 74 UNESCO registered World Heritage Sites and had diverse tourism potential. The Secretary General underlined that the accessibility of the ECO region was a prerequisite to promote tourism to and within the region and the development of the tourism industry throughout the region needed intraregional and international connectivity through all modes of transportation to ensure comfortable, cheaper accessible and safe travel in the region.

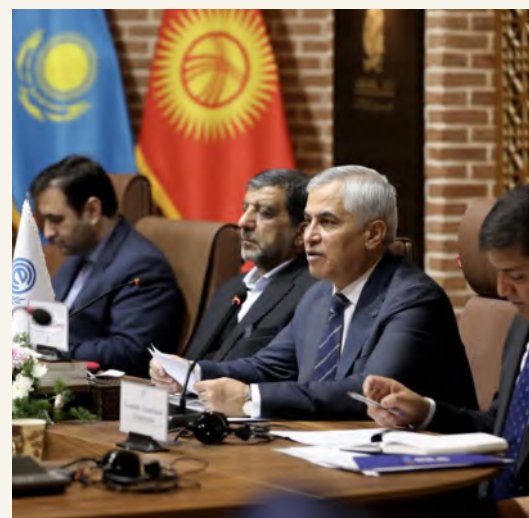
The ECO Secretary General further stressed the importance of embarking on a joint tourism programme to provide the ECO region a more attractive, competitive and powerful product image as a tourism destination and highlight the attractiveness and variety of the ECO tourism experience. He highlighted that the simplification of border-crossing procedures for foreign tourists, easing and liberalization of visa regimes would support tourism industry in the region. "Developing harmonizing service quality and environmental standards aligned with international best practices are key to raising the competitiveness of the region as a global tourism destination and attracting tourists from international markets", he said.

Mr. Ali Asghar Shalbafian, Deputy Minister of

Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the gathering about the upcoming Tehran International Tourism Exhibition, scheduled for February 7-10, 2023.

Mr. Awn Chaudhry, Advisor to Prime Minister on Tourism and Sports, Government of Pakistan highlighted that to promote regional tourism among Member States we could improve the facilitation in the movement of tourists among the ECO Member States by providing better road, rail and air connectivity and also introduce joint economical air fares for the citizens of the Member States to encourage them to visit each other's countries.

Mr. Tojiddin Jurazoda, Chairman of the Committee for Tourism Development under Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, informed the delegates about the International Tourism Fair which would be held on March 21-23, 2023 in Dushanbe and invited Member States to participate in the event.



The Meeting adopted Road Map on Facilitating Accelerated Recovery, Safe and Sustainable Development of Tourism after COVID-19 in the ECO region as a post-COVID general framework for cooperation among the Member States and selected the cities of Shakhrisabz in the Republic of Uzbekistan and Erzurum in the Republic of Türkiye as the ECO Tourism Capitals for 2024 and 2025 respectively.

The Samarkand Declaration on Tourism Cooperation was adopted and released.

The Fifth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism will be hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran in May/June 2023 in Ardabil.

Training Course on Primary Prevention of Addiction



ECO CHRONICLE The Third Virtual ECO Training Course 'Primary Prevention of Addiction' was co-organized by the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the University of Tehran, and the ECO Secretariat on December 14, 2022. The event was attended by the representatives of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Türkiye. The Representatives from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) also participated in the virtual event.

The ECO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador J.Asanov commended the Drug Control

Headquarters of Iran and the University of Tehran for organizing the event. He underlined that in the past two decades, ECO had collaborated with its Member States to organize various meetings and training courses to cooperate in combating illicit drug activities, drug supply and demand reduction and associated matters

During the course, the participants shared their perspectives on community drug abuse prevention, drug abuse prevention at universities, schools and workplaces as well as drug abuse prevention models and drug media policies.

Dr. Hamidreza Rafeipour Tehrani, Director of the International Law Department of the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran, appreciated the participants for their contribution to make it convenient to attend this training course. While reiterating the need for expanded cooperation amongst the Member States, he elaborated the measures and successful experiences of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of drug addiction prevention.

Sarakhs Special Economic Zone Delegation Visits ECO Secretariat



ECO CHRONICLE On December 14, 2022, delegation of the Sarakhs Special Economic Zone (SEZ) of Iran, headed by Mohammad Reza Kalaei and accompanied by Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, called on the Secretary General Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Ambassador Khusrav Noziri.

The purpose of visit was to highlight the role of SEZ in the economic and trade sector and explore the possibility of ECO-SEZ cooperation. The visiting delegates emphasized the need for bolstering regional connectivity, focusing on multimodal transport and transit routes to boost intraregional and interregional linkage of ECO, including with China, Russia, CIS Region, Europe and the Persian Gulf.

Ambassador Noziri briefed the

delegation on various ECO programs and initiatives in the fields of trade and connectivity. The ECO Secretary General also enlightened the delegation about ECO Enlargement that took place thirty years ago, adding that the celebration of the 30th Anniversary of ECO Expansion was graced by the honorable Foreign Minister of Iran, H.E. Mr. Amir Hossein Abdollahian.


He enunciated that the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) to be held next month in Uzbekistan would adopt 'Tashkent Communiqué' for reinvigorating the spirit of collaboration among the member countries. Likewise, the 33rd Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) in January 2023 would finalize the ECO Work Plan and the Calendar of Events for 2023.

The visiting delegation invited the ECO Secretary General to participate in a ceremony to be hosted by SEZ on December 19, 2022 in Tehran.

The Sarakhs SEZ, with an area of 5,290 hectares and situated in the northeast of Iran, is located at the geographical center of the ECO Region and 'Golden Gate' for entry into Central Asia, China and Russia, connecting major trade markets in Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, Europe, and Pakistan.

First Coordination Committee Meeting on Trans-Caspian and Almaty- Istanbul Corridors



 The Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) convened the First Coordination Committee Meeting on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Istanbul Corridors.

The virtual interaction, jointly organized by ECO-UNECE on December 16, 2022, was chaired by Ms. El De Wit Chairperson of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics. ECO was headed by Director for Transport and Communications, Mr. Akbar Khodaei.

The en-route member countries, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan, also attended the meeting.

Moreover, the representatives of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA) also took part in the event.

The meeting made extensive deliberations on aspects of corridor management. The meeting covered areas including current shifts in transport and trade flows between Asia and Europe and



impacts on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul corridors, potential to further diversify multimodal inland transport routes between Asia and Europe, and measures to smoothly operationalise Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul corridors.

Establishment of the "Coordination Committee" was decided at the 35th Annual Session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics of UNECE (WP.5) on September 6, 2022 in Geneva, Switzerland.

Secretary General Attends Business Event



While addressing the gathering, the ECO Secretary General appreciated the authorities for fostering favorable investment climate in the Sarakhs Special Economic Zone to attract and facilitate the business community inside and outside the ECO Region. He highlighted the emerging regional and global investment trends, current volume of intra-regional trade, focusing on the vast advantages of the ECO Region to expand and mutual trade and investment. Ambassador Noziri also assured of



Ambassador Khusrav Noziri attended a business event organized by Sarakhs Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at the Esteghlal International Hotel, Tehran on December 19, 2022.

The event was held to showcase the potential opportunities for business and investment in the Sarakhs Special Economic Zone. A large number of participants gathered at the occasion, including local and foreign members of business community, representatives of diplomatic corps, and local dignitaries.

ECO's continued cooperation to support initiatives that could increase trade flows and investment in the region.

The Secretary General alluded to the recent operationalization of the ECO Agreement on Protection and Promotion of Investment (APPI), drafted to bolster and woo the business community to bring investment in the region. He emphasized the need to create regional supply and value chains to seize opportunities for shared economic growth and social development.

International Conference on Transportation Highways of SCO Member States

—ECO—
CHRONICLE

The ECO
Secretary

General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri delivered message to the International Conference "Transportation Highways of SCO Member States, held in hybrid format on December 23, 2022 in Baku.

The Conference was chaired by H.E. Mr. Rashad Nabiyeu, Minister of Digital Development and Transport of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The ECO Secretary General stressed upon the importance of connectivity and elaborated on the activities of ECO to enhance regional and international connectivity through policy making, establishing legal framework, implementing international standard procedures and conventions, developing infrastructure, capacity building, technical cooperation, coordination and collaboration with relevant international partners and banks.

The Secretary General also underlined that the connectivity policy of ECO had



always prioritized corridor development approach over isolated initiatives and to that end increasing regional and international connectivity has been a guiding principle for infrastructure development.

He outlined the achievements of ECO in implementation of strategic transport corridors. He emphasized that ECO as intergovernmental development organization shared common values, targets and priorities envisaged in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ECO DAY^{30th}

CEREMONY
1992/2022

