

November 9, 2023, Tashkent

Your Excellency, Dear Chairman!
Your Excellencies, Heads of States and Governments!
Mr. Secretary General!
Dear participants of the Summit!

First of all, **let me express my huge gratitude** to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, highly esteemed ***Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev*** for the warm and cordial welcome in the beautiful city of Tashkent.

Separately, we would like to thank Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, dear ***Mr. Khusrav Noziri***, for an active work as a head of the Organization and wish him further success.

Today's 16th ECO Summit, **chaired by brotherly Uzbekistan**, will certainly give a **new impetus** to the further development of the regional cooperation.

Our Organization unites a **strategic** region of the world with vast reserves of natural resources that are of crucial importance not only for the ECO Member States, but also for the entire **world economy**.

ECO States cover a territory of **8 million square kilometers**, with a population of a **half a billion people** and a combined GDP of **2 trillion dollars**.

This proves the significant economic potential of the Organization, which allows setting very **ambitious tasks** for the further growth of its **credibility** in the international arena.

As the President of Kazakhstan **Kassym-Jomart Tokayev** noted at the 14th Summit, the ECO is able to solve many of our current issues and called for the intensification of the **collaboration** of the Member States.

In this context, I would like to draw your attention to the following, from our point of view, **priority** areas of the cooperation.

First. Promotion of **interregional trade**.

According to the last year's results, Kazakhstan's trade turnover with the ECO countries increased by **40%** and reached **16.5 billion dollars** (*Exports from Kazakhstan to ECO countries – \$12.1 billion (+41.9%), imports – \$4.3 billion (+32.8%)*).

At the same time, in 8 months of this year, the trade turnover decreased by **3%** and amounted to almost **10 billion dollars** (*exports – \$6.8 billion (-10%), imports – \$3.1 billion (+16.7%)*).

In order to increase these indicators, Kazakhstan is ready to export an average of **100 types of non-primary goods** to each Member State of the Organization.

The country has large-scale plans on the construction of **cross-border hubs** that will increase the volume of transportation of processed and food products.

One of the key growth points in the development of modern cross-border trade-logistics infrastructure is the **"Central Asia" International center for industrial cooperation** on the Kazakh-**Uzbek** border.

A similar industrial trade-logistics complex will be built on the border with **Kyrgyzstan**.

Along with this, we propose to strengthen cooperation within the ECO with the use of already established and functioning in Kazakhstan **bonded warehouses** along the perimeter of our borders.

Second. It is important to develop **the transport interconnectivity** of the region.

This is especially relevant, since **7 out of 10** ECO Member States do not have access to the world **ocean**.

Kazakhstan actively participates in infrastructure and logistics projects, paying priority attention to the development of **the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route**.

To increase its potential, since the last year together with Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey we have been implementing **Roadmaps** on the simultaneous elimination of "the Bottle necks" and the development of the Middle Corridor until 2027.

They will allow to increase significantly the **capacity** of the route.

In order to connect Uzbekistan to the western regions of Kazakhstan, **the Beineu-Shalkar highway** will be built, which will serve to complete the formation of **the 8th TRACECA highway corridor**.

Furthermore, we are actively disclosing the potential of our **seaports in the Caspian Sea**.

There will be built a "container hub" in the port of **Aktau** and a multifunctional "Sarzha" terminal in the port of **Kuryk**.

It is planned to build separate **station rail tracks** at checkpoints with **China** for Central Asian countries.

We intend to systematically increase cargo traffic in this direction and **by 2030** bring it to **500 thousand containers** per year.

Moreover, Kazakhstan is taking measures to disclose the potential of the "**North-South**" transport corridor.

For the development of this route, we have developed a **Roadmap** jointly with **Iran, Turkmenistan** and **Russia**, implementation of which will allow increasing the capacity of the corridor **from 10 to 15 million tons** until 2027.

The "**Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran**" railway is of particular importance as the shortest route between the ECO Member States in Central Asia and the Middle East.

In 9 months of this year, cargo traffic on this route in the direction of **Iran** increased by 9% and exceeded **1.5 million tons**.

In general, it seems necessary to strengthen joint work to remove administrative barriers and to deepen the integration of transport and logistics systems.

Third. We believe that **industrial cooperation** is one of the important priorities of our cooperation.

Today, more than **13 thousand joint ventures** with capital from ECO countries operate in Kazakhstan, about **1800** of them have registered over the past year.

Currently, **26** projects worth about **2.7 billion dollars** are being implemented with ECO countries in the fields such as *machinery, metallurgy, light and chemical industries, construction and subsoil use.*

We invite business-partners to jointly implement new high-tech projects.

Your Excellencies!

Kazakhstan, is committed to the principles of ECO and is ready to make every effort to achieve common **ambitious goals.**

Taking this opportunity let me congratulate **brotherly Azerbaijan** on the successful completion of the chairmanship in the Organization this year and wish success to our **Iranian** friends, who will take over the chairmanship next year.

In conclusion of my speech, I would like once again to thank sincerely the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the highly esteemed **Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev**, for his hospitality and excellent organization of today's Summit.

Thank you for your attention!