

Statement by
H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, ECO Secretary General
at the 7th International Conference on Climate Change
Tehran, 29 January 2024

Excellency Mr. Ali Salajegheh, Vice President and Head of Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
Excellency Mr. Mehrdad Bazrpash, Minister of Roads and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I feel immense pleasure to participate in the Seventh International Conference on Climate Change. I would like to express my gratitude to the organizers and wish every success to the proceedings of the Conference, which is due to address one of the most significant challenges of our time.

The Economic Cooperation Organization is among the regions that are most vulnerable to climate change, so one by any stretch of the imagination, cannot think of a scenario in which our region to stay unaffected by the dire consequences of climate change on humanity.

Climate change, disaster risk, and fresh water ecosystems are inextricably linked and global warming is increasing the frequency and severity of floods, droughts, and risks to humans, infrastructure, and nature. Climate-related challenges can aggravate displacement and serious tensions. All these can bring not only environmental, but also huge economic and social costs to all of us. So addressing climate change as one of the triple planetary crisis is not only critical for the sake of the earth systems that regulate climate, weather patterns and the water cycle, but it should also be seen as a foundation for development, poverty eradication, justice, peace and stability.

Our collective economic and social well-being depends on nature and its services which are interconnected with climate change. We must confess that a great amount of our region's GDP is derived from nature, and ecosystems provide a vast range of services vital to our survival. Therefore, we must not just focus on satisfying immediate impulses. We need to invest in our future by including the full value of nature in economic decision-making, removing harmful incentives, decoupling economic growth from resource use and GHG emissions, promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, and achieving a just transition towards a circular economy that delivers for all.

It is noteworthy that the resource-intensive growth has caused serious damage to many natural ecosystems in our region leading to environmental degradation and climate disruption. We need a framework and clear roadmap to define and make our regional priorities in this area as concrete as possible. We have to agree on some common grounds and priorities for climate action to make progress and strengthen regional capacities. In such a context, I am pleased to refer to the ongoing process of the adoption of the ‘ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment’ and its ‘Work Programme on Climate Change’.

Whereas the challenges to address climate change are great, this phenomenon provides us with some valuable opportunities too particularly in our region which has the potential to be at the heart of a renewable future and become a forerunner in the global transition to green development. It is important that we collectively work to achieve climate-resilient development, and thereby simultaneously adapt to growing climate risks and incentivize opportunities to reduce GHG emissions.

To address climate change opportunities and challenges that are trans-boundary, we need more inclusive and effective multilateralism and reinvigorating regional and global cooperation. We also need strong science, political resolve, and societal engagement to craft inclusive and transformative solutions. We must call upon all especially those involved in governance in our region to accelerate action and ambition and to pave the way for brave decisions and bold and decisive plans for collective climate action.

Technologies are vital to building climate-resilient, low-carbon societies. Many essential technologies already exist. The challenge is the lack of access or to get them deployed where they are most required. Furthermore, we as developing countries should show more readiness to embrace climate technologies to accelerate innovative, sustainable and context-specific solutions to address the impacts of climate change.

Our future depends on innovation and technology for climate action, and we need further expertise and technical assistance to strengthen the resilience of communities and systems at risk, and empower millions of people impacted by climate change. In such a context, we cannot emphasize enough the key role of academia and the scientific community as catalysts for climate innovation and technology advancement. The participatory approach and engagement of all relevant stakeholders is critical in climate decision-making at both national and international levels.

At this point, I would like to recall that the next UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) will be held later this year in the Republic of Azerbaijan - an important ECO Member State, and will stage another occasion to come across and jointly promote our climate change agenda.

In conclusion, I hope this event not only provides a forum for scientists to foster and exchange views and ideas, but also brings about remarkable results and substantial progress in addressing climate-related opportunities and challenges and promoting climate action.

I thank you for your attention.