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ECO Chronicle





Foreword



I am privileged to introduce this 32nd ECO Chronicle that symbolizes our unwavering dedication to advancing economic integration and fostering sustainable development across the region.

Amidst the global uncertainties, the solidarity and adaptability demonstrated by ECO Member States have been remarkable. This collective resilience has translated into significant strides in various realms, including trade facilitation, energy cooperation and digital transformation. Besides, the noteworthy advancements in Connectivity and infrastructure underscore our collective aspiration to create seamless corridors for stimulating economic growth and promoting greater regional integration. These endeavors reflect our shared conviction in the power of unity and the imperative of harnessing our diverse capabilities for the collective good.

As we venture into this latest edition, I hold firm confidence that its insights and perspectives will not only enlighten but also invigorate our collective endeavors towards unlocking the immense potential inherent within our region.

I extend my sincerest gratitude to all our member countries for their unwavering support and active engagement in ECO activities. It is through their steadfast commitment and dynamic participation that we continue to propel forward on our shared journey to a better future.

Thank you.

Khusrav Noziri
Secretary General
Economic Cooperation Organization

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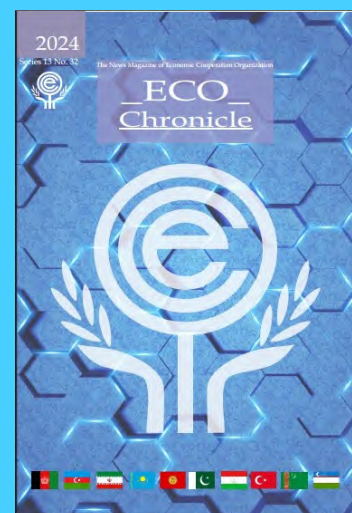
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Throughout the history of Turkmenistan, there have been many outstanding, visionary personalities who, in the most difficult moments of people's life became a spiritual backbone of all vulnerable hearts and the entire human soul. One of them was the great Turkmen poet Magymyaly Pragi, who left an indelible mark not only in the history of the Turkmen people, but also in all world-wide, his invaluable literary heritage.

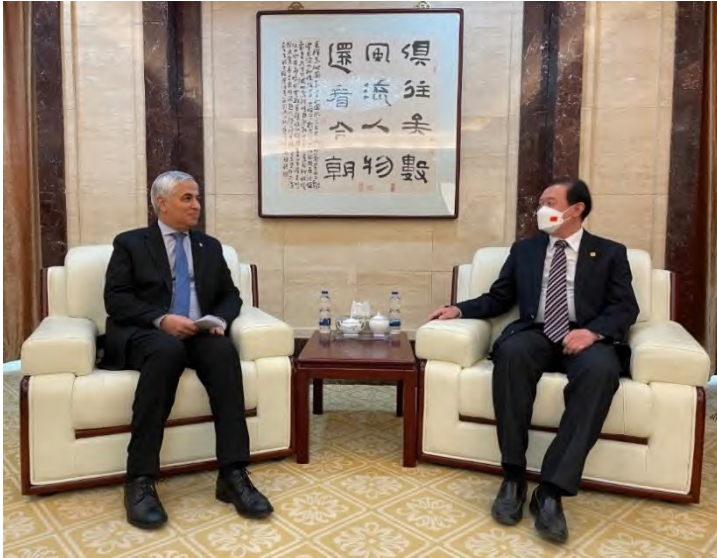
As we mark the 300th birth anniversary of Magymyaly Pragi, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) proudly honors a poet whose timeless verses champion peace, unity, and harmony across the globe. Magnificently, a humanity in Turkmen literature, intricately wove human emotions and societal ideals, reflecting ECO's mission of cultural unity and intellectual exchange. It is a commemoration not only pays homage to a legendary figure but also reaffirms ECO's dedication to cultural enrichment and deepening camaraderie among nations. Through celebrating such luminaries, ECO affirms its commitment to bridging divides, embracing cultural diversity, and fostering a future of mutual respect and shared prosperity. Magymyaly's message of harmony and light shines brightly in this global world where cultural wealth and collective values lead to a peaceful coexistence within the ECO sphere and beyond.



Economic Cooperation Organization



ECO Secretary General Meets Chinese Ambassador



On 4 January 2023, at the Chinese Embassy in Tehran, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri and Chinese Ambassador to Iran, Mr. Chang Hua, discussed enhancing cooperation between the ECO, SCO, and BRI to boost regional development. This interaction aimed at aligning mutual interests and expanding collaboration among these key regional initiatives.

ECO agencies in fostering cooperation. The discussion also highlighted the alignment of ECO's objectives with those of the SCO and BRI, particularly in strengthening ECO's ties with both organizations, recognizing China's key influence and calling for enhanced collaboration.

Discussions also explored the development of various transport corridors, notably the China + KTAI (Kyrgyz- Republic-Tajikistan - Afghanistan - Iran) route. The formulation of a Plan of Action, reciprocal visits, and the designation of focal points were proposed to advance these aims.

Concluding on an optimistic note, both parties showed readiness for ongoing consultations to further enhance, develop, and solidify their partnership in a dual and collective context. This includes sharing details on projects earmarked for future joint endeavors.



First CPR Meeting of 2023 Under New Chair



On 11 January 2023, the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) convened its inaugural meeting of the year, presided over by the Republic of Azerbaijan, which took on the ECO Chairmanship for 2023. Ambassador Ali Alizada of Azerbaijan, serving as the Permanent Representative to ECO, assumed the role of CPR Chairman.

ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, expressed gratitude to Uzbekistan for its support and commended Ambassador Bakhodir Abdullaev for his leadership in 2022. He warmly welcomed Ambassador Alizada as the new Chairman, highlighting Alizada's extensive experience and knowledge as crucial assets for driving the Council's mission of enhanced regional cooperation.

Plenary Session of 33rd ECO Regional Planning Council



The ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC) initiated its proceedings with a hybrid Plenary Session on 16 January 2023, attended by representatives from ECO Member States, Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutes, and Affiliated Bodies. The Turkish Cypriot State participated as an observer.

ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, highlighted the RPC's importance in assessing the organization's work and initiating projects for regional growth. He recognized the challenges from global conflicts and post-COVID conditions, yet acknowledged ECO's ongoing progress. Ambassador Noziri also supported Azerbaijan's 2023 Chairmanship, committing full cooperation for ECO's activities under their guidance.

Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, Azerbaijan's Special Envoy to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and RPC Plenary Session chair, welcomed Azerbaijan's ECO Chairmanship. He praised Uzbekistan's 2022 contributions, particularly the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity" initiative.

Zeynalov announced Azerbaijan's 2023 focus on "Green Transition and Interconnectivity," in line with ECO Vision 2025. He emphasized Azerbaijan's dedication to enhancing regional cooperation through connectivity, green energy, climate change initiatives, and activating ECO specialized agencies like the ECO Clean Energy Center and ECO Research Center.

During the session, heads of delegations and representatives from various ECO institutions delivered statements, emphasizing cooperation in sectors like tourism and education. The sectoral committee meetings took place from January 16 to 18, culminating in a final session on 19 January where recommendations for the ECO Work Program and Calendar of Events for 2023 were endorsed and adopted.

SG Receives President ECO Educational Institute



On 17 January 2022, alongside the 33rd ECO Regional Planning Council meeting in Tehran, ECOEI President Prof. Dr. Mehmet Akif Kireççi and ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri discussed ECOEI's contributions to ECO. The Secretary General praised ECOEI for its engagement in high-level events, efforts in publishing on regional connections, and educational initiatives. He also congratulated the President on the ratification of the Host Country Agreement with Turkey.

The ECOEI President highlighted key achievements, including the development of Study in ECO.org, ECOpedia, and student exchange programs. He also mentioned new invitations to ECO Member States to join the ECOEI Charter, aiming to enhance the Institute's dynamism and efficiency.

The meeting concluded with the Secretary General applauding the President's proposal for the Sixth Consultation Meeting of Heads of ECO Specialized Agencies, set to occur alongside the 26th ECO Council of Ministers (COM) meeting in Tashkent, where membership expansion will be discussed. The Secretary General assured full support for the Institute's activities.

ECO Secretary General Meets Uzbek Foreign Minister

During his Tashkent visit for the 26th ECO Council of Ministers meeting, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri met Uzbekistan's Acting Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Bakhtiyor Saidov, on 22 January 2023. Ambassador Noziri praised Uzbekistan's 2022 leadership, highlighting the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity" initiative and environmental dialogue platform proposal. He also thanked Uzbekistan for hosting the upcoming COM meeting and wished for its success.

Minister Saidov welcomed the ECO delegation to Tashkent, appreciating their assistance in organizing Uzbekistan's first ECO event. He reaffirmed Uzbekistan's dedication to ECO and emphasized the country's commitment to boosting regional cooperation in areas such as transport, trade, investment, and energy.

Both parties agreed to further explore cooperation opportunities to promote regional development and socio-economic progress among ECO Member States. They also committed to increasing ECO's global visibility.



ECO Chief Lauds Uzbekistan's Leadership



During his attendance at the 26th Council of Ministers Meeting in Tashkent, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri was interviewed by Donya Information Agency. He emphasized the critical role of economic cooperation in fostering socio-economic development and regional integration. Ambassador Noziri praised the significance of the meeting, organized by Uzbekistan, and commended the cooperative ties and contributions of Uzbekistan to ECO, especially highlighting its impactful chairmanship in 2022.

Secretary General Meets Turkish Foreign Minister

During the 26th ECO Council of Ministers (COM) meeting on 24 January 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri met with Türkiye's Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. Their discussions emphasized enhancing regional cooperation through the ECO, focusing on trade, connectivity, and boosting the Organization's global visibility.



Minister Çavuşoğlu expressed Türkiye's strong support for the ECO and emphasized the need for increased coordination among Member States to foster regional integration. He also thanked Ambassador Noziri for the successful organization of the COM meeting in Tashkent.

Ambassador Noziri appreciated the Minister's participation and reiterated the Secretariat's commitment to advancing regional development with the support of its member states.

Senior Officials Meet before the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers



On 23 January 2023, Senior Officials convened prior to the 26th ECO Council of Ministers (COM) meeting, with participation from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and host Uzbekistan, along with the ECO Secretary General.

The First Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Furkat Sidikov, highlighted Uzbekistan's achievements during its 2022 ECO Chairmanship, notably the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity" initiative and a productive Brainstorming Session with ECO Deputy Foreign Ministers.

He emphasized Uzbekistan's commitment to fostering cooperation for regional development and integration.

ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, recognized Uzbekistan's significant contributions to the ECO and outlined the organization's accomplishments, future cooperation prospects, and key reforms in 2022.



The meeting focused on finalizing the agenda for the 26th COM Meeting and the draft Tashkent Communiqué, which was officially adopted on 24 January 2023.

ECO Secretary General Meets Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan



During the 26th ECO Council of Ministers Meeting in Tashkent, ECO Secretary General engaged in a bilateral meeting with Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Baramov, on 24 January 2023. The discussion focused on regional developments and enhancing cooperation under Azerbaijan's 2023 ECO Chairmanship, themed “Year of Green Transition and Interconnectivity”.

Minister Baramov stressed the need for increased coordination among ECO Member States for swift progress in regional development, particularly in energy cooperation. He highlighted Azerbaijan's commitment to fostering a collaborative environment and pointed out the significance of the ECO Clean Energy Center in Baku and the roles of the Trans-Caspian and North-South Corridors in boosting transit connectivity.

The ECO Secretary General commended Azerbaijan's efforts towards regional development and cooperation within the ECO, expressing support for the Chairmanship's focus on connectivity and integration across the region.

ECO and D-8 Secretaries General Meet in Tashkent

On 24 January 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri and his D-8 counterpart, Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam, held a meeting. They reviewed the current status and activities of both ECO and D-8, focusing on their cooperative framework and issues of mutual interest. Both parties emphasized the importance of strengthening their partnership and agreed to seek new avenues for joint advancement and the welfare of their member countries.



ECO-OTS Secretaries General Meet in Tashkent



On 24 January 2023, on the sidelines of the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers in Tashkent, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri and OTS Secretary General H.E. Mr. Kubanychbek Omuraliev discussed the cooperation between the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Organization of Turkic States (OTS). They explored future collaboration opportunities, reaffirmed their commitment to work together in various development areas, and agreed to coordinate efforts to avoid duplication of initiatives. They also highlighted the need to update the existing ECO-OTS MoU to better meet emerging regional needs.

Secretary General Meets Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan



On 24 January 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri met with Kazakhstan's Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Tileuberdi, during the 26th ECO Council of Ministers Meeting. They discussed global developments, cooperation among ECO Member States, and shared interests in trade, transport, energy, and tourism, highlighting the significance of these discussions for regional collaboration.

In their discussion, Minister Tileuberdi confirmed Kazakhstan's strong support for the ECO and called for increased cooperation among Member States for regional integration. Ambassador Noziri thanked Kazakhstan for its contributions and looked forward to ongoing support from all Member States to promote sustainable development in the region.



Secretary General Meets Foreign Minister of Pakistan



At the 26th ECO Council of Ministers Meeting, Pakistan's Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, met with ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri to discuss regional economics. The Minister commended the ECO's role in enhancing regional connectivity and trade liberalization, particularly through the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), and reaffirmed Pakistan's support for the organization. He highlighted the need for joint efforts to realize ECO's goals and praised the progress in the ITI Road and Train Corridors.

Regional economic development and agreed with the Minister's perspective on increasing coordination and collaboration among member countries to accelerate regional development and integration.



Secretary General Calls On President of Uzbekistan



On 24 January 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri made a courtesy visit to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan. President Mirziyoyev commended Ambassador Noziri for the successful organization of the Council of Ministers (COM) event in Tashkent and highlighted the ECO's crucial role in fostering regional cooperation amid global disputes and economic issues, particularly in Central Asia. He expressed a desire for the swift completion of development projects ahead of the 16th ECO Summit to be hosted by Uzbekistan later in the year and welcomed the increase in scholarships at the International University of Tourism in Samarkand for ECO region students.

In response, Ambassador Noziri expressed gratitude to President Mirziyoyev for Uzbekistan's support during its ECO chairmanship in 2022 and its role in successfully convening the 26th COM Meeting. He praised Uzbekistan's initiatives, such as declaring 2022 the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity" setting a precedent for thematic years within the ECO, with 2023 named the "Year of Green Transition and Interconnectivity" under Azerbaijan's chairmanship. Ambassador Noziri also acknowledged Uzbekistan's efforts in establishing a High-Level Committee for ECO reforms and a Dialogue Platform on the environment, as well as boosting regional tourism, notably through designating Shakhrisabz as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2024, aiming to enhance regional tourism and the ECO's global profile.



ECO Holds 26th Meeting Of the Council of Ministers



The 26th ECO Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting took place in Tashkent on 24 January 2023, led by Uzbekistan's Acting Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Bakhtiyor Saidov. Foreign Ministers from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, and Turkmenistan attended, alongside the ECO Secretary General. The meeting evaluated the ECO's recent activities, approved new proposals from the Senior Officials' meeting on 23 January and adopted the "Tashkent Communiqué". This document emphasizes the importance of regional cooperation and supports the ECO's efforts to enhance its global visibility and partnerships with other regional and international bodies.



Chinese Delegation Visits ECO Secretariat

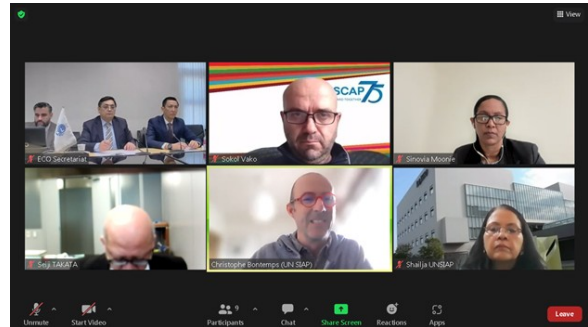


On 1 February 2023, a delegation of senior diplomats from the Chinese Embassy in Tehran visited the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), where they were received by ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri. The visit included detailed briefings by various ECO directorates, which aimed to acquaint the Chinese diplomats with the organization's regional activities, current policies, and future directions through segmental presentations focusing on ECO's diverse sectoral engagements.

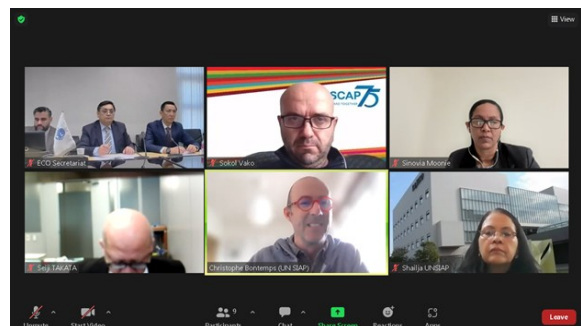
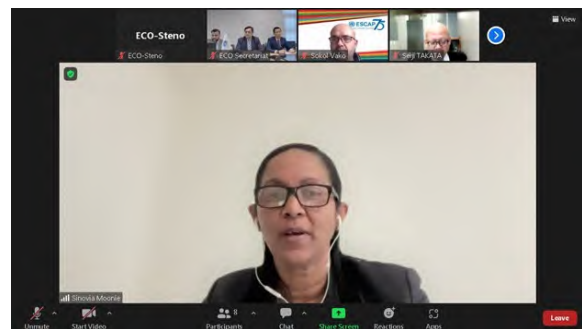
During the visit, Mr. Xu Qisong, Minister/ Counselor of the Chinese Embassy, expressed appreciation for the comprehensive briefing on the ECO's structure, scope, and functioning. He highlighted the main objectives of China's Belt and Road Initiative, as inaugurated by President Xi Jinping, emphasizing its focus on mutual development areas such as trade facilitation, connectivity, financial cooperation, and people-to-people contacts. The Chinese delegation showed a keen interest in establishing a collaborative partnership with the ECO and discussed continuing consultations to explore possibilities for joint work in areas of common interest.



ECO-UN SIAP Talks



At an online meeting on 2 February 2023, ECO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Jandos Asanov and UN SIAP Director Ms. Shailja Sharma discussed organizing joint events. They agreed to plan seminars and workshops on Data Visualization, Environment Statistics, and Register-based Censuses. The specifics of the events, including agendas and dates, will be determined through upcoming correspondence exchanges.



Operationalization of ECO Reinsurance Company



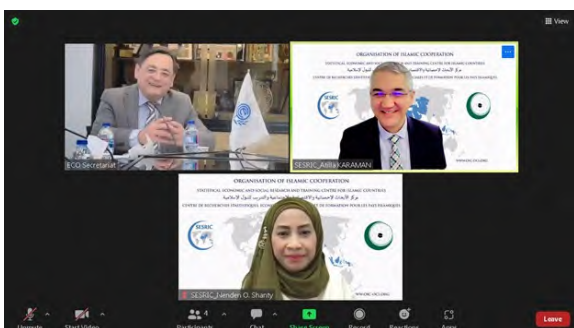
On 6 February 2023, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Secretariat hosted a hybrid meeting to discuss the activation of the ECO Reinsurance Company (ERC), attended by representatives from Iran, Pakistan, Türkiye, and the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB). ECO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Mohsen Esperri highlighted the Secretariat's efforts to enhance intra-regional trade and global trade share through initiatives in trade liberalization and facilitation, aligning with ECO Vision 2025. He mentioned the recent activation of the ECO Agreement on Protection and Promotion of Investment (APPI) and expressed hope that the ERC's operationalization would further promote growth and secure trade and investment in the region.

The meeting addressed technical challenges in launching the ERC, such as capital contribution payments, host country agreements, and drafting a regulatory framework. It was noted that nominations for the ERC's General Assembly and Board of Directors had been received, with additional nominations to be finalized soon. The meeting agreed to swiftly draft the regulatory framework with stakeholder inputs and scheduled the inaugural General Assembly and Board of Directors meetings to adopt company regulations within 60 days. The early activation of the ERC is anticipated to enhance investor and trader confidence through a regional regulatory insurance/re-insurance framework, fostering a more secure trade and investment environment in the region.

ECO-SESRIC Talks



During an online meeting on 6 February 2023, between ECO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Jandos Asanov and Dr. Atilla Karaman, Director of the Statistics and Information Department at SESRIC, discussions were held about organizing joint events. The parties agreed to plan training courses on "International Trade Statistics and Balance of Payments" and "SDG 13 (Climate Action) Indicators." They will finalize the event agendas and schedule suitable dates through forthcoming correspondence exchanges.



16th International Tourism Exhibition



An ECO delegation led by Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Jandos Asanov participated in the opening ceremony of the 16th Tehran International Tourism and Industries Exhibition at Tehran International Permanent Fairground, with Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts, H.E. Mr. Ezzatollah Zarghami, also in attendance.

The event, held from 7-10 February 2023, featured diplomats and guests from abroad and locally. After the opening, the Minister highlighted Ardabil, chosen as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2023 at the Third ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Khujand, Tajikistan on 4 October 2019.

Additionally, on the event's sidelines, ECO Secretariat delegates held bilateral meetings with officials from Iranian provinces like Ardabil, Zanjan, Tabriz, and Golestan to discuss tourism potential and ways to enhance tourism cooperation among ECO Member States.

ECO Science Foundation's Fifth Board of Trustees Meeting



On 14 February 2023, in Isfahan, Iran, the ECO Science Foundation's Fifth Board of Trustees Meeting was held, featuring ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri. Chaired by Iran's Science Minister H.E. Mr. Mohammad Ali Zolfigol, the meeting focused on the vital role of scientific research and innovation in driving economic growth and trade. Minister Zolfigol highlighted the need for increased efforts by the ECO and its agencies, especially the ECO Science Foundation, to improve scientific collaboration across the region, addressing the mismatch between trade volume and the region's potential.

Ambassador Noziri emphasized the need for enhanced scientific research and innovation among ECO Member States, highlighting the region's significant economic and demographic capabilities. He called for strong support for the ECO Science Foundation to benefit the wider region. The meeting also reviewed the Foundation's progress, evaluated actions taken since the last BoT meeting, and discussed the ratification of the ECOSF Charter and additional protocols, alongside administrative and financial issues.



National Geosciences Rock Congress and Mineral Exhibition in Tehran

An ECO delegation led by Dr. Husnu Tekin, Director for HRSD and Energy, Minerals & Environment, participated in the 41st National Geosciences Rock Congress and Mineral Exhibition hosted by the Geological Survey of Iran. During the event, which ran from 19-22 February 2023, ECO Secretariat delegates and officials from the Geological Survey of Iran engaged in discussions on projects and initiatives to enhance cooperation in the minerals sector.



13th Governing Board Meeting of RCUWM



On 23 February 2023, an ECO delegation led by Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri attended the 13th Governing Board Meeting of the Regional Centre on Urban Water Management (RCUWM), held under UNESCO's auspices in Tehran, with Iran's Energy Minister H.E. Ali Akbar Mehrabian chairing the event. The meeting focused on sustainable water management, water security, environmental conservation, water diplomacy, and developing strategies to address climate change. It attracted high-level representatives from regional countries and international organizations.

Ambassador Noziri emphasized the critical role of sustainable water management and resource conservation in the region, praising the RCUWM's efforts in advancing studies, projects, and capacity-building initiatives on a regional and international scale. The meeting also aimed to outline the RCUWM's objectives and new initiatives, identifying priorities for current and future sustainable water management plans.



273rd CPR Meeting



The 273rd Meeting of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) convened on 27 February 2023, at the ECO Headquarters in Tehran, chaired by Ambassador Ali Alizade, the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan. The meeting focused on reviewing the organization's development and progress, including deliberations on the outcomes of the 26th COM Meeting held in Tashkent. Additionally, participants examined the ECO Work Program and Calendar of Events for 2023, aiming to prioritize the organization's key activities for the year.



Japanese Students Visit ECO



On 28 February 2023, Japanese university students visited the ECO Secretariat, a visit facilitated by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and the School of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran. The purpose was to acquaint the exchange students with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri extended a warm welcome to the group, providing an insightful briefing on the organization's foundation, objectives, organizational structure, and operational mechanisms.

During their visit, the students received detailed presentations on the ECO's sectoral activities, particularly in trade and investment by Mr. Zahid Hussain Abbasi, and in transport and communications by Mr. Uktam Shomurotov. These sessions aimed to deepen the students' understanding of the ECO's role and initiatives in regional cooperation. A question-and-answer session followed, offering the students an opportunity to engage directly with ECO officials and gain further insights into the organization's work and impact.

ECO Secretary General Calls on Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan



On 1-3 March 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri visited Baku to attend the NAM Contact Group Summit on Post-Pandemic Global Recovery. He met with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister and ECO Council of Ministers Chair, H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, to discuss Azerbaijan's 2023 ECO Chairmanship theme, "Year of Green Transition and Interconnectivity" highlighting the country's focus on regional cooperation and environmental sustainability. Minister Bayramov appreciated Ambassador Noziri's summit participation, noting its significance in addressing post-pandemic recovery, especially for developing nations.

Ambassador Noziri praised Azerbaijan's ECO Chairmanship theme, emphasizing its role in promoting regional connectivity and environmental sustainability. He pledged full support for Azerbaijan's efforts towards regional development and integration. Additionally, the discussions highlighted the importance of multilateralism and increasing cooperation among ECO Member States under Azerbaijan's leadership. Both parties agreed on the need for proactive measures to further the ECO's objectives and boost its international profile, showcasing their shared dedication to economic development and regional cooperation.

Khwarizmi International Award Ceremony

The Khwarizmi International Award (KIA) ceremony took place at the IRIB International Conference Hall on 27 February 2023, with Iran's President, H.E. Mr. Ebrahim Raisi, and the Minister of Science, H.E. Mr. Mohammad-Ali Zolfigol, in attendance. Representing the ECO Secretariat was Mr. Sukhrob Mirzoaliev, Head of Section for Coordination and Follow-up. The KIA, awarded annually by the Iranian President and organized by the Iranian Research Organization for Science and Technology (IROST), recognizes 20 researchers (10 senior and 10 young) for their significant contributions to science and technology through invention, innovation, and research. The award aims to honor and motivate individuals making notable advancements in these fields.



ECO Attends NAM Contact Group Meeting



On 2 March 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri attended the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Contact Group Summit on Post-Pandemic Global Recovery in Baku, alongside Heads of State/Government, Foreign Ministers, and international organization leaders. During the Summit, chaired by Azerbaijani President H.E. Ilham Aliyev, the significance of NAM in combating contemporary neo-colonialism and advocating for increased representation of NAM countries in global institutions was highlighted. The discussions focused on achieving Sustainable Development Goals, reforming multilateralism, addressing socio-economic challenges, and narrowing the gap between developed and developing countries.

Ambassador Noziri praised Azerbaijan's NAM chairmanship (2019-2023) and the Summit's organization. He addressed the profound impacts of COVID-19 on global health, economies, trade, and the disproportionate effects on vulnerable populations, underscoring the importance of multilateralism and south-south cooperation as remedies to these challenges. Noziri also proposed institutionalizing ties between the ECO and NAM to enhance inter-organizational cooperation.



Tajik Diplomats Visit ECO Secretariat



On 5 March 2023, a delegation of young Tajik diplomats, engaged in a training program at the School of International Relations (IPIS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, visited the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). The visit was part of their curriculum to gain a deeper understanding of ECO's role and activities in regional cooperation. They were briefed by ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, who introduced them to the history, structure, and primary objectives of the organization.

During their visit, the young diplomats received presentations on ECO's sectoral operations from senior officials: Mr. Zahid Hussain Abbasi (Trade & Investment), Mr. Akbar Khodaei (Transport and Communications) and Mr. Husnu Tekin (Human Resources and Sustainable Development). These sessions provided them with a comprehensive understanding of ECO's initiatives to foster regional integration and cooperation.



SCO Secretary General Visits ECO Secretariat

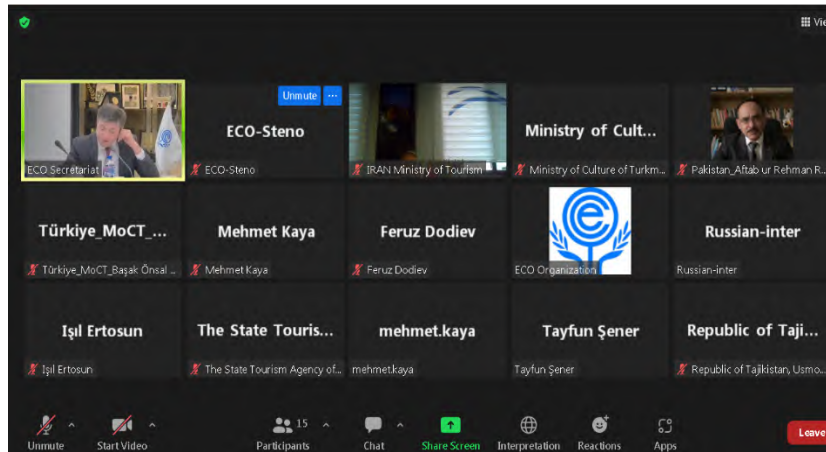


On 7 March 2023, the Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), H.E. Mr. Zhang Ming, visited the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Secretariat. ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, welcomed him and reflected on their first meeting during the Dushanbe Water Process Conference in June 2022, discussing the potential for collaboration between the ECO and SCO, especially considering the shared membership of key regional countries.

Ambassador Noziri updated Mr. Ming on recent ECO developments, notably the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers in Tashkent and Azerbaijan's declaration of 2023 as the “Year of Green Transition and Interconnectivity”. He also highlighted ECO's ongoing projects and its efforts to enhance outreach and visibility, expressing a desire for reciprocal observer status between ECO and SCO.

The SCO Secretary General appreciated ECO's contributions to regional economic development and cooperation and expressed openness to strengthening ties in areas such as trade, transport, energy, and the environment. He mentioned the upcoming SCO Summit, scheduled to be hosted virtually by India on 4 July 2023. To further solidify the relationship between the two organizations, Mr. Ming extended an invitation to Ambassador Noziri to visit the SCO Secretariat in Beijing at his earliest convenience.

ECO Secretariat Organizes a High-Level Expert Group Meeting on Tourism



On 6 March 2023, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) hosted a virtual High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting, focusing on the implementation of the ECO Roadmap for accelerating the recovery and ensuring the safe and sustainable development of tourism post-COVID-19.

Representatives from Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan participated in this critical discussion. ECO's Director for Tourism, Mr. Jasur Rajabov, opened the meeting by highlighting the vital role of tourism in the region's economic growth and development. He referenced commitments from the 15th ECO Summit leadership, underlining concerted efforts towards a swift post-pandemic tourism recovery through a strategic roadmap addressing the sector's immediate needs.

The meeting led to the recommendation of a draft framework for implementing the roadmap, which will be circulated among Member States for feedback. Additionally, discussions covered the formation of a Monitoring Committee tasked with quarterly reviews to oversee and coordinate the roadmap's execution. This committee is set to play a key role in ensuring effective collaboration among Member States, facilitating the smooth progression of the roadmap's initiatives towards revitalizing the region's tourism sector in the aftermath of COVID-19.



ECO Secretary General Participates in the Food Security Conference

On 10 March 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri virtually attended the International Conference on Food Security amid Climate Change, co-hosted by Turkmenistan's Ministry of Agriculture and the FAO. He emphasized the urgent need for food security and better nutrition as key to sustainable development, highlighting the threats climate change poses to agriculture and livelihoods. Ambassador Noziri advocated for prompt measures to make agricultural systems more resilient.



Ambassador Noziri also underscored ECO's dedication to Sustainable Development Goal 2, Zero Hunger, aiming for increased food security, health, and welfare. He mentioned that the ECO Secretariat, in collaboration with the ECO Regional Coordination Center for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS) and FAO, has updated the ECO Regional Program for Food Security (ECO-RPFS) to reflect the post-pandemic context. This update marks a significant step towards its implementation phase, focusing on boosting the resilience of ECO Member States against future challenges.



Turkmenistan: 300 Years of National Poet Magtymguly Fragi



Throughout the history of Turkmenistan, there have been many outstanding, legendary personalities who, in the most difficult moments of peoples' life became a spiritual healer of all vulnerable hearts and the entire human soul. One of them was the great Turkmen poet Magtymguly Fragi, who left an indelible mark not only in the history of the Turkmen people, but also in all world with his invaluable literary heritage.

Magtymguly is an outstanding poet and the founder of Turkmen literature. His works, which are an excellent example of Turkmen classical literature, include preserved copies of manuscripts of his works, which were widely distributed on the territory of Turkmenistan in the XVIII-XIX centuries and abroad. He belonged to the category of truly folk poets, who were nurtured by the people themselves, in his poems the joys and the sorrows of his native people took a unique form. The poet's thoughts, expressed in the poems served as an impulse for the emergence of progressive ideas, the main of which is unification of tribes and creation of single Turkmen state.

Fragi's works played a major role in the development of the didactic line in Türkmen poetry, long served as a model for poets of subsequent centuries, such as Seyitnazar Seydi, Gurbandurdy Zelili and Mammetveli Kemine, who like Magtymguly began to create, going beyond the narrow limits of conventions in the poetry of the XVIII century. The poets Mollanepes, Magrupy and Mataji became a faithful followers and continuers of the traditions of the poetic heritage of Magtymguly.



It should be noted, that the poems of Magtymguly are a chronological encyclopedia, which systematically and in detail describes the political and economic events that took place in the second half of the XVIIIth century on the territory of Turkmenistan and its neighboring countries. Therefore, it is difficult to comprehend the events of that period, without studying the literature heritage of Magtymguly.

The XVIIIth century fell on the most difficult period in the history of Turkmenistan.

Serving Humanity For Him Is Freedom. He Is The Language And The Syllable-The Speech Of Turkmen People. Honoring The Sacred Eternal Will Of The Fount Of Wisdom Of Magtymguly Fragi.

Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov - National Leader Of The Turkmen People, Chairman Of The Halk Maslakhaty Of Turkmenistan.

It was in such a hopelessly difficult period, like a lighthouse in a dark world, that Magtymguly was born and showed his compatriots a way out into a bright future. He was the first among the predecessors, to have a powerful, defiant voice, openly speaking out against the enemies not only of his people, but also the peoples of the entire region.

At the same time, Magtymguly is not the only famous poet for Turkmens, he also became a favorite for many peoples of the world. His poems are an inexhaustible source from which the people draw life-giving wisdom. His poems sound like an anthem of humanism, patriotism, unity and cohesion, they have become a reference point and a model for scientists and poets of many countries.

The content of Magtymguly's poems goes far beyond the usual themes in the poetry of Near and Middle East, where socio-political motives play an important role. He managed to rise above tribal prejudices and called to unification of Turkmen tribes to fight against foreign enslavers, to create a single Turkmen state. In this matter, he differs strongly from his predecessors, possessing a significant political outlook and free-thinking worldview.

The poet managed to inspire the people to fight for justice, equality and freedom, which is the very core for both classical Turkmen literature and the entire of progressive spiritual culture of the Turkish speaking world. This is Magtymguly's historical merit and heritage, thanks to which the Turkmen people were able to survive and preserve their native lands. That's why Magtymguly's poems gained national fame during the poet's lifetime. They sold like freshly hot baked bread on a tandoor, "without even having time to cool down".

An invaluable role was played by the poet's relatives, such as Ak Ishan, Gara Ishan, Gyzyt Akhun, as well as numerous keepers of his poems, including Nurmamed Oraz ogly from Kizilatreka, Agadurdy Begjan ogly, Abdulla Tejen akhun from Kumushdepe, Goch Gadym ogly, Juma Kerim, Sapar Yalkap ogly and many others, who managed to collect and to preserve the poet's poems for many years, in order to pass them on to the present and future generations in a complete state.

The Turkmen folk singers (bakhshi) such as Gambar bakhshi, Garadali Goklen, Muhy bakhshi, Palta bakhshi, Gurban bakhshi, who played an important role in preserving and spreading the literature heritage of poet and possessing a phenomenal memory, contributed to transmission the Magtymguly's poems from generation to generation absolutely in unchanged content.



Turkmen scientists Akhundov Gurganli, Mati Kosayev, Baymukhammet Garriyev and Annagurban Ashirov made a huge contribution to the collection, research and promotion of the poet's work, and foreign researchers such as A. Khodzko-Boreyko A. Vamberi, I.N. Berezin, Louis Bazin, Yusup Azmun, F. Bakulin and many others. As a result of the collected materials, the first collection of Magtymguly's poems was published in Ashgabat in 1926.

During the years of independence of Turkmenistan, as a result of research works carried out by Turkmen scientists, a number of valuable works of Magtymguly were found, stored in manuscripts centers of Hungary, St. Petersburg and Tashkent.

Nowadays, the significance of the great thinker's work has gone beyond the national framework of time and culture and has become an integral part of regional and world literature.

About 300 years separates us from the time, when Magtymguly lived and worked, but the memory of him lives in the minds of people so that any of them can undoubtedly distinguish the voice of their favorite poet among millions. The invaluable merit of Magtymguly lies in the fact that his poems describe the stages of personal socialization, they have become a mirror of the nation, reflecting its spiritual past, present and future. Therefore, even today, the Turkmen people take special care of the memory and literary heritage of their beloved poet.

The last many years, thanks to the tireless care of National leader of Turkmen people, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the work of the great thinker Magtymguly Fragi is going beyond the national framework of time and culture, it has become an integral part of regional and world literature.

Nowadays, under the wise leadership of the esteemed President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, wide opportunities are created in our country to familiarize the peoples of the country with Turkmen literature, culture, art and national traditions, which favorably contributes to strengthening cultural and humanitarian ties between countries and peoples, studying the priceless heritage of outstanding personalities like Magtymguly Fragi, who left an unfading trace in the history of mankind.

Collection of manuscripts of Magtymguly Fragi inscribed on UNESCO's Memory of the World Register on 24th May, 2024. On 21th November, the 300th anniversary of the birth of Magtymguly Fragi was included in the calendar of memorable dates to be celebrated jointly with UNESCO in 2024-2025. All these events are confirming the high authority of the Turkmen poet in the international literary arena.

The announcement of 2024 in the International Organization of Turkic culture (TURKSOY) as "Year of the great poet and thinker of the Turkic world Magtymguly Fragi" is evidence of the international recognition of the work of the great Turkmen poet.

In this context, called "The Fount of Wisdom of Magtymguly Fragi" the new year 2024 promises to be a year of widespread popularization in the world of the literary and philosophical heritage of the great Turkmen poet, who became the healer of all hearts and the entire of human soul.

ECO Secretary General and ECI President Jointly Inaugurate a Nowruz

On 13 March 2023, the ECO Culture Institute in Tehran hosted a Nowruz Ceremony, inaugurated by ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri and ECI President Mr. Murodjon Buriboev. The event saw participation from Ambassadors of ECO Member States such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, as well as diplomats, local dignitaries, and guests.



At the event, Ambassador Noziri emphasized Nowruz's historical and cultural importance, noting its role in renewing humanity's values and promoting peace and friendship across cultures, coinciding with the Persian New Year. He also highlighted the ECO region's values of benevolence, harmony, and peaceful coexistence. The ceremony included a photo exhibition and a display of regional handicrafts, showcasing Nowruz's significance in ECO Member States.

ECO Delegation Participates in Inauguration of Earthquake Risk Management Center

An Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) delegation, led by the HRSD directorate, attended the inauguration of the "Regional Educational and Research Center (RERC) on Earthquake Risk Management and Resilience for West and Central Asia" on 14 March 2023.

The ceremony took place at the International Research Institute of Seismology and Earthquake Engineering, drawing participation from RERC academics, staff, host country officials, UN office personnel in Iran, and representatives from Western and Central Asian countries.



Funded by UNESCO, the RERC's mission is to support regional governments in crafting and executing a comprehensive strategy for earthquake risk mitigation. This includes hazard identification, construction of resilient structures, and the provision of educational programs to enhance public awareness and specialized knowledge on earthquake risk management. The center also aims to foster international collaboration through joint educational projects and activities related to earthquake preparedness.



New Turkish Permanent Representative Presents Credentials at ECO Secretariat



On 16 March 2023, H.E. Professor Hicabi Kırlangıç, the newly appointed Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Permanent Representative to the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), visited the ECO Secretariat. The visit was to officially present his letter of credence to ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri.

During the meeting, Secretary General Noziri extended a warm welcome to Ambassador Kırlangıç, congratulating him on his new role and discussing the ECO's current agenda, activities, and organizational structure. Ambassador Kırlangıç expressed his gratitude and assured the Secretary General of his full cooperation and support in enhancing collaboration among ECO Member States for improved economic integration within the region.



Governor of the Ardabil Province Visits ECO Secretariat

On 3 April 2023, Ardabil Province Governor Seyed Hamed Ameli and his delegation visited the ECO Secretariat, highlighting joint efforts for sustainable tourism in the region.

In their meeting, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri commended Governor Ameli for Ardabil's designation as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2023, discussing its potential to boost tourism. He stressed on intensifying promotional activities to elevate Ardabil's profile globally and acknowledged the region's potential as a worldwide tourist destination, reinforcing ECO's dedication to tourism development post-COVID-19.



Governor Ameli detailed Ardabil's cultural and natural heritage and its upcoming launch as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2023. Ambassador Noziri

proposed linking Ardabil's tour operators with the ECO Tour Operators Network to attract regional tourists. Governor Ameli welcomed this idea and invited the Secretary General to the launch ceremony, enhancing regional tourism collaboration.



Bulgarian Ambassador Visits ECO Secretariat



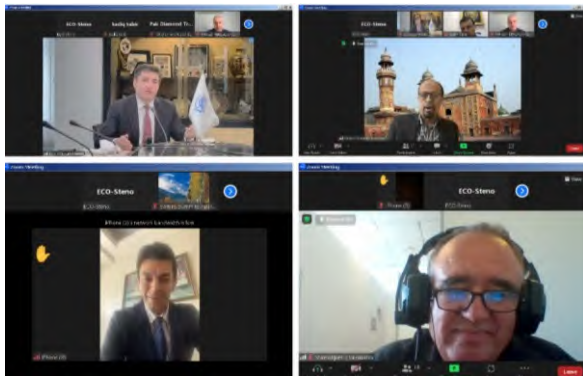
On 5 April 2023, Bulgarian Ambassador to Iran, H.E. Ms. Nikolina Kuneva, visited the ECO Secretariat where Secretary General Mr. Khusrav Noziri briefed her on the organization's activities and priorities, focusing on improving the regional transport sector.

Ambassador Noziri discussed Bulgarian companies' interest in ECO's connectivity projects, such as the ITI Corridor, and outlined the organization's strategy to expand its transport networks internationally. He also updated Ambassador Kuneva on ECO's collaborative efforts in various sectors, including trade and transport, emphasizing the warm reception of Bulgarian companies' participation in the ITI Corridor at the latest ECO Regional Planning Council meeting.

Ambassador Nikolina praised ECO for promoting regional economic development and its willingness to collaborate with Bulgaria. She was optimistic her visit would boost cooperation and dialogue between ECO and Bulgaria, also mentioning the potential for diversifying their bilateral relationship.

ECO Tour Operators Meet Virtually

The 2nd Meeting of the ECO Tour Operators Network took place virtually on 12 April 2023. The session focused on proposals for the network's early operationalization, enhancing communication among tour operators, promoting tourism packages, and facilitating travel visas. The possibility of monthly meetings to strengthen collaboration was also discussed.



Initiated by ECO's Tourism Director, Mr. Jasur Rajabov, the meeting underscored the network's role in boosting regional tourism. Newly joined operators from Iran, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan brought the membership total to approximately 350.



Romanian Ambassador Visits ECO Secretariat

On 18 April 2023, the Romanian Ambassador to Iran, H.E. Mrs. Mirela-Carmen Greco, visited the ECO Secretariat. ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, briefed her on ECO's key activities and its expanding engagement with regional and international organizations across various sectors including trade and energy.

The Ambassador expressed interest in strengthening ties between ECO and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), with discussions on potential cooperation areas. Ambassador Noziri suggested drafting a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize this collaboration. Notably, both Türkiye and Azerbaijan are members of ECO and BSEC, the latter being established in 1992 with 13 member states, including Romania.

First ECO Tourism Standardization Working Group Meeting

The inaugural Meeting of the Working Group on Tourism Standardization convened virtually on 18 April 2023, led by Azerbaijan and attended by tourism representatives from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, and the ECO Secretariat. Director for Tourism, Mr. Jasur Rajabov, highlighted ECO Vision 2025's focus on adopting unified tourism standards, creating standardization bodies, and monitoring green tourism.

The session explored the development of regional quality standards for sustainable tourism and service improvement. Participants exchanged insights on their countries' tourism standardization practices and discussed enhancing cooperation with international tourism organizations to fulfill ECO Vision 2025 objectives.



ECO Participates in the Ad-hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation of OTIF



The 4th Session of the OTIF Ad-hoc Committee on Legal Affairs and International Cooperation convened virtually on 19 April 2023, with participation from OTIF Member States, UNECE, and other international and railway authorities.

ECO's Director of Transport and Communication, Mr. Akbar Khodaei, outlined ECO's railway transport projects, activities, and the ongoing collaboration with OTIF. He emphasized the significance of transport corridors linking East Asia with Europe through Central Asia and proposed enhancing policy mechanisms for maximizing the railway sector's potential. OTIF, established in 1893 and comprising 50 Member States plus one Associate Member, recognized ECO as a Standing Observer in May 2022, reflecting its commitment to international rail cooperation.

ECO and UN Forum on Forests Conduct Virtual Meeting



On 25 April 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri conducted a virtual meeting with Ms. Juliette Biao Koudenoukpo, Director of the United Nations Forum on Forests Secretariat (UNFFS), attended by representatives from ECO's Energy, Minerals and Environment Directorate and the UNFFS. The session focused on enhancing cooperation between ECO and UNFFS in areas of shared interest.

Ambassador Noziri emphasized the region's urgent environmental and climate challenges, highlighting their priority within ECO. He noted ECO Vision 2025's focus on sustainability and the Secretariat's dedication to crafting strategies for environmental collaboration, underlining a strong interest in strengthening relations with UNFFS.



— GLOBAL —
FOREST
— GOALS —

Ms. Koudenoukpo pledged full support to enhance the partnership between the organizations, highlighting upcoming events on forests and climate change as key to strengthening collaboration. She suggested more technical discussions to further these efforts. Both sides viewed the meeting as a crucial step towards solid collaboration, eager to continue dialogue for a practical cooperation framework.

ECO Secretary General Meets the Governor of Ardabil

On 26 April 2023, alongside the ceremony proclaiming Ardabil as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri met with Ardabil's Governor, Mr. Seyed Hamed Ameli. Ambassador Noziri expressed gratitude for Ardabil's hospitality and congratulated the Governor on the city's



selection, viewing the upcoming ECO Tourism Ministerial Meeting in Ardabil as a chance to boost the province's tourism. He emphasized that selecting tourism capitals highlights ECO cities' attractions and announced plans for special programs to showcase the region's tourism potential.

Governor Ameli showcased Ardabil's unique attractions, noting its status as a hub with over 11 registered sites and annual visits from over 5 million tourists. He expressed eagerness for enhanced cooperation with ECO Member States throughout 2023 to further develop Ardabil's tourism sector. The meeting took place at the historic Sheikh Safial-Din Khānegāh and Shrine Ensemble, marking a significant occasion for both parties.



Ardabil: ECO Tourism Capital 2023



Ardabil, Iran, was declared the ECO Tourism Capital for 2023 in a ceremony on 27 April 2023, with attendees including Iran's Tourism Minister Mr. Ezzatollah Zarghami, Governor Mr. Seyed Hamed Ameli, ambassadors, diplomats, and the ECO Secretary General. Governor Ameli highlighted Ardabil's strategic importance in tourism and its role as a cultural and economic bridge between Iran, ECO Member Countries, Russia, and the Caucasus, underscoring its Silk Road heritage.



ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri awarded a certificate to Ardabil, marking its designation as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2023. He praised the ECO region's rich cultural heritage, including 74 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and Ardabil's unique natural beauty, historical significance, and its tradition in silk and

carpet trade.



The event also featured discussions on boosting regional tourism cooperation among ECO Member States, with visits to local attractions like Heyran Tourism Village, the Sheikh Safi al-Din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble (a World Heritage Site), Shorabil Lake, and a Nomadic Encampment. Minister Zarghami lauded the selection of Ardabil and highlighted

tourism's role in fostering international cultural exchanges.



ECO Secretary General Participates in the Constitutional Referendum of Uzbekistan

As an International Observer, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri attended Uzbekistan's national referendum on constitutional amendments on 30 April 2023. During his visit, Ambassador Noziri held meetings with Uzbekistan's Minister of Transport, H.E. Mr. Ilkhom Mahkamov, and Deputy Minister of Energy, Mr. Akmal Jumanazarov.



With the Minister of Transport, discussions focused on regional transport and communications, particularly on developing corridors to enhance connectivity. They also touched on the upcoming 12th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport in Uzbekistan in 2023.

In conversations with the Deputy Minister of Energy, the emphasis was on the importance of energy cooperation among ECO Member States. They explored key energy initiatives like the ECO Clean Energy Center, Regional Electricity Market, and Regional Energy Strategy, alongside preparations for the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy, scheduled in Uzbekistan for May 18-19, 2023.

ECO Delegation Participates in 27th Geomatics Engineering Conference and Exhibition



An ECO delegation led by Dr. Husnu Tekin, Acting Director for Energy, Minerals & Environment, participated in the 27th National Conference and Exhibition on Geomatics Engineering, hosted by Iran's National Cartographic Center in Tehran on 1-4 May 2023.

During the opening, Dr. Ali Javidaneh, the Center's Director General, highlighted the use of coastal and offshore hydrography in the Persian Gulf and UAVs for mapping, also mentioning the Center's efforts to export its services internationally. Discussions between the ECO Secretariat and the National Cartographic Center focused on cartography cooperation, agreeing to organize regular courses and meetings to enhance regional expertise in this field.

IOM Chief of Mission Visits ECO Secretariat

On 4 May 2023, the IOM Chief of Mission in Iran, H.E. Ms. Lalini Veerassamy, visited the ECO Secretariat. ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri welcomed her, acknowledging IOM's significant contributions to migration issues. He briefed her on ECO's operations and noted that Türkiye, Pakistan, and Iran are among the top refugee-and-migrant hosting nations globally.



The meeting focused on migration-related discussions and the activation of the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between ECO and IOM. Both parties considered initiating joint projects targeting climate change, human resources, and sustainable development. It's noted that all ECO member countries are also members of the IOM, which includes 178 member states.

ECO Tourism Directorate Meets with Iranian Tour Operator

On 10 May 2023, the ECO Tourism Directorate engaged with the Iranian tour operator, Iran Markaz. Mr. Jasur Rajabov, ECO's Director for Tourism, introduced the initiatives and activities of the ECO Tour Operators Network to the guest.



The discussion focused on strategies to elevate the ECO Region as a premier tourism destination, enhancing private sector and community participation in tourism. They explored ideas for the inaugural ECO International Tourism Market Fair, facilitating business-to-business interactions among private tourism entities from ECO Member Countries, and creating joint tour packages to boost tourist arrivals in the region.



IFRC Delegation Visits ECO

On 14 May 2023, the IFRC Delegation Head, Mr. Atta Muhammad Murtaza Durrani, visited the ECO Secretariat for discussions with Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri. Their dialogue focused on disaster risk management strategies, including data analysis and the collaborative roles of IFRC and Iran's Red Crescent in managing regional emergencies and disasters. They also examined economic impacts of such disasters.

Mr. Durrani suggested organizing a high-level meeting involving representatives from all ten ECO member states to further discuss these issues. Ambassador Noziri, recognizing disaster management as a critical area for ECO, endorsed the idea of collaboration. He highlighted the significance of the Iran Red Crescent's work and proposed a joint ECO-IFRC meeting as an effective platform for enhancing cooperation.



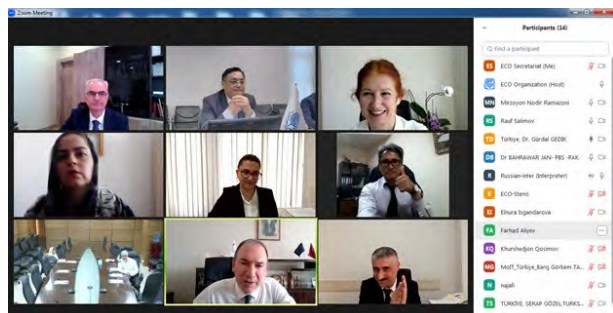
ECO Holds the 9th Meeting of High Level Experts Group on Statistics

The 9th Meeting of the High-Level Experts Group on Statistics took place virtually on 16 May 2023, led by Mr. Rauf Salimov, Deputy Chairman of Azerbaijan's State Statistical Committee. Mr. Salimov outlined Azerbaijan's priorities for its 2023 ECO Chairmanship, while member state representatives discussed statistical developments and advocated for enhanced statistical cooperation within ECO.

ECO Deputy Secretary General Amb. Jandos Asanov highlighted upcoming international training events organized in

Partnership with ECO, UN SIAP, and SESRIC. The Secretariat also reviewed the ECO Annual Economic Report for 2021 and updated on the progress of the 2022 report, which emphasizes agriculture and food security.

Additionally, the meeting approved the draft agenda for the 7th Meeting of the Heads of National Statistics Offices scheduled for September 2023.



ECO Secretary General Attends 79th ESCAP Session

At the 79th session of ESCAP in Bangkok on 16 May 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri emphasized the urgency of enhancing environmental and climate change cooperation in Asia and the Pacific. Advocating for the establishment of shared priorities for regional climate action, he highlighted the importance of addressing the global challenge, acknowledging historical responsibilities, and adhering to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR).

Ambassador Noziri discussed the challenges of transitioning to low-carbon growth in a region reliant on fossil fuels, stressing the need for a fair and inclusive approach. He called for substantial support, including technical and financial assistance, to ensure a just transition. He also underscored the necessity of sustainable climate finance, capacity-building for developing countries, and access to appropriate technologies, arguing that market-based solutions alone are insufficient for effective climate action.



ECO Holds High Level Working Group Meeting on Health



On 17 May 2023, an ECO delegation headed by Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli attended a Virtual High-Level Working Group Meeting on Health. Chaired by Azerbaijan's Deputy Health Minister Dr. Nadir Zeynalov and including WHO representatives, the session prepared for the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Health in Geneva on May 24, focusing on healthcare, natural disaster response, and pandemic preparedness within the ECO Region's Health Cooperation Plan.

Dr. Zeynalov highlighted the need for sharing successful health reform experiences and addressing public health challenges, including emergency response and post-COVID-19 recovery. He also pointed out the broader issues facing ECO countries, such as healthcare challenges and the impact of natural and climate change-related disasters, referencing the recent earthquake in Türkiye.

Ambassador Bicakli emphasized enhancing ECO's role in the health sector to better manage crises, advocating for health reforms and stronger health protection through partnership strengthening and addressing new challenges. Dr. Husnu Tekin updated on progress within the 2021 ECO Plan of Action on Health Cooperation, and the meeting deliberated on a draft joint statement for the Geneva Ministerial Meeting.

ECO Holds the 5th Ministerial Meeting on Health

On 24 May 2023, alongside the 76th World Health Assembly in Geneva, the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Health took place, chaired by Azerbaijan's Health Minister, H.E. Dr. Teymur Musayev. Attended by ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrov Noziri, member state delegations, the ECO Secretariat, and observers, the meeting focused on enhancing regional health collaboration post-COVID-19. Minister Musayev emphasized the need for stronger prevention and preparedness to tackle future health challenges.



ECO Secretary General highlighted key actions for crisis resolution and future emergency prevention, including establishing a Regional Consultation Mechanism for communicable diseases, coordinating immediate responses to disease outbreaks, expanding health capacities, providing medical support to needy member states, and reinforcing supply chains to improve regional well-being and socio-economic activities.

Delegations at the meeting reviewed the ECO Health Action Plan, focusing on public health and emergency response improvements. They emphasized the need for enhanced cooperation, adaptation to challenges, and strategies for stronger health systems to avert future outbreaks. The discussions highlighted the necessity of increased regional collaboration to tackle healthcare, socio-economic, political, and environmental challenges for achieving common development objectives.

The session concluded with the finalization of the 5th Health Ministerial Declaration, set to be adopted following a 15-day silence procedure.

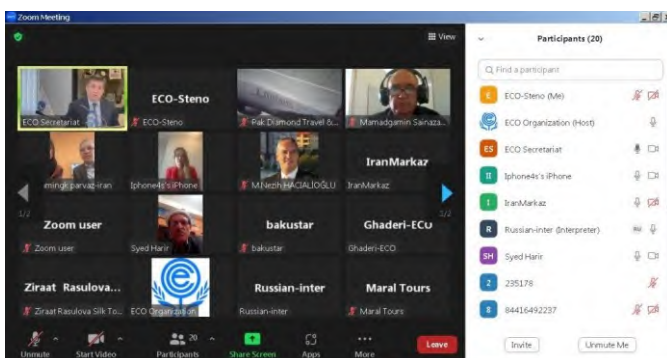
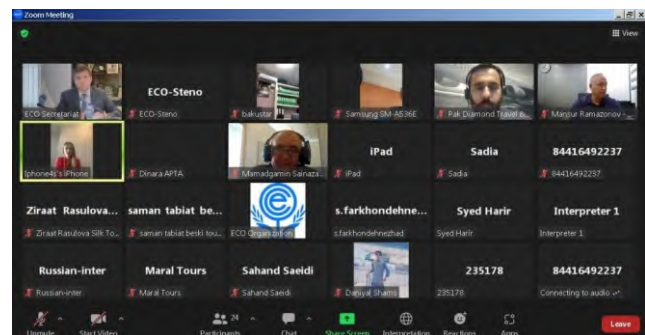
ECO Secretary General Congratulates Türkiye's President

ECO Secretary General Khusrav Noziri extended congratulations to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on his re-election in Türkiye. He expressed optimism for Türkiye's continued progress under President Erdoğan's leadership. In his congratulatory message, Noziri highlighted Türkiye's crucial role in ECO's establishment and its contributions towards the organization's socioeconomic goals. He also sought President Erdoğan's ongoing support for ECO's development and efforts to enhance regional economic integration.



ECO Tour Operators Network Holds its 3rd Meeting

The 3rd ECO Tour Operators Network Meeting occurred virtually on 29 May 2023, engaging network members and ECO Secretariat representatives. The goal was to enhance network communication and collaboration. The focus was on creating joint tour packages in ecotourism, Ziyarat, cultural, and Silk Road tourism. Operators will design their packages for network evaluation, with volunteer coordinators from member countries guiding the development of these joint proposals.



Additionally, strategies to boost regional tourism and promote ECO Member Countries as tourist destinations were explored. A new initiative was introduced whereby three tour operators will present their activities, tour packages, and introduce lesser-known tourist spots in their countries at each network meeting.

ECO Secretary General Meets with Iran's Deputy Minister and Customs Authority President

On 30 May 2023, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri visited Mr. Rezvanifar, Deputy Minister and President of the Customs Authority of Iran. The meeting focused on ECO's upcoming projects with Iran, emphasizing the importance of boosting inter-regional and international trade within ECO.

Both parties agreed to enhance regional trade through continued discussions on implementing the ECOTA agreement.

They also explored cooperation on electronic data exchange, customs procedure harmonization, eTIR implementation, TIRExB participation, improving border crossing points for transit facilitation, customs formalities relocation, and establishing a TIR Consultative Group.

Mr. Rezvanifar expressed strong support for these initiatives within the ECO framework and advocated for ongoing dialogue and regular meetings with the ECO Secretariat.



ECO Tourism Directorate Visits ECO- CCI

On 31 May 2023, ECO's Tourism Director, Mr. Jasur Rajabov, visited the ECO Chamber of Commerce in Tehran to discuss the untapped tourism potential of the ECO region, home to 74 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and rich Silk Road history. He presented initiatives like the ECO Tour Operators Network and the first Forum of ECO Heads of Tourism Associations, designed to boost regional tourism through private sector engagement.

Mr. Rajabov suggested increased ECO-CCI engagement in tourism through initiatives like creating a tourism product databank, reactivating the ECO-CCI Tourism Committee, and co-organizing a Tourism Investment Conference and the first ECO International Tourism Market Fair. Ms. Niloufar Assadi of ICCIMA showed support for these proposals and willingness to collaborate on projects such as B2B meetings for tour operators and influencer promotional trips. The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to strengthen their partnership to enhance regional tourism.



UNDRR Delegation Visits ECO

On 31 May 2023, ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, welcomed a UNDRR delegation led by Mr. Toscano-Rivalta, the Regional Chief for Asia and Pacific.



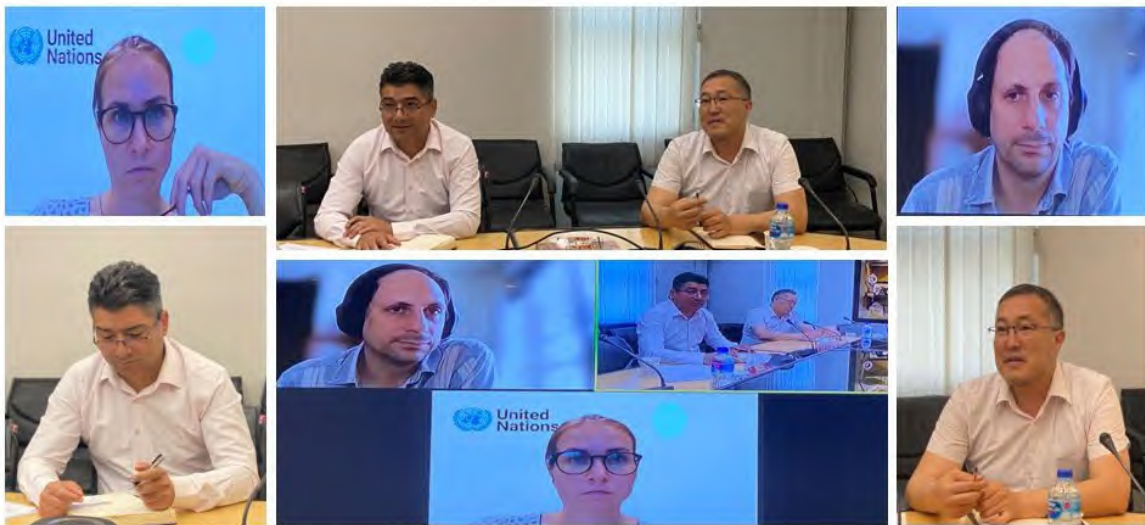
The meeting focused on ECO's priorities, particularly disaster risk reduction, and its observer status in the United Nations. Ambassador Noziri highlighted ECO's desire to enhance collaboration and coordination with UNDRR to achieve mutual goals.

Mr. Toscano-Rivalta referenced the UN General Assembly's recent political declaration, which reaffirms a commitment to mitigating disaster risk and enhancing resilience with a renewed sense of urgency. He indicated UNDRR's willingness to develop joint initiatives with ECO aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and supported ECO's agenda for regional and international cooperation.

Ambassador Noziri highlighted disaster risk management as a focal area for ECO and welcomed the suggestion for collaborative programs. He pointed out that ECO, being project oriented, is well positioned to collaborate with international partners to maximize collective efforts in exploring all possible avenues for action.



ECO Attends 2nd Asia-Pacific Forum on Power System Connectivity



The 2nd Asia-Pacific Regulatory Forum on Power System Connectivity, hosted virtually by UNESCAP on 6 June 2023, featured renewable energy experts from around the world. ECO was represented by Dr. Husnu Tekin, Director for HRSD/EME, and Mr. Ukubaev Mamatmusa Mamatazizovich, Energy Program Officer.

The forum focused on the integration of renewable energy, with experts delivering presentations on the necessity of regulatory cooperation to enhance renewable energy integration, alongside discussions on the challenges faced by countries and potential solutions.

Dr. Husnu Tekin outlined ECO's work on building a diverse and resilient energy framework, focusing on sustainable energy transition and clean energy adoption. He spotlighted the key initiative to establish a Regional Electricity Market and the crucial support from international partners for the project's success.

ECO hosts 2nd Tourism Standardization Meeting

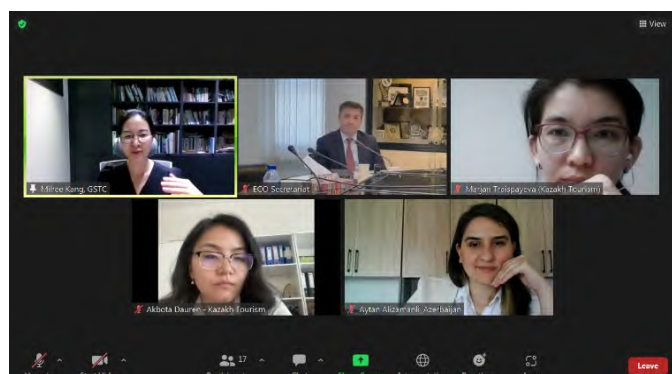
The 2nd Meeting of the Working Group on Tourism Standardization was held virtually on 6 June 2023. Mr. Jasur Rajabov, Director for Tourism at the ECO Secretariat, stressed the need for unified regional tourism standards to enhance the ECO region's standing as a premier global tourist destination.



At the meeting, Dr. Mihee Kang, Global Assurance and Asia-Pacific Director of the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), covered policy development, global standards adoption, and aligning ECO standards with international criteria. A Q&A session followed for Member States' representatives to provide feedback and ask questions.



The meeting addressed the incorporation of quality standards into regional tourism practices. Member States' representatives agreed to collaborate by sharing their respective national tourism standards to jointly develop standards for hotels and accommodations as an initial joint effort.



High-Level ITI Train Working Group Meets in Istanbul

During its 13th Session, the High-Level Working Group (HLWG) on the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) Train convened in Istanbul on 8 June 2023. Co-organized by the Republic of Türkiye and the ECO Secretariat, the meeting brought together delegations from Iran, Pakistan, and Türkiye, along with representatives from the ECO Trade and Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, and the private sector.



The Working Group delved into various aspects of the ITI Train, focusing on containerization, digitalization of procedures, and reviewing the operational status of the corridor. Discussions included mobilizing infrastructure development, potential financial support from ECO-TDB and IsDB, recent infrastructural advancements, rolling stock capacity, corridor rehabilitation efforts, establishment of a logistic center in Zahedan, station diversification, tariff considerations, timetable adjustments, multimodal transport integration, and interest from the Bulgarian private sector in the corridor.





ECO Delegation Joins World Handicrafts Day in Isfahan



A ceremony marking World Handicrafts Day and launching the National Expo on Handicrafts Industries was held in Isfahan, Iran on 11 June 2023. Minister Ezzatollah Zarghami from Iran's Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts presided over the event, with ECO's Director for Tourism, Mr. Jasur Rajabov, in attendance. Minister

Zarghami praised Isfahan for hosting the handicrafts week and highlighted Iran's efforts to create tourism-centric handicraft markets in major cities to attract more visitors. Subsequently, Minister Zarghami inaugurated the National Expo at Chehel Sotoun Palace Museum.

During the event, informal bilateral meetings were held between ECO delegates and officials from various Iranian provinces. Discussions centered on exploring tourism potential within these provinces and finding ways to enhance tourism cooperation among ECO Member States. The interactions aimed to foster collaboration and exchange ideas on leveraging the tourism resources of different regions to benefit all Member States involved in the ECO framework.



Joint Workshop on Statistics in Ankara

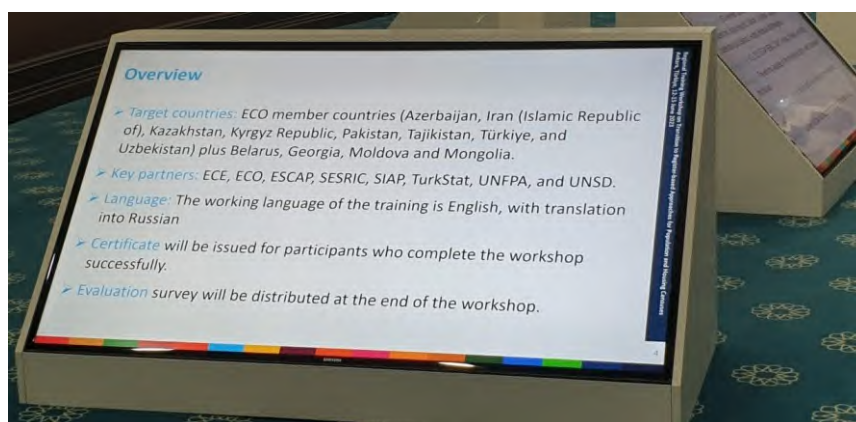
A Regional Training Workshop on Transition to Register-based Approaches for Population and Housing Censuses began in Ankara on 12 June 2023, concluding



on 15 June 2023. The workshop, a joint initiative by the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP), and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), with

support from various UN bodies and the Turkish Statistical Institute, aims to aid countries, especially ECO members such as Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, in transitioning to register-based census methodologies and utilizing administrative data for upcoming censuses.

The workshop's objectives include enhancing understanding of using population registers for vital statistics, exploring register-based census approaches, addressing transition challenges, applying a generic model for the shift, drafting transition scenarios, and facilitating knowledge exchange among participating countries. ECO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Jandos Asanov highlighted the fruitful collaboration with UN SIAP and SESRIC, expressing confidence in the workshop's positive impact on enhancing statistical services within ECO Member States. Certificates will be awarded to participants who successfully complete the workshop.



ECO Secretary General Meets Iran's Minister of Communications and

ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri visited the Minister of Communications and Information Technology of Iran, Mr. Isa Zarepour, on June 14, 2023. During the meeting, Ambassador Noziri emphasized Iran's crucial role in enhancing regional cooperation across various sectors and updated the Minister on ECO Secretariat's ICT activities. He discussed the upcoming Third Ministerial Meeting on ICT in Tehran on 12-13 July 2023, highlighting the Secretariat's commitment to ensuring its success.



Minister Zarepour praised ECO's efforts in promoting regional cooperation and expressed readiness to host the Ministerial Meeting. The discussions included the importance of the event in shaping the future roadmap for regional ICT collaboration. The meeting also addressed the need for increased ICT cooperation, digital market establishment, joint infrastructure development, collaborative efforts to tackle international challenges, and measures to protect families, women, and children from cyber threats.

Pakistan Foreign Secretary Visits ECO Secretariat



The Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, H.E. Dr. Asad Majeed Khan, accompanied by the Ambassador of Pakistan to Iran, H.E. Mr. Rahim Hayat Qureshi, visited the ECO Secretariat on 18

June 2023. ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri briefed them on the organization's agenda and activities, including updates on the upcoming ECO Summit and Council of Ministers Meeting, along with key events during the UN General Assembly Session in New York.

Foreign Secretary Asad Majeed Khan highlighted the untapped potential for cooperation within the ECO Region, emphasizing the need for ECO to bridge Member States' positions and leverage regional synergy for development. He expressed Pakistan's commitment to promoting multilateralism and supporting ECO's efforts for enhanced connectivity and cooperation among Member States, particularly in trade and customs. The meeting progressed with a working lunch where both sides agreed on the importance of strengthening ECO's role as a robust multilateral economic platform and increasing the organization's international visibility.



Serbian Ambassador Visits ECO

Ambassador Dr. Dragan Todorovic of Serbia visited ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri on 19 June 2023. During the meeting, Ambassador Noziri provided an overview of ECO's objectives, priority areas, major achievements, and organizational structure.

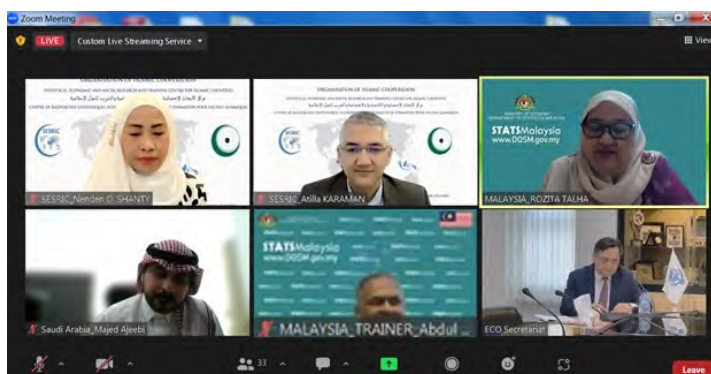


Both parties agreed to sustain their dialogue to explore avenues for enhancing economic cooperation between Serbia and the ECO.

International Trade Statistics Training

The Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Program's online training course on 'International Trade Statistics and Balance of Payments' commenced its first session on 20 June 2023, running until 22 June. This collaborative event is organized by the ECO Secretariat, SESRIC, and the Department of Statistics of Malaysia (DOSM), with support from the World Trade Organization (WTO), United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD), and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

In his opening address, ECO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Jandos Asanov emphasized the significance of cooperation with SESRIC and DOSM. He highlighted the



positive reception of previous courses in 2022 by the Regional Planning Council of ECO and expressed confidence in the current training course's substantial contribution to enhancing statistical services within ECO countries.

IOM Regional Director Visits ECO

Ms. Sarah Lou Arriol, the Asia and Pacific Regional Director of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), visited ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri on 21 June 2023. Ambassador Noziri acknowledged IOM's global role in addressing migration issues and emphasized the significance of migration for many ECO Member States, outlining it as a key priority for the Secretariat. ECO stands prepared to collaborate with IOM and other international organizations to develop effective projects addressing migration challenges.



Referring to the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between ECO and IOM, Ms. Arriol expressed a desire for enhanced cooperation through a comprehensive work plan jointly developed by both organizations. She proposed the organization of an international conference by migration-affected ECO countries in partnership with other stakeholders. Both parties demonstrated eagerness to expand their cooperation and activities, aiming to formulate tangible and actionable projects to address migration issues at regional and global level.



Meetings on Customs Cooperation and Trade Facilitation Strategy

The Republic of Türkiye hosted the 5th Meeting of the Committee on Customs Cooperation and the 1st Joint Working Group (JWG) Meeting on Trade Facilitation Strategy/ Agreement in Ankara on 21 -22 June 2023. The meetings aimed to enhance trade facilitation in the region through closer customs cooperation, focusing on boosting ECO's intra-regional and global trade. Participants recognized ECO's pivotal role in bridging capacity gaps among Member States to implement modern customs practices effectively, emphasizing the importance of digital and paperless procedures.



Delegations from Member States such as Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, and Türkiye, along with the ECO Director for Trade and Investment, attended the meeting in person. Representatives from Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Pakistan joined virtually. The discussions centered on finalizing the Draft Trade Facilitation Strategy for detailed deliberations in subsequent interactions, highlighting the commitment to advancing trade facilitation practices within the ECO region.

ECO Secretary General Holds Meeting with ETDB President

During his visit to Istanbul for the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of ECO Trade and Development Bank (ETDB), ECO Secretary General Amb. Khusrav Noziri met with ETDB President Mr. Yalçın Yüksel on 22 June 2022. The meeting focused on enhancing economic cooperation for sustainable regional development, underscoring the crucial role of ETDB in supporting ECO projects' implementation. Emphasizing the Ashgabat Consensus for Action's mandate, the discussions highlighted the need for active engagement by ECO and ETDB to facilitate smooth project implementation, enhance regional capacity and infrastructure, and boost the region's attractiveness for transit, trade, and investment. Secretary General Noziri also updated President Yüksel on the preparations for the upcoming 27th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers and the 16th Summit, to be hosted by Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, respectively.

These significant ECO gatherings will assess the Organization's activities, particularly focusing on its project-oriented approach to regional development.



ECO Secretary General Meets Turkmen Foreign Minister

During his visit to Turkmenistan to attend the inaugural ceremony of the newly constructed city of Arkadag, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri met with H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov, the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan on 28 June 2023. The discussions centered on enhancing ECO-Turkmenistan partnership and the importance of increased economic cooperation to foster greater connectivity and integration in the region. Both parties emphasized the necessity for intensified collaboration among member countries to facilitate regional development and economic growth amidst evolving global circumstances.



The meeting also highlighted joint promotion of regional cooperation in trade, transport, energy, tourism, and agriculture sectors. Additionally, preparations for the upcoming 27th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) and the 16th Summit were considered. Ambassador Noziri commended Turkmenistan for the impressive development of the new city of Arkadag, a model of modern urban planning. He also recognized Turkmenistan's significant contributions to global initiatives, particularly in advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. The Turkmen dignitary expressed full support for ECO and its role in sustainable regional economic development.



Inauguration of Newly Constructed Modern City of Arkadag

ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri visited Turkmenistan to attend the ceremony on 29 June 2023, marking the inauguration of the newly constructed city of Arkadag. The event was attended by distinguished individuals, including representatives of regional and international organizations, members of the diplomatic corps, and media personnel. The ceremony was graced by the presence of the Honourable President of Turkmenistan, H.E. Mr. Serdar Berdimuhamedov.



During the occasion, Ambassador Noziri presented a certificate of appreciation to recognize Arkadag as a model of modern urban development, showcasing optimized technologies, functions, and resources. He also acknowledged Turkmenistan's significant role in regional and global initiatives, particularly highlighting the country's proactive contributions towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.





Throughout the history of Turkmenistan, there have been many outstanding, legendary personalities who, in the most difficult moments of peoples' life became a spiritual healer of all vulnerable hearts and the entire human soul. One of them was the great Turkmen poet Magtymguly Fragi, who left an indelible mark not only in the history of the Turkmen people, but also in all world with his invaluable literary heritage.

As we mark the 300th birth anniversary of Magtymguly Fragi, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) proudly honors a poet whose timeless verses champion peace, unity, and humanism across the globe. Magtymguly, a luminary in Turkmen literature, intricately wove human emotions and societal ideals, reflecting ECO's mission of cultural unity and intellectual exchange. This commemoration not only pays homage to a legendary figure but also amplifies ECO's dedication to cultural enrichment and deepening camaraderie among nations. Through celebrating such luminaries, ECO affirms its commitment to bridging divides, embracing cultural diversity, and fostering a future of mutual respect and shared prosperity. Magtymguly's message of harmony and togetherness inspires us to cultivate a world where cultural wealth and collective values lead to a peaceful coexistence within the ECO sphere and beyond.



Economic Cooperation Organization