



**OPENING SPEECH**

**by**

**Mr. Fuad Farzalibeyov (PhD),**

**ECO Director for Environment, Minerals and Energy**

**in the Training Course on**

**“The Current Technologies and Trends in various levels of  
Spatial Data Infrastructure”**

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**Virtual**

**Distinguished Dr. Ali Javidaneh, Director General of the NCC,  
Dear Dr. Madad,  
Dr. Soltanipur, Secretary of the ECO Geomatics Committee,  
Dear Participants,**

At the outset, I would like to greet you on behalf of the ECO Secretariat. I extend our deep appreciation to the National Cartographic Center (NCC) of Iran for hosting and organizing our next capacity-building event in a distant mode and making necessary arrangements for facilitation of its work.

Needless to say, we, in the ECO Secretariat attach utmost importance to capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, as these events also provide valuable opportunities for closer interaction, networking and stimulating dialogue among the line agencies and delegates. Building institutional linkages via sharing knowledge and best practices could thus launch possible prospective partnerships in future.

In this vein, it is noteworthy that the series of training courses on geomatics and cartography organized by NCC of Iran, as well as the Pakistani authorities - Survey of Pakistan and Geological Survey of Pakistan over the past period of time proved to be quite effective and beneficial. We hope that today's Training Course could also contribute not only to raising awareness and capacity-building, but also act as a catalyst in generating certain ideas and insights for advancement of our regional cooperation in this pivotal area.

This approach is in line with the overarching objective of this Training Course, which aims at efficient management and leveraging of geospatial data for sustainable development and economic growth of our region by bridging nodes. The role of data and information is becoming increasingly important in the global and regional contexts. Our key challenge is the lack of access to many essential technologies deployed where they are most required. Furthermore, we as the developing countries should demonstrate more readiness to embrace technologies so that to accelerate innovative, sustainable and context-specific solutions. In this regard, we cannot emphasize enough the key role of academia and the scientific community as catalysts for innovation and technology advancement. The participatory approach and engagement of all relevant stakeholders are critical in decision-making at both national and international levels. To this end, SDI and advanced geospatial technologies cannot be underestimated as the key tools for planning and decision-making particularly in government, business and community levels.

## **Dear Participants,**

I would like to give you a snapshot of recent developments and our vision in the areas of geomatics, mapping and surveying. As you may be aware, ECO represents two full-fledged platforms in these areas, namely the Heads of Surveying and Mapping Organizations (HSMO) and the Geomatics Committee, which are expected to trigger the mutually beneficial regional cooperation. Over the past period, three Geomatics Committee and two HSMO meetings have been convened.

One of the key outcomes of the last - 3<sup>rd</sup> Geomatics Committee Meeting, held on 18 October 2021 on a virtual mode, was the proposal to establish ECO SDI or Regional SDI for sharing and collection of data under ECO reference framework. We still expect that the Member States could grasp this initiative. Within the perspective of exchanging best practices in our region, we may consider to work on an inclusive and country-needs driven blueprints to harness space and geospatial applications.

Meanwhile, the training courses on the “Basics of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) Remote Sensing on Minerals”, “Role of Cartography in Optimal Presentation of Spatial and Statistical Information” and Capacity Building Workshop on the “Establishment of ECO Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) to combat the Challenges of Food Security in ECO Region” became key deliverables on the subject areas.

Despite the progress in capacity building activities, there is a need for streamlining the project-oriented cooperation and facilitating the implementation of decisions in this area. From the Secretariat’s perspective, mapping and surveying, including geomatics is considered as very promising areas for regional cooperation. This cooperation could fit well in existing efforts to build on a more networked, inclusive, and effective ECO with bold actions. Your invaluable inputs and guidance for keeping this cooperation intact will help us in identifying focused areas to be incorporated in our future work programmes.

Furthermore, the international cooperation and outreach in these areas should always be in the focus of regional economic organizations as ECO, through which they will strive for the increased access to the advanced expertise and experience. Many benchmarks set by the leading stakeholders offer opportunities for ECO to tap world-leading practices and adapt them to suit regional circumstances.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Your participation in this capacity-building activity vividly manifests your interest in leveraging Spatial Data Infrastructure and geospatial technologies and trends in evidence-based decision-making and sustainable development. This training course could address multiple common challenges in infrastructure and urban planning, natural disasters, climate change, agriculture, environmental and water resource management, trade facilitation and other relevant areas. Therefore, I would like to express my firm belief that your active engagement and fruitful brainstorming in this event will inevitably contribute to its overall success and generate fruitful knowledge and expertise about the subject topics which can be further built on by participants in their career.

We also call upon other Member States to get the ownership of capacity-building by organizing similar events and activities within our Organization. ECO Secretariat will continue its efforts to foster our regional cooperation in the fields of geomatics, mapping and surveying. I wish you a fruitful and engaging training course.

In conclusion, let me reiterate my gratitude to the host organization and participating countries for making this event possible.

Thank you.