

**Statement by H.E. Sirojiddin Muhridin,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan,
at the 28th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers
(Mashhad, 3 December, 2024)**

**Honorable Chair,
Distinguished colleagues and Secretary General,**

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Seyyed Abbas Araghchi as well as to the Secretary General of the ECO for the excellent organization of this event in this historical and holy city of Mashhad and traditionally warm hospitality.

Along with this, I extend my sincere congratulations to my brother Seyyed Abbas Araghchi on the successful Iran's chairmanship in the ECO under the motto "Enhanced and Resilient ECO Region through Expansion of Intra-Regional Trade".

Dear colleagues,

The ECO Member States are important trading partners of Tajikistan. Today they account for more than 35% of the total foreign trade turnover of our country.

Along with this, we think that the existing potential for economic interaction between our countries remains untapped. The ECO Member States have enormous labor and natural resources, and possess abundant potential in all spheres.

Joint effective use of this potential can contribute to the improving of well-being of the population and socio-economic prosperity of our countries, as well as strengthening peace and security in our region.

In this regard, we emphasize Tajikistan's commitment to further strengthening of the comprehensive and mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, investment, energy, transport and communication, as well as in industry, agriculture, environment and tourism sectors.

Distinguished participants,

During this year, Tajikistan hosted three important high-level and relevant experts meetings of the Economic Cooperation Organization: the 5th meeting of Prosecutors General, the 9th meeting of Ministers of Emergency Situations and the 2nd meeting of the Group of Experts on the organization of the Regional Electricity Market of the ECO (ECO-REM).

These meetings have enhanced relations between the prosecutorial and judicial authorities of the Member States, confirmed commitments to develop regional cooperation and strengthen capacities for disaster risk reduction, as well as to take the next step towards the organization of the regional electricity market.

We all witness an urgent need in unifying our efforts to address modern challenges and use huge opportunities possessed by ECO Member States for economic development. In this context, I would like to remind that Tajikistan has repeatedly stressed the importance of the transport and logistics component of ECO.

During the 16th Summit of the Heads of State of the Economic Cooperation Organization (Tashkent, 9 November 2023), the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Honorable Emomali Rahmon stated that the Tajikistan is aimed to play an important role in the development of transport infrastructure in the direction of East-West and Central-South Asia.

Nowadays, Tajikistan is improving existing networks and constructing new transport facilities such as international highways, rail lines and airports by attracting foreign investments. Currently, 12 investment projects worth over 1 billion USD are being implemented in the country's transport sector.

At the same time, Tajikistan is actively involved in implementation of the multimodal corridors, like (TUTIT) “Tajikistan-Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Turkey”, Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan (TAP), China-Tajikistan-Afghanistan (CTA) and other projects which will contribute to the ECO’s transport and logistics component. We are also interested in wider cooperation and sufficient using of ECO Member States sea and maritime infrastructures.

Dear friends,

Along with building transport infrastructure, in our opinion, promotion of cooperation in the field of industrialization and the production of goods and services is essential for the expansion of trade.

We believe that it is necessary to encourage investment for the establishment of manufacturing facilities, given all factors ensuring their balanced and concerted operation.

Therefore, Tajikistan by offering a range of tax and custom incentives, simplified regulatory processes and others, stands ready to ensure the necessary enabling investment climate for wider participation of the ECO Member States entrepreneurs in Tajikistan economy.

Distinguished colleagues,

Tajikistan as one of the leading countries in addressing climate change issues and the Global Water Agenda, welcomes the efforts and supports of the international community in this direction.

Our country produces 98% of its electricity from hydropower, which counts as a renewable source. In terms of the percentage of "green energy" production, we are ranked sixth in the world.

We have decided to increase this figure to one hundred percent by 2032, that is, to produce electricity entirely from "green energy" resources, and to turn Tajikistan into a "green country" by 2037.

Another threatening trend that has caused concern in the international community today is the accelerated melting of glaciers and the reduction of water resources.

It is worth noting that over the past few decades, more than one thousand of the 14 thousand glaciers in our country have completely melted. This is despite the fact that Tajikistan's glaciers are the main source of up to sixty percent of the water resources of the Central Asian region.

To this end, I would like to recall that with the proposal of Tajikistan, the UNGA by its resolution declared 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, and established special UN Trust Fund to promote the conservation of glaciers.

Tajikistan has already demonstrated its commitment to this cause by contributing to the Fund. Therefore, we urge our partners to allocate resources to support this critical initiative and actively participate and contribute to the success of International Glacier's Conference to be held at the end of May 2025 in Dushanbe.

Excellencies,

Tajikistan uphold the establishment of enduring peace and stability, as well as economic and social development in brotherly Afghanistan.

Afghanistan must be a country free from terrorism and other forms of threats and challenges, as well as drugs, so that the long-term dreams of its suffering people could be realized. This country can play an effective role in expanding regional economic and trade relations and integration.

Connectivity projects such as CASA-1000, KTAI multimodal project (Kyrgyz Republic -Tajikistan - Afghanistan - Iran) and others, are not merely economic projects, they are also strategic investments in our shared future.

In pursuit of these goals, Tajikistan supports the revival and development of various sectors of the Afghanistan economy and will provide any necessary assistance.

With deep concern, we also assess the tragic situation in Palestine. Tajikistan sees the real way to resolve this issue in the mandatory implementation of the relevant UN resolutions, especially on the creation of an independent Palestinian state. We call on the warring and other interested parties to immediately cease-fire and begin peace talks.

Dear colleagues,

Tajikistan supports the ECO initiatives, as well as the areas of cooperation stipulated in the ECO-Vision 2025. We believe that the next ECO Vision will be result-oriented, and include projects and programs in accordance with the needs of member countries.

Tajikistan also support the main provisions of the Mashhad Declaration, the adoption of which will make a valuable contribution to the prospects for strengthening interaction between the ECO member countries.

At the end, I would like once again to congratulate brotherly Islamic Republic of Iran on a very successful completion of the chairmanship in the Organization in this year, and wish every success to my dear brother H.E. Mr. Murat Nurtleu, Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who will take over the chairmanship next year.

Thank you for your attention.