

## REMARKS BY THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER OF UZBEKISTAN

**Dear Mr. Abbas Araghchi,**

**Dear Mr. Secretary General,**

**Dear Colleagues,**

I fully join in expressing sincere gratitude to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Mr. Abbas Araghchi for organizing the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ECO Council of Foreign Ministers.

It is deeply meaningful that the Council of Foreign Ministers meeting is being held in the holy city of Mashhad, which has served for thousands of years as a center of inter-civilizational dialogue, mutual cultural and spiritual enrichment, trade, and scientific exchange.

Indeed, this unique city, the birthplace of great thinkers and scientists, evokes a special sense of pride not only among the people of **Iran** but also among all the peoples of our region.

We consider this meeting a valuable opportunity to discuss issues of further strengthening cooperation within the **ECO**, developing its international contacts, and ensuring the high efficiency of upcoming joint events within the Organization.

I support the view of my esteemed colleagues that the chairmanship of our Iranian brothers in the **ECO** has been conducted at the highest level.

It has been rich with vibrant events and initiatives that have enriched the agenda of our Organization with new, engaging thematic areas.

The **Uzbek** side actively supported the priorities of the Iranian chairmanship and their successful implementation.

**Dear participants,**

A year has passed since the **sixteenth** ECO summit was held in Tashkent under the motto "Together Towards Economic Stability and Development". The important decisions taken at the summit have breathed **new** life into the activities of the structure.

In this short period of time, a substantial amount of work has been accomplished collectively.

Since last November, over **10** high-level events have been held, including meetings of **tourism ministers, attorneys general, and heads of railway departments**, as well as several other practical events in the areas of transport, trade, investment and cultural and humanitarian exchange.

I would like to highlight the productive results of the **Conference of Tourism Ministers** of the ECO member states, held in the ancient city of Shakhrisabz in Uzbekistan, and the declaration of this beautiful city as the Cultural Capital of the **Economic Cooperation Organization**.

Granting the city of Shakhrisabz this honorary status will make a significant contribution to further strengthening the bonds of friendship between our fraternal peoples.

Given the growing dynamics in the tourism sector, we consider it important to accelerate work on the creating a separate **Advisory Committee on Tourism** at the ECO Secretariat, consisting of tourism administrations and leading experts from member countries.

I am pleased to announce that our country has recently joined another ECO structure – the **Clean Energy Center**. This important step demonstrates our strong will and commitment to strengthening in such a promising direction as **green energy** promotion.

It is important to continue work on establishing the Center for Trade, Investment and Innovation within the framework of our Organization, proposed by **Uzbekistan's** Leader. We propose holding the next meeting on this issue on December **17** of this year in an online format.

**Dear colleagues,**

When discussing the prospects of cooperation within our Organization, it is impossible to ignore the problem of growing geopolitical tensions in the world, which pose new challenges and threats to all our countries.

In this situation, we, along with our ECO partners continue to seek new ways and mechanisms of cooperation that will allow us to more effectively develop our collective potential.

The main focus is on promoting mutual trade, strengthening transport and communication links, enhancing industrial cooperation, developing tourism cooperation, and deepening cultural and humanitarian ties within the ECO.

All these key areas should be reflected in the draft concept paper «**Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation - 2035**», initiated by President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, during the Tashkent summit of the ECO.

We request the Secretariat to establish an ad hoc working group to draft this document.

**Dear participants,**

The situation surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be ignored when discussing security issues in the ECO space.

The tragedy in Gaza is deeply saddening consequence of a complex and entangled conflict. Achieving a stable, long-term peace requires the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state.

The only and most just solution to this problem should be based on the principle of "**two states for two peoples**" in line with previously adopted UN resolutions.

We welcome the General Assembly resolution of May 10, 2024, on providing a place for Palestine a place alongside UN member states.

This historic step is an important milestone in the context of the further settlement of the Palestinian issue.

**Dear friends!**

Taking this opportunity, I wish success to our **Kazakh** friends during their chairmanship of our Organization.

We reaffirm **Uzbekistan's** commitment to further expanding multilateral cooperation in all areas of **ECO's** activities.

Our country will continue to make every effort to uphold the principles of good neighborliness, practical cooperation, and mutual respect as the foundations of modern relations between our states.

I am confident that the results of today's meeting will contribute to further enhancing the effectiveness of practical cooperation in the **ECO** region.

*Thank you for your attention.*