

REPORT of the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment



3 June 2026
Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan
(Silk Road by Minyoun Hotel, West Journey Hall)

REPORT

Agenda Item No. 1

Inauguration of the Meeting

1. The 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment was held on 3 June 2026 in Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan. The Meeting was attended by Ministers, Heads of Environment Authorities and other senior-level delegates from the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), as well as representatives of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), as an international partner of ECO at the invitation of the Host Authorities. The ECO Secretariat delegation was present throughout. *The List of Participants is attached as Annex I.*
2. The Meeting was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Aziz Abdukhakimov, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Environmental Issues and Chairman of the National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change. H.E. Mr. Abdukhakimov welcomed the delegates and expressed gratitude to the ECO Secretariat for its efforts.
3. H.E. Dr. Asad M. Khan, Secretary-General of ECO, extended in his statement profound gratitude to the Republic of Uzbekistan and to H.E. Mr. Aziz Abdukhakimov for leadership to advancing the shared regional environmental goals and hosting the landmark Ministerial Meeting after a gap of nearly twelve years – a gap he described as a “bad reflection” on the Organization, given the severity of environmental challenges in the ECO region. He called for regular convening of ministerial meetings without such delays.
4. The Secretary-General highlighted the strategic timing of the Meeting, taking place immediately before the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Assembly, and encouraged the ECO Member States to build a collective regional voice in global fora. He underscored that environmental action must not come at the expense of economic development, and specified mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer, and adequate finance as critical enablers, particularly for developing countries. He noted the indispensable role of the GEF as the largest multilateral trust fund for environmental action, characterized environmental finance as woefully insufficient and called for increased resource mobilization.
5. The Secretary-General recalled that ECO designated environment and climate change as a cross-sectoral priority a decade ago, and highlighted a need for a framework and a clear roadmap to translate priorities into tangible results, and move from conception to implementation, while the credibility and strength of our environmental regime hinges upon it.

6. The Secretary-General further introduced the ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026-2030) and its thematic annexes, which the Ministers were to endorse. He also welcomed the First Meeting of the High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation (HLDPE) in Astana as a great promise for breakthroughs and trust-building through channeling multi-stakeholder wisdom, praised the RESCUE Initiative on circular economy launched at Climate COP29 in Baku, and emphasized the operationalization of the ECO Clean Energy Center (CECECO) in Baku as a pivotal hub for clean energy and mitigation. He called for stronger regional coordination, mainstreaming of environment into national planning, and convening regular sectoral environmental events, while encouraging Member States to volunteer to host the 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment and the second HLDPE meeting.

7. The Secretary-General concluded by appreciating the Government of Uzbekistan for its exceptional hospitality and expressed hope that the Meeting would mark the starting point of a new decade of renewed environmental action. *A copy of his full statement is attached as Annex II.*

Agenda Item No. 2

Election of the Chairperson

8. In pursuance of the ECO Rules of Procedure, H.E. Mr. Aziz Abdukhakimov was unanimously elected Chairperson of the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment.

9. In his opening remarks, the Chairperson noted the significance of the Meeting as the first gathering of ECO Environment Ministers in twelve years around a shared goal – ensuring environmental sustainability and climate security in the region. He underscored that strengthening practical cooperation is becoming increasingly important, particularly in advancing joint environmental initiatives, promoting the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

10. The Chairperson further expressed confidence that the outcome documents to be adopted – the ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026-2030), the Work Programs on Climate Change and Biodiversity, and the Samarkand Declaration – would serve as the crucial foundation for a new phase of regional environmental partnership. *A copy of his opening remarks is attached as Annex III.*

Agenda Item No. 3

Adoption of the Agenda

11. The Ministerial Meeting unanimously adopted the provisional agenda as circulated by the ECO Secretariat. *The adopted agenda is attached as Annex IV.*

Agenda Item No. 4

Appointment of the Drafting Committee

12. An open-ended Drafting Committee comprising the ECO Secretariat was appointed to finalize the report and outcome documents.

Agenda Item No. 5

Statements and Presentations by Member States

13. Under this agenda item, Ministers and Heads of Delegations delivered their national statements. The delegates expressed their sincere appreciation to the Republic of Uzbekistan for its exceptional hospitality and to the ECO Secretariat for its diligent efforts in organizing the Meeting.

14. The statements encompassed a broad range of shared environmental challenges encountered by the ECO region, most notably climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity, land degradation, desertification, air pollution, sand and dust storms, and the decline of ecosystems, including marine ecosystems such as the Caspian Sea. *The statements shared by the Member States are attached as Annex V.*

15. Several delegations reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris Agreement and announced updated nationally determined contributions, with a few speaking of their commitment to emissions reduction and carbon neutrality in future.

16. The importance of the circular economy as a tool for industrial decarbonization, job creation, and sustainable resource management was highlighted, with specific reference to regional initiatives on resource efficiency and waste management. In this particular context, the RESCUE initiative was reiterated as a promising regional platform, which is due to contribute to addressing the triple planetary crisis and support positioning the ECO region as an innovative partner within the global sustainability agenda in upcoming years.

17. Many delegates stressed that environmental challenges are transboundary in nature and require strengthened regional cooperation, data sharing, early warning systems, and joint projects, particularly on sand and dust storms, transboundary water resources, and ecosystem conservation.

18. Several Member States called for a collective ECO voice in global environmental forums, including the UNFCCC COPs, the GEF Assembly, and the upcoming COP31, to be hosted by Türkiye in Antalya. Concerns were also raised about the environmental impact of military operations and the need for effective multilateralism was reaffirmed.

19. Delegates from several Member States with significant mountain territories highlighted the particular vulnerability of mountain ecosystems, including accelerating glacial melt, loss of high altitude biodiversity, and the implications for downstream water, energy, and food security. They called for enhanced regional cooperation on transboundary glacier monitoring, mountain protected areas, and climate adaptation in mountainous regions.

20. The presentation on the Concept for a regional early warning system for sand and dust storms among the ECO Member States was delivered by Uzbekistan as the host, entailing the establishment of a regional centre, a coordinating council, and a technical working group, with a call for a unified approach to address the environmental and economic impacts. *The Concept is attached as Annex VI.*

21. The Chairperson thanked all delegations for their constructive and forward-looking contributions, noting that the rich exchange of views would inform the implementation of the regional environmental agenda. He also expressed hope that all Member States would seriously consider and respond to the presented concept by Uzbekistan on a regional early warning system for sand and dust storms in the region, which will enable us to proceed to the next stage with the coordination and support of the ECO Secretary-General.

Agenda Item No. 6

Report by the Chairperson of the Senior Officials Meeting

22. The Chairperson of the Senior Officials Meeting / 8th Working Group on Environment presented the outcomes of the SOM, held on 2 June 2026. He briefed the Ministerial Meeting that the SOM had conducted detailed page-by-page reviews of the drafts of ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment, its thematic annexes, and the Samarkand Declaration on Regional Environmental Cooperation. A great number of amendments had been raised and, after lengthy discussions, consensus was reached on the final texts. The SOM recommended that the Ministerial Meeting endorse the documents.

23. The Ministerial Meeting noted the SOM report and proceeded to take decisions based on its recommendations.

Agenda Item No. 7

Endorsement of the ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026- 2030) and its Thematic Annexes

24. The Ministerial Meeting considered the ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026-2030) and its Thematic Annexes – the ECO Work Program on

Climate Change 2026-2030, and the ECO Work Program on Biodiversity 2026-2030, as finalized by the SOM.

25. The Ministerial Meeting endorsed the Cooperation Framework and its two Work Programs by consensus. The Chair congratulated all the Member States on adopting these foundational documents as a milestone for our region in the upcoming years. *The adopted texts are attached as Annex VII.*

Agenda Item No. 8

ECO High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation (HLDPE)

26. The Chairperson, in his capacity as the incumbent Chair of the High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation (HLDPE) briefed the Meeting on the outcomes of the first HLDPE meeting, held on 23 April 2026 in Astana, Kazakhstan on the margins of Astana Ecological Summit. The Ministerial Meeting took note of the outcomes of the first meeting, including the Chair's Summary and the revised Roadmap, which were circulated earlier among Member States.

27. The Ministerial Meeting welcomed the successful launch of the HLDPE, endorsed the recommendations envisaged in the Chair's Summary and requested the ECO Secretariat, in cooperation with Uzbekistan, to finalize the Roadmap of the Platform for the next two years.

Agenda Item No. 9

Follow-up on the Implementation of the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy in the ECO Region (RESCUE)

28. The Ministerial Meeting reviewed progress under the RESCUE Initiative, launched in November 2024 during the Climate COP29 in Baku. The ECO Secretariat presented a brief update on the Initiative, followed by a statement by Ms. Fatou Haidara, Deputy to the Director-General of UNIDO. She cited that the RESCUE Initiative is rapidly becoming a flagship regional alliance, aligning ECO Member States with global momentum toward sustainability.

29. Ms. Fatou Haidara highlighted UNIDO's focus on industrial decarbonization, energy efficiency, and increased circularity, noting in this context that a joint ECO-UNIDO Project Concept on Strategic Foresight for Circular Economy Transition had been developed. UNIDO explained that the foresight methodology helps identify value chains and industries that can transform toward circularity more easily, faster, and with fewer resources.

30. UNIDO emphasized that industry greening creates not only economic benefits

but also social and environmental advantages, including job creation. The aforementioned joint project serves as a platform for collaboration, connecting ECO countries to global partners and investment opportunities. UNIDO invited all ECO Member States to support the project concept as part of today's declarations and expressed commitment to working closely with the ECO Secretariat for implementation. *A copy of her remarks is attached as Annex VIII.*

31. The Ministerial Meeting welcomed the progress under RESCUE, expressed support for the UNIDO concept note on the foresight project, and tasked the ECO Secretariat to continue collaborating with UNIDO to develop a full-fledged project proposal in consultations with Member States for possible financing.

Agenda Item No. 10

Adoption of the Samarkand Declaration on Regional Environmental Cooperation

32. The Ministerial Meeting considered the Samarkand Declaration on Regional Environmental Cooperation as its political outcome. The meeting noted with appreciation that its draft was refined and finalized by the SOM following the extensive deliberation and incorporation of numerous amendments from the Member States.

33. The Ministerial Meeting adopted the Samarkand Declaration by consensus. The Declaration serves as a unified political statement of the ECO Member States' commitment to enhanced regional environmental action. *The adopted Samarkand Declaration is attached as Annex IX.*

Agenda Item No. 11

Date and Venue of the 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment

34. The Ministerial Meeting discussed the scheduling of the next ministerial meeting. The 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment is expected to be held in 2027 at a date and venue to be determined by the ECO Secretariat in consultation with Member States. In this vein, the Member States were encouraged to volunteer as hosts.

Agenda No. 12

Adoption of the Report

35. The Meeting tasked the ECO Secretariat with preparing the draft report of the meeting and sharing it via messaging platforms prior to official circulation. The final report is expected to be disseminated through diplomatic channels.

Agenda No. 13

Any Other Business

36. No issues were raised under this agenda item.

Agenda No. 14

Closing Remarks

37. In his closing remarks, the ECO Secretary-General congratulated the Republic of Uzbekistan for successfully convening the Ministerial Meeting after a long gap and thanked all delegations for their constructive engagement, which led to a successful outcome. He acknowledged the marching orders received from the Ministers for a new regional framework on environment and stressed the critical importance of implementing the Samarkand Declaration as instructed, emphasizing that regional unity is essential to effectively address the shared environmental challenges facing the ECO region.

38. The Secretary-General further underscored the need to focus on developing bankable projects that can attract international climate finance. He noted that the collective capacity of the Member States to design and prepare such projects must be strengthened. The Secretary-General thus called for reliance on the accumulated capacity of Azerbaijan and Türkiye – both of which have demonstrated leadership in project development and global climate negotiations – to guide the region in translating policy commitments into investable, finance-ready initiatives.

39. The Chairperson expressed his sincere thanks to all the ministers and delegations for their constructive spirit and finalization of the key outcomes: the Framework, the Programs, the Samarkand Declaration, and further insight for RESCUE and HLDPE.

Annex-I

**List of Participants
of the
6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment**

MEMBER STATES

Republic of Azerbaijan

- H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Babayev, Representative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Climate Issues
- Mr. Tural Mammadov, Senior Advisor, Office of the Representative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Climate Issues

Islamic Republic of Iran

- H.E. Dr. Shina Ansari, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Head of the Department of Environment
- H.E. Mr. Mohammad Ali Eskandari, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Uzbekistan
- Mr. Arman Khoorsand, Director, Department of International Cooperation and Conventions, Department of Environment

Republic of Kazakhstan

- H.E. Mr. Yerlan Nyssanbayev, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources
- Ms. Saule Sabieva, Director, Department of Climate Policy, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
- Ms. Shattyk Tastemirova, Deputy Director, Department of Climate Policy, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources

Kyrgyz Republic

- Mr. Kumar Mambetaliev, Head of Biodiversity Department, Ecology and Technical Supervision, Ministry of Natural Resources

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

- H.E. Dr. Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal, Minister of State for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination

Republic of Tajikistan

- H.E. Mr. Bahodur Sheralizoda, Chairman, Committee for Environmental Protection
- Mr. Navruz Khotamzoda, Head of International Relations, Committee for Environmental Protection

Republic of Türkiye

- Prof. Dr. Kasım Yenigün, Director General, General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion, Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change
- Prof. Dr. Mustafa Hakkı Aydoğdu, Advisor, General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion, Ministry of Environment, Urbanization, and Climate Change

Republic of Uzbekistan

- H.E. Mr. Aziz Abdulkhakimov, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Environmental Issues and Chairman of the National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change
- Mr. Otabek Babamuradov, Head of the International Cooperation, Grants and Ratings Department, National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change
- Mr. Baktiyor Pulatov, Rector, Central Asian University of Environmental and Climate Change Studies (Green University)
- Mr. Makhmud Khaydarov, Chief Specialist of the International Cooperation, Grants and Ratings Department, National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change
- Ms. Guzel Shaykhislamova, Leading Specialist of International Cooperation, Grants and Ratings Department, National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change

- Ms. Gavkhar Makhmudova, National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change
- Dr. Doniyor Turgunov, Director, Hydro-meteorological Research Institute
- Mr. Abdijalil Torayev, Waste Management and Circular Economy Development Agency
- Mr. Nosirjon Asadov, Waste Management and Circular Economy Development Agency
- Ms. Valeriya Rakhmatova, Head of Educational Process Organization Department, Central Asian University of Environmental and Climate Change Studies (Green University)

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

- Ms. Fatou Haidara, Deputy to the Director-General and Managing Director
- Ms. Ganna Onysko, Senior Coordinator

ECO SECRETARIAT

- H.E. Dr. Asad M. Khan, Secretary-General
- Dr. Fuad Farzalibeyov, Director for Energy, Minerals and Environment
- Mr. Morteza Khansari Bozorgi, Program Officer

Annex-II

STATEMENT

by

**H.E. Dr. Asad M. Khan, ECO Secretary General
at the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment**

**Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my distinct privilege to welcome you all to the beautiful and historic city of Samarkand. We gather here to renew and reaffirm our commitment to enhanced regional environmental cooperation and action.

At the outset, I wish to express my profound gratitude to the Republic of Uzbekistan, and in particular to His Excellency Mr. Aziz Abdukhakimov, Chairman of the National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change, for his close personal interest and leadership in convening this landmark formal Ministerial meeting after a gap of almost 12 years.

While this is a clear demonstration of Uzbekistan's unwavering commitment, under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to advancing our shared regional environmental goals and priorities. It is sadly a bad reflection on us as an organization representing a region that is afflicted with practically every environmental challenge that one can think of. This must change. We cannot afford to convene our next environmental ministerial after 12 years. We must convene it regularly and with adequate preparations.

Excellencies,

Our gathering today is both timely and strategic. It takes place immediately

before the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Assembly, offering us a unique window to exchange views, build political momentum, and galvanize ambitious plans for accelerated environmental action. I firmly believe that the ECO region must strive to echo a collective voice in the global arena and advocate for outcomes that align our development aspirations with global environmental targets.

A core concern for our region remains clear: environmental action must not come at the expense of economic development. Meanwhile, mitigation, adaptation, technology transfer, and adequate finance are the critical enablers of environmental action, particularly for developing countries that have contributed the least to the environmental degradation we now face. Yet, environmental finance is woefully insufficient. Recent geopolitical developments have created significant uncertainty regarding the future scale and predictability of multilateral climate and biodiversity finance, thus affecting the patterns of international cooperation on environment. The GEF plays a unique and indispensable role as the largest multilateral trust fund for environmental action – financing projects that address biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation, and pollution across developing countries. We look to the GEF Assembly to significantly increase resource mobilization and accelerate the delivery of outcomes that match the scale of action our planet urgently demands.

Excellencies,

A decade ago, ECO designated environment and climate change as a cross-sectoral priority. That was necessary, but now we need a framework and a clear roadmap to translate priorities into tangible results, and move from conception to implementation. The credibility and strength of our environmental regime hinges upon it. The challenge is no longer why action is needed, but how to deliver it at scale.

Our collective efforts henceforth will be firmly anchored in the Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation 2035, being developed as ECO's new vision and roadmap for action for the next decade. This forward-looking strategy in its current iteration identifies environmental protection, resilience, and the shift to a low-carbon

development model as a core priority and policy focus. It calls for stronger regional coordination, integrated action on climate, biodiversity and desertification, and a just transition that balances prosperity with planetary boundaries.

Excellencies,

The ECO Cooperation Framework on Environment (2026-2030) and its thematic annexes on Climate Change and Biodiversity that the Ministers will endorse today spells out both the principles and specifics of regional environmental cooperation. The key features of this Framework are:

First, it establishes seven concrete objectives – from strengthening regional environmental coordination and mainstreaming biodiversity to integrating low-carbon development, combating land degradation and desertification, and ensuring a green recovery.

Second, it creates two expert groups to coordinate the annexed Work Programs and includes a light-touch monitoring and evaluation mechanism with voluntary biennial progress reports.

Third, it calls for a dedicated resource mobilization strategy, including the possible creation of an ECO Green Project Facility.

In short, this Framework transforms our regional ambitions into a structured, accountable, and implementable roadmap.

Distinguished Guests

Let me also highlight with appreciation the first meeting of the High Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation, successfully hosted by Uzbekistan during the Regional Ecological Summit in Astana earlier this year. That Platform, and the important decision you take on the way forward today I trust, hold great promise

for breakthroughs and trust-building through channelling multi-stakeholder wisdom.

In this vein, I also wish to recall the growing importance of combating desertification and land degradation, as well as the increasing threat of sand and dust storms in our region. These issues are not separate from biodiversity conservation or climate action; they are integral to both. I hope that the High Level Dialogue Platform will devote focused attention to this nexus in its future deliberations, particularly in the context of enhancing regional capacity in developing monitoring mechanisms and early warning system.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must increase ECO's effectiveness in addressing regional environmental challenges, and multilateralism is our only hope. The triple planetary crisis – climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution – demands integrated and fresh solutions like the circular economy. For this reason, we launched the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy (RESCUE) during Climate COP29 in Baku. We further engaged with UNIDO on a foresight project to assess circular economy opportunities and challenges across the ECO region – a strategic compass for our circular transition.

Similarly, the ECO Clean Energy Centre (CECECO) is another important track to achieve clean and green growth. Since becoming operational at the end of 2025 in Baku, CECECO has been evolving into a pivotal triangular capacity hub to ramp up industrialization, energy security, and climate goals. Scaling clean energy is the single largest mitigation measure available. Without it, we cannot meet our climate targets. With it, we build a resilient, low carbon economy.

Honourable Ministers,

Delivering on the environment requires collective and concerted action from all Member States. We need to further mainstream environment and climate resilience into national and regional development planning, programming, and budgeting.

Our countries are set to focus on decoupling economic growth from resource use and greenhouse gas emissions. We can nurture our enormous potential in renewable energy and jointly position ourselves at the heart of a renewable future – through CECECO, through RESCUE, and through every tool at our disposal.

We also humbly encourage you to organize sectoral environmental events on a regular basis. I therefore call upon Member States to play a more active role by volunteering to host the 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment, as well as the second meeting of the High Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The potential of the ECO region is immense, and together we can smartly harness it, not only to tackle environmental challenges but to shape a sustainable, resilient, and prosperous future for all our peoples.

Together, we can also make this meeting the starting point of a new decade of renewed action.

Before I conclude let me convey our deep appreciation to the Government of Uzbekistan, especially the National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change for the exceptional hospitality extended to all of us.

Thank you.

Annex - III

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Aziz Abdukhakimov, Advisor to the President
of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Environmental Issues and Chairman of the
National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change**

at the

6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment

Samarkand, Silk Road by Minyon Hotel, 3 June 2026

Assalamu alaykum

Excellencies, Mr. Secretary General, Dear colleagues, Dear partners

My sincere pleasure to welcome you to the ancient and beautiful city of Samarkand for the **6th Economic Cooperation Organization Ministerial Meeting on Environment**.

It is a great honor for us to host this vital regional event, which brings together the ECO member states **around a shared goal** – ensuring environmental sustainability and climate security in our region.

Today's meeting is of **particular significance**. For the first time in the last **12 years**, the Ministers of Environment of the ECO member states are gathering to develop coordinated approaches to addressing contemporary environmental challenges.

In this regard, strengthening practical cooperation is becoming **increasingly important**, particularly in advancing joint environmental initiatives, promoting the exchange of knowledge and best practices.

I am confident that the documents presented for consideration today – ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment for 2026–2030, the Work Programs on Climate and Biodiversity, as well as the Samarkand Declaration – will serve as a crucial foundation for a new phase of regional environmental partnership.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my gratitude to the **ECO Secretariat** and to **all the experts** whose valuable contributions during yesterday's consultations and discussions helped finalize the documents presented for review today.

I am convinced that today's meeting will be a major step toward strengthening regional environmental solidarity and will elevate cooperation within the ECO to a **qualitatively new level**.

I wish all participants a constructive dialogue and a highly successful meeting.

Thank you for your attention! Katta Rahmat!

AGENDA

6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment

3 June 2026

Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan

1. Inauguration of the Meeting
2. Election of the Chairperson
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Appointment of the Drafting Committee
5. Statements and Presentations by the Member States
6. Report by the Chairperson of the Senior Officials Meeting
7. Endorsement of the draft ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026-2030) and its Thematic Annexes:
 - a. ECO Work Program on Climate Change (2026-2030)
 - b. ECO Work Program on Biodiversity (2026-2030)
8. ECO High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation
9. Follow-up on the Implementation of the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy in the ECO Region (RESCUE)
10. Adoption of the Samarkand Declaration on Regional Environmental Cooperation
11. Date and Venue of the 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment
12. Adoption of the Report
13. Any other Business
14. Closing Remarks

Annex - V

STATEMENT

by

**H.E. Mr. Mukhtar Babayev, Representative of the President of
the Republic of Azerbaijan on Climate Issues**

in the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the ECO Secretariat for convening this important meeting here in the historic city of Samarkand.

Today's discussions take place at a time when our region is facing increasingly interconnected environmental challenges.

Climate change, land degradation, desertification, biodiversity loss, air pollution, and growing pressure on water and natural resources.

Many of these challenges are transboundary in nature.

And they require stronger regional coordination, practical cooperation and collective action.

Azerbaijan welcomes efforts aimed at strengthening environmental cooperation within the ECO framework.

Including the ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment for 2026-2030, the High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation, and stronger practical regional cooperation across thematic areas.

We particularly welcome the launch of the ECO High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation during the Regional Ecological Summit in Astana.

We believe this platform can become an important mechanism for exchanging experience, strengthening scientific cooperation and supporting joint monitoring.

As well as advancing practical regional initiatives, particularly on air quality, sand and dust storms, climate resilience, biodiversity and sustainable resource management.

Azerbaijan, in partnership with the ECO Secretariat, has also developed a practical regional mechanism to contribute to addressing our shared environmental challenges - the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability and Circular Economy, or RESCUE.

We collectively launched RESCUE during the Ministerial Meeting on Circular Economy held on the sidelines of COP29 in Baku on 16 November 2024.

The initiative aims to support a just transition toward a resource-efficient, circular and regenerative economy.

While also promoting more sustainable management of natural resources.

We believe RESCUE can contribute to addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

And can help position the ECO region as a constructive and innovative partner within the global sustainability agenda.

Azerbaijan has also actively supported the advancement of another important ECO flagship initiative - the establishment of the ECO Clean Energy Centre in Baku in partnership with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, UNIDO.

We are confident that this Centre will contribute to scaling up sustainable energy transition, energy efficiency, clean technologies and climate-resilient low-carbon infrastructure across the ECO region and beyond.

Regional environmental cooperation is becoming an essential condition for sustainable development, resilience and long-term stability across our region.

Therefore, we encourage all Member States to continue contributing actively to these common efforts, strengthen ownership of regional initiatives and further support practical, action-oriented cooperation under the ECO framework.

Thank you.

Speech by Dr. Shina Ansari, Vice-President and the Head of the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

**Excellencies,
Honourable Ministers,
Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset, I would like to thank the host government and the ECO Secretariat for organizing this important meeting.

On 28 February, two lawless regimes – the United States of America and the Zionist regime – launched an unlawful and unprovoked act of aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran, targeting its martyred leadership, civilians, civilian infrastructure, and protected environmental areas. These attacks caused irreparable damage to the environment of the region, the sensitive marine ecosystems of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, and other environmentally significant areas. Condemning these horrific crimes and the severe damage they inflicted, particularly the bloody attacks on a school in Minab and a girls' sports club in Lamerd, is the duty of all freedom-loving people and an obligation incumbent upon international institutions and organizations. Continued inaction in the face of such crimes will undoubtedly lead to the further erosion of confidence in ineffective international mechanisms.

Here, on behalf of the Government and the resilient people of Iran, I would also like to express our appreciation for the principled positions adopted by the majority of ECO member states regarding this brutal aggression. I firmly believe that strengthening regional multilateralism and cooperation among member states will help create conditions that further distance destructive extra-regional forces from the shared neighborhood of ECO countries.

Beyond their historical, cultural, and economic ties, ECO member states face a range of common environmental challenges whose impacts directly affect the welfare, health, security, and sustainable development of our peoples.

The ECO region is among the most vulnerable regions of the world to climate change. Rising temperatures, recurrent droughts, declining water resources, land degradation, dust and sand storms, wildfires, and biodiversity loss are all affecting the development trajectory of our countries.

Among these challenges, dust and sand storms have emerged as one of the most significant transboundary environmental threats. This phenomenon has not only

environmental consequences but also extensive economic, social, and public health impacts. Addressing it effectively requires close regional cooperation, data sharing, joint projects, and support from international organizations.

Likewise, protecting the region's fragile ecosystems – including mountains, forests, wetlands, arid and semi-arid lands, and marine environments – requires a coordinated and regional approach.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that ECO can serve as an effective platform for advancing environmental diplomacy in the region. In this regard, we propose:

- Developing a regional cooperation framework for addressing dust and sand storms;
- Strengthening regional climate monitoring networks and environmental data exchange;
- Expanding cooperation in sustainable water resources management and combating desertification;
- Developing joint projects for the conservation of biodiversity and transboundary ecosystems; and
- Enhancing cooperation in the fields of green economy, renewable energy, and clean technologies.

Excellencies,

Global experience has demonstrated that no country can confront complex environmental challenges alone. Regional cooperation is no longer a matter of choice; it is an unavoidable necessity for securing a sustainable future for our peoples.

The Islamic Republic of Iran stands ready to further expand technical, scientific, and operational cooperation with ECO member states and to play an active role in shaping joint regional initiatives.

I hope that the outcomes of this meeting will contribute to stronger practical cooperation and tangible achievements for the environment and sustainable development of our region.

Thank you for your attention.

Speech by Mr. Yerlan Nyssanbayev, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan at the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on the Environment

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

First of all, allow me to express my gratitude to the Uzbek side for the warm hospitality and the excellent organization of today's meeting in the beautiful city of Samarkand.

I would also like to thank the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) for its consistent efforts to strengthen cooperation and promote the **environmental agenda**, which is of great importance for our region.

Such meetings provide an **important platform** for open exchange of views, strengthening mutual trust, and developing joint solutions in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development.

Today, the environmental agenda is becoming an increasingly important component of regional cooperation.

We have repeatedly noted that climate change, glacier retreat, water scarcity, land degradation, and biodiversity loss are already directly affecting the **sustainable development of our countries and the quality of life of our people**.

That is why environmental cooperation must remain a unifying agenda for all of us. **The Regional Ecological Summit** held in Astana confirmed the readiness of ECO member states to expand cooperation and consolidate efforts in addressing modern environmental and climate challenges.

Kazakhstan believes that within the ECO framework we have strong opportunities to advance joint environmental initiatives.

In this regard, I would like to briefly highlight **several areas** that we consider particularly important.

First. Implementation of international climate commitments.

Within the framework of the Paris Agreement, Kazakhstan has approved its updated **Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0)**. Work is underway to implement the Strategy for Achieving Carbon Neutrality by 2060.

Renewable energy sources are being developed, and projects are being implemented in the areas of energy efficiency, reforestation, emissions reduction, and climate change adaptation.

Second. Promotion of the circular economy and sustainable waste management.

Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the development of a **circular economy**.

Within the framework of the Regional Ecological Summit in Astana, the countries of Central Asia **endorsed the Framework Partnership Programme on Circular Economy in Central Asia**.

In this context, the adoption of the **Baku Declaration and the RESCUE initiative** was also an important step forward.

We view it as an important platform for promoting the principles of resource efficiency and circular economy across the region.

One of the key elements of the circular economy is a modern **waste management system**.

Kazakhstan has already launched systemic reforms in the field of waste management and recycling development.

The Concept for the Management of All Types of Waste for 2026–2030 has been approved. It envisages a transition from predominantly landfill-based disposal toward a more modern and resource-efficient model. Practical projects are being implemented to develop recycling and introduce circular economy principles.

We consider this document not only as a **domestic action plan**, but also as a basis for further exchange of experience with our partners.

We are open to cooperation, ready to share our experience, and interested in learning from the successful practices of other ECO countries.

Third. Ecosystem restoration and biodiversity conservation.

The adopted **Concept on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for 2026–2035** will allow the expansion of specially protected natural areas to **33.2 million hectares**.

Today, it is important not only to increase the area of protected territories, but also to ensure ecological connectivity of ecosystems, preserve animal migration routes, and maintain the resilience of natural landscapes.

In this regard, Kazakhstan advocates **strengthening transboundary environmental cooperation within the ECO framework**.

Rare animal species, including the snow leopard, argali sheep, kulan, goitered gazelle, and Caspian seal, constitute our shared natural heritage and require joint conservation efforts.

Fourth. Rational water resource management and combating land degradation.

Water resources are a strategic asset directly linked to environmental security and regional stability.

On the sidelines of the Astana Summit, international consultations were held on the establishment of an International Water Organization under the United Nations.

We call on ECO member states to take an active part in advancing this initiative.

ECO can play a particularly important role as a platform for coordinating regional initiatives and consolidating the efforts of member states.

Today, we must focus not only on discussing the environmental agenda, but also on implementing concrete joint projects in the fields of green economy, ecotourism, digital environmental monitoring, and climate finance mechanisms.

We should make greater use of the potential of international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility, development banks, and private investment.

Dear colleagues,

In conclusion, I would like to express confidence that today's meeting will give

new impetus to the development of **environmental cooperation within the ECO framework**, and that the **Samarkand Declaration on Regional Environmental Cooperation and the ECO Framework Programme on Environment Cooperation for 2026–2030** will become effective platforms for launching concrete environmental initiatives and further strengthening regional partnership.

Thank you for your attention.

**Country Statement by H.E. Ms. Shezra Mansab Ali Khan KharaI, Minister of State
for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination of Pakistan
6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment
Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan - 3 June 2026**

Honourable Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning.

It is a distinct privilege for Pakistan to participate in the 6th Ministerial Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization on Environment. We extend our sincere gratitude to the Republic of Uzbekistan for its exemplary hospitality and to the ECO Secretariat for its continued stewardship.

As highlighted in the ECO Annual Economic Reports, our region stands at a critical crossroads, facing a confluence of challenges from climate change, desertification, water scarcity, and biodiversity loss, all of which threaten our hard-won economic gains.

The ECO has rightly identified environmental sustainability not as a peripheral concern, but as a central pillar for achieving shared prosperity.

We commend the Secretariat's work in developing the new ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026-2030) and its thematic annexes. Pakistan believes these documents provide a robust, long-term regional strategy that streamlines key priorities – from green technologies and renewable energy to resource efficiency – perfectly aligning with the urgent need to balance economic development with ecological resilience.

Climate change and environmental degradation transcend national borders. The interconnected ecosystems of the ECO region – our shared mountain ranges, river basins, and migratory corridors – demand a unified, coordinated response.

Pakistan firmly believes that the ECO platform is indispensable for fostering this cooperation, enabling the harmonization of policies, the sharing of critical data for early warning systems, and the joint mobilization of finance.

Honourable Chair, despite contributing less than one percent to global greenhouse gas emissions, Pakistan stands on the frontlines of climate-induced disasters. In

response, and under the visionary leadership of our government, Pakistan has moved from a reactive stance to a position of proactive, global leadership.

We have built a Robust Policy, Legal, and Institutional Framework to guide our climate action, embedding sustainability into our national DNA.

Our journey under the Paris Agreement has been marked by concrete achievements. We have successfully implemented our first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 1) and made significant progress on NDC 2, which has now been enhanced and updated.

In a major leap forward, we are announcing our revised targets under NDC 3, which commits Pakistan to a 17% unconditional and 33% conditional reduction in its projected greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2035.

This ambition is powered by tangible, on-the-ground best practices. I am proud to highlight our Solar PV Roof Revolution, which has successfully added over 4 Giga Watt of solar capacity to our national grid, democratizing energy access and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels.

Our natural ecosystems remain a national priority. The Mangroves Project along our coastline is not only a global carbon sequestration champion but has also started generating carbon credits, providing a replicable model for nature-based solutions and blue carbon finance. This complements our flagship Upscaled Green Pakistan Programme, our 10 Billion Tree Afforestation drive, of which 2.2 billion trees have already been planted. This massive effort has restored degraded forests, revived wildlife habitats for wildlife species, and created hundreds of thousands of green jobs.

To align our financial flows with our climate goals, we have launched the Pakistan Green Taxonomy and initiated budget tagging for climate expenditures, ensuring that every rupee spent contributes to a sustainable future.

We have also finalized our Carbon Trading Policy Guidelines, creating a legal and regulatory framework for a high-integrity voluntary carbon market.

To protect our vulnerable mountain communities, we have established an effective Early Warning System (EWS) for Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), which has already proven its worth in saving lives and property.

However, our national efforts, however robust, cannot succeed in isolation. Pakistan

therefore proposes that the ECO region deepen its cooperation in the following areas:

We should establish a formal ECO coordination mechanism to forge common positions ahead of major UNFCCC COPs, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) conferences, amplifying our collective negotiation power on issues of adaptation finance, loss and damage, and technology transfer.

The ECO Secretariat must play a proactive role in developing multi-country, bankable project proposals for submission to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF). Priority areas should include transboundary glacier monitoring, a regional sand and dust storm early warning and mitigation system, and a Central-South Asia “Green Energy Corridor.”

We propose a dedicated ECO Technical Working Group to facilitate the exchange of expertise on successful initiatives, such as our solar revolution, mangrove carbon credits, and large-scale afforestation models.

Pakistan reiterates its unwavering commitment to the ECO vision. We look forward to adopting an ambitious Samarkand Declaration and a robust Cooperation Framework that translates our shared ambitions into measurable, on-the-ground action for the benefit of all our peoples.

I thank you!

Statement by the Republic of Türkiye at the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment

Excellencies,
Honourable Ministers,
Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum and warm greetings from Türkiye.

It is an honor for me to address this distinguished gathering at the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment in the historic city of Samarkand.

At the outset, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Republic of Uzbekistan and Excellency Aziz Abdukhakimov for the warm hospitality and excellent organization of this important meeting.

Uzbekistan has played an important and constructive role in bringing environmental issues onto ECO's agenda, particularly through its efforts to promote regional dialogue and practical cooperation as well as its political ownership. The organization of this Ministerial Meeting after a long interval, demonstrates a strong commitment to strengthening regional environmental cooperation.

Distinguished Representatives,

Environmental challenges are becoming increasingly significant both globally and regionally. Climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss, desertification, water scarcity, and natural disasters directly affect economic stability, food security, energy systems, public health, and sustainable development.

Our region is particularly vulnerable to these challenges. Therefore, strengthening regional cooperation on environmental matters is becoming more important than ever.

At the same time, we should also remain mindful of ECO's founding principles and core mission.

ECO is fundamentally an organization for economic cooperation and development. The backbone of our cooperation remains economic connectivity, trade, transport, energy and sustainable growth. In our region, which consists mainly of developing countries, ensuring lasting environmental progress requires sustainable economic growth. Without economic resilience, infrastructure investment, adequate financing,

technology transfer and regional connectivity, it will be impossible to fully realize our environmental ambitions.

However, sustainable economic development is becoming increasingly dependent on efficient environmental policies. Therefore, we believe that ECO should continue to pursue a balanced and pragmatic approach that prioritizes economic development while integrating environmental sustainability into our regional cooperation efforts.

Distinguished Participants,

Türkiye attaches great importance to ECO as a strategic platform that connects our countries through shared geography, historical ties, and common development aspirations.

As Türkiye, we have consistently supported ECO's efforts in areas such as transport connectivity, renewable energy, trade facilitation, tourism, and sustainable development.

We also welcome the ongoing efforts under the ECO Cooperation Framework on Environment for 2026–2030, including initiatives related to climate resilience, biodiversity, combating land degradation and desertification, resource efficiency, and circular economy practices.

In this regard, we particularly value regional initiatives such as the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy, as well as the work of the ECO Clean Energy Centre. These initiatives demonstrate that environmental action can also contribute to economic transformation, energy security, industrial competitiveness, and sustainable growth.

We are also pleased to see that the zero waste approach is receiving growing attention within ECO cooperation. What began as a national environmental vision under the leadership of First Lady of Türkiye, Her Excellency Mrs. Emine Erdoğan has gradually evolved into a global movement supported by the United Nations and embraced by countries and institutions across different regions. Today, the Zero Waste Initiative represents a broader understanding of sustainable consumption and resource efficiency.

In this regard, we attach particular importance to further strengthening regional cooperation on zero waste practices.

Türkiye also remains committed to sharing its expertise and experiences with fellow ECO member countries in areas such as green infrastructure, renewable energy, circular economy practices, and climate adaptation.

Esteemed Delegates,

Today, the environmental sector is becoming one of the major drivers of global economic transformation. Green technologies, renewable energy systems, sustainable agriculture, resource efficiency, and climate-resilient infrastructure are rapidly gaining strategic importance worldwide.

This transformation also presents significant opportunities for the ECO region.

By strengthening regional cooperation, attracting investment, promoting innovation, and enhancing technical collaboration, our countries can jointly benefit from the emerging green economy while preserving sustainable growth and social development.

By the same token, the efforts to cope with today's environmental challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution require integrated and mutually reinforcing responses.

In this regard, as the incoming COP31 President, Türkiye places particular importance on advancing "Rio Conventions synergies" among the climate, biodiversity and desertification agendas. We consider this approach as one of the key priorities of our COP31 Climate Action Agenda. Strengthening coherence among multilateral environmental processes, while supporting nationally-driven implementation and sustainable development priorities, will be essential for delivering effective outcomes.

We believe that ECO can play an important role in operationalizing these synergies on the ground, particularly in areas such as land restoration, ecosystem resilience, circular economy and climate adaptation.

Distinguished Colleagues,

International climate cooperation also remains critically important.

As the COP31 President, we are committed to promoting an inclusive and implementation-oriented COP. We believe that climate action must go hand in hand with sustainable development, economic resilience and equitable access to finance, technology and capacity-building.

In this regard, I would like to kindly invite all ECO member states to actively participate in the upcoming COP31 meeting to be hosted by Türkiye in Antalya, between 9-20 November 2026.

We believe this important gathering will provide a valuable platform to strengthen the collective voice of our region, deepen cooperation among our countries, and advance practical and balanced solutions to joint environmental and climate challenges.

Türkiye will continue to work constructively with all ECO member states toward a more resilient, prosperous, and sustainable future for our region.

Before concluding, I would like to once again thank the Government of Uzbekistan, honorable Secretary General Dr. Asad Majeed Khan and his team, and all distinguished delegates for their valuable contributions and commitment.

I sincerely believe that today's discussions will further strengthen regional solidarity and pave the way for more practical, results-oriented, and sustainable cooperation under the ECO framework.

Thank you very much.

Statement by H.E. Mr. Aziz Abdulkhakimov, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Environmental Issues and Chairman of the National Committee on Ecology and Climate Change at the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment

Samarkand, Silk Road by Minyon Hotel, 3 June 2026,

Excellencies, Mr. Secretary General, Dear colleagues, Dear partners

Taking this opportunity, allow me to present Uzbekistan's approaches and priorities in the field of regional environmental cooperation.

Under the leadership of the **President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev**, our country consistently advances the principles of **mutual trust, regional cooperation** and **joint solutions** to common challenges, including environmental protection and climate change.

We view today's **Ministerial Meeting** as an **important step** toward building a more practical and result-oriented environmental agenda within the ECO framework.

Dear colleagues,

One of the most serious challenges facing our region is land degradation and desertification.

According to the UNCCD, at least **1.2 billion** people and **1.5 billion hectares** of land are already affected by land degradation, while an additional **100 million** hectares are degraded annually.

In this regard, we believe it is particularly important to strengthen regional scientific and technological cooperation.

To support this objective, Uzbekistan has established the **Research Institute for Combating Desertification and Desert Economy at Green University**.

We are ready to further develop cooperation with ECO member states in the areas of scientific research, technology exchange, capacity building and implementation of joint pilot projects.

Another important area of cooperation is sustainable forest management and afforestation.

In this regard, we encourage ECO member states to strengthen cooperation in implementing the UN General Assembly Resolution on the "Decade of Action on Afforestation and Reforestation in Accordance with Sustainable Forest Management," initiated by Uzbekistan.

As a first practical step in this direction, a draft "Cross-Border Green Program of ECO Member States for 2026–2030" has been developed, aimed at afforestation in desert areas. We will share this proposal with all member states and look forward to your support.

Dear colleagues,

Strengthening regional cooperation in disaster risk prevention is also becoming increasingly important.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, around **2 billion tons** of dust enter the atmosphere every year.

As is well known, a significant number of ECO member states are located within the global dust belt and are increasingly affected by sand and dust storms.

It is for this reason that, within the framework of the First Meeting of the ECO High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation initiated by the **President of Uzbekistan**, we proposed the development of a Regional Early Warning System for Sand and Dust Storms.

Our specialists developed **the Concept** of the system and presented it yesterday at 8th Working Group Meeting.

We are convinced that this initiative could become an important practical contribution to strengthening regional environmental security.

In this regard, we look forward to the continued support of the ECO Secretariat and partner international organizations.

Uzbekistan reaffirms its readiness for **further active and constructive cooperation** with all ECO member states in the interests of a sustainable and environmentally secure future for our region.

Thank you for your attention! Katta Rahmat!



SAMARKAND

31 may- 5 june

2026

**КОНЦЕПЦИЯ
РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЙ СИСТЕМЫ ПРЕДУПРЕЖДЕНИЯ
ПЕСЧАНЫХ И ПЫЛЬНЫХ БУРЬ В РАЙОНАХ
ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОГО
СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА**

**CONCEPT
FOR A REGIONAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM
AND DUST STORMS IN THE MEMBER STATES
OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION**

2026

CONCEPT FOR A REGIONAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM FOR SAND AND DUST STORMS IN THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

Chapter 1. General Provisions

1. Sand and dust storms (SDS) are dangerous natural meteorological phenomena that have a significant impact on society and the environment. According to estimates by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), approximately 2 billion tons of dust enter the atmosphere annually¹. Along with natural factors, human activities associated with the unsustainable use of land and water resources make a significant contribution to the formation of dust storms.

SDS is recognized worldwide as a serious environmental threat that negatively impacts climatic and biogeochemical processes, leading to a deterioration in the environment and public health, as well as adversely affecting various sectors of the economy, including transportation, agriculture, and industry.

At the international level, SDS are viewed as a significant environmental risk factor requiring comprehensive monitoring, prevention, and management measures². In 2017, the UNCCD adopted a Policy Framework that emphasizes the importance of monitoring systems, early warning systems, and preventive measures³. UNCCD documents emphasize that effective action against SDS requires a comprehensive approach based on international cooperation and coordination among states⁴. Recognizing the urgency and magnitude of the issue, the UN General Assembly has designated 2025–2034 as the "Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms" The resolution also reiterates that sand and dust storms are a matter of international concern, and that the associated costs manifest themselves in economic, social, and environmental consequences, while the intensity and frequency of such phenomena continue to increase.

2. Given the growing relevance of the SDS issue in the region encompassing countries in Asia and the Middle East, including Afghanistan,

¹ United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). 2022. Compendium of Sand and Dust Storms: Summary for Decision Makers. Bonn, Germany.

² https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/2022-05/1871_Summary%20for%20Decision%20Makers_RU%20web_0.pdf

³ https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-07/ICCD_COP%2814%29_17-1910488R.pdf

⁴ <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/stories/un-declares-2025-2034-decade-combating-sand-and-dust-storms>

⁴ <https://www.unccd.int/news-stories/stories/un-declares-2025-2034-decade-combating-sand-and-dust-storms>

Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, as well as their transboundary nature and their growing impact on food security and sustainable development in the region, there is a growing need to develop coordinated regional efforts to address SDS challenges ⁵. In this regard, the development of the present Concept is one of the key steps toward establishing a unified approach to the development of systems for monitoring and early warning of SDS in the countries of the region. This approach involves consolidating scientific and technical capacity, developing mechanisms for the exchange of data

and technologies, strengthening regional cooperation, and expanding collaboration with international organizations (UNCCD, WMO, FAO, etc.) and development partners in the field of SDS management.

Chapter 2. Goals and Objectives of the Concept

3. The main goal of the Concept is to establish a unified approach to the development of a regional system for monitoring and early warning of SDS, as well as to define the main directions, mechanisms, and principles of interstate cooperation.

4. The objectives of the Concept are:

- identifying priority areas for cooperation among participating countries in the field of SDS monitoring and early warning, which involves developing coordinated approaches and areas of cooperation among the countries of the region in the field of observation, analysis, early warning, and risk reduction related to SDS;
- the establishment of institutional mechanisms for coordinating efforts in this area, including the creation of organizational structures and mechanisms for cooperation among countries and other stakeholders to coordinate joint activities and facilitate the exchange of information;
- creating the conditions for establishing a regional system for SDS monitoring and early warning, ensuring the timely identification and assessment of risks associated with the SDS occurrence and spread, focused on developing coordinated mechanisms for monitoring, analyzing, and warning of SDS based on modern methods of monitoring, data processing, and risk assessment;
- developing mechanisms for the prompt exchange of hydrometeorological, climatic, environmental, and other information among countries in the region, including improving procedures for cross-border data exchange, developing digital platforms, and ensuring the compatibility of information systems and data formats;
- facilitating the development of scientific and technical capacity in the field of SDS monitoring and modeling, including support for scientific research, development

⁵ United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). 2022. Compendium of Sand and Dust Storms: Summary for Decision Makers. Bonn, Germany.

of technical infrastructure, implementation of modern analytical methods, and expansion of scientific cooperation in the field of SDS;

- creating the appropriate conditions for the implementation of modern technologies and innovative methods for the analysis, assessment, and early warning of SDS, using satellite data, geographic information systems, automated monitoring systems, numerical modeling techniques, and digital information processing technologies;

- enhancing human resource capacity through the training of specialists, the organization of training programs and knowledge-sharing initiatives aimed at improving educational and training programs, conducting training sessions, seminars, and internships, as well as expanding professional cooperation among countries in the region;

- developing cooperation with international organizations, research institutions, and development partners to draw on best practices, technologies,

and financial support, including the implementation of joint projects and programs, the

promotion of international scientific and technical cooperation, and the mobilization of international technical and financial assistance in the field of SDS combating.

Chapter 3. Priority Areas of the Concept

5. The Concept provides for:

- Establishment of a regional system for monitoring atmospheric processes related to the SDS formation and spread, based on satellite data, and automated observation systems;

- developing monitoring of dust sources, including those associated with land degradation and desertification;

- the establishment and development of regional mechanisms for the prompt exchange of hydrometeorological, climatic, environmental, and satellite information;

- improving SDS modeling techniques;

- development of an information and analytical platform;

- enhancing scientific, technical, and human resources capacity in the field of SDS monitoring and early warning;

- the advancement of scientific research and the implementation of innovative methods for assessing the risks posed by SDSs to public health, the environment, and economic sectors;

- strengthening regional and international cooperation, including collaboration with international organizations, research centers, financial institutions, and development partners.

Chapter 4. Key Provisions and Priority Areas of the Regional Sand and Dust Storm Monitoring and Early Warning System

6. The goal of developing a Regional SDS Monitoring and Early Warning System is to ensure the timely detection of SDS and to promptly notify the public and relevant agencies in order to minimize negative impact on the population, the environment, and economic sectors. The objectives of the system for monitoring are:

improving methods for monitoring atmospheric processes using satellite data, automated ground-based weather stations, and air quality observations;

– the development of SDS modeling methods aimed at assessing their intensity and spatial distribution, and determining the transport trajectories of dust aerosols;

– establishing effective channels for promptly alerting the public and stakeholders to the emergence of SDS threat;

– building the capacity of professionals in the field of SDS monitoring, assessment, and early warning.

7. The SDS Monitoring and Early Warning System represents a comprehensive multi-level structure consisting of interconnected components that ensure monitoring, assessment, early warning, and dissemination of information on the risks associated with the occurrence and spread of SDS events.

Monitoring ensures continuous observation of atmospheric, climatic, and environmental conditions contributing to the formation of SDS, as well as the assessment of their intensity, spatial extent, and movement dynamics. Monitoring is carried out on the basis of hydrometeorological observations, automated groundbased meteorological stations, air quality monitoring data, satellite observations, and lidar observations.

Dust source assessment is aimed at the identification, characterization, and monitoring of areas that represent potential dust emission sources. Particular attention is given to regions affected by land degradation, desertification, dried water bodies, and areas with disturbed vegetation cover. Within this component, mapping of active dust source areas should be carried out. To address these tasks, satellite data, ground survey results, land use information, and other relevant datasets are utilized.

The SDS early warning component provides assessment of the probability of SDS occurrence, identification of potential dust dispersion areas, and preparation of Warning notifications. The implementation of these tasks is based on the application of modern data analysis methods and modeling using satellite information.

The information dissemination component is intended to ensure the timely delivery of information on the risks associated with the occurrence and spread of SDS to relevant stakeholders. Information dissemination may be carried out through a web-platform.

8. The functioning of the SDS monitoring and early warning system is based on a set of key principles ensuring its effectiveness, reliability, and adaptability:

– Continuity of monitoring. The system shall ensure continuous monitoring of atmospheric processes through the use of satellite and ground-based observation systems for the timely detection of signs indicating SDS formation;

Timeliness of information dissemination. Notification of the population, governmental authorities, and emergency services regarding SDS threats shall be carried out as promptly as possible upon receipt of reliable information, minimizing response time to potential hazards;

– Accessibility of information. Information on SDS-related risks shall be open and accessible to all relevant users, taking into account the need to adapt communication messages for different target audiences, including the public, enterprises, and governing authorities;

– Scientific basis of early warning. All forecasting models and risk assessment algorithms shall be based on modern scientific research and empirical data, and continuously updated in accordance with new knowledge regarding SDS formation and propagation processes;

– System adaptability and development. The system shall be capable of promptly adapting its procedures and technical solutions in response to changing climatic conditions, the emergence of new monitoring and forecasting technologies, and advances in risk assessment approaches.

Chapter 5. Institutional Mechanisms for the Implementation of the Concept

9. In order to ensure coordination of activities, strengthen regional cooperation, and establish unified approaches in the field of SDS monitoring and early warning, the establishment of an institutional cooperation framework among countries of the region, national authorized bodies, scientific organizations, and international partners is envisaged.

The key elements of the institutional mechanism include:

(1) Regional Center for Sand and Dust Storm Monitoring and Early Warning;

(2) Coordinating Council for the Development of the Regional SDS Monitoring and Early Warning System;

(3) Technical Working Group responsible for providing scientific and technical support for the implementation of the Concept.

10. The Regional Center for SDS Monitoring and Early Warning serves as a regional platform for coordinating activities in the field of SDS monitoring, analysis, and early warning.

The tasks and functions of the Regional Center for SDS Monitoring and Early Warning include:

– Development and enhancement of the regional SDS monitoring and early warning system;

– Organization of prompt exchange of hydrometeorological, climatic, and environmental information;

monitoring of atmospheric processes associated with the formation, transport, and propagation of SDS;

- practical implementation of regional atmospheric dust transport models within the SDS early warning system;

- promotion and development of research activities in the field of SDS;

- development of scientific, technical, and human resource capacities of the countries of the region

- preparation of analytical materials, assessments, and recommendations for the prevention and mitigation of SDS impacts;

- development of cooperation with international organizations, research centers, and development partners.

11. The Coordinating Council for the Development of the Regional SDS Monitoring and Early Warning System ensures coordination of interstate cooperation, alignment of priority areas of collaboration, and support for the implementation of joint programs and projects. The Coordinating Council interacts with international organizations, financial institutions, and development partners, facilitates the development of information exchange mechanisms among countries of the region, and addresses issues related to the improvement of the regional SDS monitoring and

early warning system. The Council consists of representatives of authorized bodies of participating countries, scientific organizations, and other relevant stakeholders.

12. The Technical Working Group provides scientific and technical support for the implementation of the Concept, coordinates cooperation among specialists from the countries of the region, develops harmonized methodological approaches and recommendations, and facilitates the exchange of data, technologies, and experience. The activities of the Working Group are aimed at the development of SDS monitoring, analysis, modeling, and early warning systems, ensuring compatibility of observation and data processing methods, as well as preparing proposals for the implementation of modern technologies and innovative solutions.

13. Interaction among countries of the region is carried out through regular information exchange, joint consultations, meetings, training activities, and scientific and technical programs. Coordination of activities at the regional level is ensured through cooperation between national authorized bodies and the Regional Center, the Coordinating Council, and the Technical Working Group.

14. The institutional mechanisms for the implementation of the Concept are aimed at ensuring the sustainable functioning of the regional SDS monitoring and early warning system, enhancing the effectiveness of interstate cooperation, and strengthening the scientific and technical capacities of the countries of the region.

Chapter 6. Key Principles of Cooperation

15. Cooperation within the framework of the implementation of the Concept is based on the principles of mutual trust, equal partnership, and coordination of actions among the countries of the region in the field of SDS monitoring and early warning.

The main principles of cooperation include:

- mutual respect for the interests and sovereignty of participating states;
- coordination of regional efforts in the field of SDS monitoring and early warning;
- ensuring the sustainability and long-term development of the regional SDS monitoring and early warning system;
 - timely exchange of hydrometeorological, climatic, environmental, and satellite data;
 - the scientific justification of the decisions made and the methods used;
 - compatibility of information systems, data, and methodological approaches;
 - openness to international cooperation and interaction with international organizations and development partners;
 - promotion of joint scientific research, programs, and projects;
 - organization of training activities, workshops, seminars, and capacity-building programs for specialists.

Chapter 7. Financing and Incentive Mechanisms for the Implementation of the Concept

16. Financing of activities related to the implementation of the Concept may be provided through national budgets of the countries of the region, international financial institutions, grant programs, resources of international organizations and development partners, as well as other sources.

In order to implement the Concept, measures will be taken to develop mechanisms for attracting international technical and financial assistance, as well as to support joint regional projects and scientific research.

Chapter 8. Expected Outcomes of the Concept

17. The implementation of the Concept is expected to result in the establishment and development of the following organizational, scientific and technical, and information mechanisms within the regional SDS monitoring and early warning system:

- Regional Center for SDS Monitoring and Early Warning, serving as a coordination hub for cooperation with other regional dust centers within the WMO SDS-WAS framework;
- Coordinating Council for the Development of the Regional SDS Monitoring and Early Warning System, responsible for regional cooperation in information

exchange, collaboration with international organizations and development partners, and support

for the implementation of joint programs and projects in the field of SDS mitigation;

- Technical Working Group, responsible for coordinating scientific and technical cooperation, developing methodological approaches, facilitating the exchange of data and technologies, and supporting activities related to SDS monitoring, modeling, and early warning;

- harmonized standards and indicators for SDS monitoring at the regional level;

- regional SDS monitoring system and monitoring of SDS sources, including those associated with land degradation and desertification; – regional SDS early warning system; – online platform for SDS early warning.

Chapter 9. Final Provisions

18. The Concept defines the main directions for the development of regional cooperation in the field of sand and dust storm monitoring and early warning among the member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization and serves as a basis for establishing harmonized approaches to SDS mitigation.

The implementation of the Concept will contribute to the development of the regional SDS monitoring and early warning system, improvement of information exchange mechanisms, strengthening of scientific and technical capacities, and enhancement of the preparedness of countries in the region for risks associated with SDS impacts.

The development of cooperation within the framework of the Concept envisages strengthening interaction among countries of the region, international organizations, universities, research centers, and development partners with the aim of introducing modern technologies for SDS monitoring, analysis, and early warning.

The Concept may serve as a basis for the development of joint programs, action plans, and other documents aimed at enhancing SDS monitoring and early warning systems at both national and regional levels.

Annex - VII

ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026-2030)

Preamble

The Members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO):

Acknowledging the vital role of a healthy environment for life on Earth, human well-being, and sustainable economic development; and that some human activities in the ECO Region have raised serious environmental challenges, making conservation and sustainable management a core regional priority;

Recognizing the critical importance of biodiversity for sustaining all life on Earth, and **Committed to** contributing to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's goal of "living in harmony with nature by 2050";

Emphasizing the urgency of fostering sustainable, resilient, and inclusive development to address the climate change challenge;

Alarmed by the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, which exacerbate desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity in our often arid and vulnerable region, and **Guided** by the findings of the UNCCD Global Land Outlook (2022);

Inspired by the ECO Vision 2025 objective to "increase the standard of living, quality of life, economic welfare and well-being of our people" through environmental preservation, which requires concerted action to tackle common challenges;

Building upon the Foundation of the Framework Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming (2016-2020) and the decisions of the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment held in Samarkand in 3 June 2026;

Have agreed to promote the following Cooperation Framework on the Environment for the ECO Region:

Article 1: Objectives

The Member States agree to promote synergies and coordinate efforts to achieve the following objectives:

- 1.1. To strengthen regional cooperation for environmental protection, enhancing the ECO's role through coordinated actions at all levels, as appropriate,

supported by a robust monitoring and review mechanism among the relevant bodies within the ECO.

- 1.2. To mainstream biodiversity conservation, its sustainable use, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources into regional and national development policies.
- 1.3. To integrate low-carbon and climate-resilient development approaches into policies and strategies, boosting financial and technical assistance for mitigation, adaptation, and green growth.
- 1.4. To combat land degradation, desertification, and sand and dust storms by facilitating cooperation on long-term solutions, sustainable land management, and drylands restoration.
- 1.5. To enhance actions by all sectors of society, including governments, indigenous peoples, local communities, civil society, and the private sector, in support of global environmental goals.
- 1.6. To realize the environmental sustainability objectives of ECO Vision 2025 through enhanced regional cooperation.

Article 2: Implementation and Institutional Arrangements

- 2.1. Two Expert Groups on Biodiversity and Climate Change, composed of focal points from Member States, shall be established to coordinate the implementation of the annexed Work Programs.
- 2.2. The ECO Secretariat shall facilitate communications, meetings, and documentation, and will develop a light-touch Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework with clear indicators to track progress.
- 2.3. Member States are invited to submit on a voluntary and biennial basis, relevant information, and updates to the ECO Secretariat. The Secretariat can facilitate the exchange of information and prepare a consolidated overview of regional development to be shared for information purposes.

Article 3: Resource Mobilization

The Member States, in collaboration with the ECO Secretariat:

- 3.1. Agree to consider the possibility to develop a dedicated Resource Mobilization Strategy to secure financial and technical resources for the Framework's implementation. This strategy will prioritize:
 - Leveraging existing regional and international financial mechanisms (e.g., the Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund).
 - Engaging with regional development banks, international donors, and the private sector.
 - Exploring other options to fund flagship regional initiatives.

Article 4: Thematic Areas of Cooperation

Member States agree to encourage and facilitate cooperation in the following thematic areas, with specific indicative activities detailed in the Annexes on Biodiversity and Climate Change:

4.1. Natural Environment:

- Land: Promote integrated spatial planning, especially in drylands.

4.2. Human Environment:

- Energy: Develop strategies for energy efficiency, renewable energy investment, regional power trade.
- Settlements: Enhance urban and rural resilience through improved waste management, air and water quality, disaster risk response, and green infrastructure.
- Industry: Encourage responsible industrial practices to reduce pollution and advance low-carbon, circular business models, including zero-waste approaches.

4.3. Cross-Cutting Priorities:

- Planning: Implement and update National Action Plans for biodiversity and climate change.
- Health & Food Security: Promote ecosystem-based approaches for health protection and climate-smart agriculture for food security.
- Circular Economy: Foster a shift to a circular economy by integrating green financing and incentive measures into all economic sectors.

4.4. Mainstreaming Actions:

- Data and Information: Strengthen mechanisms for environmental data collection and exchange.
- CEPA (Communication, Education and Public Awareness): Encourage capacity-building, technology transfer, joint research, and the inclusion of traditional knowledge.
- Participatory Approach: Engage all relevant stakeholders.
- Global Collaboration: Enhance coordination with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), including through preparatory meetings for COPs to develop common regional positions where appropriate.

Final Provisions

This Framework is a voluntary instrument of regional cooperation and is not intended to create legally binding rights or obligations under international law. (The specific activities outlined in the Annexes [Annex 1: Work Program on Climate Change; Annex 2: Work Program on Biodiversity] are for further consideration and implementation by Member States according to their national capacities, priorities, and legislation.)

Annex I: ECO Work Program on Climate Change (2026-2030)

Preamble:

The Members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO):

Guided by the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement as the foundational framework for global climate action;

Acknowledging that the climate challenge has implication for sustainable development, with disproportionate impacts on vulnerable regions, including many within ECO, exacerbating water scarcity, food insecurity, and ecosystem degradation;

Recognizing the dual challenge of recovering from the socio-economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic while addressing the urgent need for a systemic shift towards a green, resilient, and inclusive development model;

Building upon the legacy of the “Framework Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming (2016-2020)” and inter-governmentally agreed outcomes of recent UNFCCC COPs;

Emphasizing the critical importance of regional cooperation in enhancing ambition, sharing knowledge, pooling resources, and developing a strong, unified voice in global climate negotiations as appropriate;

Hereby adopt this voluntary Work Program on Climate Change to accelerate collective action for a sustainable future in the ECO Region.

1. Strategic Objectives

This Work Program aims to:

- 1.1. Mainstream Climate Action: Integrate ambitious, low-carbon, and climate-resilient approaches into all relevant regional, national, and sub-national policies, plans, and development strategies.
- 1.2. Enhance Implementation & Cooperation: Foster synergies and coordinated action among Member States to implement regional priorities, supported by harmonized standards, regular monitoring, and knowledge exchange.
- 1.3. Mobilize Finance & Investment: Catalyze public, private, and international financial flows and technical assistance towards mitigation and adaptation projects, prioritizing just transitions and green recovery.
- 1.4. Build Systemic Resilience: Strengthen the adaptive capacity of communities, economies, and ecosystems to withstand current and future climate impacts, with a focus on the most vulnerable.

- 1.5. Empower Broader Society: Enable actions by all stakeholders, including governments, the private sector, civil society, indigenous peoples, local communities, and youth.

2. Implementation and Governance

- 2.1. **Expert Group on Climate Change (EGCC):** Composed of national focal points, the EGCC will be the primary technical body for steering implementation, reviewing progress, and proposing adaptive management of this Work Program. It will meet at least annually.
- 2.2. **Coordinating Role of the ECO Secretariat:** The Secretariat will facilitate the EGCC's work, coordinate cross-sectoral collaboration, support reporting, and act as a liaison with international partners and agreements.
- 2.3. **Technical Support:** Implementation will be supported by relevant ECO agencies and institutions, including but not limited to the ECO Specialized Agencies in the fields of energy, agriculture, and disaster risk reduction, as well as through partnerships with accredited regional and international scientific bodies for capacity-building, technology transfer, joint research, and knowledge management.
- 2.4. **Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL):** A light-touch MEL framework with clear, agreed-upon indicators will be established. Member States are encouraged to submit voluntary biennial progress summaries. The Secretariat will synthesize these into a regional progress report shared learning.

3. Resource Mobilization Strategy

To translate ambition into action, ECO Member States, with support from the Secretariat, agrees to:

3.1. **Developing a Joint Resource Mobilization Plan:** This plan will identify priority projects and map them onto potential funding sources, including:

- International Climate Finance (Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund).
- Multilateral and Regional Development Banks.
- Bilateral donor agencies.
- Private sector investment and blended finance mechanisms.

3.2. **Exploring an ECO Climate Project Pipeline:** Creating a vetted portfolio of bankable regional and national projects to attract larger-scale investment.

3.3. **Strengthening National Enabling Environments:** Supporting policy and regulatory reforms to de-risk and incentivize green investments.

4. Priority Areas for Action

Member States are encouraged to collaborate and advance actions within the following interconnected pillars, tailoring them to national contexts:

Pillar A: Planning & Enabling Environment

A.1. Enhanced NDCs & Long-Term Strategies: Support the formulation and implementation of increasingly ambitious and actionable Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS).

A.2. Climate Governance: Strengthen institutional, legal, and policy frameworks for integrated climate action, including effective carbon pricing, subsidy reform, and green fiscal policies.

A.3. Green and Circular Economy: Foster a systemic shift by mainstreaming circular economy principles and green growth strategies into economic recovery plans and sectoral policies, including through the promotion of the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy in the ECO Region (RESCUE).

Pillar B: Mitigation and Low-Carbon Transition

B.1. Energy Transition: Accelerate the deployment of renewable energy, enhance regional energy connectivity and trade, improve energy efficiency across all sectors, and advanced efforts to reform inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

B.2. Sustainable Transport: Promote fleet modernization, fuel switching to low-carbon alternatives, electrification of transport, and investment in high-quality public transit and non-motorized infrastructure.

B.3. Industry & Cities: Drive industrial decarbonization through innovation, energy efficiency, and sustainable supply chain management. Support cities in implementing integrated urban planning for low-carbon, resilient, and livable communities (e.g., green buildings, sustainable waste management).

B.4. Sustainable Land Use & Food Systems: Promote climate-smart agriculture, sustainable forest management, and food value chain interventions that reduce emissions, enhance carbon sinks, and improve food security.

Pillar C: Adaptation & Resilience

C.1. Climate & Health: Develop early warning systems and preparedness plans for climate-sensitive health risks (e.g., heat waves, vector-borne diseases).

C.2. Ecosystem-based Adaptation: Protect, restore, and sustainably manage natural ecosystems (mountains, drylands, and coastal zones) as critical infrastructure for resilience.

Pillar D: Cross-Cutting Support

D.1. Data, Knowledge & CEPA: Facilitate regional climate data sharing, best practices, and technologies driven by the World Meteorological Organization Standards. Implement robust Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) programs, respecting and integrating Traditional Knowledge (TK).

D.2. Inclusive Participation: Encourage the participation of relevant stakeholders, including sub-national authorities, indigenous peoples, local communities, and the private sector, on climate-related dialogues.

D.3. Global & Regional Solidarity: Enhance coordination in international forums, including through pre-COP regional consultations, to share experiences and develop common positions where feasible, amplifying the ECO region's voice.

This Work Program shall be reviewed periodically by the Expert Group on Climate Change to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in light of scientific developments and evolving global commitments.

Annex II: ECO Work Program on Biodiversity (2026-2030)

Preamble:

The Members of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO):

Recognizing that biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are the foundation of life on Earth, underpinning human well-being, cultural identity, and sustainable development across the ECO Region;

Acknowledging the rich and unique biological heritage of the ECO Region, encompassing diverse mountain ranges, vast drylands, inland waters, coastal zones, and marine environments that provide essential ecosystem services to our peoples;

Guided by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), adopted at COP-15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Montreal, Canada (December 2022), which sets an ambitious pathway towards the 2050 Vision of "Living in Harmony with Nature" through its four goals and 23 action-oriented targets for 2030;

Building upon the foundation of the previous Work Plan on Biodiversity in the ECO Region (2016-2020) and the outcomes of relevant regional consultations;

Emphasizing that achieving the 2030 targets of the Kunming-Montreal GBF requires enhanced approaches in economic, social, and financial paradigms, coupled with enhanced regional cooperation, knowledge sharing, and collective action;

Recognizing the interlinkages between biodiversity conservation and other global challenges, including climate change, desertification, land degradation, and sustainable development;

Hereby adopt this voluntary Work Program on Biodiversity to guide coordinated regional action for the conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of biodiversity in the ECO Region.

1. Strategic Objectives

This Work Program aims to:

- 1.1. Halt and Reverse Biodiversity Loss: Encourage the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity across the ECO Region, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources, putting nature on a path to recovery by 2030 in line with the Kunming-Montreal GBF targets.
- 1.2. Mainstream Biodiversity: Integrate biodiversity values and considerations into regional and national development policies, plans, and strategies across all sectors, including agriculture, energy, infrastructure, trade, and finance.

- 1.3. Empower All of Society: Encourage efforts by governments, indigenous peoples and local communities, civil society, and businesses to contribute to the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, its Protocols (Cartagena and Nagoya), and other biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements.
- 1.4. Strengthen Regional Cooperation: Foster synergies and coordination among Member States for effective implementation of biodiversity activities at regional, national, and sub-national levels, supported by regular monitoring, reporting, and review mechanisms.
- 1.5. Contribute to the 2030 Agenda: Advance progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and related goals on food security, water, health, and climate action.

2. Implementation & Governance

- 2.1. Expert Group on Biodiversity (EGB): Composed of national focal points from Member States, the EGB will serve as the primary technical body for steering implementation, reviewing progress, and proposing adaptive management of this Work Program. It shall meet at least annually.
- 2.2. Coordinating Role of the ECO Secretariat: The Secretariat will facilitate the EGB's work, coordinate cross-sectoral collaboration, support reporting, and act as a liaison with the CBD Secretariat and other international partners.
- 2.3. Technical Support: Implementation will be supported by relevant ECO institutions and specialized agencies, including those focused on agriculture, food security, trade, and science and technology, as well as through partnerships with regional and international scientific bodies, research institutions, and centers of excellence for capacity-building, technology transfer, joint research, and knowledge management.
- 2.4. Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL): A light-touch MEL framework aligned with the Kunming-Montreal GBF monitoring framework will be established. Member States are encouraged to submit voluntary biennial progress summaries. The Secretariat will synthesize these into a regional biodiversity progress report, shared learning, and information purposes.

3. Resource Mobilization Strategy

To translate ambition into action, ECO Member States, with support from the Secretariat, agree to:

- 3.1. Supporting Member State Access to International Finance: Recognizing that the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other international funds operate on a constituency basis, Member States will be encouraged and supported in their efforts to access available resources, including:

- The GEF biodiversity focal area and its capacity-building initiatives for the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols.
 - The Kunming Biodiversity Fund and other international biodiversity finance mechanisms.
 - Bilateral donor agencies and development cooperation partners.
- 3.2. Leveraging Regional and Multilateral Development Finance: Engage with multilateral and regional development banks (e.g., Islamic Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) to secure financing for regional biodiversity projects and programs.
- 3.3. Developing an ECO Biodiversity Project Pipeline: Create a vetted portfolio of bankable regional and national projects to attract investment, including transboundary conservation initiatives, ecosystem restoration programs, and sustainable value chain development, for presentation to potential donors and financial institutions.
- 3.4. Strengthening National Enabling Environments: Support policy and regulatory reforms to remove perverse incentives and subsidies harmful to biodiversity, and to create positive incentives for conservation and sustainable use.

4. Priority Areas for Action

Member States are encouraged to collaborate and advance actions within the following interconnected pillars, tailoring them to national contexts and aligning with the targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework:

Pillar A: Planning and Enabling Environment

A.1. Enhanced NBSAPs: Support the updating and effective implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in alignment with the Kunming-Montreal GBF, ensuring integration of biodiversity into national development planning, poverty reduction strategies, and sectoral policies.

A.2. Biodiversity Assessment and Valuation: Enhance tools and methodologies for biodiversity assessment, ecosystem service valuation, and natural capital accounting to inform evidence-based decision-making and integrate biodiversity into national accounting systems.

A.3. Policy Coherence and Incentives: Promote policy reforms to align economic and regulatory incentives with biodiversity goals, repurpose subsidies harmful to biodiversity, and develop positive incentive measures for conservation and sustainable use.

Pillar B: Conservation & Restoration

B.1. Protected Areas and OECMs: Strengthen national and transboundary protected area systems to ensure at least 30% of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine areas are effectively conserved and managed, recognizing the importance of biodiversity hotspots and ecological connectivity. Promote Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs).

B.2. Ecosystem Restoration: Support ecosystem restoration initiatives targeting degraded landscapes, including forests, wetlands, drylands, and coastal ecosystems, to enhance biodiversity, climate resilience, and ecosystem services.

B.3. Species Conservation: Implement active management measures for the conservation and recovery of threatened species, including through ex-situ conservation, reintroduction programs, and implementation of CITES provisions to ensure sustainable and legal wildlife trade.

B.4. Invasive Alien Species: Strengthen regional cooperation to prevent, control, and eradicate invasive alien species, with a focus on priority species and pathways, in line with Target 6 of the Kunming-Montreal GBF.

B.5. Marine and Coastal Biodiversity: Take precautionary measures to safeguard and monitor marine and coastal ecosystems, including the Caspian Sea and other water bodies, addressing pollution, overfishing, and habitat degradation.

B.6. Climate Change and Biodiversity: Reduce the impact of climate change on biodiversity and contribute to mitigation and adaptation through ecosystem-based approaches, striving for net-positive impacts.

Pillar C: Sustainable Use and Benefit-Sharing

C.1. Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry and Land Management: Promote sustainable management practices in agriculture, pastoralism, aquaculture, and forestry to enhance productivity, resilience, and biodiversity outcomes, including through agroecological approaches and sustainable forest management. Ensure integrated spatial planning for all landscapes, particularly in dry ecosystems, to address desertification, erosion, and sand and dust storms.

C.2. Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS): Develop and implement national and regional policies to ensure adequate access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization, including the appropriate use of related traditional knowledge, in line with the Nagoya Protocol.

C.3. Sustainable Value Chains and Business Engagement: Promote sustainable extraction, production, sourcing, certification, and trade practices across supply chains to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services, encouraging private sector engagement through initiatives such as the ECO Green Award and business biodiversity pledges.

C.4. Health and Biodiversity: Improve nature's contributions to air, land, and water quality, protect people from severe natural occurrences, and enhance human health and well-being through biodiversity conservation and ecosystem-based approaches.

C.5. Ecotourism: Encourage responsible and sustainable ecotourism initiatives that support local communities, raise awareness of biodiversity values, and mitigate potential adverse effects on ecosystems.

Pillar D: Cross-Cutting Support

D.1. Data, Information and Knowledge Sharing: Facilitate the establishment of regional mechanisms for biodiversity data sharing, and harmonization, including collaboration with the CBD Clearing-House Mechanism and national biodiversity information systems. Address potential risks of new technologies on biodiversity and human health, including through appropriate biosafety measures under the Cartagena Protocol.

D.2. CEPA and Traditional Knowledge: Strengthen Communication, Education, and Public Awareness (CEPA) programs to enhance understanding of biodiversity values and engage all sectors of society. Respect, preserve, and integrate Traditional Knowledge (TK) and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities in biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

D.3. Inclusive Participation: Encourage the participation of all relevant stakeholders in biodiversity-related dialogues.

D.4. Regional and Global Collaboration: Enhance coordination and cooperation, in consultation with Member States with biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (including CITES, CMS, Ramsar, UNCCD and ITPGRFA) through inter-ministerial collaboration and regional consultation mechanisms. Strengthen regional preparatory processes for meetings of the CBD Conference of the Parties (COP) and other relevant forums to exchange best practices, lessons learned, and develop common positions where feasible, amplifying the ECO region's voice.

This Work Program shall be reviewed periodically by the Expert Group on Biodiversity to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in light of scientific developments, evolving global commitments, and progress towards the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework targets.

Annex - VIII

Keynote Remarks by Ms. Fatou Haidara, Deputy to the Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) at the 6th Ministerial Meeting on Environment of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues,

It is a great honour to address the Ministerial Meeting on Environment of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) here in the historic city of Samarkand.

For centuries, Samarkand stood at the heart of the Silk Road, pioneering the exchange of goods, innovations, and ideas.

Today, we gather here to build a new kind of exchange – one defined by sustainability, resource efficiency, and the principles of a circular economy.

Allow me first to commend the ECO Secretariat and our host country, Uzbekistan, for convening this important gathering at a key moment for regional environmental cooperation. Today's agenda reflects the breadth of our shared priorities – from climate change and biodiversity loss to advancing circular economy pathways.

In this context, the UNIDO Industrial Development Report 2026 highlights that building future-ready industrial ecosystems requires a coordinated shift in three mutually reinforcing directions: decarbonization, improved energy efficiency, and increased circularity.

In this framing, circularity is not an add-on to industrial policy. It is an integral component of how we redesign production systems to use resources more efficiently, reduce waste, and extend the value of materials across their lifecycle.

For ECO member States, this agenda is particularly relevant. Many economies across the region are managing the dual imperative of accelerating industrial growth while improving environmental performance. The report underscores that this is not a trade-off. It is increasingly a shared pathway: strengthening industrial competitiveness while reducing environmental pressure through more resource-efficient and circular production systems.

UNIDO is privileged to contribute to this collective effort by actively supporting you, our Member States. In particular, I wish to highlight the joint ECO-UNIDO project, Strategic Foresight for Circular Economy Transition in the ECO Region. This was developed in **direct support of ECO's Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy (RESCUE).**

Launched in 2024 at the COP29 in Baku, RESCUE has rapidly **become a flagship regional alliance.** It successfully aligns ECO Member States with global momentum toward resource efficiency and circularity. Building directly on this strong foundation,

UNIDO and ECO jointly championed the initiative at the World Circular Economy Forum, in 2025.

And to translate this high-level ambition into action, **we would like to work with ECO countries in shaping a shared vision for circular economic transformation.** This project will help countries identify strategic opportunities, prioritize high-potential sectors, and develop pathways that align circular economy with national development goals, regional cooperation priorities, and a just, inclusive transition.

We see this initiative not only as a regional platform for collaboration, but as **the primary vehicle to connect ECO countries with global partners, knowledge networks, and investment opportunities.**

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you proceed with your deliberations on the Cooperation Framework, the Samarkand Declaration, and the future of RESCUE, **UNIDO stands ready to help you translate this vision into practice.**

We bring our expertise in promoting sustainable, inclusive industrial development; as well as our mandate to champion the circular economy for resource-efficient industrialization. This combination enables us to integrate your regional efforts into the broader, global agenda.

Let me conclude by inviting Uzbekistan and all ECO Member States to support this joint initiative, which is part of your deliberations today.

We look forward to working closely with you to ensure the ECO region emerges as a leader in the circular economy transition, driving sustainable industrial development, competitive economies, and resilient societies.

Thank you.

Samarkand Declaration on Regional Environmental Cooperation

**6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment
Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan
3 June 2026**

We, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), meeting in Samarkand on 3 June 2026 for the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment under the overarching theme “New Horizons for Enhanced Regional Environmental Action through Collaborative Solutions”,

Recalling the foundational commitments of the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment held in Istanbul in 2014, which designated environment and climate change impacts as cross-sectoral priorities of the Organization,

Further recalling the ECO Vision 2025 and its Implementation Framework, as well as the ECO Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation 2035, which highlight environmental protection, resilience, and the transition to a low-carbon development model as a priority area and policy focus,

Recognizing that our shared geography binds our nations together, and that environmental degradation in one Member State can swiftly become an economic, and humanitarian challenge in another,

Taking note of the outcomes of the Regional Ecological Summit held in Astana in April 2026 as a significant mid-year milestone for aligning our regional environmental ambitions,

Welcoming the ongoing and past successful leadership of ECO Member States – Türkiye and Azerbaijan, respectively in global climate negotiations and hosting 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Baku and COP31 in Türkiye,

Noting the importance of strategic engagement with global partners, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), as well as active participation in international platforms such as the Conferences of Parties (COPs) of environmental conventions,

Emphasizing the critical need for enhanced regional environmental coordination, collaborative policy making, shared innovation, and inclusive multilateralism to safeguard our common future,

Having considered the recommendations of the Senior Officials Meeting/8th Working Group on Environment held on 2 June 2026, and the outcomes of the first meeting of the High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation held on 23 April 2026,

Hereby resolve to:

1. **Adopt** the ECO Cooperation Framework on the Environment (2026-2030) as the overarching non-binding regional strategic document to guide environmental cooperation over the coming years, and its two thematic annexes: the Work Program on Climate Change in the ECO Region (2026-2030) and the Work Program on Biodiversity in the ECO Region (2026-2030).
2. **Reaffirm** our commitment to the implementation of these frameworks, recognizing that national action plans are essential, but their effectiveness is magnified when aligned with a cohesive regional strategy.
3. **Support** the continuation and consolidation of the High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation, initiated by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as a vital mechanism for bringing together all relevant stakeholders to brainstorm, exchange knowledge, and drive regional environmental action.
4. **Call upon** the Member States to explore and support concrete steps within the national capacities to advance the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy (RESCUE), with a focus on implementation timelines, resource mobilization, and tangible, measurable results.

5. **Recognize** that land degradation and desertification are longstanding and intensifying environmental challenges in the ECO region, severely affecting human health, agricultural productivity, infrastructure, and socio-economic well-being. We therefore underscore the significance of further coordinated regional cooperation to address these challenges through integrated land management, early warning system for dust and sand storms, reforestation and afforestation, water use, and knowledge sharing, while also leveraging relevant international frameworks and financing mechanisms.
6. **Call upon** the Member States within the national capacities to focus their contributions on the implementation of the existing frameworks and initiatives, providing concrete plans, expertise, technical assistance, and financial resources to accelerate progress, subject to voluntary funding by international partners, while avoiding overlaps and duplications.
7. **Encourage** the Member States to proactively engage in the Conferences of the Parties (COPs) to the UNFCCC and participate at the COP31 at the highest possible level and collectively push for positive outcomes that can align the ECO region's development with the targets of the Paris Agreement.
8. **Urge** the ECO Secretariat to continue strategic engagement with UNEP, UNIDO, and other international partners to foster green development, energy transition, effective resource management, circular economy practices, including the Zero Waste approach and to take the concerted actions in global environmental fora.
9. **Decide** to issue this Samarkand Declaration as a unified political statement of our commitment to action, and to transmit it to relevant ECO policy-making bodies for follow-up and integration into the broader ECO work program.
10. **Express** our profound gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the people of Samarkand for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements, which have contributed significantly to the success of the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment.
11. **Agree** to convene the 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment at a date and venue to be determined through the ECO Secretariat in consultation with Member States.

Adopted in Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan, on 3 June 2026