



ECO Newsletter

Economic Cooperation Organization

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Dear Friends,



by ECO with Azerbaijan, UNIDO and UNEP.

It gives us great pleasure to bring to you the ECO Newsletter for November. This month our activities gained further momentum with our team actively participating in the 29th UNFCCC COP in Baku. During our stay in Baku we carried out the launch of the ECO Clean Energy Center and the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability and Circular Economy in the ECO Region (RESCUE). The two events held at Ministerial level were jointly organized

We also participated in the High-Level Panels on Land Degradation and Climate Change and Law Enforcement for Enhanced Climatic Action. In addition to interacting with Azerbaijan media, I also availed the opportunity to hold bilateral meetings with the Vice-President & Head of Iran's Environment Department H.E. Ms. Shina Ansari and the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, on the margins of the COP.

On November 27, we celebrated the ECO Day at the IPIS in Tehran, commemorating the formation and expansion of the Organization, with participation of senior Iranian officials, ECO stakeholders, and members of diplomatic corps.

I also received the President of the ECO Trade and Development Bank at the Secretariat besides visiting the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In these interactions, we discussed the importance of securing funding for ECO projects; setting up appropriate payment mechanisms to facilitate business transactions in the ECO region and to create opportunities for B2B networking.

We also welcomed Mr. Cagatay Emrah Ongut from Türkiye to our team as the new Deputy Secretary General. We are confident that his extensive experience in management and planning will contribute to ECO's success and effectiveness.

Secretary General
Economic Cooperation Organization

ECO Advocates for Stronger Climate Commitments at COP29



Baku- November 15, 2024

At the 29th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29), Dr. Asad M. Khan delivered a statement at a High-Level Panel “Land Degradation and Climate Change: Losses, Damages, and Opportunities for Strengthening Cooperation among Countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Regions with Arid Climates.” Organized by Uzbekistan, the panel emphasized the nexus between climate change and land degradation, underscoring the importance of regional cooperation to address these intertwined challenges.

Dr. Khan highlighted the vulnerability of the ECO region to climate change and related threats and discussed regional initiatives such as the ECO LandCare Programme 2021-2030. He emphasized the commitment of ECO countries to addressing climate change, noting that they are parties to most international climate frameworks.

Dr. Khan called for a collective response to tackle climate change, advocating for the implementation of international legal frameworks, adherence to emission reduction commitments, increased climate financing, investment in renewable energy, and enhanced regional cooperation.



Soft Launch of ECO Clean Energy Centre

Baku-November 15, 2024

The Economic Cooperation Organization, in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Republic of Azerbaijan, carried out the Soft Launch of the ECO Energy Centre (CECECO) on the margins of COP29.

The event was inaugurated by Mr. Parviz Shahbazov, Minister of Energy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Dr. Asad M. Khan, Secretary General of ECO, and Mr. Ciyong Zou, UNIDO Deputy Director General and Managing Director of Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Industrial Development.

Dr. Khan highlighted the establishment of the Clean Energy Centre as a manifestation of ECO's commitment to the clean energy agenda. The primary goal of the project, he explained, is to enhance Member States' access to modern, affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy services. The Centre will contribute to energy security and reduce the negative environmental impacts of the energy sector.

Speakers expressed confidence that the Centre would be instrumental in strengthening regional energy security, combating climate change, and advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while fostering innovation, collaboration, and capacity-building to accelerate the clean energy transition. It is expected to create favorable conditions for sustainable energy markets, attract significant investments, and serve as a key pillar of the Global Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centres (GN-SEC), coordinated by UNIDO in partnership with regional economic communities. ECO and UNIDO also commended Azerbaijan for its visionary leadership in hosting this transformative initiative.





Ministerial Meeting on Circular Economy



Baku- November 16, 2024

The Economic Cooperation Organization, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the COP29 Presidency of Azerbaijan, convened the Ministerial Meeting on Circular Economy, titled “Empowering Interregional Partnerships for Circular Economy Transition: Towards a Climate Resilient and Sustainable Future via Resource-Efficiency”, on the margins of COP29. The meeting was inaugurated by UNEP Executive Director Ms. Inger Andersen and ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan, with reflections from Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, ESCAP Executive Secretary, on the importance of international cooperation in advancing circular economy.

The meeting featured two high-level panel sessions: the first focused on empowering interregional partnerships for the circular economy transition, while the second highlighted perspectives from international organizations and academia. Discussions



emphasized the critical role of circular economy practices in achieving climate goals, enhancing resource efficiency, and fostering resilient communities. Held as an interactive forum, the meeting facilitated open exchanges among over 90 stakeholders, including representatives from international organizations, businesses, academia, civil society, and other partners.

The event concluded with the presentation of two key outcome documents by Dr. Khan: the “Joint Declaration on Baku Resource Efficiency and Circularity Agenda”, advocating for global resource efficiency, sustainable policies, regional ownership, and collaboration on circular transitions, and the “Joint Statement on Launching RESCUE”. The latter announced the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy (RESCUE), a joint effort by the ECO Secretariat and COP29 Presidency to establish a regional cooperation platform for a just transition to a circular economy. Both documents are non-binding, and stakeholders were invited to associate with them.

Secretary General Meets Iran’s Vice-President

Baku-November 14, 2024



Dr. Asad M. Khan met H.E. Dr. Shina Ansari, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Head of the Department of Environment, on the margins of COP29. The Vice-President emphasized her government’s commitment to environmental issues, noting that such challenges are shared across the region and require collective action. She acknowledged ECO’s capacity to lead efforts in fostering environmental cooperation within the region.

Dr. Khan expressed appreciation for Iran’s readiness to enhance environmental collaboration and outlined key drivers for strengthening regional cooperation on environmental and climate-related challenges. He underscored the importance of regular, sustained interactions at all levels to build momentum for effective and collaborative environmental action across the ECO region.

Secretary General Meets Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister

Baku-November 15, 2024



Dr. Asad M. Khan met H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, on the margins of COP29 to discuss preparations for the upcoming ECO Council of Ministers and Summit, as well as ways to strengthen the organization.

Dr. Khan commended Azerbaijan's efforts as COP29 President in ensuring the seamless organization of the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference. He also briefed the Minister on ECO's planned events on the sidelines of COP29 in collaboration with the COP29 Presidency and UN entities.

The Minister acknowledged the complexity of climate negotiations and expressed confidence in achieving tangible outcomes at COP29. He reaffirmed Azerbaijan's commitment to collaboration with ECO despite the demanding role of the COP Presidency and emphasized the country's readiness to ensure a productive and

results-driven chairmanship of the ECO Summit in 2025.

Secretary General Meets Azerbaijan's Prosecutor General

Baku-November 14, 2024

Dr. Asad M. Khan met Dr. Kamran Aliyev, Prosecutor General of Azerbaijan and congratulated the country on the successful organization of the 2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29). He commended Azerbaijan's timely initiative to mobilize law enforcement for enhanced climate action during COP29 and highlighted the pivotal role prosecutors general can play in combating environmental crimes. Dr. Khan also stressed the importance of seamless information and data exchange among ECO Member States in this area.

Dr. Aliyev reaffirmed Azerbaijan's commitment to international cooperation and expressed determination to continue this initiative during COP30 in Brazil. He also emphasized the need to enhance bilateral cooperation in addressing environmental crimes. Both sides acknowledged the successful convening of the 4th Meeting of the Attorneys/Prosecutors General of ECO Member States in Baku in 2023, which provided fresh momentum for strengthening legal and law enforcement collaboration within the region.



Celebrating ECO's Journey of Cooperation and Growth

Tehran – November 27, 2024

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) marked its 39th Establishment and 32nd Expansion anniversaries with a reception at the Institute of Political and International Studies (IPIS). The event gathered ECO stakeholders, diplomats, host government dignitaries, and local guests, with H.E. Mr. Amin Taarafo, Deputy Minister for Roads and Urban Development of Iran, attending as the chief guest.

The event commenced with a screening of an ECO documentary and a photo exhibition showcasing the Organization's milestones and initiatives.

Dr. Asad M. Khan traced the Organization's journey from its founding in 1964 as the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) by Iran, Pakistan, and Türkiye, to its transformation into ECO in 1985 and subsequent expansion in 1992 to include Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

Highlighting 2024 as the "Year of Enhanced and Resilient ECO Region through Expansion of Intra-Regional Trade," Dr. Khan outlined ECO's achievements in trade, connectivity, energy, environment, tourism, and industrial development. He also emphasized ECO's commitment to fostering international partnerships and strengthening ties with regional and global organizations to advance regional integration.



Secretary General Meets Kyrgyz Permanent Representative

Tehran – November 5, 2024



Dr. Asad M. Khan met H.E. Ambassador Turdakun Sydykov, Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic to ECO. He appreciated Kyrgyzstan's valuable contributions to the Organization and briefed Ambassador Sydykov on his recent engagements with Ministers from Member States in New York, Ashgabat, and Tashkent. The discussion also focused on enhancing ECO's institutional capacity to more effectively serve its member nations.

Secretary General Meets Azerbaijan's Permanent Representative

Tehran – November 6, 2024

Dr. Asad M. Khan met H.E. Ambassador Ali Alizada, the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to ECO, in Tehran. He expressed his gratitude to Azerbaijan for its support to the ECO Secretariat and its proactive role in advancing the organization's objectives. He also briefed Ambassador Alizada on his recent discussions with distinguished Ministers from various ECO Member States, which took place in New York, Ashgabat, and Tashkent.

The conversation further delved into ECO's planned participation at COP29, highlighting key events the organization will host on the sidelines. These include the Ministerial Meeting on Circular Economy, the ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment, and the soft launch of the ECO Clean Energy Center. Dr. Khan emphasized the importance of these initiatives in fostering regional cooperation and advancing ECO's sustainable development agenda.



ECO Delegation Visits ECO-CCI



Tehran – November 26, 2024

An ECO delegation, led by Dr. Asad M. Khan, visited the ECO Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ECO-CCI), accompanied by the Deputy Secretary General (AIT) and officials from the Trade & Investment Directorate. The delegation was welcomed by Mr. Samad Hassanzade, President of both the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines & Agriculture (ICCIMA) and ECO-CCI.

Discussions highlighted the region's vast potential for expanding trade and investment,



with ECO-CCI representatives stressing the need for active collaboration in trade, transport, and tourism. Dr. Khan reviewed ECO's achievements and initiatives in priority sectors, emphasizing the importance of the ECOTA framework for boosting intra-regional trade.

The meeting concluded with mutual commitments to enhancing trade facilitation, investment promotion, and connectivity, aiming to foster a business-friendly environment, reduce costs and risks, and stimulate cross-border trade and investment.

ETDB President Visits ECO Secretariat

Tehran – November 24, 2024

Dr. Mohammad Hashem Botshekan, President of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB), met Dr. Asad Khan at the ECO Secretariat. Dr. Khan thanked ECO-TDB for its support and emphasized the need to strengthen collaboration and explore new funding mechanisms to advance regional development.

They reviewed existing cooperation and stressed the importance of enhancing the Bank's financial capacity. They discussed strategies to expand funding avenues and support ECO projects in priority sectors.



Turkmenistan IECD Head Visits ECO Secretariat

Tehran – November 11, 2024

H.E. Ambassador Atageldi Haljanov, Head of the International Economic Cooperation Department of Turkmenistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, met Dr. Asad M. Khan at the ECO Secretariat.

Ambassador Haljanov invited Dr. Khan to the "International Transport and Transit Corridors: Interconnection and Development" Conference & EXPO, which took place on November 26-27 in Ashgabat, while reaffirming Turkmenistan's commitment to closer cooperation with ECO.



IOM Chief Visits ECO Secretariat



Tehran – November 5, 2024

Ms. Lalini Veerassamy, IOM Chief of Mission in Iran, met Dr. Asad M. Khan at the ECO Secretariat to discuss collaboration and shared priorities. Ms. Veerassamy highlighted the 2009 ECO-IOM Memorandum of Understanding and the recent joint workshop on combating trafficking and smuggling in the ECO region.



Dr. Khan emphasized migration as a critical challenge for the ECO region, shaped by political, social, economic, and environmental factors. He called for stronger ECO-IOM collaboration to address these issues, aligning efforts with sustainable development priorities. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to tackling migration challenges through regional cooperation.

APDIM Director Visits ECO Secretariat

Tehran – November 25, 2024

Ms. Letizia Rossano, Director of the Asia Pacific Centre for the Development of Disaster Information Management (APDIM), met Dr. Asad M. Khan at the ECO Secretariat, to explore closer collaboration on disaster risk reduction (DRR) in the ECO Region.

Dr. Khan emphasized that the ECO Region is among the most disaster-prone in the world, facing challenges such as sand and dust storms, earthquakes, and floods. He expressed gratitude for APDIM's ongoing support on DRR issues and invited them to present their activities and proposals at a future CPR meeting, particularly in relation to the revision of the ECO Regional Framework on DRR in 2025.



Ms. Rossano briefed Dr. Khan on APDIM's efforts and highlighted the need for collective action to address shared disaster challenges. She reaffirmed APDIM's readiness to collaborate with ECO Member States and facilitate regional efforts to strengthen DRR initiatives.

Farewell to Ambassador Hüseyin Avni Bicakli and Mr. Akbar Khodaei

Tehran – November 20, 2024

Dr. Asad M. Khan hosted a farewell dinner to honor Ambassador Hüseyin Avni Bicakli, the outgoing ECO Deputy Secretary General and a seasoned diplomat from Türkiye. The gathering, attended by ECO Permanent Representatives, celebrated Ambassador Bicakli's exceptional six-year tenure at the ECO Secretariat. Dr. Khan expressed gratitude for his dedication and contributions. ECO Permanent Representatives also praised Ambassador Bicakli's tenure at the Secretariat.



At the ECO Secretariat, a gathering was held to bid farewell to Mr. Akbar Khodaei, Director of Transport and Communications. Dr. Asad M. Khan acknowledged Mr. Khodaei's contributions and extended warm wishes for his future endeavors. Other participants also expressed their admiration and wished him continued success.

International Conference on Environment & Urban Health

Khuramabad, Iran- November 21-22, 2024

An ECO delegation, led by Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Silapberdi Nurberdiyev, attended the International Conference on Environment & Urban Health in Khorramabad, Iran, organized by the Asian Mayor Forum and Khorramabad Municipality. The event brought together Asian municipalities, diplomatic representatives, NGOs, and academics to address environmental challenges and share best practices for improving urban health. Special focus was given to enhancing women's participation in environmental protection for sustainable development, and the conference concluded with a ceremonial oak tree planting.

On the sidelines, the ECO delegation held bilateral meetings with Mr. Mohammad Khaki, President of the Lorestan Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines, and Agriculture, and Mr. Hamidreza Gholamzadeh, Secretary General of the Asian Mayor Forum. Discussions centered on potential collaboration in line with their organizational mandates.



High-Level Expert Group Meeting on Statistics

Tehran – November 5, 2024

The 10th High-Level Expert Group Meeting on Statistics, chaired virtually by ECO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Jandos Asanov, saw participation from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, and Turkmenistan.

Ambassador Asanov congratulated Azerbaijan, Iran, and Kazakhstan on their upcoming agricultural censuses, emphasizing food security as a strategic ECO priority. He proposed related events for 2025 and thanked the Turkish Statistical Institute for its recent workshop on trade statistics and Azerbaijan's Economic Scientific Research Institute for hosting the 3rd ECO Think-Tank Forum in October.



Member States shared updates on national statistical developments and discussed ways to enhance collaboration in ECO's statistical initiatives. The meeting reviewed ongoing projects, the ECO Annual Economic Report 2023, and approved the draft agenda for the 8th Meeting of Heads of National Statistics Offices, set for 2025.

Dr. Khan appreciated Turkmenistan's active participation in ECO initiatives, referencing his recent meeting with Turkmenistan's Foreign Minister during the UN General Assembly in September 2024. The discussion also focused on regional initiatives in transport, energy, and environmental collaboration.

ECO Experts Group Meeting on Eco Tourism

Girne- November 25, 2024

The 4th ECO Experts Group Meeting on Ecotourism, hosted by the Republic of Türkiye and the Turkish Cypriot State, convened in a hybrid format, bringing together experts from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and the Turkish Cypriot State. The meeting focused on strategies to promote sustainable tourism and preserve the region's natural heritage.

Discussions revolved around nature tourism practices in protected areas, ecosystem management for tourism, progress in ecotourism activities, and the development of infrastructure for ecotourism routes. Participants also explored marketing strategies for specific ecotourism

destinations and reviewed recommendations from previous meetings.

A significant outcome was the proposal to compile a comprehensive ecotourism catalogue featuring best practices and to organize field trips to strengthen regional ecotourism. Azerbaijan expressed interest in hosting such trips and the 5th Experts Group Meeting on Ecotourism.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to promoting sustainable tourism, sharing knowledge, and protecting the region's natural and cultural heritage, ensuring that ecotourism benefits local communities while fostering regional cooperation.



Welcoming New Members at ECO Secretariat

The ECO Secretariat is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Çağatay Emrah Ongut as the Deputy Secretary General, effective November 28, 2024. A Turkish national with extensive experience in administration and finance, Mr. Ongut succeeds Ambassador Hüseyin Avni Bıçaklı. He will oversee Administration, Energy, Mines and Environment (EME), Information Technology (IT), and International Relations (IR), infusing these crucial areas with innovative strategies and dynamic leadership.



We also welcome Mr. Alireza Mahmoudi, who joined on November 10, 2024, as Director of Transport and Communication. With over 30 years in government services, including his role as Director General for Consular Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, Mr. Mahmoudi succeeds Mr. Akbar Khodaei.



Economic Cooperation Organization



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