

Joint Statement
**on launching the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency,
Sustainability, and Circular Economy in the ECO Region (RESCUE)**

of the Ministerial Meeting on Circular Economy
**“Empowering Interregional Partnerships for Circular Economy Transition:
Towards a Climate Resilient and Sustainable Future via Resource-Efficiency”**

16 November 2024
Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan

We, the Participants of the Ministerial Meeting on Circular Economy “Empowering Interregional Partnerships for Circular Economy Transition: Towards a Climate Resilient and Sustainable Future via Resource-Efficiency”, held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan on 16 November 2024 on the sidelines of the 29th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP29) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);

Resolve to launch on the margins of COP29 the Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability, and Circular Economy in the ECO Region (RESCUE), which was initiated by the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) in partnership with the Republic of Azerbaijan;

Reaffirm that the key overarching objective of the RESCUE is to create a target-oriented regional cooperation platform that will advocate for a just transition to a resource-efficient, circular, and regenerative economy, and support coherent policies for circularity and more sustainable management of resources;

Recognize that the RESCUE is instrumental for achieving climate resilience and keeping resource consumption within planetary boundaries, thus contributing to regional sustainability in a long-term perspective;

Emphasize that RESCUE may contribute to positioning the ECO Region as a proponent of a socially just, inclusive, and sustainable transition to circularity and lower-carbon economies in the international arena;

Reaffirm that the RESCUE may support the global efforts on circular transition, and transform into a relevant regional knowledge and excellence hub in the long run;

Expresses our conviction that the RESCUE will support and complement the existing country-led global and regional initiatives by some of the ECO Member States, notably the ‘Zero Waste’ Initiative by the Republic of Türkiye, International Decade for Action ‘Water for Sustainable Development’ by Tajikistan, ‘Sustainable Mountain Development’ by the Kyrgyz Republic and the ECO High-Level Dialogue Platform for Environment of the Republic of Uzbekistan;

Proclaim that the RESCUE is launched as a collaborative initiative by ECO jointly with the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) and the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), which share a similar vision, membership, and geographical coverage with ECO;

Welcome all stakeholders promoting circular transition globally to align with the RESCUE, which is open for joining by any international development partners;

Call upon the ECO Member States and potential international development partners to engage in the following collaborative activities within the RESCUE in a short and mid-term perspective:

1. To initiate and develop the low-budget **project on preparation of needs assessment/feasibility study of the ECO region for a just transition to a resource-efficient and circular economy** with possible seed financing by ECO, SPECA, and OTS;
2. Driven by the outcomes and deliverables of the aforementioned Project, to consider mapping out a well-designed and long-term oriented **Regional Action Plan** that will represent a guiding framework towards circular transition. The Regional Action Plan may entail a roadmap for an integrated and coherent resource mobilization. To further explore the possibilities of setting up the governance mechanism for regular steering and monitoring required activities;
3. To reflect and highlight the significance of a just transition to a resource-efficient and circular economy and more sustainable management of natural resources in key outcome documents of the forthcoming meetings of policy and decision-making bodies of ECO, SPECA, and OTS;
4. To consider possibilities for uptake of the topic of gradual just transition to a resource-efficient and circular economy in the framework of different important international events, to be organized in the ECO Member States as dedicated special sessions, panels, side events, etc. Furthermore, to examine the key relevant global events (such as the Davos Forum, IRENA Assembly, UN GA, etc.) for advocacy of the initiative;
5. To establish a **Group of Friends** within the United Nations System and other global multilateral platforms with a view to interact with possible counterparts, advocate the initiative, and forge partnerships for the delivery of cohesive and robust technical and financial support.

Done in Baku, on 16 November 2024.