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Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations
and Executive Secretary of ESCAP**

Remarks (as delivered)

Opening Session

**17TH Summit of the Economic Cooperation Organization
New ECO Vision for a Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Future**

Friday, 4 July 2025

Khankendi, Republic of Azerbaijan

Excellency, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev,

**Excellencies Heads of State and Heads of Government, distinguished
delegates, ladies and gentlemen,**

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr Ilham Aliyev for his leadership in advancing multilateral cooperation by initiating the first summit of the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) in 2023, the hosting of the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference and this ECO summit.

This gathering takes place under the new ECO direction for “a sustainable and climate-resilient future,” aimed at redefining ECO’s shared pathways toward sustainability and economic resilience as the ECO Vision 2025 concludes.

Last year, for the first time, the global average temperature exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Recent projections suggest that global

temperatures are likely to remain at or near this level over the next five years. It is a clear warming that the window for decisive action to address climate change is rapidly closing.

The climate challenges make the summit's theme particularly relevant to the future of cooperation among ECO member States and beyond. They also underscore the need to fully integrate sustainability and resilience into the core cooperation areas including trade, transport, energy, tourism, economic growth, productivity, social welfare and the environment.

To effectively address these interconnected and intensifying climate risks, regional cooperation must be strengthened to safeguard development gains and foster a just transition to low-emission, climate-resilient economies.

Moreover, in this turbulent time, the role of regional cooperation has never been more vital. In this context, I would like to highlight **three key suggestions** for your further deliberations:

First, we must build and strengthen regional platforms to accelerate policy coherence and alignment across national and subregional levels. For example, the new Vision of ECO can be aligned with national climate targets, especially as countries are finalizing their next round of nationally determined contributions.

Second, given the profound effects of climate change on countries, it is crucial to establish or enhance a shared framework for climate risk assessment, early warning systems and regional response coordination, particularly for floods,

droughts and glacial hazards, including those with transboundary consequences.

Finally, we must embed the vision of a sustainable and climate-resilient future across all sectors of cooperation to foster greater policy coherence, cross-sectoral alignment and implementation synergies.

Excellencies,

As ECO member states are also ESCAP member States, I would like to use this opportunity to invite all of you to the 82nd session of the Commission, to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan in April 2026 with the theme on “Leaving No One Behind: Advancing a Society for All Ages.” I would like to express my high appreciation to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr Ilham Aliyev for this important initiative and support.

Thank you for your kind attention.

I wish you successful Summit.