



# ECO Newsletter

Economic Cooperation Organization

August, 2025- No. 12



## Foreword



Dear Friends,

I am pleased to bring out to you the ECO Newsletter for the month of August. This month, at the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China, I attended the 25th Summit of Heads of States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tianjin, People's Republic of China. During the Summit I had the privilege of engaging with the ECO and other leaders attending the Summit including the Honourable Presidents of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, and the Prime Minister of Pakistan. During these interactions, I sensed a strong commitment to and desire

for promoting regional integration and deepening engagements to harness the regions' full potential. While in Beijing, I visited the headquarters of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and engaged with its senior leadership to explore potential ECO-AIIB collaboration for advancing infrastructure development in the region. I also visited the SCO Secretariat, where I met SCO Secretary General to discuss opportunities for joint initiatives that would enhance synergies between the two organisations. I also held bilateral meetings with the Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission, as well as the Secretaries General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), to strengthen cooperation and explore avenues for mutual collaboration.

Earlier in Awaza, Turkmenistan, I attended the 3rd Third United Nations Landlocked Developing Countries Conference (LLDC3). This was the second time that an ECO country hosted the LLDCs conference, which reflects ECO countries' commitment to improving regional connectivity and transport linkages. ECO actively participated in the conference and organized a sideline ministerial event for implementing the Awaza Programme of Action 2024–2034. On the margins of the conference, I also met with the Transport Minister, Kazakhstan as well as the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS). With seven out of ten ECO member countries being landlocked, this conference held particular significance for our region and our organization and reflected our shared dedication to addressing the unique challenges faced by landlocked countries.

In Islamabad, I had the privilege of delivering a public address at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). I provided an overview of ECO, including its structure, activities, and priorities. I also highlighted the current state of regional integration, the numerous overlaps among our Member States, and stressed the importance of strengthening regionalism in light of the rising unilateralism and the prevailing geopolitical dynamics.

August was an eventful month and ECO strives for making 2025 equally impactful. This year, the Islamic Republic of Iran will host meetings of ECO Interior, Health, and Agriculture Ministers, while the Republic of Türkiye will convene the ECO Trade Ministers Meeting. The momentum has been built, and we remain optimistic about sustaining and building upon it.

Secretary General  
Economic Cooperation Organization

# Secretary General Attends SCO Summit

Tianjin-China, August 31, 2025

As part of his participation at the 25<sup>th</sup> Summit of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Cooperation (SCO) in Tianjin, Dr. Asad M. Khan attended the welcome banquet hosted by the President of the People's Republic of China, H.E. President Xi Jinping and the First Lady Peng Liyuan, for leaders and heads of international organizations participating in the 25<sup>th</sup> SCO Heads of State Summit in Tianjin.

The event was marked by immaculate organization and generous hospitality. Dr. Khan expressed profound gratitude to President Xi Jinping and the First Lady for their warm welcome and commended their efforts in fostering



# Secretary General Meets ECO Leadership at SCO Summit



Tianjin-China, August 31, 2025

At the invitation of the Government of the People's Republic of China, the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), H.E. Dr Asad M. Khan, participated in the 25<sup>th</sup> Summit of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit.



## Exchange with President of Turkmenistan

Dr. Khan also met with H.E. Serdar Berdimuhamedow, President of Turkmenistan. He congratulated Turkmenistan on the successful hosting of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) in Awaza and acknowledged Turkmenistan's active contributions to ECO's initiatives.

## Interaction with President of Kyrgyz Republic

Dr. Khan held discussion with H. E. Sadyr Japarov, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, focusing on Kyrgyzstan's forthcoming Chairmanship of ECO in 2026. The Secretary General expressed readiness to undertake a bilateral visit Bishkek for in-depth consultations with Kyrgyz leadership to ensure a smooth transition of chairmanship and further strengthen ECO's agenda.



## Tête-à-Tête with President of Uzbekistan

Dr. Khan briefly interacted with H. E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of Uzbekistan, and commended Uzbekistan's initiatives aimed at deepening and diversifying cooperation within the ECO region.

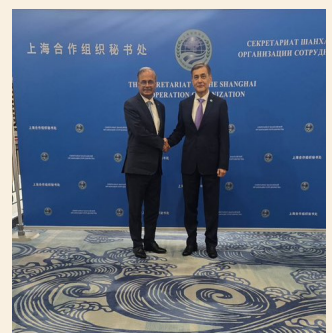


## Meeting with President of Kazakhstan

At the welcome banquet hosted by Chinese President Xi Jinping and First Lady Peng Liyuan for leaders and heads of international organizations participating in the Summit, Dr. Khan availed the opportunity to meet and greet H.E. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Kazakhstan, and expressed gratitude for Kazakhstan's able stewardship of ECO during 2025. He also discussed the upcoming 29<sup>th</sup> ECO Council of Ministers Meeting, scheduled to be held in Kazakhstan in November, and shared optimism for its successful outcomes.



## Secretary General Visits SCO Secretariat



August 29, 2025 – SCO Secretariat, Beijing

Dr. Asad M. Khan, met with H.E. Nurlan Yermekbayev, SCO Secretary General.

Both sides, while discussing commonalities between the two organizations and sharing updates on the latest developments within their respective frameworks, emphasized the need for launching joint ECO-SCO activities.

The meeting also discussed implementing the 2007 ECO-SCO Memorandum of Understanding and finalizing the Joint Plan of Action with a view to establishing solid cooperation mechanisms between the two organizations. The meeting further reaffirmed the commitment of ECO and SCO to strengthening regional partnerships, promoting cooperation, and leveraging synergies to benefit the broader region.





## Secretary General Visits AIIB Headquarters

August 29, 2025 – Beijing

Dr. Asad M. Khan, held a meeting with Mr. Konstantin Limitovskiy, Chief Investment Officer for Public Sector & Project and Corporate Finance Clients at the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

The discussions focused on potential avenues for ECO-AIIB collaboration, with particular emphasis on advancing regional connectivity, supporting energy projects and promoting innovation. Being a key region for AIIB and with almost complete membership and priorities overlap between the Bank and the ECO, Dr. Khan stressed the need for the two organizations to synergize efforts to plan and execute infrastructure projects in the region. The two sides also agreed to explore opportunities to materialize joint regional development initiatives.



## Secretary General Highlights Synergies with SCO During CGTN Interview

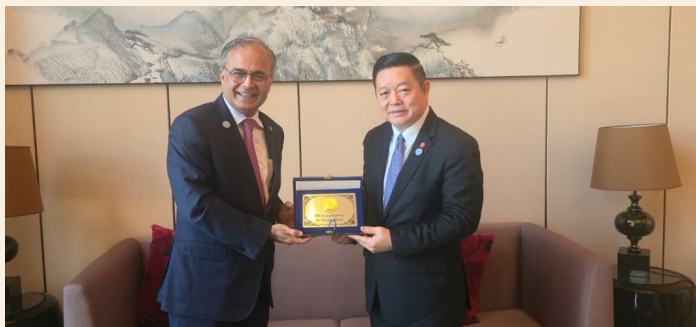
August 31, 2025-Tianjin

On the sidelines of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Tianjin, Dr. Asad M. Khan, participated in an exclusive interview with CGTN at their invitation.

Dr. Khan highlighted commonalities between ECO and SCO, including overlapping membership and shared priorities such as regional connectivity, trade integration, and sustainable development. Dr. Khan commended this year's SCO Summit for its remarkable representation by nearly 30 heads of state and international organizations. He reaffirmed ECO's commitment to deepening its partnership with SCO, formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding in 2007, and expressed readiness to expand cooperation with SCO and other regional organizations.



## ECO-ASEAN Secretaries General Meet in Tianjin



August 31, 2025- Tianjin

On the sidelines of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, met with H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Both sides exchanged views on the latest developments in their respective regions. Dr. Khan emphasized historical significance of both organizations, noting that ECO and ASEAN rank as few of the oldest international organizations in the world, with the former starting as Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) in 1964. Dr. Khan also called for operationalization of the ECO-ASEAN Memorandum of Understanding and the Framework of Cooperation and elevating ECO-ASEAN relations to a results-driven partnership.

Further focusing on establishing multitrack cooperation to create synergies in their respective work, the meeting concluded with a mutual resolve to continue consultations for better carrying out joint activities in the areas of mutual interest.

## Secretary General Meets CIS and EEC Leadership



September 1, 2025-Tianjin

Dr. Asad M. Khan held meetings with H.E. Sergey, Secretary General of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and H.E. Bakytzhan Sagintayev, Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC).

Discussions were held on the commonalities between the organizations, including overlapping membership and shared priorities. During the meetings, the sides updated each other on the latest developments in their respective organizations and agreed to initiate mechanisms to institutionalize collaboration with each other for the sustainable development and collective benefit of the region.

The meetings expressed optimism about future collaboration, while also agreeing to hold regular consultations, and formalize relations. The meetings concluded with a mutual commitment to advancing regional development and connectivity through deeper partnership and cooperation.



## ECO Participates in the Third United Nations Landlocked Developing Countries Conference (LLDC3)

Awaza, Turkmenistan August 5-8, 2025

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), led by its Secretary General, Dr. Asad M. Khan, actively participated in the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3), held in Awaza, Turkmenistan, from August 5–8, 2025.

The high-profile event brought together Heads of State/Government, Ministers, Heads of International Organizations, and senior officials from around the globe to address the unique challenges faced by landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and explore strategies for sustainable development.

The 5-day conference featured a series of high-level political, economic, cultural, and humanitarian events, focusing on broader development issues impacting LLDCs. ECO, representing seven landlocked member states, played a pivotal role in advocating for the needs of these countries while sharing its insights, experiences, and best practices with the international community. The conference also marked the adoption of the Awaza Program of Action (APA) for the decade 2024–2034, which aims to guide LLDCs toward achieving inclusive and sustainable development.



## ECO's Contributions to LLDC3

### Opening Plenary Meeting

August 5

Dr. Asad M. Khan led the ECO delegation at the Welcoming Ceremony and Opening Plenary Meeting of LLDC3. In his remarks, he emphasized ECO's critical role in advocating for the interests of landlocked member states and contributing to global dialogue on solutions for sustainable development. The participation of Heads of State/Government, Ministers, and international organizations underscored the global commitment to addressing LLDC-specific development challenges.



## High-Level Roundtable on Trade

August 6

Dr. Khan delivered a statement at the High-Level Thematic Roundtable 2, titled “Seizing the transformative potential of trade, trade facilitation, and regional integration for landlocked developing countries.” During his address, he emphasized the need for a holistic approach to development, including closer collaboration with the private sector and stronger mechanisms to finance regional projects. He outlined priority actions such as building regional supply chains, promoting cross-border e-commerce, enhancing transport-tourism-trade linkages, and fostering innovation through digitalization and technology.

Dr. Khan also stressed the importance of reliable data, cooperation with international financial institutions, and inclusive development by investing in youth and women. He reaffirmed ECO’s commitment to accelerating WTO accession processes, implementing the TIR transit system, and aligning its strategic goals with the Awaza Program of Action to drive sustainable growth through partnerships.



## Ministerial Side Event on Implementing the Awaza Programme of Action 2024–2034

August 6

ECO hosted a high-level Ministerial Side Event titled “ECO, Implementation of the Awaza Program of Action (APA) 2024–2034” during LLDC3 in Awaza, Turkmenistan. The event brought together representatives from ECO Member States, including Turkmenistan, Iran, and Kyrgyzstan, alongside officials from organizations such as the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and TRACECA.

Dr. Asad M. Khan emphasized ECO’s commitment to aligning its strategic vision with the APA to accelerate sustainable development, enhance transport and digital connectivity, mobilize infrastructure financing, and promote climate-resilient development. Participants highlighted the APA’s role as a framework for regional cooperation and sustainable growth, underscoring the need for integrating digitalization, trade facilitation, and climate resilience into regional strategies. The session concluded with a reaffirmation of ECO’s pivotal role in advancing the collective interests of its member states, particularly LLDCs, through partnerships with the UN and international stakeholders.





# Plenary Meeting Address

August 7

Dr. Khan addressed the Plenary Meeting of LLDC3, underscoring ECO's efforts to enhance transport connectivity and infrastructure among its member states. He noted that while progress has been made, LLDCs continue to face significant challenges, such as infrastructure bottlenecks and limited access to global markets. Dr. Khan called for increased support and collective action at bilateral, regional, and international levels to address these obstacles.



Aligning his remarks with the Awaza Program of Action, Dr. Khan reiterated ECO's commitment to advancing sustainable development through deeper regional cooperation. He emphasized the need for inclusive development agendas, particularly in financing connectivity infrastructure, to ensure equitable benefits for all LLDCs. Furthermore, he urged robust international support to enable LLDCs' effective integration into regional and global economies, stressing that strong partnerships are essential to overcoming structural challenges and achieving long-term growth.

## Secretary General Meets Transport Minister, Kazakhstan

Awaza, Turkmenistan –August 4, 2025

On the sidelines of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3), Dr. Asad M. Khan, held a meeting with H.E. Mr. Nurlan Sauranbayev, Minister of Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan.



The two sides reviewed the progress of ECO's ongoing initiatives in the transport sector, with particular emphasis on the implementation of the Tehran Declaration, proposals presented by the Member States, aimed at strengthening regional connectivity and transit cooperation.

Dr. Khan commended Kazakhstan's constructive role in advancing ECO's regional transport agenda, underscoring the Organization's commitment to promoting sustainable, efficient, and integrated transport networks across the ECO region.

Both parties reaffirmed their resolve to enhance cooperation in multimodal transport, transit facilitation, and digitalization of transport corridors, recognizing these as essential tools for improving connectivity among ECO Member States and beyond.

## Secretary General Meets High Representative UN-OHRLLS

Awaza, Turkmenistan –August 7, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan held a meeting with Ms. Rabab Fatima, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), on the sidelines of the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) in Awaza.

The two sides discussed strengthening cooperation between ECO and OHRLLS in advancing the development agenda of the ECO region's landlocked countries.

Discussions covered priority areas including trade facilitation, connectivity, sustainable transport, regional integration, and implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action which addresses the special needs of LLDCs.

Dr. Khan underlined that the cooperation and support of the OHRLLS in implementing the APA would be highly appreciated. He reaffirmed the Organization's commitment to working closely with the United Nations and OHRLLS to address the unique challenges faced by landlocked developing countries, particularly in enhancing regional cooperation, boosting economic resilience, and promoting sustainable growth.



## Secretary General Delivers Public Address at ISSI on Regionalism and Geopolitical Dynamics

Islamabad-August 20, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan delivered a public address at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on the topic of "ECO, Regionalism & New Geopolitical Dynamics." The event brought together a distinguished audience comprising policymakers, diplomats, academics, and experts from across the region.

Dr. Khan highlighted the pivotal role of ECO in fostering regional prosperity through enhanced trade, connectivity, energy cooperation, and climate resilience. He emphasized that in the face of evolving geopolitical dynamics, ECO serves as a crucial platform for promoting collective action and sustainable development among its member states.



He also provided a briefing on the structure, working, and priorities of ECO, underscoring the organization's commitment to addressing shared challenges and unlocking the region's economic potential. The discourse sparked meaningful discussions on the importance of regional collaboration and the need to harness ECO's full potential for the benefit of its member states.

## Dentistry Congress on Health Tourism and Innovation

Tehran, August 7, 2025

ECO delegation led by Ambassador Jandos Asanov, Deputy Secretary General, participated in the Soft Launch event of the "First Scientific, Cultural and Commercial Congress and Exhibition in the Field of Dentistry." The event brought together high-level dignitaries and stakeholders from the Islamic Republic of Iran, including Dr. Mohseni Bandpei, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.



The Congress is designed to serve as a premier platform to showcase advancements in dentistry, particularly focusing on health tourism, dental materials and equipment, and digital innovations. The initiative aims to foster regional cooperation in dental sciences, support the exchange of medical technologies, and enhance collaboration in the growing field of health tourism within the region as well.

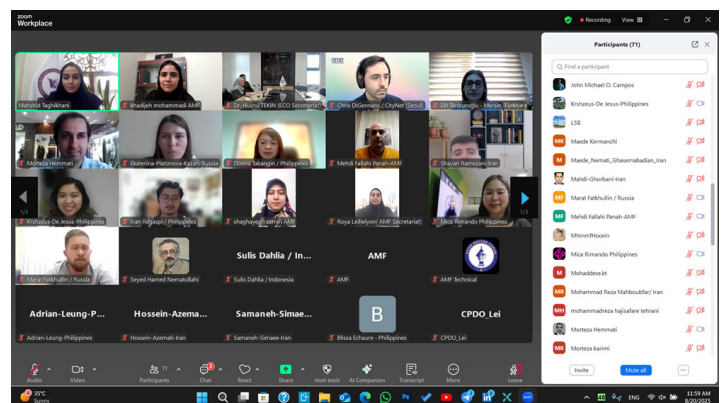




Dr. Asad M. Khan met with H.E. Dr. Hamid Ghanbari, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

# Asian Mayors Forum Webinar on Digital Twin & City Simulation

Municipal representatives from countries including Türkiye, India, Russia, the Philippines, South Korea, and the Islamic Republic of Iran shared practical case studies and insights on the implementation of smart city strategies. Key topics included twin city initiatives for climate change adaptation, water resource management, traffic optimization, AI integration, data-driven governance, and citizen engagement in urban innovation.



## ECO Tourism Directorate Meets Iranian Tour Operator

Tehran –August 24, 2025

The Tourism Directorate of the ECO Secretariat received Mr. Yaghoub Ghasemi, Chief Executive Officer of Iran Markaz Company, one of the Iranian members of the ECO Tour Operators' Network, during a courtesy visit to the Secretariat.

The meeting discussed proposals aimed at enhancing regional tourism collaboration, including the development and implementation of joint ECO tour packages as well as raised some challenges. Notably, organization of a Trans-Caspian cruise tour as a unique initiative to link ECO coastal countries was discussed.



Mr. Jasur Rajabov, Director for Tourism, provided information on planning and timing of the ECO's existing mechanisms for tourism cooperation, noting some upcoming events International Tourism Forum in Aktau and 2<sup>nd</sup> ECO Tour Operators Forum in Turkish Cypriot State and elaborated on the formal procedures required for submitting project proposals through official channels. Mr. Rajabov also briefed the visitor on how private sector stakeholders can engage in ECO-supported tourism events and initiatives.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Agriculture Ministerial Preparatory Meeting

August 26, 2025

The ECO Secretariat hosted a preparatory meeting to discuss arrangements for the upcoming 8<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting and the 7<sup>th</sup> High-Level Experts Meeting (HLEM) on Agriculture, scheduled to be hosted by Iran on November 17–18, 2025. Participants reviewed preparatory work to ensure high-level participation and discussed areas of cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture-Jahad, including ECO-VECO activities. The meeting concluded with agreements on actionable steps, coordination of technical meetings, and follow-up sessions to monitor progress.



## 5<sup>th</sup> ECOSA Virtual Session

August 26, 2025

The ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) held the fifth session of its 2025 virtual meeting series titled "Current Status of Seed Sector and Investment Opportunities in Uzbekistan." The series aims to enhance regional seed sector development, facilitate knowledge-sharing, and promote investment dialogue among ECO Member States.



During the session, Uzbekistan presented an in-depth overview of its seed sector, covering the structure of its national seed system, regulatory and legal frameworks, seed certification processes, and opportunities for strategic cooperation. The event featured an interactive Q&A session, engaging over 80 participants from across the ECO region in discussions on fostering collaboration and advancing the seed sector.





Economic Cooperation Organization



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