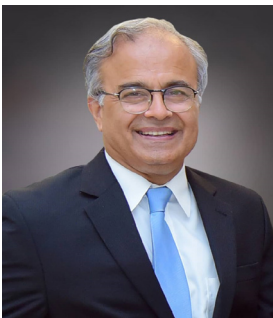




ECO Newsletter

Economic Cooperation Organization

October 2025- No. 13



Dear Readers,

I am pleased to present the October 2025 edition of the monthly ECO Newsletter.

This month, the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted the 4th ECO Interior Ministers Meeting in Tehran. Inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Masoud Pezeshkian, Honourable President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the meeting brought together esteemed Ministers and Deputy Ministers from ECO member states to deliberate on matters of mutual interest in the realm of security cooperation. The discussions culminated in the adoption of the Tehran Declaration, reflecting our shared commitment to regional collaboration and stability. On the sidelines of this event, I had the privilege of holding in-depth and constructive discussions with the honorable ministers and deputy ministers from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Pakistan. These engagements provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen our ties and explore avenues for enhanced cooperation in law enforcement and crime prevention areas.

This month also saw the Regional Transport Ministers Conference (RTMC 2025) held in Islamabad, where I had the honor of addressing the Ministerial Roundtable on “Regional Connectivity: Opportunities for the Region” and participating in the panel discussion on “Border Infrastructure, Trade Facilitation, and Smart Corridors.” In my remarks, I highlighted the pivotal role of connectivity and trade integration in realizing ECO’s vision of shared prosperity and sustainable growth. The conference’s closing ceremony was graced by H.E. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan. On the sidelines of the RTMC, I held meetings with ministers and deputy ministers from ECO Member States, discussing ways to advance transport, trade facilitation, and digital connectivity under the ECO framework.

At the ECO Secretariat, we hosted the 22nd Meeting of the Project Monitoring Group in a hybrid format, which reviewed the progress of regional projects. In addition to this, we actively participated in a number of expert level events, both in-person and online, to advance regional cooperation in tourism, energy, and urban development.

The momentum we have built reflects the collective commitment of our Member States to ECO and its objectives, and we remain committed to sustain it for the next two months to make 2025 a milestone year for ECO.

Secretary General
Economic Cooperation Organization



ECO Interior Ministers Meet in Tehran

October 28, 2025- Tehran

The 4th ECO Interior Ministers' Meeting was officially inaugurated in Tehran, with the presence of H.E. Mr. Masoud Pezeshkian, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hosted at the Summit Conference Hall, the meeting marked a significant milestone, reconvening after a 15-year hiatus and reaffirming the Organization's commitment to fostering regional engagement and cooperation among Member States.

In his opening address, President Pezeshkian underscored the critical role of Ministries of Interior as "key pillars of stability and economic resilience" in the ECO region. He highlighted pressing challenges such as illegal migration, drug trafficking, and terrorism, calling for the establishment of joint security mechanisms to effectively address these shared threats and strengthen regional security.

The meeting brought together Ministers and senior officials from Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The Interior Minister of Oman and the Deputy Interior Minister of Iraq participated as guest delegates, while the ECO Secretariat was represented by Secretary General H.E. Dr. Asad M. Khan.

H.E. Dr. Eskandar Momeni, Interior Minister of Iran, emphasized the importance of utilizing police capacities and expertise, ensuring timely and efficient information exchange among Member States, and enhancing international police cooperation to combat terrorism and transnational organized crime.

ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan noted the significance of reconvening the meeting after such a long interval. He emphasized the progress made in institutionalizing judicial and law-enforcement cooperation within the ECO framework but stressed the need for more regular engagement and the effective implementation of agreed frameworks to address emerging security challenges and advance regional integration.

The Ministers reviewed the ECO's progress report on regional law-enforcement cooperation, which highlighted collective efforts to prevent organized cross-border crime and strengthen capacities for joint action. The meeting concluded with the adoption of the Tehran Declaration, outlining shared commitments and future steps to enhance security cooperation across the region.

On the sidelines of the meeting, ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan held bilateral discussions with H.E. Ismat Aliyev, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan, and H.E. Muhammet Hydyrov, Minister of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan. These meetings focused on strengthening the framework for law enforcement cooperation in key areas within the ECO region.

Senior ECO Officials Convene Ahead of 4th Interior Ministers Meeting

October 27, 2025- Tehran

Senior officials from ECO Member States convened in Tehran to prepare for the 4th ECO Interior Ministers' Meeting. The session focused on finalizing the agenda and working documents for ministerial consideration.

H.E. Mr. Ali Akbar Pourjamshidian, Deputy Minister of Interior for Security and Law Enforcement Affairs of Iran, chaired the meeting and emphasized the need for enhanced regional cooperation to address human



trafficking, cybercrime, and other transnational security threats. He underscored priorities such as improving border infrastructure, intelligence sharing, and capacity building in border security management.

ECO Deputy Secretary

General Ambassador Jandos Asanov highlighted progress in judicial and enforcement collaboration, including the Plan of Interaction amongst Attorneys/Prosecutors General and the establishment of the ECO Regional Centre for Cooperation of Anti-corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen.

The meeting also reviewed the draft Tehran Declaration and a report on ECO activities related to regional law enforcement cooperation, including joint efforts against organized crime and other security challenges.

Bilateral Engagements during 4th ECO Interior Ministers Meeting

1. Meeting with Minister of Internal Affairs, Turkmenistan

October 28, 2025

On the sidelines of the 4th ECO Interior Ministers Meeting, Dr. Asad M. Khan held a productive meeting with H.E. Muhammet Hydyrov, Minister of Internal Affairs of Turkmenistan. The discussion focused on enhancing cooperation in anti-crime law enforcement across the ECO region and exploring the pivotal role Turkmenistan can play in advancing these efforts.

Both sides emphasized the importance of fostering collaboration to combat transnational crime, strengthen regional security, and promote effective law enforcement mechanisms. The Secretary General highlighted the need for joint initiatives and capacity-building programs to address shared challenges, while H.E. Hydyrov reaffirmed Turkmenistan's commitment to supporting ECO's objectives in this critical area.



2. Meeting with Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Azerbaijan

October 28, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan held a fruitful discussion with H.E. Ismat Aliyev, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Azerbaijan. Dr. Khan expressed gratitude to Azerbaijan for its steadfast commitment and active contributions to ECO's agenda on law enforcement collaboration. Discussions also focused on strengthening joint efforts to combat transnational crime and enhance security across member states.

The meeting reaffirmed the importance of Azerbaijan's role in driving regional initiatives aimed at creating a safer and more secure ECO region. The Secretary General looks forward to continued collaboration with Azerbaijan in achieving these shared goals.



3. Meeting with Interior Secretary, Pakistan

October 27, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan met with H.E. Muhammad Khurram Agha, Interior Secretary of Pakistan. During the meeting, Dr. Khan provided an overview of ECO's ongoing initiatives and priorities in the areas of law enforcement and crime prevention. Discussions focused on strengthening regional cooperation to combat transnational crime and enhance security across the ECO region.

Dr. Khan acknowledged Pakistan's significant contributions to ECO's agenda and expressed confidence that continued collaboration will further advance the organization's objectives. The meeting reaffirmed the shared commitment to promoting regional security and stability through collective efforts.



Secretary General Underscores Importance of Connectivity at RTMC 25



October 23, 2025 -Islamabad

Dr. Asad M. Khan addressed the Ministerial Roundtable at the Regional Transport Ministers' Conference on "Regional Connectivity: Opportunities for the Region," held in Islamabad. He emphasized that connectivity and trade integration are central to ECO's vision for shared prosperity and sustainable growth. Highlighting ECO's upcoming Strategic Goals 2026–2035 and the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy, he reaffirmed the Organization's commitment

to advancing regional transport networks that are efficient, safe, and environmentally responsible.

Also noting the progress on key initiatives, which aim to enhance trade access and regional integration, Dr. Khan called for strengthened cooperation through public–private partnerships, digitalization, and regional financial mechanisms, stressing that "connectivity is not only about infrastructure, but about linking economies, people, and ideas."

Secretary General Participates in Panel Discussion at RTMC 2025

October 23, 2025-Islamabad

Dr. Asad M. Khan participated in panel discussion on Border Infrastructure, Trade Facilitation and Smart Corridors at the Regional Transport Ministers' Conference (RTMC 2025) in Islamabad, underscoring the need to modernize border infrastructure, digitalize customs processes, and strengthen cooperation to achieve seamless regional connectivity.

Dr. Khan noted that the ECO region's strategic location—linking Asia, the Middle East, and Europe—offers immense potential to become a bridge between continents. With seven of its ten member states being landlocked, he emphasized that both hard and soft infrastructure development are essential for economic integration and shared growth and shared the vision of the ECO in this connection.

He further highlighted the importance of the ECO–IRU Action Plan, which envisions the implementation of eTIR as well as TIR-EPD systems at key border points. He also stressed the significance of implementing the ECO Trade Facilitation Strategy, which promotes harmonized customs procedures.



Bilateral Engagements at RTMC 2025

1. Meeting with Federal Minister for Communications, Pakistan

October 23, 2025

On the sidelines of the Regional Transport Ministers' Conference (RTMC 2025), Dr. Asad M. Khan met with H.E. Aleem Khan, the Federal Minister for Communications of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to discuss ongoing and future cooperation in transport, logistics, and regional connectivity.

Dr. Khan expressed his deep appreciation for Pakistan's hospitality and excellent organization of the



high-level conference, as well as for hosting the 7th Meeting of the High-Level Working Group (HLWG) on the Islamabad–Tehran–Istanbul (ITI) Road Corridor on September 9, 2025. Discussions also covered the implementation of the Tehran Declaration, the ECO–IRU Action Plan, and progress on establishing Joint

Trade Zones (JTZ) to promote cross-border commerce and investment. The Secretary General also briefed the Minister on the ECO Projects and on efforts to update the ECO Road and Railway Maps.

2. Meeting with Federal IT Minister, Pakistan

October 24, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan held a meeting with H.E. Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, to discuss cooperation in the digital economy and the advancement of the ICT agenda within the ECO framework. Dr. Khan expressed appreciation for Pakistan's readiness to host the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), along with the 2nd Meeting of the High-Level Working Group of ICT Regulatory Authorities.

He further informed that the current ECO ICT Strategy will conclude this year and noted the need to formulate a new five-year strategy (2026–2030), which may focus on promoting regional digital transformation, ICT innovation, and regulatory harmonization across the ECO Member States. The meeting also underlined the necessity in deepening cooperation in ICT development to foster digital connectivity, innovation, and inclusive growth across the ECO region.



3. Meeting with Deputy Minister of Transport, Azerbaijan

October 23, 2025

Dr. Asad M. Khan met with H.E. Mr. Rahman Hummatov, Deputy Minister of Digital Development and Transport of Azerbaijan, to enhance cooperation in regional transport, trade facilitation, and digital connectivity under the ECO framework. Dr. Khan emphasized implementing the outcomes of the 13th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport, particularly the Tehran Declaration, and highlighted Azerbaijan's role in advancing the ECO Sustainable Transport Strategy 2026–2035, the ECO Special Fund for Transport Development, and the upcoming Conference on Financing for Transport Projects.

The meeting stressed the strategic importance of the Trans-Caspian Corridor within the Middle Corridor and INSTC, with a focus on promoting Ro-Ro services across the Caspian Sea. Discussions also included developing Gabala Airport as a regional air hub, implementing digital transit systems like eTIR and eCMR, and establishing Joint Trade Zones to boost cross-border cooperation. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to building sustainable, smart, and digitally integrated transport networks for deeper regional connectivity and shared prosperity.



ECO Permanent Representatives Meet in Zanjan



October 20, 2025- Zanjan

The Economic Cooperation Organization held the 300th Meeting of its Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) in Zanjan, hosted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The opening ceremony was attended by H.E. Seyed Mohsen Sadeqi, Governor General of Zanjan, and Mr. Yousef Asleh, President of the Zanjan Chamber of Commerce, reflecting strong local support for ECO's regional cooperation agenda.

Holding the session in Zanjan, a city known for its cultural heritage and strategic location, demonstrated the Organization's focus on engaging more closely with local communities and stakeholders. A documentary showcased Zanjan's strategic location on key trade routes, robust infrastructure, diverse investment opportunities and rich cultural heritage, positioning it as a regional hub for growth and cooperation. The event also featured a business forum connecting Zanjan's private sector with ECO officials to explore new trade

Secretary General Meets Governor of Zanz



October 20, 2025-Zanz

On the sidelines of the 300th Meeting of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives, Dr. Asad M. Khan held a bilateral interaction with the Governor General of Zanz and extended his gratitude for the warm hospitality and support extended to the ECO Permanent Representatives and Secretariat delegation.

He acknowledged the province's significant potential to contribute to the Organization's agenda of regional growth and integration. Governor General, while reflecting on ECO's founding purpose, emphasized that deeper connectivity remains essential to realizing the Organization's original vision and called for stronger linkages among Member States.



ECO Project Monitoring Group Meeting

October 30, 2025-Tehran

The 22nd meeting of the ECO Project Monitoring Group was convened, bringing together key stakeholders to review the progress of ECO's project portfolio. The meeting served as a vital platform to evaluate ongoing initiatives and discuss strategies for enhancing their overall effectiveness.

During the session, participants underscored the importance of sharpening focus on the quality, sustainability, and measurable impact of ECO projects. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that projects align with the organization's broader objectives of fostering regional development, economic integration, and cooperation among member states.

The meeting highlighted the need for adopting innovative approaches to project implementation and monitoring, ensuring that the outcomes deliver tangible benefits to the region. Stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration and addressing challenges to achieve the desired results.



Secretary General Meets Head Anti-Narcotics Police, Iran

October 8, 2025- Tehran

Dr. Asad M. Khan held a meeting with H.E. Brigadier General Iraj Kakavand, Head of the Anti-Narcotics Police of Iran. The discussions focused on collaborative strategies to address the growing narcotics challenges in the region. The exchange acquired added significance in view of the 4th Meeting of ECO Interior Ministers, which was held in Tehran on October, 28 2025, where combating drug trafficking was a key point of discussions.

During the meeting, both sides emphasized the importance of a unified approach to combat drug-related crimes, which have severe implications for public health, security, and socio-economic development. The Secretary General acknowledged Iran's pivotal role in the fight against narcotics and commended the country's efforts in implementing effective anti-drug policies. The Head of Anti-Narcotics Police of Iran stressed Iran's readiness to host the meeting of Heads of Anti-Narcotics Police of ECO Member States in Tehran.



Secretary General Receives IOM Chief of Mission

October 9, 2025- Tehran

Mr. Salvador Gutierrez, Chief of Mission of Interantional Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iran, met with Dr. Asad M. Khan at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran to discuss potential collaboration and shared priorities between ECO and IOM.

Dr. Khan highlighted the success of their joint 2024 workshop on "Combating Trafficking in Persons and Human Smuggling" and expressed ECO's commitment to following up on recommendations from Member States and IOM Iran. He also emphasized migration as a key challenge in the ECO region, impacted by political, social, economic, and environmental developments, and stressed the need for enhanced ECO-IOM collaboration to address these issues within the framework of ECO's sustainable development goals. Mr. Gutierrez acknowledged emerging challenges in migration and highlighted IOM's readiness for regional cooperation on migration and humanitarian development.



ECO & FAO Explore Cooperation on Food Security and Agriculture

October 9, 2025-Tehran

Dr. Asad Khan met with Mr. Farrukh Toirov, Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in the Islamic Republic of Iran, at the ECO Secretariat to discuss enhanced collaboration in food security and agricultural development.

Acknowledging that food security and agricultural development remain priority areas for ECO, which is closely aligned with FAO's core mandate, both sides agreed to pursue enhanced inter-organizational cooperation through strengthened networking and coordination, leveraging FAO's technical expertise and its broad presence across ECO Member States, by drawing on mutual experiences, best practices, and lessons learned to advance sustainable agriculture in areas of common interest.



Azerbaijan Third National Urban Forum

October 15-17, 2025-
Khankendi & Baku, Azerbaijan

ECO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Silapberdi Nurberdiyev participated in Azerbaijan's Third National Urban Forum, which opened in Khankendi and continued in Baku on October 17, 2025, under the theme "Resilient Cities – Green Growth and Inclusive Recovery." Organized by Azerbaijan's State Committee on Urban Planning in collaboration with UN-Habitat, the forum brought together over 300 participants, including senior officials, UN representatives, and regional organizations, to address post-conflict urban reconstruction and sustainable development.

In his keynote address, Ambassador Nurberdiyev highlighted the strategic importance of the Middle Corridor as a dynamic link between Asia and Europe, emphasizing its growing role in fostering regional cooperation, economic integration, and sustainable urban development. He outlined the need to strengthen the corridor's foundation through enhanced connectivity, technological innovation, and sustainability. He also stressed the importance of digital solutions to improve efficiency and coordination along the corridor, alongside green transport initiatives, low-emission infrastructure, and climate-conscious urban planning to ensure inclusive and environmentally responsible growth.

The forum's outcomes will inform Azerbaijan's national urban development strategies and contribute to global efforts, including preparations for the World Urban Forum 12, set to take place in Baku in May 2026.



ECO Silk Road Task Force Meeting



October 29, 2025- Sheki, Azerbaijan

The State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan hosted the First Meeting of the ECO Silk Road Task Force in the historic city of Sheki. The event brought together tourism experts from ECO Member States, the UN Tourism, and the ECO Secretariat to advance Silk Road-themed tourism collaboration across the region.

Discussions focused on the current state of Silk Road tourism initiatives and future opportunities under the ECO framework. Participants emphasized the importance of joint actions to enhance cultural connectivity, preserve heritage sites, and promote the ECO region as a unified Silk Road destination.

A highlight of the meeting was the launch of the Second Special Edition of the ECO Chronicle, dedicated to UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the ECO Region. Available at tourism.eco.int, the publication showcases the region's rich cultural heritage and ECO's commitment to sustainable tourism.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of a Declaration, outlining commitments to develop coordinated Silk Road tourism campaigns and collaborative initiatives. Delegates also toured Sheki, a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its architecture and historical charm, marking a significant step toward revitalizing Silk Road tourism through regional cooperation.



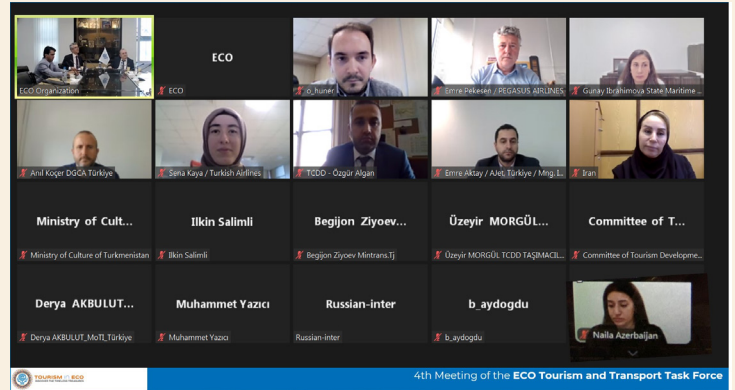
ECO Tourism & Transport Task Force Meeting

October 15, 2025-Tehran

The Economic Cooperation Organization held the 4th Meeting of the ECO Tourism and Transport Task Force virtually, with representatives from seven Member States—Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Türkiye—and officials from the ECO Secretariat.



The meeting focused on enhancing regional transport connectivity to support tourism. The Secretariat provided an update on transport connectivity, addressing challenges, policy gaps, and opportunities to improve passenger transportation for tourism. Delegations shared national updates on infrastructure, cross-border transport issues, and sectoral expectations, emphasizing the need for multilateral coordination in aviation, road, rail, and multimodal transport. Participants committed to strengthening cooperation and developing a framework to guide future actions, to be discussed further at upcoming high-level meetings, including the next ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism.



ECO Advocates Circular Economy at Global Zero Waste Forum

October 17-19, 2025 -Istanbul

The first Global Zero Waste Forum was organized on by the Zero Waste Foundation in collaboration with the Government of Türkiye and the United Nations. The forum represented a unique platform for fostering dialogue among governments, civil society, and private sector on zero waste and circular economy policies. The forum endorsed the Istanbul Declaration solidifying a collective commitment to promoting zero waste principles and fostering sustainable development worldwide.

The forum, held under the overarching theme: “Zero Waste in Action: People, Places and Progress”, was inaugurated by Her Excellency, Madam Emine Erdoğan, First Lady of Türkiye who highlighted the urgency of the zero waste movement and called on the United Nations to establish a permanent zero waste mechanism. The delegates of ECO Member States were also widely represented in that global gathering. Partnering the forum, ECO Secretariat advocated its Regional Initiative on Resource Efficiency, Sustainability and Circular Economy (RESCUE) on the sidelines. This engagement testified ECO’s resolve to advancement of environmental cooperation and circular economy agenda among its Member States and beyond.

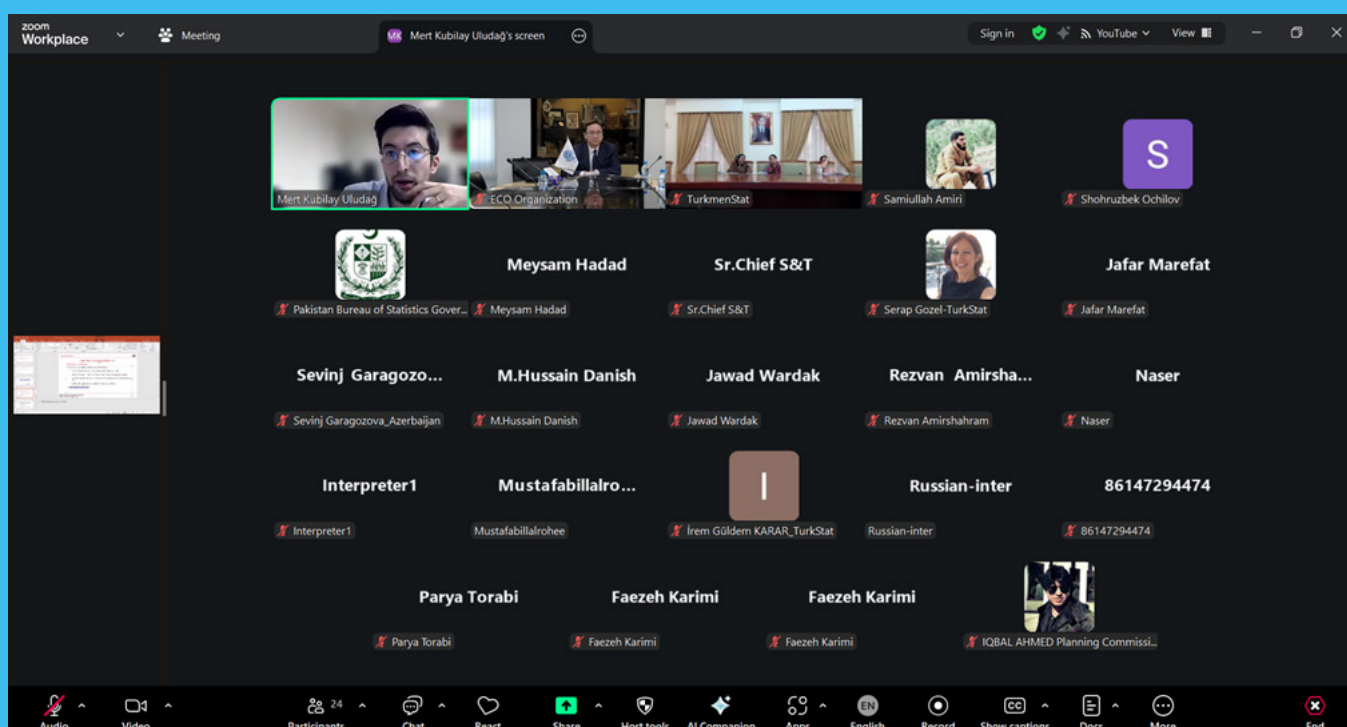


ECO and TURKSTAT Co-Host Online Training on Remote Sensing in Statistical Production

October 23, 2025-Tehran

The ECO Secretariat, in collaboration with the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), organized an online Introductory Training on Remote Sensing in Statistical Production. The event gathered participants from ECO Member States to enhance regional capacity in applying remote sensing and geospatial technologies in official statistics. The training was held within the framework of the ECO Statistical Modernization and Digital Transformation Initiative. Participants discussed practical uses of geospatial data in agriculture, environment, and regional development, emphasizing its role in supporting evidence-based policymaking.

In his opening remarks, the ECO representative highlighted the importance of innovative tools such as remote sensing for improving the quality, timeliness, and policy relevance of statistical data. He expressed appreciation to TURKSTAT for its continued partnership and contribution to strengthening statistical systems in the ECO region. Reaffirming its commitment to regional cooperation and capacity building, the ECO Secretariat will continue working with national and international partners to advance innovation and knowledge sharing across the ECO region.



Economic Cooperation Organization



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