Economic Cooperation Organization

ECO

Third ECO Ministerial Meeting on ICT
13 July 2023
Tehran- the Islamic Republic of Iran

Tehran Declaration

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We, the Ministers/Heads of Delegation of the ECO Member States, assembling at the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on ICT on 13 July 2023 in Tehran under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Eisa Zarepour, Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to review our existing regional cooperation in ICT related areas and to discuss and facilitate further activities and engagement in the future;

Bearing in mind the principles and objectives of the Treaty of Izmir, as well as targets envisaged in the ECO Vision 2025 and "Ashgabat Consensus for Action" and; **Renewing** our firm commitment and dedication for continued support to their implementation;

Acknowledging regional connectivity and integration as cornerstone for sustainable and resilient economic growth and development in the ECO region and in this context:

Emphasizing the significance of the theme of "Green Transition and Interconnectivity" of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship in ECO in 2023 for enhancing regional cooperation in the field of communications;

Recognizing the significant role, that ICT can play to achieve aforementioned goals and objectives;

Highlighting the "2025 ECO Regional Strategy for Information Society Development" as a framework for cooperation towards building an inclusive information society by 2025 in ECO Member states; and **Recognizing** that achieving its goals and implementing its Plan of Action is incumbent upon utilizing new and emerging ICT- related technologies;

Underlining the necessity to upgrade the level of ICT cooperation and interaction in the ECO region in line with new ICT developments and trends in global area;

Considering the possibility of having joint space projects among interested Member States;

Highlighting the significance of the International Astronautical Congress 2023 to be hosted by the Republic of Azerbaijan on 2-6 October 2023 in Baku for providing a valuable platform also for ECO Member States to discuss the ways of furthering cooperation in the field of space industry;

Appreciating the work done by the ECO-ICT Working Group and emphasizing the need to follow up the adopted outcomes of the two meetings of ICT Working Group held in 2021 and 2022 respectively;

Welcoming adoption of Terms of Reference (ToR) for the ECO High Level Working Group on ICT Regulatory Issues;

Stressing the necessity of favourable national and regional regulatory frameworks for facilitating and enhancing cooperation on ICT related topics in ECO Member States;

Welcoming the MoU between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran signed on March 11, 2022 to facilitate transport communications between the Eastern Zangezur Economic Region and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic of the Republic of Azerbaijan through the territory of Iran, including through development of new communication lines along the route and emphasize its importance for enhancing regional connectivity.

Emphasizing the importance of cybersecurity in fostering the information society and digital economy and the role of meaningful regional and international cooperation in protecting cybersecurity, countering cybercrimes, ensuring data privacy and CERTs level interaction between the Member States;

Reaffirming the need for enhancing cooperation on education, research, and transfer of knowledge in the field of ICT through cooperation among ICT universities and research centres as well as the implementation of joint research projects, such as the establishment of ECO ICT Scientific Network, ECO ICT Digital Library, Digital Skills and Virtual Training Programs, educational workshops and exchange of ICT faculty and graduate students;

Have agreed to:

1. **Enhance** regional cooperation in all relevant ICT related areas;

2. **Mandate** the Secretariat to assist early functioning of the ECO High-level Working Group on ICT Regulatory Issues. The HLWG may, among

others, focus on reaching a common framework for the regulation of platforms.

3. **Encourage** the Member States/private sector to investigate the possibilities of creating a digital common market, joint applications, common GIS platforms for trade and transport, implementing joint projects to develop emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, IoT, Big Data and joint investment in these areas.

4. **Stress** the importance of regulating the radio frequency spectrum management in the border areas of the Member States and implementing Radio Regulations including frequency coordination and mutually agreed joint monitoring among ECO Member States to reduce interference/spill-over in border areas.

5. **Stress** the need for timely implementation of the Digital Silk Road Project by utilizing the existing capabilities/ infrastructure of ECO countries, which aims to create a new telecommunication backbone route between Europe and Asia.

6. **Recognize** the increasing importance of the private sector in the development and maintenance of ICT infrastructure and reaffirm the importance of involving all stakeholders, including the private sector, for developing and implementing the next ECO Regional Strategy for Information Society.

7. **Establish** specialized committees, if deemed necessary, under the Working Group of ICT with a view to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Working Group.

8. **Underscore** the enhancement of cooperative relationship of the Secretariat with relevant international and other regional organizations with a view to seeking their financial and technical support for the execution of ECO programs and projects in ICT sector.

9. **Mandate** the ECO secretariat to formulate the "ECO infrastructure and ICT applications Plan 2025-2030" through feasibility study utilizing its available resources and through mobilization of funds from other sources including ITU, IsDB and ECO-TDB as well as the relevant international bodies.

10. **Cooperate** in the relevant international fora to the extent possible in various areas of ICT to promote ECO common interests.

11. **Mandate** the ECO Secretariat to submit progress reports on the implementation of all ICT related ministerial decisions, including this Declaration.

12. **Extend** our sincere gratitude to H.E. Mr. Eisa Zarepour, the Honorable Minister of Communications and Information Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran for excellent hosting of this meeting and express our thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the warm hospitality extended to delegations. The Ministers and Heads of Delegation expressed their appreciation for the excellent arrangements made by the ECO Secretariat to hold the successful meeting.

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