

Adopted Report

The 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade

(Mode: in person)

(November 26, 2025)
Republic of Türkiye, Istanbul

Adopted Report

1. The 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade held on November 26, 2025 in Istanbul, the Republic of Türkiye. The Honourable Ministers, Deputy Ministers of Commerce and Foreign Trade of the ECO Member States and the Heads of Delegations, including **Afghanistan**, the Republic of **Azerbaijan**, the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, the Republic of **Kazakhstan**, **Kyrgyz Republic**, Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**, the Republic of **Tajikistan**, the Republic of **Türkiye (host)**, **Turkmenistan**, and the Republic of **Uzbekistan** participated in the meeting. The delegations from ECO Observers, namely; Turkish Cypriot State and the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), as well as the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA), ECO Trade Development Bank (ECO-TDB), International Road Transport Union (IRU), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), along with ECO delegation attended the Meeting. List of participants is attached as **Annex-I**.

Agenda Item No.2

Inauguration of the Meeting

2. The 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade was jointly inaugurated by H.E. Prof. Dr. Ömer BOLAT, Minister of Trade, the Republic of Türkiye and H.E Dr. Asad M. Khan, ECO Secretary General.

3. In his opening statement, the ECO Secretary General, Dr. Asad M. Khan extended a warm welcome to the Honourable Ministers, Deputy Ministers and distinguished delegates of the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting, graciously hosted by the Government of the Republic of Türkiye. Dr. Khan in his remarks, highlighted several key remarks, including the importance of the revision and modernization of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), as necessary to make ECOTA more capable to drive regional integration, and also presented three pivotal ECO instruments, namely the *ECO Trade Facilitation Strategy*, the *ECO Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters*, and the *Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Joint Trade Promotion Activities among ECO Member States*. He emphasized that these initiatives demonstrate the Organization's commitment to a more streamlined, equitable, and effective regional market. A copy of his statement is attached as **Annex-II**.

4. Honorable Minister of Trade, the Republic of Türkiye Prof. Dr. Ömer BOLAT, in his inaugural remarks, extended a warm welcome to the H.Es. Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Heads of Delegations, and representatives from regional and international organizations. He expressed profound appreciation for their active participation and acknowledged the invaluable contributions of the ECO Secretary General and his dedicated team for their meticulous efforts in ensuring the smooth organization of this significant gathering. Furthermore, he commended the senior officials for their unwavering commitment and collaborative spirit demonstrated during the 5th High-

Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting on Trade, Investment, and Other Related Matters in the ECO Region (the 5th HLEG Meeting), which laid a solid foundation for the discussions ahead. His opening remarks is attached as **Annex-III**.

Agenda Item No.2

Election of the Chair

5. In accordance with the ECO Rules of Procedure, **H.E. Prof. Dr. Ömer BOLAT**, the Honorable Minister of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye, was unanimously elected as the Chairperson of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No.3

Adoption of the Agenda

6. In the absence of any objection, the Meeting unanimously adopted its Agenda as proposed by the ECO Secretariat, and finalized by the 5th HLEG Meeting, held on November 24-25, 2025. Copy of the Agenda is attached as **Annex-IV**.

Agenda Item No.4

Statement by the Honourable Ministers/Heads of Delegations

7. The Honourable Ministers/Deputy Ministers/Heads of Delegations from ECO Member States highlighted the need for stronger regional cooperation to address global challenges that hinder economic progress. Additionally, they shared updates on their countries' national programs and policies within the ECO framework. Copies of the statements are placed at **Annex-V**.

Statements by ECO Observers

8. The Representatives from the Turkish Cypriot State and the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) also delivered statements in their respective capacities as ECO Observers. They emphasized their shared vision and commitment to strengthening collaboration in alignment with ECO's goals and priorities.

Statements by Heads of International Organizations

9. The Heads of international organizations, including the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA), International Road Transport Union (IRU), and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) delivered their comprehensive statements, highlighting their respective programs, initiatives and achievements. They underscored their contributions toward advancing ECO's regional development goals. The shared statements are placed at **Annex-VI**.

Agenda Item No.5

Approval of Trade Facilitation Strategy

10. The Meeting approved the final text of the *Trade Facilitation Strategy*, as adopted at the 10th Council of Heads of Customs Administrations, held on May 28, 2025, in Tehran, aiming to promote transparency, harmonization, cooperation, and predictability in trade and customs operations across the ECO region. The Meeting requested Member States to cooperate for the possible implementation of the Trade Facilitation Strategy, and convene the first meeting of the ECO Trade Facilitation Committee.

Agenda Item No.6

Adoption of ECOTA Negotiation Strategy and Roadmap

11. The Meeting approved the recommendations of the 5th HLEG Meeting held on November 24-25, 2025, in relation to the updated research study, titled "*Impediments to the Implementation of the ECO Trade Agreement and Measures to Resolve*", and the ECOTA Negotiation Strategy and Roadmap, and mandated the ECO Secretariat to coordinate the first meeting of the Technical Negotiation Committee (TNC) with a view to start renegotiations of ECOTA in the first quarter of 2026, where TNC shall convene with a quorum consisting of at least three (3) ECOTA Parties. The Meeting also approved the transfer of technical work regarding drafting the "*Multi-Dimensional Trade and Investment Strategy and Prospects of Establishing a Free Trade Area in the Region*" to the ECOTA Technical Negotiation Committee. A copy of the ECOTA Negotiation Strategy and Roadmap is attached as Annex-VII.

Agenda Item No. 7

ECO Vision 2025 and Beyond

12. The Meeting commended the ECO Secretariat's efforts in formulating the "*Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation 2035 – (SGEC 2035)*" and urged the Member States to contribute actively through inclusive and participatory engagement. The Meeting emphasized the need for all ECO initiatives and activities to be closely aligned with the Organization's SGEC-2035 framework.

Agenda Item No. 8

Adoption of the Istanbul Declaration

13. The Meeting unanimously adopted the Istanbul Declaration and entrusted the ECO Secretariat with the responsibility of ensuring the effective implementation of the decisions made during the Ministerial Meeting, as outlined in both the Declaration and the Report of the Meeting. Copy of the Istanbul Declaration is attached as Annex-VIII.

Agenda Item No.9

Any Other Business

Treaty Events

14. Following the formal approval of the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting; the “ECO Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters” and the “MoU on Cooperation in Trade Promotion Activities among ECO Member States” were officially opened for signature / ratification by Member States.

i. ECO Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters

15. The Meeting welcomed the signing of the *ECO Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters*, by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Türkiye, and encouraged the remaining Member States to sign/ratify. A signed copy of the *ECO Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters* is attached as *Annex-IX*.

ii. “Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Joint Trade Promotion Activities among ECO Member States”

16. The Meeting further welcomed the signing of the “*Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Joint Trade Promotion Activities among ECO Member States*” by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Türkiye, and encouraged the remaining Member States to sign/ratify. The signed copy of the “*MoU on Cooperation in Joint Trade Promotion Activities*” is attached as *Annex-X*.

17. The Meeting kindly reminded the remaining Member States that they may sign the instruments at a later stage, once their internal procedures are completed. The Secretariat, as the depository of ECO legal instruments, will facilitate the signing process for interested Member States through bilateral settings or written communication.

Agenda Item No. 10

Adoption of Report of the Meeting

18. The Ministerial Meeting adopted its Report held on November 26, 2025, in Istanbul, the Republic of Türkiye, and approved the outcome/recommendations of the 5thHLEGMeeting,as an essential technical input to the Ministerial deliberations and subsequent actions.

Agenda Item No. 11

Date and Venue of the next Meeting

19. The Meeting invited the interested Member States to offer to host the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade. Afghanistan and subsequently the Islamic Republic of Iran volunteered to host the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade. Interested Member States may share their offer through diplomatic channels.

Agenda Item No. 12

Vote of Thanks

20. The Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Member States, along with representatives of the international organizations, expressed their sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Türkiye for the exemplary hosting of the Meeting. They commended H.E. Prof. Dr. Ömer BOLAT, the Honorable Minister of Trade, for his adept chairmanship of the proceedings. Additionally, they extended their appreciation to the ECO Secretariat for the meticulous arrangements and professional conduct that contributed to the success of this gathering.

Agenda Item No. 13

Closing

21. The ECO Secretary General expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Türkiye for their exceptional hospitality during the 5th Ministerial Meeting. He also extended sincere appreciation to **H.E. Prof. Dr. Ömer BOLAT**, the Honorable Minister of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye, and his dedicated team for their efforts in ensuring the success of this gathering. He also appreciated efforts of high-level experts during the 5th ECO HLEG Meeting. Dr. Khan said, these discussions have reaffirmed our commitment to further trade, investment and related business activities within the ECO region, and the insights shared will serve as a foundation for our future endeavors.
