



Islamic Republic of IRAN
Ministry of Industry, Mine & Trade

Speech by Mr. Seyed Mohammad Atabak

Honourable Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Türkiye for their gracious hosting and warm hospitality in organizing the 5th Meeting of the ECO Ministers of Trade.

I also extend my deep appreciation to the Secretary General and his colleagues for convening this meeting. Allow me also to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the occasion of ECO Day.

This year we completed the 60 years of cooperating under the Economic Cooperation Organization. Over the past six decades, the ECO member states have experienced peaceful and friendly coexistence side by side. Today, supported by a large population, abundant energy and raw materials, production, agriculture, industry capacity, and a unique geopolitical location, ECO can become one of the most prominent models of regional economic cooperation in Asia. The young and educated population of member countries is also a significant advantage for building a powerful economic hub in the region.

Despite these potentials, some objectives of the ECO Vision 2025 have not been fully realized, reminding us of the need for increased efforts in the coming decade. The Islamic Republic of Iran, believing in the power and future of ECO, has prioritized its economic diplomacy on maximum engagement with

neighbors and considers that Vision 2035 must be a decade of hard work and fruitful achievements for all of us.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates,

In recent years, trade relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and ECO member states have shown a positive trend, with an 82% growth in trade volume over the past five years. However, the existing intra-regional trade potential remains largely untapped. As we approach negotiations to revive the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), we expect all member states, beyond the current ECOTA members, to join these efforts and use the previous ECOTA text as a draft framework towards a more comprehensive and advanced agreement. Such an agreement can facilitate the growth of intra-regional trade.

Beyond facilitating goods trade, ECO should expand cooperation into emerging areas such as e-commerce development, creation of joint service platforms, transit facilitation, strengthening the digital economy, tourism, and trade in services. This pathway can be the engine driving economic growth and integration in the region.

Distinguished Delegates,

Despite the oppressive sanctions that have forced Islamic Republic of Iran to impose some trade restrictions, my country is fully prepared to actively collaborate and participate in forming a new trade agreement. We also expect member states to consider Iran's special circumstances and prevent unilateral sanctions from impeding regional trade and economic integration.

Islamic Republic Iran firmly believes that realizing ECO's potential requires regular ministerial meetings and close monitoring of cooperation progress. We hope that through collective efforts, by 2035 we will witness significant achievements in economic, trade, and transit cooperation among member states.

In conclusion, I once again thank the Government of Türkiye and the ECO Secretariat for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of this meeting. I hope that with a realistic, fair, and mutual interest-based approach, we can build a strong future for ECO, a future where economic growth, active trade, and interconnected transport and transit infrastructure ensure the prosperity of our nations.

Thank you

والسلام عليكم و رحمة الله و بركاته