



ECO Newsletter

Economic Cooperation Organization

February, 2026- No. 18



Dear Readers,



It is with great pleasure that I introduce the February edition of the ECO Newsletter. The past few weeks have been marked by meaningful diplomatic and technical progress, illustrating the various dimensions of our regional cooperation.

The month of February opened on a remarkable note, as I participated in the Indus AI Summit hosted by Islamabad. This landmark event highlighted our region's determination to harness advanced technologies for economic prosperity. Such initiatives are vital in building the foundation for the digital future we are working together to create.

This month, I was also honored to visit the ECO Park together with ECI President Ambassador Muhammad Hassan. Beyond its role as a green space, the park stands as a living testament to our environmental commitment and cultural unity reminding that our collaboration reaches beyond policies and agreements. In a subsequent meeting with the CEO of Abbasabad Company, we made a shared pledge to revitalize the park and transform it into a vibrant showcase of the cultural diversity and unity that defines the ECO region. This vision reminds us that true economic integration grows from mutual cultural understanding.

In addition, our team's active participation in national events and technical meetings reflected our collaborative spirit. The presence of our Deputy Secretary General at the National Day celebrations of the Islamic Republic of Iran exemplified this commitment. Such moments of diplomatic goodwill strengthen the lasting friendships that form the foundation of the ECO family.

Complementing this, our dedication to technical advancement was vividly illustrated when a delegation led by Deputy Secretary General (Trade), visited the Iran National Standards Organization (INSO) in Karaj. This engagement highlights our ongoing efforts to synchronize national practices with broader regional quality frameworks.

I am also delighted by the headway we are making in dismantling technical barriers to trade. This month, a vital online technical meeting brought together the ECO Secretariat, UNIDO, and the ECO Trade and Development Bank (TDB) to advance Phase IV of the "ECO-UNIDO Project to Support the Implementation of the Regional Quality Policy." This project is far more than paperwork. It is the engine that will power seamless cross-border trade, ensure compliance with international standards, and enhance our region's competitive edge.

Looking ahead, I draw inspiration from the continued dedication of our Member States and partners to strengthening the bonds of regional cooperation. We will continue to work together in our commitment to realizing ECO's vision of a truly connected, resilient, and prosperous region.

Secretary General
Economic Cooperation Organization



**H.E. MUHAMMAD
SHEHBAZ SHARIF**
PRIME MINISTER
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

ECO Secretary General Participates in the Indus AI Summit 2026

9 February 2026 - Islamabad

The Secretary General of the ECO participated in the high-level panel discussion titled "Strategic Dialogue: Making National AI and Data Governance" during the Indus AI Summit 2026 in Islamabad.

The panel brought together policymakers, technology leaders, and international experts to discuss emerging frameworks for artificial intelligence (AI) governance, sovereign data management, and regional cooperation in digital transformation. Discussions focused on the importance of developing transparent, ethical, and inclusive AI policies that support innovation while safeguarding public trust and national interests.

In his remarks, the Secretary General underscored

the growing significance of AI and data governance for sustainable development, economic integration, and competitiveness across the ECO region. He highlighted the need for strengthened collaboration among Member States in building digital infrastructure, harmonizing regulatory approaches, and promoting capacity-building initiatives to bridge the digital divide.

The Secretary General reaffirmed ECO's commitment to supporting regional dialogue and cooperation in emerging technologies, emphasizing that coordinated action in AI policy and governance can unlock new opportunities for innovation, trade, and socio-economic development across Member States.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also attended the Summit as Chief Guest alongside Federal Minister for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja. In his address, the Prime Minister described artificial intelligence as central to national progress and announced a \$1 billion government commitment to AI by 2030. The investment will fund sovereign compute infrastructure, research, and ecosystem development. He also announced 1,000 fully funded AI PhD scholarships, the introduction of AI curriculum in federal schools, and a plan to train one million non-IT professionals in AI skills.

A key outcome of the Summit was the Islamabad Declaration, outlining eight pillars for sovereign, ethical, and accountable AI governance, focused on data trust, public value, explainability, and a private-sector-led ecosystem.



ECO Secretary General Visits the ECO Park



Tehran – February 16, 2026

The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad Majeed Khan, accompanied by the President of the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI), Ambassador Muhammad Hassan, paid an official visit to the ECO Park.

During the visit, the dignitaries toured the park and surveyed the areas dedicated to the representation of ECO member states. The tour provided an opportunity to assess the current state of the park and its facilities.

Following the site visit, the Secretary General and the ECI President held a productive meeting with Seyed Mohammad Hossein Hejazi, CEO of the Nosazi Abasabad Company. The discussions focused on potential avenues for collaboration to revitalize the ECO Park. Among other discussions, the key topic was the proposal to establish dedicated spaces for the ECO member states to showcase their cultural heritages, besides consideration of the declaration of the annual “ECO Week” as a regular feature at the venue, aiming to enhance cultural exchange and promoting the shared heritage of the member states.





304th Meeting of ECO Council of Permanent Representatives

Tehran – Feb 25, 2026

The ECO Council of Permanent Representatives convened at its 304th Session on February 26, 2026.

Chaired by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Ambassador Muhammad Mudassir Tipu, the Council discussed important agenda items concerning regional economic cooperation including, drafting of the Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation – 2035 and the ECO Five-Year Roadmap on Minerals Cooperation for 2026-2030, among others. The ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan briefed the Council on recent activities of the Organization, as well as on the planned activities for 2026, including important ECO Ministerial Meetings.

The Council also welcomed the newly appointed Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Yerzhan Mukash and wished him a successful term at ECO.



Participation in the ceremony commemorating the National Day of the Islamic Republic of Iran



11th February - Tehran

"The Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) participated in the ceremony commemorating the National Day of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The event, held on 9 February 2026, was attended by His Excellency Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, along with a number of senior Iranian officials and diplomats, as well as Heads of Diplomatic Missions and representatives of international organizations accredited in Iran. The ECO Deputy Secretary General took part in the ceremony on behalf of the Secretary General, who was unable to attend due to an official mission outside Iran.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, which included addresses by His Excellency the President, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the Ambassador of Tajikistan in his capacity as Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, the ECO representative formally extended congratulations to His Excellency Dr. Pezeshkian on the occasion of National Day of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the host country of the ECO Headquarters."



**Economic Cooperation
Organization**

ECO Deputy Secretary General Visits INSO to Advance ECO-RISCAM Agenda



On 18 February 2026, a delegation from the ECO Secretariat, headed by Deputy Secretary General Dr. Saberi Ansari, paid an official visit to the headquarters of the Iran National Standards Organization (INSO) in Karaj, Alborz Province of Iran.

The visit aimed to review ongoing cooperation and identify opportunities to advance the regional quality infrastructure agenda through the ECO Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology (ECO-RISCAM).

The ECO delegation was received by Dr. Majid Javanmard, President of the Iranian Standard Research Institute; Dr. Ghollasi Moud, INSO Deputy for Standards Development and Promotion; along with senior directors, experts, and specialists from both INSO and the Standard Research Institute. Representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran were also present.

The programme included a consultative meeting, during which discussions focused on preparations for key upcoming milestones, particularly the logistical and substantive arrangements for the inaugural General Council Meeting of ECO-RISCAM. The consultations were followed by an extensive tour of the specialized laboratories at the Standard Research Institute, intended to familiarize the ECO delegation with the activities, capabilities, and achievements of INSO as the host and leading body for this key regional initiative aimed at strengthening quality infrastructure through ECO-RISCAM.

The laboratory tour provided the ECO delegation with an opportunity to observe firsthand the technical processes, testing procedures, and expert assessments conducted by INSO, offering valuable insight into its operational capabilities and technical expertise.



ECO Deputy Secretary General Meets with Iranian Anti-Narcotics Officials

Deputy Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Ambassador Yerzhan Mukash, met with Dr. Hamidikia, Deputy Head of the Regional and International Anti Narcotics Police of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to explore ways to further strengthen cooperation between the ECO Secretariat, Member States, and the Iranian Anti Narcotics Police. Prior to the meeting, Ambassador Mukash visited the Anti Narcotics Exhibition organized by the Iranian Anti Narcotics Police.

Ambassador Mukash expressed his appreciation for the invitation extended by the Anti Narcotics Police of Iran and reaffirmed ECO's commitment to enhancing collaborative efforts to counter narcotics trafficking and related transnational threats. Both sides emphasized the importance of sustained, coordinated regional action and the need to reinforce intelligence driven and operational cooperation among Member States.

Dr. Hamidikia conveyed Iran's readiness to deepen institutional collaboration and offered to host the Second Meeting of the Chiefs of Anti Narcotics Police of ECO Member States in October, an initiative welcomed by Ambassador Mukash. The two sides agreed to maintain close coordination to finalize the organizational, substantive, and logistical details of the meeting and to advance joint capacity building programs for anti narcotics officials across the ECO region.



Meeting on Supporting the Implementation of the Regional Quality Policy in the ECO Region

On February 18, 2026, an online technical meeting was held between ECO Secretariat, UNIDO, and ECO TDB to advance the development of the project "ECO-UNIDO Project of 'Support the Implementation of the Regional Quality Policy in the ECO Region' (Phase IV)".

Participants reviewed the survey's methodology and scope, ensuring alignment with regional priorities. The meeting focused on refining the project's conceptual note and discussing funding mechanisms for its execution. During the meeting, UNIDO presented a programme for strengthening quality infrastructure and sustainability standards compliance in the ECO region.

The discussion concluded with a shared commitment to finalize the conceptual mode and secure the necessary funding, paving the way for the next steps in project implementation. The project aims to strengthen regional quality policies and support sustainable economic growth. UNIDO has committed to providing the Secretariat with a draft project concept document.

The ECO-UNIDO project strengthens regional quality policies, boosts competitiveness, aligns with international standards, and fosters sustainable growth in ECO countries.





Economic Cooperation Organization



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