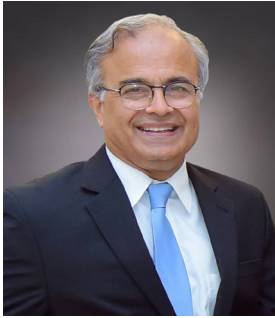




ECO Newsletter

April, 2026- No. 20



Dear Readers,

It gives me immense pleasure to present the April 2026 edition of the ECO Newsletter. This past month proved to be remarkably active despite the prevailing regional situation. Even amid these challenging circumstances, the Economic Cooperation Organization has continued to operate without interruption - a testament to the extraordinary resilience and dedication of our Iranian colleagues, as well as our international staff, whose efforts have enabled the seamless online coordination of our activities. To all of them, I once again extend my deepest appreciation.

The month of April offered a number of important opportunities for regional and international engagements. I had the privilege of attending the Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2026, which brought together leaders and policymakers to exchange views on building sustainable peace and stability across our region and to hold important bilateral exchanges.

From Antalya, I travelled to Astana to participate in the Regional Environmental Summit - a timely initiative that underscored the pressing need for strengthened regional dialogue and action on environmental sustainability. Being my first official visit to Kazakhstan as SG ECO I also availed the opportunity to hold a number of important bilateral ministerial meetings. While in Astana, I also attended a number of related side events representing ECO.

An important achievement for the Organization this month was the successful convening of the 7th Tourism Ministerial Meeting, preceded by the 9th Meeting of the High-Level Experts Group on Tourism in the historic city of Shusha, was also formally declared as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2026. In addition, the inaugural session of the ECO High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation was convened in Astana, marking a significant step toward strengthening regional collaboration in this vital area

Equally significant was the convening of the First Meeting of the Technical Negotiation Committee (TNC) for the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), held virtually. The deliberations underscored the pressing need to transform ECOTA into a functional and dynamic instrument capable of advancing regional economic cooperation in a meaningful and measurable way.

In parallel with these efforts, the ECO Deputy Secretaries General also attended a number of other important events across the region.

During the month, I also had the opportunity to visit the ECO Clean Energy Centre (CECECO) in Baku, Azerbaijan, where I received a comprehensive briefing on the Centre's ongoing activities and strategic priorities. Beyond these engagements, I also took the opportunity to engage with the media, giving several interviews in which I reaffirmed ECO's strong commitment to promoting economic cooperation and regional connectivity.

As we look ahead, ECO remains steadfast in its mission to foster collaboration, resilience, and sustainable development across all member states. I hope this edition of the newsletter offers valuable insights into our ongoing efforts and the achievements of the past month.

Secretary General

Economic Cooperation Organization

ECO Convenes 7th Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Shusha



Shusha, Azerbaijan- April 29, 2026

The 7th Ministerial Meeting on Tourism of the Economic Cooperation Organization was successfully held in the historic city of Shusha, designated as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2026. The high-level gathering brought together Ministers and senior representatives from ECO Member States.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Asad M. Khan, ECO Secretary General, highlighted the region's strong tourism performance, noting that international visitor numbers to ECO Member States surpassed 105 million in 2025. He emphasized the importance of collective action to achieve the ambitious targets for 2035 including increasing tourism's contribution to national economies and enhancing regional competitiveness.

The ECO Secretary General formally presented the certificate to the Chairman of the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the opening of the meeting.

The Ministers deliberated on a range of strategic initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable and inclusive tourism growth. These included official the launch of the ECO Compendium of Best Practices in Ecotourism, and the Policy Brief on Diversifying Regional Tourism. The Meeting also discussed strengthening tourism education, joint market and of destinations and promoting investment opportunities across the region.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to advancing tourism as a driver of economic growth, cultural exchange, and regional connectivity. They emphasized the importance of preserving cultural heritage and promoting tourism as a force for peace, stability, and mutual understanding.

The Meeting concluded with a group photo and appreciating messages to the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan for its warm hospitality and excellent organization of the event.

The ECO Officer-in- Charge signs condolence book for former FM of Iran and Head of country's Strategic Council for Foreign Relations

On behalf of the ECO, the Deputy Secretary General of the Organization Mr. Behzad Saberi signed the book of condolences on the occasion of tragic assassination of H.E Kamal Kharrazi, former Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran and head of the country's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations.

In his statement in the book, he referred to late Dr Kharrazi as a man of honor and honesty, an exceptional diplomat and a true believer in regional integrity and cooperation who supported the ECO during his tenure as foreign minister and afterwards.

Dr Kamal Kharrazi passed away recently following a US-Israeli strike on April 1st at his residence in Tehran.



ECO Convenes 9th Meeting of High-Level Experts Group on Tourism / Gastronomy Festival in Shusha



Shusha, Azerbaijan- April 28, 2026

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) successfully convened the 9th Meeting of the High-Level Experts Group on Tourism on 28 April 2026 in Shusha, Azerbaijan, as a preparatory meeting for the upcoming 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism. On the sidelines of the meeting, a vibrant Gastronomy Festival with the participation of ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan was organized, showcasing the rich culinary traditions of ECO Member States through dishes prepared by chefs from across the region.



The meeting brought together senior officials, and tourism experts from ECO Member States as well as the officials of the Secretariat including the Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Yerzhan Mukash to review progress in regional tourism cooperation and advance key strategic initiatives. The gathering was hosted in Shusha, the ECO Tourism Capital for 2026, underscoring the city's growing importance as a hub for cultural and sustainable tourism.

Participants reviewed the implementation of decisions adopted under the Erzurum Declaration of the previous ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism and discussed priority areas for further collaboration. Key agenda items included the endorsement of the Compendium of Best Practices for Ecotourism in the ECO Region and the Policy Brief on Diversifying Intra-Regional Tourism, aimed at expanding tourism offerings across member states.

Deliberations also focused on the draft Roadmap for the Expansion of Tourism Services (2026–2030), which will contribute to the broader framework of the upcoming ECO Strategic Goals for Economic Cooperation for 2035. Participants further worked on finalizing the draft Shusha Declaration.

The meeting also considered the nomination of Aktau, proposed by Kazakhstan, as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2030, with discussions expected to conclude at the ministerial level.



ECO Secretary General Attends the Regional Environmental Summit

Astana – April 22, 2026

Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization, Dr. Asad M. Khan, participated in the official opening ceremony of the Regional Environmental Summit in Astana, which was inaugurated by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Summit participants included heads of state from Central Asian countries, leaders of Armenia, Georgia, Mongolia, Azerbaijan, heads of

relevant UN specialized agencies, and representatives of international organizations.

Organized by the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan under the theme “Shared Vision for a Sustainable Future,” the Summit underscores the importance of enhanced regional dialogue and joint efforts toward environmental sustainability.

ECO Secretary General addresses the 1st High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation



Astana – April 23, 2026

The Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, called on Member States to anchor regional environmental cooperation in the latest scientific knowledge and national priorities, as he addressed the first meeting of the ECO High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation (HLDPE).

The HLDPE meeting, held on the margins of the Regional Ecological Summit (RES2026) in Astana, formally inaugurated a new interactive consultation mechanism for ECO Member States to exchange perspectives on shared environmental challenges, including pollution, biodiversity loss, and the adverse impacts of climate change.



“Environmental systems are changing faster than many of our policies. What worked five years ago may no longer be sufficient today,” Dr. Khan said. “The HLDPE is designed to be a knowledge bridge – translating the best available science, policy innovations and local expertise into actionable regional cooperation.”

The HLDPE was established by the 26th ECO Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting and will convene at least once a year, with its Chairmanship rotating annually among Member States in alphabetical order. The Republic of Uzbekistan, as initiator of the Platform, holds the first Chairmanship.

ECO Secretary General delivers Statement at High-Level Dialogue on the Tehran Convention

Astana, April 23, 2026

The Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, delivered a statement at the High-Level Dialogue on the Tehran Convention, held on the sidelines of the Regional Ecological Summit 2026 in Astana. Speaking under the theme “Shared Waters, Shared Prosperity: Turning Caspian Environmental Crisis into Regional Cooperation”. Dr. Khan called for urgent collective action to address the rapid decline of the Caspian Sea.

The Secretary-General noted that the Caspian is not only an ecological treasure but also a vital artery for trade, energy, and livelihoods across the ECO region. Four of ECO’s ten Member States are Caspian littoral states, while the remaining six depend on transboundary connectivity through the Caspian basin.

Dr. Khan highlighted a striking irony: while much of the world worries about rising seas, the Caspian is shrinking. He warned that water stress is at the center of the region’s environmental challenges. Land degradation, desertification, droughts, and floods further compound the region’s vulnerability.

Economically, the Caspian’s decline is already reducing port accessibility, raising transport costs, and disrupting supply chains for energy, grain, and manufactured goods. Fisheries – including sturgeon that produce the world’s caviar – are under threat, while exposed seabeds generate salt-laden dust storms that degrade agricultural soils and harm public health hundreds of kilometers inland, affecting even non-coastal ECO members such as Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Dr. Khan reaffirmed ECO’s support for the Tehran Convention and noted that ECO’s mandate is to foster political commitment, regional cooperation, and shared investment frameworks. He concluded that “the Caspian’s fate is a test of our ability to act together.” “No single country can reverse its decline alone. Let us leave Astana with a clear message: cooperation is not an option; it is the only path.”

Meeting between ECO Secretary General and Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan

Astana – April 24, 2026

Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, met with H.E. Serik Zhumangarin, Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in Astana. The high-level meeting addressed key priorities in regional economic integration, trade facilitation, and strategic connectivity.

Discussions highlighted the importance of digital economic integration and the ECO Trade Facilitation Strategy. The Secretariat pledged to facilitate Kazakhstan’s active role in the ECO Trade Negotiation Committee (TNC).

The meeting further discussed prospects of regional connectivity, while noting that the two-year ECO Chairmanship by Pakistan will serve to accelerate the realization of regional connectivity goals.

The meeting reaffirmed the strong and growing partnership between the ECO Secretariat and Kazakhstan, and underscored the shared commitment of both sides to advancing regional prosperity through enhanced trade, connectivity, and economic cooperation.





Meeting between ECO Secretary General and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan

Astana – April 23, 2026

On April 23, 2026, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, met with H.E. Mr. Yermek Kosherbayev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in Astana. The meeting focused on deepening cooperation, enhancing trade and economic ties, and improving transport and logistics across the region.



Thanking the honorable Minister for Kazakhstan's contributions to the Organization and their successful chairmanship of ECO in 2025, Dr. Khan informed him that the Organization continues to sustain its work program despite the circumstances, and conveyed optimism that 2026 will continue on this positive momentum, with a vigorous calendar of Ministerial Meetings across member states in sectors including ICT, environment, industry, agriculture, finance, tourism and transport.

The meeting further reviewed important regional cooperation initiatives, including the ECO Trade Negotiation Committee, and strategic transport and logistics corridors, as well as other areas for expanded regional cooperation in environment, tourism, agriculture and industry.

ECO Secretary General meets with Minister of Tourism and Sports of Kazakhstan

Astana – April 23, 2026

Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, and H.E. Mr. Yerbol Myrzabosynov, Minister of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, held productive bilateral discussions in Astana.

The meeting underscored the shared commitment to regional integration, with both dignitaries expressing confidence in doubling the ECO region's international visitor figures through joint efforts.

The parties focused on the upcoming 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Shusha, Republic of Azerbaijan, during which the city of Aktau, Kazakhstan, will be officially proclaimed as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2030.

Exploring new horizons for regional integration, they also discussed initiating regional cooperation in the fields of sports and youth events, with Kazakhstan taking the lead in this new direction.

The meeting concluded with an agreement to closely coordinate the integration of concrete sports and youth exchange initiatives into major ECO events.





ECO Secretary General meets the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan

Astana – April 24, 2026

On the sidelines of the Regional Ecological Summit in Astana, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Yerlan Nysanbayev, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Secretary General expressed gratitude for the invitation to participate in the Regional Ecological Summit, a landmark initiative organized by the President of Kazakhstan under the auspices of the United Nations. Dr. Khan commended Kazakhstan for the successful convening of the Summit, recognizing it as a crucial platform for addressing pressing regional environmental issues and fostering practical cooperation among Central Asian nations and beyond.



During the dialogue, both dignitaries acknowledged the severe and interconnected environmental challenges confronting the ECO region, including soil degradation, sandstorms, floods, and the alarming depletion of the Aral and Caspian Seas. The Secretary General expressed deep appreciation for Kazakhstan's leadership in these areas, noting the ECO's keen interest in learning from Kazakhstan's experience in balancing fossil fuel utilization with robust environmental protection.

The parties also discussed the preparation for the upcoming 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment, scheduled to be held in Samarkand, Republic of Uzbekistan. Underscoring the critical importance of this sectoral gathering, the Secretary General expressed strong hope for Kazakhstan's high-level participation.

The meeting concluded with both sides reaffirming their mutual commitment to deepening regional ecological cooperation and ensuring a climate-resilient and sustainable future for the ECO Member States.



Meeting between ECO Secretary General and Minister of Industry and Construction of Kazakhstan

Astana – April 24, 2026

The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, called on H.E. Mr. Yersaiyn Nagaspayev, Minister of Industry and Construction of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in Astana.

A central topic of deliberation was the imperative to revitalize the ECO's industrial agenda. The Secretary General noted that regional industrial cooperation required renewed momentum. He informed the Kazakh side that the Secretariat has scheduled the upcoming ECO Ministerial Meeting on Industry, alongside an Expert Group Meeting, for September 22-23 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Minister Nagaspayev expressed support for this strategic initiative, confirming Kazakhstan's active participation and steadfast commitment to developing concrete, result-oriented policy frameworks.

To further strengthen regional economic integration, the Secretary General emphasized the critical importance of harmonizing quality infrastructure.

The meeting concluded with both sides reaffirming their mutual commitment to deepening regional cooperation, and ensuring a sustainable cooperation in the ECO region.



ECO Secretary General Participates in OTS Environmental Ministers Meeting in Astana

Astana – April 24, 2026

The ECO Secretary General participates in the OTS Environmental Ministers Meeting in Astana within the Regional Ecological Summit 2026. Dr. Khan proposed stronger cooperation between ECO and OTS especially in promoting Circular Economy, knowledge sharing and technical consultations, for greater resilience.



ECO Secretary General holds Meeting with Director General of IOFS

Astana – April 24, 2026

Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, visited the headquarters of the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) in Astana to hold a meeting with H.E. Berik Aryn, Director General of the IOFS.

The dialogue focused on addressing the pressing challenges of food security and water stress across the overlapping membership of both organizations. Recognizing the severe and contrasting impacts of climate change in the region – from extreme droughts and shrinking seabeds to devastating floods – both dignitaries underscored the critical need to pool resources and capacities for advanced water management. In this regard, the IOFS invited ECO representatives to participate in an upcoming offline workshop on water resource management scheduled for June, which aims to support broader UN initiatives. Furthermore, the IOFS proposed organizing a joint side event dedicated to agriculture and climate change during the upcoming COP31.



The meeting also highlighted concrete programmatic collaboration in the agricultural sector. The Secretary General outlined ECO's keen interest in establishing an "ECO seed vault" to encourage regional seed trade and develop climate-resilient, high-yield local crop varieties. The IOFS leadership shared updates on their successful ongoing project to disseminate new seed varieties among several countries, including Kazakhstan, and highlighted their active initiative – in cooperation with the FAO – to eradicate the Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) animal disease within the ECO region.

The meeting concluded with a mutual commitment to continue exploring specific, concrete proposals for joint action, leveraging the specialized knowledge of the IOFS to foster lasting food security and sustainable development throughout the region.

Kazakh State Media Interviews ECO Secretary General

Astana – April 24, 2026

At the Regional Environmental Summit held in Astana's Congress Hall, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, gave a live interview to the state television channel 24KZ, outlining key priorities for regional sustainability and energy cooperation. He emphasized that Central Asia already possesses a shared electricity grid infrastructure, and unlocking its full potential depends on stronger political coordination. Key initiatives such as regional green energy corridors and the ECO Regional Electricity Market aim to enhance energy security, accelerate clean energy transition, and improve cross-border integration.



Dr. Khan also highlighted the need for a balanced energy transition that considers the region's reliance on fossil fuels while scaling up renewable energy investments. He underscored opportunities in green hydrogen development, regional water management cooperation, and attracting international climate finance through unified platforms like the RESCUE initiative. Stressing the importance of collective action, he called on ECO member states to strengthen collaboration, harmonize policies, and present a unified regional voice to address environmental challenges and secure sustainable development.



ECO Secretary General Attends the Antalya Diplomacy Forum



Antalya – April 18, 2026

Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Dr. Asad M. Khan participated at the Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2026. Convened under the theme “Mapping Tomorrow, Managing Uncertainties,” and hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, under the auspices of H.E. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Forum brought together leaders, policymakers, diplomats, academics, business experts, media and civil society representatives to explore how to best manage uncertainties and address pressing issues while preparing for future challenges.

Within the Forum, Dr. Khan participated at the panel: “Refining Geo-economics: How to balance global and national priorities?” The Panel explored how states and international economic and financial institutions can cooperate to balance national economic security policies with efforts to uphold an open, rule-based multilateral system for common good. The discussions sought to contribute to managing uncertainties and mapping tomorrow in a rapidly transforming geo-economic order, while supporting a multilateral system that remains sustainable, effective and resilient.

In his remarks Dr. Khan noted that the growing emphasis on regionalism and regional cooperation provides a prime opportunity for the Economic Cooperation Organization and similar regional organizations to serve as central hub for trade and industrial collaboration, while ECO is responding to this challenge not only through policy coordination, but by strengthening its own analytical foundations-building the institutional capacity to generate the evidence-based strategies that shifting geo-economic conditions demand.

He expressed that from a political perspective, developing economies are required to adapt to the rewiring of global production and supply chain systems not only through economic reforms, but also through strategic positioning given the increasingly polarized global order. Hence, emerging and developing economies should actively engage in trade agreements, strategic partnerships, and investment deals to strengthen their position in the global economy. In this evolving environment, regional organizations can play a stabilizing role by fostering policy coordination, reducing trade frictions, and supporting trust-based economic cooperation among member states, he concluded.



ECO Secretary General meets D-8 Secretary General

Antalya – April 18, 2026

The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization Dr. Asad M. Khan held a meeting with the Secretary General of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. The ECO Secretary General congratulated Ambassador Sohail Mahmood on assuming office and expressed confidence that his leadership would further strengthen the organization's engagement with regional and global partners.

The ECO Secretary General noted that both organizations share common objectives of promoting economic integration, trade facilitation, and sustainable development, particularly among developing economies. He emphasized the potential for closer institutional collaboration and reviewed opportunities for enhanced cooperation between ECO and D-8 across areas of mutual interest.

Expressing optimism about the future of ECO–D-8 relations, the ECO Secretary General underscored the importance of translating shared goals into structured and results-oriented cooperation. The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to further strengthening institutional ties and advancing common objectives of regional connectivity and development.



ECO Secretary General Meets the Foreign Minister of Turkish Cypriot State

Antalya – April 18, 2026

Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Dr. Asad M. Khan met with the Foreign Minister of Turkish Cypriot State (TCS), H.E. Tahsin Ertuğruloğlu, on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2026.

The meeting reviewed the status of ongoing cooperation between ECO and the Turkish Cypriot State, which is an observer of ECO since 2012. Both sides expressed satisfaction with engagement of TCS in ECO activities, especially co-hosting of some events in tourism, sports and ecology. They further expressed readiness to sustain and expand engagement.





The First Meeting of Technical Negotiation Committee (TNC) for the ECO Trade Agreement

The First Meeting of the Technical Negotiation Committee (TNC) for the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) was convened on 15 April 2026 in virtual format.

The meeting was inaugurated and chaired by Dr. Behzad Saberi Ansari, Deputy Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization. In his opening remarks, Mr. Saberi underscored the urgent need to transform ECOTA into a functional and dynamic instrument for advancing regional economic cooperation.

Delegations from three ECOTA contracting parties - the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the Republic of Türkiye - participated actively in the meeting. The TNC reviewed, discussed, and finally adopted its Terms of Reference.

The meeting expressed its gratitude to the ECO Secretariat for preparing the draft documents, convening this important event and facilitating the process.

The TNC is established upon approval by 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade held on November 26, 2025 in Istanbul, and shall function as the main technical negotiating body responsible for the revision and amendment of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), with a view to enhancing intra-regional trade, aligning the Agreement with contemporary trade practices, and facilitating broader participation of ECO Member States.



ECO Secretary General Visits ECO Clean Energy Center



Baku, Azerbaijan – April 26, 2026

The ECO Secretary General visited the ECO Clean Energy Center (CECECO) in Baku, Azerbaijan and met its Executive Director Ms. Aysel Yagubova & her team.



He received a full briefing on CECECO’s activities. The Secretary general expressed confidence that it would play an important role in sustainable energy transition in our region.

ECO Secretary General Meets President of ECO Science Foundation

Islamabad- April 9, 2026

The ECO Secretary general Asad M. Khan held a constructive meeting with the President of ECO Science Foundation, Prof. Seyed Komail Tayebi. He discussed opportunities to strengthen scientific and technological collaboration across the region and expressed optimism about the impact ahead.



ECO Deputy Secretary General Attends TurkmenTravel 2026

Ashgabat- April 14, 2026

Ambassador Silapberdi Nurberdiyev, Deputy Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), represented the ECO Secretariat at the 'TurkmenTravel 2026' International Tourism Exhibition and Forum held from 14 to 16 April in Ashgabat.

During the opening day's session, "The Region's Common Heritage: Promoting Central Asian Culture on the World Stage," Ambassador Nurberdiyev outlined the ECO's strategic vision and key initiatives, particularly for enhancing regional tourism cooperation. He commended Turkmenistan's steadfast commitment to advancing regional cooperation, connectivity and the sustainable development of the sector. The Ambassador extended the ECO's congratulations on the designation of Mary from Turkmenistan, as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2028.



The Ambassador extended the ECO's congratulations on the designation of Mary from Turkmenistan, as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2028.

In his address, the Deputy Secretary General highlighted the substantial tourism potential of the ECO region, which welcomed a record 105 million international visitors in 2025. He emphasized tourism's critical dual function as a powerful engine for economic growth and a vital instrument for fostering cultural dialogue, mutual understanding, and lasting peace. Ambassador Nurberdiyev further stressed the importance of platforms such as TurkmenTravel in catalyzing collaboration and the development of a resilient tourism ecosystem in the region.

Ambassador Nurberdiyev also announced that Shusha from Azerbaijan, the current holder of the ECO Tourism Capital 2026 title, will host the forthcoming 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism and reiterated the ECO's role for regional tourism promotion with such initiatives.



ECO Deputy Secretary General Addresses International Conference on Sustainable Tourism in Ashgabat

Ashgabat- April 16, 2026

The Deputy Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Ambassador Silapberdi Nurberdiyev, participated in the Scientific Practical Conference on “Tourism – a Bridge of Cultures: Sustainable Development and International Cooperation in the Field of Tourism”, held in the margins of the International Tourism Exhibition and Conference TurkmenTravel 2026 at the Turkmen State Institute of Culture.

In his address, Ambassador Nurberdiyev expressed appreciation to the organizers for convening researchers, experts, and policymakers, emphasizing the importance of such platforms in fostering knowledge exchange and identifying practical solutions for sustainable tourism development.

He commended Turkmenistan for successfully hosting the event and highlighted the country’s active and constructive role within ECO, particularly in promoting regional cooperation in tourism, connectivity, and cultural exchange.

Underscoring the broader significance of tourism, the Deputy Secretary General noted that tourism serves not only as an economic driver but also as a vital tool for strengthening mutual understanding, enhancing people-to-people connections, and promoting peace and stability across the ECO region.

He also congratulated Turkmenistan on the designation of Mary as the ECO Tourism Capital for 2028, highlighting the city’s rich cultural heritage and its historic significance along the Silk Road.

Highlighting the ECO region’s vast tourism potential, Ambassador Nurberdiyev emphasized the importance of strategic planning, reliable data, and strengthened regional collaboration. He referred to the development of the ECO Tourism Roadmap for 2026–2030 as a key initiative aimed at enhancing service quality and increasing the region’s attractiveness to international visitors.

Concluding his remarks, Ambassador Nurberdiyev reaffirmed ECO’s commitment to promoting intra-regional tourism and strengthening collaboration among member states. He expressed confidence that the conference would generate valuable insights and practical recommendations for the future development of tourism in the region.





Economic Cooperation Organization



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