

**Statement by H. E. Mr. Ali Alizada,
the Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan - the Head of Delegation of the Republic of
Azerbaijan at the 36th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council**

17 May, 2026

**Dear Mr. Chairman,
Dear Secretary General,
Distinguished Colleagues,**

It is a great pleasure to personally attend and address the 36th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council of the Economic Cooperation Organization from the ECO Secretariat in Tehran. We were concerned over the escalation of the situation in our region in March-April of this year and I once again convey my condolences to the IR of Iran, the distinguished member country of our organization in connection with the loss of innocent lives as a result of this tension and war. We welcome the declared ceasefire and hope the situation will be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy, and the sustainable stability and peace will be achieved soon in the region. Despite the fact that our meeting today in hybrid format and most delegations, including the majority of members of our delegation participate online, we believe that this meeting will be another opportunity for us to review the progress we have so far, as well as, to deliberate on our further plans and joint activities.

First of all, I would like once again to congratulate the brotherly Islamic Republic of Pakistan on assuming the Chairmanship of ECO and express full confidence in its leadership during this critical period. Azerbaijan is committed to working closely with the Chair to enhance regional cooperation and operationalize key ECO initiatives. At the meantime, I thank ECO Secretary-General for his efforts in guiding the Organization toward its objectives and appreciate the Secretariat's work in facilitating this meeting and advancing ECO's agenda.

We reiterate our commitment to the objectives outlined in ECO Vision 2025 and look forward to finalization of the new strategy document to set new goals for the Member States in addressing current and emerging challenges our region faces, thus aligning to the global agenda and moving towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Azerbaijan advocates for a realistic and actionable framework, where each initiative is backed by clear implementation plans and financial commitments.

Comprehensive reforms are essential for enhancing the effectiveness and visibility of our Organization. With this in mind, Azerbaijan continuously supports efforts to streamline administrative processes, optimize budget allocations, and direct resources towards result-oriented initiatives. To achieve this goal, we stand ready to further deepen regional cooperation, enhance institutional effectiveness, and ensure the successful implementation of the organization's strategic priorities.

As far as initiatives aimed at enhanced regional cooperation and involvement of ECO in these processes are concerned, we reiterate our support to establishment of the ECO High Level Committee at the level of deputy foreign ministers. We believe that this platform set to serve as a strategic forum for brainstorming within the Organization will sustainably serve to raising effectiveness of the ECO to better correspond to the needs of the Member States.

Azerbaijan is determined to ensure that the COP29 legacy translates into regional benefits. The ECO Clean Energy Centre in Baku already began operations as a hub to accelerate the sustainable energy transition and facilitate green energy projects in our region. We invite all Member States to actively participate in its programmes and to bring forward regional projects that can be supported through the climate-finance instruments shaped in Baku.

In parallel, ECO Research Centre in Baku is being developed as the Organization's economic think-tank. In an era of rapid geopolitical and technological change, ECO needs its own analytical capacity anchored in our realities and priorities. Using this opportunity, I would like to once again invite all our esteemed Member States to be the part of this important initiative and to sign its Charter to make it fully operational.

To ensure sustainable development in the region, cooperation in energy, transport, industry, agriculture, ICT, tourism, mining and processing of minerals as well as environmental protection should be in the focus of the Member States. Promotion of intra-regional trade and investment are another key factors for accelerating economic growth in the ECO region thus contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Connectivity is vital for enhancing economic growth and prosperity in the ECO Member States and establishment of new transport communications in the region is attractive from the perspective of providing benefits and new connectivity opportunities for all. In this regard, we welcome the developments with respect to the establishment of transport communications between the Eastern Zangezur Economic Region of Azerbaijan and its Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Soonest finalization of infrastructural projects and operationalization of this route will serve to mutually beneficial cooperation between these two ECO member-states, and will also add a new artery of connectivity to boost the transport and transit potential of entire ECO region.

Tourism cooperation between the Organization's member states is an effective factor in strengthening ties between our peoples. Striving to proactively participate in the development of tourism in the ECO region, Azerbaijan hosted the last meeting of the ECO tourism ministers on 27-29 April of this year in Shusha, the tourism capital of ECO. The meeting deliberated on a range of strategic initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable and inclusive tourism growth, and also discussed strengthening tourism education, jointly marketing of destinations and promoting investment opportunities across the region.

While talking about recent multilateral activities, I would like to emphasize that the 13th Session of the World Urban Forum, the United Nations' premier platform on sustainable urbanization commences its work today in Baku. Representatives from over the globe, including ECO Member States will focus on housing as a driver of inclusive and resilient development and deliberate on current trends and challenges in urbanization related fields. This global event will place our wider region at the centre of discussions on future cities, connectivity, digital transformation and sustainable development.

I would also like to commend the Member States for their constructive contribution to work and positive outcomes of the 17th ECO Summit held in Khankendi on 4 July last year. The Summit, together with the ECO Youth, Women's and Business Forums in Aghdam, Lachin and Shusha, demonstrated both the dynamism of our region and the profound transformation taking place in Azerbaijan's liberated territories. The Khankendi Communiqué, shaped on the Chair's summary of the Summit, provides a strategic vision and guidance for our work. It highlights economic sustainability, climate resilience, deeper intra-regional trade, stronger connectivity and clean-energy cooperation as core pillars of ECO's future vision.

I believe that within the framework of RPC, the Sectoral Committees will discuss and consider the relevant issues and topics of their specific areas to make appropriate recommendations to RPC regarding the ECO Work Programme 2026 and Calendar of Events 2026.

I congratulate the Republic of Kazakhstan for the successful ECO Chairmanship in 2025 and once again wish every success to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in its activities within the Chairmanship of ECO in 2026. I thank you all for your attention.

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Alireza Tootoonchian

**Honourable Permanent Representative
of the Islamic Republic of Iran to ECO**

36th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council

May 17, 2026 — ECO Secretariat

In the Name of God

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished ECO Ambassadors, and Head of the Delegations,
Honorable Secretary General, and distinguished colleagues**

At the outset, I extend a warm welcome to all participants and wish to express my sincere appreciation to Distinguished ECO Ambassadors and the ECO Secretary General, Dr. Asad Majeed Khan, and his dedicated team at the Secretariat for organizing this meeting. I also wish to convey special thanks to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in its capacity as ECO Chair for 2026.

It is an honor to be part of this important gathering, and I am confident that the deliberations and outcomes of this Regional Planning Council will make a meaningful contribution to advancing the Economic Cooperation Organization's programs and activities at this critical juncture.

Seventy-nine days have now passed since the United States and the Zionist regime launched their unprovoked, unlawful, and unjust war against the Islamic Republic of Iran – a war they initiated by surprise over an eight-month period between June 2025 and February 2026, precisely while two rounds of diplomatic negotiations were underway, and in which they plunged the world into chaos and market turmoil.

The Islamic Republic of Iran's commitment to diplomacy and its avoidance of war have been demonstrated time and again. At the same time, our crushing response to any act of aggression has served as a cautionary tale. On February 28, 2026, the enemy not only cowardly martyred the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic and a number of senior officials, but in those very same hours carried out an attack on a school in the city of Minab, resulting in the martyrdom of more than 170 students and teachers.

The Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms its unwavering commitment to diplomacy, dialogue, and the principles of international law. Unilateral sanctions, the instrumentalization of the global financial system, the politicization of trade, and above all, war itself, pose a direct threat to the sustainable development of developing nations, including ECO member states.

As you are well aware, the ECO member states, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Turkey, Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan, have over the past three decades made considerable strides toward achieving their development goals through regional cooperation. Nevertheless, a significant gap remains between what has been accomplished and the ECO region's true potential. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran firmly believes that ECO member states, operating within a regional framework and in the

framework of South-South cooperation, are able to have a substantial share in regional and global economic growth.

At present, intra-regional trade within ECO accounts for only a modest fraction of the region's total trade with the rest of the world. Data for 2025 indicate that ECO member states exported approximately \$304 billion worth of goods globally, of which just 5.6 percent (\$17.1 billion) remained within the region. On the import side, member states brought in more than \$430 billion in goods from the rest of the world, with only 3.1 percent (over \$13 billion) sourced from within the region. Taken together, these figures make clear that ECO has thus far played a limited role in expanding trade among its members, and that actual trade flows fall well short of the region's real capacity. Moreover, the share of intra-regional trade has been declining in recent years. It is therefore imperative for this Organization to adopt decisions that unlock the existing potential among member states and give meaningful impetus to intra-regional trade.

Regional developments – including the 12-day and 40-day illegal and unjustified wars imposed upon the Islamic Republic of Iran by the United States and Zionist regime, and broader global developments that have heightened international tensions and risks- have made regional convergence and alignment a more urgent need, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, and the transfer of knowledge and expertise. In this context, strengthening value chains among ECO member states to safeguard sustainable economic growth, securing supply chains, developing complementary financial and banking channels, reinforcing infrastructure, and facilitating customs procedures are all of great importance.

Notwithstanding, the two wars imposed upon the Islamic Republic of Iran by the United States and the Zionist regime, Iran is committed to the goals of ECO. Iran is therefore a strong and serious supporter of expanding trade among ECO member states and realize the transit projects in the region. To this end, existing tools that have yet to be fully used – chief among them the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), which, despite being repeatedly endorsed at previous meetings, has sadly seen little practical application, must now receive the attention they deserve. Iran's vast oil and gas resources, strong petrochemical and steel industries, rich mineral deposits, and skilled technical and engineering workforce can serve as a solid foundation for industrial and agricultural development, as well as the growth of new technology-based industries across the region. Every ECO member state has its own strengths and advantages - and together, these strengths can form the basis of a regional value chain with low geopolitical risk.

Given the growing need for stronger regional and international engagement, the Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to play a more active role in ECO in order to achieve the Organization's goals, particularly in the areas of expanding intra-regional trade, securing financial resources, removing trade barriers, developing a joint plan for human resource development, and building better transport and communications infrastructure. In this context, member states should seriously consider the following concrete steps:

- Creating the conditions for trade transactions to be conducted in the national currencies of member states, or through a shared common currency

- Developing the digital and physical infrastructure needed to support and facilitate trade transactions
 - Strengthening economic, financial, and trade ties within the region, particularly in the fields of energy, new technologies, and knowledge-based industries
 - Promoting unity and alignment among regional countries, and keeping the Organization away from political tensions and challenges
 - Ensuring that all ECO members actively participate in implementing and expanding the ECOTA trade agreement and in opening up regional trade
 - Developing a practical framework to deal with environmental challenges, climate change, and their effects on water resources and natural disasters
- Exploring the development of an integrated management framework for ECO-corridors, along with strategies for their commercialization through sustainable linkages to load origins

It is worth noting that ECO's performance in 2025 was commendable in terms of ministerial and technical meetings, including high-level sessions on trade, transport, tourism, interior affairs, and disaster risk reduction, as well as the Summit held in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The year 2026 is equally packed with high-level engagements. The Islamic Republic of Iran, having hosted several ministerial and senior expert meetings in 2025, has likewise scheduled a rich program of activities for the current year.

The year 2026 and the process of finalizing the ECO Vision 2035 document mark a defining turning point. All member states must focus their efforts on producing a practical, action-oriented document that genuinely reflects the needs of member states and keeps pace with the fast-changing realities of our region and the world.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, allow me to emphasize the great importance of this Regional Planning Council. We must develop a practical, evidence-based and forward-looking work program for 2026, one that is fully aligned with the priorities set out in the ECO Vision 2025 and the new Vision document. The directives of Heads of State and Government and the decisions of the ECO Council of Ministers will continue to guide us on our path toward a better shared future.

Thank you for your attention.

Statement
by Counselor of the Embassy of the
Republic of Kazakhstan in Tehran,
Head of delegation
of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Mr. Kazbek Bokebayev
at the 36th Meeting
of the ECO Regional Planning Council
17-20, 05. 2026

Dear Mr. Chairman,
Dear Mr. Secretary-General,
Your Excellencies,
Dear delegates,

At the outset, let me express my gratitude to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for chairing the 36th meeting of the Regional Planning Council and to the ECO Secretariat for convening this meeting and ensuring follow-up to the decisions taken during the 35th RPC meeting.

I would also like to convey greetings from His Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan. He would have been delighted to participate in today's meeting, but was unable to join us due to his official commitments following the transfer of humanitarian aid from Kazakhstan to the Islamic Republic of Iran yesterday at the Iran-Turkmenistan border. Therefore, I have the honor to lead the Kazakh delegation at this meeting.

The Republic of Kazakhstan attaches great importance to the ECO as a practical platform for the development of regional connectivity, trade facilitation and sustainable development.

In 2025, during Kazakhstan's chairmanship, our joint work was focused on the theme of "Promoting Regional Transport Connectivity and Sustainable Development." This theme reflects both Kazakhstan's national priorities and the shared needs of the ECO region.

In implementing the decisions of the 35th meeting of the PSA, Kazakhstan focused on several practical areas.

First, we placed special emphasis on strengthening the institutional effectiveness of the ECO. In February 2025, the first meeting of the ECO High-Level Committee was held in Tehran, chaired by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan. The meeting addressed issues of reforming the Organization, ensuring a quorum, and enhancing the effectiveness of the ECO working bodies.

Second, Kazakhstan continued to promote regional transport connectivity. We support the development of key multimodal corridors connecting East and West, as well as North and South, including the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, the North-South Corridor, and the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway.

In practical terms, Kazakhstan has initiated four preliminary feasibility studies in the transport sector, all of which received unanimous support from ECO member states. These projects cover an assessment of the functioning of the North-South international transport corridor, digital modeling for railway construction and operation, electronic data exchange between railway administrations and customs authorities, and the possibility of creating an economic corridor along the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran route.

We are grateful that two of these studies have already been completed. We also look forward to the timely launch of the remaining two studies.

Third, Kazakhstan has been advancing the digital connectivity agenda. In March 2025, Kazakhstan hosted a technical meeting on the construction of a fiber-optic line along the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran railway route. We believe that physical and digital connectivity should develop in parallel.

Fourth, Kazakhstan continued its efforts to facilitate trade and strengthen business ties. In February 2025, Kazakhstan organized an online webinar dedicated to potential exporters from Iran and other ECO countries across the Kazakh-Chinese border.

We believe that transport corridors can only generate real economic benefits if they strengthen contacts between business circles, implement practical logistics solutions, and increase trade volumes.

Kazakhstan also contributed to the development of cooperation in statistics and tourism. In September 2025, Kazakhstan chaired the 8th Meeting of Heads of Statistical Services of the ECO Member States and hosted the ECO International Tourism Forum in Aktau.

In addition, Kazakhstan hosted the TransLogistica Kazakhstan 2025 International Exhibition and the New Silk Way Transport Forum in Almaty, with the participation of representatives from all 10 ECO member states.

Your Excellencies,

Experience in 2025 has shown that the ECO region has significant potential. However, practical implementation remains the main challenge.

Our task is to move from declarations to practical projects, from general discussions to agreed deadlines, from disparate national efforts to coordinated regional actions.

Kazakhstan believes that the next stage of cooperation within the ECO should focus on practical transport connectivity, digitalization of transit, customs, and logistics procedures, as well as sustainable development.

In conclusion, Kazakhstan reaffirms its commitment to the goals of the ECO and its readiness to work closely with all Member States and the Secretariat in promoting practical and results-oriented regional cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.

Statement
by Head of delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan
Mr. Saidzoda Saidjafar Sharif,
Head of the Land Transport Department
of the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Tajikistan
at the 36th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council

Distinguished Secretary General,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, allow me to express our appreciation to the Economic Cooperation Organization for its consistent efforts in strengthening regional cooperation and promoting multilateral partnership among the member states.

The Republic of Tajikistan considers the Economic Cooperation Organization as an important platform for advancing joint initiatives in the fields of transport, transit, trade, and sustainable economic development.

Today, the ECO member states possess significant potential in the sphere of transport and logistics connectivity. The geographical position of our region creates favorable conditions for the development of efficient international transport corridors linking Central and South Asia with the Middle East and Europe.

In this regard, Tajikistan attaches special importance to the development of modern transport infrastructure, modernization of international highways, strengthening of transit potential, and expansion of multimodal transportation.

During the years of independence, with the support of international financial institutions, dozens of investment projects have been implemented in the transport sector of the Republic of Tajikistan, aimed at the construction and rehabilitation of roads, bridges, tunnels, and logistics infrastructure. The implementation of these projects contributes to improving regional connectivity and creating favorable conditions for international transportation.

Today, Tajikistan is actively participating in the development of international transport corridors, including:

China – Tajikistan – Uzbekistan – Turkmenistan – Iran – Türkiye;
Tajikistan – Afghanistan – Pakistan (TAP);
China – Tajikistan – Afghanistan;
the multimodal KTAI Project (Kyrgyz Republic – Tajikistan – Afghanistan – Iran),
as well as other regional initiatives aimed at enhancing transport and logistics connectivity.

We are convinced that further development of transport corridors, digitalization of transport procedures, simplification of transit mechanisms, and implementation of modern logistics solutions will contribute to increasing trade turnover, reducing transportation costs, and strengthening economic cooperation among ECO member states.

Particular importance should be attached to coordinating the efforts of ECO member states in developing sustainable, safe, and efficient transport and logistics systems that meet the modern requirements of international trade.

In this regard, the Republic of Tajikistan supports further advancement of the Framework Agreement on Transit Transport among ECO member states and advocates for the intensification of practical cooperation in this area.

Distinguished participants,

Tajikistan will continue to make every effort to expand mutually beneficial cooperation within the ECO framework and to implement joint projects aimed at the sustainable development of our region.

Thank you for your attention.

**Opening Statement by H.E. Selçuk KOÇ,
Director General in Presidency of the Strategy and Budget of the
Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye
36th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC)
17-20 May 2026**

Bismillahirrahmanirahim,

H.E. Dr. Muhammad Ali Talpur, Joint Chief Economist of the Ministry of Planning,
Development and Special Initiatives, (Pakistan)

H.E. Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation
Organization (ECO),

Distinguished Heads of Delegations

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum ve Rahmetullahi ve Berakatuh

- I am pleased to address this august gathering on the occasion of the thirty-sixth (36th) Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC).
- I would like to thank ECO Secretariat for their efforts for the successful conduct of this meeting.
- I believe deliberations during the meeting on the program, project and activities under each cooperation area will yield fruitful outcomes and guide our endeavors for the period ahead.

Distinguished Delegates,

- We have sadly witnessed that the war has caused a humanitarian tragedy resulting in the deaths of thousands of people and displacement of millions in Iran as well as in the region.
- We deeply mourn those who lost their lives in the war, especially the large number of Iranian citizens, and extend our condolences to their families and the Iranian people.
- The war has also affected the global economy, trade, energy and food security, and intensified inflationary pressure all over the world.

- It is clear that the resumption of hostilities again would give rise to multifaceted risks in the region and beyond.
- Despite the ceasefire, international community continues to be negatively affected by the war and its negative consequences.
- Preventing this destructive process from starting again has become one of the few issues on which the international community has long been in agreement.
- We have been supporting Pakistan's facilitation/mediation role from the very beginning. The joint efforts of Türkiye, Pakistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia played a crucial role in the process leading to the ceasefire.
- We expect all parties to act with common sense and prudence, in a constructive and flexible manner, to achieve a lasting peace as soon as possible.

Distinguished Participants,

- As the driving force of regional growth, trade remains at the heart of our cooperation within the ECO. In this regard, the 5th ECO Trade Ministers Meeting recently held in Istanbul marked a transformative milestone. By adopting the ECOTA Negotiation Strategy and Roadmap as well as establishing the Technical Negotiation Committee, we have demonstrated a clear commitment to revise and modernize the ECO Trade Agreement, ensuring it meets the contemporary needs of our member states.
- We are also making significant efforts in streamlining our commercial borders through the Trade Facilitation Strategy. The successful finalization of this strategy in Istanbul provides the legal and technical infrastructure necessary to enhance our collective capacity. With the ongoing negotiations for the Draft Trade Facilitation Agreement in Tashkent, we are moving closer to a binding framework that will eliminate procedural barriers and foster a more seamless trading environment across the region.

Esteemed Participants,

- The Government of Türkiye maintains an unwavering commitment to the ECO's objective of strengthening regional connectivity. In light of evolving global dynamics, the importance of securing access to international markets through a sophisticated and resilient transportation network has become increasingly evident.
- As you are well aware, strategic transport corridors, well-functioning logistic hubs and robust digital infrastructure are essential for mobilizing our member countries' potential towards the advancement of regional cooperation.
- In this respect, the key projects such as the Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad (ITI) and the Istanbul-Almaty Cargo Trains have great potential for facilitating trade and streamlining the complexities associated with multimodal transport operations.
- Our development efforts need to be aligned with social and environmental aspects as well. Given the challenges of rapid urban growth and the climate crisis, it is vital that our regional planning remains both progressive and ecologically responsive.
- In this framework, we are ready to share our technical expertise in transport infrastructure and digital transformation with our fellow member countries. We will also be very pleased to have insights about the experiences of our brotherly ECO member states.

Distinguished Colleagues,

- Ensuring food security remains an important pillar of our cooperation. Recent disruptions in global supply chains and the resulting imbalances between supply and demand have triggered serious concerns, especially the heightened volatility of food prices both within our region and on a global scale.
- We need to enhance our efforts to address the challenges faced for ensuring food security. In this context, ECO Regional Coordination Center is an

important asset for the member countries to improve our cooperation in this important field.

Distinguished Colleagues,

- Tourism is a strategically important sector with its significant economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Tourism affects economic welfare, employment, income and workforce development.
- In this regard, Türkiye attaches particular importance to enhancing tourism cooperation within the ECO region. Beyond its potential, tourism serves as a driving force for accelerating regional connectivity, mutual understanding, and economic cooperation across the ECO Region.
- Within this framework, I would like to express our appreciation to the ECO family for their participation in contribution to the activities organized for Erzurum as the 2025 ECO Tourism Capital.
- We extend our full support and best wishes to Shusha as the 2026 ECO Tourism Capital, and to Lahore for 2027. We believe both cities will exceptionally showcase the diverse heritage of our region and further strengthen our tourism ties.

Esteemed Delegates,

- As one of the ECO's concrete achievements, the ECO Trade and Development Bank is essential for turning our cooperation goals into reality. We invite fellow member states that are not yet members of the Bank to take advantage of its facilities.

Dear Participants,

- I would like to share our genuine observations on the current stage of our cooperation under the ECO umbrella.

- As we all know, the current level of our cooperation is far below the expected level.
- We must move from a broad and overly ambitious agenda to a focused, realistic, and results-oriented framework centered on deepening economic and trade cooperation as our primary mission.
- As we are all aware, the organization's agenda has expanded into a wide array of fields and fall outside our core mandate of economic development. This expansion causes a significant loss of focus and waste of our limited resources.
- Seizing this opportunity, I would like to underline some important dimensions that need to be taken into consideration during the design of our next Vision document.
- To maintain our collective momentum, the new Vision Document must move away from abstract targets and focus on the needs of our region and the Member States through a clearly defined and prioritized framework.
- We are of the view that we need "program and project-based" operational model in our cooperation efforts. Instead of maintaining a wide spectrum of unrealized activities, we should focus on scalable pilot applications, technical cooperation schemes, and twinning programs. Such initiatives must be designed to deliver tangible results and provide direct support to the development priorities of our member states.
- We further believe allocating larger share of our limited resources to "soft" projects and technical cooperation will enhance the overall effectiveness of our cooperation. We must ensure that our institutional structure allows for the development of concrete tools that facilitate experience sharing and capacity building across the region.
- These observations have already been voiced by our fellow Member States at various ECO occasions, including ECO High-Level Meetings. Accordingly, the updated Vision document should reflect these shared perspectives through a

results-oriented approach and clear implementation mechanisms as well as timelines to ensure a successful transition into the next decade.

Esteemed colleagues,

- In concluding my remarks, I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to the Secretariat and all distinguished delegates for their tireless work. The spirit of solidarity demonstrated here reinforces our confidence in our ability to overcome the challenges and explore the opportunities for the upcoming period.

I look forward to a highly successful and productive meeting. I believe the decisions we reach in this meeting will pave the way for a more integrated, resilient, and prosperous ECO community for the benefit of all our nations.

Thank you very much.

Assalamualaikum ve Rahmetullahi ve Berakatuh.

Statement
by Head of delegation of Turkmenistan
Mr. Atageldi Haljanov
Head of the Department of International
Economic Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan
at the 36th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Government of Pakistan and the ECO Secretariat for the excellent organization of the 36th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council and for the warm hospitality extended to all delegations.

Turkmenistan regards the Economic Cooperation Organization as an important and highly relevant platform for regional interaction, bringing our countries together around the common goals of sustainable development, mutually beneficial partnership, and strengthening good-neighborly relations.

We note with appreciation that the **Chairmanship has declared the theme for the year 2026 as “Reviving Regionalism for a Resilient ECO,”** which highlights the importance of strengthening regional solidarity, enhancing practical cooperation, and building a sustainable and resilient partnership across our Organization.

Today, the ECO region possesses enormous economic, transport, energy, and human potential. Under current conditions, it is particularly important not only to preserve the accumulated experience of cooperation, but also to enrich it with new practical initiatives that respond to the challenges of our time.

Turkmenistan consistently advocates for strengthening regional connectivity, particularly in the field of transport and logistics. The development of international transport corridors, the establishment of efficient transit routes, and the creation of modern infrastructure remain among the key priorities of our national policy.

In this regard, Turkmenistan actively contributes to the promotion of the East-West and North-South transport corridors, the development of multimodal transportation, and the expansion of regional logistics capacities. A special role in this process is played by the International Seaport of Turkmenbashi, which is becoming an important link connecting the regions of Asia and Europe.

Another important area is the development of energy cooperation. Turkmenistan consistently supports ensuring reliable and sustainable energy security, diversification of energy supply routes, and the promotion of international dialogue in the energy sector. At the same time, significant attention is being paid to green development, environmental sustainability, and the introduction of modern energy-efficient technologies.

We also attach great importance to the further expansion of trade and economic cooperation within the ECO region. We are convinced that the simplification of trade procedures, the development of digital mechanisms of interaction, and the removal of existing barriers will contribute to the growth of mutual trade and investment activity throughout our region.

Turkmenistan also places particular emphasis on humanitarian cooperation. Strengthening cultural, educational, and scientific ties among our peoples contributes to building an atmosphere of trust, mutual understanding, and sustainable partnership.

In this context, I would especially like to highlight the First ECO Ministerial Forum on Sustainable Development, held on 28–29 April 2025 in Arkadag. It was a great honor for Turkmenistan to host this important event. The Forum brought together representatives of member states, international organizations, and specialized institutions to discuss the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the promotion of green economy,

digital transformation, and sustainable transport connectivity. We are confident that the outcomes of the Forum will provide additional momentum to practical cooperation within our Organization.

Turkmenistan also looks forward to the adoption of the **Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation 2035**, which are currently under process. We are pleased to have already provided our contributions to the draft of this important strategic document and are confident that, once adopted, it will provide a clear roadmap for deepening regional economic cooperation, promoting sustainable development, and harnessing the full potential of our Organization.

I would also like to emphasize that Turkmenistan remains committed to actively participating in ECO activities, making a constructive contribution to the implementation of joint programmes and initiatives, and promoting the strengthening of the Organization's role and authority at the international level.

Distinguished colleagues,

Today, our countries face new opportunities for deepening economic cooperation and expanding regional partnership. We believe that through joint efforts, mutual support, and a pragmatic approach, we will be able to effectively utilize the vast potential of the ECO region for the benefit of sustainable development and the prosperity of our peoples.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm Turkmenistan's readiness for continued close and constructive cooperation with all member states and the ECO Secretariat.

Thank you for your attention.

**Statement by the Head of delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Mr. Jasur Rajabov, Deputy Head of Department of Cooperation with
Regional Organizations of
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

**at the 36th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council
of the Economic Cooperation Organization
17-20. 05. 2026**

**Honourable Secretary General,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations,
Dear participants,**

It is a pleasure to address the **36th** Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation to the ECO Secretariat for organizing today's meeting.

We also warmly welcome the assumption of the ECO Chairmanship by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and wish our Pakistani colleagues every success during their tenure.

Dear colleagues,

Today, our region faces growing economic uncertainty, disruptions in supply chains, climate-related challenges, and geopolitical tensions. Against this backdrop, the role of the ECO as a platform for practical and result-oriented cooperation is becoming increasingly important.

Uzbekistan attaches great importance to strengthening regional economic integration, transport connectivity, trade cooperation, and sustainable development within the **ECO** framework.

In this context, we call for accelerating work on “**Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation – 2035**,” initiated by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

We see this document as a practical roadmap for enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of our **Organization**.

Distinguished participants,

Allow me to briefly highlight several priorities for Uzbekistan.

First, trade, investment, and transport connectivity.

We advocate for the early finalization of the **ECO Trade Facilitation Agreement**, including measures aimed at digitalizing trade procedures, simplifying document flow, and reducing technical and non-tariff barriers.

We also encourage the development of multimodal transport corridors and more efficient transit mechanisms, including harmonized **digital customs** and **single-window systems**.

In addition, Uzbekistan endorses the launch of the “ECO-Invest” Program to mobilize private investment for regional projects.

Second, environmental sustainability and climate cooperation.

We highly value regional efforts aimed at combating desertification, improving water management, and promoting green development.

We welcome the **first** meeting of the **High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation**, held in Astana in April this

year, and look forward to hosting the **6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment** in Samarkand this June.

Third, tourism and people-to-people connectivity.

We support the early adoption of the “**Roadmap for Expansion of Tourism Services 2026–2030**” aimed at promoting joint tourism products and increasing tourist flows across the **ECO** region.

We believe that the development of joint tourism routes under the **Silk Road brand** will further strengthen cultural and humanitarian ties among our peoples.

In this regard, we highlight the important role of the **ECO Advisory Committee on Tourism**, established on the initiative of Uzbekistan.

Following its successful **first** meeting in Tashkent in **2025**, the Committee can serve as an effective platform for further refining these initiatives and advancing practical cooperation in the tourism sector.

At the same time, Uzbekistan is ready to expand practical cooperation across other important areas of the **ECO** agenda.

In this regard, we note the successful holding of the **6th Meeting of the Prosecutors General of ECO** member states in Tashkent in September **2025**, which contributed to advancing interagency dialogue and legal cooperation within our region.

Dear colleagues,

Uzbekistan remains firmly committed to the goals and principles of the **ECO** and stands ready to continue active and constructive cooperation with all member states and the Secretariat.

We are confident that today’s meeting will contribute to strengthening regional partnership, mutual trust, and the effectiveness of our Organization.

Thank you for your attention.

