

**Statement for the 36th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC)
ECO Trade and Development Bank (ETDB)
Mr. Ali Akbar Nasiri,
Head of ETDB Representative in Tehran
17-20. 05. 2026 (in-person)**

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Heads of Delegations
Hn. Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am honoured to participate in the 36th RPC meeting and sincerely thank the organizers for their excellent arrangements. Let me state that we are meeting at a time of complex and challenging global circumstances, with ongoing conflicts in the Middle East causing profound human suffering and significant regional instability. These are extraordinary times, and on behalf of my Bank, I would like to express our deepest thoughts and sympathy to all those affected.

We remain hopeful that urgent progress will be made toward lasting peace and stability in the region. The Bank is closely monitoring developments and stands ready to provide support to mitigate the impact of this crisis and safeguard the hard-won socio-economic progress of our member states.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me inform that ECOBANK, as the financial arm of the ECO, has been highly successful in enhancing its operations. In line with its mandate, the Bank has been pursuing a business model that supports trade, promotes the development of micro and small enterprises, and meets the financing needs of corporates and projects across its member states effectively. In this regard, it is my pleasure to highlight that since its inception in 2008, ECOBANK has provided over 3.3 billion dollars in funding.

We have been delivering strong financial and operational results and continue to maximize the development impact of our operations. The Bank's net income reached SDR 27.7 million in 2025, marking one of the highest results in the Bank's history.

Importantly, these results were achieved with no non-performing loans, reflecting the Bank's prudent risk management and the strong quality of its portfolio.

Last year, we secured our first external credit rating of 'BB' after 18 years, and this year we also achieved a national 'AAA' rating, enabling local currency operations. These milestones enhance our transparency and credibility, positioning us to access capital markets more effectively. We are also carefully focused on issuing green and social bonds to mobilize funds that support trade and inclusive development across the region.

Looking ahead, we are enhancing our services through guarantees, local currency lending, equity investments, the establishment of special funds, and the provision of buyer's credits.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, I would like to underscore that despite numerous challenges in the operating environment, the Bank has grown from a concept into a fully functional multilateral development institution. We have strengthened our operational governance, internal capabilities, and external engagements to deliver on our mandate in a transparent and effective manner.

Expanding the Bank's membership remains a priority for us, and I take this opportunity to extend a sincere invitation to Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan to join ECOBANK. I am confident that, with your continued support, the Bank will create new opportunities for sustainable development, trade, and prosperity across the ECO region.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**Statement by the
President ECO Science Foundation
Prof. Seyed Komail Tayebi
36th Meeting of Regional Planning Council (RPC)
Tehran (Virtually)
May 17-20, 2026**

**Excellency the Chairman,
Excellencies, the Delegates from ECO Member States
Excellency the Secretary General of ECO,
Excellencies the Observers, Heads of Specialized Agencies and Institutions,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Assalam-O-Alaikum and a Very Good Day to you all!

Excellencies, it gives me an immense pleasure to address the prestigious forum of 36th Meeting of Regional Planning Council (RPC). On behalf of ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) and on my personal behalf, I express my deep gratitude to all the Member States and ECO Secretariat for their cooperation extended to the Foundation. Our acknowledgement and special appreciation to the Governments of Pakistan and Iran for their patronage and continued budget contribution.

Excellencies, **there is a pivotal role of Science, Technology and Innovations (STI) in the development of societies and countries.** Thus, for the ECO region to achieve inclusive and sustainable economic growth, investment in STI capacity building is essential. As the specialized agency of ECO, **ECOSF remains committed to advancing this agenda through partnerships and collective action.**

Mr. Chairman, despite financial constraints, **ECOSF has continued its robust efforts on strengthening Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) in the ECO Region.** In 2025, the Foundation organized multiple capacity-building workshops, an international conference, trainings and webinars in collaboration with national and international partners. The detailed report of our activities has been shared with the secretariat.

Excellencies, since the last RPC, ECOSF has organized and co-organized over 40 major scientific and technical conferences, workshops, seminars, and hands-on camps to promote Science, Technology, and Innovation across the ECO region. Thus, allow me to highlight a few:

- ECOSF hosted the **International Conference on Science, Technology & Innovation: Catalyst for Regional Connectivity and Sustainable Development in the ECO Region (ECONEX)**” in April, 2025 wherein, about 400 including 30 international participants attended.
- ECOSF co-organized the **2nd International Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (IC-CCDRR) in Beijing, China** in October, 2025 and convene over 400 experts from across China, the ECO region, and international organizations to address the urgent challenges posed by climate change and disaster risks.
- ECOSF also actively contributed to the **First ECO Youth Forum, and ECO Women Forum as part of the ECO WEEK, and 17th ECO Summit in Azerbaijan** in July, 2025, which engaged youth and women in discussions on science, regional development, sustainability and cooperation.

- In 2025, the 9th Belt and Road Teenager Maker Camp in Kunming and Urumqi, China hosted **86 participants** from **Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, and Uzbekistan**, engaging in hands-on learning, innovation activities, and cross-cultural exchange. ECOSF was one of the main co-organizers.

Excellencies, while we continue to expand our outreach, **ECOSF is facing serious financial challenges. Limited contributions have constrained our core operations and, regrettably, we are unable to sustain full salaries for our staff.** At present, the Foundation is surviving solely on the mandatory budgetary contribution provided by the Government of Pakistan and partial payment by I Iran. We sincerely acknowledge and highly appreciate the continued support of both these Governments in keeping the organization operational during these difficult times.

Excellencies, to ensure that ECOSF can continue serving the Region effectively, Member States are therefore requested to pay their outstanding budgetary arrears and contributions.

Furthermore, since the signing of the Charter of ECOSF in March 1995, **only five Member States namely Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, have ratified the Charter**, whereas, five Member States Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan yet to ratify. Taking this opportunity, **I request the non-ratifying Member States to ratify the Charter and its Additional Protocol of the Foundation so that the Foundation can follow its mandate vibrantly.**

I sincerely appeal to Member States to consider our requests positively for the advancement of connectivity and knowledge-based socio-economic development in the region.

I express my sincere thanks to the ECO Secretariat for their efforts in convening and organizing the 36th Meeting of Regional Planning Council (RPC).

I thank you all!

Statement by Prof. M. Akif Kireççi
President, ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI)

36th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC)
17 May 2026 (Online Plenary Session)

Excellencies,
H.E. Secretary General Mr. Asad Khan,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to express our deep sorrow and sincere condolences for the tragic loss of life and suffering caused by the recent war affecting the Islamic Republic of Iran. We are deeply saddened by the tragic attack on the Shajareh Tayyebah girls' primary school in Minab, which resulted in the loss of innocent young lives and caused immense grief to families, educators, and the wider community. I wish to convey, on behalf of the Economic Cooperation Organization Educational Institute, our full solidarity with the families of the victims, as well as with the students, teachers, and communities affected by this tragedy. The targeting of educational institutions and the harm inflicted upon children represent a grave violation of fundamental humanitarian principles and stand in direct contradiction to the universal right to education. Schools must remain sanctuaries of safety, learning, and hope under all circumstances.

In moments such as these, the role of education becomes even more critical—not only as a means of continuity, but as a source of resilience, hope, and reconstruction. Education sustains societies when other systems are under strain, and it prepares future generations to rebuild with wisdom and stability.

Excellencies,

Despite the challenges facing our region, ECOEI has continued its efforts to advance educational cooperation and innovation across Member States. I would like to briefly highlight a few areas of recent progress.

First, we published a book on Teacher Education in Iran, which highlights the development, challenges, and innovative practices within the country's teacher education system. We believe this publication is a valuable contribution to comparative educational research and policy dialogue in the region.

Second, in September 2025, ECOEI successfully conducted an International Workshop Series on Artificial Intelligence in Education, implemented in cooperation with Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences. The program brought together over sixty participants from across Iran and focused on the practical application of AI tools in teaching and learning. Participants engaged in hands-on training in areas such as AI-assisted content development, multimedia design, and ethical considerations in educational technologies. This initiative marked an important step toward strengthening digital capacity and AI literacy among educators in the region. We would like to repeat this modality across Member States in cooperation with relevant national institutions.

Third, ECOEI has expanded its work on integrating cultural heritage into education through digital means. In collaboration with the Ankara University Digital Education Center, we have developed a series of audiovisual educational materials on the most significant historical and cultural sites across the ECO region, including three UNESCO heritage sites in Iran (Naqsh-e Jahan Square, the Bam Citadel, Arg-e Bam and Shustar) and five sites from Türkiye (Selimiye, Troy, Çatalhöyük, Göbeklitepe, Wooden Mosques of Anatolia). Each of these sites represents not only architectural and historical excellence, but also the accumulated knowledge, creativity, and civilizational depth of our shared regional heritage.

These materials can be found online at the Institute's Youtube Channel as well as our official website. They combine academic rigor with advanced digital techniques, making shared cultural heritage more accessible and engaging for learners across the ECO region. Teaching young generations about these sites is not only a matter of cultural preservation; it is an investment in intercultural understanding and in the long-term cohesion of our region.

Looking ahead, I would like to inform you that the next Meeting of the ECOEI Board of Trustees is scheduled to be held in 2026. This meeting brings together the Education Ministers of Member States, who deliberate on and approve the Institute's strategic priorities, planned activities, and key institutional decisions. In preparation for this meeting, we kindly invite Member States to submit their proposals for future activities, including curriculum development, teacher training, student and faculty mobility schemes, vocational and skills-based education, and collaborative research across disciplines, climate change awareness, internationalization, educational governance, quality assurance, and inclusive education practices.

Our objective is to support the development of impactful model activities that are cost-effective, yet exemplary in design and implementation, and that can be readily adapted and replicated across other Member States.

Your contributions will be essential in shaping a responsive and impactful work programme for the coming period.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm Educational Institute's commitment to strengthening education as a foundation for resilience, cooperation, and sustainable development across our region. I would also like to repeat my favorite reminder "Every dollar invested in education contributes fifteen-fold in economy."

Thank you for your attention.

Statement
by Ms. Aysel Yagubova, Executive Director of the
Economic Cooperation Organization Clean Energy Center
at the
36th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council of the Economic
Cooperation Organization
17 -20. 05. 2026 (Virtually)

Distinguished Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegations of member
states, Dear colleagues,

It is my great honor to represent the ECO Clean Energy Center, CECECO, and to present an overview of the activities undertaken during the period from September 2025 to April 2026.

This reporting period marked the initial operational phase of the Center and focused on establishing the institutional and legal foundations of CECECO, strengthening governance mechanisms, expanding regional outreach, and initiating practical cooperation activities.

One of the major milestones achieved during this period was the formal operationalization of the Center following the entry into force of the Charter and the convening of the first Board of Governors Meeting on 9 September 2025 under the chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan. During this meeting, the Rules of Procedure of CECECO were adopted, and I was honored to be appointed as the first Executive Director of the Center.

Another important achievement was the signing of the Host Country Agreement on 2 December 2025 between the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and CECECO, establishing the legal and operational framework of the Center and confirming its status as an ECO regional center with full legal personality and operational mandate. The agreement was approved by the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan on May 5, 2026.

Few days ago, on May 14 we held the first meeting of the CECECO Executive Board. Among other matters discussed, the Board reviewed the drafts of Staff Regulations and Financial Regulations of CECECO, aimed at

establishing a comprehensive, transparent, and rules-based administrative and financial governance framework for the Centre.

Throughout the reporting period, the Secretariat actively engaged with CECECO signatory states through bilateral consultations and high-level meetings with ministers, deputy ministers, ambassadors, and relevant national institutions. These discussions focused on identifying national priorities, exploring future areas of cooperation, and ensuring that CECECO's activities effectively support member states' objectives in renewable energy and energy efficiency.

The Secretariat also established cooperation with a broad range of international and regional partners, including IRENA, UNIDO, UNECE, UNESCAP, the Islamic Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, bp Azerbaijan, TIKa coordination offices, the ECO Science Foundation, TURKPA, TUREB, as well as academic institutions and local organizations.

In parallel, CECECO actively participated in major international and regional events related to sustainable energy and climate action, including the IRENA Assembly in Abu Dhabi, the Regional Ecological Summit in Astana, Baku Climate Action Week, the Vienna Energy and Climate Forum, the International Hydrogen Conference, and the OTS Energy Ministers' Meeting in Istanbul. These engagements significantly contributed to increasing the international visibility of CECECO and positioning the Center as an emerging regional platform for sustainable energy cooperation.

Particular attention was also given to awareness-raising, youth engagement, and knowledge-sharing initiatives. In this regard, CECECO launched the "Clean Energy by Numbers in CECECO Countries" series on social media, highlighting renewable energy and energy efficiency developments across signatory states.

In addition, CECECO organized the regional "Clean Energy Hackathon 2026," which brought together young innovators, students, researchers, and entrepreneurs from across the ECO region. The initiative received more than 200 applications and became one of CECECO's first flagship regional youth initiatives, demonstrating the strong potential of youth-driven innovation and regional collaboration in advancing clean energy transition.

The reporting period also marked progress in institutional partnerships through the signing of Memoranda of Understanding with Baku State University and Brussels Energy Club ASBL, aimed at promoting academic

cooperation, knowledge exchange, and joint initiatives in sustainable energy development.

Excellencies,

These activities represent important first steps toward establishing CECECO not only as a coordination mechanism, but also as a dynamic and action-oriented regional platform promoting innovation, capacity building, and practical cooperation across the ECO region.

And I would like to kindly encourage CECECO signatory states that have not yet finalized their ratification procedures to complete the necessary domestic processes and remaining ECO member states to sign the CECECO charter. The active participation and full ownership of all member states will be essential for ensuring the effectiveness, sustainability, and long-term success of CECECO.

The CECECO Secretariat remains fully committed to implementing the mandate entrusted to the Center under its Charter and to supporting regional cooperation in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and sustainable development.

We highly value the continued guidance and support of the ECO Secretariat under the leadership of the distinguished Secretary General, Dr. Asad Khan, as well as the support of ECO member states. We look forward to working closely with all stakeholders in advancing the mission of the Center.

I thank you for your kind attention.

Statement

**by Ambassador Muhammad Hassan,
President of the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) in Tehran
at the 36th ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC)
17-20 May 2026**

**Distinguished Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Honourable Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour to address this distinguished gathering on behalf of the ECO Cultural Institute.

The ECO region is far more than a geographic space. It is a living civilizational community shaped by centuries of shared history, cultural interaction, and intellectual exchange. Our peoples are connected not only through borders and economies, but through traditions, languages, arts, and values that have linked us for generations. This rich cultural foundation gives real meaning and lasting strength to regional cooperation.

Within the ECO framework, culture and economic cooperation go hand in hand. Culture is not only a source of identity and mutual understanding; it is also a powerful force for sustainable development, social cohesion, innovation, and peace.

As the cultural arm of ECO, the ECO Cultural Institute has continued to promote cultural cooperation and regional understanding among our member states. Today, the Institute is also undergoing a process of revitalization and institutional renewal to further strengthen its effectiveness and capacity. Alongside the review of our organizational structure and foundational

documents, we are advancing the long-awaited Host Country Agreement, which will provide a stronger institutional basis for our future work.

At the same time, ECI is expanding its role as a platform for intellectual engagement, policy dialogue, academic exchange, scientific cooperation, and intercultural collaboration across the ECO region.

We are pursuing a focused programme aimed at empowering scholars, artists, scientists, and young innovators to play a more active role in regional cooperation. In this regard, ECI is preparing to launch an artist exchange programme and strengthen networks among art universities, cultural academies, and heritage institutions across member states.

The Institute is also placing greater emphasis on evidence-based cultural policy research. We are currently reviewing the cultural policies of ECO member states to identify shared challenges and new opportunities for cooperation. The findings will be published in a special issue of ECO Heritage.

This work will be followed by regional studies on endangered tangible and intangible heritage, as well as the remarkable linguistic diversity of the ECO region, which includes nearly 600 living languages, many of them endangered or vulnerable.

In parallel, ECI continues to promote intercultural dialogue and people-to-people connectivity through cultural festivals, youth exchanges, translation initiatives, joint exhibitions, digital platforms, and media cooperation, with particular attention to youth engagement and emerging creative talent.

Excellencies,

The ECO Cultural Institute remains fully committed to working closely with the ECO Secretariat, member states, academic institutions, and partner organizations in building a more connected, inclusive, and culturally vibrant ECO region.

We firmly believe that stronger cultural and intellectual cooperation will contribute meaningfully to the broader vision and long-term objectives of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

I thank you for your kind attention.