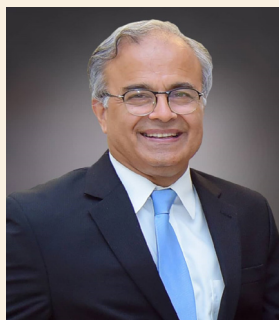




ECO Newsletter

Economic Cooperation Organization

July, 2026- No. 23



The month of July 2026 witnessed continued diplomatic engagement and tangible progress in our work at the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) despite ongoing challenges in the region.

I was honored to join world leaders in paying our final respects to His Eminence Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, and to offer our heartfelt condolences to his family, the leadership, and the people of Iran, praying for his eternal peace.

Consistent with my priority to closely engage with the entire family of ECO institutions, I visited Istanbul to attend the 25th Meeting of the Board of Governors of the ECO Trade and Development Bank and reaffirmed our collective resolve to deepen ties with international financial institutions and establish trilateral mechanisms to advance key regional projects. Meanwhile, I also participated in the 6th Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the ECO Science Foundation in Islamabad, where I reiterated our firm belief in the transformative potential of science, technology, and innovation for regional development.

Our outreach and quest for building institutional partnerships continued during July with a productive exchange with Ambassador Cong Peiwu of China focusing on deepening ECO-China cooperation. Separately we also made progress in our exchanges with the IsDB to strengthen and further institutionalize our partnership.

We were pleased to welcome Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui of Pakistan as the new Permanent Representative to ECO, as Pakistan currently holds the Chairmanship of the ECO Council of Ministers for the 2026-2027 term. Under Pakistan's leadership, we anticipate significant progress in cooperating regional development cooperation particularly in enhancing trade and transport connectivity.

Our commitment to resilience and knowledge-based development remains unwavering. The ECO delegation's visit to the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES) underscores our dedication to disaster risk reduction and crisis management across the region. In the energy sector, the 3rd Task Force Meeting on the establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM) marked another significant step forward, bringing us closer to a fully integrated regional electricity market that will power sustainable development across Member States.

In the tourism sector, the Second Meeting of the ECO Advisory Committee on Tourism (ECO-ACT) was held virtually, bringing together Member State representatives to review regional tourism priorities and advance finalization of the draft Roadmap on Expansion of Tourism Services, aligned with the forthcoming ECO Vision 2035. We are also delighted to celebrate a historic milestone for the region: the inscription of three new sites- Alamūt Castle in Iran, the Rock Mosques of Mangystau in Kazakhstan, and Tashkent Modernist Architecture in Uzbekistan- on the UNESCO World Heritage List, bringing the total number of World Heritage sites in the ECO region to 85, presenting a strategic opportunity to leverage our rich cultural heritage for tourism and economic growth.

Finally, ECO Deputy Secretary General attended the opening of the Games of the Future 2026 and World Phygital Summit in Astana underscores Kazakhstan's growing role in promoting sport tourism, innovation, and youth engagement.

As we reflect on these achievements, the ECO Secretariat remains steadfast in its commitment to facilitating cooperation, fostering dialogue, and driving the implementation of initiatives that will build a more connected, resilient, and prosperous region

Secretary General
Economic Cooperation Organization

ECO Secretary General Participates in Funeral of Late Supreme Leader



The ECO Secretary General joined world leaders at the funeral of His Eminence Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran, offering condolences to the family, the Iranian leadership, and the people of Iran. Expressing profound sorrow on behalf of the ECO Secretariat, the Secretary General stood in solidarity with the nation during its time of mourning. The ECO also voiced concern over sovereignty violations in Iran, urging wisdom and dialogue to preserve peace and stability across the region.



ECO Secretary General Attends ECO-TDB's BoG Meeting



Istanbul – July 10, 2026

ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan participated in the 25th Meeting of the Board of Governors of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB) in Istanbul.

In his address to the Board, the Secretary General noted that the evolving geo-economic landscape has created renewed momentum for deepening regional economic cooperation. Underlining the need for a strong and well-resourced ECO TDB for achieving the Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation – 2035, the Secretary General briefed the Board of Governors about some recent activities accomplished under ECO to promote regional trade, connectivity and economic integration, including most notably the outcomes of the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade in November 2025.

In his statement, the Secretary General also underscored the need for deepening relations with international financial institutions and other development partners, with possible establishment of trilateral mechanisms, including ECO and the ECO TDB, to advance regional development projects.

The meeting concluded with reaffirmed commitments from the Bank and Member States to align priorities, pool resources and drive forward a common agenda of prosperity, connectivity and economic cooperation across the ECO region.



ECO Secretary General Participates in the Board of Trustees Meeting of ECO Science Foundation



Islamabad – July 22, 2026

The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, participated in the 6th Meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) of the ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF), held in hybrid mode in Islamabad today. The BoT session was preceded by the 8th Meeting of the Executive Committee (EC), which laid the preparatory groundwork for the Board's deliberations.

The meeting brought together Ministers, eminent scientists and senior officials from ECO Member States for deliberations on advancing Science, Technology, and Innovation as well as for mobilizing resources for transformative regional projects aimed at addressing the shared developmental challenges of the ECO region.

In his remarks, the Secretary General praised ECOSF as a pillar of effective scientific and technological cooperation within the ECO. He underscored that the Foundation's work is fully

aligned with the ambitions of the ECO Vision 2025 and the wider goal of promoting sustainable, knowledge-based regional development.

The 6th BoT Meeting addressed a comprehensive agenda, encompassing project progress, financial oversight, and organizational restructuring. The Board conducted a detailed review of implementation of the previous BoT Meeting's decisions and gave its approval to the work plan for the upcoming year, reinforcing the institute's operational continuity.

The Secretary General concluded his remarks by reaffirming the ECO Secretariat's steadfast support for ECOSF. He expressed confidence that the decisions taken during the 6th BoT meeting would significantly strengthen the ECO SF's capacity to contribute to regional peace, prosperity, and sustainable development through the transformative power of science and technology.

ECO Secretary General Sign Condolence Book at Qatar Embassy

Signed the condolence book on the passing of His Highness the Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani today at the Embassy of Qatar in Tehran, conveying our heartfelt sympathies to the Family, Government and the people of Qatar.



Ambassador of Pakistan Presents Credentials to ECO

Tehran – July 13, 2026

The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, received H.E. Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Tehran, at the ECO Secretariat today for the formal presentation of his credentials as the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to ECO.

During the credential ceremony, the Secretary General extended a formal welcome to Ambassador Siddiqui and expressed his firm belief in the continued strengthening of the longstanding ties between Pakistan and the ECO Secretariat.

The credential presentation was followed by a productive exchange of views on the current priorities of the ECO agenda and the substantive preparations for the upcoming ministerial meetings to be hosted under Pakistan's Chairmanship. The discussions highlighted Pakistan's active engagement within the Organization, particularly as it has assumed the Chairmanship of the ECO Council of Ministers for the 2026–2027 term.

Ambassador Siddiqui, in turn, reiterated Pakistan's resolute commitment to close collaboration with the ECO Secretariat in advancing the Organization's strategic vision for regional integration, economic growth, and sustainable development. He reaffirmed Pakistan's active role in spearheading transformative connectivity projects that are pivotal to ECO's long-term objectives and reflect the agenda of Pakistan's current Chairmanship.

The meeting concluded with both sides reiterating their shared resolve to enhance cooperation and jointly contribute to the prosperity of the ECO region.

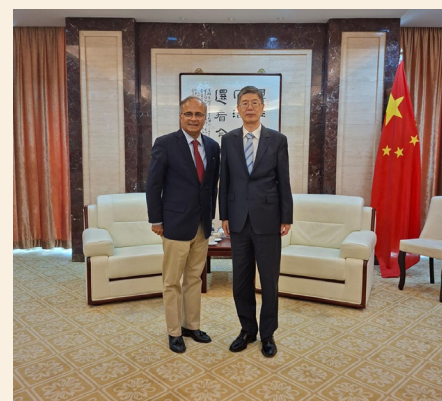


ECO Secretary General Meets the Ambassador of China in Tehran

Tehran – July 9, 2026

The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, met with the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Iran, H.E. Cong Peiwu, at the Chinese Embassy in Tehran today to discuss opportunities for deepening cooperation between the ECO Region and China.

Thanking Ambassador Cong for receiving him, Secretary General Khan expressed both his personal and institutional desire to build a strong and enduring relationship with China, emphasizing that the country is a key neighbor, investor, and trading partner for the entire region, sharing borders with five of the ECO's ten member states.



308th CPR Meeting - ECO Permanent Representatives briefed on the Upcoming International Financing Conference for ECO Transport Corridors



Tehran – July 21, 2026

In its 308th meeting held on 21 July 2026 in the ECO Secretariat in Tehran, the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) received a progress report by the Secretariat on the preparation for the upcoming international financing conference for the ECO transport projects and corridors.

During the briefing, the ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Asad M. Khan highlighted the imperative of connectivity for the ECO Region, its Member States and the partners and reaffirmed the important role that the envisaged conference can play for mobilization of financial resources for the ECO prioritized projects and corridors. He also briefed the Council on his recent talks and coordination with the President of ECO Trade and Development Bank (ETDB) in Istanbul as well as his approaches to other ECO partners on the subject matter.

Reminding that the 13th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport has requested the ECO Secretariat and ETDB to organize an international conference

aimed at financing ECO transport corridors and projects, the ECO Deputy Secretary General Amb. Silapberdi Nurberdiyev informed the Council that the preparatory process is ongoing and an inter-agency steering committee is now established by the ECO Secretariat and ETDB to oversee and coordinate preparations for the Conference. He said that the target participants for the Conference include high-level representatives from the ECO Member States, private sector stakeholders, ECO development partners, relevant UN regional commissions, international donor community, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, academia and research institutions.

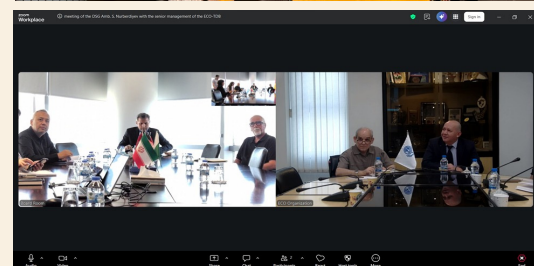
The Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) acknowledged the importance of well and effective preparation for the Conference and established a working group with the participation of the relevant and interested line ministries and institutions of the Member States to assist preparatory process leading to international financing conference for ECO transport corridors.

ECO Secretariat and ECO Bank Consultations on the Upcoming International Financing Conference

Delegations from ECO Secretariat, led by Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Silapberdi Nurberdiyev, and the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB), headed by Vice President Mr. Ahmet Tural, held the first round of consultations on their joint initiative to organize an international conference on financing the ECO transport projects and corridors. The virtual exchange of views, took place on 1 July 2026, focused primarily on the necessary preparatory work and required actions to make this important conference a real success.

During the meeting, the two sides shared views, ideas and information on the optimal format and contents of the Conference. The envisaged conference aims to bring together senior officials and authorities from multilateral development banks (MDBs), international financial institutions (IFIs), development partners, and other relevant stakeholders as well as the ECO Member States to explore financing opportunities for priority transport infrastructure projects within the ECO Region.

Consultations with the ECOTDB on effective preparations for the conference will continue regularly.





ECO Deputy Secretary General Participates in the Official Opening of the Games of the Future 2026 and the World Phygital Summit in Astana

Astana-Kazakhstan, July 29, 2026

The official opening ceremony of the Games of the Future (GOTF) 2026 took place at the Barys Arena Multifunctional Ice Palace and was graced by H.E. Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who delivered the welcome address for the international sporting spectacle. The ceremony was also attended by the Heads of State of several countries, including the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Held alongside the GOTF 2026, the World Phygital Summit convened government leaders, representatives of international organizations, sports federations, and members of the global phygital community to explore the growing convergence of traditional sports and digital technologies. The Summit featured opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Yerbol Myrzabossynov, Minister of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan, together with representatives of Phygital International.

It also included a high-level Ministerial Session with the participation of ministers responsible for sports from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the United Arab Emirates.

Upon the invitation of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the ECO Secretariat, Ambassador Yerzhan Mukash, ECO Deputy Secretary General participated in the official opening for the Games of the Future 2026 and the World Phygital Summit, held in Astana on 29 July 2026.

The GOTF 2026 tournament that will continue until 9 August 2026 brings together more than 800 athletes and esports players from over 50 countries, including participants from ECO Member States. The event highlights Kazakhstan's growing role as a host of major international events to the country's efforts to promote sport tourism, innovation, and youth engagement through emerging sports formats.



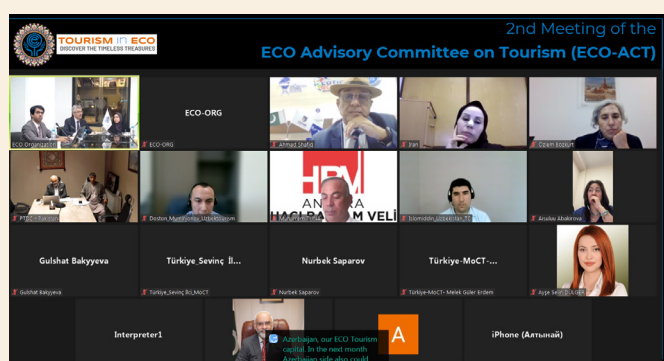
3rd Task Force Meeting on establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM)

The 3rd Task Force Meeting on establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM) was organized in virtual mode on 16 July 2026. The meeting was overwhelmingly attended by more than twenty managers and technical experts from all Member States representing both the relevant government authorities and network/generation companies.

The Meeting adopted, in principle, the recommendations on policy and regulatory reforms reflected in the “Regional Roadmap of Power System Connectivity – ECO Regional Electricity Market: promoting cross-border electricity connectivity for sustainable development” developed by UNESCAP. The participants further streamlined the next steps for advancement of the ECO-REM project.



ECO Advisory Committee on Tourism Further Advances RETS-2030



Tehran, July 28, 2026

The Second Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Advisory Committee on Tourism (ECO-ACT) was held virtually on 28 July 2026 under the chairmanship of the ECO Secretariat. The meeting brought together representatives of the ECO Member States to review key recent priorities for regional tourism cooperation and to advance the finalization of the draft Roadmap on Expansion of Tourism Services – 2030 (RETS-2030).

The primary focus of the meeting was the comprehensive review of RETS-2030 revised upon recommendations of the 7th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism, which is designed to align with the broader objectives of the forthcoming Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation for 2035.



Delegations from the ECO Member States actively participated in the discussions, providing valuable comments, suggestions, and recommendations on the roadmap's strategic initiatives, planned activities and implementation modalities. The Committee expressed broad support for the proposed initiatives, emphasizing the importance of promoting sustainable, inclusive, resilient, and innovation-driven tourism that delivers tangible socio-economic benefits across the ECO region.

The meeting also reviewed the progress achieved under the ECO tourism agenda and discussed measures to strengthen the institutional framework of the Committee. In this regard, participants considered the reorganization of existing lower-level coordination mechanisms, including task forces and working groups, into specialized subcommittees operating under the ECO-ACT.

ECO Region Has Three New Sites Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List

Tehran, July 29, 2026

At the 48th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, held from 20 to 29 July 2026 in Busan, Republic of Korea, the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) region achieved a historic milestone. Three valuable properties from ECO member states were officially inscribed on the World Heritage List, raising the total number of World Heritage sites in the region to 85.

The newly inscribed properties are as follows:

- Alamūt Castle and Related Fortifications, Iran: A serial property in the Alborz Mountains, representing the political and intellectual center of the Nezāri Ismāīlis from the 11th century.
- Rock Mosques and Associated Sacred Sites of Mangystau, Kazakhstan: Five rock-carved “underground mosques” on the Caspian coast, blending Sufi spirituality with ancient ancestral traditions.
- Tashkent Modernist Architecture: Modernity and Tradition in Central Asia, Uzbekistan: Ten modernist buildings from the 1960s–1990s, reflecting the fusion of modern design with local climate and culture.

The ECO Secretariat is well-positioned to leverage this momentum as a strategic opportunity for tourism and economic growth across the region as indicated in the Second Special ECO Chronicle dedicated to UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the ECO Region published in October 2025.



ECO visits International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES)

On 18 July 2026, an ECO delegation led by Dr. Hüsni Tekin, Director for Human Resources and Sustainable Development (HRSD) visited the International Institute of Earthquake Engineering and Seismology (IIEES), along with representatives of the UNESCO Regional Centre for Earthquake Risk Management and Resilience for West and Central Asia, to discuss opportunities for expanding cooperation in earthquake risk reduction and crisis management.

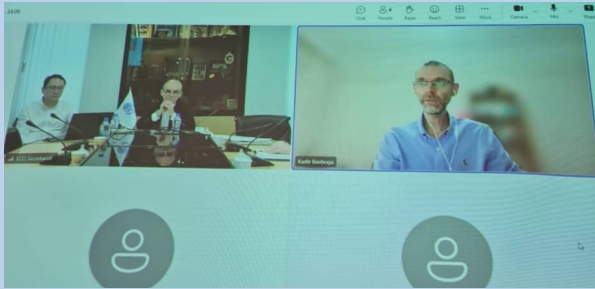
During the meeting, Dr. Majid Mohammadi, Secretary of the UNESCO Regional Centre, highlighted potential areas for joint collaboration. IIEES presented its experience and capabilities in earthquake risk mitigation, seismic monitoring, and crisis management, while participants discussed opportunities for joint projects with Türkiye’s Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), universities, research institutions, and other ECO member countries.

Dr. Tekin emphasized the achievements of the 10th ECO Ministerial Meeting on DRR and the importance of continued cooperation through upcoming ECO DRR initiatives, including the 5th Expert Group Meeting in Mashhad in 2026.

The visit concluded with a tour of IIEES facilities, including its broadband seismic network and structural and geotechnical laboratories.



ECO and IsDB Review Cooperation in Transport Sector



In an online meeting on 9 July 2026, delegations from the ECO Secretariat and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) discussed state of affairs of bilateral cooperation and partnership in regional transport and connectivity. Both sides took stock from past cooperation in transport sector and shared ideas on optimal formats for continued cooperation in the future.

In the meeting, IsDB delegation briefed on the new 10-year IsDB strategy as well as its new financing approaches. The ECO delegation informed about the upcoming international conference on financing for

ECO transport projects and corridors, to be jointly organized with ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO TDB), and invited IsDB for active participation in the Conference. ECO delegation also referred to the UN Awaza Programme of Action for landlocked developing countries which provide solid basis for enhanced ECO and IsDB cooperation to the benefit of the seven common landlocked countries.

During the meeting, follow-up measures to the ECO Secretary General's visit to the IsDB headquarters in November 2025 were also reviewed.



Economic Cooperation Organization

