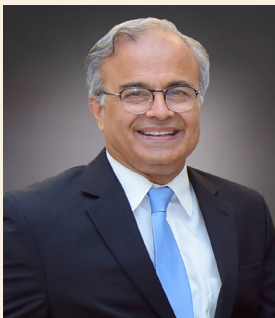




# ECO Newsletter

Economic Cooperation Organization

August, 2026- No. 24



August has been a month of sustained engagement and meaningful progress for the Economic Cooperation Organization. Against a backdrop of regional and global developments, the ECO Secretariat has remained focused on advancing its shared agenda.

This month, a key driver of this progress has been the private sector. The Presidential Meeting of the Heads of the Chambers of Commerce of ECO Member States, hosted by the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, provided a valuable platform for dialogue. I emphasized the need for the private sector to work closely with governments to advance trade integration and create networking opportunities.

Another highlight of the month was my visit to Golestan Province in the Islamic Republic of Iran, where I had the privilege of meeting with H.E. Alireza Tahmasebi, Governor-General of Golestan, and other provincial authorities. Our discussions focused on the potential to generate significant benefits for the wider ECO region by facilitating trade, transit, investment, and regional supply-chain connectivity.

Strengthening partnerships with key international organizations remains a priority. I was delighted to congratulate Mr. Habib Turki on his assumption of duties as the new Secretary General of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and to discuss ways to further expand our partnership, including through the implementation of our joint 2026-2027 Action Plan.

I also held a meeting with the Deputy Transport Minister of Kazakhstan on the preparatory process for the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport, scheduled in October 2026 in Astana highlighting the importance of Transport Ministerial Meeting for the ECO.

In our ongoing efforts to support the landlocked ECO Member States, we have continued to deepen our cooperation with the UN-OHRLLS. I held a videoconference with the UN Under-Secretary-General and discussed possible cooperation on addressing the challenges faced by landlocked Member States to ensure they have better access to regional and global markets.

Capacity building also remained a key focus in August. We successfully concluded an online training webinar on the Harmonized System of the World Customs Organization, which brought together nearly 80 customs experts from nine ECO Member States. Such initiatives are essential for strengthening customs expertise and facilitating smoother trade flows across our region.

As we move forward, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to the principles that bind us. Together, we can revive regionalism and build a resilient ECO for the benefit of our peoples.

Secretary General  
Economic Cooperation Organization

## Presidential Meeting of the Heads of the Chambers of Commerce of ECO Member States



August 12, 2026

A delegation of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), headed by H.E. Asad Majeed Khan, Secretary General of the ECO participated in the virtual meeting of the Presidents of the ECO Member Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI) on August 12, 2026.

The meeting was hosted by the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). Mr. Atif Ikram Shiekh, President of ECO CCI chaired the meeting. The meeting was also attended by the Presidents and delegates of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan.



At the outset in his statement, H.E. Secretary General Mr. Asad Majeed Khan highlighted the significance of the role of private sector as an engine of growth and assured continued support and cooperation of the ECO Secretariat to the private sector in all initiatives. He highlighted the need for private sector to work in close liaison with their respective governments to advance trade integration and trade expansion agenda particularly to create networking opportunities. He underscored that ECO is working to build synergies among trade, transport and tourism and ECO's objective is to translate investment in connectivity and infrastructure into higher trade volumes and increased cross-border movement of goods, services and people.

The President of ECO CCI stated that there is clear need to revive the Istanbul–Tehran–Islamabad corridor; expand road, rail, and air links and enable the wider use of TIR system to enhance connectivity in the region. He also highlighted the need for establishment of a regional SME matchmaking platform, dedicated B2B forums and exhibitions for women-led businesses.

The delegates participated actively in the meeting and deliberated on the ways for strengthening cooperation through greater engagement of the private sector. The delegates stressed on enhancing trade flows and addressing the connectivity challenges. They converged on trade facilitation and simplification and harmonization of customs procedures, digitalization of trade documentation, reduction in administrative barriers at borders. They also highlighted the need for fast-track visa arrangements for business persons.



# ECO Secretary General Meets Governor-General of Golestan to Advance Regional Trade and Connectivity



Gorgan, Iran – August 27, 2026

Dr. Asad M. Khan, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), met with H.E. Alireza Tahmasebi, Governor-General of Golestan Province, during his official visit to the province to discuss the strategic importance of the Incheh Borun border area and the development of the ECO-supported Iran–Turkmenistan Joint Trade Zone (JTZ) initiative.

During the meeting, Dr. Khan highlighted the significant potential of Incheh Borun as a gateway for regional trade and transit, emphasizing the importance of strengthening infrastructure, connectivity, and trade facilitation in the area.

The Secretary General underscored that the Joint Trade Zone initiative extends beyond bilateral cooperation between Iran and Turkmenistan and has the potential to generate significant benefits for the wider ECO region by facilitating trade, transit, investment, and regional supply-chain connectivity.

Dr. Khan further noted that the initiative could serve as a replicable model for other strategic border areas across ECO member states, contributing to the Organization's broader objectives of enhancing regional connectivity, expanding intra-regional trade, and promoting deeper economic integration.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to exchange views on strengthening cooperation between ECO and the provincial authorities in support of the initiative and other projects aimed at unlocking the economic potential of the region.





# ECO Secretary General Visits Golestan Province to Advance ECO Joint Trade Zone Initiative



Gorgan, Iran – August 27, 2026

Dr. Asad M. Khan, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), undertook an official visit to Golestan Province to review progress on the ECO-supported Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Trade Zone (JTZ) initiative, aimed at enhancing cross-border trade and regional connectivity.

During his visit to the Incheh Borun border crossing, the Secretary General was briefed on ongoing logistics projects and the railway and road infrastructure within the Incheh Borun Free Trade and Industrial Zone, designated as the host site for the JTZ.

The Secretary General also held discussions with Mr. Malek Hosseini, Managing Director of the Incheh Borun Free Trade and Industrial Zone, as well as with members of the business community and economic stakeholders from Gonbad-e Kavous engaged in trade with Turkmenistan and other ECO member states. The discussions focused on trade facilitation, infrastructure development, private sector engagement, and concrete measures to expedite the operationalization of the JTZ.

The Secretary General also met with the Governor of Gonbad-e Kavous and a Member of the Iranian Parliament representing the city, exchanging views on the role of the region in strengthening trade and economic cooperation across the ECO region.





## ECO Secretary General Hold Video Conference with Under Secretary General UN-OHRLLS

In a videoconference on August 13, 2026, the ECO Secretary General Ambassador Asad M. Khan, and the UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS), Ms. Rabab Fatima, discussed possible cooperation on addressing the challenges faced by 7 ECO landlocked Member States.

In his remarks, the ECO Secretary General acknowledged the services rendered by Ms. Fatima during her tenure as the UN High Representative for least developed, landlocked and small island developing countries, wishing continued success in her new position.

Dr. Khan provided an update on the ECO activities, particularly in the connectivity domain which is a top priority for the ECO Membership.

During the meeting, ECO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Nurberdiyev briefed the UN Official on the ECO activities since Awaza Conference and the upcoming ECO kick-off meeting on implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action in the ECO Region.

Ms. Fatima Rabab acknowledged the importance of the ECO where 7 important landlocked and 3 transit countries are members. She briefed the Secretary General on the OHRLLS' activities in the first year of implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action. She also appraised the role of some ECO landlocked countries in chairing the relevant UN committees and groups.

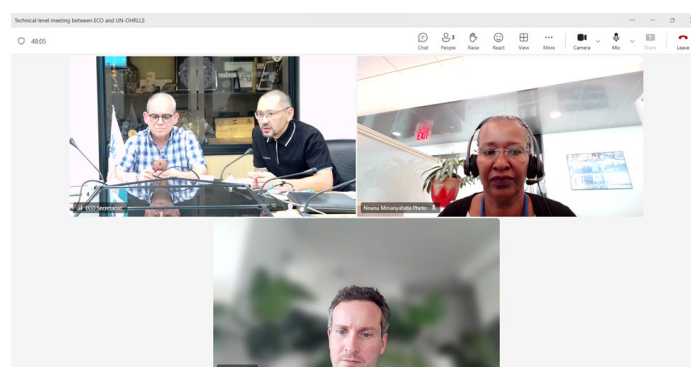
Both sides discussed the ways and means to assist implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action in the ECO Region. They agreed to establish a technical contact group to continue coordination on joint actions for securing their shared goals.



## ECO and UN-OHRLLS Discuss Activities for Landlocked Countries

Tehran – August 20, 2026

In the follow-up to the meeting of ECO Secretary General and UN Under-Secretary-General on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2026, a virtual meeting between technical teams from the ECO Secretariat (Transport and Communications Directorate) and the UN Office for Least Developed, Landlocked and Small Island Developing Countries (UN-OHRLLS) was held on 20<sup>th</sup> August and discussed ways and means to jointly assist the 7 landlocked ECO Member States, including through implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action (PoA).



Among a range of issues identified during the meeting, the both sides agreed to work closely on activities related to the priority 3 of the PoA (Transport and connectivity). Member States were among activities both sides considered for the short term cooperation. They also discussed possibility of developing a Letter of Understanding for mid-term bilateral cooperation.

# ECO Secretary General Congratulates New IRU Secretary General in a Videoconference Meeting

Tehran – August 6, 2026

In an online meeting on 6 August 2026, the ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan congratulated Mr. Habib Turki on his assumption of duties as the new Secretary General of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and wished him success in his new capacity. He also admired Mr. Umberto de Pretto, the former IRU Secretary General for his collaborative attitude towards the ECO.

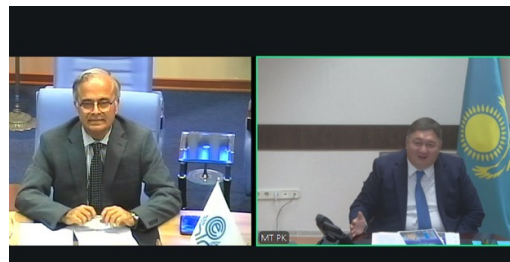
Dr. Khan acknowledged and appreciated excellent relations between ECO and IRU and expressed hope and confidence that under the leadership of Mr. Turki, both organizations further develop their partnerships, including through implementation of the joint 2026-2027 Action Plan. He gave an update on some connectivity-related activities in the ECO, including the upcoming Transport Ministerial Meeting in Astana (14-15 October 2026), International Financing Conference for ECO Transport Corridors and Projects in 2027, implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action for the ECO landlocked countries, efforts to have more engagement by private sector into ECO connectivity agenda, etc. Secretary General invited IRU to participate and engage in these events and activities.

Mr. Habib Turki thanked Secretary General for his sentiments and valued the IRU-ECO joint activities throughout the years which aimed at trade facilitation as well as strengthening private sector in the region. He welcomed the upcoming ECO events and expressed readiness to consider new areas for cooperation. He also highlighted the imperative for the ECO and IRU to jointly mobilize financial resources for their important joint projects.

Both sides mandated their teams in Tehran and Geneva to continue constant exchanges to ensure highest benefits possible for the ECO Member States.



## ECO Secretariat and Kazakhstan Review Preparation for the Upcoming Transport Ministerial Meeting



On 5 August 2026, ECO Secretary General and Deputy Transport Minister of Kazakhstan held online consultations on the preparatory process for the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport, scheduled for 14-15 October 2026 in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, in the context of "New Silk Way Transport and Logistics Forum".

In his remarks, ECO Secretary General appreciated Kazakhstan for its role in the ECO, including its ECO chairmanship during 2025. He highlighted the importance of Transport Ministerial Meeting for the ECO and shared his ideas to make it a successful regional connectivity event.

Mr. Talgat Lastayev, Deputy Minister of Transport of Republic of Kazakhstan, reaffirmed Kazakhstan willingness to have meaningful contributions to ECO activities and assured of firm commitment of his country to organize a successful and high-level ECO Ministerial Meeting. He further briefed about the other activities to be organized during the New Silk Way Forum.

Both sides discussed some preparatory, substantive and organizational matters of the Ministerial Meeting and appointed focal points to continue coordination. Secretary General and Deputy Minister also discussed some areas of cooperation, including possible expansion of air transport and connection within the ECO Region.



# 309<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives

The 309<sup>th</sup> Council of Permanent Representatives Meeting was held on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2026. During the meeting, important upcoming events including the ECO Summit & the Council of Ministers Meeting were discussed. In addition, the ECO Secretary General bid farewell and extended sincere thanks to Amb Hicabi Kirlangıç, Permanent Representative of Türkiye in Tehran, for his support to ECO.



## ECO Secretary General Meets with Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic

Tehran – August 2, 2026

The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, received H.E. Akylbek Kylychev, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to Tehran and Permanent Representative of Kyrgyzstan to ECO today.

During the meeting, Secretary General briefed the Ambassador on recent and upcoming activities of the Secretariat, particularly the recent and upcoming Ministerial Meetings, as well as upcoming Council of Ministers Meeting in Islamabad and the 18th ECO Summit in Tehran.

Ambassador Kylychev briefly informed the Secretary General on the recent and upcoming important international events to be organized in Kyrgyzstan during the year.

The meeting then discussed the status of cooperation with the Kyrgyz Republic within the ECO framework and concluded with both sides reiterating their commitment to enhance cooperation.



## Second Preparatory Coordination Meeting for the 4<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Industry

August 5, 2026

The Directorate of Agriculture and Industry of the ECO Secretariat and the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Tajikistan held their second virtual coordination meeting to review preparations for the 4<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Industry, scheduled to take place on 23 September 2026 in Dushanbe.



The meeting was attended by H.E. Mr. Aziz Nazar Savzali, Deputy Minister of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Tajikistan, officials from the Ministry's Department of International Relations, a representative of the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in Tehran, and the ECO Secretariat delegation led by Dr. Behzad Saberi Ansari, Deputy Secretary General.

The participants reviewed the latest developments in the preparations, discussed the draft programme and the Draft Dushanbe Declaration, and exchanged views on the remaining organizational and logistical arrangements to ensure the successful convening of the Ministerial Meeting.

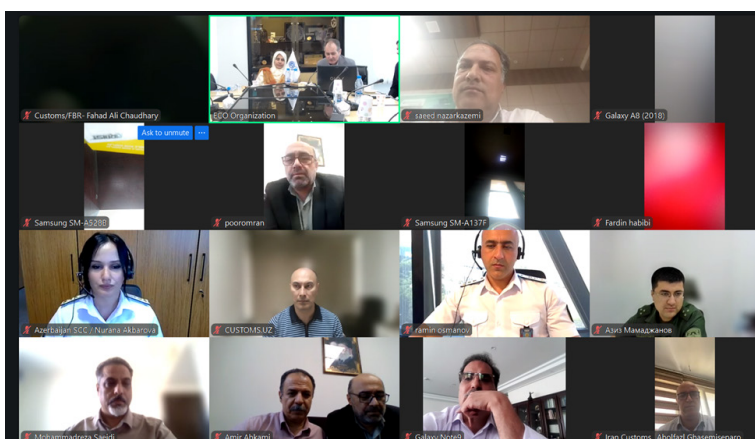
The Ministerial Meeting will be preceded by the 3rd Meeting of the High-Level Expert Group on Industry on 22 September 2026 and will be held alongside the International Textile Forum. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining close coordination and cooperation throughout the remaining preparatory process.

## Online Training Webinar on Harmonized System of World Customs Organization

Tehran – August 19, 2026

The Customs Administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in coordination with the ECO Secretariat, has successfully concluded an online training webinar on 'Harmonized System (HS) of World Customs Organization' aimed at strengthening customs expertise across the ECO region on 19 August 2026.

The training session brought together nearly 80 experts from customs of nine ECO Member States: the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran (host), the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Türkiye and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The session focused on deepening participants' understanding of 'Harmonized System', thereby supporting more accurate and effective customs procedures within the region.



The Webinar was opened with introductory remarks by Ms. Amina Batool, Director for Trade and Investment at the ECO Secretariat. In her opening remarks, she underscored importance of capacity building as an essential instrument for strengthening regional economic cooperation. She highlighted that exchange of knowledge and technical expertise among ECO Member States is one of the most effective ways of narrowing capacity gaps and supporting more efficient regional cooperation.

Mr. Abdolaziz Yusefi, head of HS Classification of Tariff Office of Iran Customs Administration, in his presentation, provided technical knowledge and gave detailed overview of the information systems of the Customs Administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran and highlighted good practices in Harmonized System worldwide. The webinar provided invaluable opportunities for customs professionals by equipping them with practical knowledge and tools to refine customs procedures and enhance data exchange practices.



## ECOSA Outlines Roadmap for Regional Seed Cooperation in 2026 and Beyond

On 12 August 2026, the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) held an online meeting on its future vision and work plan, bringing together more than 60 participants from ECOSA Member States. The meeting provided an opportunity to present ECOSA's planned activities and discuss a roadmap for strengthening regional cooperation in the seed sector in 2026 and beyond.

Following the opening remarks by ECOSA President Mr. Yıldırım Genç, Mr. Can Aygöl, Director for Agriculture and Industry at the ECO Secretariat, emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation between ECOSA and its Member States through an effective network of focal points and technical experts, regular exchange of information, and continued technical consultations. He also underlined the need to accelerate work on pending regional initiatives, including efforts to finalize the draft ECO Regional Seed Agreement as an important legal foundation for closer and more effective regional cooperation in the seed sector.



During the meeting, ECOSA presented its priorities and planned activities for the coming period. These included human resources development and training, continuation of the ECOSA Seed Trade Congresses, establishment of a Digital Information Exchange Platform, greater regulatory harmonization, adjustment and reduction of customs duties on seeds, establishment of a Common Variety Catalogue, development of a Common Certification System and ECOSA Certificate, and inclusion of seeds in preferential trade arrangements among Member States. ECOSA also highlighted the importance of identifying practical areas of cooperation and promoting bilateral cooperation protocols among Member States.

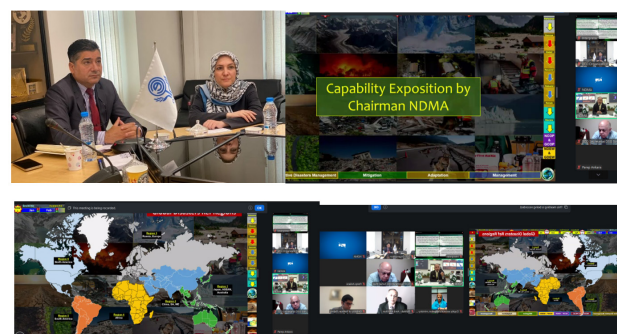
## ECO Secretariat Participates in Strategic Appraisal on Pakistan's Monsoon Preparedness

August 6, 2026

The ECO Secretariat participated virtually in the Strategic Appraisal on Pakistan's Preparedness Measures for the Monsoon meeting, organized by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) of Pakistan.

During the meeting, Lieutenant General Inam Haider Malik, Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), delivered the keynote address, highlighting Pakistan's indigenous and proactive approach to disaster risk management. He emphasized the importance of strengthening regional cooperation and promoting both financial and operational collaboration to effectively address multi-hazard disaster situations.

Representing the ECO Secretariat, Dr. Husnu Tekin, Director for Human Resources and Sustainable Development, delivered a statement reaffirming the Organization's commitment to regional cooperation in disaster risk reduction (DRR). He highlighted the key outcomes of the 10<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Islamabad earlier this year, including the adoption of the updated ECO Regional Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction (ECORFDRR) 2025–2030 and the Islamabad Declaration, both of which provide a strengthened framework for enhancing regional collaboration and resilience across the ECO region.





Economic Cooperation Organization



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