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Newsletter





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FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Connectivity at the heart of our regional agenda

Dear Readers,

The month of October 2026 witnessed a significant pick up in momentum of ECO activities aimed at strengthening regional cooperation. Through a series of high-level engagements and sectoral initiatives, ECO and its Member States continued to advance regional connectivity, economic integration and institutional collaboration through practical measures, underscoring their shared resolve to foster a more integrated, resilient and prosperous region.

A major highlight of the month was my participation in the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport, held in Astana, which culminated in the adoption of the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy 2026–2035 and the Astana Declaration. These landmark instruments provide an important strategic framework for strengthening regional transport networks, facilitating trade and transit, and addressing the connectivity challenges faced by landlocked Member States. On the sidelines of the Meeting, I participated in the Dialogue with the Private Sector on Digitalization and Financing of the ECO Transport Sector and held bilateral meetings with the Transport Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Deputy Minister of Transport and Infrastructure of Türkiye, and the Deputy Minister of Railway Transport of Turkmenistan, exchanging views on advancing the ECO Transport Strategy and strengthening regional transport corridors and cross-border connectivity.

Meanwhile, discussions on the revision of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) gained further momentum, providing an opportunity for Member States to consider a modern and more comprehensive framework for regional trade cooperation. Progress was also made in other priority sectors, including minerals, energy, statistics, agriculture and tourism. The endorsement of the Implementation Plan of the ECO Five-Year Roadmap on Minerals Cooperation 2026–2030, continued work towards establishing an ECO Regional Electricity Market, and deliberations on the ECO Strategic Plan on Statistics 2026–2030 reflect the Organization's sustained efforts to strengthen sectoral cooperation through coordinated and forward-looking approaches.

Particular importance was also attached to strengthening cooperation with regional and international partners. ECO's engagement with the United Nations and other relevant institutions, including discussions with the World Health Organization and participation in initiatives under the Awaza Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries, reaffirmed the Organization's commitment to fostering meaningful partnerships and ensuring that regional priorities are reflected in wider international development efforts.

As we move towards the forthcoming 30th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers in Islamabad and the 18th ECO Summit in Tehran, the need to reinforce the Organization's institutional effectiveness, strengthen coordination among Member States and accelerate the implementation of agreed decisions remains paramount. These forthcoming high-level engagements will provide important opportunities to review our collective progress and renew political commitment. The ECO Secretariat remains committed to working together towards a more connected, integrated and prosperous ECO region.

Dr. Asad M. Khan
SECRETARY GENERAL,
ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION



SPECIAL REPORT · ASTANA TRANSPORT WEEK

14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport Convenes in Astana

ASTANA · 15 OCTOBER 2026

The 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport was held in Astana on 15 October 2026, and preceded by the Senior Officials' Meeting, alongside the New Silk Way Transport and Logistics Forum aimed to exchange views, focused on shared priorities, including regional connectivity, transport digitalization and trade facilitation, and provided an opportunity to strengthen cooperation among regional and international partners. It was preceded by the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) on 14 October, which was chaired by Kazakhstan and reviewed the draft ECO Transport Strategy 2026–2035 and the Astana Declaration for submission to the Ministers for consideration.

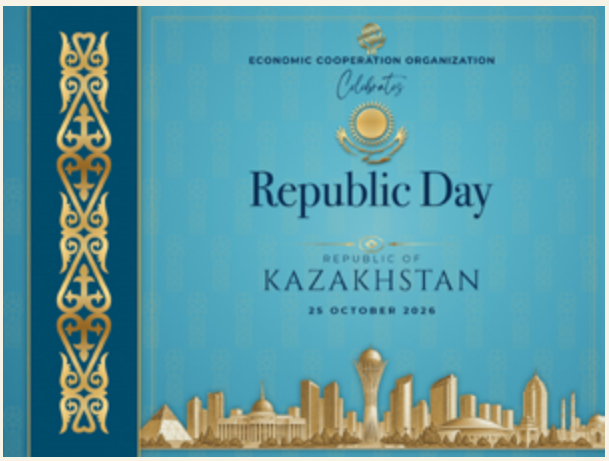
Addressing the Ministerial Meeting, Dr. Asad M. Khan, ECO Secretary General, emphasized that connectivity extends beyond physical infrastructure and called for a comprehensive approach combining infrastructure investment with trade facilitation and greater regional economic integration. He highlighted the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026–2035, identified the connectivity needs of the seven landlocked Member States as a priority, underscored the importance of closely engaging the private sector and stressed the need for concrete, economically viable and bankable projects.

H.E. Mr. Zhanibek Taizhanov, Vice Minister of Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan, underlined Kazakhstan's commitment to advancing regional transport cooperation, strengthening transit corridors and promoting sustainable connectivity across the ECO region.

The Ministers and Heads of Delegation underscored the shared priorities of regional connectivity, transport digitalization and trade facilitation, and welcomed the opportunity to strengthen cooperation among regional and international partners. Particular attention was given to the special needs and challenges of landlocked countries, with emphasis on facilitating uninterrupted access to regional and international markets, enhancing transit links, removing border and logistical bottlenecks, and advancing sustainable and resilient transport networks for the benefit of all Member States.

The Meeting adopted the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026–2035, the Astana Declaration and the Report of the Meeting, with a view to ensuring their effective implementation and thereby advancing regional connectivity, transport digitalization and trade facilitation across the ECO region.

ECO CELEBRATES REPUBLIC DAY OF KAZAKHSTAN AND TURKIYE



Republic Day of Kazakhstan

Warm congratulations to the people of Kazakhstan · 25 October

▸ WATCH THE VIDEO MESSAGE



103rd Republic Day of Türkiye

Warm congratulations to the people of Türkiye · 29 October

▸ WATCH THE VIDEO MESSAGE

REGIONAL DIPLOMACY

ECO Participates in the 7th CICA Summit in Baku

BAKU · 15 OCTOBER 2026





Deputy Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Mr. Cagatay Emrah Ongut, participated in the Seventh Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), held today in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Summit, convened under Azerbaijan's chairmanship, brought together Heads of State and Government from CICA's member states, alongside representatives of observer organizations and international partners.

Deputy Secretary General Ongut represented the ECO at the Summit. Meanwhile, in a statement made part of the official summit record, the ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan, who could not join the summit because of the ECO Ministerial meeting in Astana, noted ECO's perspectives on the theme and underscored the organization's support for CICA's objectives. He also reaffirmed the organization's commitment to deepening its institutional partnership with CICA.

He further stated that the ECO and CICA have maintained a formal Memorandum of Understanding since 2008, focusing on key priority areas including transport, tourism and environment. Both organizations share a common vision of promoting regional cooperation as a foundation for sustainable peace, security, and prosperity across Asia.

Discussions focused on the theme "Stronger CICA: Connectivity, Digitalization and Sustainable Growth," with member states reviewing achievements under Azerbaijan's 2024–2026 chairmanship and adopting key decisions.

SPECIAL REPORT · CONNECTIVITY

ECO Secretary General Addresses IRU–UN-OHRLLS Side Event on Advancing the Awaza Programme of Action

ASTANA · 14 OCTOBER 2026

ECO Secretary General, Dr. Asad M. Khan, attended an IRU–UN-OHRLLS side event on advancing the Awaza Programme of Action, which mobilized regional and international partnerships to strengthen connectivity, transit facilitation and market access for landlocked countries. The Secretary General noted that the Programme provides an important framework for addressing their development challenges, particularly in transport connectivity and access to international markets.

He stated that ECO has deepened engagement with UN-OHRLLS, UNESCAP, UNECE, the IsDB and the IRU to translate the Programme's priorities into regional initiatives, emphasizing that improved road transport efficiency requires harmonized regulations, simplified border procedures, digitalized transit systems and a professional, resilient transport industry.



The Secretary General announced that ECO is working towards an international financing conference for transport corridors and projects in next year, and that a meeting is planned for 18 November 2026 in Bangkok to develop a regional roadmap for implementation of the Programme, While the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy for 2026–2035 and the Astana Declaration stand as landmark instruments providing strategic direction for addressing the connectivity challenges of landlocked Member States over the coming decade.

SPECIAL REPORT · CONNECTIVITY

ECO Participated in the IRU-OHRLLS Panel Discussions on Landlocked Countries in Astana

ASTANA · 14 OCTOBER 2026



The International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) jointly organized on 14 October 2026 in Astana, a one day regional dialogue on implementation of the "Awaza Programme of Action (PoA) for Landlocked Developing Countries 2024-2034". The Event was held on the margins of the Astana "New Silk Way Forum".

SPECIAL REPORT · PRIVATE SECTOR

ECO Organizes Dialogue with the Private Sector on Digitalization and Financing of the Transport Sector in Astana

ASTANA · 15 OCTOBER 2026

On 15 October 2026, on the sidelines of the 14th Ministerial Meeting of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) on Transport in Astana, the ECO Secretariat organized a "Dialogue with the Private Sector on Digitalization and Financing of the ECO Transport Sector." The event brought together senior government officials, international organizations, and private-sector representatives to discuss ways to strengthen regional transport connectivity, promote digital transformation, and mobilize financing for transport infrastructure and corridor development.



The Dialogue was moderated by Ambassador Silapberdi Nurberdiyev, Deputy Secretary General of ECO. It featured the participation of Dr. Asad M. Khan, Secretary General of ECO; Mr. Damir Kozhakhmetov, Vice Minister of Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Mr. Vadim Zaharenko, Head of the IRU Permanent Representation in Eurasia; and Ms. Ayimgul Abileva, President of the IT Association of Kazakhstan.

In his remarks, Dr. Asad M. Khan highlighted the strategic importance of strengthening regional transport connectivity, accelerating digitalization, and mobilizing investment to unlock the full potential of the ECO region's transport corridors. He emphasized the need for closer cooperation among Member States, international financial institutions, and the private sector to address infrastructure and financing challenges and promote more efficient, integrated, and competitive transport networks.

The ECO Secretary General also highlighted ongoing regional cooperation initiatives, including the development of Joint Trade Zones (JTZs). He further referred to the planned International Financing Conference on ECO Transport Corridors and Projects in 2027 as an important opportunity to mobilize investment, strengthen partnerships with international financial institutions, and advance the development of regional transport infrastructure.

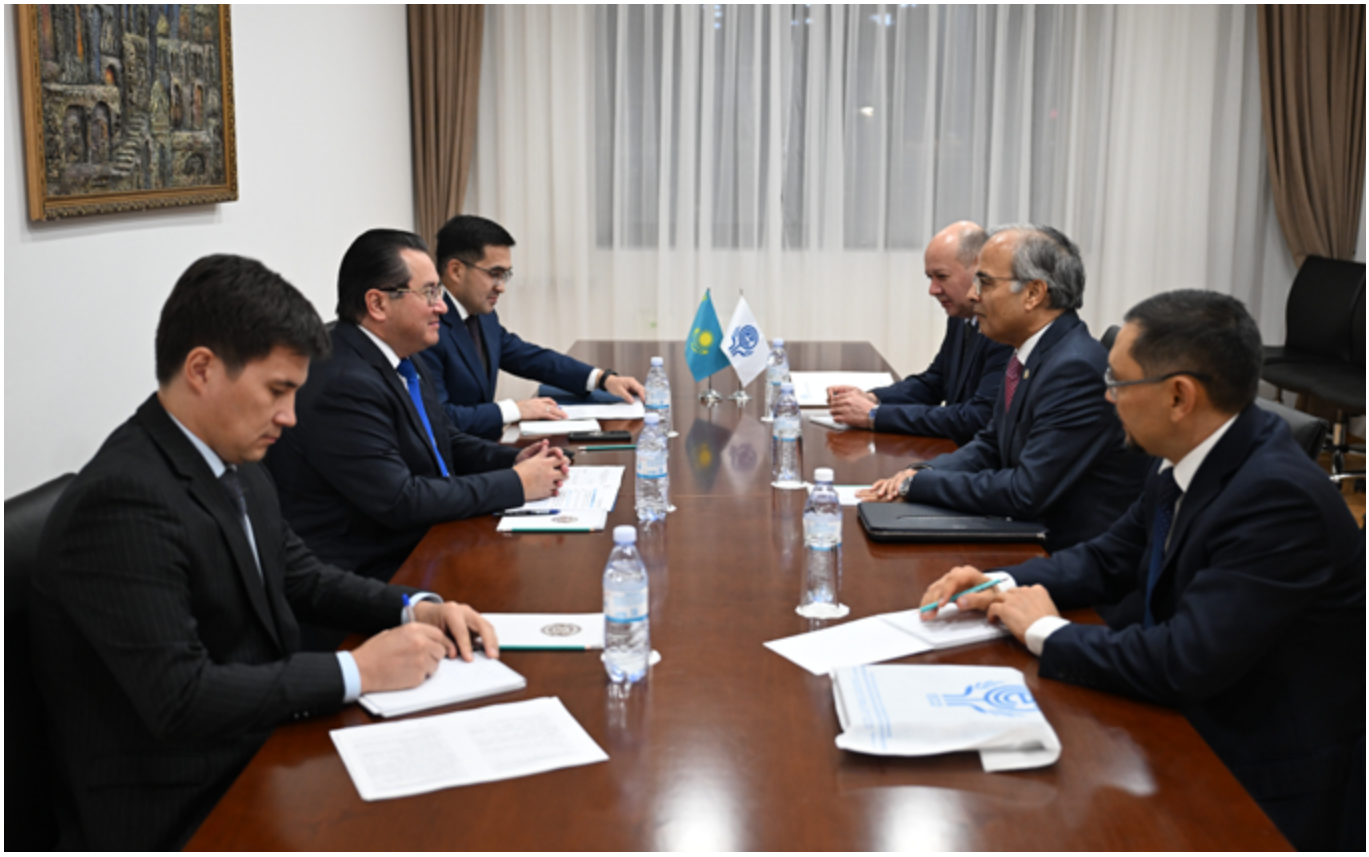
The discussions focused on the role of digitalization in improving transport efficiency, facilitating cross-border procedures, enhancing the interoperability of transport and customs systems, and strengthening the competitiveness of regional transport corridors. Participants also exchanged views on financing transport infrastructure, encouraging private-sector investment, and fostering stronger partnerships between governments, international organizations, and businesses.

The Dialogue highlighted the importance of public-private cooperation in advancing regional connectivity and developing efficient, sustainable, and digitally integrated transport networks across the ECO region. The Ministers of transport and high-level officials from the ECO Member States in their concluding document, the "Astana Declaration" issued on 15 October 2026 welcomed this joint initiative of the ECO Secretariat and Kazakhstan.

SPECIAL REPORT · DIPLOMACY

ECO Secretary General Meets with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan

ASTANA · 13 OCTOBER 2026



Dr. Asad M. Khan, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), met with H.E. Mr. Arman Issagaliyev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on the sidelines of the Silk Way Forum in Astana.

At the outset of the meeting, the Secretary General warmly congratulated H.E. Mr. Arman Issagaliyev on his appointment as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and conveyed his best wishes for success in the discharge of his important responsibilities. He expressed confidence in the continuation of close cooperation between ECO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and emphasized the importance of sustained dialogue and coordination in further advancing the Organization's objectives and strengthening regional cooperation among Member States.

The Secretary General expressed his appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for hosting the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport on 15 October 2026 in Astana. He also highlighted the forthcoming adoption of the ECO Sustainable and Resilient Transport Strategy 2026–2035 as an important step towards establishing a common strategic framework for enhancing regional connectivity, facilitating trade and transit, and promoting closer cooperation among Member States.

Deputy Minister Issagaliyev thanked the Secretary General for his visit and highlighted Kazakhstan's important role in advancing regional transport and transit connectivity. He emphasized the significance of cooperation within the ECO framework in promoting regional economic development, facilitating trade and strengthening links between regional and international markets.



SPECIAL REPORT · TRANSPORT

ECO Secretary General Interacts with Transport Officials of Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye and Turkmenistan

ASTANA · 15 OCTOBER 2026





On the sidelines of the 14th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport in Astana, Dr. Asad M. Khan, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), interacted with H.E. Mr. Talantbek Soltobayev, Minister of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic; Mr. Osman Boyraz, Deputy Minister of Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Türkiye; and Mr. Sylapberdi Nurberdiyev, Deputy Minister of Railway Transport of Turkmenistan.

In his exchanges with the officials, Dr. Asad M. Khan expressed his appreciation for their participation in the Ministerial Meeting and underscored the importance of strengthening regional cooperation in transport and connectivity.

The exchanges covered advancing the ECO Transport Strategy 2026–2035 and the Astana Declaration, enhancing regional transport corridors, improving cross-border connectivity, and strengthening cooperation among ECO Member States to facilitate regional trade and transit.

IN THE MEDIA

ECO Secretary General Speaks to Tasnim News

TEHRAN · 24 OCTOBER 2026

In an interview, ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan highlighted the importance of deeper regional integration and stronger cooperation among Member States to unlock the region's considerable economic potential. He underscored the need to enhance intra-regional trade, strengthen transport and connectivity networks, promote investment and pursue coordinated approaches to shared challenges

Photo: Tasnim News Agency



CULTURE

ECO Secretary General Attends Exhibition Organized by the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran and ECO Cultural Institute

TEHRAN · 22 OCTOBER 2026




The ECO Secretary General attended and jointly inaugurated an exhibition titled "Pakistan Through the Ages" organized by the Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran in collaboration with the ECO Cultural Institute. The event showcased Pakistan's civilizational depth, diverse heritage and historic linkages to the ECO region

PARTNERSHIPS

ECO Secretary General Meets Head of UNAMA Liaison Office in Iran

TEHRAN · 7 OCTOBER 2026

The Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, met with Mr. Bojidar Vassilev Dimitrov, Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Liaison Office in Iran, to exchange views on recent developments in Afghanistan and discuss areas of mutual interest.



During the meeting, the Secretary General briefed the Head of UNAMA Liaison Office in Iran on the current status of Afghanistan's participation in ECO activities and reaffirmed the continued commitment of ECO Member States to constructive engagement on matters related to Afghanistan.

The two sides held substantive discussions on the evolving situation in Afghanistan, ECO's ongoing efforts to support regional cooperation and engagement with the country. Both parties underscored the importance of sustained dialogue and coordinated efforts in promoting stability and development in Afghanistan.

PARTNERSHIPS · HEALTH

ECO Secretary General Receives Newly Appointed WHO Representative in Iran

TEHRAN · 6 OCTOBER 2026



On 6 October 2026, Dr. Asad M. Khan, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), received Dr. Jean Jabbour, the newly appointed Representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The two sides discussed the longstanding cooperation between the ECO and WHO and explored ways to further strengthen collaboration in health and promote regional health initiatives among ECO Member States.

Dr. Jabbour highlighted the importance of continued cooperation and proposed developing joint initiatives in areas of mutual interest. He also briefed the Secretary General on efforts to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two organizations and proposed forming a joint technical team to finalize the draft.

The meeting reaffirmed the shared commitment of the ECO and WHO to enhancing institutional cooperation and advancing regional health initiatives.

INSTITUTIONAL

311th Meeting of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives Convenes

TEHRAN · 21 OCTOBER 2026



The Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) convened its 311th Session at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran on 21 October 2026, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to ECO and Chairman of the CPR.

Prior to the meeting, the newly appointed Turkish Ambassador to Iran and Permanent Representative to ECO, H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Aydın Doğan, presented his credentials to the ECO Secretary General Dr. Asad M. Khan.

Congratulating him on his appointment, the Secretary General and the Council extended their best wishes for a successful tenure, and expressed confidence that Türkiye's continued and active engagement would further strengthen the work of the Organization.

The meeting discussed the Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation – 2035, preparations for the 30th ECO Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting to be held in Islamabad on 15–16 November 2026 and respectively the 18th ECO Summit to be held in Tehran, as well as other important issues on the ECO cooperation agenda, including preparations for the 5th ECO Interior Ministers Meeting to be held in Islamabad on 30 October 2026 and the 5th ECO Energy Ministers Meeting to be held in Istanbul on 10 December 2026.



AGRICULTURE

9th ECOSA International Seed Trade Congress Opens in Tashkent to Strengthen Regional Seed Cooperation

TASHKENT · 27 OCTOBER 2026



On 27 October 2026, the 9th International Seed Trade Congress of the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) opened in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, bringing together more than 500 participants from government institutions, the private sector, international organizations, and other stakeholders to strengthen regional cooperation and promote seed trade.

The opening ceremony of two-day Congress featured addresses by the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Ibrohim Abdurakhmonov; the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Dr. Asad M. Khan, who addressed the Congress virtually; and the President of the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA), Mr. Yildiray Gencer. In his statement, Dr. Khan underscored the importance of regional cooperation in strengthening food security, agricultural productivity, and seed trade, emphasizing the need for compatible standards and transparent regulatory frameworks. He commended ECOSA's efforts and highlighted proposed initiatives, including an ECO Common Variety Catalogue, joint seed certification and trade working groups, and a regional seed information exchange platform, while calling for progress on the draft ECO Regional Seed Agreement and greater engagement by Member States.

Representatives of the ECO Member States presented statements on their respective national seed sectors, sharing experiences and identifying opportunities for cooperation. The program also includes presentations on the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA), OECD programs, and business-to-business meetings to promote partnerships and expand seed trade.

The Congress aims to translate regional dialogue into practical initiatives that support seed-sector development, investment, and stronger regional trade. A Congress Declaration is expected to be adopted at the conclusion of the meeting on 28 October, setting out shared priorities for future cooperation.



TRADE

The 2nd Informal Consultative Session of the Technical Negotiation Committee (TNC) on the Revision of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA)

TEHRAN · 19 OCTOBER 2026





The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) convened the 2nd Informal Consultative Session of the Technical Negotiation Committee (TNC) on the Revision of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) on 19 October 2026. The meeting brought together representatives of ECO Member States (both ECOTA contracting and non-contracting Members) to exchange views on the Concept Note submitted by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and to consider possible approaches for the negotiations process.

The opening remarks were delivered by Deputy Secretary General of ECO, Dr. Behzad Saberi Ansari. Welcoming the growing participation of Member States, he emphasized that the purpose of these informal and friendly consultative sessions is to facilitate the exchange of ideas among the relevant technical authorities of Member States and provide an opportunity for participants to hear one another's views, perspectives and concerns, without creating any commitments for any of the participating governments. He noted that the previous informal session had proven highly useful in bringing the parties' views closer together, expressing the hope that the present session, as well as subsequent meetings, would likewise contribute effectively to advancing the work.

After the opening remarks, Ms. Amina Batool, Director, Trade and Investment of the ECO Secretariat, presented the key elements of Pakistan's Concept Note and outlined the proposed framework, including the possible areas of cooperation under the three thematic protocols and the proposed approach to market access and tariff treatment.

The session focused on the Concept Note on the new Trade Agreement submitted by Pakistan, which proposes a modern and evolved architecture and scope in comparison to ECOTA. The Concept Note envisages a new-generation ECO Trade Agreement based on a Framework Agreement complemented by thematic protocols, with a view to creating a more flexible, progressive and comprehensive framework for regional trade and economic integration.

Representatives of ECO Member States exchanged preliminary views on the Concept Note and shared their perspectives on the proposed architecture, scope and possible modalities for the new agreement. The discussion also provided an opportunity for Member States to raise issues for further consideration and, where appropriate, to put forward alternative or additional proposals.

In closing, the Deputy Secretary General noted that, in accordance with the previously approved work plan, the Secretariat had been tasked with preparing a zero draft of the Agreement. He therefore invited the representatives of Member States to formally communicate to the Secretariat any comments, proposals or observations of their respective governments, so that the drafting process could proceed at the earliest opportunity, duly taking into account the views of Member States.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Iran Showcases Rural and Nomadic Potential at 6th International Exhibition in Tehran

TEHRAN · 11 OCTOBER 2026

The ECO Secretariat, represented by Mr. Can Aygul, Director for Agriculture and Industry, visited the 6th International Exhibition of Rural and Nomadic Capabilities (IRDEXPO) in Tehran as part of the National Event marking Rural and Nomadic Communities Day.

The ECO delegation toured exhibition stands showcasing agricultural products, handicrafts and economic capabilities from Iran's 31 provinces and met with exhibitors to learn about their activities. Mr. Aygul also met with H.E. Mr. Abdulkarim Hosseinzadeh, Vice President for Rural Development and Deprived Areas of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and briefly exchanged views on potential areas of cooperation in agriculture. Mr. Aygul subsequently signed the exhibition's commemorative book.



Held from 8 to 11 October 2026, IRDEXPO featured more than 400 booths showcasing provincial products and capabilities, alongside 50 booths dedicated to startups and technology-related activities. The exhibition also highlighted local foods, traditional crafts, regional music and nomadic heritage, underscoring the economic and cultural contributions of Iran's rural and nomadic communities.

MINERALS

10th ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting

TEHRAN · 12 OCTOBER 2026



The 10th ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting (MEGM-10) was jointly organized by ECO Secretariat and Geological Survey of Iran (GSI) on 12 October 2026 in a hybrid mode. The meeting brought together the representatives of eight ECO Member States, who overwhelmingly highlighted the ever-increasing crucial role of mineral cooperation in sustainable economic development, energy transition, and digitalization of the ECO region.

The meeting reviewed the next steps in advancing the regional mineral agenda, focusing heavily on a range of project proposals and initiatives. The delegates called for the regular engagement to build up momentum of regional cooperation in minerals through sustainable resource management, technological advancement, investment facilitation, and development of value-added mineral industries.

Special emphasis was placed on "ECO Five-Year Roadmap on Minerals Cooperation for 2026–2030", adopted in January 2026 as a first ever inclusive framework document of ECO in the field of minerals. In a decisive stride, the meeting successfully refined and endorsed the Implementation Plan of this Roadmap.

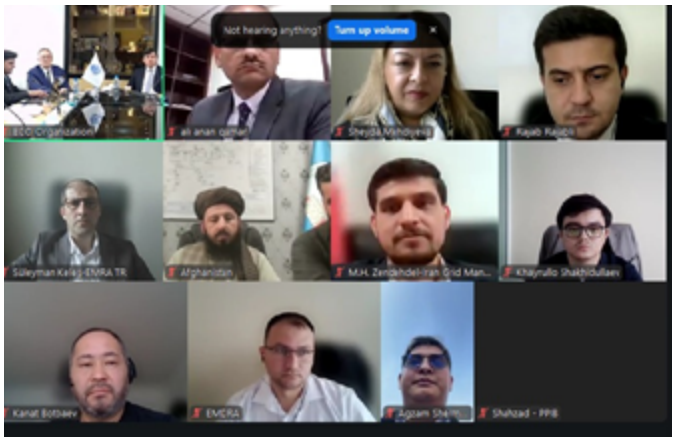
The Member States resolved to step up efforts to consolidate ECO as a unique regional platform for mineral cooperation.

ENERGY

4th Task Force Meeting on ECO Regional Electricity Market

VIRTUAL · 20 OCTOBER 2026





The 4th Task Force Meeting on establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM) was organized in virtual mode on 20 October 2026. The meeting was attended by managers and technical experts from nine Member States representing both the relevant government authorities and network/generation companies.

The meeting discussed the progress in developing the terms of reference on preparation of the Feasibility Study on the establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market, the Draft Concept Paper for the ECO Member States Power Grid Operators Forum and next steps for advancement of the ECO-REM project. This Task Force represents a unique platform for fostering dialogue and paving the way for the ECO-REM project.

STATISTICS

11th High-Level Expert Group Meeting on Statistics

TEHRAN · 14 OCTOBER 2026







The 11th High-Level Expert Group Meeting on Statistics was held in virtual format under the chairmanship of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Representatives from the national statistical agencies of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan attended the meeting.

The meeting focused on finalizing the draft ECO Strategic Plan on Statistics 2026–2030, the successor to the 2021–2026 Plan, as requested by the 36th Regional Planning Council. The draft Plan aims to modernize statistical production, harmonize methodologies and national accounts, strengthen capacity, expand digital dissemination and partnerships, and align regional statistical work with the Strategic Goals of Economic Cooperation – 2035.

Member States presented their national statistical developments and proposals on the draft Plan. The meeting also reviewed the ECO Statistics Interactive Dashboard, scheduled for launch by the end of 2026, the updated ECO Key Statistical Indicators (ECOKSI 2.0), and the capacity-building programme for 2026–2027.

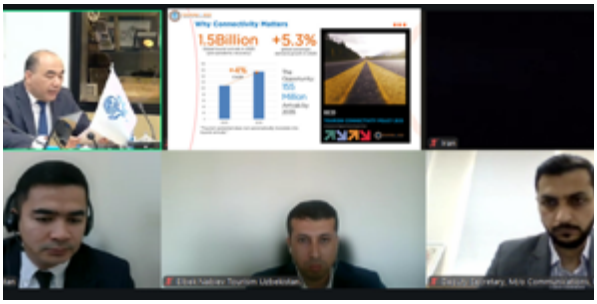
The meeting agreed the draft Plan in principle and approved the draft agenda for the 9th Meeting of the Heads of National Statistical Offices, scheduled for October 27, 2026.

TOURISM

ECO-ACT Subcommittee on Transport Elaborates Regional Tourism Connectivity Agenda

TEHRAN · 13 OCTOBER 2026





The Fifth Meeting of the ECO-ACT (ECO Advisory Committee on Tourism) Subcommittee on Transport, reorganized from the previous ECO Tourism and Transport Task Force, was held online with the participation of delegations from the tourism and transport authorities of ECO Member States.

Participants emphasized that passenger connectivity and visa facilitation are fundamental to tourism competitiveness, accessibility, and resilience. The Meeting reviewed the draft ECO Tourism Connectivity Policy–2035, prepared by the ECO Secretariat in support of the regional target of 155 million visitor arrivals by 2035. Delegations shared updates on international passenger transport developments and proposed measures to improve transport infrastructure and operations, particularly by expanding air connections to smaller cities with tourism potential.

The Meeting also discussed establishing a Working Group to assess the feasibility of piloting the ECO Heritage Train Route as a regional passenger rail initiative under the Roadmap on Expansion of Tourism Services–2030 (RETS-2030). Member States were invited to provide their final inputs to the draft Policy. The regional tourism connectivity framework, incorporating practical recommendations to strengthen transport links and facilitate travel across the ECO region, is expected to be finalized and submitted to the relevant ECO decision-making bodies in the coming period.

AGRICULTURE

ECO Participates in the 9th Peste des Petits Ruminants Advisory Committee Meeting

PARIS · 26–28 OCTOBER 2026





The ECO Directorate for Agriculture and Industry participated virtually in the 9th Meeting of the Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) Advisory Committee, organized by the Joint FAO–WOAH PPR Secretariat under the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TADs), held in Paris from 26–28 October 2026.

Over the course of the three-day meeting, participants exchanged views on the current PPR situation and key issues shaping the global eradication agenda. The meeting provided an opportunity to consider progress and challenges in PPR control and eradication, recent technical and research developments, opportunities for partnership and resource mobilization, and the longer-term timeline for achieving global eradication under the PPR Global Eradication Programme.

On 26 October 2026, as part of the session on Regional Progress in Central Asia, the ECO Agriculture and Industry Directorate presented an overview of the PPR situation in the ECO region and highlighted the importance of strengthening regional cooperation on PPR and other transboundary animal diseases.

It was noted that the PPR situation varies considerably across the ECO region: while some Member States have achieved officially recognized PPR-free status or made significant progress under the PPR Monitoring and Assessment Tool (PMAT) framework, others continue to face endemic risks and implement vaccination, surveillance and disease-control programmes.

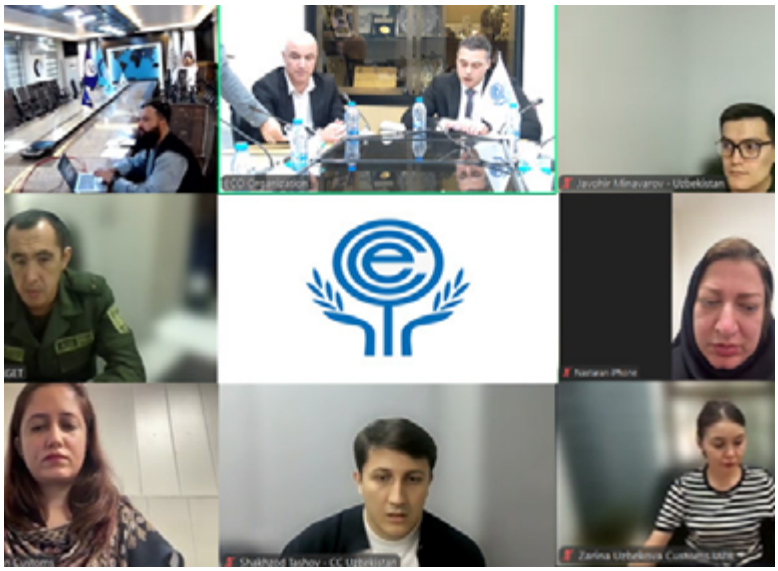
On behalf of the ECO Secretariat, Mr. Fallahi highlighted animal trade and veterinary cooperation as an established priority of ECO's agricultural agenda, supported through regional mechanisms and cooperation among veterinary authorities and relevant institutions in the region.

CUSTOMS

ECO Strengthens Regional Customs Cooperation through Training on Risk Management

TEHRAN · 6 OCTOBER 2026





The Customs Administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in close coordination with the ECO Secretariat, successfully organized an online training webinar on "Risk Management in Customs Matters," aimed at strengthening customs expertise and cooperation across the ECO region.

The webinar brought together customs experts from eight ECO Member States: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran (host), Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan. The session focused on enhancing participants' understanding of customs risk management to promote more efficient and effective customs procedures across the region.

The webinar commenced with introductory remarks by a representative of the ECO Secretariat, who emphasized the importance of customs risk management in modernizing customs procedures, facilitating legitimate trade and strengthening supply chain security. The representative highlighted the growing significance of risk-based approaches, data analysis and digital tools in promoting intra-regional trade and connectivity. The webinar also provided an opportunity to benefit from Iran's experience and exchange practical approaches to risk identification, assessment and management.

Mr. Abolfazl Ghasemiseparo, Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Department of Iran Customs Administration, delivered a technical presentation providing an overview of Iran's customs information systems and highlighting good practices in customs risk management.

The webinar offered customs professionals valuable insights and practical tools to improve customs procedures while facilitating the exchange of experiences and best practices among ECO Member States.

This was the second training webinar organized by the Customs Administration of Iran in 2026, following the first session on the Harmonized System in August 2026, reflecting continued efforts to strengthen capacity-building, share best practices and enhance customs expertise and cooperation across the ECO region.



Economic Cooperation Organization

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is an intergovernmental regional organization established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Türkiye to promote economic, technical and cultural cooperation among its Member States. Today ECO brings together ten Member States: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

ECO SECRETARIAT

No. 1, Golbou Alley, Kamranieh St., Postal Code: 19519–33114, Tehran, Iran
Tel: (+9821) 22831733-4 · Fax: (+9821) 22831732
E-mail: registry@eco.int · www.eco.int

