

2015

The News Magazine of Economic Cooperation Organization

Series 5 No.13



ECO CHRONICLE

ECO Beyond 2015: Towards a Brighter Future



Farewell Reception hosted by outgoing ECO Secretary General





Towards a New Architecture for ECO

Publication of this issue of the ECO Chronicle coincides with some developments in the Organization. The reform process within ECO is still ongoing. This entails, among others, prospects for the future. The ECO Vision 2016-2025 is being developed by the Secretariat and the Member States which will define new directions of the Organization in the coming ten years.

The Secretary General-elect, Ambassador Halil Ibrahim Akca from Turkey, will take over his duties as of 13 August 2015 replacing Ambassador Aleskerov. He will be the eleventh ECO Secretary General whose leadership in the ECO Secretariat will be of great importance in the times of envisaged plans for changes. ECO Chronicle wishes him success in his tenure.

The ECO Council of Ministers (COM) will convene its extra-ordinary meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in early October this year in New York. This meeting is of great significance in terms of its agenda and timing. The ECO highest decision making body, the Council of Ministers, is expected to address in its meeting in New York some important agenda items and make decisions on crucial issues. Ministers will also exchange views on the directions ECO should take in the next ten years. Their views will be guiding the ongoing ECO reform process as well as the recently launched process of drafting the ECO Vision 2016-2025. This ECO high level event on the sidelines of important meetings such as the "Seventies Anniversary of United Nations" and the "UN Summit to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda" is also important in terms of ECO visibility and external relations.

This issue of Chronicle is also produced in the time when newly concluded nuclear negotiations seems to be changing the circumstances in our region and beyond. The new environment, especially with the Iran's sanctions to be removed in near future, will in one way or another create more favorable conditions for economic exchanges of Iran with the outside world. Economic Cooperation Organization may be one of the beneficiaries of the new envisaged enabling atmosphere.

The prevailing form of cooperation within ECO emanates from the development paradigm dominating in early 1990s when ECO expanded its membership to 7 new member countries. The sustainable development of the countries and enhanced welfare and prosperity of the peoples, as the very objectives of the Organization and coupled to regional projects and programmes, still constitute the main drive for ECO and its activities. In the last three decades or so, ECO Member States expanded their cooperation into some sectors and areas of interests. Various regional frameworks and networks have been developed to foster regional cooperation and integration while the rate of participation by the Member States in the activities varies from sector to sector. This less-than-full participation by Member States in ECO projects, programmes and initiatives has been partly attributed to the parallel membership. Some ECO Member States are also members of other regional organizations and programmes in the same geography which provide them with possibility to make choices from among them. At the same time, ECO has proved its validity, and uniqueness, for outsiders. To the international community and development partners, ECO is now a reliable and credible regional partner to implement global agenda in this part of the world. UN agencies and other global players have been drawn to many partnerships with ECO targeting countries of the South and West Asia as well as Caucasus and Central Asia. Addressing this anomalous phenomenon, i.e. acknowledged more by outsiders than members, ECO needs to revisit its profile.

The above mentioned ongoing reform process and the newly launched process for developing the ECO Vision for the next ten years as well as the global efforts to agree on post-2015 development agenda are making conditions all but conducive for devising a new cooperation architecture for ECO. The year 2015 can be a turning point in the ECO history. The forthcoming events and developments in the ECO and in the United Nations, as referred to above, can provide for a blueprint for the envisaged ECO architecture for 2015 onward.

ECO Chronicle



CONTENTS

2-3 Contents

4-19 News in ECO

- ECO Ministers Adopted the Safranbolu Declaration on Climate Change
- ECO Secretariat Hosted the Regional Planning Council
- Heads of ECO Railways met in Tehran
- ECO Ministers of Health adopted Geneva Declaration on Health Cooperation
- ECO Senior Energy Experts met in Tehran
- Uzbek Ambassador paid Farewell Visit to Secretary General
- Secretary General Met with the

Representatives of Private Sector in Tehran

- FAO and ECO conducted Workshop on Implementation of Country Stat
- Kashan Hosted ECO Council of Permanent Representatives
- ECO Secretary General addressed the UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
- UNAMA Representative in Iran visited the ECO Secretariat
- And more...

20-31 External Relations

- Ambassador of Venezuela Visited the ECO Secretariat
- Italian Environment Delegation

Visited the ECO Secretariat

- ECO Secretariat attended the 1st Forum of Environment Ministers of Asia and the Pacific
- ECO Secretary General attended the 71st annual session of ESCAP
- ECO Secretariat attended the INOTEX Exhibition in Tehra
- And more...

32-41 Interviews

- Interview with ECO Secretary General
- Interview with Ambassador of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Tehran
- Interview with Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Tehran

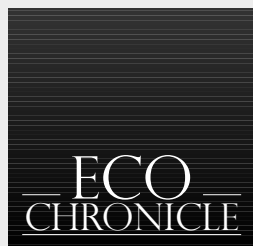


In The Name Of God

Front Cover



Meeting of H.E. Dr. Javad Zarif,
Chairman of the ECO Council
of Ministers with the outgoing
ECO Secretary General
H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov



Published by

Economic Cooperation Organization

Patron & Supervision

Shamil Aleskerov
ECO Secretary General

Address

No.1, Golbou Alley,
Kamranieh St., Tehran-Iran
P.O.Box \ 14155- 6176

Tehran(I.R. Iran)

Tel \ (+98-21) 22831733-4
22292066

Fax \ (+98-21) 22831732
<http://www.eco.int>

Graphic Design

Saadatmand
0939 321 0 716

42-53 Papers

- Food Security in the ECO Region
- Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction: Outcomes and Prospects for ECO Region

54-57 Publications

- ECO Statistical Report 2015
- ECO Annual Economic Report 2013
- Map of ECO Member Countries Transit Railways

58-59 Report

- International Conference on Allama Iqbal Lahori

Disclaimer:

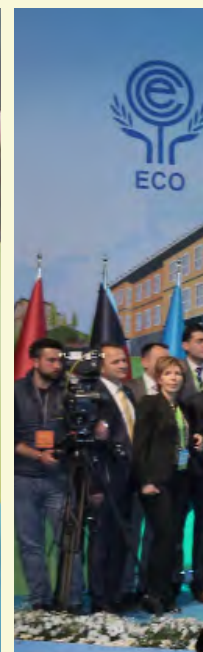
The views expressed and data contained in this publication provided by writers/ authors are not necessarily those held or agreed by the ECO Secretariat.

ECO Ministers Adopted the Safranbolu Declaration on Climate Change

ECO CHRONICLE The ECO Ministerial Conference on Climate Change was held on 27 March 2015 in Safranbolu, Turkey. It was preceded by the Experts Meeting on 25-26 March 2015. The Meeting was attended by high-level delegations from ECO Member States and observers as well as Balkan countries and international organizations. The ECO Secretariat delegation headed by ECO Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Seyed Jalaedin Alavi Sabzevari, also attended the Meeting.

As a 2nd consecutive high level ECO environment forum in 3 month organized by Turkey and the ECO Secretariat, the Conference indicated regional aspirations and resolve for bringing and integrating vital climate agenda into ECO's environmental umbrella. It also highlighted the need for meaningful and regular engagement by all regional and international stakeholders for identifying and formulating common regional approaches and policy options, as well as the imperative of a regional ambition before Paris Climate Conference.

In his opening Statement in the Ministerial Conference, the ECO Deputy Secretary General gave policy overview of ECO's environmental profile and the important decisions taken during the ECO Consultative Meeting on Environment held on 25 June 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya and the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment held on 17 December 2014 in Istanbul, as well as Secretariat's engagement with international and



regional organizations, including UNEP and United Nations Forum on Forest Secretariat (UNFF) for maximizing existing synergies and optimizing collective efforts to address environmental challenges of the Region, including climate change. He also underscored the importance of ECO Safranbolu Ministerial Conference as a catalyst and great opportunity for Member States to

make accelerated preparations for the forthcoming UNFCCC COP-21 Meeting in December 2015 in Paris.

The ECO Director for Energy, Minerals and Environment, Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, in his statement during the opening session of the Experts Meeting of the Conference on 25 March gave an update and all-inclusive state of ECO`s environmental dimension and climate change activities vigorously pursued by the ECO Secretariat. The ECO Director touched upon post-UNFCCC (COP 20) scenario in the context of regional aspirations and commonalities, common challenges ahead of Paris Conference, including, inter alia, identification of scope and ground rules of submission of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) and underscored the importance of establishing formal relations with Green Climate Fund (GCF) for all Parties, including ECO Member States.

bridge the gaps and ensure necessary complementarities, as well as enhanced arrangements within the frameworks of time-bound targets for climate resilient pathways.

The Conference mandated the ECO Secretariat to establish working relationship with UNFCCC and help Member States through stimulating regional technical dialogues for scope, submission and other pertinent details on INDCs before COP 21. The Conference also emphasized that the COP 21 agreement, a protocol, or an agreed outcome with legal force to be concluded at COP 21 should include the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, as well as, all elements such as mitigation; adaptation and loss and damage; provision of finance; technology development and transfer; capacity building and related matters like transparency of actions, timeframe and facilitating action in a balanced manner. The Member States also agreed to increase regional ambition pre-COP



In their statements, the ECO Ministers/Head of Delegations expressed their grave concern over burgeoning climate change affecting the ECO Region and noted that this phenomenon has led to extreme poverty, financial crisis, water scarcity, droughts, floods, changes in coastal and terrestrial ecosystems, forests degradation, sea level rise and health issues. They called for a greater synergy to

21 and adopted the Safranbolu Declaration on Climate Change.

On the sidelines of the Conference, official "ECO Plaque" was presented by the ECO Deputy Secretary General to H.E. Mr. Idris Güllüce, Minister of Environment and Urbanization of Republic of Turkey.



The Twenty-Fifth Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was held on 1-5 March 2015 at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran.

The Meeting was attended by the delegations from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Republic of Uzbekistan. The delegations from the Turkish Cypriot State and the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States also attended the Meeting as Observers. The presidents and representatives of ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated Bodies, namely ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Science Foundation, ECO Trade & Development Bank, ECO College of Insurance, ECO Regional Center for Risk Management for Natural Disasters (ECO-RCRM), ECO Research Centre and ECO Institute of Environment and Science Technology also participated in the Meeting. The Meeting was opened by introductory remarks by the ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov and inaugural statement by Dr. Mohammad Khazaei, Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of the Islamic Republic

ECO Secretariat Hosted the Regional Planning Council

of Iran. Secretary General in his report to the opening plenary session highlighted the main activities of the Organization during the year 2014. Referring to the current reform process, he requested the Member States to develop reform-supportive work programme for Organization.

The Iranian dignitary also in his inaugural statement expressed the hope that the Meeting will help in initiating result-oriented activities, compatible with the available resources and the priorities of Member States which would also increase the overall efficiency and performance of

the Organization.

The eight sectoral Committees of the RPC in their deliberations took stock of the work done in the previous year and developed draft work programmes and calendar of events for the different sectors, which were later adopted by the plenary session of the RPC meeting. In a separate meeting, ECO Secretary General and heads of delegation of the Member States exchanged views on the state of play of the ECO Vision 2015 and discussed the possible directions for the new ECO Vision 2016-2025.

Regional Planning Council (RPC) is the most important planning body within ECO which evolves annual programmes for realization of the objectives of the Organization.



Heads of ECO Railways met in Tehran



ECO CHRONICLE The 12th Meeting of Heads of ECO Railway

Authorities/6th Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC was held in Tehran on 17-18 May 2015. Delegates from all ECO Member States except Uzbekistan participated in the Meeting. The Meeting was also attended by representatives from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), ECO-TDB, UNESCAP, OTIF and UIC.

The Meeting was inaugurated by His Excellency Dr. Abbas Akhoundi, honourable Minister of Transport and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the inaugural session, the new "Map of the ECO Transit Railways" was unveiled by the honourable Minister of Iran and the Heads of the participating delegations. The Map was further approved by the Meeting.

During the 2 day Event, the Heads of



Delegation of the ECO Member States delivered comprehensive statements/ presentations on the latest developments and projects in their respective railway systems. The Meeting also considered a range of proposals focusing on reduction and unification of tariff rates, utilization of cargos, dates of dispatching of train and infrastructure development along the routes which were proposed by the Member States for smooth functioning of the trains along the ECO Railway Routes. The Meeting agreed on a range of decisions in this regard.

The Meeting also took note of the status of cooperation with international and regional organizations and recommended the ECO Secretariat to take necessary measures to organize the railway related events at the national and regional levels, in cooperation with these organizations and in line with the existing MoUs.

Utilizing the opportunity of the presence of two funding institutions in the Meeting (IDB and ECO-TDB), a brainstorming session was also held which discussed the ways and means of promoting the regional partnership for implementation of the "ECO Railway Network Development Plan".

Moreover and on the sidelines of the Meeting, an informal trilateral Meeting between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran (KTI) was held at the ECO Secretariat where officials from the three enroute countries discussed and agreed on a number of issues to be followed within the context of this Corridor.

ECO Ministers of Health adopted Geneva Declaration on Health Cooperation



Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, reviewed the state of play of health cooperation in the ECO Region and agreed on the outline for an ECO Plan of Action on Health Cooperation in post 2015.

The outline, drafted by the ECO High-level Experts Group Meeting, defines priorities for regional actions on health in line

with the emerging global health agenda.

Ministers also adopted the "Geneva Declaration on Better Health for ECO Region in post-2015".

Ministers decided to continue to convene their meetings on the sidelines of World Health Assembly in the future.



The 2nd ECO
Health

Ministerial Meeting was held on 19 May 2015 on the sidelines of 68th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

It was attended by honorable Ministers and high level officials from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan. Senior officials from World Health Organization (WHO) also participated in the Meeting. A delegation from the ECO Secretariat headed by Deputy Secretary General also attended the Meeting.

The Meeting, chaired by Dr. Ghazizadeh Hashemi, the honorable Minister of Health and



ECO Senior Energy Experts met in Tehran

 The 3rd High Level Experts Group (HLEG) Meeting on Energy, hosted by the Ministry of Petroleum of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was held in Tehran on 25-26 May 2015. The Meeting was attended by senior experts from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran (host), Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan, as well as, representatives from ECO-

TDB and ECO-CCI. The ECO Secretariat delegation, led by Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, ECO Deputy Secretary General also attended the Meeting.

The Meeting proceedings focused on evaluation of the progress done in key action areas of ECO Plan of Action for Energy/Petroleum Cooperation (2011-2015) and its projected extension/revision, ways and means to increase the role of




national stakeholder groups in advancing regional energy agenda, and the important topics of renewable energy and environmental footprints of energy-related activities in the context of Rio+20 goals and sustainable development agenda. Delegates also deliberated on emerging priorities of the Organization for years to come, inter alia, establishment of ECO regional power market, gas-to-power generation and transmission, preparation of energy master plan for the ECO Region, promotion and facilitation of B2B energy cooperation, and deployment of environmentally sound energy technologies.

The Meeting adopted its Report with reflection of key priorities and objectives for ECO's energy domain to be endorsed during the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Energy to be held in Ankara in November 2015.

ECOTA Cooperation Council convened in Ankara



 The 6th Meeting of "ECOTA Cooperation Council", the body responsible for implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), and "Workshop on Implementation of ECOTA" were organized by Republic of Turkey on June 15-16, 2015 in Ankara. The two events were attended by the delegates from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Turkey, as well as representatives from the ECO Secretariat. Mr. Hasan Yalcin, Deputy Director General of Agreements, Ministry of Economy of Republic of Turkey, chaired both the Cooperation Council and the Workshop.

The 6th "ECOTA Cooperation Council" reviewed the progress on the implementation of the decisions of its 5th meeting held in Islamabad in April 2014. The Meeting also deliberated at length on the completion of legal and procedural requirements for implementation of ECOTA and related matters. However, no agreement could be reached on the dates for the start of tariff reduction under ECOTA. At the end of the Meeting, the Council adopted its Report.

During the Workshop on ECOTA implementation, presentations were made on Regional Trade Agreements, ECOTA Implementation, Rules of Origin and Republic of Turkey's Free Trade Agreements. The presentations were made by officials from Republic of Turkey and ECO Secretariat. Each presentation was followed by a question-answer session. The participants were of the view that such workshops can make immense contribution to ECOTA implementation.

Secretary General addressed the ECO Bank.



 ECO Secretary General Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov attended and addressed the high profile executive business luncheon organized by the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ETDB) in Istanbul on 2 June 2015.

The Event was held on the occasion of the 2015 Annual Board of Governors Meeting of ETDB. Along with the ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hossein Ghazavi, President of the ETDB, and Mr. Cavit Dagdas, the Turkish Governor of the ETDB, made their statements in the business gathering.

Uzbek Ambassador paid Farewell Visit to Secretary General



Ambassador of Republic
of Uzbekistan to ECO, H.E.

Dr. Ilkhom Akramov, whose stint as Uzbek Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran has come to an end, paid a farewell visit to ECO Secretary General H.E. Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov on 13 April 2015.

The Secretary General appreciated the cooperation extended to the Organization by Ambassador Akramov, who holds accreditation to the ECO since 1999, and wished him success in his future work in the diplomatic service. They also discussed issues of



interest to the ECO and Uzbekistan.

The outgoing Ambassador of Uzbekistan also attended the 201st meeting of the "ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)", held in the Secretariat premises, where Ambassadors of the ECO Member States extended their best wishes to him.

Among the attendees of the luncheon, along with the ETDB governors and representatives of the ECO Member States, there were the executives of banking sector from the Member States as well as from some international organizations and financial institutions (D8, BSEC BC, IMF, EIB, etc).

It provided an opportunity to present the ETDB with its expanded Membership to the business community as well as the opportunities and needs for financing, the challenges which have a bearing on the economic development of the ECO Region.

They were also informed about ECO and its activities in different sectors of economy.

On the sidelines of the Event, ECO Secretary General had an informal trilateral meeting with the Secretaries General of BSEC and GUAM, Ambassadors V. Tsvirkun and V. Chechelashvili where they exchanged the information on the activities and developments related to their organizations and discussed the issues of regional cooperation, prospects and possibilities of implementation of common projects, as well as necessity of closer coordination of regional organizations' activities.



Secretary General Met with the Representatives of Private Sector in Tehran

ECO CHRONICLE ECO Secretary General H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov received a delegation representing TASIM (Trans-Eurasia Information Super Highway) of Republic of Azerbaijan as well as Representatives from a Financial Engineering Company of Iran on 10th of June 2015.

In the meetings, the possibility of involvement of private sector companies in the ECO projects and programmes was widely discussed between Secretary General and private sector representatives. It was agreed that the Organization could benefit from the private sector in ECO Region especially in the field of financial engineering services. The private sector representatives also held meetings with the other concerned officials of the Secretariat.

The idea of having these bilateral talks emerged when H.E. Secretary General Dr. Shamil Aleskerov participated in the "International Innovation and Technology Exhibition" on 9th of June 2015 in Tehran where two sides had brief talks and decided to have meetings in the ECO Secretariat to examine the possibility of further involvement of private sector in the ECO projects.

ECO Steering Committee on Entrepreneurship

ECO CHRONICLE The Fourth ECO Steering Committee Meeting on Entrepreneurship and SMEs Development was hosted by the Small Industries & Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) of the Islamic Republic of Iran on May 24-25, 2015 in Tehran.

Delegations from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Turkey and ECO Secretariat participated in the Meeting.

The Meeting reviewed progress made in the implementation of the decisions of previous meetings and agreed on new activities for further development of SMEs and entrepreneurship in the



Region.

Organization of various workshops and exhibitions, collection and exchange of data, exchange of experts and focal points networking were among the decisions of the Meeting.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan offered its readiness to host the next meeting of the Steering Committee in Pakistan.

The Meeting concluded its work by a field visit to Charmshahr Industrial Estate, an Iranian leather and footwear production complex.



ECO Police officials made progress towards ECOPOL

The 2nd Experts Group meeting for Finalizing necessary formalities/ documents for establishment of ECOPOL was held on 28-29 July 2015 at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran.

The Meeting was attended by delegates of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as well as the officials of ECO Secretariat.

The Meeting was aimed to accelerate the process of establishment of the ECOPOL (Economic Cooperation Organization Police), a decision made by the ECO Ministers of

Interior.

In a two day meeting, the police officers and experts from the Member States and the relevant officials from the Secretariat managed to finalize most part of the draft Statute of the ECOPOL.

They also agreed on the need for an interim coordination unit to facilitate the establishment of ECOPOL.

The envisaged Unit will be in charge of organizing training and capacity building programmes for the police officers and officials from the ECO Member States.



FAO and ECO conducted Workshop on Implementation of CountryStat



The regional Workshop on "Stocktaking and Lesson Learnt

from the Implementation of CountryStat in ECO Countries" was organized by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in joint collaboration with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) on 25-26 June 2015 in Rome.

The main objective of the workshop was to present the achievements of the first phase of CountrySTAT Project in Afghanistan and to highlight the importance of sustainability of implementation of CountrySTAT in the ECO Region through possi-



ble implementation options. The workshop was attended by delegations from Republic of Azerbaijan, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

Representatives from the ECO Secretariat and other international organizations and interested donors also participated in the workshop.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Laurent Thomas, Assistant Director General of the FAO, emphasized on the access to statistical and real-time data management as a key to understand regional dynamics and evaluate their actual and potential impacts on local economies and peoples' welfare. Referring to the FAO and ECO joint cooperation for establishment of CountrySTAT system in Afghanistan, he pointed out that it is a starting point for moving forward with this ambitious objective and expressed the readiness of the FAO to provide all necessary technical and institutional support to the ECO Member States to improve information quality and monitoring system in agriculture and food security.





Mr. Pietro Gennari, Director of the FAO Statistics Division, in his welcoming statement underlined the success of the CountrySTAT activities in Afghanistan and positive feedbacks from the ECO Member States in the previous workshops which is encouraging for continuation of this programme in the ECO Region. He briefly reviewed the joint collaboration of the FAO with other regional and international partners and donors for successful implementation of CountrySTAT in other countries and expressed hope that with interest of all partners, improvement of data sharing network and open access to agriculture and food security data in the ECO Region would be achieved.

The ECO Secretariat was represented in the Workshop by Mr. Amini, Programme Officer of "Directorate for Projects, Economic Research and Statistics" who appreciated the continuous support of the FAO to the development of agriculture and food security activities in the ECO Region, including the improvement of the knowledge of CountrySTAT. He highlighted the outcomes of implementation of CountrySTAT project in Afghanistan which was achieved despite all the problems and difficulties facing the Country. He stressed on the need for sustainability of CountrySTAT Programme in the region through active participation of the project partners.

The Workshop was briefed about the latest status of implementation of CountrySTAT Project in Afghanistan and on the achievements of the first phase of the project that was presented jointly by Mr. Azizullah Faqiri and Mr. Inayatullah Ghairat, members of National CountrySTAT Team of Afghanistan, who participated through videoconference in the Workshop. While explaining the problems and impediments for implementation of the Project in the Country, they recognized the Project and its outcomes as structural programme for development of agriculture and food security statistics in Afghanistan.

The Workshop continued its work with presenta-

tion on the framework, contents and outcomes of the new CountrySTAT Programme by the FAO CountrySTAT Team with participation of the participating delegates in the discussions on the aspects of the Programme. The Workshop welcomed the proposed Action Plan on the Implementation of CountrySTAT Programme in the ECO Region presented by the FAO Statistics Division. According to the proposed Plan, the CountrySTAT Programme will be implemented in two phases in the ECO Region, where in the first phase three countries of the region, including Afghanistan, will participate in the implementation of the Project.

The Workshop was concluded with a list of recommendations on the future activities for development of CountrySTAT Programme in the ECO Region that was supported by participating delegations from the ECO Member States.

Two regional training workshops on the implementation of CountrySTAT for ECO Member States had been conducted jointly by the FAO and ECO. The first regional training workshop was organized in joint collaboration with SESRIC within 21-25 October 2013 in Ankara and the second regional training was hosted by the ECO Secretariat within 10-13 November 2014 in Tehran.



The 6th Meeting of Board of Trustees (BoT) of the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) was held in Khojand, Tajikistan on 22 March 2015 preceded by the 5th High Level Experts Group (HLEG) Meeting on 21 March 2015. The Meeting was organized by the Ministry of Culture of Republic of Tajikistan in collaboration with the ECI. The Meeting was attended by the delegations of the four ECI Member States i.e. Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan and was chaired by H.E. Mr. Shamsiddin Orumbekzoda, Minister of Culture of Republic of Tajikistan. The ECI was represented by Professor Iftikahr Arif, President of the Institute and Ambassador Mohammad Reza Haji Karim Jabbari, ECI's Executive Director. The ECO Secretary General was represented by Assistant Director in-charge of International Relations of the ECO Secretariat.

Khojand hosted the 6th Meeting of ECI Board of Trustee

The 6th Meeting of the Board of Trustees considered the comprehensive report of the ECI President on the activities and programmes of the Institute and reviewed and approved its strategies, policies and programmes for the period

2015-16. The Meeting also deliberated upon the financial and budgetary matters of the Institute and approved the budgets for the years 2014 and 2015.

The representative of the ECO Secretariat in his remarks stressed on the significance of promoting cooperation among the ECO member states in the fields of culture, literature and arts. Referring to the ongoing reform process of the ECO, he emphasized upon the need to enhance and expand the role of the ECO Specialized Agencies in supporting the broader objectives of the Organization.

Towards the end of the Meeting, the participating delegations appreciated the Ministry of Culture of Tajikistan and the ECI for organizing the Meeting in an efficient manner. The delegations also expressed their gratitude to the host authorities for their excellent arrangements and warm hospitality.

Turkish Cypriot State Hosted Workshop on Tourism



The Workshop on Tourism was co-organized by Republic of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot State (ECO Observer) from 28 to 30 April 2015 in Girne (Kyrenia), Turkish Cypriot State. The Workshop was attended by the delegates from the Islamic Republic


of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Turkey.

The 3-day Workshop was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Serdar Denta?, Deputy Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Özdil Nami, Foreign Minister of the Turkish Cypriot State, H.E. Ambassador Halil Ibrahim Akca in Lefkose and Mr. Maraslioglu Deputy Secretary General of the ECO in City of Girne (Kyrenia), Turkish Cypriot State.

During the Workshop different topics including the potential of cooperation for sustainable tourism development in the Region; tourism potential in Turkish Cypriot State; the new trends in tourism; protection of tourism assets; tourism planning and preparation of tourism master planning for ECO Region; joint tourism and marketing strategies; and potential for travel industry were presented and discussed. The ECO Secretariat also delivered a presentation on sustainable tourism development in the Region.

A 1- day sightseeing tour to the cities of Girne, Lefkosa, Gazimagusa and Bafra Tourism Zone was also arranged by the host authorities. The participants also visited the Eastern Mediterranean University in Gazimagusa and were informed of the activities of this University.

ECO Workshop on Seismic Hazard Reduction

 The 1st Workshop on ECO Seismic Hazard Reduction Programme (ECO-SHARP), was hosted by the Geological Survey of Iran (GSI) on 10-11 May 2015 in Tehran. The representatives from Azerbaijan, Iran (host), Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Turkey, as well as, ECO Secretariat delegation participated in the Workshop.

During the Workshop participants deliberated extensively on the ways and means to enhance synergy among the ECO Member States needed for harmonized mechanisms for seismic hazard reduction in the Region. Issues such as formulation of regional database and maps on seismic hazard, inter alia, regional probabilistic seismic hazard analysis by GIS-Ready layer/map based data, a GIS-based database for the active faults across the Region, compilation of data on historical and instrumental seismicity, earthquake parameters, seismic sources (active faults), analysis and presentation of accurate data through Remote Sensing and GIS techniques were also addressed in the Workshop.

Participants also attended in a technical site visit arranged by the host organization to the active fault lines in Kan Valley and Chitgar Park on the outskirts of Tehran. At the end of the Workshop, all participants were awarded with Certificates of Participation.



ECO Member States discussed Cooperation on Handicrafts



 ECO Member States discussed Cooperation on Handicrafts

At the invitation of the Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHTO), a meeting was held at Tehran Niyavaran Cultural Complex on 3rd August 2015 to discuss regional cooperation in the field of handicrafts. Representatives from the Embassies of ECO Member States in Tehran, ECO Secretariat and ECO Cultural Institute participated in the Meeting. The Meeting reviewed the activities by the ECO for promotion and development of handicrafts industry in the Region particularly through organizing exhibitions. Dr. Soltanifar, the Head of Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) highlighted the important role of handicrafts in creating jobs and low cost employment and invited the Member States to pay due attention to this Sector through devising practical measures. He also invited the Member States to participate in a meeting of high ranking officials of the ECO Member States in Tehran to discuss regional cooperation on handicrafts. The President of the ECO Cultural Institute, Mr. Iftekhar Hussain Arif, and the ECO Deputy Secretary General, Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, also delivered statements. The ECO Deputy Secretary General presented a brief history of ECO activities and elaborated on the potential contributions of handicrafts industry into the local, national, regional and international development, particularly in poverty reduction, women empowerment and job creation. He also expressed readiness of the ECO Secretariat for promoting cooperation among the Member States. Ambassadors and representatives of some Member States also shared their views on how to preserve common cultural heritage of the ECO Region, particularly handicrafts, and ways and means to cooperate in the industry within the Region. The participants also visited an exhibition of Iranian handicrafts at the end of the Meeting.

Kashan Hosted ECO Council of Permanent Representatives

ECO CHRONICLE Upon the invitation of the Mayor of the City of Kashan, the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) convened its 202nd Meeting on 11 May, 2015 in Kashan, Isfahan Province, Iran.

Ambassadors/Permanent Representatives and Representatives of the ECO Member States except Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan attended the Meeting. The ECO Secretary General H.E. Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov also headed the delegation of the ECO Secretariat.

In the opening ceremony organized in the famous

"Fin Garden", Kashan Mayor Mr. Seyed Mohammad Nazem Razavi welcomed the distinguished Ambassadors/Permanent Representatives and Representatives of the ECO Member States as well as the ECO Secretary General to Kashan and thanked them for convening their 202nd CPR Meeting in this cultural and historic

city of Iran (Kashan). He also presented a list of areas where Kashan city is interested to cooperate with ECO and its Member States. ECO Secretary General and President of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) also made statements in the opening ceremony.





ECO-UNFF Consultations in Tehran



ECO CHRONICLE A delegation from Secretariat of United Nations Forum on Forest (UNFF) visited the ECO Secretariat on 8-9 March 2015 and discussed with ECO officials ways and means to follow up the key recommendations of the "ECO-UN Tehran Workshop on Harnessing Climate Change Financing for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in the ECO Region" (April 2014) and reviewed the envisaged regional strategy for mobilizing climate financing for SFM in the ECO region. The two sides also exchanged views on the three project proposals prepared by UNFF consultant team encompassing outcomes of Tehran Workshop and inputs from national focal points of the ECO Member States. Representatives of the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST) and "Tehran Process Secretariat for Low Forest Cover Countries" (TPS LFCC) were also presented during the discussions. During the meeting, the UNFF consultant, Mr. Victor Novikov from "ZOI environment" a Geneva based consultancy firm, presented detailed presentations on ECO Region's prospects in forest-related climate change financing, including newly-established Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund and various GEF mechanisms. Special emphasis was given to the consolidated role of ECO as a suitable regional platform for mobilizing relevant stakeholders and policy makers across the region to formulate and submit forest-related projects to appropriate multilateral financing mechanisms. consultations on areas of mutual interest, including on enhanced communication strategy and capacity building, seeking sources of financing through existing and emerging climate funds, joint work on providing ECO Member States with special tools for preparing and submitting congruent and compatible Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) before 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21) in Paris 2015.

UNFF was established in October 2000 by Resolution 2000/35 of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC) and is a global intergovernmental policy forum with the main objective to promote "...the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end..." based on the Rio Declaration, the Forest Principles, the outcome of the IPF/IFF Processes and other key milestones of international forest policy.

ECO is granted Observer Status in United Nations Environment Assembly

ECO CHRONICLE Following a successful ECO ministerial meeting on the sidelines of the first meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in June 2014 in Nairobi which, among others, resulted in wider interactions and cooperation between UNEP and ECO, the UNEP Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner, in a letter addressed the ECO Secretary General, extended a standing invitation to ECO to participate as Observer in the sessions and work of the UNEA and its subsidiary organs.

The ECO-UNEP relations were given a strong boost in the aftermath of the Nairobi meeting. A high-level special envoy of UNEP Executive Director visited the ECO Secretariat on 19 January 2015 and discussed with ECO officials the state of affairs of cooperation between two organizations where both sides agreed on the frameworks to enhance cooperation and interactions.

Environment is now a cross sectoral priority of ECO following the decision by the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment held in December 2014 in Istanbul. The same ministerial meeting also gave mandate ECO Secretariat to expand its relations with UNEP, including through observer status.

ECO Secretary General addressed the UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction



The ECO
Secretary

General Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov addressed the high level participants of the third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (14-18 March 2015) in Sendai, Japan. In a statement delivered on 16 March 2015, the ECO Secretary General briefed the high level audience on the ECO activities, including in the area of disaster reduction and outlined ECO prospects in post-Sendai era.

ECO Secretary General also attended "ECO Ministerial Lunch" on the sidelines of the UN Conference where ministers/high level officials from the ECO Member States and the Secretary General explored enhanced regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction in post- Sendai

era. H.E. Mr. Ragim Latifov, Deputy Minister of Emergency Situations from Republic of Azerbaijan; H.E. Mr. Kubatbek Boronov, Minister of Emergency Situations and H.E. Mrs. Elvira Saieva, Minister of Education and Science from Kyrgyz Republic; H. E. Mr. Syed Tariq FATEMI, Special Assistant to Prime Minister from Pakistan; and H. E. Numan Kurtulmus, Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey (host) participated in the ECO Lunch.

ECO Secretary General also attended the Asian Ministerial Roundtable on 16 March 2015 where ministers from India, Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, Kazakhstan, China and officials from Asian regional organizations including ECO, SAARC and ASEAN exchanged views on the Asian approach to disaster risk reduction in the Post Sendai era. In his intervention in the Meeting, the ECO Secretary General highlighted the importance of cooperation between Asian sub-regions in the course of implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia.

ECO and Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) also reviewed possible cooperation on the sidelines of Sendai Conference. In a meeting with


ADRC President Mr. Hamada, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov shared his views on the ways and means to establish cooperation between two organizations whose membership are overlapping (7 ECO Member States are members of ADRC).

On 17 March 2015, ECO Secretary General also had a very fruitful meeting with Ms. Margareta Wahlström, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. Both sides discussed about enhanced UNISDR and ECO cooperation for the period to come, particularly in implementation of the Sendai outcomes.

Several thousand representatives of the countries from all regions of the world, including Heads of State and senior representatives from governments, the UN, regional and international organizations, private sectors and NGOs have attended the Conference where implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015) was reviewed and the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030" and the "Sendai Declaration" were approved.

Iran hosted joint Training Workshop with **UN and ECO** on National Accounts



 The regional training workshop on "Compilation of Quarterly National Accounts for ECO Member Countries" was conducted jointly by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), Statistical Centre of Iran (SCI) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) from 8 to 11 March 2015 in Tehran. The Statistical Centre of Iran hosted the training workshop in its Statistical Research and Training Centre.

The training workshop was organized in the framework of ECO-UNSD joint cooperation for implementation of statistical capacity building programme for ECO National Statistical Offices. This joint cooperation has so far resulted in co-organizing a number of regional training workshops on developing the System of National Accounts (SNA) for ECO member countries in 2007, 2012, 2013 and 2015.

The main objective of this training workshop was to provide basic knowledge about compilation of Quarterly National Accounts (QNA)

in line with internationally-accepted data template and metadata on short-term statistics for use in macroeconomic surveillance and early warning of economic and financial vulnerabilities. The QNA provide timely, coherent, accurate, comprehensive and reasonably detailed data to serve as a framework for assessing, analyzing and monitoring current economic development. It uses same standard classification as in Annual National Accounts, in a higher level of aggregation and timelier than provided by ANA, that focuses on growth rates and their temporal characteristics such as acceleration and deceleration.

In the opening session of the Workshop, ECO Deputy Secretary General welcomed the participants and appreciated the Statistical Centre of Iran and UNSD for their contributions to organizing this regional training. He highlighted the importance of technical trainings on development of the Systems of National Accounts in the Region. In the opening message of the Head of the SCI, he stressed on importance of availability of timely key high-frequency data in detecting sources of vulnerability and implementing corrective actions in time and highlighted the compilation of Quarterly National Accounts which provide a picture of current economic development in more comprehensive manner than provided by individual short-term indicators.

The training materials were presented by three resource persons from the UNSD, Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) and the Statistical Centre of Iran. Also a number of sessions were allocated to country presentations by participating countries, where the situation of compiling Quarterly National Accounts along with scope and coverage of QNA, data sources for compiling QNA, benchmarking techniques in use, seasonal adjustment methods used, if any, price and volume measures, revision policy and dissemination practices in their respective countries were presented to the participants. The training workshop was attended by participants from Republic of Azerbaijan, Iran (host country), Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkey. The training workshop was concluded with awarding the Certificates of Completion to participants.



The FAO and OIE International Conference for the Control and Eradication of Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), was held from 31 March to 2 April 2015 in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. The Conference was organized and hosted by Government of Côte d'Ivoire, FAO and World Organization of Animal Health (OIE), and attended by more than 300 experts from about 70 countries as well as representatives from regional and international organizations, namely, AU-IBAR, IGAD, COMESA, WAEMU, ECOWAS, SADC, UMA, CEN-SAD, ASEAN, SAARC, EU, ECO, etc. The ECO Secretariat was represented in the Conference by Mr. Gokten Damar,

ECO Secretariat participated in the FAO/OIE Conference

Director of Agriculture, Industry and Tourism.

The Conference concentrated

on reviewing global PPR situation and the key elements for implementing a control and eradication strategy on PPR. Representatives of participating regional and international organizations made their presentations on the subject. The Closing session was presided over by Mr. Daniel Kablan Duncan, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and attended by Mr. Jose Graziano da Silva, the Director-General of FAO and Dr. Bernard Vallat, the

Director-General of the OIE, where a three-pillar strategy against PPR (eradication of PPR, overall strengthening of veterinary services and control of other small ruminants diseases) was approved and launched.



ECO Participated in the UNCTAD's Meeting on Entrepreneurship



The "Multi-year Expert Meeting on Investment, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship for productive Capacity-building and Sustainable Development" was organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on 30-31 March 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Meeting was attended by representatives from several national, regional and international organizations responsible for the above mentioned subject matter. The ECO Secretariat was represented by Deputy Secretary General Mr. Hayri Maraslioglu.

The Meeting concentrated on entrepreneurship and its constructive role in driving economic growth, enhancing productive capacity, creating employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in developing countries and economies in transition, with special focus on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Meeting was organized in four panel discussions, addressing: (i) lessons learned for formulating a national entrepreneurship strategy, (ii) upgrading entrepreneurial skills to promote inclusive and sustainable value chains, (iii) enhancing the entrepreneurship eco-sys-

tem for youth, and (iv) best practices in key areas for inclusive growth.

UNCTAD is the principal organ within the United Nations dealing with trade, investment, and development issues. The Organization's goals are to "maximize the trade, investment and development opportunities of developing countries and assist them in their efforts to integrate into the world economy on an equitable basis." In 1999, ECO signed an MoU with UNCTAD and agreed to cooperate on different development related activities.

UNAMA Representative in Iran visited the ECO Secretariat



The Head of the Liaison Office of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in Iran Ms. Joanna Nathan visited the ECO Secretariat on April 6, 2015 in Tehran and was received by the ECO Secretary General Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov. At the outset, Ms. Joanna Nathan thanked the Secretary General for the opportunity to become familiar with the ECO and informed him about her experiences, including in Afghanistan.

Secretary General congratulated the UNAMA Representative for her appointment as the head of the Liaison Office in Iran and briefed her about the structure and the current activities of ECO. Secretary General also elaborated on the current programmes and activities of ECO for Afghanistan. He referred to some already completed projects as well as ongoing projects such as a maternity hospital in Faryab province, construction of a school in Bamyan province, construction of public park and rehabilitation of Kabul Zoo and construction of a training center affiliated to the Ministry of Rural Development, all financed by the ECO Member States through "ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan".

Secretary General also informed the UN Representative about some other specific ECO projects directly targeting Afghanistan, such as the EU funded project on fight against trafficking from/to Afghanistan. He underlined that almost all ECO activities and projects contribute to the national, regional



and global attempts to address developmental challenges in Afghanistan. He specifically referred to ECO policies and activities in areas such as transport and transit; trade promotion and facilitation; renewable energy; environment; disaster reduction; and drugs and organized crime.

Ms. Joanna Nathan also briefed ECO Secretary General about UYNAMA activities in Afghanistan and the way ahead. Referring to the UN decision to review its all operations in Afghanistan, she elaborated on the new atmosphere created in Afghanistan following the 2014 presidential election which will have bearing on future UN programmes in Afghanistan.

ECO Secretary General in return referred to the recent decision by the ECO to organize a review meeting and develop new policy approach towards Afghanistan which will take place in the first half of 2015 in the ECO Secretariat. Referring also to the recently expanded cooperation between ECO and UN bodies such as FAO, UNIDO, UNEP, UNODC, UNFF, UNFCC and UNISDR, Secretary General expressed readiness to engage in Afghanistan-friendly partnerships with UN relevant bodies, including UNAMA to help economic development in Afghanistan. Both sides agreed to continue contacts with a view to elaborating further any possible cooperation arrangement.



The "Training Seminar for the benefit of the countries of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)", organized by Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and Permanent Committee of Social and Economic Cooperation (COMSEC) was held on 7-9 April 2015 in Istanbul, Turkey. The Seminar was attended by 8 ECO Member States, namely, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as well as the representatives of IDB, ICDT, COMSEC, and the ECO. The ECO Secretariat was represented by Mr. Hayri Maraslioglu, Deputy Secretary General.

The Seminar was an extension of the training and awareness raising activities of ICDT on the OIC Trade Preferential System (TPS) for the member countries and was aiming at the familiarization of the ECO Member States with the said Preferential System. ECO Member

OIC Organized Seminar for the ECO Member States in Istanbul

States are also members of OIC and 3 of them, namely, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey have already signed and ratified the TPS/OIC and the Protocol on the Trade Preferential Tariff Scheme for TPS/OIC (PRE-TAS). Like the Economic

Cooperation Organization Trade Agreement (ECOTA), TPS of OIC is considered as a major tool to liberalize the trade regimes of its member states.

During the Seminar, various aspects of TPS/OIC Framework Agreement, the Protocol on the Preferential Tariff Scheme for TPS/OIC and the Rules of Origin were presented by the representatives of the said organizations and discussed with the participants. In his opening statement, Mr. Hayri Maraslioglu, the ECO Deputy Secretary General outlined the ECO trade strategy. He also made a presentation in the first session of the Seminar, focusing on the current status of ECO trade and various aspects of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA).

IDB and ICDT representatives expressed their willingness to work closer with the ECO Secretariat in various areas especially in trade. ICDT recently has devoted a special chapter in its periodical TIJARIS (Issue nr. 139, January February 2015) to the ECO and its activities.

ECO Secretariat attended the 2nd South Caspian Petroleum & Energy Summit



The "2nd South Caspian Petroleum & Energy Summit" was held in Vienna, Austria on 14-16 April 2015. The meeting brought together major oil & gas companies, policy makers, energy industrialists, executives, and various stakeholders from the ECO Region and beyond to fast track imperative topics of energy security and sustainability, role of the Caspian region, in particular Iran, in global energy outlook, environmental footprints and numerous cross-cutting issues of regional and global agenda importance. The ECO Secretariat was repre-

sented in the discussions by Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, Director of Energy, Minerals and Environment.

The proceedings of the Summit proved to be useful stock-taking exercise with a view to elaborating potential energy scenarios and options, inter alia, possibilities of oil and gas exports from South Caspian region in the context of European energy security, transit facilitation measures for energy, possibilities for establishment of Caspian Energy Grid as well as various options encompassing energy arbitration mechanisms.

Policy statement delivered by ECO Director focused on pertinent matters for the enhancement of synergy and coherence among key energy stakeholders in the ECO Region in the context of global energy outlook, inter alia, measures to be taken to advance an energy master plan for the Region, evaluation of current bilateral projects from regional perspective, establishment of ECO Power Market, deployment of environmentally sound energy technologies, and promotion & facilitation of B2B energy cooperation.

Ambassador of Venezuela Visited the ECO Secretariat

ECO CHRONICLE A delegation from the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Tehran headed by H.E. Ambassador Amenotheop Zambrano visited the ECO Secretariat in Tehran on April 12, 2015 and was received by the ECO Secretary General Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov.

At the outset, Ambassador Zambrano thanked the ECO Secretary General for receiving the delegation and shared his opinion about the importance of the ECO as a regional organization. Ambassador informed the Secretary General about the recent visits of Venezuelan government officials to the ECO Member States with a view to enhancing the bilateral relations between Venezuela and ECO Member States.

He also pointed out that Venezuela is a member of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and is keen to have stronger economic ties with the ECO Member states.

Ambassador further stated that Venezuela both as an individual country and also as a Member of a regional economic initiative, namely, ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America), is eager to establish relations with the ECO.

He also added that Embassy of Venezuela in Tehran follows closely the major activities and decisions by the ECO, including its programme

of work, with a view to identifying possible areas of cooperation between ECO and ALBA.

Secretary General Aleskerov in return thanked the Ambassador for his visit and congratulated him on his appointment as the Ambassador of Venezuela to the ECO Region.

He also thanked him for his genuine interest in the ECO affairs and ECO Region. Secretary General informed the delegation about the interest from ECO side to engage into partnerships with different regional groupings. He expressed his belief that although inter-regional cooperation in areas such as transport are geographically uncertain, there are other areas like finance, investment, energy, trade and tourism where cooperation may be explored. He also added that the exchange of knowledge and information between the two organizations would be very beneficial, including through exchanging observership status.

At the end of the meeting it was decided that two sides would stay in touch with each other and the Embassy would convey to the ECO Secretariat its proposed areas of cooperation.

It was also agreed that there could be further contacts between the Embassy and the relevant technical directorates of the ECO Secretariat.

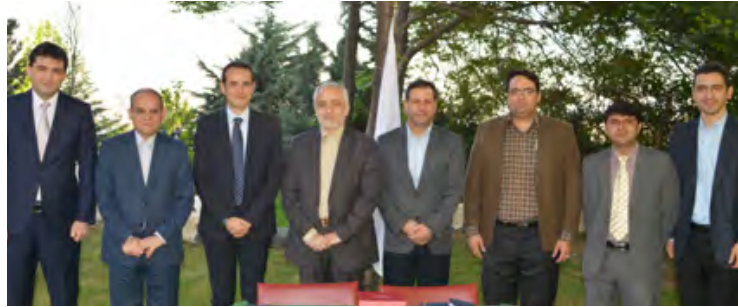


Italian Environment Delegation Visited the ECO Secretariat



Director General of the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research, ISPRA, Mr. Stefano Laporta, visited the ECO Secretariat on 27 April 2015 to explore ways and means for initiating potential partnership frameworks.

During discussions with ECO Deputy Secretary General Mr. Seyed Jaleddin Alavi Sabzevari and his colleagues, as well as with the delegation of the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO IEST) led by its President, Dr. Asghar Mohammadi Fazel, the two sides exchanged views to establish synergic and coherent dialogue in on environ-



ment, including in the areas of climate change, management of high-carbon terrestrial and coastal ecosystems, air pollution, biodiversity conservation, disaster management, water pollution, research and capacity building.

The ECO officials outlined ECO's robust activities in numerous sectors and underscored the importance of environment as a cross-sectoral priority of the Organization and its active engagements with regional and international actors, inter alia, UNEP, UNFF, UNFCCC and IPCC for bringing and integrating vital climate agenda into ECO's environmental umbrella and showcasing need for meaningful and all-inclusive engagement by all stakeholders for identifying and formulating common regional approaches and policy options, as well as

enhancement of regional ambition prior to COP21 Climate Conference in Paris.

Mr. Stefano Laporta, while providing an overview of Institute's broad environmental portfolio, stressed that mutual collaboration could be reinforced through regular interactions and exploring areas of common interest.

In an official ceremony at the end of the meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between ECO-IEST and ISPRA for bilateral cooperation, including on capacity building; exchange visits of scientists and specialists; exchange of scientific and technical information; joint research programmes; and organization of training and joint conferences and seminars.


ECO Secretary General attended Annual Meeting of Asian Development Bank



ECO Secretary General Dr. Shamil Aleskerov attended the 48th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank held on 4-5 May 2015 in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan. Along with the ECO Secretary General, Dr. Hossein Ghazavi, President of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB) also participated at the Meeting. Around 3000 participants representing ADB Member States, international and regional organizations, banks and financial institutions, private sector, NGOs, etc. attended this ADB annual meeting. During the Meeting, held under the title "Fostering Partnership for Development", a wide array of the development issues faced by the countries of Asia and the Pacific as well as the role of the ADB in this regard were discussed in the plenary sessions and a big number of seminars.

In his intervention made at the "Seminar on Central Asia, Southern Caucasus and the Future of Regional Cooperation and Integration", the ECO Secretary General described the ECO activities, particularly in development of transport connectivity in the ECO Region, and called for cooperation between ECO, ECO-TDB and ADB with a view to raising required financing for the implementation of the ECO projects.

Delegation of German Ministry for Environment visited the ECO Secretariat

 A delegation from German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, led by Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst, Director of "Cooperation with Eastern European Countries, Central Asia and South Caucasus, the Middle East and North Africa" visited the ECO Secretariat, Tehran, on May 6, 2015.


At the beginning of the visit, Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, Director for Energy, Minerals and Environment of the ECO Secretariat briefed the German delegation about ECO's recent interactions with regional and international actors, including UNEP, UNFF, UNFCCC, GIZ, GEF and IPCC for bringing and integrating vital climate agenda into ECO's environmental umbrella and showcasing need for meaningful and all-inclusive engagement by all stakeholders in identifying and formulating common regional approaches and policy options, as well as, intensifying regional ambition prior to COP21 Climate Conference in Paris this year.

Mr. Jürgen Keinhorst, while recalling his meeting with the Secretary General Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov in Tehran on 9 October 2014, reiterated his resolve that the both sides shortly embark on some joint projects and requested the Secretariat to follow-up and facilitate the issue of placement of an integrated expert from GIZ in the ECO Secretariat.

The two sides exchanged views on ways and means of further enhancement of synergic and coherent dialogue, inter alia, possible designation of integrated expert from GIZ in the ECO Secretariat, pre-COP 21 agenda, especially adaptation component, sustainable forest management in the ECO Region, high-carbon ecosystem management, biodiversity conservation and capacity building.



ECO and JICA reviewed possible Cooperation

 A delegation from JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) visited the ECO Secretariat on 22 July 2015. The Japanese delegation, headed by Mr. Kohei Sato, the Chief Representative of JICA in Tehran was briefed by ECO Deputy Secretary General and other senior staff of the ECO Secretariat on the ongoing activities within the ECO Region. The ECO representatives also informed the JICA delegation about the recent boost in external relations of the ECO through accelerated rate of partnerships with partners from within and outside the UN system.

The visiting JICA Official in return briefed the ECO officials on the assistance programmes of JICA in general and in the JICA Tehran Office in particular.

He underlined that JICA is assisting the target countries through ODA, grant aid and technical assistance programmes. The two sides continued their meeting with exchange of views on the possible areas of bilateral cooperation. They agreed to utilize other opportunities to discuss further the optimal format for possible cooperation in the areas of interest to JICA and the ECO Region.

ECO Secretariat attended the 1st Forum of Environment Ministers of Asia and the Pacific



ECO CHRONICLE The 1st Forum of Ministers and Environmental Authorities of Asia Pacific was organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Bangkok, Thailand on 19-20 May 2015. The Forum was attended by ministers and high level environmental authorities of 33 Asia-Pacific countries, including 3 ECO Member States. The ECO Secretariat was represented by Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, Director of Energy, Minerals and Environment. The Forum proceedings focused on post-2015 Development Agenda and emerging Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); climate change and environmental outlook for Asia and the Pacific; implementation of resolutions and priorities for United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA); and ways and means to overcome common environmental challenges in the backdrop of emerging priorities in Asia Pacific with a stronger and more unified voice at global and regional environmental fora. The ECO Director delivered a policy statement during the session on "Environmental Outlook for Asia Pacific", highlighting recent progress in ECO's environmental domain and way ahead, common efforts by ECO Member States and the Secretariat in tackling environmental challenges, including those of trans-boundary nature and interactions with key international players to benefit from commonalities and complementarities. The Forum was a part of the UNEP's response to the mandate given by the Rio+20 for strengthening UNEP's regional presence and implementation of resolutions and decisions made at the first session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-1) and helping identify the regional inputs and resolutions to be submitted for the next UNEA in 2016 and UNEP's medium term strategy for 2018-2021.

ECO & WHO Officials Discussed Cooperation in Geneva

ECO CHRONICLE An ECO delegation, headed by Deputy Secretary General Mr. Seyed Jalaedin Alavi Sabzevari, held bilateral talks with senior officials of World Health Organization on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly and ECO Ministerial Meeting in Geneva (21 May 2015). In his meeting with Dr. Bruce Aylward, the WHO Assistant Director General for Emergencies, the ECO Deputy Secretary General briefed the WHO Official about the newly adopted Outline for envisaged "ECO Plan of Action on Health Cooperation in the ECO Region" and requested WHO to help the ECO Secretariat for preparing the "Plan of Action" as mandated by the ECO Ministers. He also referred to the ECO unique membership and expressed readiness to help WHO implement its agenda in the ECO Region and its Member States. In return, WHO Assistant Director General emphasized on the need to primarily concentrate on more achievable goals, including Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). He also enumerated other areas of possible cooperation with and within ECO such as "Resilient Health Systems", "International Health Regulations" and "Global Health Security". The two sides also discussed the possibility of cooperation between ECO and WHO on disasters and emergency situations. In a separate meeting, Dr. Oleg Chestnov, WHO Assistant Director General on Non-Communicable Diseases and his team elaborated on the WHO profile in NCDs, including its activities in the ECO Member States. Two sides agreed to maintain contacts and to exchange further information regarding their activities.

The two sides also reiterated their interest to explore areas in which cooperation between ECO and WHO can be established with a view to helping ECO fulfill its mission to enhance health status in the Region. WHO officials also accepted invitation to attend ECO relevant meetings in the future.

ECO Secretary General attended the 71st annual session of ESCAP

ECO CHRONICLE The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov, participated in the 71st session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) held in Bangkok from 26-29 May 2015. The theme for the session was "Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: from integration to implementation".

In his statement delivered during the Ministerial segment of the session, the Secretary General highlighted the role being played by the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) for promoting cooperation in various areas for achieving sustainable development of the ECO Region. He also touched upon the measures being adopted by the ECO and its Member States to promote a balanced and effective integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, economic growth, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. Acknowledging the role of ESCAP in working towards a more connected and prosperous region, the ECO Secretary General stressed upon the need for greater collaboration at regional and sub-regional levels in order to address the common chal-



lenges faced by the Asia and the Pacific region.

On the sidelines of the session, the Secretary General held a meeting with Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP. The Secretary General briefed the ESCAP Executive Secretary about the status of ongoing cooperation between the two sides in various



sectors and emphasized the importance of technical and financial assistance of ESCAP for ECO's programmes and activities. The senior staff members of the ESCAP Secretariat were also present during the meeting.

Earlier, the Secretary General participated in the side event hosted by the Government of Pakistan on

"Prosperity through

Regional Trade and Transport Connectivity". He shared ECO's perspectives regarding trade and transport connectivity in the region and highlighted the importance of ECO Trade Agreement for achieving greater regional integration geared towards higher economic growth, as well as transport connectivity promotion by ECO in the region.

On the sidelines of the session, the Secretary General also attended the luncheon event on "Energy for Sustainable Development- From Plan to Action" hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation. The luncheon event focussed on the launching of the Asia Pacific Energy Portal and the first Regional Trends Report on Energy for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific.

ECO CHRONICLE H.E. Mr. Shamil Aleskerov, the Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization participated at the 4th International Innovation and Technology Exhibition (INOTEX 2015) which was held on 9-12 June 2015 in Tehran. In his statement delivered during the inaugural ceremony of the Exhibition, the Secretary General described the current pace of global developments as unsustainable, both in their inadequacy of fulfilling the social and economic development needs of billions of inhabitants of the planet, and in the dangers they

ECO Secretariat attended the INOTEX Exhibition in Tehran

pose to environmental resources and life-support systems. He further emphasized the role of science, technology and innovation (STI) as important forces

behind both positive and negative development trends and the need for making the science, technology and innovation (STI) to be more participatory and inclusive, hence the enhanced public engagement in the scientific endeavors from the full spectrum of social actors, including women, young people and indigenous communities.

The Secretary General also referred to the ECO's capacity to promote South-South cooperation and to disseminate and create technologies and the needed capacity to absorb new technologies in the Member States through establishing necessary mechanisms.



ECO officials will discuss customs transit cooperation in Kabul

ECO CHRONICLE The 4th Meeting of the Customs Transit Committee of the ECO Transport Transit Cooperation Council is scheduled to be held on 26th August 2015 in Kabul, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The Meeting will consider and discuss, inter alia, the status of implementation of customs related provisions of the ECO Transport Transit Framework Agreement (TTFA) and

accession of the ECO Member States to the "International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures" as well as the arrangements for facilitation of customs services along the ECO road corridors. The ways and means of implementation of the "ECO/IDB Feasibility Study on Customs related Provisions of the TTFA" will be also considered in the Meeting. It is expected that all ECO Members States as well as representatives from international organizations such as IRU will participate in the said meeting.

The Meeting will be preceded by some national capacity building workshops on transport related international conventions/agreements for Afghan officials on 24-25 August 2015 in Kabul. The aim of these workshops is to assist the accession of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to the conventions such as CMR, ADR and TIR.

Concerned stakeholders in Afghanistan, including government agencies, customs authorities and transport operators as well as resource persons from UNECE, IRU and ECO will participate in these workshops.



Interview with ECO Secretary General

Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov is the tenth ECO Secretary General who started his tenure in August 2012. As the end of his term of office was approaching, the ECO Chronicle invited him for an interview which is reproduced below:

■ **ECO Chronicle:** You are at the end of your term as the 10th Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization. How do you feel when you look back into your time in ECO?

■ **Secretary General:** Overall, I feel satisfied. This time was very interesting and full with challenges and opportunities, which we have tried to address and use in order to meet the expectations of the Member States taking forward the cooperation in different fields.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** In the last three decades, ECO has expanded its membership and scope of activities. A mixed record of performance attests to the fact that ECO still needs to identify its strengths and weaknesses with a view to concentrating on more conducive areas of regional cooperation. This is also important when ECO is developing its vision for post 2015. As the outgoing ECO Secretary General, what is your advice to the ECO Member States on the way forward?

■ **Secretary General:** It is necessary to accomplish successfully the reform process which the Organisation has embarked on in the last two years. The reform process should concentrate on the implementation of the activities and projects in the priority fields of cooperation and related goals; which are development of trade in the Region, enhancement of transport

connectivity, ensuring sustainable energy supply with wider use of renewable energies and increased energy efficiency. Of major importance is to strengthen the ownership of ECO activities and projects by the concerned ministries and organizations of the Member States.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** Regional platforms form a critical component of many global agendas the international community and UN system are pursuing. One can hardly find a global programme or initiative sponsored by UN or other international players with no regional component. Regional organizations have always proved a critical mass of credibility in implementing global agenda in certain regions. In the recent history of ECO, especially in the last three years under your leadership, how ECO contributed to global agendas as a regional partner?

■ **Secretary General:** The Political Declaration on Strengthening Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional and Sub-regional Organizations adopted two months back by the General Assembly of the United Nations is a vivid testimony to the importance attached to the role of the regional organisations in this regard. ECO has always been striving for such cooperation to the benefit of our Region. During recent years we have managed to enhance our cooperation with the UN system, particularly with FAO, UNIDO, UNODC, UNEP, WHO, UNESCAP and UNECE. The ECO has been attracting new interest from other UN agencies such as United Nations Forum on Forest (UNFF).

■ **ECO Chronicle:** For regional organizations and blocs, enlargement and expanded outreach constitute an instrument of visibility and credibility. Enlargement happens frequently in the regional blocs and organizations. It has not been the case in ECO despite its huge potential for attracting new members. In three decades of its existence, ECO has experienced only one enlargement in 1992, when 7 new members joined the Organization. Was there any self-imposed moratorium on further enlargement in ECO since 1992?

■ **Secretary General:** I would not say that there was a self-imposed moratorium in this

respect. In principle, ECO is an open organization, but there was a need for elaborating and adopting modalities regulating this process and related decision-making. After such modalities were adopted, it is now possible to consider any possible application for membership or observership status. There are two observers in ECO now, and I believe more observer statuses will be granted to countries and international organizations in the near future. In the meantime, our Member States are interested in making the Organization with present membership more effective and efficient.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** Excellency, ECO is conducting a reform process with a view to making it more responsive to the needs and aspirations of its individual Member States and the people of the Region as a whole. You are leaving the Organization in the middle of the reform process. In your opinion, which directions the reform process should take from now on?

■ **Secretary General:** I believe we have already done a great deal of work in this regard taking into account the findings and recommendations of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG), and it is necessary now to maintain the momentum gained to continue and accomplish the ongoing process at the earliest, so that ECO can function as a more effective and productive regional economic cooperation organization delivering tangible results with greater impact on the development of the Member States and on the region as a whole.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** Final words? Any advice or recommendation to your successor?

■ **Secretary General:** I wish my successor to have a very successful term of office as the ECO Secretary General, and to accomplish the ongoing process of reforming this organization which will make it able to fulfil all the expectations of the Member States.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** Thank you very much Excellency. We also wish you and your esteemed family all the best. We remain hopeful that ECO can still benefit from your contributions.





Interview with Ambassador of Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Tehran

H. E. Mr. Amenotheop Zambrano is the Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Tehran. In his interview with the ECO Chronicle, Ambassador kindly

shares his ideas in details on regional and inter-regional cooperation and the experiences of Venezuela in this regard.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** Since its enlargement in 1992, ECO with its diverse membership from Caucuses and Central Asia, as well as South and West Asia has developed into a full-fledged regional

organization with growing international profile and has been engaged with national and regional stakeholders in formulating result-oriented strategies and elaborating new partnership frameworks for enhanced regional

cooperation and dialogue.

On the other hand, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is actively pursuing partnership frameworks within Latin American regional arrangements, inter alia, UNASUR, Mercosur and ALBA.

It would be interesting to learn more about Venezuela's experience, good practices and results achieved in the context of collaboration within major regional groups.

■ **Ambassador:** 200 hundred years ago Simon Bolivar wrote in the Letter From Jamaica "I wish more than anyone else to see America form the greatest nation in the world, less for its extension and wealth than for its liberty and glory". Since the foundation and liberation of Venezuela, our liberator thought of our Latin America as a great pole and block of geopolitical power as long as it kept itself united. A few years later in Panama, the Amphictyonic Congress was convened by Bolivar in 1826; its objective continued to be intact the motherland is America- and it pretended to found a confederation of nations, to establish ties amongst the states and the governments, and to promote the integration of our peoples.

Nevertheless, it was not achieved, instead of keeping together and strong we derailed, each one on a different path, we were separated, little and weak, furthermore we were dominated

by foreign powers.

The Leader of the Bolivarian Revolution, Hugo Chavez, raises the flag of Bolivar, and re-vindicates his unifying thought, his integrating vision, the diplomacy of the peoples; all from a rhetoric totally opposed to the one that kept us giving each other our backs during the XX century.

Chavez promoted the complementarity as an alternative to the competition, the solidarity instead of domination, cooperation as a substitute for exploitation, and respect to sovereignty over the corporate rule.

The matter is to unify ourselves or to see us sink; it is an existential necessity for the political, economic, and social survival of the region. Bolivar said "we cannot expect anything but from ourselves".

Therefore,



Venezuela during the last years has walked the path of alternatives, a path that truly integrates us and not the opposite, nor that integrates us at the expenses of others.

Venezuela has played a key role as a middle power in the Latin-

American region, closing gaps and differences in social matters, catalyzing economic asymmetries, and unifying diverse political factors. Such phenomena takes place in ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America) for the social, in MERCOSUR (Southern Common Market) the economic, and in UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) the political [factors].

These mechanisms aim at the contribution of a greater social inclusion and eradication of poverty, for a greater economic development and commercial complementarity of our countries, and for a renovated political concentration and in defense of our sovereignties.

■ **ECO Chronicle:**

ECO Region contains one third of the global hydrocarbon resources and is an important supplier of oil and natural gas to the world market, contributing to the international energy security.

As a holder of world's largest proven oil reserves and founding member of OPEC, Venezuela also plays key role in global energy outlook.

Would you please share your insights on ECO Region's potential energy scenarios and considerations taking into account your country's interest in this region as well as the global need for more robust and resilient energy architecture?

■ **Ambassador:** ECO has an infinite potential on new modalities of oil integration and energy security. In one hand, they have clients with high payment capacity

translates into poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

On this scenario exists an unexplored niche that cannot be attended to from the traditional position of a provider-consumer; perhaps another form of relationship could be established as partners with different types of wealth and hence complementary to

and believe that we have a great responsibility with our region first, and then with other farther countries and their energy and food security. For this reason we founded PETROCARIBE ten years ago.

Petrocaribe is a booster initiative for the energy integration driven by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela under the leadership of Commander Hugo Chavez Frias; and its aim is to secure energy sovereignty, integral development and the political unity of the Central American and Caribbean peoples.

Petrocaribe is a multilateral organism formed initially by fourteen Caribbean nations; Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Surinam, and Venezuela.

In 2007, Haiti, Honduras and Nicaragua joined the mechanism as did Guatemala in 2008, and the most recent addition, El Salvador, in 2014 to reach the current 19 member countries.

Petrocaribe is an integral proposal conceived under the principles of cooperation, respect, solidarity and complementarity that promotes the direct energy supply with financial facilities and without speculation; additionally

and industrial development, but they also have less advantaged countries with high poverty levels that do not have access to fossil energy and that cannot afford the high prices of the oil industry; this

each other.

I'll give you an example of what Venezuela has been doing since June 25th 2005:

Venezuela takes very seriously the international energy security, as you said, we possess one of the greatest oil reserves in the world, and without a doubt, we know



contributes with the expansion of processing, storing and distribution capacities of hydrocarbons, and the equitable and just exchange among the member countries with the objective to drive the social productive participation and to rise the life quality levels of the peoples.

One of the main challenges of Petrocaribe is to help re-designing an energy policy that accompanies a social development in order to face poverty, social inequalities, technological dependencies, energy asymmetries, and other situations that affect the Centro American and Caribbean region in which population reaches over 83 million people.

This way, Petrocaribe develops several social projects which are directly related with the agricultural, health, and educational sectors of the Caribbean member countries through the Fund ALBA-CARIBE, which aims to reduce the energy importations and dependency.

Oil and gas-main resources of the world's energy matrix- are natural goods that provide opportunities for the energy integration of the peoples from Centro America and the Caribbean, and are priority matters in the Venezuelan diplomatic agenda and foreign policy. Within this framework of ideas, Petrocaribe during its 10 years of existence has played a key role in providing "energy for life", becoming a revolutionary unification

mechanism of its signing countries, while supplying energy that's being used for the sustainable and integral wellbeing of the region.

According to some data provided by the performance report of Petrocaribe 2015, some of the achievements we can highlight since its creation are: compensation of 3,471MMUSD of the oil invoice with 3,018,829 metric tons of food, and 10,621,035 units of products; development of social-productive projects; energy supply to the people of member countries; establishment and operation of 15 joint companies in 12 countries; increase of the



scale that can reach up to 50% of the oil invoice, depending on the oil barrel price, at an interest rate of 1%. The energy agreement of Petrocaribe also includes initiatives in areas of transport, logistics, repairs, maintenance, energy infrastructure, storing and distribution of fuels, technical formation, and transfer of technology.

For the country members of Petrocaribe, the benefits of the integration scheme are just simply revolutionary. This mechanism that already grouped 19 countries of mainly Centro America and the Caribbean, has been named the "Anti-misery Shield" for its immediate effects in the energy security and its repercussions in the food security of the peoples; helping dramatically to contain the advancement of poverty in many cases, and to reduce it in others as long as the governments implement actions and complementary policies for social justice and redistribution. The benefits for the buying countries of Petrocaribe are diverse:

- Independence from transnational oil corporations and their intermediaries who raise the price and speculate with the oil.
- By having a common provider, it is possible to establish distribution policies that are adequate to the scales of each country, guaranteeing this way a secure and constant access to oil.

store and distribution capacity of hydrocarbons; and the refining capacity of 135,000 barrels per day for the benefit of the region.

Petrocaribe secures the supply of 35% of the energy requirements in the region. It currently provides hydrocarbons to 13 member countries with the input of 88,000 barrels per day by year 2014 and an cumulative of 313 MMB between the years 2005 and 2014.

Other benefits of Petrocaribe includes the Agreement of Energy Cooperation which encompasses a financial mechanism with a

- Equilibrium of their fiscal accounts with the allowance of the financing of the oil invoice.
- Elimination of financial intermediaries by the establishment of a direct relation with the producer and distributor of oil.
- Betterment of the external debt profile of the country by the increase of the payment periods for an energy market that has always been speculative and paid for in cash.
- Economic protection from the world financial crisis by the possibility of access to energy in real conditions of solidarity, cooperation and complementarity.
- The possibility to pay in a complementary way with goods and services.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** As a young and dynamic intergovernmental platform, the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our Americas (ALBA) includes 11 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and embraces wide-range aspects of economic, social and political integration of its members.

As a former Executive Secretary of ALBA, could you name some potential areas where ECO and ALBA can engage in exchange of knowledge and best practices?

■ **Ambassador:** In many areas and matters, an urgent one is the climate change and the preservation of the planet.

It is of vital importance to define political positions during the next events and multilateral

meetings. Another topic is the oil.

We are oil producer countries, some of us OPEC members and some others not, but we all have a common denominator: our economy and national budget depend on a high degree on the oil income, therefore we have to establish strategies for a just crude price, as well as other decisions of interest for our peoples in the energy matter. It is mandatory to establish a mechanism of dialogue and permanent consultation.

Furthermore, we must create an extended political council formed by our Ministers of foreign affairs to establish agreements and to politically agree in the different international forums.

Additionally, it is indispensable to have a group of financial action which would follow the world financial crisis and that would provide a mechanism of solutions for protection of our economies.

We can also implement a committee of commercial complementarity to evaluate the necessities and potentialities of our different mechanisms of regional integration, and being able this way to establish trade flows of goods and services that could complement our balances. There are many other areas we can observe in the basic structure of ALBA and that without a doubt could complement the structure of ECO.

Together we can attend forgotten areas and reinforce common matters.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** ECO Ministers of Environment has recently adopted a historic "ECO Climate package" adopting set of recommendations in line with ongoing global climate negotiations.

ECO Ministers also adopted the Istanbul Declaration on climate change and green economy which captured, inter alia, the importance of the transition to the use of renewable energy sources,

existing energy resources with clean technologies and environment friendly alternatives in order to address more effectively challenges posed by environmental pollution and climate change. Venezuela ranks among the top 10 of the world's most ecologically diverse countries, but still it suffers from environmental degradation, including deforestation and soil degradation.

What is your country's approach to any new global climate regime expected from Paris Conference? What role you perceive for the regional organizations like ECO in this process.

■ **Ambassador:** Venezuela and ALBA are committed to the preservation of the planet and the salvation of the human kind; we do not accept any climate regime that ignores the responsibilities of the countries that caused the climate change and the detriment. We reject equalitarian measurements among the countries for the next actions to be undertaken with the objective to mitigate and revert the effects of climate change.

In this sense, we believe this is a test of fire for the UN and all of our sub-regional integration mechanisms. We have to adequate to the height of the circumstances and give answer to the great problem of the climate change. From ALBA, we are willing to work with ECO with the aim to achieve credible and applicable solutions in the short term.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** Thank you for your time.



Interview with Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Tehran

H. E. Ambassador Naseer Ahmad Noor is the top Afghan Diplomat in Tehran and the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in ECO. He was so kind to accept ECO Chronicle invitation for an interview:

■ **ECO Chronicle:** Afghanistan joined Economic Cooperation Organization in early 1990s. What was the main reason for Afghanistan to make such important decision?

■ **Ambassador:** Afghanistan has always attached a great importance and paid special attention to enhancing and extending economic cooperation

among the countries of the region as one of the main priorities of its foreign policy. Thus our country has put lots of efforts to secure close and constructive economic cooperation with the regional countries particularly in the fields of trade, transit and transportation which are fortunately amongst the main objectives of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Furthermore, Afghanistan is locat-

Considering these reasons Afghanistan decided to be one of the active members of the Economic Cooperation Organization.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** Five out of six Afghanistan's neighbours are members of ECO. In addition to bilateral relations between Afghanistan and its ECO neighbouring countries, ECO has been collectively committed to assist Afghanistan's efforts to foster economic development and welfare of its people. ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan has financed some projects in Afghanistan. ECO sectoral activities in, among others, trade, transport, energy, environment, health, food security, disaster management, etc., in one way or another, benefit Afghanistan. What are the areas of immediate needs for Afghanistan where ECO may contribute more?

■ **Ambassador:** First of all I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the generous and timely contributions of the ECO member countries for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. As we all know, more than three decades of war and adversities have left numerous damages and imposed lots of problems upon Afghan nation and tackling these problems is not easily possible for the Afghan government, therefore regional and international organizations have been invited to assist Afghanistan and to play a pivotal role to support the Afghan government's efforts. We do hope that the regional and international organizations particularly ECO and the esteemed ECO Member States will remain steadfast to fulfil their commitments.

Having been damaged by wars, Afghanistan is currently in process of reconstruction, thus it welcomes any assistance in every fields particularly in the areas of health, education, infrastructure, capacity building and rural development.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** In December 2014, ECO and its partners completed an EU-funded project on "trafficking from/to Afghanistan". It was implemented over 5 years through cooperation between Interpol, UNODC, German Criminal Police (BKA), German Development Agency (GIZ) and ECO Drug and Organized Crime Unit (DOCCU). The Project addressed areas such as capacity building, border measures and regional networking. Is there any interest in Afghanistan to continue such projects?

■ **Ambassador:** we appreciate the efforts of ECO Secretariat for encouraging the international organizations to take part in countering and combating narcotics. Unfortunately, in the case of narcotics (like many other issues), Afghanistan has become a victim. You see before the imposed war, there were no addicts nor a single poppy had been cultivated in

ed in the heart of the ECO Region, so it seemed quite a natural choice for us to be part of this organization. In addition, Afghanistan has a lot in common with all ECO Member States from historical, religious, cultural, social and neighbourly aspects which have paved the way and created a suitable groundwork for bilateral and multilateral cooperation with esteemed ECO Member States.



Afghanistan. The war and conflicts fostered the suitable ground for growth of criminal economics in Afghanistan, including drug trafficking. Now the question is "how do the illicit drugs traverse thousands of kilometres to reach the market? And how do the precursors travel thousands of kilometres to Afghanistan?" Unfortunately, many countries are engaged in this repellent cycle. There is a fact that if the market doesn't exist, not even a single Afghan farmer will be willing to cultivate poppy. We believe drug trafficking is an immense threat and danger to all countries and combating it is a universal responsibility, particularly for those countries who are main consumers of illicit drugs. In fact the countries of resources (in case of precursors and some other drug-related issues, other countries are considered as resource country), the countries on the narcotics transit routes and consumer countries who are often more self-sufficient financially must rally together to tackle this problem. It certainly needs the international and regional commitments to eradicate this misfortunate phenomenon.

Afghanistan welcomes any effort and initiative to eradicate the cultivation and trafficking of narcotics and actively cooperate in this project and similar projects that aim at combating drug trafficking.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** Reconstruction of Afghanistan has been among the top agendas of the international community, particularly donor community. The "Sixth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan" will be held in Kabul in September this year. As mandated by RPC, ECO Secretariat is also planning a special Conference on Afghanistan in 2015. The Conference is expected to develop a new ECO advocacy policy for Afghanistan. How can ECO play a complementary role vis-a-vis that of international community?

■ **Ambassador:** Since enhancing and expanding economic cooperation in the Region is one of the main goals of ECO, it can play an active and constructive role alongside other donating institutions and organizations in the reconstruction process of Afghanistan. Afghanistan is in dire need of supporting role of this organization (ECO) alongside other contributing institutions and welcome its active role and participation in the conferences which are held for the stability and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Many different countries and organizations including the Economic Cooperation Organization have been invited to participate in the upcoming Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA). We hope that ECO Secretariat and ECO Member States will actively participate in this Conference at the highest level because we believe the presence of ECO Secretariat and ECO Member

States will enrich this Event, secure its success and contribute to its objectives.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** ECO is now undertaking a reform process. Would you please share your opinion with our readers on how ECO should look like in post 2015?

■ **Ambassador:** The government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan appreciates and welcomes all initiatives and efforts which lead to further functioning and effectiveness of the Economic Cooperation Organization.



Afghanistan has a positive vision towards the ECO reform process and its implementation is very important and vital for the effectiveness of ECO's activities. Afghanistan in consultation with other member countries is endeavouring to play an active and constructive role in the reform process of Economic Cooperation Organization, and eagerly pursue this purpose.

■ **ECO Chronicle:** Excellency, thank you very Much for your time.



By: Gokten DAMAR

Food Security in the ECO Region

Most of the Member States of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) have identified food security as one of their primary concerns. This makes agriculture a key sector in achieving food security for the ECO Region, as it is the case in the developing world.

Agricultural production and productivity growth secure the nutrition by making food available and accessible through their income generating

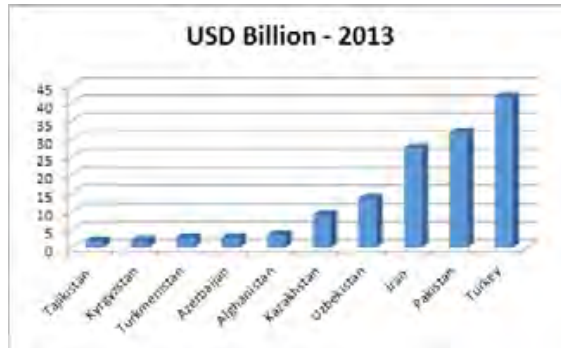
and employment creating capabilities. This is more so for countries where agriculture occupies a considerable share in the GDP and labor force. Constituting more than 11 percent of the overall value-added and employing nearly 37 percent of total active population of the Region, agriculture is one of the major source of growth and development in the ECO Region. The Region is very rich in variety of soil, environmental and climatic conditions,

suitable for crop and livestock diversification. Major farm products of the ECO member countries are wheat, barley, rice, sugar cane, sugar beet, seed cotton, potatoes, tomatoes, meats, milk and milk products. Livestock production in the ECO countries is predominately based on traditional systems, including small holdings of cattle, sheep and goats in villages and small towns for their household requirements of milk and meat.

Figure: Agricultural Production in the ECO Region

Agricultural production in the ECO Region reached 137 billion USD in 2013, nearly 3.5 percent of total agricultural production of the world. However, most of ECO countries are net importers of agricultural products with total imports valued at USD 48,444 million in 2013. Total exports of agricultural products in ECO countries reached USD 35,442 million in 2014, a net deficit of USD 13,002 million. Despite the modest increases seen in recent years, there is still an untapped potential for the growth of agricultural production and trade.

As indicated in the Table, over



Source:FAO

tors. The most important developments have taken place in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Iran and Turkmenistan where they reached the international rate of <5%.

The incidence of poverty and hunger is more prevalent in the rural areas of the ECO Region,

especially among women, children, nomadic populations, peasants with little or no land, and agricultural laborers in addition to refugees. Women and children are the most vulnerable groups.

There is a concentration of poverty among nomadic populations with small herds and semi-arid-land shepherds. A smaller group

of the extremely poor includes widows, sick and disabled older people, who depend heavily on direct state support. Malnutrition and lack of medical services, especially in rural areas remain a serious health problem in some ECO states. Under-nourishment (stunt-

the period 2012-2014, it is estimated that about 12.9 percent of the population in the ECO Region was under-nourished with marked variation among countries. According to FAO estimates, the proportion of under-nourished population ranged from 32.3 percent in Tajikistan, 24.7 in Afghanistan to 21.7 percent in Pakistan. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan decreased their un-nourished population compared with the past indica-



ing) and micronutrient deficiencies are more prevalent in rural areas. Iron deficiency anemia is a common problem, goiter is endemic and rickets and other nutritional deficiencies, for example of zinc and other micronutrients, are also found.

ECO, as a regional organization dedicated to economic and social development of its Member States accords top priority to food

Table : ECO Population, Per Capita Dietary Energy Supply, and Prevalence of Under-nourishment, 2012-14

Countries	Population (Million)	Per Capita Dietary Energy Supply (Kcal/day)	Undernourished	
			number in millions	% to total population
Afghanistan	35.4	2107	7.5	24.7
Azerbaijan	9.4	2952	ns*	<5
Iran	75.6	3058	ns*	<5
Kazakhstan	16.4	3107	ns*	<5
Kyrgyzstan	5.4	2828	0.3	6.0
Pakistan	180.0	2428	39.6	21.7
Tajikistan	7.1	2101	2.7	32.3
Turkey	74.5	3880	ns*	<5
Turkmenistan	5.2	2883	ns*	<5
Uzbekistan	28.1	2673	1.7	5.8
ECO	435.06	2643	56.3	12.9

Source: *State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2012-14*, FAOSTAT

ns* - Not stated.

security and agricultural development in the Region. The ECO Regional Programme for Food Security (RPFS), was prepared with the technical assistance of FAO in 2004-05 and updated in 2008 and 2010. Comprising 9 regional components along with various national projects, the Program focuses on enhancing agricultural production and trade of agro-products in the ECO Member States. The Republic of Turkey has been elected as the coordinating country to implement the Programme. A coordination center (ECO-RCC) was set up in Ankara, in 2012.

The 9 regional components of the Programme are as follows:

1. Combating Transboundary Animal Diseases
2. Integrated Pest Management
3. Coordinated Research on Wheat Improvement
4. Inter-and intra Regional Trade Promotion
5. Support to

Agricultural Advisory Services

6. Development and Maintenance of Pastures

7. Establishment of Regional Plant Gene bank

8. Strengthening of Regional Seed Supply

9. Support to the Regional Centre for Risk Management of Natural Disasters

With respect to the provision of food security, a significant progress has been recorded in the field of seed. ECO has started Technical Cooperation Programmes (TCP) with FAO on strengthening seed supply in the ECO Region, which aims to promote the integration of the seed sector and promotion of seed trade within and beyond ECO member countries. ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) was created as an outcome of the First Phase of ECO-FAO Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) signed in 2006.

In line with the 8th compo-

nent of RPFS, the ECO/FAO-SEC Project on Seed Sector Development in the Region, amounting to USD 400.000, co-financed by Turkey within the scope of FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme (FTPP) and ECO (USD 350.000 and USD 50.000 respectively), started its implementation in May 2013 and will be completed at the end of 2015. The Project has been implemented with the participation of seven Member States, namely, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

ECO-FAO Project on technical assistance for the formulation of strategies *peste des petits ruminants* (PPR) at global and regional level, developed by FAO, started with the participation of ECO Secretariat. The Sub-regional Workshop on PPR Control for ECO Region is scheduled to be held in

September/October
2015 in

one of the ECO Member States. The implementation of the said Project is expected to be completed in 2015.

The ECO Agricultural Bio-technology Network (ECO-ABN) is under establishment process. The main purpose of this Project is to provide the national agricultural research institutes (NARIs) in ECO countries with an efficient tool for collaborative research in biotechnology.

ECO has started a process of institutionalization regarding food security in recent years. The decision making bodies of ECO have approved the establishment of various ECO affiliated bodies and institutions in the field of agriculture to facilitate the implementation of the RPFS. The Regional Coordination Center for Implementation of the RPFS (ECO-RCC) was inaugurated in Ankara, Turkey (2012); the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) was established in Ankara, Turkey (2009); and the ECO Regional Center for Risk Management of Natural Disasters (ECO-RCRM) was set up in Mashhad, Iran (2007). Institutions such as the ECO Meteorological Calibration Center (ECO-MCC) in Ankara, Turkey, the ECO Veterinary Commission (ECO-VECO) in Tehran, Iran and the ECO Center for Efficient Utilization of Water for Agriculture (ECO-CEUW) in Islamabad, Pakistan are also in the process of being established.

The mission of the ECOSA is to promote and develop the seed and plant breeding industry in the Region. The

Association provides a forum for cooperation and information exchange among national seed and plant breeders associations and companies and represents the interests of its members at the national, regional and international level. Six International Seed Trade Conferences have been organized by ECOSA since 2009. Experts and representatives from private sector, seed sector specialists from ECO and OIC Member States' public and private companies and various other international organizations and institutions participated in these conferences. As the results of these conferences, around 900 professionals working in the seed sector were trained through technical workshops and had the opportunity to establish business contacts.

The ECO-RCRM was inaugurated on 4 September 2007 in Mashhad with MOU establishing the Regional Center for Risk Management, which was signed by nine ECO Member States. It is an affiliated body of ECO aiming to promote cooperation among Member States in the fields of meteorology, climatology, hydrology and climatic disasters for effective risk management of natural disasters. ECO-RCRM has organized various Working Group Meetings and Training courses for the establishment of the Centre.

The ECO-RCC for Implementation of ECO-RPFS was inaugurated during the 5th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture (November 2012, Antalya, Turkey). Housed at the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of

the Republic of Turkey in Ankara, Turkey, the Center is meant to mobilize and coordinate the implementation of the RPFS in collaboration with the Member States. The concerned Turkish authorities appointed a coordinator and other staff of the Center. The ECO-RCC has so far organized activities to coordinate and facilitate the effective implementation of the ECO-RPFS.

Although ECO-RPFS provides a well designed integrated frame for prospective regional and national projects under its relevant components, the Programme has not yet been fully implemented due to lack of relevant project proposals in desired quantity and quality, lack of necessary financial mechanisms for available projects as well as failure to access the international donors.

To ensure further achievements and developments in the implementation of the ECO-RPFS, ECO Secretariat in cooperation with the Member States focuses on planning to organize training courses, projects and programmes on preventing trans-boundary animal diseases, seed sector development, food losses and waste reduction and management of post harvest waste. ECO aims at reaching the international rate of undernourished population (FAO definition) which is below 5 per cent in the ECO Region, in next ten years.

About the author: Mr. Gokten DAMAR is the Director of "Agriculture, Industry and Tourism" at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran.



Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction: Outcomes and Prospects for ECO Region

By: Mostafa Mohagheh

■ Preamble

Disasters triggered by natural hazards continue to cause human and material damages and losses and affect the socio-economic development of various communities and countries. New phenomenon like cli-



mate change and rapid urbanization have multiplied the negative impact of disasters due to their role in creating widespread vulnerabilities in communities and nations.

Over the past decade,

over 700 thousand people lost their lives, over 1.4 million were injured and approximately 23 million were made homeless as a result of disasters. Overall, more than 1.5 billion people were affected by disasters in various ways.

Women, children and people in vulnerable situations were disproportionately affected.

The total economic loss was more than \$1.3 trillion. In addition, between 2008 and 2012, 144 million people were displaced by disasters. (SFDRR , page 4)

Local and national efforts to face the challenge of disasters has a long history, but it has been only in the recent decades that the international community considered disaster risk reduction and management in its list of priorities.

As a result of major impact of disasters on the outcomes of development of many countries in the 20th Century, international and regional bodies such as the United Nations and a number of regional inter-governmental organizations as well as Non-governmental organizations and academia engaged in the agenda of so called natural disaster management.

Based on the UN General Assembly Resolution (A/RES/42/169) in 1987, the 1990s was declared the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

In 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the "International Framework for Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction" (A/RES/44/236). the first World Conference on Natural Disaster

Reduction in 1994 adopted the "Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World".

But a turning point was the United Nations General Assembly endorsement of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/RES/54/219). And in 2005, in Kobe, Japan, the 2nd World Conference on Disaster Reduction adopt-



ed the "Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015:

Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters" (HFA).

Adoption of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in January 2005 which coincided with the consequences of the

Asian Tsunami in December 2004 shifted the global and regional directions toward disaster risk reduction.

The HFA contributed to raising awareness; more political space and commitment; new international, regional and national set ups and structures; and in some cases dedicated legislation for disaster risk reduction and management. But the final outcomes of disaster risk reduction had to yet emerge at national and local levels.

■ Third world Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Sendai 2015

In 2012, the United Nations General Assembly decided to convene the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) to review implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action and to adopt a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (A/RES/67/209).

The 2012 resolution requested UNISDR to serve as Secretariat of the World Conference in 2015, to facilitate development of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2), and to coordinate the preparatory

activities in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

The objectives of the 3rd WCDRR were:

a) To complete assessment and review of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action;

b) To consider the experience gained through the regional and national strategies/institutions and plans for disaster risk reduction and their recommendations as well as relevant regional agreements under the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action;

c) To adopt a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2);

d) To identify modalities of cooperation based on commitments to implement a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction;

e) To determine modalities for periodic review of the implementation of a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction.

On 20 December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution to hold the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction from 14 to 18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan, outlining the modalities for the preparations of the 3rd World Conference (A/RES/68/211).

The 3rd UN World Conference attracted 6,500 delegates who attended the intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder events where over 40,000 participants attended the Public Forum. One hundred eighty seven countries represented by over 25 Heads of State, Vice Presidents, Heads of Government and around a 100 Ministers attended this grand Conference.



Forty two intergovernmental organizations, 236 non-governmental organizations, 38 UN entities and over 300 private sector representatives also attended the Event.

There were 150 intergovernmental and multi-stakeholder events which included opening and closing sessions, meetings of Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee, 3 High Level Partnership Dialogues, 5 Ministerial Round Tables, plenary sessions for official statements, Informal Preparatory & Stake-holders meetings, Thematic/HFA working sessions as well as official events.

There were also 350 side events within the framework of Public Forum which were open to both WCDRR participants and Japanese public.

Events included side events, exhibition booths and poster exhibitions.

■ Key outcomes of WCDRR

The main outcomes of the WCDR are Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, Sendai Declaration, and voluntary commitments.

The Sendai Framework, the main outcome of the WCDRR, endorses progress in Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) in raising public and institutional awareness & generating political commitment; and focuses on actions by all stakeholders around key themes (namely, understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance and investment; enhancing preparedness, response and recovery).

Sendai Framework is expected to ensure "substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets



of persons, businesses, communities and countries" (SFDRR, page 6).

Its goal is to "prevent new and reduce existing disaster risk through the implementation of integrated and inclusive economic, structural, legal, social, health, cultural, educational, environmental, technological, political and institutional measures that prevent and reduce hazard exposure and vulnerability to disaster, increase preparedness for response and recovery, and thus strengthen resilience" (SFDRR, page 7).



To support the assessment of global progress in achieving the outcome and goal of Sendai Framework, seven following global targets have been agreed. These targets will be measured at the global level and will be complemented by work to develop appropriate indicators.

National targets and indicators will contribute to the achievement of the outcome and goal of this Framework:

- (a) Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality

between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015.

- (b) Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower the average global figure per 100,000 between 2020-2030 compared to 2005-2015.

- (c) Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030.

- (d) Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them, health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030.

- (e) Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020.

- (f) Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this framework by 2030.

- (g) Substantially increase the availability of and access

to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030.

■ Priorities for action

Taking into account the experience gained through the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, and in pursuance of the expected outcome and goal, there is a need for focused action within and across sectors by states at local, national, regional and global levels in the following four priority areas:

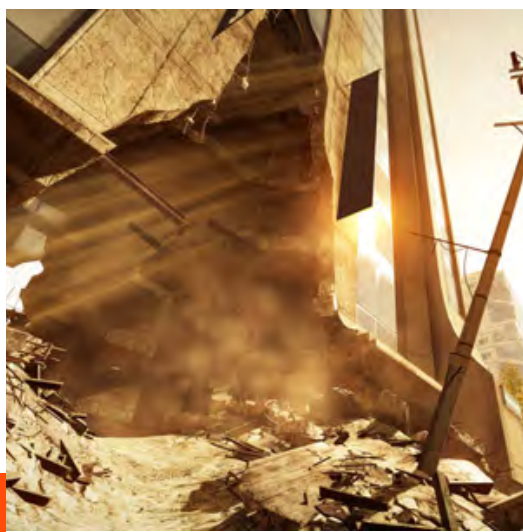
1. Understanding disaster risk;
2. Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk;
3. Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience;
4. Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. (SFDRR, page 9)

■ Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and ECO Region

ECO Region is one of the most disaster prone regions of the world and faces various types of natural hazards.

It seems that despite considerable efforts made at national level, regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction and management among ECO countries can be further improved in the years ahead.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction can be used by the ECO member countries to boost their regional and cross-regional cooperation to reduce risk of disasters in the Region. The following areas may be pursued by ECO as appropriate fields of cooperation for disaster risk reduction:



- To develop and agree on a regional framework for disaster risk reduction and management which provide the common understanding and strategic directions as well as priority areas of cooperation across the Region,

- To develop, support and implement a joint plan of action which is built on needs, priorities and capacities of the member countries as well as the potential of cooperation and partnership with the other regional and international bodies and organizations,

- To establish the appropriate set-ups and mechanisms to share and exchange data, information, skills, knowledge and good practices on disaster risk reduction within and outside the Region in cooperation with the partner institutions,

- To promote effective use of knowledge, science and technology, including those of local and indigenous communities, to improve understanding of risk, hazard monitoring and early warning, disaster preparedness, etc. by bridging the existing gap between communities of science and practice in disaster risk management,

- To develop a joint regional reporting platform to record and report the progress made in the advancement of disaster risk reduction and implementation of the Sendai Framework,

- To review and develop means for the improvement of risk governance at national and local levels, including the improvement of institutional and operational capacities, legislative foundations, and organizational and structural set-ups and systems,



- To integrate disaster risk reduction into development agenda and programmes including national and local development plans.

ECO has the capacity and potential for not only overcoming the challenges of disaster risks in the Region, but also to present good examples of success in reducing disasters risk.

This will require commitments and investment by all actors and sectors, importantly by the ECO member governments.



About the author: Mr. Mostafa Mohaghegh is the Manager for "Partnership for Urban Disaster Risk Reduction" at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Geneva.

Disaster Indicators in the ECO Region

Compiled by: Javad Heidari

Total number of natural disasters in ECO Member States-(1994-2004 and 2005-2014)

Subjects Country	Earthquake		Flood		Landslide & Storm		Drought		Total	
	94-04	2005-14	94-04	2005-14	94-04	2005-14	94-04	2005-14	94-04	2005-14
Afghanistan	14	7	19	43	4	12	1	2	38	66
Azerbaijan	3	2	5	2	1	0	1	0	10	4
Iran	28	24	31	10	5	2	1	0	65	37
Kazakhstan	1	0	2	7	2	0	0	0	5	7
Kyrgyzstan	0	4	1	3	7	3	0	1	9	11
Pakistan	7	6	19	34	13	13	1	0	41	53
Tajikistan	4	5	12	11	7	4	1	1	24	21
Turkey	23	8	14	11	8	6	0	0	45	25
Turkmenistan	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Uzbekistan	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	2	2
Total	81	57	103	122	48	40	6	42	240	226

Total number of natural disasters in ECO Member States-(1994-2004 and 2005-2014)

Subjects Country	Total number of Disasters	people killed (1994-2004)	People affected (1994-2004)	Total number of Disasters	People killed (2005-2014)	people affected (2005-2014)
Afghanistan	38	9,439	2,999,337	66	2651	4,691,883
Azerbaijan	10	60	2,477,774	4	3	97,499
Iran	65	30,904	39,317,510	37	1403	1,015,074
Kazakhstan	5	163	42,794	7	90	95,309
Kyrgyzstan	9	250	68,769	11	81	2,047,567
Pakistan	41	3,976	10,554,325	53	80,208	43,477,088
Tajikistan	24	172	3,652,343	21	216	915,434
Turkey	45	18,859	5,585,974	25	900	154,688
Turkmenistan	1	11	-	-	-	-
Uzbekistan	2	24	600,000	2	13	1586
ECO	240	63,858	64,698,826	226	83,525	52,341,440

Total number of people reported killed and affected by all kind of disasters by ECO Countries (1994-2003; 2004-2013; and 2013)

Subjects Country	people killed (1994-2003)	People affected (1994-2003)	People killed (2004-2013)	people affected (2004-2013)	people killed 2013	people affected 2013
Afghanistan	10,095	5,436,660	4,419	4,712,493	228	21,635
Azerbaijan	596	2,478,111	56	97,499	-	-
Iran	32,645	115,312,215	3,326	372,173	125	6,036
Kazakhstan	240	650,542	518	102,943	21	5,000
Kyrgyzstan	306	69,851	230	2,047,747	-	-
Pakistan	6,374	19,345,737	82,150	47,324,932	797	1,698,760
Tajikistan	193	6,261,765	261	3,304,900	-	2,500
Turkey	20,002	5,507,816	1,971	244,188	35	-
Turkmenistan	51	-	15	-	-	-
Uzbekistan	131	1,223,958	73	5,116	-	-
ECO	70,636	157,290,038	92,819	58,411,991	1,209	1,733,971
Asia	825,476	2,643,097,996	690,118	1,616,639,834	22,375	87,017,240
Africa	43,671	267,405,621	35,495	283,565,969	2,665	8,260,959
America	76,393	61,205,739	35,495	89,153,795	1,761	2,730,799
Europe	105,430	32,825,232	74,233	6,626,853	1,832	1,749,949
Oceania	3,426	21,376,249	2,117	1,913,221	32	77,720

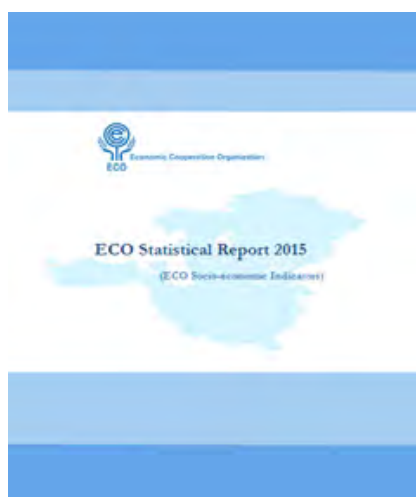
Total number of natural disasters, people killed and affected and damages in ECO Member States (2000-2015)

Subjects Country	Earthquake (92)			Flood (177)			Landslide (43)			Drought (9)		
	People Killed	Affected People	Damage (000US\$)	People Killed	Affected People	Damage (000US\$)	People Killed	Affected People	Damage (000US\$)	People Killed	Affected People	Damage (000US\$)
Afghanistan	1,338	112,735	50	2,110	438,009	20,000	382	301,606	-	37	6,510,000	142,050
Azerbaijan	31	25,793	10,000	3	106,500	35,000	11	-	-	-	-	106,000
Iran	25,050	1,192,153	2,251,928	758	1,585,507	240,695	20	4	-	-	-	-
Kazakhstan	3	36,626	-	52	101,477	240,738	45	-	-	-	-	-
Kyrgyzstan	71	16,247	-	3	13,993	2,560	86	9,661	1,300	-	2,000,000	-
Pakistan	74,019	6,488,540	5,310,500	5,940	44,397,420	18,706,148	432	30,423	15,000	-	-	-
Tajikistan	16	40,531	23,300	104	471,145	290,596	56	22,027	41,600	-	3,500,000	57,000
Turkey	930	418,995	2,904,000	237	171,076	932,000	59	512	-	-	-	-
Turkmenistan	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Uzbekistan	13	36	-	-	1,500	-	-	-	-	-	600,000	50,000
Total	104,538	8,332,039	10,501,978	9317	47,522,912	20,308,040	1,094	364,537	61,100	37	12,910,000	349,050

Source: EM-DAT at <http://www.emdat.be>

ECO Statistical Report 2015

Review by:
Mohammad Hossein Amini,
ECO Secretariat



The new issue of the ECO Statistical Report has been published by the ECO Secretariat in April 2015. Since 2013, the ECO Secretariat has regularly published the "ECO Statistical Report" that consists of the last updated data on major socio-economic indicators of the countries of the region. The "ECO Statistical Report 2015" with coverage of the last available data on demography, economy and foreign trade of ECO Member States in 2013 intends to give a comprehensive picture of the region through presenting and analyzing the key socio-economic indicators of countries of the region.

According to the Report, total population of ECO region reached to 441 million in 2013 that shares 6.21% of total world population. Growth rate of population of the region shows 1.58 percent increase in the size of population of the region, compared

with the previous year. It indicates a faster trend of increase in the size of population of the region in comparison with total world population changes in the reported year.

Total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of ECO countries at current prices in 2013 passed 1,863 billion US\$ that indicates 2.49 percent share of the ECO region in total world economic performance in the reference year. Total GDP of the ECO region in current prices in 2013 decreased by 2.4 percent, compared to the previous year. Turkey is the first economy of the region with 44.1 percent share from total economic performance of the region in 2013 while small economies of the region, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan have totally less than one percent of total GDP of the region that indicates dramatic differences in the size of economies of countries of the region.

Total foreign trade of goods and services of ECO countries in 2013 amounted to 995 billion US\$ that shows 7.7 percent decrease, compared to the previous year. It shows 1.3 percent decrease in total foreign trade of merchandise while for services a sharp decrease in 2013, equal to 34 percent, is reported. Turkey with 47.4 percent and Tajikistan with 0.7 percent have the highest and lowest share from total foreign trade of goods and services of the region in 2013.

The Report has been supported by charts and maps to give a better picture of the region and its member countries in different areas of study. The Report has utilized the last updated data and statistics from reliable international sources to meet consistent and harmonized data with full coverage of data for all countries of the region. The "ECO Statistical Report 2015" has been compiled by Directorate for Projects, Economic Research and Statistics (PERS). The electronic copy of the Report is available on the ECO webpage (www.eco.int) as well as on the ECO Statistical Network-ECOSTAT (www.ecosn.org).

ECO Annual Economic Report 2013

Review by:
Mohammad Hossein Amini,
ECO Secretariat

The new issue of ECO Annual Economic Report for year 2013 has been published by the ECO Secretariat in July 2013. The current issue of the ECO Annual Economic Report reviews the major development in the socio-economic conditions of the ECO Member States and tries to give a picture of economic performance of the countries in the reference year.

Also, development in the regional cooperation and implementation of regional programmes, projects and activities have been provided in this Report.

Trend of changes in the key macroeconomic indicators of the region shows downtrend in some major indicators of the region in 2013. In the reported year, contribution of economies of the region to total world economy has been 2.49 percent.

In same trend, GDP per capita in whole region shows decrease in the value with the same rate of decline in the total GDP of the region.

Downward trend is also observed in the changes of total Foreign Direct Investment of the region that dropped by 18 percent in 2013 and resulted in less absorption of capital flow from international market by economies of the region. In the meantime, total external debt of the region increased by 11 percent in 2013 that indicates increased burden of financial liabilities by countries of the region.

Decrease in total foreign trade of goods and services of the region with abroad have also impacted the total economic performance of countries of the region in



the reference year.

The Report has been contributed by country reports on economic performance of the Member States in the reference year. Moreover, data and reports from reliable international sources as well as documents of ECO, including reports of decision making bodies of the Organization have been utilized for compilation of the Report.

The "ECO Annual Economic Report 2013" has been compiled by Directorate for Projects, Economic Research and Statistics (PERS). The electronic copy of the report is available on the ECO webpage (www.eco.int).

Map of ECO Member Countries Transit Railways

Review by:
Zukhra Abisheva, ECO Secretariat

In line with Article 6 of TFA which provides for adoption of the prescribed road, railway and inland water transit routes of the ECO Region, the ECO Secretariat managed, with the technical assistance of Gitashenasi, the Geographic and Cartographic Institute of the Islamic Republic of Iran, to publish in 2011 the “ECO Railway and Road Transit Routes Maps”.

The 8th Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications (Ashgabat, June 2011) expressed satisfaction over the published maps and decided that the aforesaid maps need to be revised every three years.

Accordingly, the ECO Secretariat approached the Member States for updating on developments/changes in the status of the road and railway transit routes in their respective territories based on the previous versions of the ECO Road and Railway Transit Routes Maps.

The 12th meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th meeting of Railway Committee of the TTCC (Tehran, May 2015) approved and formally unveiled the new version of the “ECO Railway Routes Map” and recommended for its publication and distribution. Accordingly, ECO Secretariat, with the assistance of Gitashenasi, published the Map in different sizes for different end users within the Region and beyond.

This version of the “ECO Railway Routes Map”, already circulated among the Member States, reflects developments and changes in the ECO railway network since the last version including all newly constructed, under construction and under feasibility studies rail corridors within the ECO Region. Preparations and coordination are ongoing to finalize the new version of the “ECO Road Transit Routes Map” to be adopted by the 7th Road committee of TTCC, scheduled for November 2015 in Turkey.





Int'l Conference on

Allama Iqbal Lahori Thoughts and Philosophy Held in Tehran



Int'l Conference on Allama Iqbal Lahori Thoughts and Philosophy, was organized by the ECO Cultural Institute in collaboration with Huzeher Hunari (Art Department) of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Tehran on 14 June 2015. The Conference was attended by senior officials, diplomats and cultural authorities as well as prominent Iqbal scholars from Pakistan, Iran, India and Afghanistan.

The Conference was graced by the messages from H.E. Mr. Mamnoon Hussain, President and H.E. Mr. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as well as H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Three books "Iqbal: His Life and Our Times", a new look at Allama Iqbal and his thoughts in a practical manner for his followers, published by ECO Cultural Institute in collaboration with Iqbal Academy of Pakistan; "Gabriel's Wings", a poetic Persian translation of Allama Iqbal's Urdu Poetry, published by the ECO Cultural Institute and translated by Mohammad Afsar Rahbeen, renowned Afghan poet; and "Who was Iqbal and what he said?", by Mohammad Baghaee Makan, a



prominent Iranian Iqbal scholar, were unveiled during the Conference. A special commemorative stamp, issued by the Post Office of Islamic Republic of Iran on the occasion, was also unveiled on the sidelines of the



Event.

It is noteworthy that almost 60 papers from different countries had been received by the

Secretariat of the Conference. Eight articles were shortlisted and recognized worthy of appreciation by the Jury. At the end of the Event, an award of \$ 3000 was presented to the top authors from various countries. The Secretariat of the Conference will publish a collection of the selected articles in the near future.

An expert session was also held on June 14, 2015 at the ECO Cultural Institute Headquarters, in which Iqbal

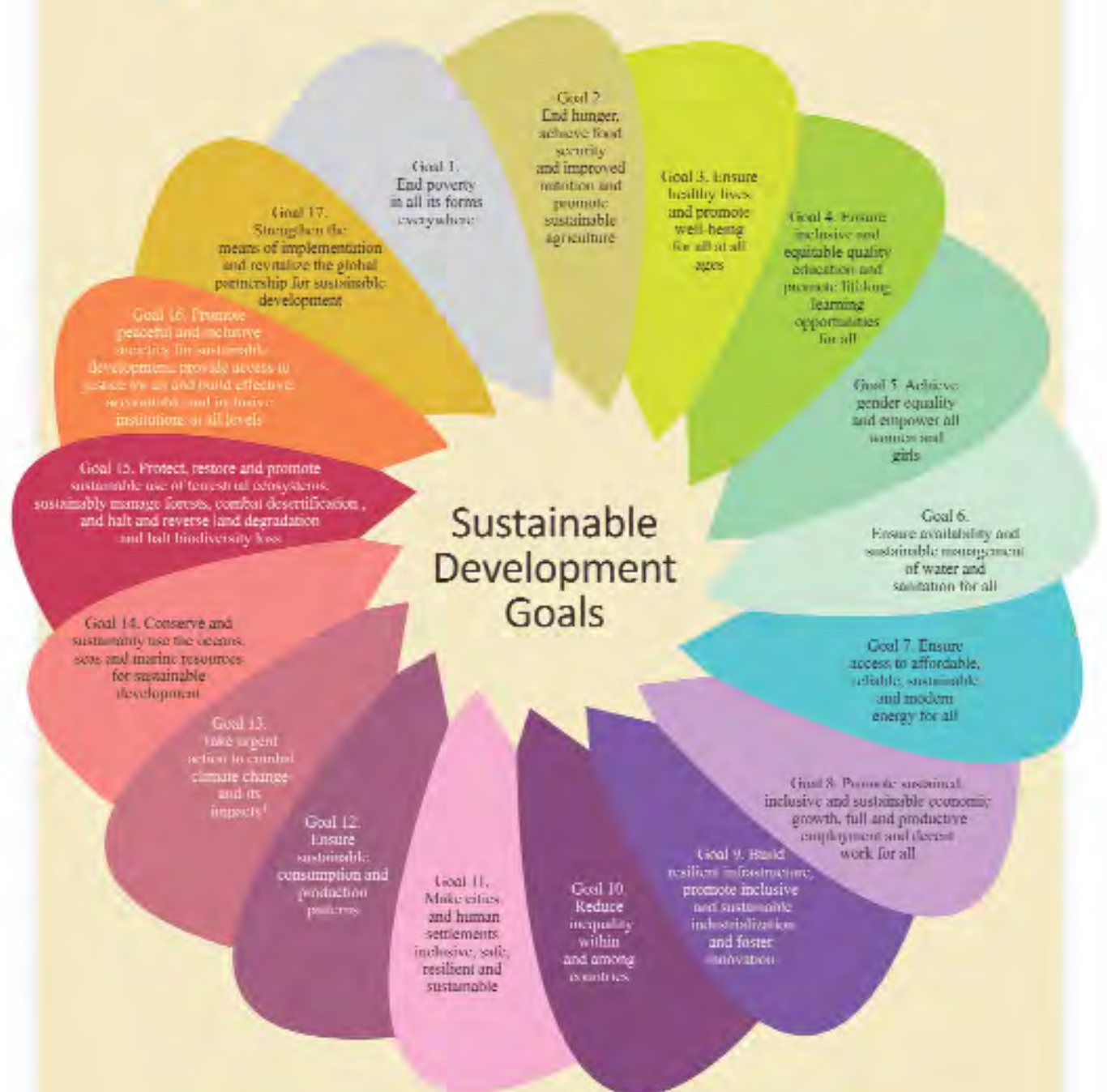
scholars and lecturers delivered their lectures and discussed Allama Iqbal's ideas and thoughts.

The foreign guests of the Event also went on a trip to Isfahan on June 18, 2015, organized by the Huzeher Hunari and met with H.E. Rasool Zargar Pour, Governor of Isfahan Province and the enthusiasts for Iqbal. At the Meeting, the Governor of Isfahan informed about the future programmes in the Province, including launching the "Chair of Iqbal Studies" and "Urdu Faculty" at the Isfahan University.

Allama Iqbal (1877 -1938) is admired as a Pakistani prominent classical poet and a Muslim philosophical thinker by all international scholars. He wrote poetry in Urdu and Persian languages. His vision of an independent state for the Muslims of India inspired the creation of Pakistan.



Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development



ECO as the Most Suitable Regional
Forum to Engage