

25th Meeting

of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC)

1-5 March 2015
ECO Secretariat-Tehran

Report

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Report

The Twenty-Fifth (25th) Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was held on 1-5 March, 2015 at the ECO Secretariat, Tehran. Sectoral Committee meetings were also held on the sidelines of the RPC Meeting.

2. 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 as well as the delegation of ECO Secretariat. The Meeting was also attended by the representatives of the Turkish Cypriot State and the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States as Observers. The representatives of ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated Bodies also participated in the Meeting. The list of participants is placed at **Annex-I**.

Agenda Item No. 1

Inauguration of the Meeting

3. At the outset, the ECO Secretary General H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov, welcomed the visiting delegations to the 25th RPC meeting and presented a comprehensive overview of the main activities of the Organization during 2014 highlighting the major achievements and progress made in various key areas, including trade, investment, transport, communications, energy, environment, agricultural, industry, tourism, economic research, statistics, human development, disaster risk reduction, drugs and organized crimes and the international relations. He also pointed out the impediments faced by the Organization in achieving the desired goals in these sectors. Taking note of the modest level of intra-regional trade, the Secretary General particularly stressed upon the need to expeditiously implement ECOTA and called upon the Member States to complete their respective procedures for its swift implementation. With regard to the lowest percentage for realization of the ECO Calendar of Events in 2014, he requested the Member States to play a proactive role to host the ECO meetings/events in their countries. He emphasized the importance of the 25th RPC meeting keeping in view the implementation of the EPG recommendations and the need to formulate a new ECO Vision for the upcoming decade. He also urged the ECO Member States to actively participate in the ECO meetings. Secretary General also expressed condolences to the people of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on the recent natural disaster which took the lives of many people. A copy of his statement is placed at **Annex-II**.

4. The Meeting was inaugurated by His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Khazaei, Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance and the President of the Organization of Investment and Economic and Technical Assistance of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In his inaugural address, he expressed the hope that the 25th RPC meeting would further strengthen regional cooperation, and provide a way forward to collectively deal with emerging challenges faced

by the Region. He underscored the potential of ECO Region for having successful and effective regional cooperation. While acknowledging the achievements made within the framework of ECO, he stressed on the need for additional measures to further enhance the existing level of cooperation. Referring to the recommendations of the EPG and targets set forth in ECO Vision 2015, he underscored the need to set the new strategic direction for the Organization for the upcoming decade. He also highlighted the importance attached by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the initiatives within the framework of ECO and ensured his country's continued support for ECO's activities and programmes. Mr. Khazaei also expressed his deep sympathy on the death of people in the recent avalanches in Afghanistan. A copy of his statement is placed at **Annex-III**.

Agenda Item No. 2

Election of the Chairman

5. His Excellency Mr. Majid Bizmark, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was elected as the Chairman of the 25th RPC Meeting. In his opening statement, Mr. Bizmark highlighted the importance of the Regional Planning Council and underscored the need for appropriate decisions to help in strengthening the economic cooperation among the Member States.

Agenda Item No. 3

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The Council adopted the following agenda items for its deliberations:

1. Inauguration of the Meeting
2. Election of the Chairman
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Statements by the Heads of delegation on the implementation of the decisions of the 24th RPC
5. Review of the progress of implementation of the ECO approved programmes/projects and consideration of proposals for new programmes and projects for the year 2015-16:
 - Trade and Investment
 - Transport & Communications
 - Energy, Minerals and Environment
 - Agriculture, Industry and Tourism
 - Project, Economic Research & Statistics
 - Human Resources & Sustainable Development
 - Drugs and Organized Crime Coordination
 - ECO Regional Institutions/Specialized Agencies/Affiliated Bodies and International Relations
6. Exchange of views between Secretary General and the Heads of delegation on evaluation of ECO programmes/projects and the New ECO Vision 2016-2025

7. Annual ECO Calendar of Events for 2015-2016
8. Any other business
9. Date and Venue of the next Meeting
10. Adoption of the Report
11. Closing Remarks

7. Upon request by the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Council decided to discuss the state of play of the ongoing ECO reform process under its agenda item 6.

Agenda Item No. 4

Statements by the Heads of delegation on the implementation of the decisions of the 24th RPC

8. The Heads of delegation of the ECO Member States made their statements outlining their country's policies and views on the programmes and activities of the Organization. They also highlighted the progress achieved on the implementation of the decisions taken during the 24th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council. Copies of their statements are placed at **Annex-IV**.

9. The Heads of delegation of the Turkish Cypriot State and the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States also delivered their Statements. Copies of their statements are placed at **Annex-V**.

10. The Presidents and officials of the ECO Regional Institutions/Specialized Agencies/Affiliated Bodies, including ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Science Foundation, ECO Trade & Development Bank, ECO College of Insurance, ECO Regional Center for Risk Management for Natural Disasters, ECO Research Center and ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology also delivered their statements highlighting their activities and progress achieved since last RPC meeting. Copies of their statements are placed at **Annex-VI**.

Agenda Item No.6¹

Exchange of views between Secretary General and the Heads of delegation on evaluation of ECO programmes/projects and the New ECO Vision 2016-2025

a) Implementation of ECO programmes/projects and ECO Vision 2015

11. Under this agenda item, the ECO Secretary General and the Heads of Delegation (HODs) of the Member States thoroughly discussed the state of play of the Organization in terms of implementation of the its projects and programmes as well as the ECO Vision 2015. The Heads of Delegation were briefed by the Secretary General on major factors hampering full implementation of the ECO projects and Vision 2015.

¹ As requested by delegation of Republic of Azerbaijan, the Council agreed to address, in its Report, Agenda Item No.6 before Agenda Item No.5.

12. Addressing the areas of common concerns in the ECO Region, the participating officials highlighted the low rate of intra-regional trade; environmental challenges such as climate change; and resources scarcity such as water scarcity and energy poverty; as well as the transit challenges. They underscored the importance of projects/activities such as ECOTA; and the ECO road and rail corridors and environmental projects for bringing enhanced trade and economic development and prosperity to the whole ECO Region. They also emphasized that any new project/area of cooperation should be result-oriented, regionally important, and related to economic development which also ensures the availability of resources from within and outside the Organization. The idea of creation of special funds for specific projects/activities, as well as involvement of international financial institutions and the ECO-TDB in the ECO projects was also raised by the participants. The need for careful project selection process as well as strong project monitoring system was also raised.

13. On the state of affairs of the ECO specialized agencies/institutions, the participants emphasized the need for evaluation of their performance in the context of the ongoing reform process in ECO with a view to making necessary fine-tuning. Secretariat was requested to prepare an evaluation report. As regards the establishment of the new bodies within ECO, some participants were of the view that no more bodies should be created before reform process comes to an end.

14. The participants also identified budgetary constraints, emanating particularly from the outstanding arrears; and the inadequate professional human resources in the Secretariat as critical factors seriously affecting the ECO effectiveness and performance. The Secretary General reminded the Heads of Delegation that ECO is in the hands of its Member States who provide Secretariat with their financial and human resources. He also mentioned that the ECO had also approached the regional and international donors, including the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and ECO-Trade and Development Bank (TDB) for their possible financial and technical assistance.

15. It was also highlighted that the sense of ownership towards the Organization should be strengthened through more incentives.

b) New ECO Vision 2016-2025 and Reform Process

16. The participants appreciated the ECO Secretariat for preparing a non-paper on the major problems encountering proper implementation of the ECO Vision 2015. While discussing the possible elements for the new ECO Vision 2016-2025, the need for further scrutiny and critical analysis on the weak implementation/failure of the Vision 2015 was raised.

17. For a pragmatic and focused Vision for 2016-2025, the participants believed that lessons learnt from the implementation of the current Vision 2015 shall be taken into consideration. To that end, the following course of action was agreed by participants:

- i. Secretariat will further enrich the non-paper with more analytical accounts of the strengths and weaknesses of the Vision 2015 and its implementation.
- ii. The Secretariat will prepare the preliminary draft of the ECO Vision 2016-2025 taking into account findings/recommendations of the EPG. If needed, Secretariat may also utilize expertise of relevant institutions from within and outside the Region.
- iii. The draft will be shared with the Member States. Upon feedback from the capitals, a new draft text will be prepared by the Secretariat. A working group may then be established by CPR to further elaborate the draft Vision.
- iv. The draft Vision will be developed in line with the trending international issues, including the global post-2015 development agenda and the emerging sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- v. In developing the draft Vision, views of the ECO regional centers, specialized agencies and affiliated bodies should also be sought.
- vi. A meeting(s) of capital based representatives at the appropriate level will then be called for finalization of the draft Vision 2016-2025.
- vii. Secretariat should propose a reasonable timetable for the above process ensuring timely decision by COM.

18. The Republic of Turkey offered to share its experiences within the framework of COMCEC especially its new project implementation mechanism during the preparation of ECO Vision 2016-2025 as well.

19. Upon request by some Member States, an overview was given by the ECO Deputy Secretary General on the state of play of the ongoing reform process within ECO as well as the implementation of the EPG recommendations. He briefed the Heads of Delegation on the activities of the Working Group established for finalization of the outline for the implementation of the EPG recommendations. He said that the Working Group has so far drafted almost 40 decisions for implementation of the EPG recommendations and will continue its work to cover all 91 recommendations. He further informed the participants that EPG recommendations on ECO Vision will be addressed in the process of drafting the ECO Vision 2016-2025.

20. Recalling the mandate given to CPR by the 21st COM meeting, the Heads of Delegation encouraged the Secretariat to submit to CPR the already drafted decisions for approval, expediting the implementation of some EPG recommendations.

21. The Council noted that during the reform process the prioritization of the ECO activities and consolidation and streamlining the functioning of the ECO bodies as well as necessary amendments to the ECO legal documents should be given due attention.

Agenda Item No.5

Review of the progress of implementation of the ECO approved programmes/projects and consideration of proposals for new programmes and projects for the year 2015-16:

- Trade & Investment;
- Transport & Communications;
- Energy, Minerals & Environment;
- Agriculture, Industry & Tourism;
- Projects, Economic Research & Statistics;
- Human Resources & Sustainable Development;
- Drugs & Organized Crime Coordination;
- ECO Regional Institutions/Specialized Agencies/Affiliated Bodies and International Relations

22. The Council elected the following delegates to chair sectoral Committees:

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| (a) Trade & Investment | - Mr. Shovgi Mehdizada Kamal Oglu, Republic of Azerbaijan |
| (b) Transport & Communications | - Mr. Hussein Malaek, the Islamic Republic of Iran |
| (c) Energy, Minerals & Environment | - Mr. Fatih Unlu, Republic of Turkey |
| (d) Agriculture, Industry & Tourism | - Mr. Homan Fathi, the Islamic Republic of Iran |
| (e) Projects, Economic Research & Statistics | - Dr. Ali Bat Khan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan |
| (f) Human Resources & Sustainable Development | - Mr. Ahmad Safari, the Islamic Republic of Iran |
| (g) Drugs & Organized Crime Coordination | - General Sayed Afandi Aga, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan |
| (h) ECO Regional Institutions/Specialized Agencies/Affiliated Bodies and International Relations | - Mr. Riza Kağan Yılmaz, Republic of Turkey |

23. The Sectoral Committees thoroughly discussed the ongoing programmes and projects as well as the areas of future cooperation, including those reflected in the Working Papers prepared by the ECO Secretariat and proposed the sectoral annual work programme/calendar of events to the RPC plenary session for approval. The Council noted, with appreciation, the work of the Sectoral Committees as well as the ECO Secretariat for the proposed ECO Work Programmes and Calendar of Events for 2015-2016, as shown below:

a. Trade & Investment

24. The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for confirming to host the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade in the third quarter of 2015 and

requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to announce exact dates of the meeting at the earliest convenience. The Council also requested the Member States to confirm their participation in the meeting at the appropriate level accordingly.

25. Noting the importance of completing all legal and procedural requirements for implementation of ECOTA, the Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Tajikistan to complete all legal and procedural requirements including submission of Product Lists and ratification of the Annexes to ECOTA to pave the way for the start of implementation of the Agreement.

26. The Council welcomed the Republic of Turkey for announcing to host the 6th Meeting of ECOTA Cooperation Council on April 7, 2015 in Ankara. The Council requested the Contracting Parties to ECOTA to confirm their participation in the meeting.

27. The Republic of Turkey stressed the importance of fulfilling legal and procedural requirements for implementation of ECOTA before the 6th Meeting of ECOTA Cooperation Council, in order to have fruitful deliberations. The Council also welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the Workshop to facilitate the relevant authorities and technical experts of the ECOTA Contracting Parties in the execution of ECOTA in Ankara on April 8, 2015.

28. The Council called on the non-signatory interested Member States to join the ECOTA to fully harness the regional trade potential and enable their business communities to reap the benefits of preferential market access in the region.

29. The Council took note of the postponement of the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Trade Promotion Organizations (ECO-TPOs) in 2014 due to lack of quorum. The Council requested the Member States to confirm their participation in the meeting as the host authorities of Turkey have rescheduled the meeting on May 7, 2015 in Ankara.

30. Taking into consideration the delay in organizing the Meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) established by the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade to prepare and finalize a ECO multi-dimensional trade and investment strategy and prospects of establishing a Free Trade Area in the region, the Council recommended that in order to avoid further delay the contents of the relevant paper prepared by the ECO Secretariat may be discussed in the 5th Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade.

31. The Council welcomed the Republic of Azerbaijan for announcing to host the 4th ECO Business Forum in Baku in the last quarter of 2015, and requested the country to announce the exact dates for the Forum at the earliest convenience.

32. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the ECO-ASEAN Joint Business Forum in 2015 and suggested that the exact dates of the Forum may be finalized in coordination with the ASEAN Secretariat. The Council further recommended that

accommodation and local hospitality to the delegates of the two organizations may be provided by the host authorities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, while the cost of air travel may be borne by the participants themselves.

33. Noting that the meeting of the Joint Working Group established by the 4th Ministerial Meeting to draft an ECO Trade Facilitation Agreement was postponed in the past three occasions due to lack of quorum, the Council requested the Republic of Turkey to consider holding the Meeting of the Joint Working Group in the 2nd quarter of 2015 and requested the country to announce the exact dates of the meeting at the earliest. The Council requested the Member States to participate in the meeting after the dates have been announced by the Republic of Turkey.

34. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to announce the schedule of hosting the 3rd ECO Trade Fair in 2015.

35. Taking into account the significance of the 7th Meeting of the Council of ECO Heads of Customs Administration (CHCA) for strengthening cooperation in customs matters, the Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 7th Meeting of the Council of ECO Heads of Customs Administration (CHCA) along with the Meeting of Subcommittee of Experts of Customs in May/June 2015.

36. The Council took note of the proposal of Islamic Republic of Iran to discuss the Authorized Economic Operators (AEO) programme in the 7th Meeting of CHCA to be held in Tehran in 2015.

37. The Council appreciated the presentation made by the Republic of Turkey on ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank and requested the non-signatory Member States to sign and the signatory countries (except Iran, Pakistan and Turkey) to ratify the Agreement on the Establishment and Operation of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank at the earliest. The Council requested the Member States concerned to convey to the Secretariat the status of their accession to the agreement at the earliest convenience.

38. The Council took note of the delay in ratification of the Articles of Agreement of the ECO Reinsurance Company by the Republic of Turkey and reiterated its request to the country to complete the ratification process of the Company at the earliest convenience. With a view to accelerating commercial activities in the region, the Council requested the remaining Member States to consider joining the ECO Reinsurance Company on priority basis.

39. The Council welcomed the assumption of the Chairmanship of the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) for three years starting in September 2014 and called upon the ECO-CCI to enhance its role for strengthening private sector cooperation in the region.

40. The Council noted with appreciation that the 13th General Assembly and 19th Executive Committee meetings of ECO-CCI along with the 6 Specialized Committees were hosted by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) in September, 2014 in Karachi. The Council requested the Member States to ensure active participation of their National Chambers in the events organized by the ECO-CCI.

41. The Council acknowledged the importance of putting in place an Arbitration system for ECO region and appreciated the ECO-CCI for hosting the workshop on Arbitration among ECO Member States in December 2014 in Tehran in collaboration with ECO Secretariat. The Council took note of the proposal to establish an ECO-CCI Arbitration Centre. The Council requested the Secretariat to send detailed information to the Member States regarding the establishment of ECO-CCI Arbitration Centre.

42. Keeping in view the importance of promoting cooperation among Member States on E-Commerce, the Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to announce the dates for hosting the 2nd Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on E-Trade Cooperation along with the 3rd Regional event on Trade Facilitation and E-Business in 2015.

43. The Council requested the Member States which have not already done so to sign or ratify the Protocol on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen & Transit Drivers, so that the Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen may come into effect without further delay.

44. The Council appreciated the Republic of Kazakhstan for hosting the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Economy and Finance on May 22-23, 2014 in Astana, on the sidelines of the 7th Astana Economic Forum and invited the Member States to give due consideration to implementing the decisions of the Meeting.

45. The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the First Meeting of the Experts of Tax Administration on May 26-28, 2014 in Tehran and took note that the Meeting finalized three draft Documents on ECO Tax Cooperation namely, a)-the Charter for Establishment of ECO Tax Administration Cooperation Society (ECOTAX); b)-ECO Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Taxation and Related Matters; and c)-Agreement on the Exchange of Information in Tax Matters among ECO Member States, in accordance with the decisions of the First Meeting of the ECO Heads of Tax Administration.

46. The Council requested the Member States to volunteer hosting the 2nd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Tax Administration in 2015 to endorse the three draft documents finalized by the First Meeting of the Experts of Tax Administration and submit these documents to the appropriate forums for approval.

47. The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Seminar on "Transfer Pricing: Fundamental Principles and International Developments" on October 6-8, 2014 in

Tehran and requested the Member States to take into account the recommendations made by the seminar for enhancing intra ECO cooperation in tax matters.

48. The Council thanked the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the seminar on Taxpayers Services on November 06-08, 2014 in Baku and requested the Member States to take into account the recommendations made by the seminar for increasing intra ECO cooperation in tax matters.

49. The Council requested the Republic of Turkey to convey new dates to the Secretariat for hosting the Seminar on Risk-Based Analysis Management System in 2015, which could not be held in 2014 due to lack of quorum.

50. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 2nd Meeting of ECO Heads of Central Banks in the fourth quarter of 2015. Noting that the 2nd Meeting of ECO Heads of Central Banks will go a long way in strengthening regional cooperation in the field of monetary policy, the Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to convey to the Secretariat, the schedule of the meeting along with the level of hospitality for the delegates at their earliest convenience.

51. The Council took note that the Secretariat prepared and circulated a Note on the Implementation of the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment (APPI) among the Member States and requested the Member States, which have not already done so, to sign or ratify the Agreement along with the Amendment Protocol at their earliest convenience. The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for signing the Amendment Protocol during the 25th RPC.

52. Recalling the decisions of the 3rd and the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy on setting up an ECO Heads of Investment Promotion Agencies (ECO-IPA) forum on the pattern of ECO Heads of Trade Promotion Organizations, the Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to announce the new dates in 2015 for hosting the First Meeting of the ECO-IPAs, which was earlier scheduled on February 19-20, 2015 in Islamabad but was postponed due to lack of quorum. The Council requested the Member States to participate in the Meeting upon confirmation of the new dates by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

53. The Council thanked the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Turkey for conveying information to the Secretariat regarding the potential of public-private partnership in their countries and requested the other Member States to convey to the ECO Secretariat information highlighting the potential of public-private partnership in the ECO region. The Council agreed that a report on the potential of public-private partnership in the ECO region may be compiled and submitted to the 4th ECO Investment Conference as well as to the Member States.

54. The Council requested the Republic of Tajikistan to confirm hosting of the 4th ECO Investment Conference and announce the dates for the event.

55. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 3rd WTO Seminar for ECO Member States as well as thanked the ECO Trade and Development Bank for agreeing to provide financial assistance for the Seminar. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to convey to the Secretariat the dates and venue and other details for hosting the 3rd WTO Seminar in 2015. The 3rd WTO Seminar will also include discussions on the relationship between the commitments of the ECO Member States arising out of their membership of WTO and regional trading agreements.

56. The Council considering the need to support the accession of the remaining ECO Member States to the WTO reiterated that seminars on WTO may be organized on regular basis. In this respect, the Council requested the other WTO members of the ECO to volunteer hosting such seminars in 2016, as the Republic of Turkey has already hosted two seminars. The Council asked the Secretariat to continue to seek financial and technical support from the relevant international institutions/organizations for arranging the seminars.

57. The Council referring to the relevant decisions of the meetings of the Council of Minister (COM) and RPC invited Member States not having hosted Trade Policy Review Sessions (TPRS) to consider hosting these Sessions. The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for offering to hold its Trade Policy Review Session in 2015.

58. The Council welcomed the membership of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Azerbaijan to the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB).

59. The Council welcomed the signature of the Articles of Agreement of the ECOTDB by the Kyrgyz Republic on February 12, 2015 in Istanbul and requested the Kyrgyz Government to complete the membership process.

60. The Council invited the remaining ECO Member States to start the membership process of the Bank at their earliest convenience.

61. The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey for conveying views to the Secretariat on the draft Terms of Reference (TORs) prepared by ECO Trade and Development Bank to launch a periodic Regional Partnership Forum (RPF) and requested the Bank to expedite organizing the said forum on project basis. The Council reiterated its request to other Member States to also convey their views to the Secretariat on the draft TORs and encourage their relevant national institutions/organizations to actively participate in the Forum.

62. The Council referring to the decisions made by the Meetings of the Council of Ministers (COM), Ministerial Meetings on Commerce/Foreign Trade and on Finance and Economy requested the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB) to create a Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) to assist development projects in the region in close consultation with the ECO Secretariat and the Member States.

63. The Council, referring to the project document signed between the ECO and the UNIDO on March 18, 2014, thanked the UNIDO for its commitment to co-finance the 3rd Phase of ECO-UNIDO Project on Trade Capacity Building of ECO Member States in Standardization and Quality Policy. The Council appreciated the ECO Secretariat and UNIDO for the start of the 3rd Phase of the Project in September 2014 and holding the First Workshop under the Project on February 3-4, 2015 at ECO Secretariat. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to hold the 2nd Workshop under the Project in Ankara.

64. Noting that the 3rd Phase of ECO-UNIDO Project on Trade Capacity Building of ECO Member States in Standardization and Quality Policy would go a long way in shoring up export competitiveness of the Member States and reduction of non-tariff barriers in the region, the Council requested the Member States to provide technical and financial support for the remaining amount required for the completion of the Project. The Council also appreciated the efforts of the ECO Secretariat to secure funding from international organizations for the Project.

65. The Council reiterated its request to the Member States to ensure regular flow of information to achieve the objectives of the ECO Trade Web Portal (www.tradeeco.org). Flow of information to the Web Portal is required mainly for the pages under the title of Member Countries i.e. economic indicators, regulatory regimes, policies, events, contacts/references, enquiries, trademarks, bilateral/multilateral arrangements, WTO related activities of the Member States, and companies forms and links.

66. The Council took note that the Secretariat has initiated the process of upgrading the existing trade web-portal and establishing an ECO Data Base of Traders and Manufacturers and requested the Member States to provide their full support for setting up the data base, which will serve as an effective source of business match-making in the region.

67. The Council noted that since the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade could not be held in 2014, the TORs for conducting the 2nd Phase of the Study on Trading Patterns in ECO Region could not be approved. The Council also noted that the Secretariat had so far not received an appropriate response from the relevant international organizations, namely UNCTAD, ITC and IDB as well as from the Member States for assistance to conduct the Study. The Council requested the Secretariat to submit the status of these developments to the CPR for a final decision on conducting the Study.

68. The Council welcomed the offer of the Iranian Mercantile Exchange Company to host "the First Meeting of the Heads of the Commodity Exchange of ECO Member States" in Tehran in August 2015. The exact date, venue and agenda of the meeting will be communicated to the Secretariat in due course.

69. Considering that many of the meetings/events planned in 2014-15 in the T&I Directorate could not be held due to such reasons as the non-availability of a host country, failure to announce the schedule of the meeting, delay in announcing hospitality details, and

lack of quorum, the Council in order to ensure the implementation of the calendar of events of the Directorate for 2015-2016 recommended that:

- a. the host Member States may announce the schedule of the events/meetings along with the details of hospitality for the delegates well in advance;
- b. the Member States may convey their confirmation to attend the meetings/events well before an event is scheduled;
- c. the Secretariat as per the ECO Rules of Procedure may consider hosting the meetings/events in case no Member State is willing to be the host.

b. Transport & Communications

70. The Council asked the ECO Secretariat to approach ECO Member States for hosting the 9th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport in 2015.

71. Turkmenistan is requested to expedite ratification of the TTFA. Uzbekistan is invited to expedite signing and ratifying the Agreement. The council requested Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to inform the 9th ECO Ministerial Meeting thereon.

72. The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey for having organized the 6th meeting of the Insurance Committee of the TTCC/5th Meeting of ECO Council of Bureaux (ECO-CB) preceded by the Training Workshop on the ECO White Card (Istanbul, 1-2 September 2014).

73. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for providing proposals regarding Financial Guarantee Mechanism as contained in the Annex-II of the White Card Scheme and requested the Member States to convey their comments and views on the proposals to the Secretariat.

74. Iran informed and provided the details of the Web Site for White Card in the Meeting. The information will be circulated to the Member States for their comments and views as soon as it is received by the Secretariat officially. The concerned National Bureaus of the Member States except Turkey are requested to convey to the Secretariat their tariffs table for the Motor Vehicle Third Party Liability insurance in their respective territories for onward submission to the concerned authorities of Iran for their placing on the Web Site.

75. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan informed that its sample print of the White Card will be conveyed to the Secretariat shortly.

76. The Council requested the National Bureaus of the Member States enroute ITI and KTAI corridors to take necessary measures for facilitating the movement of trucks along these two corridors.

77. The Council recommended the 7th Meeting of the Insurance Committee/6th Meeting of the ECO-CB to be held in consultation with Member States, once the issue of Financial Guarantee Mechanism is adequately dealt with. The Meeting will be covered by SSF and TTFA Fund.

78. The Council requested the Member States to expedite confirming their participation at the level of the Head of Railway Administration in 12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC scheduled for 17-18 May 2015 in Tehran. Local hospitality will be provided by host authorities on 1+1 basis. The round-trip airfare for the head of railway administration plus one delegate (on 1+1 basis) from each Member State will be covered by the ECO Secretariat from SSF and TTFA Fund. The Council also asked the Secretariat to encourage participation of the People's Republic of China in the upcoming Meeting and all relevant transport related meetings of the ECO.

79. Iran informed that the "3rd EXPO International Exhibition on Rail Transport and related Industries" will be organized from 17 to 20 May 2015 in Tehran and invited the participating delegations of the Member States in the 12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC to attend the inauguration ceremony of the Exhibition.

80. The Council appreciated the ECO Secretariat for circulating the blueprint of the ECO Railway Transit Routes Map, prepared according to the information provided by the Member States notably, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic and Pakistan. So far, Afghanistan, Iran and Turkmenistan have provided their comments and views on the blueprint. Turkey will convey its comments and views on the blueprint shortly. As the deadline of 20th February 2015 for submission of the modifications to the blueprint has already passed, the Council asked the Secretariat to distribute the final version of the blueprint among the Member States for approval by the 12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC (Tehran, 17-18 May 2015). The Council asked the ECO Secretariat to take appropriate measures to publish the map for public distribution accordingly.

81. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways for organizing the Training Course for Afghan Railway Staff (Yazd, 30th May- 19th June 2014). Afghanistan is requested to expedite conveying to the Secretariat the requisite information on its training needs for onward submission to Turkey for organizing a training course for their railway staff. The concerned authorities of Turkey are requested to convey the dates, venue and details of hospitality concerning the training course for the Afghan Railway staff.

82. The Council expressed hope that the accession of Azerbaijan to the COTIF would be finalized in 2015.

83. The Council noted with satisfaction the organization of the OTIF/UIC/ECO Conference on COTIF (Tehran, 11-12 November 2014) and requested the Member States, the ECO Secretariat, OTIF and UIC to implement the recommendations of the Conference.

84. In line with the decision of 6th Meeting of Road Committee, the Member States except Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Turkey are requested to provide their information regarding the situation of permit exchange with the Member States together with some relevant information on taxes, duties and other charges such as insurance, visa, parking and fuel charges applied during transit operation to the ECO Member States.

85. The Council appreciated the ECO Secretariat for circulating the blueprint of the ECO Road Transit Routes Map, prepared according to the information provided by the concerned authorities of the Member States notably Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan and Turkey. Subsequently, Turkmenistan provided its comments and views on the blueprint. Turkey will convey its comments and views on the blueprint shortly. As the deadline of 20th February 2015 for submission of the modifications to the blueprint has already passed, the Council asked the Secretariat to distribute the final version of the blueprint among the Member States for approval by the 7th Meeting of Road Committee of TTCC to be held in Turkey in 2015.

86. The 7th Meeting of Road Committee of TTCC will be held at the last quarter of 2015 in the Republic of Turkey. The Republic of Turkey is requested to provide the exact dates of the Meeting together with details of hospitality. The Member States are requested to actively participate in the 7th Meeting of the Road Committee of TTCC. The Meeting will be covered from SSF and TTFA Fund.

87. The Council welcomed the signing of a five year action plan (2015) between ECO and IRU to strengthen mutual cooperation and develop joint plans for transit development by road in the region in line with the MoU signed between the two entities.

88. The 4th Meeting of Customs Transit Committee of TTCC will be held on 23rd April 2015 in Kabul, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan preceded by the National Capacity Building Workshops on the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), ADR agreement, and TIR Convention for Afghan officials, scheduled for 21-22 April 2015 with the assistance of UNECE and IRU. The host authorities will provide venue, meals, conference room facilities and local transfer. The Meeting will be covered from SSF and TTFA Fund. Given the significance of the Customs Transit for the full implementation of the TTFA and the converging support of international entities such as IDB and IRU to the Customs Transit component of the TTFA, the Member States are requested to actively participate in this important Meeting. The Council asked the Secretariat to invite the relevant International Organizations such as UNECE, IDB and WCO to the Meeting.

89. The Council requested the Member States that are contracting parties to the said conventions/agreements, (CMR, ADR, TIR) and willing or in a position to share their expertise, to provide resource persons for the National Workshops organized for Afghan officials and inform the Secretariat accordingly.

90. The Member States, except Iran and Turkey, were requested to provide the 4th Meeting of Customs Transit Committee with latest developments concerning the status of their accession to the international Convention on Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (revised Kyoto Convention).

91. The Council noted with satisfaction the three one day National Capacity Building Workshops on TIR Convention, 1975, in Pakistan, in August 2014 and the 3rd ECO/IRU Regional Conference on Facilitation of Transit by Road and TIR Convention in Tehran, 26 October 2014, organized by the ECO Secretariat in collaboration with IRU.

92. The Council asked the Member States and the ECO Secretariat to actively participate in the Meetings of UNECE's Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport, WP.30 and AC.2 to be held in 2015.

93. The Council was informed by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan that its accession to the TIR Convention is in the final stage and a decision in this regard will be conveyed accordingly.

94. The Council decided that the 4th ECO/IRU Regional Conference on Facilitation of Transit by Road and TIR Convention will be held in consultation with IRU in 2015.

95. The workshop on ADR, modernization of border-crossing points and digital tachograph will be held back to back with 7th Meeting of Road Committee of TTCC in the Republic of Turkey at the 4th quarter of 2015.

96. The 7th Meeting of the TTCC will be held at the fourth quarter of 2015 in the Republic of Turkey preceded by the 7th Meeting of Road Committee. The Republic of Turkey is requested to provide the exact date of the Meeting together with details of hospitality. The Member States are requested to actively participate in the 7th Meeting of the TTCC. The Meeting will be covered from SSF and TTFA Fund.

97. Since the 7th Meeting of the TTCC will be held at the last quarter of 2015, the Council agreed that the Work Programme of the TTFA Fund for 2014 to be carried over to 2015.

98. The Council expressed satisfaction with publication and circulation of the final reports on road, railway and insurance components of the ECO/IDB Joint Project among the Member States.

99. The Council asked the ECO-TDB to specify the dates and venue of the regional partnership forum for implementation of the ECO Railway and Road Network Development

Plans (ECORNDP). The Member States were requested to inform the Secretariat about the possible contributions of their respective countries in organizing this Forum.

100. The Member States were requested to take necessary actions to prepare comprehensive descriptions of their projects envisaged in the ECO Road and Railway Network Development Plans to be presented at the Forum.

101. The Council asked the ECO-TDB/Secretariat to contact and invite all relevant stakeholders and potential financiers including relevant national, regional and international organizations as well as funding institutions, including IDB, ADB, and WB to the forum with a view to start exploring the possibility and encouraging financing of the projects envisaged in the ECORNDP.

102. The Meeting was briefed on the results of the interagency meeting, held between ECO and IDB in December 2014 at the head-quarters of IDB, where the parties discussed future actions on the remaining component of the ECO/IDB Joint Project on implementation of TTFA to cover customs related provisions of TTFA.

103. The Council requested the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) to convey the final status of internal process for commencement of Customs Component “preparation of a new regional program for customs transit and modernization of border crossing points in the region” of ECO/IDB Joint Project for implementation of TTFA.

104. It also requested Member States and ECO Secretariat to pursue required measures in order to implement feasibility study on implementation of the TTFA’s customs related provisions once it is finalized, in a time-bound manner.

105. The Council took note that this study will be undertaken based on the international standards and best practices geared towards promotion of functional and technical solutions and shall be based on inputs provided by the Customs Administrations of the Member States. Noting the successful experience of the Republic of Turkey in modernization of its border crossing points, Turkey’s best practice may be utilized as a model for this Study.

106. The Council welcomed the initiative for utilizing the experience of Turkey and requested the concerned authorities of the Republic of Turkey to provide their assistance for conducting this study inter alia through organizing a workshop/field visit on cross-border points Customs best practices.

107. The Republic of Turkey expressed its readiness to organize a field visit to its border crossing points for the ECO Member States once it receives an official Note from the Secretariat.

108. The Republic of Turkey provided the details of information on the Silk Road Customs Cooperation Initiative (SRCCI) and invited the Member States to involve in the process to

stimulate our common goals and benefit from the experience of customs modernization and international supply chain security.

109. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for organizing the 3rd meeting of the Trilateral Coordination Committee (TCC) on construction of Railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran (Tehran, 2nd March 2014), 1st High Level Working Group (HLWG) Meetings of the ECO Container Trains on Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty (Tehran, 2-3 March 2014), and the 8th High Level Working Group Meeting on ECO Container Train on ITI route (Tehran, 4th March 2014).

110. The Council took note of the status of implementation of the MoU between Great Anatolia Logistic Organization (BALO) and Pakistan Railways regarding the freight transport services of Istanbul-Tehran-Islamabad ECO Container Train. The enroute Member States were requested to make concerted efforts for regular operations of the train.

111. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to convey to the Secretariat the exact dates and details of hospitality for 9th HLWGM of the ITI train in one month through diplomatic channel.

112. Turkey proposed that the issue of possibility of extension of the ITI Train to south Asia will be included in the Agenda of the forthcoming HLWG of the ITI train to facilitate and keep the route operational.

113. The Council asked the ECO-CCI to facilitate and promote their activities on the trilateral MoU on marketing and promotion of ITI train.

114. The Council welcomed the decisions of the 1st Meeting of the HLWG of the ECO Container Trains on Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty on functioning of HLWG as the coordinating body of the Trains with the assistance of the ECO Secretariat and expressed satisfaction with the adoption of the report of the Feasibility Study on the ECO Container Trains on Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty routes which shall serve to facilitate regular and smooth functioning of the Container Trains.

115. The Council appreciated Turkmenistan for providing time table and tariff rates for the ECO Container Train on Istanbul-Almaty route. Turkey and Iran have already provided their revised time table for this route. Since no changes in the time table were introduced by the concerned authorities of Turkmenistan, the other two enroute Member States (Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan) were requested to provide their concurrence with previously agreed timetable.

116. The enroute Member States were requested to provide their support to the enhanced transportation of goods from China to Turkey through the Istanbul-Almaty route. In this regard and further to the assistance sought by the Istanbul based private company (Demiryolu Logistics), the Council, while appreciating Turkey for its readiness to extend support to the business industry on the subject, encouraged serious involvement of the private sector dealing

with transportation of goods in all ECO Routes including the one from China to Turkey through the Istanbul-Almaty route and asked the concerned authorities of the Republic of Turkey to keep in contact with its private sector to provide the detailed information on technical and other arrangements including tentative dates of dispatching train along this route. The enroute Member States were requested to provide the Secretariat with their focal points and their contact details in this regard.

117. The Council asked the Secretariat to coordinate with the enroute Member States on holding the 2ndHLWG Meeting of the ECO Container Trains on Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty routes. Local hospitality will be provided by the host country. The airfare will be covered from SSF and the Fund for the Feasibility Study of the said train.

118. The enroute Member States updated the meeting on the latest developments in their respective territories of the railway connecting China to Europe through Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan informed the meeting that as the first phase, feasibility study of KTAI railroad (about 300 KM) is being conducted and the second phase from Mazar-e-Sharif to Kunduz and Sherkhan Bandar with Tajik border (about 210 KM) is also expected to be completed in 2015. 60% of the KTAI route in the territory of Afghanistan will be completed once these studies are finalized. The Kyrgyz Republic informed that they are taking measures to attract Chinese Company to undertake the Feasibility Study in the territory of Kyrgyzstan. According to the agreement between the two parties, this study would be finalized in 2016. Once the study is finalized, the ECO Secretariat may help the Kyrgyz Republic to explore the possibility of finding the funding resources for the Project.

119. Tajikistan informed that an expert level meeting of Railway authorities of Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran and China was held in December 2014. A steering working committee was decided to be established and will be held in 1st half of this year in Bishkek. The date of the ECO Senior Officials' meeting of enroute countries/Ministerial Meeting of the Project on construction of railway from China to Europe through Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran will be specified in this Committee. The airfare will be covered from SSF for the ECO Senior Officials' meeting. Local hospitality will be provided by the host authorities. The Council stressed the role and the continued relevance of ECO in coordinating this Project and requested all the enroute Member States to support the ECO Secretariat in fulfilling its function and mandates concerning the Project.

120. The Council expressed satisfaction with the inauguration of the railway between Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran (KTI) by the honorable Presidents of the enroute Member States on 3rdDecember 2014 in Inche Boroon/Akyayla border.

121. The Islamic Republic of Iran informed that the agreement on development of the regulations for technological process of operation of Akyayla-Inche Boroon stations would be signed soon. Issues on technical matters such as harmonization of tariff rates along this route will be discussed by the enroute Member States.

122. The Council asked the Secretariat to coordinate with Turkmenistan for holding the 1st High Level Working Group of KTI railway in 2015. Local hospitality will be provided by the host authorities. Air fare will be covered from SSF.

123. The Council urged expeditious establishment of a commercial working group which will be convened every six months through ECO-CCI in order to study the problems and situation of cargo transport and offer guidelines to attract and increase cargo for KTI Train and report back to 12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC, scheduled for 17-18 May 2015 in Tehran and regularly report to its HLWG Meeting.

124. The Council appreciated the enroute Member States for conveying business plans on their projects in their respective territories along Qazvin-Rasht- Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) Railway. The ECO Secretariat will coordinate holding of the 3rd HLWG Meeting of the project with the enroute Member States through diplomatic channel.

125. The Council welcomed the decisions of 3rd High Level Working Group (HLWG) meeting of the Kyrgyz Republic-Tajikistan- Afghanistan- Iran (KTAI) Road Transport Corridor (Tehran, 27 October 2014) and expressed with satisfaction the adoption of the Terms of Reference (TOR), prepared by the ECO Secretariat for field study along this Corridor. The Council asked the Secretariat to approach the CPR in case an extra amount would be required to undertake the study.

126. The enroute Member States, except Tajikistan, are requested to take necessary measures to accede to the ADR Agreement and, except Iran and Tajikistan, to the Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods to ease the customs clearance procedures at the border crossing points. Afghanistan is also requested to take necessary measures to accede to the two conventions i.e. Road Traffic, 1968 and Road Signs and Signals, 1968.

127. The enroute Member States were requested to provide the Secretariat with regular updates on the infrastructural developments in their territories. Afghanistan was requested to keep the Secretariat abreast of the progress report for the remaining 231 KM missing link between Heart and Mazar-e-Sharif by providing quarterly updates. The enroute Member States were requested to perform the requirements of developing the TIR Park places along KTAI corridor.

128. The 4th HLWG Meeting of the KTAI Road Corridor will be held in Tajikistan. The concerned authorities of the Republic of Tajikistan were requested to convey the exact dates of the Meeting together with details of hospitality.

129. While stressing the importance of utilizing the common ToR for conducting the field study along ITI and KTAI Road Corridors, the Council requested the Republic of Turkey to

expedite providing its comments and views on the revised ToR, keeping the views and comments of the International Consultant into account.

130. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to communicate with the Secretariat about the exact dates of the 4th Meeting of the HLWG on ITI Road Corridor by the end of March 2015. Local hospitality will be provided by the host authority.

131. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to take necessary measures to accede to the ADR Agreement and Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods.

132. The Council, while expressing its regrets for losing the international consultant, who accomplished the Study under ECO/IDB Joint Project on implementation of TTFA and was mandated to conduct the field study along the ITI and KTAI Road Corridors, asked the Secretariat to follow the previously exercised practice for recruiting a new international consultant for conducting the field study along these two corridors.

133. Afghanistan, while expressing satisfaction for reactivation of TIR Convention in Afghanistan, informed about difficulties in obtaining visas by its own drivers for passage through the ECO Member States, the same issue was raised by Iran. The Council emphasized the importance of the visa acquisition facilitation for drivers of all Member States as well as the issue of safety and security and requested the Member States to take necessary measures in this regard in their respective territories. The 1st ECO senior consular officials meeting will be held in May/June 2015 in Tehran. The local hospitality will be provided by host authority. The airfare will be covered from SSF. The Member States were requested to actively participate in the Meeting.

134. The Council was briefed on the latest status of providing the required documents by associations from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan and requested the Republic of Turkey to accelerate finalizing the registration process of the ECO Logistics Providers Associations Federation (ECOLPAF) in Istanbul. National Associations of other Member States, who have not yet provided requisite documents, were requested to expedite doing so. The Council asked the ad hoc committee comprising of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, to inform the Secretariat on the preparatory work and organizational documents enlisted in the Statutes and provide the proposed agenda for the General Assembly meeting. First meeting of the General Assembly of ECOLPAF will be held in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, once all related arrangements are finalized.

135. The Islamic Republic of Iran expressed their concurrence with the proposal of Turkey for establishment of a Working Group on Civil Aviation. The Council asked the other Member States except Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey to convey their comments and views on this proposal at the earliest.

136. The landlocked Member States are requested to expedite conveying to the Secretariat their specific needs and proposals for utilizing facilities of the ECO Zone in Chabahar. Subsequently, the concerned authorities of Iran may provide the Secretariat with the action plan for activating the ECO Zone in Chabahar at the earliest. Pakistan delegation requested the Secretariat to provide the 'specific information' about the forum/meeting where it was decided that the ECO Zone would be established in Chabahar.

137. The Council appreciated the ECO Postal Staff College (ECO PSC) for the two weeks international course organized on "Managing Post as a Business (Opportunity and Challenges)" (Islamabad, 7th to 25th April 2014) and the offer to organize a one week course for the ECO Member States on "Postal Aviation and Mail Security" (Islamabad, 16-20 March 2015) and a three week course on Award of Fellowships on "Operations Management" (Islamabad, 6-24 April 2015). The Member States were requested to actively participate in the training courses proposed by ECO PSC.

138. The Council requested the Republic of Tajikistan to consider hosting the 6th Meeting of the ECO Postal Authorities in consultation with its relevant authorities. The interested Member States were invited to sign the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) through postal services for Online Money Order System on the sidelines of the Meeting.

139. The Council requested the Member States, except Azerbaijan and the Kyrgyz Republic, to expedite providing their comments and views on the draft Terms of Reference for conducting the Feasibility Study for development of the ICT and Telecommunications infrastructure connectivity and services in the ECO Member States.

140. The Council asked the ECO Secretariat to start preparatory arrangements to recruit the international consultant according to the exercised practice at the Secretariat and commence this study with support and technical assistance of international organizations such as ITU and ESCAP. The Council recommended the CPR to allocate additional funds from FSGP Fund in case the extra cost will be required for conducting the Feasibility Study.

141. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to convey the response of its concerned authorities to the Secretariat regarding the interconnectivity of the Optic Fiber Cable at Mirjaveh border point with Iran.

142. Upon the suggestion of the concerned authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the meeting agreed to hold the "1st Meeting of the HLWG of ICT Communication Regulatory Authorities", the "1st ECO Expert Group Meeting on ICT Security and Cyber Crime" and the "1st Preparatory Meeting for establishment of the ECO ICT Provider Association", subject to finalization of the Feasibility Study for development of the ICT and Telecommunications infrastructure.

143. The Member States, except Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic and Turkey, are requested to provide their comments and views on the “Preliminary Report on Joint ECO Telecommunication Satellite” which will be considered by the 2nd ICT Ministerial Meeting.

144. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to communicate to the Secretariat the dates for holding the 2nd ICT Ministerial Meeting.

145. The Council welcomed the presentation made and acknowledged the information provided by the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Trans Eurasian Information Super Highway Project (TASIM) in the Meeting.

146. The Council asked the ECO Secretariat to keep its contacts and enhance its cooperation with international organizations. It also asked to expedite finalization of the Action Plan in the context of the trilateral MoUs among ECO-IDB-UNESCAP and ECO-IDB-UNECE for implementation of the Trilateral MoUs.

c. Energy, Minerals & Environment

- **Energy**

147. The Council welcomed the readiness of the Republic of Turkey to host the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum in November 2015 in Ankara, and requested the Member States to participate in the event at the highest possible level.

148. The Council requested the Member States (except Afghanistan and Turkey) to submit feedbacks on the implementation of the ECO Plan of Action (PoA) on Energy/Petroleum Cooperation (2011-2015) by the end of May 2015. The Council also requested the Secretariat to prepare an evaluation report (within one month after getting feedbacks) of the PoA on the basis of received feedbacks with a view of its possible extension and/or revision.

149. The Council noted the importance of the High Level Experts Group (HLEG) Meetings on Energy in advancement of ECO's energy agenda and welcomed the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 3rd HLEG Meeting on Energy on 25-26 May 2015 in Tehran. The Council further requested the host to inform about hospitality details for the event and called on all Member States to participate in this preparatory event for the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Energy scheduled to be held in November 2015 in Turkey.

150. The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 1st Trilateral Meeting (Iran-Turkey-Secretariat) on "ECO Regional Electricity Market" (REM) on 25-26 September 2014 in Ankara and requested concerned Member States to continue regular dialogue within existing framework, as well as, through new platforms for dialogue to be introduced by the ECO Secretariat.

151. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 2nd Iran-Turkey Bilateral Meeting (in line with the agreement during the Council, the title of the Meeting has been changed) on ECO REM on 19-20 April 2015 with coordination of the ECO Secretariat.

152. The Council also welcomed the readiness of the Republic of Turkey to host the 2nd Experts Meeting on "Establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market" in 2016, and called for active participation of interested Member States in the event.

153. The Council while reiterating its support to the elaboration of "Feasibility Study for establishment of ECO REM through harmonizing and merging the electricity markets of Iran and Turkey", mandated the ECO Secretariat to explore the possibilities of funding feasibility study through submission to pertinent financial/development agencies, seed financing from concerned Member States, as well as through ECO Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FGPF).

154. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for hosting the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Experts Group and 5th Workshop on Renewable Energy Sources (RES) on 15-17 September 2014 in Kabul and requested the Member States and the ECO Secretariat to implement the recommendations of these events, in particular project-oriented elements. The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the 4th Meeting of the ECO Experts Group and 6th Workshop on RES in 2015/16.

155. In line with the report of the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Experts Group on RES, the Council requested the Member States to consider establishment of "Virtual University Network" (VUN) on renewable energy among the relevant academic circles of the Member States which would contribute to awareness raising and knowledge sharing among the Member States.

156. The Council commended efforts on knowledge sharing and capacity building on RES and urged the Member States (except Iran) to submit national data on renewable, as well as to provide (except Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Tajikistan and Turkey) relevant Country Report/Questionnaire on RES, for further integration into the (<http://abemda.az/eco>) "ECO Data Information Network on RES" (ECO DIN on RES) portal established by the State Agency on Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources (SAARES) of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Council also welcomed the idea of possible merging of ECO DIN on RES with IRENA's Renewable Readiness Assessment (RRA) portal in the future. The Council requested the Republic of Azerbaijan to upload submitted RES data to ECO DIN portal and make it operational as soon as possible.

157. The Council welcomed recent reinvigoration of ECO-IRENA interaction and mandated the Secretariat to continue this dialogue to create synergies and benefit from complementarities. Furthermore, the Council mandated the Secretariat to explore the possibility of organizing ECO Ministerial Roundtable on Renewable Energy on the sidelines of the next IRENA Assembly in January 2016 in Abu Dhabi.

158. The Council while appreciating the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host training courses on Oil and Gas in the second half of 2015 based on list of priority courses submitted by the Member States, requested Iranian authorities to provide the Secretariat with their elaborated proposal including trainings dates, venues and hospitality details by end of May 2015.

159. The Council welcomed the offer of the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) to host the "1st Meeting of the ECO Public and Private Sector Energy/Petrochemical Consortium/Companies" in cooperation with ECO-CCI and ECO Secretariat in Tehran in December 2015, and agreed that this event may further facilitate B2B energy dialogue within the region and beyond. The Council also called the Member States to submit to the Secretariat lists of their capable companies active in the field of energy and petrochemical (except Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Turkey) and provide feedbacks on Roadmap for Establishment of the ECO Energy Consortium (except Tajikistan and Turkey) by end of April 2015.

160. The Council took note of the information given by the ECO Secretariat regarding the establishment of a Trust Fund for financing the high priority ECO regional energy projects and since four Member States (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey) have already provided their views/comments on this idea, requested the rest Member Countries to submit the same by the end of September 2015 and mandated the Secretariat to prepare the tentative modalities/concept paper for this fund.

161. The Council took note of the proposal by the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the Meeting on proposal to establish the refinery association in ECO region in December 2015 in Tehran and requested the Member States to actively participate in the meeting and requested Iran to submit to the Secretariat elaborated proposal on the subject in compliance with the Secretariat's Project Profile Form through official channels by end of March 2015. The Council also took note of intervention from one Member State on advising to refrain from establishment of new associations till completion of the reform process within the Organization.

162. The Council while expressing its concern over lack of interest and proper coordination from relevant national focal points, as well as failed reporting and feedback mechanism requested the Member States to update/nominate their National Focal Points (NFPs) in relevant fields.

163. The Council recommended the Secretariat to maximize its efforts to strengthen its cooperation with relevant international and financial entities, including but not limited to, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), United Nations Industrial Development

Organization (UNIDO), as well as relevant regional and international financial/development cooperation agencies.

- **Minerals**

164. The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 2nd Meeting of ECO Heads of Surveying and Mapping Organizations on 8-9 May 2014 in Ankara, and called for Member States and the ECO Secretariat to follow-up with decisions and recommendations of the event. The Council recommended the Secretariat to communicate with the Member States on hosting the 3rd Meeting of ECO Heads of Surveying and Mapping Organizations in 2015/16.

165. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 5th ECO Minerals Experts Group meeting on 16-18 November 2014, and took note of the decisions of the Meeting. The Council also welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 6th ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting back-to-back with the ECO Mining and Geosciences Conference in the second half of 2016.

166. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 1st Meeting of ECO Geomatics Committee on 20-21 October 2015, and called for active participation of all Member States in the event by the fully authorized representatives of the Heads of Surveying and Mapping Organizations of the Member States to review/approve the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) of "ECO Geomatics Committee" prepared by Iranian National Cartographic Centre (NCC).

167. The Council while appreciating the work done by the Project Manager (Geological Survey of Iran) within the Contract agreement on ECO Seismic HAZARD Reduction Programme (ECO-SHARP), welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 1st Workshop on ECO Seismic HAZARD Reduction Programme (ECO-SHARP) on 10-12 May 2015 in Tehran and requested the Member States to ensure participation in this important event. The Council also welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 2nd Workshop on ECO Seismic HAZARD Reduction Programme (ECO-SHARP) in 2016. The Council requested the Iranian side to provide all Member States with the comprehensive information about ECO-SHARP well in advance of the Workshop.

168. While appreciating the Iran Minerals Processing Research Center (IMPRC) for hosting the Workshop on "Ferrous and Base Metal Mineral Processing" on 9-10 September 2014 in Karaj, the Council requested the Member States to volunteer hosting the 2nd Workshop on "Ferrous and Base Metal Mineral Processing" by June 2015, otherwise the IMPRC would host the event on 8-9 September 2015.

169. The Council while expressing its concern over lack of interest and proper coordination from relevant national focal points, as well as failed reporting and feedback mechanism

requested the Member States to update/nominate their National Focal Points (NFPs) in relevant fields of Secretariat's Minerals domain.

- **Environment**

170. The Council appreciated the ECO Secretariat for organizing the ECO Consultative Ministerial Meeting on Environment on the sidelines of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in June 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya and requested the Member States and the ECO Secretariat to follow up the recommendations of the Meeting. The Council mandated the Secretariat to explore the possibilities of organizing the similar sideline gathering for the next UNEA in 2016.

171. The Council appreciated the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanization for hosting the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment in December 2014 in Istanbul and urged all member states and the ECO Secretariat to pursue the implementation of key outcomes/recommendations and key action points envisaged in the Istanbul Declaration.

172. The Council took note of the Report of the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment and asked the ECO Secretariat to submit the formal request along with provisional agenda to the Republic of Azerbaijan on hosting the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment for further consideration and decision by the relevant authorities of Azerbaijan.

173. The Council requested all Member States to consider hosting the forthcoming ECO Ministerial Meetings on Environment to ensure proper follow up to the decisions of the previous Ministerial meetings.

174. The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the 6th Working Group Meeting on Environment (pending from 2009) to elaborate the agenda and other modalities for the Ministerial Meeting in coordination with the ECO Secretariat and ECO-IEST sometime in 2015/16.

175. In line with the outcome recommendations of the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment (15-17 December 2014, Istanbul), the Council commended the Republic of Turkey for hosting the proposed "ECO Safranbolu Ministerial Conference on Climate Change" (on 27 March), preceded by a preparatory Conference of experts on 25-26 March 2015 in order to make tentative preparations and to develop a climate change agenda of the ECO region before new legally binding agreement on climate change, which is expected to be adopted in 2015 in Paris and requested the Member States to ensure their high level participation in the Conference.

176. The Council mandated the ECO Secretariat to introduce, in cooperation with the UNEP and ECO-IEST, the most appropriate outline/format for the State of Environment (SoE) report for ECO region by mid-2015, taking into account the existing national, regional and

international models, including recently introduced and globally accepted UNEP Live model in line with the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment. The Member States are requested to cooperate with the ECO Secretariat and ECO-IEST for preparation of the first SoE report through submitting regular national reports.

177. The Council welcomed and appreciated the recent activities of the Secretariat for reinvigoration of ECO-UNEP interaction and called on the Secretariat to proceed with the mandate given by the Ministers of Environment in Istanbul to enhance cooperation with UNEP, to make necessary endeavours to secure observer status with UNEP, as well as to pursue enhanced synergy with UNEP in key areas of mutual engagement like preparation of the State of Environment (SoE) Report for ECO region, air pollution and dust haze, management of ecosystem services, capacity building and knowledge sharing, energy efficiency and relevant cross-cutting issues, as well as revision of the Framework Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming (2011-2015) for ECO Member States.

178. The Council deliberated the issue of change of status of the ECO-IEST from project based into an ECO Regional Category (B) Centre and acknowledged the important and proactive role of ECO-IEST in implementation of ECO's environmental agenda and supplementing the Secretariat's expertise and activities in relevant domain. The Council further agreed that the change of status of the Institute into an ECO Regional Category (B) Centre will be considered in line with the outcomes of the ongoing reform process within the ECO.

179. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for reaffirming their readiness to pay its voluntary contribution of 100,000 USD for the implementation of project profile Framework Plan of Action on Environmental Cooperation and Global Warming (2011-2015) and requested Iran, ECO Secretariat and ECO-IEST to complete the legal and fiscal/financial adjustments/requirements by end of June this year and proceed with the implementation of this project as envisaged in the Report of the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment.

180. The Council appreciated ECO-IEST for presenting outline of the regional project on Combat Desertification with Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storm in the ECO region and requested the ECO Secretariat to allocate 50,000 USD from the Feasibility General Purpose Fund (FGPF), which will allow for ECO-IEST to prepare elaborated project proposal for further submission to relevant financial institutions/donors. The Council requested the Member States to cooperate actively with the Secretariat and ECO-IEST during the implementation phase of this project.

181. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for submitting two reports of the Feasibility Study on "Development and Harmonization of Environmental Standards in ECO Region" and requested the latter to submit the remaining project reports to the Secretariat in line with indicated timeframe reflected in the Contract signed between the ECO Secretariat

and the Iranian authorities. The Council requested the Member States to cooperate actively with the Project Manager for effective implementation of the Study.

182. The Council appreciated the ECO Secretariat for organizing ECO-UNFF the Tehran Workshop on Harnessing Climate Change Financing for Sustainable Forest Management in the ECO Region in April/May 2014 and commended the Member States, namely, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkey, Uzbekistan, as well as Tehran Process Secretariat for Low Forest Cover Countries (TPS LFCC) and ECO-IEST, for providing specific proposals on sustainable forest management, which were submitted for further consideration by UNFF. The Council also welcomed recent dialogue between ECO Secretariat and UNFF and while taking note on upcoming visit of the UNFF consultant team from New York and Geneva to the ECO Secretariat in March for preparing regional strategy on sustainable forest management, requested the Secretariat to pursue the outcomes and recommendations of this visit. The Council requested the Member States to coordinate with the Secretariat and ensure provision of proper feedbacks/reporting mechanism for smooth and efficient implementation of envisaged regional strategy.

183. The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 2nd Experts Group Meeting on Biodiversity (4-5 November 2014, Antalya) and called upon the member States (except Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Iran) to furnish their views/comments on the draft "Work Plan on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2016-2020)". The Council requested the Member States and the Secretariat to consider recommendations of Antalya Meeting for further implementation and facilitation.

184. The Council noted that pivotal role of the National Focal Points (NFPs) in respective fields related to environment, such as climate change, biodiversity etc. in transmitting necessary data on fast-track basis to enable the ECO Secretariat to ensure enhanced communication system. For this purpose, the Member States are to provide to the Secretariat corresponding details of their NFPs dealing with respective subjects upon request from the Secretariat.

185. The Council while appreciating the Republic of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Turkey for providing their National Progress Reports (NPRs) on Environment for 2013, requested the other Member States to do the same at the earliest based on the submitted format. Moreover, the Council agreed that NPRs should be submitted to the ECO Secretariat annually within the first quarter of each calendar year to help identify weaknesses and gaps to be addressed. The Council also noted the importance of ECO Bulletin on Environment in raising environmental awareness in the region and requested the Member States to provide to the ECO Secretariat with their contribution for the next issues on a timely manner.

186. The Council appreciated a short briefing given by President of ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) regarding its observer membership with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and called upon the ECO and Member States to establish interaction with the IPBES in order to avail maximum dividends

from the latter's experience and best practices in the relevant fields of environment and climate change and biodiversity.

d. Agriculture, Industry & Tourism

• **Agriculture**

187. The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the 6th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, preceded by the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in their respective countries, in 2015.

188. The Council requested the concerned authorities of the Republic of Turkey to announce the exact date for the 2nd Meeting of the Programme Steering Committee of the ECO Regional Coordination Centre (ECO-RCC) for Implementation of the ECO Regional Programme for Food Security (ECO-RPFS), scheduled to be held in May 2015 in Ankara. The Council requested from the Steering Committee to consider the revision of the ECO-RPFS, if necessary, during its second meeting.

189. The Council requested the Member States which have not yet done so, to nominate their ECO-RCC Programme Steering Committee Members. The Council also requested the Member States to participate and extend their support to the ECO-RCC's forthcoming activities. In this context, the Member States are requested to prepare Project Proposals on Food Security within the framework of RPFS and convey the same for coordination to the said Centre.

190. The Council while appreciating the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 1st Workshop on Food Security, welcomed the offer for organizing of the 2nd Workshop on Enhancing Food Security in the ECO Region scheduled to be held in May 2015, in Ankara, and requested to send the exact date to the Secretariat.

191. The Council thanked the ECO-RCC for preparing the "Working Principles of the ECO-RCC for Implementation of the ECO-RPFS" and requested its finalization during the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting of the ECO-RCC scheduled to be held in May 2015, in Ankara, the Republic of Turkey.

192. The Council thanked the Member States and the ECO Secretariat for including ECO-RPFS issue under agenda item of the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy held on May 22-23, 2014 in Astana-Kazakhstan and requested the Member States to consider providing funds for implementation of the ECO-RPFS, so as to facilitate securing financial assistance from the donor institutions/organizations.

193. The Council requested the ECO-RCC to cooperate with the ECO Secretariat for preparing bankable project documents for the components of the ECO-RPFS.

194. The Council thanked the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) for its activities carried out so far and requested concerned authorities of Azerbaijan/Pakistan to consider organizing the 7th ECOSA International Seed Trade Conference and Seed Trade Fairs and 5th General Assembly Meeting in their respective countries, in 2015.

195. The Council also requested the Republic of Azerbaijan to send new date for organizing the Workshops on Field Control, which was postponed due to lack of quorum. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to organize the Workshop on Plant Variety Protection (PVP) in July 2015 in Karaj. The Council requested the concerned authorities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to send the exact date and venue for the Workshop on Seed Testing scheduled to be held in 2015, Pakistan. The Council requested the Member States to prepare Project Proposal in collaboration with ECO Secretariat for providing the financial assistance for the said Workshops.

196. The Council thanked the FAO, concerned Member States and the ECO Secretariat for the successful implementation of the ECO/FAO-SEC Project on Seed Sector Development in the region, which will be completed in April 2015. The Council also thanked the Republic of Turkey for organizing Regional Seed Workshop and Seed Fair held on 5-10, January, 2015 in Istanbul.

197. The Council appreciated signing an agreement by the ECO Secretariat and the Ministry of National Food Security and Research of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for provision of USD 50 000 support from the ECO-FGFP for conducting the activities for establishment of the ECO Center for Efficient Utilization of Water for Agriculture (ECO-CEUW). The Council also requested the concerned authorities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to officially confirm the dates for the 2nd Working Group Meeting on the Establishment of the ECO-CEUW preliminarily scheduled to be held on April 14-15, 2015, Islamabad and the Member States to confirm their participation in the said meeting.

198. The Council appreciated the finalization of the Draft Statute of the ECO Regional Center for Risk Management of Natural Disasters (ECO-RCRM), included the views of some Member States, which to be submitted to one of the CPR Meetings for endorsement/finalization. The said Statute will be submitted to the next COM Meeting for final approval. All the Member States (except Iran and Turkey) are also requested to contribute and designate their focal points for the Working Group to draw up Project Proposals for cooperation, as per decisions made by the 2nd Heads of Meteorological Organizations.

199. The Council welcomed the proposal made by the Islamic Republic of Iran for the establishment of Natural Disaster Data System and requested to send the detailed project proposal to the ECO Secretariat for consideration by the CPR.

200. The Council requested the Member States to volunteer for hosting the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations scheduled to be held in 2015, in their respective countries.

201. The Council welcomed the offer by the ECO-RCRM to organize the Workshop/Training Course on Drought Monitoring and Prediction in the ECO Region, in October 2015, Mashhad, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

202. The Council thanked the concerned authorities of the Republic of Turkey for preparing the Draft Statute for the establishment of the ECO Meteorological Calibration Center (ECO-MCC) and requested the Member States to send their views/comments on the said document after circulation, by the Secretariat.

203. The Council thanked the concerned authorities of the Republic of Turkey for organization of the training programmes in the field of calibration and metrology so far. The Council also requested the Republic of Turkey to send the exact dates and venue for the Training Programme on the Basics of Calibration scheduled to be held in 2015.

204. The Council requested the Member States (except Iran) to expedite signing/ratifying the Statute of the ECO Veterinary Commission (ECO-VECO).

205. The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for sending the Plan of Action containing the activities within the ECO-VECO in Tehran for its implementation in 2015 and for its interest to organize the activities indicated in the said Plan in the 2nd half of 2015. Iranian concerned authorities are also requested to announce the exact date and venue for the following activities scheduled to be held in 2015. The Member States are requested to collaborate for implementation of the said Plan.

- a. 3rd ECO Heads of Veterinary Organizations Meeting;
- b. Workshop on Management of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Training Workshop on Central Veterinary Laboratories (CVL); and
- c. 1st Technical Steering Committee for early establishment/ operationalization of the ECO-VECO.

206. The Council thanked the concerned authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran for redesigning and updating a new dynamic website for ECO-ABN at www.eco-abn.net and registration of a new domain www.eco-abn.org for better communication with the National Focal Points as well as Biotechnologists and Researchers in all Member Countries and also requested the Member States to provide information in this regard and nominate Focal Points for the Network.

207. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to organize the 2nd Expert Group Meeting of the ECO-ABN and its Joint Workshop on “Biotechnology, and Biosafety Issues of GMOs”, on May 26-28, 2015, immediately after the 1st International and 9th National Biotechnology Congress of Iran, which will be held from May 23-25, 2015, in Iran. Round trip air-ticket (the most direct route, economy class), registration fee of the

biotechnology congress, board and lodging for one participant from each Member State (national focal point) will be provided by the host authority, ECO-ABN.

208. The Council also requested the concerned authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to consider the following proposals for reviewing during the 2nd Expert Group Meeting:

- Establishment of a platform for harmonization of bio-safety regulations and capacity building for GMO detection. (Iran, Pakistan and Turkey);
- Establishment of an intellectual property rights network and capacity building program in this field. (Pakistan and Iran); and
- Using bio-technology tools for characterization and utilization of agricultural genetic resources for sustainable agriculture and food security (Iran).

209. The Council thanked the concerned authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran for submitting the ECO-ABN report and full justification about the benefits of the ECO-ABN to the Member States for allocation of an extra US\$ 50,000/- from ECO Feasibility Study and General Purposes Fund for holding the 2nd EGM and establishment of ECO-ABN as indicated in Para-196 of the Report of 24thRPC Meeting.

210. The Council requested the Member States and other ECO Networks to kindly conduct their Regional Research and Training Activities in the area of Genetic Engineering, Biotechnology and Biosafety under the umbrella of ECO, through ECO-ABN as considering the mission and objectives of the ECO Agricultural Biotechnology Network in order to boost this network in achieving its objectives and to enhance cooperation among the ECO Member States.

211. The Council welcomed the information of the ECO Secretariat regarding the Project Proposal on Technical Assistance for the Formulation of Strategies for the Control of Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) at Global and Regional Levels, prepared by the technical services of FAO, and requested the Member States to communicate their technical views/comments on the said Project to the Secretariat.

212. The Council requested the Member States to confirm their participation in the International Conference on Technical assistance for the formulation of strategies for the control of PPR scheduled to be held on 31 March - 02 April, 2015 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

213. The Council requested the Member States to host the ECO/FAO Regional Workshop for the PPR Road Map formulation as well as TCP implementation in September/October, 2015 in their respective countries.

214. The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to actively participate in the related International Conferences to be organized in 2015 and prepare the project proposals on the events/activities for provision of financial assistance in this regard.

215. The Council welcomed the proposal on organizing Buyers/Sellers meetings/forums on wheat, cotton, bean and other Agricultural commodities to improve intra-regional trade.

- **Industry**

216. The Council stressed the need for reviewing the industrial cooperation in the region and redrawing the new approach toward future collaboration and requested the Member States to consider hosting the 4th ECO Ministerial and 3rd HLEG Meetings on Industry in 2015 and inform the ECO Secretariat by June 2015.

217. The Council requested the Member States to sign (except Afghanistan and Turkey) and ratify (except Iran) the Statute of RISCAM to pave the way for early operationalization of the Institute.

218. The Council requested the Member States to provide the ICU (Interim Coordination Unit) of RISCAM with the relevant data and documents according to the questionnaire which has been circulated to the Member States by the Secretariat required for the establishment of a database on Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology and related website in 2015.

219. The Council appreciated the ICU (RISCAM) for finalizing drafting basic documents i.e. Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations and Staff Regulations and requested the Member States to reflect their views and comments on the said documents by mid 2015.

220. The Council called on the Member States to appoint at least two focal points to the Interim Coordination Unit (ICU) and support the activities of this Unit for operationalization of the RISCAM. The Meeting also emphasized the host countries of the Secretariats of the Technical Management Boards of RISCAM to start operating on interim basis.

221. The Council requested the Secretariat to communicate with Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Pakistan to reconfirm their interest to participation in the activities of ICU RISCAM.

222. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 6th High Level Working Group on Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology on the 1st February, 2015 and requested the Member States to implement the decisions of the Meeting.

223. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Workshop on Conformity Assessment on 2nd February, 2015 and requested the Member States to consider hosting such workshops.

224. The Council welcomed the willingness of the Republic of Turkey for extending training services and technical assistance to the Member States on privatization practices.

225. The Council appreciated with thanks the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the 2nd Meeting of Coordination Committee on Industrial Property Rights on 16 June 2014.

226. The Council thanked Islamic Republic of Iran for offering to host the 3rd Meeting of Coordination Committee on Industrial Property Rights in August 2015 and requested the latter to announce exact date and details of hospitality for the Meeting.

227. The Council also appreciated Islamic Republic of Iran for offering to host a Joint Workshop on Industrial Property Rights in cooperation with WIPO back to back with the 3rd Meeting of Coordination Committee in August 2015.

228. The Council appreciated the Secretariat for approaching the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to conclude a cooperative agreement.

229. The Council requested the Member States to inform the Secretariat on their relevant programs/plans on Industrial Property Rights.

230. The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for renewing its offer to host the 4th Steering Committee Meeting on Entrepreneurship and SMEs Development on 24-25 May, 2015. It reiterated its previous request to the Member States for their active participation in SMEs Development Cooperation.

231. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to share its experiences in the field of SMEs Development with the interested Member States and requested to share their views and needs on the SMEs Development in due course with the Secretariat.

232. The Member States were requested to organize Training/Workshops for SMEs Development for introducing the latest trends and best practices.

233. The Council thanked the Islamic republic of Iran for renewing its offer to host the 2nd Steering Committee Meeting on Establishment of the ECO Nanotechnology Network (ECONAN), and Workshop on NANO-technology activities in the region in October 2015 and requested for active participation of the Member States in the Meeting and the Workshop, informing three months in advance of their confirmation of participation.

234. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for submitting the Project titled Pre-Feasibility Study of Removal of Arsenic Water Pollution in ECO Region using Nanotechnology Methods with the target of enhancing the regional cooperation in the field and implementation of the ECONAN and requested the Member States to reflect their views and comments on the Project by May 2015 to the Secretariat.

235. The Council reiterated its request to the interested Member States to offer their project proposals to develop and enhance the nanotechnology in the region.

236. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to submit the Project Proposals on (1) identifying potential transferors and transferees in the ECO region and (2) identifying supporters of Technology Transfer process in the region.

237. The Council also welcomed invitations by the Islamic Republic of Iran Pardis Technology Park extended to the ECO Member States to participate in the Innovation and Technology Exhibition (INOTEX 2015) on 9-12 June 2015 in Tehran as well as a Workshop on Technology Parks of the ECO Member States and visit to Fanamooz Educational Park in October 2015. The ECO Member States will enjoy a considerable discount on accommodation expenses and a free stall at the exhibition. In this regard, ICCIMA can distribute this information through ECO-CCI and publish on the website www.ecocci.org in order to encourage interested companies from the ECO Member States to participate at the INOTEX exhibition to be held on June 9-12, 2015 and in the year 2016.

238. The Council appreciated the Secretariat for initiating cooperation with relevant international organizations, development agencies and financial institutions with (but not limited to) UNIDO, JICA, WIPO, RCSTT for the purpose of regional development and encouraged it to do so with other international and regional organizations, institutions and agencies.

- **Tourism**

239. The Council appreciated the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Tourism Ministers and the 5th HLEG Meeting on Tourism in October/November 2015 in Antalya and called upon the ECO Members to actively participate in these events.

240. The Meeting appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat for drafting the document titled "Elaboration of ECO Tourism Development Strategy" and requested the Member States to convey their views and comments on the document before end of May, 2015 to be used in drafting the ECO Tourism Development Strategy. The Council welcomed the suggestion of the ECO Secretariat to form a Working Group for preparation of the strategy and requested the Member States to host 1st meeting of the Working Group. In this regard, Republic of Turkey informed the Council that it will consider hosting the meeting along with the Ministerial Meeting to be held in October/November 2015 in Antalya.

241. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the ASEAN-ECO Joint Forum on Tourism on the sidelines of the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Tourism Ministers, to be held in October/November 2015 in Antalya and called upon the Member Countries to actively participate in this event.

242. The Republic of Turkey informed the Council that the legal procedures for transferring their pledged contribution to the Tourism Promotion Fund are finalized and the amount will be transferred to the ECO Secretariat as soon as possible.

243. The Islamic Republic of Iran also informed the Council that their pledged amount will be transferred as soon as possible to the ECO Tourism Promotion Fund.

244. The Council requested the Member States to consider contributing to the Tourism Promotion Fund.

245. The Council requested the Secretariat to develop working program and operational arrangements for utilizing the ECO Promotion Tourism Fund upon receipt of contributions.

246. The Council reiterated its request to the Member Countries, except Iran, to provide the necessary information for the "Ecotourism Catalogue for the ECO Region" to be prepared by the Republic of Turkey.

247. The Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Council that it has developed a questionnaire for collecting tourism information of the Member States to establish the ECO ecotourism database. The Council requested the Secretariat to circulate the questionnaire to the Member States as early as possible.

248. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to invite the ECO Member States to actively participate in the 1stAsia Cooperation Dialogue Tourism Ministerial Meeting (ACD-TMM) and its sideline Workshops on E-Tourism and Health Tourism, which will be held in June 2015, in Shiraz.

249. The Council appreciated with thanks the Islamic Republic of Iran and the ECO-CCI for hosting the 1stECO Confobition (conference+ exhibition) on Health Tourism in August 18-20, 2014 and requested the Member States to consider hosting the 2ndConfobition on Health Tourism.

250. The Council requested the ECO-CCI to inform the date and details of hospitality for the 3rdCoordination Committee Meeting on Health Tourism Cooperation in the ECO region, which will be held in Mashhad in 2015 on the sidelines of the 5thConference on Health Tourism of the Islamic Countries. The Council further requested the ECO-CCI to provide the Member States with an implementation report of the 1stand 2ndCoordination Committee Meeting as well as the 1stConfobition held in Ramsar, in August 2014.

251. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the Workshop on Health Tourism in 2015 and requested the ECO Member Countries to actively participate in this event.

252. The Council requested the Member States to actively participate in the Workshop on Tourism to be organized on 28-30 April 2015 in Girne.

253. The council reiterated its request to the Member States to encourage the private sector involvement in the regional tourism activities through participation in the relevant

meetings/events/initiatives. And in this connection, the ECO CCI is requested to explore the possibility of setting up regional cooperation modality on tourism to strengthen cooperation among the national private sector associations/forums/federations with the purpose of sustainable tourism promotion and propose its study to the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in October/November 2015.

254. The council requested the Member States to form a contact group on the sidelines of Silk Road related meetings, conferences and events to effectively pursue the collective interests of ECO Region and enhance the role of ECO in international tourism market.

255. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran for organizing the First ECO-SILK Road Food Festival in May 2015, in Zanjan and requested the Member States particularly ECO Embassies in Tehran to actively participate in the event.

256. The Council appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat for establishing ties with UNWTO, JICA and ASEAN and requested it to intensify activities to approach national and international development agencies like ECOTDB, IDB, OPEC Fund, and etc for securing fund for tourism related projects in the region.

257. The Council appreciated with thanks the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the First Periodic Exhibition on Tourism and Handicrafts of the ECO Member States in June, 2014 and welcomed its offer to host the 2nd Exhibition in June, 2015 in Tehran.

258. The Council appreciated the efforts the Secretariat for introducing regional activities with regard to tourism promotion in international forums.

259. The Council voiced that many of the meetings/events planned in the AIT Directorate in 2014-15 could not be held / postponed due to such reasons as the lack of quorum, lack of a host country, failure to announce the schedule of the meeting, delay in announcing hospitality details. The Council, in order to ensure the implementation of the calendar of events of the Directorate for 2015-2016 recommended that:

- a. the host Member States may announce the schedule of the events/meetings along with the details of hospitality for the delegates well in advance;
- b. the Member States may convey their confirmation and ensure active participation in the meetings/events in due time an event is scheduled;
- c. the Secretariat as per the ECO Rules of Procedure may consider hosting the meetings/events in case no Member State is willing to be the host.

e. **Projects, Economic Research & Statistics**

• **Project**

260. Considering the financial and budgetary constraints of the organization for project implementation, the Council welcomed the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish a mechanism for fund-raising of ECO Projects in collaboration with the international financial institutions.

261. The Council expressed its satisfaction on the functioning of the ECO Project Monitoring Group for supervision of the Secretariat and Member States for more effective implementation of the ECO projects through holding its meetings at the Secretariat. It supported the Secretariat's initiative for establishment of Project Management Information System (PMIS) within the organization in order to obtain progress reports and outcomes of the ECO projects. The Council underlined the importance of regular holding of the Project Monitoring Group meetings by the Secretariat in collaboration with the Member States for achievement of its responsibilities and proper implementation of projects which is essential for socio-economic development of the region.

262. The Council appreciated IRTI and SESRIC for organization of the Regional Training Workshop on "Project Assessment and Evaluation for ECO Member States" on 12-16 May 2014 in Ankara, Turkey. The Council welcomed the Secretariat for preparation to hold the next Regional Project Training on "Project Management Information System (PMIS)" for ECO member countries in 2015, as agreed by the participants of the last project training. This regional training workshop will be organized in joint cooperation with IRTI that has contributed to strengthening institutional capacity of the Member States on projects in previous years.

263. Appreciating the presentation made by the Secretariat on the status of implementation of Reconstruction Projects in Afghanistan, the Council took note of the financial and executive issues of the completed and ongoing projects. The Council requested the Member States that have not transferred their pledges to the ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan yet, to do so, enabling the Secretariat to complete the ongoing projects and to initiate new projects, as submitted and followed up by relevant authorities of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The Council also requested the remaining Member States to make their relevant contributions to SFRA - to express solidarity with the people of Afghanistan.

264. The Council, while appreciating the generous contribution of ECO Member States for implementation of projects in Afghanistan, requested the Secretariat, ECO countries and TIKA to take the difficult situation of Afghanistan into consideration and to support the Fund/fulfill their commitments by utmost contribution for betterment of socio-economic conditions in Afghanistan.

265. Having in mind the ongoing projects/programmes/initiatives by international community for Afghanistan, the Council acknowledged the need for revisiting the terms of reference of the ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan with a view to contributing more effectively to the development-related activities in Afghanistan. Accordingly, the Council requested the Secretariat to convene a special meeting on Afghanistan with the participation of Afghan authorities, Fund's donors and other interested ECO Member States to review the Fund's performance and to develop a new ECO advocacy approach/policy for Afghanistan including new possible missions for Fund. Potential partners from outside the Region may also be involved in this exercise.

- **Economic Research**

266. The Council appreciated implementation of the ECO Joint Economic Research Programme (JERP) which received full support of the 21st COM for development of economic research studies in the ECO region that contributes to recognition of socio-economic potentialities and needs of the countries of the region. The Council was briefed by the delegation of Azerbaijan on progress of implementation of two economic research projects, coordinated by the Republic of Azerbaijan titled *“Exchange of Experiences and Strengthening Inter-agency Cooperation on the Development of Ecologically Clean Agriculture in ECO Member Countries”* and *“Study on Applicability of General Equilibrium (CGE) Model in ECO Countries and Capacity Building”*.

267. The Council also considered the status of implementation of two ongoing research project proposals, coordinated by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, namely *“Economic Management Modeling for the ECO region”* and *“Trade Liberalization and Food Security in the ECO Region”* and requested the Secretariat to submit these project proposals for consideration by the CPR.

268. The Council requested the Member States to cooperate actively with the Secretariat in implementation of the ECO Joint Economic Research Programme (JEPR) through proposing new economic research project proposals in line with the objective of the organization for strengthening financial development and trade markets in the region.

269. The Council reaffirmed its continuous support for implementation of the ECO Plan of Action on Economic Research which was adopted by the first meeting of the Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research, held in Astana in 2010. The Council also welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 4th Meeting of the Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research in December, 2015 in Turkey. The Council requested the 4th PSCER Meeting to propose thematic topics for future RPC Meetings and in this regard one for the upcoming 26th RPC Meeting was suggested as *“Enhancing Infrastructure Development in the ECO Region”*. The Council also requested the Member States to provide their inputs regarding the thematic topic of the 26th RPC Meeting, to be consolidated by the Secretariat.

270. The Council stressed on regular publication of ECO Annual Economic Report and appreciated the Member States (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan and Turkey) that have already submitted their country report on economic performance of their respective countries in 2013 to the Secretariat for compilation of ECO Annual Economic Report (AER) for the year 2013. As included in the Report of the 24th RPC Meeting (Para 245) and following the correspondence with the Member States in the matter, the Secretariat had forwarded two reminders to the Member States for submission of country report 2013 in order to compile the Report. In this regard, the Council urged the remaining Member States to provide their country reports on economic performance in 2013 to the Secretariat as soon as possible, enabling the Secretariat for compilation and publication of the AER 2013. The council also called for active cooperation of the Member States with the Secretariat for compilation and publication of ECO Annual Economic Report for the year 2014.

271. The Council appreciated the Republic of Azerbaijan and EcoMod for their contribution to organizing the First Training Course on “Practical CGE Modeling with GAMS for ECO Member States” held on 21-25 April 2014 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The council expressed its satisfaction for initiating the capacity building on Economic Management Modelling in the region by the Secretariat and encouraged Member States for active participation in such productive training programme that benefit the economic research institutions of the region on development of knowledge on Economic Modeling. The Council welcomed the offer of Kyrgyz Republic for hosting the 2nd training course on Economic Modeling for ECO Member States in August 2015 which is included in the ECO Calendar of Events for 2015-2016.

272. The Council noted with satisfaction the Report of the 2nd Meeting of Editorial Board of ECO Economic Journal, held on 26 April 2014 in Baku and appreciated the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting this event. The Council also welcomed the compilation of the 5th issue of ECO Economic Journal that was prepared in close cooperation with Member States by submission of analytical papers/articles/reviews pertaining to regional socio-economic development. The issue will be presented to the 3rd Meeting of the Editorial Board of ECO Economic Journal, to be hosted by the Republic of Turkey in December 2015 whereas the 4th Meeting of the Board will be held in Tajikistan in 2016. The Council was briefed on biannual publication of ECO Economic Journal in the coming year and requested Member States to support the Journal with submission of analytical papers/articles/abstracts related to key socio-economic development of the Region.

273. The Council appreciated the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the 2nd Forum of ECO Economic Think Tanks, held on 1-3 October 2014 in Baku with active participation of the ECO Member States in which deliberated the issues relating to economic strategy and policies for sustainable economic development of the region. The Council also noted with satisfaction the outcomes of the 2nd International conference on “Energy, Regional Integration and Socio-economic Development” held on the sidelines of the Forum that considered analytical papers/abstracts/reviews concerning the theme of the Forum. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Kazakhstan for considering to host the 3rd Forum of ECO Economic Think Tanks in 2015 and encouraged Member States to actively participate in the event.

274. The Council was briefed by the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the basic formalities for operationalization of newly established ECO Research Centre in Baku and attached great importance to the functioning of the Centre as the ECO Economic Think Tank of the Region. The Council was informed by the Secretariat that the Basic document (Strategy) of the ECO Research Centre, submitted by the Republic of Azerbaijan, was circulated to the Member States on 9 February 2015 for their consideration and feedback. The Council reiterated the contribution of Member States on shaping this regional Centre through provision of their feedback and requested Member States to provide their views/comments/proposals on the basic document of the Centre for consideration by host country of the Centre, latest by the end of April 2015." The Council also requested the Member States to sign/ratify the Charter of the ECO Research Centre for its early operationalization.

275. Welcoming the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Council requested the Secretariat to update the Roaster of Leading Economic Research Institutions/Experts in consultation with the Economic Think-Tanks of ECO Member States.

- **Statistics**

276. The Council welcomed the proposal of the delegation of Turkey for hosting two ECO statistical events possibly back-to-back in 2016 in Turkey, including the Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Offices and High Level Expert Group Meeting on Statistics. Acknowledging the importance for holding the 4th Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistical Officers in 2015, the Council requested the interested Member States to host the subject meeting, which was not convened since 2011. In the same line, the Council also requested Member States to pay more attention for regular holding of the meetings of High Level Expert Group on Statistics, especially the 6th Meeting which was not held since 2013.

277. The Council expressed its appreciation to the Statistical Centre of Iran for its continuous support in provision of regular updates for ECO Statistical Network (ECOSTAT). While appreciating the Member States namely Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for submission of their completed Compendium 2013 to the Secretariat, the Council strongly urged the remaining Member States to provide the requisite data for Compendium 2013 at the earliest possible for dissemination to the ECOSTAT. The Council also urged the Member States to cooperate with the Secretariat actively to provide their filled-in Compendium 2014 in order to enable the Secretariat to make updates on the ECOSTAT for new data of 2014.

278. The Council appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat for compilation of the ECO Key Statistical Indicators (ECOKSI) 2013, prepared on the information provided by the Member States, for disseminating the updated ECOKSI on the ECOSTAT. The Council requested those Member States, who yet to provide their requisite data for 2013, to do so at the earliest for filling-up the missing data in ECOKSI 2013. It also urged the Member States to provide the Secretariat with the new statistical data for 2014, required for compilation of updated ECOKSI 2014 for disseminating on the ECOSTAT by the Secretariat.

279. The Council appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat for publication of the new Statistical Report under the title of “ECO Trade” and its publication on the ECOSTAT. The Council noted that two statistical reports including “ECO Population” and “ECO Economy” have already been compiled and published on the ECOSTAT in 2013. The Council requested the Secretariat to continue its work for compilation and publication of such informative statistical report for development of statistical information and publications of the Organization.

280. The Council appreciated the PERS Directorate for sustained efforts in implementation of the statistical capacity building programme for the Member States in 2014. The Council appreciated the generous contributions from the international partners for co-organizing the training workshops. The Council also expressed its thanks to the Member States for active participation in the training workshops/courses and requested them to provide their statistical needs for development of statistical training programme to the Secretariat. The Council welcomed the proposal of the Statistical Centre of Iran for hosting a Regional Training Workshop in September/October 2015 in Tehran. The topic of the training workshop will be identified jointly by the co-organizers of the events based on the statistical training needs of the Member States.

281. Acknowledging the continuous support by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Council expressed its satisfaction for the report of the “Regional Training on Statistical Methods and Information System Technologies for Implementing CountrySTAT in the ECO Countries” for ECO Member States which was held within 10-13 November 2014 at the ECO Secretariat in Tehran. It was also informed that the training workshop was a component of the ECO-FAO joint project on “Support for the Implementation and Development of the CountryStat Framework in the ECO Countries” which has been implemented, in the first step, in Afghanistan as the pilot country. With completion of the first phase of this project, ECO and FAO are jointly working for continuation of implementing the CountrySTAT project in the other countries of the Region.

282. The Council acknowledged the continuous support of the Statistical Centre of Iran and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) for conducting the regional training workshop on “Compilation of Quarterly National Accounts for ECO Member States” on 8-11 March 2015 in Tehran. The Council was informed that the main objective of this regional workshop is to provide the trainees with the knowledge and expertise on compilation of Quarterly National Accounts which provide a set of key economic indicators in short term basis at national level for decision-making authorities, economists and economic research institutions. The UNSD will provide training documents and materials whereas the Statistical Centre of Iran will host the event and provide local hospitality and facilities to participants.

283. Referring to the Terms of Reference for Harmonization of Regional Statistical Methodology, adopted by the 5th High Level Expert Group Meeting on Statistics (December 2012, Ankara), the Council was informed that the first Meeting of the Committee on Regional

Harmonized Statistical Methodology (CRHSM) is included in the PERS Calendar of Events for 2015-2016. With regard to importance of this event for initiating the process for establishment of harmonized statistical system in the region, the Council requested the Member States to offer for hosting the said event in 2015 and to provide Metadata along with completion of annual Compendium to the Secretariat.

284. Considering the continuous efforts of PERS Directorate in seeking technical and financial assistance from regional and international organizations, the Council expressed its satisfaction for constructive cooperation of PERS Directorate with the UNSD, FAO, SESRIC, IRTI and EcoMod for implementation of capacity building programme of the Organization by conducting several training workshops for Member States in 2014. Keeping in view, the Council further encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts for development of knowledge, expertise and proficiency in the region in close cooperation with regional and international organizations including the UN bodies.

f. Human Resources & Sustainable Development

285. The Council reiterated the strong need for regional cooperation to improve the human centered development. The Council further requested the ECO Secretariat to give special focus in the ECO Vision 2016-2025 to human development and its associated sectors and areas as well as disaster risk reduction.

- **Health and Human Development**

286. The Council requested the Member States to enhance cooperation in capacity-building activities, as well as sharing experiences, best practices and knowledge on human development in ECO Region.

287. The Council requested the Member States to offer new topics and specific activities for cooperation in the field of human development and positively consider hosting the training programmes, workshops, experts group meetings and study tours in HD priority areas, including health, in 2015/2016.

288. The Council appreciated the offer of the Republic of Turkey to share its experience within the framework of COMCEC regarding new project implementation mechanism, including in human development.

289. The Council appreciated the ECO Secretariat efforts regarding the cooperation with international and regional organizations and called on the Secretariat to approach the relevant regional and international organizations, including IDB, UNESCAP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNICEF and WHO for their support for preparation and implementation of the projects on human development.

290. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the "3rd ECO High Level Experts Group Meeting on Health related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Post MDGs era" (21-22 January 2015) and requested the other Member States to consider hosting the 4th ECO High Level Experts Group Meeting on Post MDGs and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Council also requested the Member States to implement the recommendations of the 3rd ECO High Level Experts Group Meeting.

291. The Council welcomed the renewed offer by Republic of Turkey to host the 2nd Meeting of the ECO Heads of National Organizations/Centers for Civil Registration in September/October 2015.

292. The Council requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat with the web-addresses (English version) of their relevant main State HRD bodies in order to link them with the Human Resource Development webpage in the official website of the ECO Secretariat.

293. The Council requested the Member States to introduce/regularly update the information of their focal points on health related MDGs, civil registration and human development.

294. The Council requested the Member States to strengthen cooperation in health area and accord priority to health in the larger scheme of regional cooperation within ECO and to propose holding events/conferences/seminars/workshops on health issues in 2015/16.

295. The Council welcomed the recommendation of the "3rd ECO High Level Experts Group Meeting on Health related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Post MDGs era" for organizing the Second ECO Ministerial meeting on Health on the sidelines of upcoming World Health Assembly in Geneva in May 2015. The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to make necessary coordination with the Member States and the WHO organizers to make proposed ECO event a success.

296. The Council requested the Member States to convey their views and inputs on the proposed outline for "Plan of Action on Health Cooperation in ECO Region" by the end of March 2015 for further discussions, including in the Second ECO Health Ministerial Meeting on the sidelines of upcoming World Health Assembly in Geneva in May 2015.

297. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the High Level Experts Group Meeting on Human Resource in Health (HRH) in 2015 in Tehran. The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to prepare, in coordination with the host authorities, the proposed agenda and programme of the Meeting for consideration by the Member States.

298. The Council welcomed the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to submit a project proposal on HIV in the ECO Region. The Council requested the concerned Iranian authorities to convey more information about the proposed project as well as financial resources for its implementation for further consideration by Member States.

299. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the High Level Experts Group Meeting on International Health Regulations (IHR) in 2015 in Tehran. The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to prepare, in coordination with the host authorities, the proposed agenda and programme of the Meeting for consideration by the Member States.

300. The Council appreciated Republic of Turkey for hosting the workshop on “Drug Registration and Licensing, Counterfeit Medicines and Good Manufacturing Practices” on 8-9 May 2014 in Ankara. The Council also welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the workshop on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) in 2015 in Tehran.

301. The Council recognized the usefulness of organizing study tours for health authorities of the Member States and invited the interested Member States to host similar tours in 2015/16.

302. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for providing academic scholarships in Master of Public Health in 2014 and requested the Member States to exchange academic scholarship in health related areas.

303. The Council requested the Member States to implement the recommendations of the 3rd Meeting of ECO Heads/ Authorities of Blood Transfusion Organizations (14-15 February 2013-Baku), including to host training courses/workshops, seminars on the blood priority areas.

304. The Council welcomed the offer by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 4th Meeting of the ECO Heads/ Authorities of Blood Transfusion Organizations in Islamabad in October 2015 and requested the ECO Secretariat to prepare, in coordination with the host authorities, the draft agenda and programme of the Meeting for consideration of the Member States.

305. The Council requested the Member States to nominate designated accredited representatives to be granted access to the Blood Safety Network.

306. The Council requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat with the information on their pharmaceutical websites (English version) in order to link them with the Pharmaceutical webpage in the ECO official website (www.ecosecretariat.org/pharmaceutical).

307. The Council requested the Member States to introduce/regularly update the information of their focal points on drug (pharmaceutical) and blood transfusion cooperation.

- **Disaster Risk Management**

308. The Council requested the Member States to strengthen cooperation on disasters management involving all stakeholders including local communities, non-governmental

organizations and private enterprises, and to propose holding events/conferences/seminars/workshops on disaster risk reduction issues in 2015/16.

309. The Council requested the Member States for regular dissemination among themselves of information on their activities and regulations on disaster risk reduction through ECO Secretariat.

310. The Council appreciated the ECO Secretariat efforts regarding the cooperation with international and regional organizations and requested ECO Secretariat to continue cooperation on disaster risk management with relevant international and regional organizations, particularly UN-ISDR, UN/OCHA, UN-HABITAT, UNDP, UNESCAP and APDIM for their technical and financial support.

311. The Council took note of the offer of ECO Secretariat for organizing a side meeting/event on the sidelines of the "Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction" scheduled to be held on 14-18 March 2015 in Sendai, Japan and requested the Member States to participate actively in above meeting/event which will consider possible regional strategy/approach to disaster risk reduction.

312. The Council appreciated Republic of Azerbaijan for holding the "7th ECO International Conference on Disaster Risk Management" in Gabala on 4-5 June 2014 and welcomed the offer by Republic of Turkey to host the "8th ECO International Conference on Disaster Risk Management" in September 2015. The Council called on the Member States to actively participate in the Conference.

313. The Council appreciated the invitation by the Islamic Republic of Iran extended to the Member States to participate in the "International Exhibition and Conference on Safety, Security and Disaster Management in Natural Disasters" scheduled for May 2015 and requested the concerned Iranian authorities to convey more information to the Secretariat.

314. The Council requested the Member States to nominate/regularly update the information regarding their related focal points on disaster risk management cooperation.

315. The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to enhance its institutional capacities to support regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction. The Council also requested the ECO-RCRM to actively contribute to the regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction.

316. The Council requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat with the information on the websites (English version) of their disaster risk management bodies in order to link them with the webpage of Disaster Risk Management in the official website of the ECO Secretariat (<http://www.ecosecretariat.org/DRM>).

g. Drug & Organized Crime Coordination

317. The Council acknowledged the need for strong support by ECO Member States for ECO activities in addressing the menace of drugs and organized crimes in the Region.

318. The Council also acknowledged the need for regional networking among relevant anti drugs and crimes bodies/authorities of the Member States and requested the Member States to actively contribute to existing networks such as Drug Liaison Officers (DLOs), including through timely exchange of information and submission of statistics, as well as active participation in the relevant meetings.

319. The Council requested Member States to expedite nomination/update of their National Focal Points on drugs; terrorism; transnational organized crime; and human trafficking; as well as liaison officers for police cooperation; and anti corruption agencies.

320. The Council authorized the ECO Secretariat, in the absence of an interested Member State, to host the first Drug Liaison Officers (DLOs) Meeting and the 2nd Meeting of the National Focal Points on Drug Control Matters on 9-10 September 2015. The Republic of Azerbaijan will also consider possibility of hosting the 2ndDLOs Meeting in 2016.

321. Considering the importance of ECOPOL for effective fight against trans-boundary crimes in the Region, the Council reauthorized the ECO Secretariat to host the 2ndExperts Group Meeting (EGM) in July 2015 for finalizing necessary formalities/documents for establishment of ECOPOL, and requested the interested Member States to actively participate in the Meeting. Given the ongoing reform process within the ECO, the Republic of Azerbaijan also reiterated its request to the ECO Secretariat to prepare an updated background paper about ECOPOL.

322. Recalling that the Statute of the ECO Regional Centre for Cooperation of Anti Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen (RCCACO) has been signed by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Republic of Tajikistan, the Council requested these countries to ratify other interested Member States to sign/ratify the Statute so that the RCCACO could start functioning.

323. The Council was informed by the Secretariat about the preparatory process of the "Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on World Drug Problem in 2016". Given the importance of UN event, the Council mandated the Secretariat to explore possible ECO contribution, including through regional preparatory meeting/sideline events.

324. The Council recalled that due to absence of interested host countries, some important meetings, such as 3rdMeeting of ECO Heads of Anti Corruption Organizations and Ombudsmen; 2nd Meeting of ECO Chiefs of Police and 2nd Meeting of ECO Attorneys/Prosecutors General are still pending. The Council requested the interested Member States to seriously consider hosting these meetings. The Council also requested the Islamic Republic of

Pakistan to formally convey to the Secretariat the exact dates for hosting the 4th Meeting of ECO Interior Ministers and the 2nd Meeting of ECO Heads of Interpol.

325. The Council welcomed the renewed offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host an Experts Group Meeting for preparation of an ECO Plan of Action on Terrorism in August 2015. The Council further requested the Iranian relevant authorities to submit for the consideration of Member States the proposed Draft Plan of Action to the Secretariat by the end of June, 2015.

326. The Council welcomed the DOCCU proposal for expanding training and capacity building programmes for the experts/officials of the relevant Member States utilizing the training facilities/trainers from within the Region. Accordingly, the ECO Secretariat will prepare a roster list of institutions and trainers nominated by the interested Member States.

327. The Council also welcomed the training courses offered by the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely, training course on “Crisis Management” on 18-20 May 2015; and training workshop on “Best Practices on Drug Demand Reduction” in June 2015. The Council requested the organizing authorities to convey to the Secretariat the proposed training syllabi and tentative programmes of the courses/workshops.

328. The Council was informed about meetings/events organized/co-organized by DOCCU since last RPC, including workshops on “Countering Cybercrime”; “Identifying Legal and Operational Obstacles for Regional Cooperation in the Fight against Trafficking”; “Drug Interdiction at Airports”; as well as “Regional Training on Legal Migration, Labour Migration and Integration”; “briefing for Tehran-based diplomatic corps on EU-funded Project on fight against trafficking from/to Afghanistan” and closing conference of the EU-funded Project. The Council appreciated DOCCU and its partners, namely, the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC), Interpol of Iran, UNODC, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), GIZ and EU for co-organizing/financing above events.

h. ECO Regional Institutions/Specialized Agencies/Affiliated Bodies and International Relations

a) Intra-Regional ECO Activities

i. ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies

329. The Council took note of the outcomes of the meeting of the ECO Secretary General with Heads of delegation on the reforming process of ECO and recommended to the Member States to consider every initiative on establishment of new bodies and upgrading the status of already existing ones in line with the reform process.

330. In order to support the broad objectives of the Organization, especially in the fields of science, culture and education, the Council encouraged the ECO Specialized Agencies to synergize their activities to promote cooperation in the relevant areas.

331. Taking note of the proposal made by the Republic of Turkey, the Council requested the ECO Science Foundation and the ECO Educational Institute to develop and work on innovation-based initiatives that can result in practical benefits for the Member States.

332. The Council encouraged the Member States to join the ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies and Centres and support their activities in different areas.

333. The Council encouraged the Secretariat to facilitate and assist the Specialized Agencies in developing cooperation with the relevant regional and international organizations in the Educational, Scientific and Cultural fields, specifically UNESCO, within the framework of the MoU signed between the ECO and UNESCO.

- **ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)**

334. The Council appreciated the Institute for organizing a broad range of events and activities in the fields of culture, literature and arts aimed at promoting greater cooperation among the Member States in these areas. The Council encouraged the Institute to further expand the cooperation in the relevant fields for realizing the core objectives of ECI.

335. Noting that the 6th Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the ECI is being held in Khojand, Tajikistan on 21 March 2015, preceded by the High Level Experts Group Meeting on 20 March 2015, the Council encouraged the ECI Member States to actively participate in the BoT Meeting.

336. Taking note of the successful holding of the first ECO Poetry Night, the Council encouraged the Member States to organize the second ECO Poetry night in the region in collaboration with ECI.

337. The Council appreciated the Institute for holding the First ECO Chess Tournament which was attended by players from all ECO Member States and created awareness about the activities of ECI in the region. The Council encouraged the Member States to consider holding similar sports events in collaboration with the ECI in the coming period.

338. The Council asked the ECO Member States that have not yet joined the Institute to ratify the ECI's Charter and support its initiatives for promoting the rich cultural heritage of the Region.

339. The Council appreciated the announcement made by the Republic of Turkey that it has initiated the procedure for ratification of the ECI Charter and expressed the hope that the procedure would be completed at an early time.

340. The Council appreciated the nomination of national focal points to the Institute by Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan and requested the other ECO Member States to nominate their Focal Points. The Council expressed the hope that this would help in ensuring effective coordination between the ECI and Member States in relevant matters.

341. The Council asked the Member States to consider extending necessary support to ECI in holding cultural weeks and other events for creating awareness about ECO region and its culture.

342. The Council appreciated the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for providing extra-budgetary contribution for the year 2014 and supporting the initiatives of the Institute through the relevant cultural institutions. The Council encouraged the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its support for ECI and to favourably consider the issue of the ECI premises.

343. The Council appreciated the Tehran Municipality for offering its assistance for the construction of ECO Park in Tehran. Noting that the Tehran Municipality has expressed its readiness to celebrate events in the fields of culture and arts in order to increase public awareness about the Institute and its Member States, the Council requested the Member States to provide proposals to showcase their national and cultural heritage at the ECO Park. The Council encouraged the ECI to follow-up the matter with the relevant authorities of the Member States.

344. Keeping in view the financial problems being faced by the ECI, the Council requested the Member States to pay their annual budgetary contributions to the Institute as per the agreed scale of assessment. The Council also expressed the hope that the outstanding financial and budgetary problems of the Institute would be discussed and resolved in the upcoming BoT meeting of ECI, scheduled to take place later this year.

- **ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF)**

345. The Council appreciated the activities and initiatives of the Foundation for developing and promoting cooperation among the Member States in the field of science and technology and for the promotion of scientific research in the region. The Council also appreciated the Annual Report published by the ECOSF for 2014.

346. The Council appreciated the ratification of the ECOSF Charter by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the announcement made by the Republic of Turkey concerning the initiation of the ratification process. The Council also requested the Member States that have not ratified the ECOSF Charter to do so at their earliest convenience.

347. The Council appreciated the payment of annual mandatory contributions made so far by the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan to the ECOSF. The Council also requested the remaining concerned Member States to make their contributions at the earliest. The Council further requested the ECOSF to present its financial report for the period 2013-14.

348. The Council requested the Member States to fulfill their pledges towards the 'Science and Technology Fund' in order to support research projects in relevant areas.

349. The Council requested the member states to nominate their focal points in order to facilitate coordination between the Foundation and the Member States on relevant issues. The Council also asked the concerned Member States to nominate their eminent scientists for the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees of ECOSF, who will formulate the future Action Plan of the Foundation for the coming period.

350. As informed by the ECOSF, the draft host country agreement, to be concluded by the ECOSF and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, has been sent to the relevant authorities in Pakistan. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to expedite the finalization and conclusion of the Agreement.

351. Noting that the 2ndBoT meeting of the ECOSF has twice been postponed due to lack of quorum, the Council asked the ECOSF to convey new dates for holding the BoT meeting, preceded by the Executive Committee meeting. The Council also requested the Member States to confirm their participation in the 2ndBoT meeting when the new dates are announced by the ECOSF.

352. The Council appreciated the efforts of the ECOSF to hold regular consultations with the Ambassadors/Permanent Representatives of the Member States based in Islamabad to discuss issues of importance. The Council also asked the Secretariat to assist the Foundation in devising a mechanism for holding such consultations.

353. The Council requested the Host Country to expedite the allocation of the appropriate premises to the ECOSF.

- **ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI)**

354. The Council welcomed the ratification of the Charter of the Institute by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and requested the non-ratifying members to ratify/accede to its Charter to further promote cooperation in the field of education.

355. The Council requested the concerned Member States to pay their mandatory contributions for the period 2012-14 and asked the ECOEI to actively follow-up on the matter.

356. In line with the recommendations of the 22nd and 23rd RPC Meetings, the Council proposed the establishment of an ECO Educational Trust Fund with voluntary contributions (cash and/or kind) of the Member States. This Fund would be in line with Article VII of the Charter and would support the Institute to finance its programmes for educational development. The Council also asked the Institute to prepare and finalize the Draft Terms of Reference for the Fund which would be shared with the Member States for their views and comments.

357. In accordance with Article III (3) of the Charter and as decided in the First BoT Meeting, the Council asked the Member States to appoint experts to the Academic Council of the ECOEI that would organize, monitor and evaluate the training projects and activities of the Institute. The Council also asked the ECOEI to follow-up on the matter.

358. Reiterating the decision made by the 1stBoT meeting held in 2012, and the recommendations of the previous RPC meetings, the Council asked the Member States to introduce their national focal points to the Educational Institute to ensure regular coordination/consultations between the Institute and its members.

359. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 2nd BOT Meeting of the Institute in 2015, and called on the concerned Member States to actively participate in this important event.

360. The Council agreed that the following proposals of the Islamic Republic of Iran would be considered by the Institute and would specifically be taken up by the Academic Council of the ECOEI in its first meeting:

- i. Regional Conference on Pre-primary, Primary and Middle Education;
- ii. Establishment of Communication and information network of regional educational institutes in collaboration with the Secretariat;
- iii. Festivals of story-telling and local and native games of the ECO region.

- **ECO Consultancy & Engineering Company (ECO-CEC)**

361. The Council requested the Member States to support ECO-CEC in becoming an active regional institution of ECO. The Council also asked the Member States and the Secretariat to utilize the expertise of the ECO-CEC in providing consultancy services for projects having regional character.

362. The Council asked the member states to facilitate effective participation of ECO-CEC in the bidding process for the projects financed from ECO resources and for other national projects, specifically, by timely exchange of information related to the bidding process.

363. In order to promote a more direct and effective approach in securing new projects, the Council encouraged the representatives of Petrochemical Industries Design and Engineering Company (PIDEC), which is a founding company of ECO-CEC and has one-thirds share in

ECO-CEC, to organize meetings of the Board of Directors with the relevant agencies in Tehran for pursuing new business opportunities. The Council also asked the Secretariat to extend necessary assistance to the ECO-CEC and PIDEC in this regard.

364. The Council stressed on the need for effective communication and coordination between ECO-CEC and the ECO Secretariat for exploiting the emerging opportunities in the region. The Council asked the Secretariat to share the relevant reports and publications issued by the Secretariat, especially in the transport and energy sectors, with the ECO-CEC on a regular basis.

365. The Council took note of the request made by the some Member States indicating that the ECO-CEC should prepare a report highlighting its core competencies in the field of engineering, which would be shared with the relevant agencies and authorities in the Member States for creating awareness about the company.

- **ECO College of Insurance**

366. The Council asked the College to share information pertaining to the academic sessions, recognition of degrees within the region and scholarship programs for the ECO region so that the information may be shared with the Member States. In this regard, the Council took note of the website developed by the College for dissemination of information.

367. The Council requested the Member States to share proposals/recommendations for improving the educational standards and performance of the College. The Council also asked the Member States to encourage their talented students to avail scholarship opportunities offered by the College.

368. The Council asked the College to initiate preparations for the 2nd BoT Meeting and convey the proposed dates to the Secretariat and the Member States.

- **Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Countries (PAECO)**

369. During the First Meeting of the Executive Council of PAECO held on 12 February 2013 at Islamabad, it was decided that Afghanistan would host the 2nd Conference of the PAECO in Kabul. In line with this decision, the Council requested the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to propose the dates for the 2nd Conference of the PAECO in the coming period.

370. The Council also took note of the proposal made by the Islamic Republic of Iran to hold the 2nd Conference of the PAECO on the sidelines of the upcoming meetings being attended by the Parliamentarians/Speakers of the Member States, in case the Conference cannot be held in Kabul.

371. The Council also requested the six Member States that have signed the PAECO Charter (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkey) to update the Secretariat about the status of ratifications.

ii. ECO's External Relations

372. The Council encouraged the Secretariat to take further steps in accordance with the Treaty of Izmir and the relevant decisions reached at different fora to strengthen the existing cooperation with the regional and international partners, including those within the UN system. The Council also asked the Member States to support the Secretariat in its efforts in this regard.

373. The Council requested the Member States to send instructions to their Permanent Missions based in New York, Vienna, Geneva, Rome, Bangkok, Nairobi and Jeddah to actively participate in the consultations/meetings of the Contact Groups at these places. The Permanent Missions may be encouraged to play active roles within the framework of the ECO Contact Groups for enlisting support of the UN specialized agencies and other organizations for ECO's activities and programmes in various key sectors.

374. In view of the decision reached at the 14th ASEAN-ECO Joint Ministerial Meeting held in New York on 25 September 2014, and the proposals to hold the ASEAN-ECO Joint Tourism and Business Forums in Turkey and Pakistan respectively, the Council requested the concerned Member States to approach the relevant authorities to hold these events in the coming time. The Council also requested the Member States to actively participate in the events and to confirm their participation at an early time.

375. Taking note of the cooperation between ECO and the International Center for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in the field of legal and labour migration, the Council encouraged the Secretariat to expand its cooperative relations with the ICMPD in relevant areas.

376. The Council requested the Member States to share substantive proposals for promoting ECO's cooperative relationship with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, funds and programmes.

377. The Council encouraged the Secretariat to develop and promote project-based cooperation with its regional and international partners and also asked the Member States to consider giving strategic direction to the Secretariat for undertaking such collaboration.

378. With the objective to develop and enhance interaction with ASEAN Ambassadors in Tehran the Council encouraged the Secretariat to take necessary measures for the accreditation of the ASEAN Ambassadors in Tehran to the ECO.

Agenda Item No.7

Annual ECO Calendar of Events for 2015-2016

379. The Council endorsed the Annual ECO Calendar of Events for the year 2015-2016, proposed by the sectoral Committees for further submission to the COM on the recommendation of the CPR for final approval, which is placed at **Annex-VII**.

Agenda Item No.8

Any other business

380. No issue was raised under this agenda item.

Agenda Item No.9

Date and Venue of the next Meeting

381. The Council decided to organize the next 26th RPC Meeting in November/December 2015 at the ECO Secretariat. The Secretariat would work out the exact date of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No.10

Adoption of the Report

382. The Report of the 25th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council was adopted unanimously.

Agenda Item No.11

Closing Remarks

383. On behalf of all the participating delegation, the Council expressed its appreciation and thanks to the ECO Secretariat for making appropriate arrangements for this important meeting.

384. The Council concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair for conducting the deliberations of the meeting in a smooth and efficient manner. The Council also thanked the Chairmen of various sectoral Committees for successfully conducting the business of their respective Committees. It also appreciated the efforts made by the Secretary General and his staff for preparing comprehensive Working Papers and other documents for the Council.
