



28th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC)

“ECO Work Programme 2018”

(Islamabad, 11-14 December 2017)

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES /ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
A. Sector: TRADE AND INVESTMENT		
1.	<p>In the beginning of the meeting, the ECO Secretariat informed the Council that since the ECO Vision 2025 has been adopted, it would now serve as the road-map for all activities of the Trade & Investment Directorate. In view of this, this year's RPC report will be based on the ECO Vision 2025 and activities and work plan for 2018 will be discussed according to the trade-related part of the ECO Vision 2025. These include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Preferential and Free Trade b) Finance, Taxation and Investment c) Trade Promotion, Capacity Building and ECO Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ECO-CCI) d) Membership of WTO e) Customs Cooperation and Trade Facilitation f) ECO Trade & Development Bank and Trade Finance g) ECO Reinsurance Company h) Visa Procedures 	
2.	<p>The ECO Secretariat informed that after the 4th Ministerial Meeting of Commerce and Foreign Trade in Kabul in 2011, no meeting has been held due to lack of quorum. The meeting was scheduled twice during 2016 by Islamic Republic of Iran but was postponed due to lack of quorum. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan offered to host the meeting in August 2017, but on request of the Republic of Turkey, the date was moved forward. Now the meeting would be held on 23-24th January 2018 in Islamabad.</p>	
3.	<p>The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for announcing the schedule of the 5th Ministerial Meeting of Commerce and Foreign Trade in January, 2018 in Islamabad. The Council also requested the Member States to confirm their participation in the meeting and convey the composition of delegations to the ECO Secretariat at the earliest convenience. The Republic of Turkey informed the Council that H.E. Mr. Nihat ZEYBEKCI, the Minister of Economy would represent his country on 24th January 2018 in the Ministerial. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan informed the Council that if completion of quorum is not communicated to it by 31st December 2017, it would not be possible for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to hold the meeting.</p>	
4.	<p>The Secretariat informed the Council that ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA),</p>	

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	<p>despite being in force, has not been operationalized despite passage of many years. The Council was informed that it is obligatory to hold at least two meetings of the ECOTA Cooperation Council in a year. The 7th (Extra-Ordinary) Meeting of the ECOTA Cooperation Council was held on 23-24 January, 2017. The Secretariat informed that during the discussion on the Iranian proposal to fast-track implementation of ECOTA, the Islamic Republic of Iran informed that it can finalize its Positive, Negative and Sensitive Lists after evaluating the concessions which are to be made by other Contracting Parties. The meeting remained inconclusive.</p>	
5.	<p>The Council acknowledged the Secretariat for holding the 7th (Extra-Ordinary) Meeting of the ECOTA Cooperation Council. The Council requested the Contracting Parties of the Agreement to volunteer to host the 8th Meeting of ECOTA Cooperation Council in 2018. The Council also requested that the Contracting Parties should strive to find a way to operationalize the Agreement. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan supported the proposal made by Islamic Republic of Iran to the extent of exchange of lists on Request-Offer basis. The Republic of Turkey termed the Iranian proposal as a new interpretation of the modalities. The Republic of Turkey was of the view that this proposal was not covered by the modalities of the ECOTA, and from legal point of view it tantamounts to amendment of modalities. The Republic of Tajikistan informed that the tariffs of his country are already lower than those required by ECOTA. The Council requested the Republic of Tajikistan to convey its offer in writing to the ECO Secretariat. The Republic of Turkey was of the view that despite being member of WTO it will be beneficial for the Republic of Tajikistan if they are a member of regional trading arrangement in order to obtain market access opportunities. The Islamic Republic of Iran proposed that the option of holding the next meeting of ECOTA Cooperation Council on the sidelines of 5th Ministerial Meeting of Commerce and Foreign Trade may also be considered.</p>	
6.	<p>About the ECO Multi-Dimensional Trade and Investment Strategy and Prospects of Establishing a Free Trade Area in the Region, the Secretariat informed the Council that the Strategy is part of the agenda for the forthcoming 5th Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade and would be discussed during that meeting.</p>	
7.	<p>The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that the Republic of Turkey had</p>	

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	agreed to host the 1st Meeting on the Joint Working Group for Preparation of the draft ECO Trade Facilitation Agreement (ETFAs) in October 2017. Five confirmations were received so the meeting had to be postponed because of lack of quorum. The sixth confirmation from a Member State was received after the date of the meeting had passed. The ECO Secretariat further informed that the Republic of Turkey has provided a very comprehensive paper on Trade Facilitation.	
8.	The Council agreed with the proposal of the ECO Secretariat to circulate the Working Paper submitted by Republic of Turkey on Trade Facilitation amongst the Member States to obtain the respective views of their Trade, Transit and Customs authorities before the Ministerial Meeting in January 2018.	
9.	The ECO Secretariat informed that no meeting of Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy has been held after the 4 th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy held in 2014 in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Council called upon the Member States to volunteer to host the 5 th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy in 2018.	
10.	The ECO Secretariat informed that after the 1 st Meeting of ECO Heads of Central Banks in Pakistan in 2007, the 2 nd Meeting of ECO Heads of Central Banks has not been held due to lack of quorum. It was informed that the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed to host the meeting in 2016 but quorum was not achieved. The Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Council that it would like to host the meeting in 2018, subject to the condition that Governors or Heads of all ECO Central Banks could attend the Meeting.	
11.	The Council was informed that the 2 nd Meeting of Heads of ECO Tax Administration was held in the Republic of Turkey in 2016. The Council was informed that so far the following three draft Documents have been drafted in the first meeting held in the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2014 in this regard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	
12.	The Council called upon the Member States to volunteer hosting the 2 nd Meeting	

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	of the ECO Heads of Tax Administration in 2018 to endorse the aforesaid three documents to be submitted to decision making organs of ECO for approval.	
13.	Regarding the First Meeting of ECO Heads of Capital Markets Supervisory Authorities , the Council was informed that the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed to host in 2017. The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the Meeting and inform through the ECO Secretariat.	
14.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that so far two ECO Member States namely the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan have ratified the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment among ECO Member States (APPI) , along with the Amendment Protocol and deposited the Instrument of Ratification. The APPI has been signed by five ECO Member States (namely, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey) and entry into force requires ratification by four Member States. The Council called upon the Member States, which have not already done so, to sign & ratify the APPI along with its Amendment Protocol.	
15.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that for the ECO Trade and Investment Network Web Portal , the ECO Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI) was requested to provide detailed information about importers and exporters in the ECO Region. The ECO-CCI had circulated this request among the National Chambers of Commerce and Industry. So far no information has been received in this regard. The Council requested the Member States to impress upon their respective National Chambers of Commerce and Industry to provide this information at the earliest.	
16.	The Council while thanking the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for hosting the First Meeting of ECO Heads of Investment Promotion Agencies (ECO-IPAs) in Islamabad on December 26, 2016. It was informed that the title of the Meeting was changed to "ECO Investment Promotion Agencies (ECO-IPAs) Forum in its first meeting. The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the Second Meeting of ECO Investment Promotion Agencies (ECO-IPAs) Forum and inform the ECO Secretariat through diplomatic channels.	
17.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that during the 3 rd Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy held on 21-23 December, 2008 in Tehran, the Republic of Tajikistan was designated as the coordinating country for ECO initiatives on investment. Tajikistan offered to host the 4th ECO Investment Conference but	

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	has not conveyed the schedule so far. The Council requested the Republic of Tajikistan to convey the dates and other details for the Conference at the earliest. The Republic of Tajikistan informed the Council that it would convey its position to the ECO Secretariat via diplomatic channels.	
18.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that as per the decision of the 27 th Meeting of the RPC held in 2016, a proposal for two-year project on ECO Business Forum worth US\$ 50,000/- was prepared and it was circulated among the Member States. So far no input and views have been received on the draft proposal, which were important before this proposal could be submitted to the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) for approval. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan reiterated to hold the Business Forum and the proposal to allocate funds for the Forum. This was supported by the Republic of Turkey. The Islamic Republic of Iran and Islamic Republic of Afghanistan requested the Secretariat to prepare a list of relevant ECO projects and programmes having financial implication to the budget of the ECO for consideration and approval by the CPR. The Council requested the rest of the Member States to expedite the provision of their views to the ECO Secretariat at the earliest.	
19.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that after the holding of the 2 nd ECO Trade Fair held in Karachi, Pakistan in July 2008, the 3 rd ECO Trade Fair has not been held. The Islamic Republic of Iran offered to host the Fair during 2016 but it could not be held due to lack of response, after which the Islamic Republic of Iran informed that it would not be hosting this Fair. The ECO-CCI tried to organize the 3 rd ECO Trade Fair in October 2017 in Karachi, but it was postponed because, except the Islamic Republic of Iran, no Member State showed any interest in the event.	
20.	The Council expressed its concern over the lukewarm interest and requested to actively participate in ECO Trade Fairs. The Council requested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States to prefer organizing and participating Specialized Trade Fairs instead of General trade exhibitions. • Member States to hold Business Fora on the sidelines of these Fairs. 	
21.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that the ECO-ASEAN Joint Business Forum was to be hosted by the ECO-CCI. In this regard, the ASEAN Secretariat has requested that a Master List of traders doing business with ASEAN may be provided to it. The ECO-CCI was requested to provide this List and the response	

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	is still awaited from ECO-CCI. The Council requested the Member States to impress upon their National Chambers of Commerce and Industry to provide the lists to ECO-CCI at the earliest.	
22.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that the ECO-SAARC Joint Business Forum is to be hosted by the ECO-CCI. In the ECO-CCI Meetings held in Ankara in November 2017, it was decided that the ECO-SAARC Joint Business Forum will be organized on the sidelines of 4 th ECO-Business Forum.	
23.	While appreciating the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for announcing the date and the venue as 19 March, 2018 in Islamabad for the 4th ECO Trade Promotion Organizations (ECO-TPOs) Forum , the Council called upon the Member States to actively participate in the Forum to synergize trade promotional activities in the region.	
24.	The Council appreciated that the implementation of the 3rd Phase of the ECO-UNIDO Trade Capacity Building Project (TCBP) has been completed in 2017 and ECO Regional Quality Policy and Guideline for National Quality Policy have been formulated.	
25.	<p>The Council agreed that for promoting the ECO Quality Infrastructure and to implement the ECO Regional Quality Policy, the next phase of the Project is required. In this respect the Council invited UNIDO, ETDB and IDB to provide financial and technical support for the implementation of the next phase of the Project. The Council also requested all the Member States to give their full support to initiate the implementation of the next phase of ECO-UNIDO Trade Capacity Building Project.</p> <p>The Islamic Republic of Iran proposed that the next possible phase of ECO-UNIDO TCB Project to involve ECO Regional Institute for Standardization Conformity Assessment Accreditation and Metrology (ECO-RISCAM). The Islamic Republic of Pakistan did not agree with proposal of Islamic Republic of Iran and was supported by the Republic of Turkey as they were of the view that they are two different aspects. The Republic of Turkey offered to share his expertise in this regard if requested.</p>	
26.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for holding the meetings of the 22nd Executive Committee meeting and 15th General Assembly meeting of the ECO-CCI along with the six Specialized Committees , in Islamabad on 1-3 March, 2017. The Council also thanked and appreciated the	

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	Republic of Turkey for holding the meetings of the 23 rd Executive Committee meeting of the ECO-CCI along with the Six Specialized Committees Meetings, in Ankara on 15-17 November, 2017.	
27.	The Council requested the Member States to urge their respective National Chambers to confirm their participation in the meetings of the 24 th ECO-CCI's Executive Committee and the Specialized Committees in March, 2018 in Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran.	
28.	The Council appreciated that the CPR has approved allocating the required funds from the General Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FGPF) for the Second Phase of the Study on Trading Patterns in the ECO Region which will be conducted by Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). The Council also showed its appreciation that work on the Study has been started.	
29.	The Council urged the ECO Secretariat to ensure that the Study is completed within time stipulated in the contract so the Member States can use the result of the study as soon as possible.	
30.	The Council while recalling that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan during the 26th RPC meeting offered to hold the Trade Policy Review Session requested Pakistan to convey to the Secretariat dates and venue for hosting such event in 2018. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan informed the Council that, it will only hold the TPRS if requested by a non-WTO ECO Member State provided that financial support is provided by the ECO-TDB. The Council requested the non-WTO ECO Member States to inform Islamic Republic of Pakistan via ECO Secretariat in this regard if they are interested.	
31.	The Council while appreciating that so far six ECO Member States are the members of the WTO, underlined that ECO may support the remaining four ECO Member States to become members of the WTO through capacity building to align the trade policies and laws for regulatory reforms as per WTO requirements.	
32.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has organized a <i>3rd Seminar on Trading Patterns in the ECO Region and Accession of ECO Member States to WTO</i> on 02-03 May 2016 and the <i>4th Seminar on Trading Patterns in the ECO Region and WTO Issues</i> on 25-26 October 2017 in Islamabad with the financial support of ECO Trade and Development Bank (ETDB).	

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33.	The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for hosting these Seminars and the ETDB for providing financial support to organize the Seminar. The Council agreed that seminars to support and encourage the remaining ECO Member States on Trading Patterns in ECO Region and accession to WTO should be organized on regular basis. In this respect, the Council requested the WTO Members of ECO to volunteer hosting and organizing such Seminars and the ETDB to continue provide financial assistance for organizing the seminars. The Council decided that the Fifth Seminar on Trading Patterns in ECO Region will be held in 2018 in one of the ECO Member States who may volunteer to host.	
34.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for holding the 8th Meeting of the ECO Council of Heads of Customs Administration (CHCA) along with the 4 th Meeting of the Sub-Committee of Customs Experts (SCOEs) on 13-14 November, 2017 in Islamabad. The Council was informed that the name of the SCOE has been changed to ECO Customs Cooperation Committee (ECCC) and the next meeting would be called the 5 th Meeting of the ECO Customs Cooperation Committee (ECCC).	
35.	The Council requested the Member States to volunteer hosting of the 9 th Meeting of the CHCA and the 5 th Meeting of the ECCC and convey the dates, venue and hospitality details at the earliest convenience.	
36.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that after the Republic of the Azerbaijan ratified the Agreement on Establishment and Operation of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank this year, the four of the six signatories have now ratified the Agreement and it would come into force on 30 th December 2017.	
37.	The Council thanked the Republic of the Azerbaijan for ratifying the Agreement on Establishment and Operation of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank. The Council requested the Republic of Turkey to take the next steps for the establishment of the ECO Smuggling and the Customs Offences Data Bank. The Council requested the Member States to fully cooperate with the Republic of Turkey for early operation of this institutional mechanism aiming to increase the Governmental revenues of the Member States.	
38.	The Republic of Turkey informed that it has already started working on the Data Bank. A Working Group in the Turkish Customs Administration has been established to determine the data entry fields. The Republic of Turkey will share	

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	the draft data fields with the Contracting Parties to the Agreement when these are ready. It will also be determined through mutual consultation among the contracting parties as to the possibility on how far in the past the Data Bank needs to compile data. After these aspects are clarified, the software will be developed.	
39.	The Council requested the remaining signatories to the Agreement to expediting ratification of the Agreement. The Council also requested the non-signatory Member States to consider signing and ratifying the Agreement.	
40.	The ECO Secretariat informed that the draft text of the Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters has been finalized in the 8 th Meeting of the CHCA. This adopted final draft text has been circulated among the Member States for completion of formalities and internal governmental processes. The Council requested the Member States for early completion of their formalities and internal governmental processes. After this, this draft Agreement will be submitted to the decision making organs of the ECO for approval to be open for signatures.	
41.	The Islamic Republic of Pakistan informed the Council that during the 8 th CHCA Meeting the Islamic Republic of Pakistan offered to support the capacity building activities of the Member States in Customs matters through a set of different trainings at the Customs Training Academy at Karachi. It was also suggested that the Member States may share their best practices in different thematic areas and may communicate the proposed set of trainings with the ECO Secretariat. These training proposals can then be circulated among the Member States for the interest and confirmation of their participation.	
42.	During the Meeting of 8 th CHCA, the Islamic Republic of Iran agreed to host the 1 st Meeting of Committee on the Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) . It was decided that the ECO Secretariat would prepare the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for this Committee and circulate it among the Member States for their views and nomination of experts. The Islamic Republic of Iran would announce the dates and venue for the 1 st Meeting of the Committee after these ToRs are received from the Secretariat. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for volunteering to hold the 1 st Meeting of the Committee on EDI.	
43.	The ECO Secretariat informed that the 1 st Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on E-Trade Cooperation was hosted by Islamic Republic of Iran in 2012. The Council	

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	<p>urged the Member States to volunteer to host the 2nd EGM on E-Trade Cooperation and convey the dates and hospitality details to the ECO Secretariat. The Council requested the Secretariat to host the Meeting at its headquarters in absence of volunteering for hosting the Meeting.</p>	
44.	<p>While underlining that the current membership base of the ECO Trade & Development Bank (ETDB) includes six ECO Member States, the Council called upon the remaining four ECO Member States to start the membership process of the Bank at their earliest convenience to get benefit from its resources.</p>	
45.	<p>The Council also underlined that the ETDB should be further supported to strengthen its role and enhance its capacity for financing trade and development projects of the Member States.</p>	
46.	<p>The Council appreciated that the Terms of References (TORs) for launching Regional Partnership Forum (RPF) prepared by the ECO Trade and Development Bank have been finalized with the support of the Member States. The Council agreed that ECO Trade and Development Bank with the coordination of the Secretariat and the Member States may start arranging relevant activities as envisaged by the TORs at the earliest convenience. The Council also urged the Member States to encourage their relevant national institutions and organizations to actively participate in the subject Forum.</p>	
47.	<p>The Council referring to the earlier decisions of the ECO Council of Ministers requested the ECO Trade and Development Bank 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.</p>	
48.	<p>The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that the Republic of Turkey has ratified the Articles of Agreement of ECO Reinsurance Company. The two other parties to the Agreement have already ratified it. The Council was informed that ECO Secretariat has notified the Agreement as being in force and has requested the parties to the Agreement to take the next steps to establish the ECO Reinsurance Company.</p>	
49.	<p>The parties to the Agreement appreciated the Republic of Turkey for ratification of the Articles of Agreement of ECO Reinsurance Company. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan offered to host the 1st Meeting of parties to the Agreement in Pakistan for purpose of deciding the modalities associated with the establishment of the ECO Reinsurance Company, preferably in last week of December 2017 or</p>	

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	1 st week of January 2018 and informed that for the 1 st Meeting on Reinsurance Company it will cover the cost of Economy Class return air-ticket and local hospitality during the Meeting for one participant from each Party. The Parties to the Agreement invited the remaining ECO Member States to join the Agreement on ECO Reinsurance Company.	
50.	The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that the Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen and the Additional Protocol to the Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen and Transit Drivers of ECO Member States has been signed by Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is the only country that has also ratified the Agreement and the Protocol. A meeting to discuss these issues was to be held in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, but during the 27 th RPC, it informed that it could not hold this the meeting. The ECO Secretariat has requested Member States to volunteer for the meeting but so far no country has agreed to host the meeting.	
51.	The Council requested the Member States, which have not signed or ratified the Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen and the Additional Protocol on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Businessmen and Transit Drivers, to sign / ratify these legal texts.	
52.	The Council also requested the Member States to volunteer holding the Meeting on Simplification and Harmonization of Visa Procedure for Businessmen and Drivers in 2018.	
53.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for offering to host the First Meeting of the Heads of the Commodity Exchange of ECO Member States on 12 th May, 2018 in Tehran. The Council requested the Member States to inform about their participation in the Meeting by 30 th March, 2018 through the ECO Secretariat.	
54.	At the request of ECO Secretariat, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey have already provided list of focal points in all areas. The Council also called upon the remaining Member States to designate their Focal Points in the areas of Trade, Investment, Customs, Trade Facilitation, WTO, Tax, Banking, Capital Markets, E-Trade and Visa, and provide their contact details.	

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B. Sector: TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY		
1.	<p>Status of Ongoing Activities, Achievements, and Proposals:</p> <p>I) <u>The 9th Ministerial Meeting on Transport</u></p> <p>The 27th Council requested Turkmenistan to expedite conveying details regarding the 9th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport, i.e. date and other logistic arrangements and the representative of Turkmenistan assured to provide the details through diplomatic channels.</p>	
2.	<p>President of Turkmenistan at 13th ECO Summit (Islamabad, March 2017) reiterated the readiness of the Government of Turkmenistan for hosting the Ministerial Meeting. Keeping in mind that holding of meetings at the level of Ministers require necessary logistic and timely actions, the concerned authorities of Turkmenistan were approached for specifying the dates of the meeting. The ECO Secretariat in its latest correspondence proposed hosting the Meeting either in the 2nd half of November 2017 or in February-March 2018.</p>	
3.	<p>The Council requested Turkmenistan to expedite conveying dates for the 9th Ministerial Meeting on Transport through diplomatic channels, at least three months prior to the stipulated date for the event.</p>	
4.	<p>II) <u>Implementation of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA):</u></p> <p>A. Status of ratification of the TTFA by Member States</p> <p>The Council requested Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to expedite completion of the process of acceding to TTFA and inform the Secretariat accordingly through diplomatic channels.</p>	
5.	<p>The recent meetings of the TTCC and its auxiliary bodies</p> <p>a) Insurance Committee</p> <p>Further to the updates provided by the ECO Secretariat regarding comments and views received from the concerned authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Turkey on the proposals of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the Financial Guarantee Mechanism of the White Card scheme, the issue was followed up with other Member States for intimation of their comments and views. No response has been received so far.</p>	
6.	<p>Noting that the issue of the Financial Guarantee Mechanism remains a serious concern in implementation of the White Card scheme where the level of road</p>	

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	<p>traffic and Financial Guarantee Mechanism needs to be considered by all Member States including the enroute Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) Road Corridor and further to the recommendations of the 4th HLWG on ITI Road Corridor ((Islamabad, August 2016), the Council was informed about ECO's initiative to organize a special meeting of the concerned authorities of the member states enroute ITI Road Corridor on the sidelines of the Road Committee of TTCC, scheduled for mid November 2016 at the ECO Secretariat. Due to shortage of time Turkey had regretted for not being able to participate in the meeting.</p>	
7.	<p>The representative of Pakistan informed the meeting that Pakistan has acceded to TIR convention and after accession most of the post accession formalities have been completed and presently, the only impediment is resolution of the issue of Financial Guarantee Mechanism and bilateral agreements between the national insurers of the enroute countries. In order to find out acceptable solution a special meeting on the issue of insurance is required to be convened.</p>	
8.	<p>The Council also supported Pakistan's idea to convene a special meeting on insurance issue.</p>	
9.	<p>The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to coordinate a meeting on insurance within the first quarter of 2018.</p>	
10.	<p>b) The Railway Committee 13th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/7th Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC was hosted by the Republic of Azerbaijan on 17-18 April 2017 in Baku. The Meeting was attended by the senior officials from the railway authorities of all Member States, except Uzbekistan. The meeting was also attended by representatives of IDB, ECO-TDB, UNECE, UNESCAP and OTIF to contribute to the agenda of the Meeting. The delegation of China also participated in the Meeting. An interactive/ dialogue session between ECO Member States and Peoples Republic of China was allocated to questions/answers on major railway activities being implemented and planned by the Government of China including the railway corridors passing through the ECO region.</p>	
11.	<p>The extensive discussions were held during the meeting on the corridor developing and railway infrastructure projects being coordinated under the umbrella of ECO. Representatives of UNECE and OTIF made presentations on the latest activities of their Secretariats in the railway sector, notably, a presentation was made on the latest status of the "unified railway law" under umbrella of</p>	

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	UNECE and COTIF under the Secretariat of OTIF.	
12.	The meeting took note of the presentation made by the representative of the IDB on the first phase of the joint IDB/UNECE project on Transport Geographic Information System (GIS) covering all ECO member states. The meeting requested inclusion of ECO transport maps in the GIS initiative. The meeting requested member countries through ECO Secretariat to nominate national consultants/focal points for contribution to GIS initiative. The member states were also urged to provide necessary information/data and to actively participate in the meeting to be organized by IDB/UNECE under this initiative. The meeting requested IDB to support the ECO Secretariat in terms of capacity building regarding GIS application.	
13.	So far, nominations from seven member states have been received. The contacts have been established by the ECO Secretariat with the international consultant recruited by UNECE for the project on the next joint actions on the project.	
14.	The Secretariat informed the Council that accordingly, two workshops have been held on the GIS initiative with participation of some ECO Member States. The Council was further informed that it is expected that by the third quarter of 2018 maps of ECO region will be added in the GIS system.	
15.	The representative of Pakistan fully supported GIS initiative and informed the Council that it has nominated the focal point on GIS system and the ECO Secretariat will soon receive information in this regard.	
16.	The Council appreciated the Secretariat for joining the GIS initiative and requested the remaining member states to introduce their focal points on GIS, at the earliest.	
17.	<p style="text-align: center;">c) The Road Committee</p> <p>The ECO Secretariat informed the Council that Pakistan has graciously offered to host 9th meeting of the Road Committee, 6th meeting of the Customs Transit Committee of TTCC and 9th Meeting of TTCC 13-15 February, 2018 in Islamabad. The new dates of the meetings along with the agenda, have already been conveyed to the Member States for provision of nominations.</p>	
18.	The Secretariat encouraged the ECO Member States for high-level participation in the TTCC events.	
19.	The representative of Pakistan informed the Council that regarding CMR inter-ministerial consultation process has been completed within the concerned stakeholder Ministries and following the achievement of the consensus of all	

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	stakeholders, the case has been submitted to the Federal Cabinet for its final approval. Once it is approved by the Cabinet the instrument of accession will be deposited in the UN legal section. The ECO Secretariat will be updated in this regard within two months.	
20.	The representative of Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Council that Iran is the official member of e-CMR convention. As regards accession to ADR convention it may take one and a half year for its approval.	
21.	The representative of Pakistan informed the Council that Pakistan is in the process of operationalizing the TIR convention. Workshop on TIR has been conducted in October with the help of IRU. The representative of Pakistan requested ECO Secretariat to arrange more workshops on TIR. As regards ADR, Pakistan is currently engaged in consultation process. It was also informed that Pakistan will update the ECO Secretariat in two month's period on its on CMR status of ratification.	
22.	The representative of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan informed that Ministry of Foreign Affairs is pursuing the case of accession to CMR and ADR seriously.	
23.	The representative of Turkey informed the Council that Turkey has carried out the e-TIR pilot project with Iran that was successfully concluded in February 2017 which was based on two phases. In total 64 shipments have been carried out. E-guarantee system was successfully tested. The programme was based on data exchange from customs to business and business to customs. The Council was also informed that Turkey is planning to carry out another e-TIR pilot project with Georgia.	
24.	The Council appreciated the initiatives taken by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Islamic Republic of Pakistan for accession to the important conventions. The Council urged the member states to nominate delegations for TTCC events, at the earliest. The Council appreciated the joint implementation of e-TIR pilot project and TIR-EPD by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey and recommended implementation of similar projects by all ECO Member States.	
25.	d) The Customs Transit Committee Further to the decision of the 5 th Customs Transit Committee (Tehran, November 2016) taken on the findings of the "ECO/IDB Feasibility Study on Customs related Provisions of the TTFA and modernization of border crossing points in the ECO	

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	Region”, notably requesting the Member States to provide regular reports with regard to implementation of recommendations provided in the Study and the requirements of the Plan of Action for modernization of customs crossing borders, to regularly assess and provide progress report to the said Committee, the Member States have been approached to do so but no feedback has been received so far.	
26.	The Secretariat was also asked in coordination with Member States to conduct field visits if necessary, with a view to providing the member states with the latest status of progress in implementation of Plan of Action in its assessment.	
27.	The meeting decided to request the CPR to provide the required funding for implementation of the Plan of Action within the framework of TTFA Fund and ask the Secretariat to seek additional financial resources and technical assistance from all relevant international and regional bodies including IDB, ADB, IRU etc.	
28.	The Secretariat requested the member states to urge their relevant authorities to deal more seriously with the follow-up mandates they have endorsed to enable the successful implementation of the Plan of Action.	
29.	The representative of Turkey informed the Council that it will host another training session for Pakistan National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce (PNC-ICC) officials in Turkey for which the date will be communicated through diplomatic channels.	
30.	The representative of the ECO Secretariat informed the Council that a number of workshops were held to familiarize the customs authorities of Pakistan with TIR and after finalization of internal procedures in Pakistan IRU will be ready to hold a workshop on how to practically operationalize the TIR. The Secretariat requested Pakistan to indicate a date regarding finalization of internal legal formalities so that accordingly, the Secretariat could coordinate organizing the workshop with IRU.	
31.	The representative of Turkey requested the ECO Secretariat to prepare and share a questionnaire with the Member States periodically about actions mentioned in the Plan of Action in order to make the implementation and follow-ups more manageable for the Member States.	
32.	<p>e) The TTCC Meeting</p> <p>The ECO Secretariat requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to inform about</p>	

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	the completion of internal procedures on functionalization of TIR in order to decide on the suitable date for the workshop on implementation of TIR system with the involvement of resource persons from IRU and TOBB as soon as required formalities are in place.	
33.	The Council requested the member states to introduce their delegations to the ECO Secretariat for TTCC meetings. The Council also requested the authorities of Islamic Republic of Pakistan to intimate to the Secretariat about completion of internal procedures, at the earliest to proceed to the next phase of TIR i.e. its implementation.	
34.	<p>f) ECO/IDB Joint Project for Preparation of a Regional Program Implementation of the TTFA</p> <p>The customs issue as the enabler and facilitator of transit transportation and inter-regional trade is in the focus of TC Directorate and a number of projects have been initiated and successfully implemented since 2010 in this regard. Among major of them are “ECO Truck Caravan 2010” and “ECO Regular Monitoring of Trucks (ECORMT)” which enabled to collect a comprehensive data on major physical and non-physical barriers and analyze the real situation for movement of trucks through the region and beyond where non-physical issues have been identified among major impediments in the way of trucks performing international carriage of goods.</p>	
35.	After successful completion of the 1 st phase “ECO/IDB Joint Project on implementation of TTFA” which enabled to identify priority roads and rail routes connecting the member states and also address the provisions related to “motor vehicle third party liability insurance scheme” of TTFA, IDB was approached for possibility of addressing customs provisions of TTFA and modernization of border crossing points.	
36.	27 th Council was reported about the actions taken by the ECO Secretariat in collaboration with the Member States to implement “ECO/IDB Joint Project on customs related provisions of TTFA and modernization of the border crossing points” in collaboration with the national consultants from the customs administrations of the Member States. The major findings of the Feasibility Study and recommendations have been presented to the 5 th meeting of the Customs Transit Committee of TTCC, held on 15 th November, 2016 at the ECO Secretariat and accordingly endorsed by the Member States.	

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37.	The Secretariat was also asked in coordination with Member States to conduct field visits if necessary, with a view to providing the member states with the latest status of progress in implementation of Plan of Action in its assessment.	
38.	The meeting decided to request the CPR to provide the required funding for implementation of the Plan of Action within the framework of TTFA Fund and ask the Secretariat to seek additional financial resources and technical assistance from all relevant international and regional bodies including IDB, ADB, IRU etc.	
39.	<p style="text-align: center;">III) <u>ECO Projects in the Field of Railway and Road Transport</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A. Projects in the field of Railway Transport</p> <p>ECO Container Train on Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) route</p> <p>The representative of ECO Secretariat informed the Council that 13th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities was informed by the representative of Pakistan that historically the ITI container train route is part of Silk route and a successful run of ECO ITI container train on this route between 2009 and 2012 occurred. However, later on, the businessmen/traders were discouraged to use the corridor due to a number of issues related to infrastructure and train service. He further informed that Pakistan has improved its railway infrastructure in terms of rolling stocks. The representative of Turkey stated that the major obstacle in functionalization of this corridor is infrastructural issues causing delays, and weak demand.</p>	
40.	9 th meeting of the HLWG on ITI Container train (Islamabad, July 2017) discussed at length all technical issues pertaining to train services, e.g. Timetable, tariffs, marketing issues etc. The Turkish delegate informed about the Marmaray project which will be finished at the end of 2018 as a result of which ITI Train will arrive in Istanbul.	
41.	Pakistan's representative informed the Council that Ministry of Railways has taken steps to improve transport infrastructure related to ITI route. First, feasibility study for Rohri-Quetta-Taftan section of the railways launched and expected to be completed in 10-12 months. Second, EOI for upgradation of the railway line (Rohri-Quetta-Taftan) on BOT basis has also been called. Third, one major portion of ITI route within Pakistan (Islamabad-Lahore-Rohri section) is being upgradated under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is expected to be completed in next three to five years timeframe. All these steps would significantly reduce the transit time within Pakistan.	

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42.	The representative of Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Council that in the 9 th HLWG meeting on ITI Container Train, it was decided that Turkish railway will announce new tariffs in two weeks and accordingly Iran and Pakistan railways will announce new tariffs. However, revised tariffs have not been received from Turkish side.	
43.	The representative of Turkey informed the Council that after completion of Marmaray project at the end of 2018, revised tariffs and time table will be worked out. He requested the ECO Secretariat to conduct commercial study of ITI railway corridor.	
44.	The Council appreciated the briefing of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Turkey regarding infrastructure development. The Council requested again the ECO Secretariat to conduct a commercial study of the corridor on priority so as to optimize operationalization of this important corridor.	
45.	The representative of Pakistan informed the meeting that in line with the recommendation of 9 th HLWG meeting of ITI container train Afghanistan may be included in ITI corridor. The Secretariat informed that Afghanistan officially informed the Secretariat that ITI project is not currently their priority and accordingly declined the invitation.	
46.	<p>a) ECO Container Train on Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty Routes</p> <p>The Secretariat informed the Council that since last meeting of the Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty routes, lack of cargo and inefficient management mechanism remains the biggest bottlenecks in functionalization of this route. The 13th Heads of Railway requested the Secretariat to conduct commercialization study to gauge the commercial viability of the routes. In the next meeting of the corridors, a preliminary plan will be submitted for consideration of the meetings in this regard.</p>	
47.	The representative of Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the commercialization study on Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty routes and expressed willingness to work with all enroute Member States on new tariffs.	
48.	The Council recommended that working group on the routes should meet on regular basis to resolve all outstanding issues. The Council also recommended that Iranian side may consult with higher authorities for the working group meeting and inform the Secretariat about the outcome in less than one month.	
49.	The Iranian representative requested the ECO Secretariat to host 2 nd HLWG	

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	meeting for the Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty routes.	
50.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to prepare a preliminary plan on commercialization of the Istanbul-Almaty and Bandar Abbas-Almaty to be discussed by enroute countries during the 2 nd HLWG meeting for which the date and venue will be communicated by the Secretariat.	
51.	<p>a) Railway Project for the connection of China to Europe through Kyrgyzstan Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran (KTAI)</p> <p>13th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/7th Railway Committee of TTCC (Baku, 17-18 April 2017) was briefed on the developments along the segments passing via the territory of Afghanistan (about 1000 KM), notably, regarding completion of the pre-feasibility and feasibility study from Sherkhan Bandar to Mazar-e-Sharif and the study from Mazar-e-Sharif to Shibargan as well as completion of pre-feasibility study from Shibargan to Herat (around 460 km) and plans for the feasibility study in 2017. Segment Khaf-Herat (181 KM) is divided into 4 portions, two of which being in Iran, and the other two segment being in Afghanistan. First three segments have been agreed to be done by Iran. So far, first two segments have been completed and the third segment in the territory of Afghanistan (62 KM) is expected to be completed by end 2017. Segment four (43 KM) pre-feasibility and feasibility studies are almost completed and construction works are expected to start in the 1st half of 2018.</p>	
52.	The representative of Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Council that in near future phase 3 of the railway project Khaf-Herat will be completed.	
53.	Representative of Tajikistan informed the Council on continuation of construction operations of KTAI.	
54.	The Council while appreciating the explanations provided by representative of Tajikistan, requested the expedition of the operations. The Council reiterated that KTAI corridor will be built on Standard European gauge. The Council also requested the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to announce new dates for 2 nd KTAI Ministerial and SoM to discuss all outstanding issues.	
55.	<p>Railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran (KTI Railway)</p> <p>Further to the request of 27th RPC to announce the dates of meeting of the Heads of Railway Administrations of the countries enroute KTI, the meeting was held on 6th February 2017 at the ECO Secretariat preceded by the interagency consultations between ECO, IDB and UNESCAP. As the result of detailed discussions, the</p>	

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	enroute countries agreed on the concrete ways of commercializing the railway in collaboration with ECO, IDB and UNESCAP.	
56.	The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Council that lack of sufficient cargo is the main hindrance in proper functioning of this corridor. He further informed the Council that on Iran's border with Turkmenistan a lot of development work is being done. Construction of wide gauge railway has already been completed in Incheborun station of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Loading/offloading facilities and terminals are being provided there. Iran has already offered considerable discount in tariffs for this route.	
57.	The Council while appreciating the development work done by Iran, requested Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to introduce their focal points for the study. Iran informed that has conveyed its nomination and the Secretariat will receive it imminently.	
58.	<p><i>The Railway Project on Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) Route</i></p> <p>The representative of Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Council that 95% infrastructure work on Qazvin Rasht has been completed and it is expected to be inaugurated in March 2018. As regards Rasht-Astara segment, it was informed that 164 kilometers of missing link will be co-financed by the Republic of Azerbaijan. It was further informed that the agreement between Azerbaijan and Iran has already been signed for leasing the land of 35 hectares on the territory of Astara in Iran. The meeting requested the ECO Secretariat to consider undertaking a study on commercialization of "Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan)" railway similar to ECO's initiative on commercialization of the railway between Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran (KTI). The meeting decided that the 5th meeting of HLWG would be hosted by Islamic Republic of Iran with a site visit in the first half of 2018.</p> <p>It was also informed that until the completion of missing link the transportation will be done through alternate means.</p>	
59.	The representatives of Iran and Azerbaijan provide updates on the co-financing of Rasht-Astara segment informing that it is almost finalized.	
60.	The Council appreciated the updates provided by Iran and Azerbaijan and recommended the ECO Secretariat to conduct a study on commercialization on the "Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan)" railway.	

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61.	<p>B. Projects in the field of Road Transport: ECO Road Corridors on Kyrgyz Republic-Tajikistan- Afghanistan- Iran (KTAI) and Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) routes <u>KTAI Road Corridor</u> The Secretariat informed the Council that the International Consultant has completed field visits in the territory of Afghanistan and Iran. Second part of the field visits will be conducted by the end of December of 2017.</p>	
62.	The Secretariat informed that Tajikistan has generously offered to host the next KTAI road corridor meeting.	
63.	The Council while appreciating the offer of Tajikistan to host the next meeting of KTAI road corridor requested Tajik authorities to confirm the dates of the meeting to the ECO Secretariat through diplomatic channels.	
64.	<p><u>ITI Road Corridor</u> ECO Secretariat informed the Council that the meeting of “international and national consultants to review and finalize filled-in questionnaires/tables” was held on 27th September 2017 at the ECO Secretariat. After detailed deliberations the meeting came up with recommendations and determined time for the field visits of the international consultant of the enroute member states.</p>	
65.	The Secretariat provided an update on the field visits already conducted in Afghanistan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and part of Pakistan and expressed its deep appreciation to the national consultants for providing utmost cooperation and facilities. The Secretariat informed that the field visits to Pakistan and Turkey will be conducted by the end of December 2017, as a result of which the field visits will be completed and the final report may be accordingly worked upon by the international consultant.	
66.	The representative of the Republic of Turkey informed the Council that International Consultant will visit Esendere and Kapikoy border crossing points at Turkey-Iran border. The representative of Islamic Republic of Iran added that the mission will pass through Iranian border crossing point of Sero. The representative of the Republic of Turkey also informed that Turkey is looking forward to participating in the test run once TIR system is operationalized in Pakistan.	
<u>Any other business</u>		
67.	The representative of Afghanistan requested the ECO Secretariat to conduct a feasibility study on rail and road corridors beginning from Afghanistan through	

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	Iran leading to Turkey (Kabul-Tehran-Istanbul).	
68.	<p>IV) <u>ECO Unified Visa Sticker for Drivers</u></p> <p>ECO Secretariat briefed the Council that “First ECO Senior Consular Officials Meeting on Facilitation of Visa for Drivers” was held on 4th October 2016 at the ECO Secretariat where the Member States were presented the principles of proposed workable scheme. Based on the deliberations and comments of the delegates the ECO Secretariat prepared the modified version of the “ECO Visa Exemption Sticker Scheme” and an explanatory note reflecting responses provided by the Secretariat to all the queries raised in the course of the meeting and requested the Member States to provide comments and views. However, the Secretariat received response from only Afghanistan and Tajikistan. It was conveyed that Tajikistan is not ready to join proposed ECO visa sticker scheme. As regards Afghanistan it was indicated that “the Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do not agree with the “modified version of the ECO Visa Exemption Sticker Scheme”.</p>	
69.	The representative of Islamic Republic of Pakistan appreciated the proposal and stated that visa facilitation is of vital importance for seamless transportation. He further requested the Council to indicate new deadline for seeking views from Member States on the scheme.	
70.	The Council proposed that the member states may provide clear position/views to the ECO Secretariat by the end of February 2018.	
71.	<p>V) <u>ECOLPAF</u></p> <p>The Secretariat informed the Council that as per decision of the 27th RPC the ECO Secretariat requested the Turkish authorities to convey the contact details of the focal point in Turkey for accelerating registration process of ECO member States. Turkey graciously conveyed the contact details of the concerned official in UTIKAD which was accordingly shared with the Member States. However, only Pakistan has provided the complete documents.</p>	
72.	The Council was informed by the representative of Turkey that email address of the concerned official of UTIKAD was provided to the ECO Secretariat for easing the acceleration of registration of ECO Member States.	
73.	The Council while appreciating the provision of requisite document by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan requested Republic of Turkey to convey the request of ECO Secretariat for more regular follow-ups by the liaison mechanism established by	

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	Turkey. Turkey while accepting the request of the Secretariat asked the member states to expedite providing the information to the liaison office. The Council while appreciating Turkey for establishing the liaison office asked for active interaction between the liaison office and the ECO Member States and also requested the ECO Member States to accelerate the registration process.	
74.	<p style="text-align: center;">VI) <u>Cooperation in the Field of Civil Aviation</u></p> <p>As per decision of the 27th RPC and keeping in view the lack of interest of ECO Member States in this particular agenda, the representative of Turkey proposed to remove from the agenda.</p>	
75.	The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran supported the proposal of Turkey.	
76.	The Council decided to remove the item from next agenda.	
77.	<p style="text-align: center;">VII) <u>Latest Developments in Maritime Cooperation</u></p> <p>The Council requested the ECO member states willing to host 5th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Reference Marine Organizations to intimate the ECO Secretariat the exact dates by the end of February 2018.</p>	
78.	<p style="text-align: center;">VIII) <u>Communications</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A. Postal activities</p> <p>ECO Secretariat informed the Council about the request of ECO Postal Staff College for allocation of amount to conduct postal courses.</p>	
79.	The Representative of Islamic Republic of Iran inquired about the legal basis for cooperation between ECO and affiliated bodies and suggested that given the existence of similar request by other affiliated bodies, the issue related to all the affiliated bodies and their requests should be discussed and decided upon by the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) taking into account the approved priorities of ECO.	
80.	The representative of Islamic Republic of Iran requested the ECO Secretariat to kindly provide a comprehensive list of projects, activities and programmes, proposed by the ECO Member States to be funded from ECO budget.	
81.	The Council recommended that the issue of affiliated bodies and their requests to be discussed and decided upon by the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) taking into account the approved priorities of ECO.	
82.	<p style="text-align: center;">B. Telecommunications</p> <p>ECO Secretariat informed the Council about the outcomes of the 2nd meeting of</p>	

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	<p>ECO Ministers of ICT held in Baku from 4-5 December, 2017 including the 2025 ECO Regional Strategy of Information Society Development and its attached Action Plan, a roadmap for the future cooperation in the field of ICT among ECO member states for application and infrastructure development. The meeting came up with a recommendation to establish a Working Group with the representation of relevant ICT experts from ECO member states to discuss the modalities of implementation and update the information provided and revise it where appropriate. The Secretariat clarified that the approved outcomes shall serve as an evolving references to be responsive to emerging changes and needs of all member States.</p>	
83.	<p>The representative of Islamic Republic of Iran congratulated the ECO Secretariat on successfully organizing the 2nd Meeting of ECO ICT Ministers.</p>	
84.	<p>The Council recommended the issue of establishment of Working Group to Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) as per mandate provided by the 2nd Meeting of Ministers of ICT of ECO member states and asked the Secretariat to inform the Member States following the establishment of the Working Group so that they would introduce their nominations immediately.</p>	
85.	<p>Review of the Relations with Regional/International Organizations (Progress since 27th RPC) ECO Secretariat provided an overview to the Council regarding ECO's cooperation with Regional/International Organization i.e. IDB, IRU, UNECE, UNESCAP, OTIF, UIC and ITU, providing financial and technical assistance to the ECO programmes.</p>	
86.	<p>The Council appreciated the efforts of the ECO Secretariat for strengthening cooperation with the Regional/International Organizations to seek their expertise and financial assistance for the progress of mandated projects of ECO and further encouraged the Secretariat to continue efforts in this regard.</p>	
<p>C. Sector: ENERGY, MINERALS AND ENVIRONMENT</p>		
1.	<p>The Council underscored the importance of promoting regional energy and environment cooperation, unfolding ECO's huge potential in the relevant fields and advancing their agendas in line with the ECO Vision 2025.</p>	
2.	<p>The Council while taking into account the existing policies/strategies set to enhance energy and environment cooperation in ECO Region, highly emphasized the need in streamlining energy and environment agendas in the context of ECO Vision 2025 with its Implementation Framework, UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable</p>	

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	Development, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.	
3.	The global trends coupled with ECO Vision 2025, and the existing and expected initiatives, policies and programmes may trigger a paradigm shift towards pertinent regional partnership frameworks, notably in clean energy, green economy, renewables and energy efficiency.	
4.	The ECO Secretariat in cooperation with ECO Member States will continue to endeavour for development of environmentally sound mechanisms and innovative solutions to address the prevailing common challenges aimed at contributing to sustainable socio-economic development in the ECO Region.	
5.	The Council recognized and appreciated the overall progress made so far since the 27 th RPC Meeting in the fields of energy, minerals and environment, notably in establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market, promoting ECO Clean Energy Center, ECO Energy Consortium, finalization of the ECO-SHARP project, stimulating high level policy debates on energy and environment, implementation of the 5-year Biodiversity Work Plan in ECO Region (2016-2020), engagements with international organizations; entities and processes; and on the basis of views/comments/proposals furnished by the Member Countries for launching the project development phase of the Regional Project to Combat Desertification with a Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storm.	
6.	The Council called upon the ECO Secretariat and the Member States to jointly implement the Work Programme for 2018 as follows:	
ENERGY		
7.	The Secretariat will coordinate with the interested Member States the hosting of the 4 th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum in 2018. The Ministerial Meeting is primarily set to review the revision/extension of the ECO Plan of Action (PoA) for Energy/Petroleum Cooperation. It is expected to provide a timely platform for keeping up the momentum for energy cooperation and stimulating high level policy dialogue. The Member States are requested to attend the Meeting at the highest possible level.	
8.	The concerned authorities of Islamic Republic of Pakistan will communicate to the Secretariat its position by end of January 2018 for holding of the 4 th High Level Experts Group (HLEG) Meeting on Energy and Petroleum [with 4 th Meeting of ECO Experts Group on Renewable Energy Sources (RES) and the 6 th Workshop on RES back-to-back] in February/beginning of March 2018.	

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9.	Republic of Tajikistan will communicate to the Secretariat the date, venue and hospitality details for hosting of the 2 nd Experts Meeting on "Establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market" (ECO REM) in 2018.	
10.	The Secretariat will host the 3 rd Iran-Turkey Bilateral Meeting on ECO Regional Electricity Market (ECO-REM) in the first half of 2018 in Tehran with a view to advance ECO-REM as one of the most promising ECO initiatives in its energy portfolio and to continue regular dialogue within existing framework.	
11.	The concerned authorities of Turkey will expedite providing the Secretariat with their views/comments on ToR for hiring international and local consultants for preparation of a Feasibility Study on ECO REM at the earliest, preferably prior to the 3 rd Iran-Turkey Bilateral Meeting on ECO-REM in the first half of 2018 at the ECO Secretariat.	
12.	The ECO Secretariat in cooperation with Iran and Turkey will explore the possibilities of funding Terms of Reference (ToR) for hiring international and local consultants for preparation of a Feasibility Study on ECO REM for harmonizing and merging the electricity markets of Iran and Turkey with possibility of providing equal seed financing by mentioned Member States and ECO Secretariat from ECO Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FGPF). The Secretariat may also involve relevant financial/development agencies for raising additional funding. The scope of the project will be extended to other interested Member States in future.	
13.	The Secretariat will continue its cooperation with the International Energy Charter (IEC) Secretariat in the areas of mutual interest, notably in implementation of ECO REM, in the context of reciprocal observer status and organizing sideline meetings on the margins of important events for raising visibility of the organization and for garnering support from international organizations.	
14.	The concerned authorities of Islamic Republic of Pakistan will confirm its position by end of January 2018 for holding of the 4 th Meeting of ECO Experts Group on Renewable Energy Sources (RES) and the 6 th Workshop on RES to be held back-to-back in February/beginning of March 2018 in Islamabad [<i>preceded by 4th HLEG Meeting on Energy</i>], to ensure proper follow up of the decisions of previous meetings/workshops and to discuss the promoting of renewable agendas in line with ECO Vision 2025. Republic of Azerbaijan will also consider hosting these	

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	events in the course of 2018/2019.	
15.	The Member States may consider the establishment of “Virtual University Network” (VUN) on Renewable Energy among the relevant academic circles and research institutions for awareness raising and knowledge sharing among the Member States, and provide (except Iran and Tajikistan) their feedback to the Secretariat at their earliest convenience. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan will provide the Secretariat with comprehensive description of its proposal concerning establishment of Virtual University Network (VUN).	
16.	The Member States (except Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkey) will expedite providing in 2018 their relevant Country Reports/Questionnaires on RES, as well as concrete project proposals on RES and Energy Efficiency along with the relevant concept paper/feasibility studies for further integration into the "ECO Data Information Network on RES" (ECO DIN on RES) portal (http://eco.abemda.az) established by the State Agency on Alternative and Renewable Energy Sources (SAARES) of the Republic of Azerbaijan.	
17.	ECO Secretariat will continue its engagement with UNIDO in launching the preparatory phase of the Project on "Establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre (CECECO)". First Draft of Project Document “Preparatory Phase for the establishment of CECECO” prepared by UNIDO in cooperation with the ECO Secretariat was agreed upon. The Secretariat will continue consultations with the IDB, UNIDO and other potential international donors/institutions for promotion of this project initiative. The Centre will act as a catalyst and a think-tank in initiating ECO projects in RE & EE in line with ECO Vision 2025.	
18.	The Secretariat will continue to explore the possibilities of establishing a constant ECO-IRENA dialogue mechanism for enhanced future cooperation through organizing joint initiatives and activities on RES in line with ECO Vision 2025, the relevant UN SDGs and “Regional Action Plan unlocking Renewable Energy Potential in Central Asia”.	
19.	The Secretariat will also explore the idea of merging of ECO DIN on RES with IRENA’s Renewable Readiness Assessment portal in future.	
20.	The Secretariat will coordinate with the volunteer Member State the hosting of the 2 nd Meeting of ECO Public and Private Sector Energy/Petrochemical Consortium/Companies in 2018.	

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21.	The Member States (except Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan) will convey the Secretariat their views and comments on the draft Roadmap for Establishment of the ECO Energy Consortium through official channels in 2018 with a view to following up implementation of the key outcomes of 1 st Meeting of ECO Public and Private Sector Energy/Petrochemical Consortium/Companies (16-17 August 2016, Tehran).	
22.	The Secretariat will elaborate the modalities/concept paper for establishment of a Trust Fund for financing the high priority ECO regional energy projects and circulate it among the Member States well before the 4 th Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum for their consideration.	
23.	The Islamic Republic of Iran will provide the Secretariat with exact date, venue and hospitality details for hosting the 1 st Meeting on Establishment of Refinery Association in the ECO Region to be held in 2018. The relevant Institutions of the Member States are expected to participate in this Meeting,, which will discuss the Draft Project Profile on Establishment of Refinery Association in ECO Region, prepared by the National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Company (NIORDC) and already circulated among Member States.	
24.	The Oil and Gas International Training Center (OGITC) of the Islamic Republic of Iran will organize oil and gas training courses for the ECO Countries in 2018. The Member States are encouraged to participate in those Training Courses.	
25.	Islamic Republic of Iran will organize the 1 st ECO Working Group Meeting on Joint Investment for Construction of Renewable Energy Power Plants/Projects in 2018. Realization of these joint activities is sought to facilitate intra and inter-regional trade in ECO Region and complement the ECO-REM initiative.	
26.	The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan informed the Council that it has provided facilities for foreign investors in the field of energy; power generation, transmission, distribution, renewable sources and hydropower sector's development.	
27.	The Secretariat will invite the representatives from Member States, Regional and International Organizations, attending the ECO Meetings at the Secretariat to visit On-Grid Solar Power Plant installed at its premises to showcase ECO's advocacy in promoting renewables/energy efficiency. This On-Grid Solar Power Plant was generously funded by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and implemented by Iran Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution	

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	Management Company (TAVANIR), Renewable Energy Organization of Iran (SUNA), Power Distribution Company of Tehran, as well as Solar Baad Energy Company.	
28.	The Member States will regularly update/nominate their National Focal Points (NFPs) in relevant energy fields in order to enhance coordination, as well as the reporting and feedback mechanisms.	
29.	The ECO Secretariat will continue its enhanced cooperation and coordination with the relevant regional and global organizations to obtain technical and financial support for its energy projects, including, but not limited to, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), International Energy Charter (IEC) Secretariat, 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) and International Energy Agency (IEA).	
30.	The Council appreciated the outcomes of the International Specialized Exhibition Expo 2017 (10 June to 10 September 2017, Astana) under the theme “Future Energy”, as well as establishment of the International Green Technology Centre in Kazakhstan on the basis of the Expo 2017. Meanwhile, the Council welcomed and supported the initiative of the Republic of Azerbaijan on hosting Expo 2025 in Baku.	
Minerals		
31.	The Secretariat will follow up with a volunteer Member State the possibility of hosting the 7 th ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting in 2018 to follow up implementation process of the outcome decisions of 6 th ECO Minerals Experts Group Meeting (17-18 October 2016, Tabriz, Iran).	
32.	The Member States (except Tajikistan) will expedite providing the Secretariat with their views/comments on the Concept Papers of project proposals: (i) Geodynamic and present-day Crustal Stress (ECO-GeoDyS) Map of the ECO Region; (ii) Preparing ECO-Environmental Quality Index (ECO-EQI) Map of the ECO Region; (iii) Preparation of Mineral Deposit Types and Metallogenic Map of the ECO Region; and (iv) Spiroclast Map of mobile belt between Gondwana and Eurasia, respectively.	
33.	The Secretariat will follow up with a volunteer Member State hosting of the 3 rd	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
	Meeting of ECO Heads of Surveying and Mapping Organizations in 2018 with a view to implement the outcomes of the previous Meetings.	
34.	The National Cartographic Center of the Islamic Republic of Iran will host the 2 nd ECO Geomatics Committee Meeting in the 3 rd quarter of the 2018, to follow up the implementation phase of the decisions of the 1 st Meeting of ECO Geomatics Committee (20-21 October 2015, Tehran). The next Secretary of the Geomatics Committee will be nominated by the host country of the 2 nd ECO Geomatics Committee Meeting.	
35.	ECO Secretariat and the Geological Survey of Iran (GSI)-the Project Manager, which successfully completed the ECO-SHARP project, will continue their regular contacts for necessary coordination and supervision of upgrading the Project. The Member States will provide their overall necessary feedbacks on final report of "ECO-SHARP Project: Seismic Hazard Assessment of ECO Member States". ECO Secretariat and Project Manager will arrange operational portal linkages in ECO Secretariat's and GSI's websites simultaneously reflecting Reports/Maps of the ECO-SHARP.	
36.	The Secretariat will follow up with a volunteer Member State for hosting the next similar Workshop on "Ferrous and Base Metal Mineral Processing" in 2018 with a view to maintaining the momentum generated in the previous events.	
37.	The Member States will cooperate with ECO Secretariat in implementation of the recommendations of the 2 nd ECO Capacity Building Training Course on Unification of Height Datums, focused on Gravity Potential Approach (22-27 July 2017, Tehran).	
38.	The Secretariat will follow up with a volunteer Member State for hosting the 3 rd ECO Geomatics Committee Training Course on Unification of Height Datums in 2018 with a view to keeping up the momentum of the capacity building activities in geomatics and the related areas, including Spatial Data Infrastructure; Scientific GNSS Data Processing; Local Geodetic Datum; Regional Deformation Study of the Earth; Orthophoto Generation; Cadastral, Cartographic Maps and Atlas Production, as reflected in the Calendar of Events.	
39.	The Member States will regularly update/nominate their National Focal Points (NFPs) in relevant minerals fields in order to enhance coordination, as well as the reporting and feedback mechanisms.	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES /ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
Environment		
40.	The Secretariat will coordinate with the volunteer Member States the hosting of the 6 th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment, preceded by Senior Officials in 2018.	
41.	The Secretariat will explore the possibility of holding of the High-Level Consultative Meeting on Environment on the sidelines of the 24 th COP of UNFCCC, to be held in December 2018.	
42.	The Secretariat and the Member States will continue to follow up the implementation of outcome decisions of the 6 th ECO Working Group Meeting on Environment (1-2 June 2016, Islamabad). The Secretariat will also coordinate with a volunteer Member State for hosting the 7 th ECO Working Group Meeting on Environment in 2018.	
43.	The Kyrgyz Republic will communicate to the Secretariat with exact date, venue and hospitality details for hosting the 4 th Experts Group Meeting (EGM) on Biodiversity in 2018. The Meeting will follow up the implementation of outcomes of the 3 rd EGM on Biodiversity (6-7 March 2016, Antalya, Turkey), including progress made on “Work Plan on Biodiversity in the ECO Region (2016-2020)”.	
44.	<p>In line with the Work Plan on Biodiversity in the ECO Region (2016-2020):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The Member States will share/update details of their National Focal Points on Biodiversity with ECO Secretariat by the first quarter of 2018 to enhance communication and properly implement the activities as envisaged within the Work Plan; ii. Concerned authorities of the Republic of Turkey, as Coordinating Country for follow-up and implementation of the Work Plan, will apprise the Secretariat and Member States on developments in implementation of the Work Plan; iii. ECO Secretariat in consultation with Member States will explore fund-raising opportunities for implementation of priority plans/programs envisaged in this Work Plan; iv. ECO-IEST will provide technical support for implementation of the Work Plan. 	
45.	The Secretariat in cooperation with Member States will also continue its efforts to develop capacity building and public awareness programs for conservation of and sustainable use of biodiversity and its components in line with the Work	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
	Plan on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2016-2020).	
46.	The Secretariat will seek UNCBD's technical support and assistance in organizing capacity building workshops for the ECO Member States and fund raising for ECO projects, including implementation of the ECO Work Plan on Biodiversity in ECO Region (2016-2020).	
47.	The Republic of Turkey will communicate the Secretariat with exact date, venue and hospitality details for hosing the 3 rd ECO Pre-COP Meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity back to back with the Meeting on Sustainable Pastoralism, to be held before October 2018.	
48.	The Secretariat and the Member States will pursue the active implementation of the key outcome recommendations of the First Workshop for Capacity Building and Sharing Best Practices on Biodiversity (1-2 March 2016, Antalya, Turkey). The Secretariat will follow up with the interested Member State for hosting the similar Second Workshop in 2018.	
49.	The Republic of Turkey will communicate to the Secretariat the exact date, venue and hospitality details for hosing the Experts Meeting on Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) in 2019.	
50.	The Secretariat will coordinate with co-hosts - Turkey/Turkish Cypriot State - providing the Secretariat with exact date and hospitality details for hosting the (1) Workshop on Protected Areas Systems and (2) Workshop on Ecosystem Services in the course of 2018. The Council took note of the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran made in the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) in 2015 at New York.	
51.	The ECO Secretariat will coordinate with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for holding of the 2 nd Experts Meeting on Climate Change and Biodiversity in 2018.	
52.	The Islamic Republic of Iran will communicate to the Secretariat exact date, venue and hospitality details for hosting of the Experts Meeting on Conservation of Fauna and Flora in the ECO Region in 2018.	
53.	The Islamic Republic of Iran will communicate to the Secretariat exact date, venue and hospitality details for hosting of the Meeting on Green Economy with emphasis on the Role of Women and Sustainable Livelihood in the ECO Region in 2018 back to back with the Workshop for the Optimal ECO Regional Approach to Green Economy in the context of outcome document of Rio+20 in 2018 with the cooperation of ECO-IEST.	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES /ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
54.	The Secretariat in cooperation with UNEP and ECO-IEST will organize “Inception Workshop on Modalities of First State of Environment (SoE) Report for ECO Region (based on UNEP Live Model)” in the course of 2018 to implement the decision of the 5 th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment. In this connection, the Member States will also cooperate with the ECO Secretariat and ECO-IEST for preparation of the first SoE Report through submitting their national reports on regular basis.	
55.	The Secretariat will continue to bolster its collaborative efforts with the UNEP and thus will revisit the existing ECO-UNEP MoU for wider cooperation in various spheres of environment in particular climate change.	
56.	The Council noted the recent developments regarding the Project on Combating Desertification with Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storm in the ECO Region. The Member States and Secretariat will follow up the outcomes of the Project Development Consultation Workshop, co-organized by ECO Secretariat and ECO-IEST on 5-6 July 2017 in ECO Secretariat, Tehran. Periodically Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism will be carried out by the ECO Secretariat and the results will be shared with the Member States. The interested Member States will expedite providing by 18 February 2018 the Secretariat with their views and comments on the above mentioned project proposal for incorporation by Project Manager- ECO-IEST.	
57.	The Council noted the concerns of the Republic of Turkey on the Project to Combat Desertification. Turkish Delegation also expressed that the concerned Turkish Authorities will convey detailed views on the project to the Secretariat soon.	
58.	The delegation of Islamic Republic of Pakistan while extending its support for ECO’s Project on Combating Desertification deemed it appropriate to incorporate the component of a sizeable “Regional Tree Plantation Campaign” in the Project to Combat Desertification in order to achieve the target of enhancing the forest areas.	
59.	Based on the views and comments received from the Member States, the ECO Secretariat will continue its engagement and cooperation with the Project Manager-ECO-IEST for finalization of the project development phase of the Regional Project to Combat Desertification with a Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storm in the ECO Region within the agreed timeframes in line	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
	with the signed Contract.	
60.	The Member States will regularly update/nominate their National Focal Points (NFPs) in relevant fields of environment, including climate change, biodiversity, forests, desertification, etc. in order to enhance coordination, as well as the reporting and feedback mechanisms.	
61.	The Member States will provide the Secretariat with their National Progress Reports (NPRs) on Environment for 2016 (except Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey) and 2017. The Member States will accelerate submitting their NPRs to the Secretariat in the first quarter of each calendar year.	
62.	The Member States (excluding Kyrgyz Republic and Turkey) will expedite providing the Secretariat with their National Adaptation Programmes in line with recommendation of the 6 th ECO Working Group Meeting on Environment (1-2 June 2016, Islamabad, Pakistan) with regards to establishment of Ad Hoc Group/Task Force to formulate and develop the ECO Regional Adaptation Programme (ERAP). After receiving requisite feedbacks from the Member States, the Secretariat and ECO-IEST will prepare the draft TOR for developing ERAP.	
63.	The Secretariat will continue to pursue the implementation of recommendation of the 6 th ECO Working Group Meeting on Environment (1-2 June 2016, Islamabad), regarding establishment of partnership frameworks with regional organizations working on environment and climate change issues, among others, the South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and Association for South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).	
64.	The Member States may consider the recommendations of the Feasibility Study on “Development and Harmonization of Environmental Standards in ECO Region” in their national and regional programmes, which has already been completed by the Department of Environment of Iran.	
65.	The Secretariat has already allocated 50,000 USD through the CPR for preparation of a regional program for implementation of the Framework Plan of Action on Environment Cooperation and Global Warming for ECO Member States (2016-2020). The Member States, except Islamic Republic of Iran who has	

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	<p>pledged 100,000 USD, will consider allocation of remaining 100,000 USD for early implementation of the project profile. The Islamic Republic of Iran will release the pledged money upon signing the contract.</p> <p>In line with decision of the 27th RPC Meeting, the Secretariat will draft a multilateral contract for preparation of a regional program for implementation of the Framework Plan of Action on Environment Cooperation and Global Warming for ECO Member States (2016-2020) upon completion of pledge(s) by other stakeholder(s) for the remaining 100,000 USD.</p>	
66.	<p>The Secretariat will continue its efforts to further enhancing cooperation with UNFF and other forest-related regional, sub-regional organizations and processes for soliciting more technical and financial support and enhancing its visibility in forest-related issues. ECO Secretariat will continue cooperation and coordination with UNFF for the benefits of the Member States, including through organizing capacity building/knowledge sharing activities on developing actions/strategic plans, preparation of an ECO regional strategy on sustainable forest management, organization of capacity building workshops for the ECO Region, seeking UNEP & UNFF's technical assistance in utilizing the financial resources available through Global Environment Facility (GEF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund (AF) and Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN).</p>	
67.	<p>The Secretariat's efforts for expansion of its cooperation and outreach through active engagement in important environmental fora in line with the mandates of the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment will continue in 2018.</p>	
68.	<p>The delegation of Pakistan recalled that the ECO Secretariat may continue its engagements in developing concept proposal, networking among Member States and development and management of Biosphere Reserves in the ECO Region with special emphasis on the guidelines of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere Programme. The delegation further proposed that Pakistan will host a Conception/Capacity Building Workshop for Developing Future Roadmap back to back with 2nd ECO 2nd Experts Meeting on Climate Change and Biodiversity in 2018.</p>	
D. SECTOR: AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY & TOURISM		
Agriculture		
1.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
	6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture, preceded by the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in the first quarter of 2018. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan confirmed that the exact date will be communicated shortly.	
2.	The Council thanked the ECO Regional Coordination Centre (ECO-RCC) for preparing the “Working Principles of the ECO-RCC for Implementation of the ECO-RPFS”, which has already been finalized and approved during the 2 nd Steering Committee Meeting of the ECO-RCC in the Republic of Turkey.	
3.	The Council requested all the Member States to send at least one project idea which its budget should not exceed 200.000 US \$ for national projects and 1.000.000 US \$ for multi-country or regional projects not later than February 2018. Projects ideas shall be evaluated under FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme 2 nd Phase (FTPP 2) as decided during the 2 nd Meeting of the Programme Steering Committee.	
4.	The Council requested the Member States to send their ECO-RCC Programme Steering Committee Member to nominate and inform ECO Secretariat at the earliest possible. The Council also requested the Member States to participate and extend their support to the ECO-RCC’s forthcoming activities.	
5.	The Council thanked the Republic of Turkey for presentation of the Report and Bulletin regarding ECO-RCC for Implementation of the ECO Regional Programme for Food Security (ECO-RPFS), prepared by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of Turkey.	
6.	The Council requested the Member States to actively take part in the important events/issues, regarding ECO-RCC which will be discussed in the 3 rd Steering Committee.	
7.	The Council while appreciating with thanks the FTTP-II Multi-country Project Proposal on Seed Sector Development Priority Area prepared by the FAO Sub-regional Office for Central Asia (FAO-SEC) in close cooperation with Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of the Republic of Turkey, requested all Member States to support and provide their contribution for finalization of the said project and actively participate in its implementation.	
8.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 3 rd Meeting of the Programme Steering Committee of the ECO-RCC for Implementation of the ECO Regional Programme for Food Security (ECO-RPFS) in Turkey in 2018. The Council requested the Steering Committee to consider the revision of the	

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	ECO-RPFS, if necessary, during its 3 rd meeting.	
9.	The Council welcomed the project proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding Waste Management and Greening Food Value Chain for Food Security Improvement in ECO Member countries which will be submitted to the Secretariat. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan proposed that the drafts will be sent electronically and discussed in a meeting. The Council considered it positively.	
10.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in cooperation with ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) and IDB for organizing the 7th ECOSA International Seed Trade Conference and Seed Trade Fairs in 2018 in Pakistan.	
11.	The Council welcomed the offer the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the Workshop on Plant Variety Protection (PVP), scheduled to be held in Iran on 16-18 July 2018.	
12.	The Republic of Azerbaijan and Islamic Republic of Pakistan are requested to send new dates/venue for the workshops on the Field Control and Seed Testing scheduled to be held in 2018, in Azerbaijan and Pakistan respectively.	
13.	The Council appreciated the membership of the ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) to the World Seed Federation (WSF) and getting status to be represented in International Seed Federation (ISF) central management committees and requested ECOSA coordinate with ECO and Member States before action in such case.	
14.	The Council thanked the Member States, FAO, and the ECO Secretariat for the successful implementation of the ECO/FAO-SEC Project on Seed Sector Development in the Region, which was completed by organizing the Final Regional Seed Workshop on November 4-6, 2015 in Antalya, Turkey. The Council also welcomed the formulation of the ECO Regional Seed Agreement as an outcome of the said project, which was sent to the Member States for their views and comments. The Council requested ECO Secretariat to proceed for finalizing the draft ECO Seed Agreement.	
15.	The Council requested Member States to kindly send their feedback and views/comments on the FTTP-II Multi-country Project Proposal on Seed Sector Development Priority Area earliest possible.	
16.	The Council requested ECOSA to prepare a project proposal on Seed Exchange Mechanism among ECO Member States in collaboration with the relevant international organizations and other institutions in the Member States. The	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
	Council requested ECOSA to organize the training courses on seed industry for ECO Member States.	
17.	The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for organizing the 2nd Working Group Meeting on the Establishment of the ECO Center of Excellence for Efficient Utilization of Water for Agriculture (ECO-CEEWUA) on July 25-26, 2016 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The Council welcomed the amendment of the Draft Plan of Action and Draft Statute for establishment of the ECO-CEEWUA, which were circulated to Member States for their views/comments for finalization. The Council while thanking Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Turkey for submitting their views/comments on the Draft Statute for establishment of the ECO-CEEWUA requested other Member States to do so. The Council also thanked Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Islamic Republic of Pakistan for providing information with regard water issue in their countries, requested other Member States to do so.	
18.	The Council thanked and welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for hosting the 3 rd Working Group Meeting on the Establishment of the ECO-CEEWUA on 27-28 February, 2018. The Council requested to nominate national focal points/institutions for expediting the process of Establishment of the Centre, by the Member States. The Council requested the Secretariat to expedite approval process of Draft Plan of Action and Draft Statute and submit it to the Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture.	
19.	The Council welcomed and thanked the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran host the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organizations in the first quarter of 2018, in which the Draft Statute of the ECO Regional Center for Risk Management of Natural Disasters (ECO-RCRM) to be finalized.	
20.	The Council requested the Member States to introduce their national focal points for providing data in order to enable ECO-RCRM to make more precisely weather forecast.	
21.	The Council also requested all the Member States (except Azerbaijan, Iran and Turkey) 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 Meeting of the Heads of Meteorological Organizations.	
22.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Workshop/Training Course on Drought Monitoring and Seasonal Forecast in the	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
	ECO Region, which is scheduled to be held in the first quarter of 2018 back to back to the 3rd Meeting of ECO Head of Meteorological Organizations in Iran. The Council also requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to send a report on the Establishment of the Natural Disaster Data System to the Secretariat.	
23.	The Council took note of RCRM to propose project proposal for Road Weather Monitoring (RWM) for locating road weather stations via Mashhad-Ashgabat as a pilot project and requested to send the details to the Secretariat.	
24.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 2 nd International Training Course on Basic of Calibration on February 19-23, 2018, in Ankara, in Turkey.	
25.	The Council while thanking the Republic of Turkey for preparing the Draft Statute for the establishment of the ECO Meteorological Calibration Center (ECO-MCC), requested the Member States to send their views/comments on the said document.	
26.	The Council while appreciating the Islamic Republic of Iran for organizing the 3rd ECO Heads of Veterinary Organizations Meeting in April, 2018 requested the Member States to confirm their participation in the said event.	
27.	The Council welcomed the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to hold the first Technical Steering Committee of the 3rd ECO Heads of Veterinary Organizations Meeting in April, 2018 requested member States to confirm their participation in the said event. The Council also appreciated the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host Workshop on Management of Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Training Workshop on Central Veterinary Laboratories (CVL). These workshops are planned to be followed by the above said meeting.	
28.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for ratifying the Statute of ECO Veterinary Commission (ECO-VECO).	
29.	The Council requested the Member States (except Iran and Afghanistan) to expedite signing/ratifying the Statute of the ECO-VECO.	
30.	The Council welcomed the proposal of the ECO Secretariat preparing a draft program in cooperation with FAO and OIE for the exchange of experiences in the identification of cattle and ruminant in parallel with the outcome of the FAO Regional PPR Roadmap Meetings for ECO Region.	
31.	The Council thanked the ECO-VECO for proposal to prepare a concept project on Prevention and Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases in the ECO Region.	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
32.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for organizing the 2nd Expert Group Meeting of the ECO-ABN, scheduled to be held on 5-7 May, 2018 in Iran.	
33.	With the appreciation of the Islamic Republic of Iran for updating the website of ECO-ABN (http://www.ecoabn.org) the Council requested the Member States while updating the information about their national focal points, to provide the country reports on biotechnology and related information to be uploaded to the above mentioned website.	
34.	The Islamic Republic of Pakistan proposed establishment of Centre for Excellence on Bio-Technology and Genomics.	
35.	The Council requested the Member States to send their project proposals, recommendations, ideas, and expectations for an efficient network to achieve its goals in accelerating Agricultural Biotechnology in the region.	
36.	The Council requested all Member States to confirm their participation in the 3rd Regional Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) Meeting for ECO Region on Technical assistance for the formulation of strategies for the control of PPR scheduled to be held in Uzbekistan, in 2018.	
37.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to actively participate in the related international conferences to be organized in 2018 and prepare the project proposals on the events/activities for provision of financial assistance in this regard.	
38.	The Council requested Member States to voluntarily organize regional/international buyers/sellers meetings/trade fairs on agricultural products in 2018 in their respective countries with a view to improve intra-regional trade.	
39.	The Council noted importance of the establishment of the Islamic Organization for food Security aimed at, among others, developing cooperation among ECO Member States.	
Industry		
40.	The Council welcomed the renewed offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Industry in 2018 and requested the latter to inform the exact date and details of hospitality to the Secretariat by the end of first quarter of 2018. The Council also requested the Member States to actively participate in the Meeting. In this context the Council requested the ECO	

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	Secretariat while preparing draft agenda of the Meeting to take into consideration the ECO Vision 2025 in order to contribute to the expected objectives of the Vision.	
41.	The Council recommended the ECO Member States to organize the meetings to initiate the process of the development of the Green industrial development strategy at regional level to contribute to 2030 Sustainable Development Goals agenda.	
42.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Azerbaijan to host the 7th HLWG on Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology on 28-29 June 2018 and requested all the ECO Member States to actively participate in this meeting.	
43.	The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey for ratifying the Statute of the Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology (ECO- RISCAM).	
44.	The Council requested the interested Member States to sign (except Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey) and ratify (except Iran and Turkey) the Statute of ECO-RISCAM to pave the way for early operationalization of the Institute and in this connection welcomed the interest of Pakistan to do so.	
45.	The Council appreciated the Central Secretariat of ECO-RISCAM for preparation of the basic documents of the Institute documents (i.e. Rules of Procedure, Financial Regulations and Staff Regulations) and requested the Member States to reflect their views on the documents as early as possible to its Secretariat.	
46.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran especially Iranian National Standard Organization for establishment of the Central Secretariat of ECO-RISCAM and conformity assessment and management board.	
47.	The Council was informed of the interest of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the Technical Management Board of Metrology of ECO- RISCAM and its request for amendment of the relevant article of the Statute of ECO - RISCAM concerning hosting of the Technical Management Board. The Secretariat informed the Council that based on the signatory states agreement, the draft document on amendment of the relevant article of the Statute of ECO - RISCAM, has been circulated to the Member States.	
48.	The Council requested Republic of Turkey to establish technical Management Boards of Standardization and Accreditation of ECO-RISCAM after the	

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	completion of ratification process by four Member States.	
49.	The Council requested the signatory Member States and Pakistan to nominate their focal points for the Central Secretariat of the ECO-RISCAM.	
50.	The ECO Secretariat is requested to circulate the draft of updated ECO-RISCAM Roadmap and work programme to the Member States for the comments.	
51.	The Council requested the Central Secretariat ECO-RISCAM to develop and implement measures and projects toward promoting green industrial development in line with ECO-Vision 2025 and contribute to the new growth paradigm in the region with the cooperation of Member States.	
52.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Azerbaijan to host 6th Meeting on the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration and the 5th HLWG on Privatization and Private Sector Development in 2018 and requested all the ECO Member States to actively participate in this meeting. The Council requested the CPR to allocate SSF for organizing the Meeting.	
53.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 4th Coordination Committee Meeting on Industrial Property Rights on 7-8 March 2018 and requested all the ECO Member States to actively participate in this meeting.	
54.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting a Training Workshop on Industrial Property Rights on 21-22 February 2017 in Tehran.	
55.	The Council was informed by the Secretariat that the MoU for cooperation with WIPO is finalized and circulated to the Member States for their views. The Council thanked the Secretariat for active follow - up of concluding the MoU between ECO and WIPO and also requested the CPR to support the activities of the Secretariat in this connection.	
56.	The Council recommended the Member States in line with the ECO Vision 2025 to support development of green industries in the Region through national and regional legal and administrative measures.	
57.	The Council welcomed the renewed offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 5th Steering Committee Meeting (SCM) on Entrepreneurship and SME Development Meeting in 2 nd quarter of April 2018 and SME Conference in 2018 and requested all the interested Member States to participate in the said events. Pakistan will provide local hospitality (accommodation, meals and local transportation) to one participant from each Member State.	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES /ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
58.	The Council thanked the Republic of Turkey for hosting a workshop on Energy Efficiency and Environmental Protection in SMEs on 18-19 October 2018.	
59.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to convene expert level meetings with the ECO Member States to develop a financial mechanism to support start-ups, SME's and entrepreneurs, consisting establishment of special fund which may be managed with the help of ECO-TDB and funded through Member States, ECO TDB and other international funding agencies.	
60.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat in collaboration with UNIDO and other donor institutions to develop start up projects in different sectors of industry focusing on SMEs and entrepreneurs in the Region.	
61.	The Council requested the Secretariat to convene meetings of the experts and women entrepreneurs of the Member states to develop an implementation of action plan to promote and encourage women entrepreneurship in the region.	
62.	The Council expressed appreciation to ECO-CCI for the preparation of "The Concept Paper on Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises in ECO Region". The Council requested the Member States in line with ECO-Vision 2025 to provide their views and comments on said Concept Paper.	
63.	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 Opportunities for Textile Industry in ECO region in June, 2018 and requested for active participation of all the Member States in the Meeting and the Workshop.	
64.	The Council appreciated Iran for commencing the project titled Pre-Feasibility Study of Removal of Arsenic Water Pollution in ECO Region using Nanotechnology Methods in collaboration with the University of the Science and Industry of Iran. The Project proposal was circulated by the Secretariat to Member States for their views and comments. Some of the Member States (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan and Turkey) have already conveyed their views on the Project Proposal. The Council requested the rest of Member States to inform their views and comments on the Project.	
65.	The Council appreciated Islamic Republic of Iran (INIC) for conducting a study project which compiled in the booklet as the Study of Nano-Technology process in ECO Region and requested Member States to send their views and updates for uploading on the website.	

Paragraph #	PROGRAMMES/ACTIVITIES	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN
66.	The Council appreciated Islamic Republic of Iran (INIC) for updating ECO-NANO Website and requested Member States to introduce their focal points for activating website.	
67.	The Council reiterated its request to the interested Member States to offer their project proposals to develop and enhance the nanotechnology in the Region.	
68.	The Council recommended the Member States to encourage development of nanotechnology to contribute to the protection of environment and better preserve natural resources.	
69.	The Council requested the Member States, in particular ECONAN to organize capacity building and training courses for the interested Member States to publicize and build awareness on this technology.	
70.	The Council requested Islamic Republic of Iran to organize workshops on technology parks and technology transfer in line with its commitment to establish the Technology Transfer Center.	
71.	The Council appreciated the Secretariat for initiating cooperation with relevant international organizations, development agencies and financial institutions including (but not limited to) UNCTAD, UNIDO, JICA, KOICA, WIPO, TIKA, ISO, DEVCO for the purpose of regional development and encouraged it to do so with other international and regional organizations, institutions and agencies.	
72.	The Islamic Republic of Pakistan requested the Secretariat to approach the UNIDO for implementation of the two Projects on Sector Value Chain Development and Digital Information Exchange Network (IDENE).	
Tourism		
73.	The Council requested Republic of Kazakhstan to consider hosting the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Tourism Ministers and the 5th HLEG Meeting on Tourism in 2018.	
74.	The Council acknowledged the importance of early preparation of the ECO Tourism Strategy and requested the Member States to host the First Working Group Meeting on ECO Tourism Strategy as soon as possible. The Council also encouraged the Secretariat to consider seeking technical assistance from relevant international organizations i.e. UNWTO, UNIDO, UNESCO, UNEP in this connection. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to consider hosting above said meeting.	
75.	The Council reiterated its request to the Member States, except Republic of	

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	Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Islamic Republic of Pakistan, to provide all the necessary information for the “Ecotourism Catalogue for the ECO Region” to be prepared by the Republic of Turkey. Pakistan informed that it will provide updated information for the Catalogue very soon.	
76.	The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to circulate the questionnaire on ecotourism for establishment of the relevant database very soon.	
77.	The Council welcomed the renewed offer of Republic of Turkey and Turkish Cypriot State to co-host 4 th EGM on Ecotourism in Nicosia in 2017/2018. The Council took note of the position of the Islamic Republic of Iran made in the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) in 2015 at New York.	
78.	The Council appreciated the offer of Republic of Tajikistan to host 5th EGM on Ecotourism.	
79.	The Council welcomed the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iranian Chamber of Commerce) to host the 2nd ECO Confobition on ECO Health Tourism on 23-26 January 2018.	
80.	The Council requested the Member States to offer their programs/proposals in field of Health/Medical Tourism in the ECO Region for promotion of this field of industry.	
81.	The Council requested ECO-CCI to inform the date and details of hospitality for the 3rd Coordination Committee Meeting on Health Tourism Cooperation in the ECO Region.	
82.	Taking into consideration the high capacity for job creation and income generation, the Council requested the Member States to consider organizing workshops on rural tourism and also requested the Secretariat to consider seeking technical assistance from relevant international organizations i.e. UNWTO, UNIDO, UNESCO, and UNEP.	
83.	The Council requested the Member States to organize meetings of the airlines, tour operators and travel industry sector of the region to discuss establishment of new destinations and routes of tourism in the region and requested the relevant private sector to host such meetings.	
84.	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 was requested to explore the possibility of setting up regional cooperation modality	

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	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 3rdECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism.	
85.	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 such arenas.	
86.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to participate in Silk Road related meetings, conferences and events and coordinate participation of Member States in such events within and outside the ECO Region.	
87.	The Council requested the Member States (except Kyrgyz Republic) to appoint their focal points to the ECO-Silk Road Contact Groups as soon as possible.	
88.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Third International ECO - Silk Road Food Festival and welcomed the offer of latter to host the Fourth ECO - Silk Road Food Festival in April, 2018 in Zanjan. The Council also requested the Islamic Republic of Iran to set up a coordination mechanism and website for better promotion and organization of the annual event in coordination with the Secretariat, if possible. The Council also requested the Member States to actively participate in the Event.	
89.	The Council requested the Secretariat to organize workshops on culinary tourism and tourism business development on the sidelines of the ECO - SILK Road Food Festival and approach the relevant international organizations and institutes for this purpose.	
90.	The Council welcomed the Islamic Republic of Iran convening of the 11th International Exhibition of Tourism & Related Industry on 23-26 Jan 2018 in Tehran and requested all the Member States to actively participate in the Event. Detailed information of the Event is available on the website www.ttexhibition.com .	
91.	The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting tourism and handicrafts related exhibitions for the purpose of enhancing tourism cooperation in the Region.	
92.	The Council welcomed the offer of Islamic Republic of Iran to organize celebrating the Nowruz Festival on 23 March 2018 in Tabriz which city is selected by OIC as Islamic Tourism Capital in 2018. The Council also requested active	

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	collaboration of the Secretariat in this event.	
93.	The Council requested the Member States and the Secretariat to actively participate in the international conferences and meetings with the aim of introducing the tourism potentials of the ECO Region and also to increase the role of ECO in the international policy making trends.	
94.	The Council appreciates the Secretariat for institutionalizing relations with UNWTO through an MOU.	
95.	The Council also appreciated the Secretariat for establishing working cooperation with UNIDO and UNESCO for promotion of tourism in the Region and requested the latter to expand its relations with the international organizations and agencies.	
E. SECTOR: PROJECTS, ECONOMIC RESEARCH & STATISTICS		
<u>PROJECTS</u>		
<i>Project Monitoring Group (PMG)</i>		
1.	The Council was briefed by the Secretariat about the overall coordination and monitoring implementation status of the ECO projects. The Council appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat and noted with satisfaction the functioning of the ECO Project Monitoring Group (PMG) for effective implementation of ECO Projects through holding its regular meetings. The Council also appreciated the holding of 11 th PMG Meeting held on 7 th November 2017 at the ECO Secretariat and stressed upon for active participation of all Member States in the forthcoming PMG Meetings.	
2.	While highlighting the importance of regular holding of the Project Monitoring Group (PMG) Meetings, the Council urged the need for holding of the meeting with greater ownership and active participation of Member States to review the implementation process of the ECO projects. The Council also requested the Secretariat to inform the focal points about planned meetings through e-mails along with the diplomatic channels. The list of projects under implementation by ECO Secretariat for the last five years will be made available on the website.	
<u>Capacity Building on Project Management</u>		
3.	The Council was briefed by the ECO Secretariat on the organization of recent activities during 2016-17. Four training workshops to enhance knowledge on project management and implementation for ECO Member States and ECO Secretariat staff were organized with the support of UNDP, IRTI and SESRIC.	

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	Any volunteer Member State may host the future training programmes on project management and implementation for the ECO Member States and the ECO Secretariat staff.	
<u>ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan (SFRA)</u>		
4.	The Council was briefed by the ECO Secretariat, in detail, about the ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the projects implemented so far.	
5.	The Council appreciated the Member States for pledging their contributions for reconstruction of Afghanistan and welcomed the agreement of Afghanistan and Turkey on the project of reconstruction of Dr. Rafiqi Kamil Urga Sanatorium Hospital of Kabul Medical University along with the construction of new units which will be utilized within the scope of Turkey's commitment to ECO-SFRA. The Council called upon the Secretariat to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the project as soon as possible.	
6.	The Council took note of the proposal by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan that the Conference on Reconstruction of Afghanistan be held on the sidelines of the forthcoming COM Meeting scheduled to be held in Dushanbe in April 2018. Moreover, the Afghan delegation also proposed holding of Preparatory Meeting for the said Conference in the Secretariat. The Republic of Tajikistan supported the proposal.	
<u>Economic Research</u>		
<u>ECO Plan of Action on Economic Research</u>		
7.	<p>The Council took note of the <i>ECO Plan of Action on Economic Research</i> as the framework for cooperation in the area of economic research in the ECO region. The 4th Meeting of ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (PSCER) was held on in December 2015 in Ankara and considered the theme topic on "<i>Enhancing Infrastructure in the ECO Region</i>" as well as suggested policies for enhancing the economic research activities in the region. The Member States were requested to volunteer hosting the 5th Meeting of PSCER in 2016 and was included in the Calendar of Events for 2016 and 2017 respectively.</p> <p>The Council was further informed that since none of Member States volunteered hosting the said meeting (5th Meeting) either in the year 2016 or 2017, the Secretariat sought approval of CPR who in its Meeting (222nd) accorded concurrence for holding the event at the ECO Secretariat and be supported from SSF and FGPF. It was further informed that the travel expenses of each delegate</p>	

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	not exceeding an amount of US\$900 will be reimbursed by the ECO Secretariat. However, due to lack of quorum, the meetings were postponed.	
8.	<p>The Council appreciated the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 5th Meeting of PSCER and 4th Meeting of Economic Journal Editorial Board (EJEB) back-to-back in 2018 in Tehran.</p> <p>The Council appreciated the offer of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to host the 6th Meeting of PSCER along with 5th Meeting of the EJEB in Kabul. Formal communication in this regard will be sent to the ECO Secretariat.</p> <p>The Council requested the Secretariat to seek approval of the CPR for covering travel expenses for these meetings to be supported from SS Fund.</p>	
<u>ECO Joint Economic Research Programme (JERP)</u>		
9.	<p>The Council was briefed by the ECO Secretariat on the on-going projects being implemented under the framework of the ECO JERP in 2016-2017:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) <i>“Economic Management Modelling in the ECO Countries”</i> by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as Project Coordinating Country. (ii) <i>“Analyzing Food Security Issues in the ECO Region”</i> by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as Project Coordinating Country. (iii) <i>“Exchange of Experiences on Strengthening Inter-Agency Cooperation on the Development of the Ecologically Clean Model in Agriculture for the ECO Region”</i> by the Republic of Azerbaijan as Project Coordinating Country. (iv) <i>“Setting Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) and Capacity Building for Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan”</i> by the Republic of Azerbaijan as Project Coordinating Country and fully funded by Azerbaijan. <p>The Council requested the Member States to come up with new project proposals for the benefit of all the Member States.</p> <p>The Council also took note of the progress with appreciation on the following new project proposals conveyed to the ECO Secretariat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Project Proposal from the Republic of Azerbaijan titled <i>“Setting Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) and Capacity Building for Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan”</i> vide Note Verbale No.6-018/16 dated 29 March 2016 and the same was circulated to the ECO Member States by the ECO Secretariat’s Note Verbale No.PERS/26-RPC/Projects/2016/993 dated 7 	

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	<p>August 2016 for their views and comments. Feedback from the Member States except for Republic of Turkey and Kyrgyz Republic is awaited.</p> <p>ii. Project Proposal from the Republic of Kazakhstan titled <i>“Decomposition on Input-output Table at the Regional Level”</i> vide Note Verbale No.321 dated 16 March 2016 and the same was circulated to the ECO Member States by the ECO Secretariat’s Note Verbale No.PERS/26-RPC/Projects/2016/994 dated 7 August 2016, for their views and comments. Feedback from the Member States except for Republic of Turkey and Republic of Azerbaijan is awaited.</p> <p>The Council also welcomed the new proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran on <i>“Prioritizing and harmonizing the SDGs goals, indicators, monitoring and evaluation mechanism in the ECO Member Countries”</i>. Detailed proposal in this regard will be sent to the ECO Secretariat for circulation to the Member States for their views/comments.</p>	
10.	<p>The Council requested the Project Coordinating Countries to provide the Secretariat with the regular updates on implementation progress of the ongoing projects. The Council also requested ECO Member States, who have not done so, providing their views/comments/feedback on the already circulated new project proposals on economic research from Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, for their early launch and implementation. The Council further asked the Secretariat to provide research proposals to the concerned institutions directly as well.</p>	
ECO Research Centre (ERC)		
11.	<p>The Council was briefed by the ECO Secretariat that the ECO Research Centre’s Charter was approved by the 21st COM in 2013 to serve as the ECO economic think tank to work out projects, economic development strategies and policies for the region.</p>	
12.	<p>The Council requested the Republic of Azerbaijan to expedite signing and ratification of the Charter. The Council also requested the Member States for signing and ratification of Centre’s Charter for its early functioning/operationalization in Baku.</p>	
13.	<p>The Council was informed by the Republic of Azerbaijan that almost all the necessary internal procedures are completed and the Charter hopefully will be signed and ratified soon before the forthcoming COM Meeting in Dushanbe.</p>	
14.	<p>The Council also took note of the support by Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan,</p>	

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	Tajikistan and Turkey for the establishment of the ECO Research Centre (ERC) in Baku.	
<u>ECO Economic Publications</u>		
<u>(a) ECO Economic Journal</u>		
15.	The Council affirmed its support to the Economic Journal as the ECO publication for dissemination of high quality analytical papers, abstracts, academic articles, views on economic and social development trends in regional and global levels.	
16.	The Representative of Azerbaijan, as the host of ECO Economic Research Centre, stressed upon the importance of ECO Economic Journal and said that a revised strategy for Economic Journal has ready been circulated to the Member States for their views and comments. The strategy will be considered by the 5 th Meeting of PSCER and 4 th EJEB Meeting.	
17.	The Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan requested the Secretariat to regularly issue a call for papers to focal points for dissemination in Member States. This will increase the in-take of research papers. In this regard procedure to secure international journal ranking for the ECO Economic Journal may also be explored. The Representative further said that the Secretariat may explore the possibility of providing some incentives in order to encourage submission of quality research papers	
18.	While appreciating the efforts of the ECO Secretariat in compilation and dissemination of analytical papers, abstracts, academic articles, reviews on economic and social development trends in regional and global levels requested that any new proposal should be shared with the Member States in advance thus providing them sufficient time at their disposal to review the proposal.	
<u>(b) ECO Annual Economic Report</u>		
19.	The Council was informed that the Annual Economic Report is a report that is prepared with contribution of Member States with provision of updated economic data. The Council appreciated that the Annual Economic Report for the year 2015 was published in the form of Economic Review 2017 embracing the period of Fifteen Years of Economic Cooperation and Development of ECO countries (document titled "Fifteen Years of Cooperation and Development (2000-2015)"),	

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	which also contains Annual Economic Report 2015 and thanked the Secretariat for its efforts in this regard.	
20.	The Council also requested the Member States on timely provision to ECO Secretariat of requisite national economic and statistical data for compilation and publication of the ECO Annual Economic Reports by the Secretariat.	
(c) ECO Economic Think-Tanks Forum		
21.	The Council was briefed by ECO Secretariat that ECO Economic Think- Tanks Forum organized two events in Baku and requested the Republic of Kazakhstan to consider hosting of 3 rd ECO Economic Think Tanks in 2018 in coordination with the ECO Secretariat.	
(d) Three-Year Capacity Building Program on Economic Research		
22.	The Council appreciated the efforts made by the ECO Secretariat for three year Capacity Building Program on Economic Research and requested the Member States (except Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan and Turkey) to provide inputs to the Secretariat for early finalization of the said programme for the benefit of the region.	
STATISTICS		
(i) ECO-FAO Country STAT Project		
23.	The Council appreciated the ECO Secretariat briefing that FAO and ECO jointly drafted a new project concept to promote advanced technologies for establishing a data and knowledge-sharing network to strengthen natural resource and agriculture management in the ECO region. The main goal is to establish a regional data sharing network with at least one FENIX node in each country and a regional hub at the ECO Secretariat. The Council took note with appreciation positive feedback and views from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Turkey and requested the remaining Member States to provide their inputs on the new concept on CountrySTAT/FENIX System and circulated among ECO Member States and requested ECO Secretariat and FAO to continue their efforts for finding donor agencies for financing the projects so that the next phase of the project is launched at the earliest.	
24.	The Council took note of the project proposal by the Islamic Republic of Iran to have cooperation with ECO Member States with regard to designing and operating of website of ECO-FAO CountrySTAT. In this regard a project proposal will be sent to the Secretariat for circulation to Member States for views and	

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	comments to be conveyed within two months upon receipt of the proposal.	
(ii)	<u>ECO Statistical Network (ECOSTAT)</u>	
25.	The Council requested the Member States to convey requisite statistical data with ECO Secretariat at the earliest convenience. The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to expedite the appointment of an officer at the earliest facilitating the SCI to enhance its cooperation with the Secretariat for reactivating ECOSTAT.	
(iii)	<u>ECO Key Statistical Indicators (ECOKSI)</u>	
26.	The Council was informed by the ECO Secretariat on the compilation of the updated compendium for ECO Key Statistical Indicators (ECOKSI) and requested the Member States to provide requisite statistical data as soon as possible for the functionality of ECOKSI.	
(iv)	<u>ECO Statistical Publications</u>	
27.	The Council was informed that with the aim of development of statistical information and providing the last updated statistical data, the ECO Statistical Report has been compiled and published by the Secretariat since 2013. In the previous years, three volumes of this Report have been published by the Secretariat and posted on the ECOSTAT to give a comprehensive picture of the region through presenting and analyzing the main socio-economic indicators of countries of the region, supported by variety of tables, charts and maps. The Council took note that due to shortage of staff in PERS Directorate, it was not possible to publish the Fifth Volume of ECO Statistical Report and requested the Member States to expedite the nomination of a candidate for the post of Programme Officer of PERS Directorate of the ECO Secretariat.	
28.	The Council also requested	
(v)	<u>ECO Statistical Capacity Building Programme</u>	
29.	The Council welcomed the offer of Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting of a Regional Training Workshop on “Emerging Issues in Implementation of SDGs” on 25-28 February 2018 in Tehran (Iran) and requested the Member States for their active participation in the said event. The Council welcomed the offer of some Member countries for providing technical assistance and trainers to the other countries in the field of statistics.	

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30.	The Council also took note of the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to provide trainers, if their travel expenses and allowances are covered by the Secretariat.	
31.	The Council took note of the request of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for provision of technical assistance in various aspects of statistics. A formal request will be submitted to the ECO Secretariat through diplomatic channels.	
(vi) <u>ECO Statistical Events</u>		
32.	The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 4 th Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistic Offices (MHNSO) and 6 th ECO High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting on Statistics back-to-back in second half of 2018.	
33.	The Council also welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to host the 5 th Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistic Offices (MHNSO) and 7 th ECO High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting and details will be conveyed to the Secretariat through diplomatic channel.	
<u>Cooperation with Regional/International Organizations</u>		
34.	The Council appreciated the efforts of ECO Secretariat to enhance its cooperation with Regional and International Organizations and Research Institutions such as: IRTI, SESRIC, TEPAV, FAO, UNSD and welcomed the finalization and approval by CPR of MoUs with SESRIC and TEPAV which will be signed soon.	

F. SECTOR: HUMAN RESOURCES & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT		
1.	The Council acknowledged again the continued relevance and value of regional cooperation on health and related areas, civil registration and disaster risk reduction in the ECO Region in the light of continued needs and requirements of the Member States, as well as regional and global developments, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SFDRR) and ECO Vision 2025. It also acknowledged the importance of support from relevant regional and international organizations for implementation of the work programme 2018.	
2.	The Council requested the Member States and Secretariat to develop a nexus approach to the relevant SDGs, climate, health and disaster risk reduction in their national and	

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	regional programmes.	
3.	The Council acknowledged the need of close coordination among ECO Member Countries to promote regional cooperation for the education/training through exchange of faculty members/students, seminars and technology-sharing programmes. The Council requested the ECO Educational Institute (ECO-EI) to elaborate on the above needs and prepare a draft outline in consultation with ECO Member States.	
4.	<p>The Council requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Member States, who have not done so, to accelerate providing the Secretariat with their views and inputs on the draft Plan of Action on Health enabling the Secretariat to develop the revised draft of the "Plan of Action; • The Secretariat to continue consultation with WHO in finalization of the draft Plan of Action on Health with a view to making it focused and target oriented; • The Secretariat to organize high level Expert Group Meetings to finalize the Plan of Action; • The Secretariat to ensure holding the 4th ECO Health Ministerial Meeting in 2018 in one interested Member State. 	
5.	The Council took into account the possibility of exploring mutual ways of activities for sustainable development in the ECO Region keeping in view the existing poverty in the region that is one of the main reasons of expanding various diseases.	
6.	The Council took into account the possibility of multilateral agreement for sustainable development in the ECO Region by creating a system of networking, in line with other multilateral forums.	
7.	<p>The Council requested the Member States and the Secretariat to implement the outcomes of the 2nd Meeting of the ECO Heads of National Organizations/Centers for Civil Registration held on 17 October 2017 in Istanbul, among others the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of online regional demographic dashboard; • Publication of ECO civil registration data yearbook; • Conducting a study using technical assistance of the relevant international organizations such as UNFPA to assess the existing civil registration systems of the Member States with a view to their further improvement; • Exchange of documented experiences in the field of issuance of Smart-Card considering the biometric parameters; 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working closely on the issue of non-registered citizens and migrants to decrease the risk of fraud and other negative impacts of these non-registered individuals; • Establishment of a task group of high level registration experts to develop necessary frameworks for realization of regional cooperation in the above areas; <p>The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to develop a project/programme for implementation of the above agreed measures and submit it to the relevant ECO bodies for needed decisions and financial support.</p>	
8.	The Council called on the Secretariat to continue to enhance relations with relevant regional/international organizations and UN bodies, including UNDP, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNESCAP, UNICEF and WHO for their support for the implementation of the relevant SDGs and health cooperation at the regional levels.	
9.	The Council requested interested Member States to share with the Secretariat their plans, if any, to extend academic scholarships in health and other related areas to the other Member States.	
10.	The Council requested the Member States and the Secretariat to implement the outcomes of the Workshop on Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) held on 10-11 May 2017 in Tehran.	
<u>DISASTER RISK REDUCTION</u>		
11.	The Council requested the Member States and Secretariat to pursue a regional integrated disaster risk reduction system/network with the ultimate aim of preventing and reducing disaster losses in lives, and in social, economic, and environmental assets of people of ECO Member States at all levels.	
12.	The Council appreciated the Member States and Secretariat for finalizing the ECO Regional Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (ECORFDRR) in 2 nd Experts Group Meeting on 11-12 October 2017 in Ankara, Turkey and thanked IDB, ESCAP, UNISDR and other partners for their valuable financial and technical contributions. The Council requested the Secretariat to present the Framework to the 8 th ECO Ministerial Conference on DRR and next Council of Ministers (COM) meeting for approval.	
13.	The Council further requested the Member States to take into account the recommendations made by the Regional Framework and support the implementation of the Framework.	

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14.	The Council welcomed the outline for implementation of ECORFDRR and requested the Secretariat to develop feasible projects and organize events in this regard.	
15.	<p>The Council requested the Secretariat, in line with the ECORFDRR, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize workshop on "Capacity Building" for Member States focal points on Implementation and monitoring of SFDRR and ECORFDRR in conjunction with Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) and UNISDR in 2018; • Organize training workshop on “Urban Renewal and Building Resilient Infrastructure” to strengthen the capacity of relevant stakeholders of Member States in collaboration with UN Habitat in 2018; • Organize training workshop on “Disaster Risk Transfer through Insurance” to strengthen the capacity of relevant stakeholders of Member States in 2018; • Continue its cooperation with UNESCO and Members States on Enhancing Capacity of Member States on School Safety Programme; • Strengthen DRR section of the Secretariat and continue updating the DRR roster of Member States’ experts and institutions, and assist ECO Regional Centre for Risk Management (ECORCRM) to take greater role under DRR Regional Framework; • Continue its interactions with relevant regional and international organizations and development partners and agencies with a view to seeking technical and financial support, including UNISDR, IDB, UNESCAP (as well as its new center APDIM), UNDP, UNOCHA, UNESCO, GIZ and other potential partners. 	
16.	The Council acknowledged the timeliness and importance of the 8 th ECO Ministerial Conference on DRR to be hosted by Republic of Turkey in the second half of the 2018.	
17.	The Council requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat, latest by end of March 2018, with their views and inputs on the draft protocol titled, “Real-time Seismological Data Exchange (RSDE)” prepared by Republic of Turkey. The draft protocol is envisaged to be signed by Member States in the context of the 8 th ECO Ministerial Conference on DRR.	
18.	The Council encouraged the Member States to benefit from the consultancy	

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	services/expertise of the DRR International Expert, temporary hired by the ECO Secretariat.	
19.	The Council requested the Member States to update the list of their stakeholders, including local communities, non-governmental organizations and private enterprises, in order to facilitate and enhance regional cooperation on DRR.	
20.	The Council requested the interested Member States to propose holding events/conferences/seminars/workshops on disaster risk reduction and related issues in 2018.	
21.	The Council requested the Member States to regularly submit information on their activities on Disaster Risk Reduction and related regulations to the Secretariat for further circulation among the other Member States in order to disseminate the information and increase public awareness on DRR importance.	
G. SECTOR: DRUGS AND ORGANIZED CRIME COORDINATION UNIT (DOCCU)		
1.	The Council recognized again the importance of the regional cooperation against drugs and organized crimes in the ECO Region. The Council underlined the continued relevance and need of such cooperation for the economic growth and sustainable development in the Member States and the Region as a whole, hence the need for maximized efforts by the ECO Secretariat and the Member States to achieve desirable results. It was further emphasized that effective regional institutional arrangements in the fields of police and law enforcement, judicial and anti-corruption cooperation as well as capacity building and training programmes would greatly help achieve desired results in prevention of such illegitimate activities in the ECO Region. In this regard, technical and financial support may be sought from relevant regional and international partners to make the ECO agenda a success.	
2.	The Council reiterated the importance of ECOPOL for the Region and recalled that the Statute is expected to be finalized by the upcoming 4 th ECO Interior Ministers Meeting/2nd Meeting of the ECO Chiefs of Police. Accordingly, the Council requested the Secretariat to make necessary preparations, including the circulation of the latest version of the draft Statute among Member States. The Council further requested the interested Member States to designate the liaison officers for facilitation of coordination.	
3.	The Council welcomed the outcome of the 3 rd Meeting of Heads of Anti-Corruption and Ombudsmen of ECO Member States held in Baku and	

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	highlighted the need for regular such meetings. It also invited the ECO Member States, who have not done so, to sign/ratify the Statute of the ECO-Regional Centre for Cooperation of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen” (RCCACO) , enabling the Center starts its functions as early as possible.	
4.	The Council welcomed the upcoming 3rd Meeting of Attorney/Prosecutors General of ECO Member States to be held on 30-31 January 2018 in Islamabad where an effective regional mechanism for judicial cooperation/legal assistance among Member States will be further discussed and the future course of actions will be decided. The Secretariat was requested by the Council to make necessary preparations/coordination with the host authorities and Member States for the success of the Meeting.	
5.	Given the long interval since the last such meetings, the Council requested the ECO Secretariat to make serious efforts as well as coordination with the host countries/interested countries to organize in 2018 i) 4 th ECO Interior Ministers Meeting; ii) 2 nd Meeting of ECO Chiefs of Police; and iii) 2 nd Meeting of Heads of Interpol of ECO Member States.	
6.	The Council reiterated the significance of the capacity building programmes and training activities for sharing expertise and experiences in fighting against drugs and organized crimes and highlighted the need for pooling up the existing capacities and resources within the Member States. In this respect, the Council requested the ECO-DOCCU and the Member States to organize relevant capacity development programmes in different areas of drugs and organized crime for the relevant experts/officials and other target groups within the ECO countries. The ECO-DOCCU will also circulate a questionnaire among Member States thereby requesting for information on their training needs or/and training offers in the areas of drugs and organized crime.	
7.	The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to utilize ECOPOL ad-hoc Fund for funding relevant capacity building and training programmes.	
8.	While preparing for training courses and capacity development workshops, ECO-DOCCU should ensure utilization of the available financial resources and expertise from within and outside ECO Region. To ensure maximum participation of the representatives of the Member States in these programmes, the ECO-DOCCU will inform Member States at least two months before the fixed	

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	date of the planned training course/workshop. Any changes in the time and venue of the planned event shall be conveyed to the Member States latest by 10 working days prior to the scheduled date.	
9.	The Council requested the Member States, which have not done so, to convey the list of their national training institutions and facilities as well as the professional trainers in the fields of drugs and organized crimes enabling the Secretariat to complete DOCCU Roster to be utilized while organizing capacity building and training events for the Member States.	
10.	The Anti-narcotics Force Academy of Pakistan and the Directorate General of Training and Research (Customs) Karachi, Pakistan expressed their readiness to offer relevant trainings for ECO Member States. The host authorities will cover the training expenditure, technical support and local transfer. The information on the available courses in 2018 will be conveyed to the ECO-DOCCU in due course.	
11.	The Police University of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed its readiness to continue organizing training courses for ECO Member States. The training costs excluding the airfare tickets will be covered by the host country. The information on the available courses in 2018 will be submitted in due course.	
12.	The Council highlighted the importance of the availability of comprehensive package of drugs detoxification, treatment and rehabilitation services for effective combating the illegal drugs. Pakistan informed the Council of adequate and sustainable capacity in its Ministry of Narcotics Control/Anti Narcotics Force in this regard. The Council also agreed that the upcoming workshop on drug demand reduction may address the health perspective of combating narcotic drugs through exchange of information and best practices among the participants. Ministry of Narcotics Control/Anti Narcotics Force of Pakistan will consider hosting this workshop in 2018 and will inform the ECO Secretariat, accordingly.	
13.	Given the importance of timely exchange of information/statistics among the Member States on activities in the areas of drugs supply, demand and trafficking, the Council requested the Member States for timely submission of relevant statistics/data to the ECO-DOCCU for dissemination among the Member States, and for periodic publication of the "Drug Situation in the ECO Region".	

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14.	While acknowledging the importance of the ECO partnerships with potential partners, the Council requested the ECO-DOCCU to continue interactions with the relevant regional and international organizations and United Nations agencies, including UNODC, Interpol, ICMPD and International Anti-corruption Academy (IACA), with a view to seeking technical assistance, equipment support and expertise required for effective implementation of its mandates.	
15.	Given the important role of the focal points of the Member States in facilitating cooperation in the areas of drugs and organized crime, the Member States should inform ECO-DOCCU, within a deadline of 3 months, the updated lists of their focal points in different areas. The ECO-DOCCU will annually circulate the updated list of focal points among Member States. The Islamic Republic of Iran expressed its readiness to host the first coordinating meeting of the police focal points of the ECO Member States.	
H. SECTOR: ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies and External Relations		
Sector: International Relations		
1.	a) Inter-Regional ECO Activities (i) ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies In order to support and promote the broad objectives of the ECO, particularly in the fields of science, technology, culture, and education, the Council encouraged the ECO Specialized Agencies to synergize their activities to promote cooperation in the relevant areas.	
2.	The Council encouraged the Member States to join, where applicable, the ECO Specialized Agencies and Regional Institutions and support their activities in different areas for the shared goals.	
3.	The Council took note of and appreciated the efforts by the secretariat for the development of a comprehensive reform proposal with respect to the existing and under-establishment bodies of the ECO. In this connection, a special "Consultation Meeting on the Reform of Specialised Agencies and Regional Institutions" was held on the 13th of December, 2017.	
4.	The Council requested 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	

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	UNESCO.	
	The Council took note of the the discrepancies in the salary structure of the ECOEI, ECOSF and -ECI and recommended to harmonize it in the three Specialized Agencies.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) 		
5.	The Council appreciated the ECO Cultural 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. The Council encouraged the Institute to further expand the cooperation in the relevant fields for realizing the core objectives of ECI.	
6.	The Council took note of and appreciated the Islamic Republic of Pakistan's offer to host the Seventh Boards of Trustees Meeting in Pakistan. Pakistan has been playing an active role on the platform of the ECI.	
7.	The Council appreciated promotion of common literary heritage of the great poets like Maulana Rumi, Hafiz Shirazi, Firdausi, Allama Iqbal, Mir Seyed Ali Hamedani , Makhdoom Quli, and Babajan Ghaforuv, etc.	
8.	The Council asked the ECO Member States which have not ratified the ECI Charter yet to ratify it and support its initiatives for promoting the commonly cherished rich cultural heritage of the Region.	
9.	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, as this would help in ensuring effective coordination between the ECI and ECO Member States in relevant matters.	
10.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for providing indirect support by contributing to different ECI events. The Council encouraged the Islamic Republic of Iran to continue its support for ECI as the host country of the ECI.	
11.	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 assessments and in a timely fashion as delays also hinder ECI's activities.	
12.	The Council appreciated the Republic of Tajikistan to host the 4th Meeting of ECO Heads of National Libraries. As the present chair of the ECI, Tajikistan has	

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	shown a great commitment to the cause of the ECI.	
13.	The Council acknowledged and appreciated the role of the president of the ECI in his endeavor towards enhancing the Institution's activities and capacities.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) 	
14.	The Council appreciated the activities and initiatives of the ECO Science 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.	
15.	The Council requested the Member States that have not yet ratified the ECOSF Charter to do so as soon as possible, so as to make the Foundation stronger to achieve its objectives. The ratification of the ECOSF Charter and its Additional Protocol has so far been done by Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.	
16.	The Council requested the Member States to contribute their mandatory share in a timely manner for smooth functioning of the Foundation.	
17.	The Council also noted the need for the Member States to fulfil their pledges towards the 'Science and Technology Fund' and requested other member-states to generously contribute towards the Fund so that research projects between the member-states can be initiated.	
18.	The Council also took note of the Foundation's request that the ECO Secretariat should be represented in all forums of the ECOSF, its meetings and events, to the possible extent.	
19.	The Council requested the Member States, who have not done so, 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 Action Plan of the Foundation for the coming period.	
20.	As informed by the ECOSF, the draft Host Country Agreement, to be concluded between 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.	
21.	The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for the offer to host the 4th	

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	Meeting of the ECOSF Board of Trustees in 2018. Iran has been an active member state on the platform of the ECOSF.	
22.	The Council appreciated the efforts of the ECOSF to hold regular consultations with the Ambassadors of the Member States based in Islamabad to discuss issues of importance.	
23.	The Council appreciated the allotment of dedicated office premises to the ECOSF by Pakistan in the Ministry of Science and Technology's building, Islamabad.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>ECO Educational Institute</u> 		
24.	The Council, on the intervention of the Republic of Turkey, agreed to reflect the issues of the Educational Institute in the Report of the Committee on Affiliated Bodies.	
25.	Commending the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 2nd BoT meeting of the ECOEI on 26th July, 2017, in Istanbul, the Council welcomed the election of Professor Mehmet Akif Kirecci as the President of the Institute and approval of the Scale of Assessment, the Annual Budget, the Road Map and the Action Plan of the ECOEI by the said BoT Meeting.	
26.	The Council called upon the Member States to actively participate in the activities of the Institute and underlined the importance of continuous support for Educational Institute's future endeavors.	
27.	The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey for allocating premises with the required equipments for the headquarters of ECOEI in Ankara.	
28.	The Council requested the relevant authorities of the Member States to designate their focal points for the ECOEI and communicate them to the Institute at their earliest convenience.	
29.	The Council acknowledged the importance of ECO cooperation in the field of education and welcomed the planned activities of the Institute on developing and advancing learning/teaching languages, history, literature and cultural heritage in ECO member-states, and establishing a web platform for common ground for educational institutions to share the best practices.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>ECO Consultancy & Engineering Company (ECO-CEC)</u> 		
30.	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.	

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31.	The Council encouraged 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.	
32.	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 for pursuing new business opportunities. The Council also asked the Secretariat to extend necessary assistance to the ECO-CEC and PIDEC in this regard.	
33.	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 its relevant reports and publications, especially in the transport and energy sectors, with the ECO-CEC on a regular basis.	
34.	The Council took note of the request made by 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.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECO College of Insurance 		
35.	The Council appreciated the College for annual allocation, starting from 2014, of 40 Student Scholarships to the ECO Member Countries other than Iran. The Scholarship includes waiver of tuition fees and dormitory expenses. The ECO Member States may benefit from this opportunity, which will be announced regularly on the website of the College, as so far only Afghanistan and Pakistan have introduced their candidates for the program.	
36.	The Council requested the Member States to convey their focal points from the relevant authorities, and share proposals/recommendations for enhancing cooperation and 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.	
37.	The Council asked the College to initiate preparations for the 2nd BoT Meeting and convey the proposed dates for 2018, to the Secretariat and the Member States.	

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• <u>Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Countries (PAECO)</u>		
38.	The Council took note of the fact that the PAECO is still not operational as so far only three countries, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey have completed the internal legal formalities and informed the Secretariat, whereas to become operational, four member states must complete internal formalities and inform the Secretariat.	
39.	The Council recalled that the Inaugural Ceremony and First Conference of the PAECO was held in Islamabad in 2013 where leaders of the 6 ECO States signed the Charter of the PAECO. Therefore, the Council requested Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan to expedite the ratification process and update the ECO Secretariat, so that the PAECO can come into force.	
40.	The Council appreciated Pakistan for its offer to host the second PAECO conference in 2018; as soon as it comes into force after the ratification of four signatory states of the PAECO Charter.	
<u>(ii) ECO's External Relations</u>		
41.	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 requested the Member States to support the Secretariat in its efforts in this regard.	
42.	The Council pointed out that the MoUs signed between ECO and international organizations should be effectively operationalized and implemented in order to generate maximum benefit. The Council also requested the Secretariat that in signing the new MoUs with the potential partners, consideration should be given to the need for an agreed work programme to implement the MoU.	
43.	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 ECO 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.	
44.	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.	

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45.	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.	
46.	With the objective to develop and enhance interaction with ASEAN, the Council encouraged the Secretariat to take necessary measures for the enhanced cooperation between ECO and ASEAN, including through possible accreditation of the ASEAN Ambassadors in Tehran to the ECO.	
