

## **207<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

# **Report**

25<sup>th</sup> November 2015  
ECO Secretariat-Tehran

## Report

The 207<sup>th</sup> CPR meeting was held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at the ECO Secretariat. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Majid Bizmark, Permanent Representative/Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was attended by the Ambassadors, the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of all ECO Member States except Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The ECO Secretary General along with concerned officials of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex-I.

### **Agenda Item No.1**

#### Adoption of the Agenda

2. The Council adopted the following agenda for deliberations:

#### Draft Agenda

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 207<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting
3. Latest update on preparations for 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting
4. Participation of the Turkish Cypriot State and Turkic Council at the 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting in their capacity as observers
5. **Financial Issues**
  - i) Secretariat's budget proposal for the financial year 2016
  - ii) Working Group on Scale of Assessments/Contributions and Arrears
  - iii) Recommendations of Audit Board
6. Allocation of US\$ 50,000/- from the FSGPF in support of the Regional Project to Combat Desertification with a Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storm in the ECO Region
7. **Administrative matters**
  - a) Appointment for the post of Deputy Secretary General
  - b) Continued discussions on the post of Programme Officer of Projects, Economic Research and Statistics
  - c) Recommendations of the Selection Panel
8. Any other business
9. Date of the next CPR Meeting

### **Agenda Item No.2**

#### Adoption of the Draft Report of 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Meetings:

3. Draft Report of the 206<sup>th</sup> CPR meeting, contained in the document ECO/CPR/206/3 (27<sup>th</sup> October 2015), was circulated to the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No.CFU/206<sup>th</sup> CPR/2015/1622 dated 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.
4. The amendment proposed by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in paragraph 65 of the Draft Report of 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting on page 14 was circulated to the Member

States vide Secretariats Note Verbale No.CFU/206<sup>th</sup> CPR/2015/1664 dated 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2014.

5. The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan mentioned that the Draft Report of 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting may be approved with amendment proposed by Pakistan vide Embassy's Note Verbale No. No. ECO-7/2/2015/18 dated 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 for incorporation in para 65 (page 14) of the Draft Report. The ECO Secretariat circulated the Note Verbale of the Embassy of Pakistan among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No.CFU/206<sup>th</sup> CPR/2015/1664 dated 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. Furthermore, the Iranian delegate stated that in response to the amendments proposed by Pakistan in para 65, it has also drawn the attention of the Secretariat as well as Member States to the Report of the Working Group's meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015 vide Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Note No. 651/3817406 of 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2015 which was also circulated by the Secretariat among the Member States vide its Note Verbale No. CFU/206<sup>th</sup> CPR/2015/1723 dated 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2015. The Iranian delegate requested that Iranian stance may also be included in para 64 of the Report.

6. Secretary General opined that the Note Verbales from Pakistan and Iran state their respective positions on the issue and need to be reflected as such, moreover, Pakistan wishes for amendment in para 65 and Iran wishes amendments in para 64 of the 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Report.

7. The Council decided to incorporate amendments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in paras 64 and 65 in 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Report respectively.

8. The Iranian delegate further mentioned that in paras 33 and 34 of the Report mentions establishment of a Working Group to resolve the outstanding issues of Scale of Assessment and Status of Contribution and Arrears. He said that Working Group's meetings have already been held to discuss these issues but with vain and he proposed that instead we may have 1-2 day Meeting(s) at the Secretariat at the level of distinguished Ambassadors/Financial Experts from the Capitals and finalize the issue. So it would be better if para 34 of 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting may also be amended accordingly.

9. The Secretary General informed the Council that numerous meetings to resolve the issue of financial issues such as "Scale of Assessments/Contribution and Arrears" were held but were not fruitful and even in the Extraordinary COM Meeting held in New York on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015, it decided to postpone the matter to the next COM. So assistance of financial experts from the Member State may be required in order to find some acceptable solution on the issues. Therefore, the Secretariat proposed to have a Working Group consisting of financial experts from the capitals. The Ambassador of Pakistan supported the stance of the ECO Secretary General.

10. The Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey expressed his reservations with reference to procedures adopted for amendments in the 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Report, as having been circulated well in advance, he was of the view that the Member States may send

proposed amendments, if any, in writing to the ECO Secretariat so that precious time of the CPR could be utilized more efficiently.

11. After deliberations, the Council came up with a re-drafted para 34 in the Report of 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting which is to be read as under:

**“The Council decided to convene, through the Secretariat, a meeting with participation of all Member States and consisting of relevant authorities from interested capitals, who will meet at the Secretariat, in order to discuss and finalize the issue of “Scale of Assessment/Contributions and Arrears” for its further approval by the next COM and Summit Meetings.”**

12. Moreover, the Council further decided that para 40 of 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Report relating to Member States’ “Status of Contribution/Arrears” to the ECO Secretariat’s budget may also be amended as proposed in para 7 above of this report accordingly.

13. After deliberations and with consensus, the Council adopted the Draft Report of **206<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting** circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat’s Note Verbale CFU/206<sup>th</sup> CPR/2015/1622 dated 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 along with the amendments proposed by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in paras 64 and 65 respectively. The Council, after deliberations, also adopted amendments in para 34 and 40 as agreed at para 11 above.

### **Agenda Item No.3**

#### Latest update on preparations for 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting

14. The ECO Secretariat vide its Note Verbale No. No.CFU/26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting/2015/1294 dated 24<sup>th</sup> August, 2015 with reference to the decision of the 25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Regional Planning Council (RPC) to organize the next 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting in November/December 2015 proposed to hold the **26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting on 13 - 17 December 2015** at the ECO Secretariat. It was also decided that for ensuring enhanced participation from the Member States in the RPC meeting, the ECO Secretariat will provide accommodation and reimburse the cost of round trip air tickets (up to US\$900) for four (4) delegates from each ECO Member State from the Feasibility Study and General Purpose Fund (FSGPF).

15. The Secretariat requested Member States to confirm their participation along with composition of their delegations and flight details to ensure quorum and enable the Secretariat to make necessary logistical arrangements for the participants. Moreover, invitations have also been extended to the ECO Specialized Agencies/Affiliated bodies and Observers for participation in the 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting.

16. The Draft Agenda of 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting contained in the document No. CFU/26<sup>th</sup> RPC/2015/1 (6<sup>th</sup> October, 2015) has been circulated vide Secretariat’s Note Verbale No.CFU/26<sup>th</sup> RPC/2015/1535 dated 6<sup>th</sup> October, 2015. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran has already been requested to provide assistance in issuing gratis visas for the delegates of the ECO Member States participating in 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting.

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17. The Secretariat had circulated (i) Draft Agenda and Annotated Draft Agenda, (ii) Working Papers (iii) Paper on Draft ECO Vision 2025 and (iv) Tentative Programme of 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting among the Member States vide Secretariat's Notes Verbale No.CFU/26<sup>th</sup> RPC/2015/1638 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2015 and No.CFU/26<sup>th</sup> RPC/2015/1645 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2015. Besides this, the Secretariat has also circulated an Information Note among the Member States as well as among Specialized Agencies/Affiliated bodies and Observers.

18. The Council was informed that Working Papers (hard and soft copies) have been circulated among the Member States and also these been placed on the ECO Website. The Secretariat requested the Member States for early confirmation and conveying of composition of their delegations along with travel itineraries enabling the Secretariat for making necessary logistic and other arrangements accordingly.

19. The Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General (PERS) briefed the Council stating that no confirmations/nomination of delegations by any Member States for the RPC Meeting and for the Brainstorming Session on ECO Vision 2025 alongside the RPC Meeting have so far been received. The Secretary General also raised a question if the Member States do not send nominations for the Brainstorming Session on ECO Vision 2025, then whether the Secretariat may establish direct contacts with NGOs/Think Tank organizations, as until now no response has been received from any side.

20. The Iranian delegate informed that it has already officially conveyed the ECO Secretariat regarding the confirmation of Iran for its participation in the 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting and requested the Member States to inform as soon as possible for visa arrangements so that no difficulty is faced at the last moment.

21. The Chairman further requested the Member States for early confirmation and conveying of composition of their delegations, travel itineraries enabling the Secretariat to complete necessary logistic and other arrangements. The Council also approved the suggestion of the Secretary General to establish direct contacts with the NGOs/Think Tanks of the respective countries of the Member States for their participation in the Brainstorming Session alongside 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting.

#### **Agenda Item No.4**

Participation of the Turkish Cypriot State and Turkic Council at the 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting in their capacities as Observers:

22. The 207<sup>th</sup> CPR meeting may approve participation of Turkish Cypriot State and Turkic Council at the 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting in their capacities as observers according to the ECO Modalities for Granting Observer and Dialogue Partnership Status at ECO.

23. The Council considered and approved, in accordance with the ECO Modalities for Granting Observer and Dialogue Partnership Status at ECO, the participation of Turkish Cypriot State and Turkic Council, in their capacities as "Observers" without right to vote in augural and closing ceremonies of 26<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting scheduled on 13-17 December, 2015 at the ECO Secretariat, Tehran.

#### **Agenda Item No.5**

Financial Issues:

**I) Secretariat's Budget proposal for the financial year 2016**

24. The Secretariat had prepared budget proposal for the financial year 2016, circulated to the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. ACC-Budget/2015/1454 dated 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015 for consideration.

25. The Council considered and adopted the proposed budget for the financial year 2016 for further submission to the upcoming COM for final approval. However, the Iranian delegate posed a question that whether the absence of some Member States during today's meeting will have any impact on adoption of the Budget? The Legal Adviser clarified that based on the Rules of Procedure, the decision making is based on consensus and when we have the quorum, we can make a decision. However, as per practice the Secretariat will circulate the Report of the meeting to the Member States and will wait for their response.

26. The Chairman enquired about the approval of the budget by COM. DSG (Admn) clarified that if there is no COM Meeting after adoption of budget by CPR, the CPR has the authority to approve the budget on behalf of the COM.

**II) Working Group on the Scale of Assessments/Contributions and Arrears**

27. The 206<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the CPR was informed about the discussions in the Extraordinary Session of the ECO Council of Ministers (2 October 2015) on the financial situation of the Organization, including the pending issue of scale of assessments in post-2015 as well as the problems facing ECO Secretariat as a result of outstanding arrears of/contributions by some Member States to the budget of the Organization.

28. Building on the decision of the Extra-ordinary COM Session, the 206<sup>th</sup> CPR meeting decided to establish a Working Group process with the participation of financial experts from the capitals to discuss the issue of Scale of Assessments, as well as deliberate and finalize the pending issue of contributions and arrears. To facilitate early and effective implementation of this CPR decision, the Secretariat has prepared a non-paper introducing the terms of reference, timeframe and modalities to be observed during the working group process. The Paper was placed before the Council for appropriate decision.

29. The Council recalled its decision to amend para 34 of the 206<sup>th</sup> CPR Report so as a meeting will be held to discuss and resolve financial issues of the Secretariat. The new formulation of para 34 is again reproduced below:

"The Council decided to convene, through the Secretariat, a meeting with participation of all Member States and consisting of relevant authorities from interested capitals, who will meet at the Secretariat, in order to discuss and finalize the issue of "Scale of Assessment/Contributions and Arrears" for its further approval by the next COM and Summit Meetings."

30. The Council agreed with the suggestion of the Secretariat to adjust proposed ToR in the light of above mentioned decision. The Iranian delegate requested the Secretariat to forward the revised ToR to the Member States for views/comments to be conveyed to the Secretariat officially.

### **III) Recommendations of Audit Board**

31. Under this Agenda item, as requested by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Secretariat gave a detailed briefing to the Council on the status/modality of the implementation of the recommendations of the Audit Board.

32. The Chief Accountant of the Secretariat gave a detailed briefing to the Council stating that proper actions, as recommended in the Audit Reports of the financial years 2013 and 2014, have been taken which include: (i) follow-up on different audit issues, (ii) on the issue of project of reconstruction of Faryab Hospital in Afghanistan and as recommended by Audit Board, the Secretariat discussed with the Contractor and Afghan Health Ministry and all parties agreed on the percentage of progress approved by "National Engineering Service Pakistan" in whose opinion 67% work has been completed, (iii) avoidance of cash payments, (iv) economized procurement procedure as well as other actions for effective internal financial control; and (v) new accounting software was implemented by the Secretariat, the action which was appreciated by the Audit Board. He further mentioned that for finding mechanism to accommodate and follow-up observations and recommendations made in the Audit Report, the Secretariat has initiated correspondence with the Member States with the request to provide views/comments to be incorporated in the Working Paper and assured that the Secretariat will comply with the observations of the Audit Board and continue to follow-up the issues.

33. While appreciating the briefing of the Secretariat, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan showed his interest to know if there were audit reservations by the Audit Board meant to correct the procedure of accounting. He also appreciated if the Secretariat could provide copies of Note Verbales exchanged by the Secretariat with the Member States in order to follow up for a reply and for ease of feedback. The Ambassador further recalled that in the 21<sup>st</sup> COM Meeting in Tehran in 2013 it had talked about the Working Group to be formed to amend the rules as per Audit Board's recommendations or settlement of audit paras. He enquired from the Secretariat for any update and asked if it was not seen feasible to follow it up? The Ambassador asked Secretariat's input on this count.

34. The Secretariat stated that the only negative comment of the audit report was the size of savings in the financial year 2013-2014 and the Secretariat has explained in the comments that these were mainly due to the termination/commencement of the tenures of the Secretariat employee's benefits. The renewal of contracts of nine staff members caused saving most of the allocated budget in this regard. He said that with reference to formation of Working Group for follow-up of recommendations and changes in the audit mechanism, the Secretariat has sent several Note Verbales requesting the Member States to convey their opinion and comments on the issue but till now it has not received any feedback.

Allocation of US\$ 50,000/- from the FSGPF in support of the Regional Project to Combat Desertification with a Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storm in the ECO Region

35. The Deputy Secretary General (Admn) informed the Council that the issue is on the agenda of CPR for some time and on the basis of the decisions and request made during the last CPR, there were some exercise by the ECO Secretariat and also the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST). The Secretariat circulated the pre-feasibility study, prepared by the ECO-IEST, among the Member States and received feedbacks from some Member States which have also been circulated among the Member States and the ECO-IEST. He said that Dr. Fazil, President of ECO-IEST has been invited in today's meeting for his further technical elaboration on the subject.

36. The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan while expressing his views on the subject agenda item said that comments/inputs received from headquarters, have already been conveyed to the Secretariat which are not supportive of the project due to its duplication of the activity. He further said that going by the current financial situation of the Secretariat it would be difficult to go for approval of this money. He also recalled the attention of the Chairman that during the meeting held to discuss the issue of "Scale of Assessments", Kazakhstan delegation pointed out that they would like to contribute once the focus of the Organization would be on certain areas particularly trade, energy and connectivity. He said that we respect the observation of Kazakhstan and at this stage are not in a position till the time we receive inputs from other Member States as we have just received inputs from Afghanistan and Pakistan. So we are waiting inputs/comments from other Member States also. The Ambassador of Pakistan also appreciated the presence of Dr. Fazil, President of IEST for his briefing which will be official views for sharing.

37. The President of the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST), Dr. Asghar Fazel, informed the CPR about the history of the Project and highlighted that the 5<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment (December 2014, Istanbul) requested the Secretariat to allocate US\$50,000 for implementation of this Project and ECO-IEST was mandated with the above project implementation, including through a number of pilot training/workshop sessions. The 25<sup>th</sup> RPC appreciated ECO-IEST for presenting outline of the Project and requested the ECO Secretariat to allocate US\$50,000 to prepare elaborated project proposal for further submission to relevant financial institutions/donors. He also referred to a "Preliminary Study" on this Project prepared in 146 pages by the ECO-IEST and circulated among the Member States which includes an overview of status of desertification in the ECO Member States, as well as the accessibility and eligibility of funding sources currently available for the Project. The ECO-IEST received supportive comments and amendments from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran as well as some concern from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on duplication/repetition of currently financed projects at national levels.

38. The ECO-IEST President continued that ECO-IEST fully understand the concern of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Pakistan has been implementing US\$23



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million similar projects through Global Environment Facility (GEF) under the Land Degradation Focal Area in National Level. This is also the case for several other ECO Member States. But it should be noted that 1) ECO Project is not going to do anything at national level. Rather the regional coordination, synergy and capacity building will be the focus of the Project and all national experiences would be considered as inputs to this regional project; and 2) the GEF is not the only financing mechanism of these types of activities and other donors would be interested to support the project in the ECO Region.

39. The Iranian delegate while appreciating the comprehensive briefing by Dr. Fazi, President of IEST, said that since this is a common issue among the ECO Member States and even if a Member State has any reservation for any reason which is very understandable but may be other Member States would like to have such cooperation in the project and more over it has been mandated by the Ministerial meeting which has asked the Secretariat for allocation of amount for implementation. For starting of the project, he requested the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan for his consent to approve the amount till he receives further instructions from the capital.

40. The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan said that no doubt the project is very good that is why the Ministers had approved but he mentioned that in the previous meeting while discussing the issue we did raise this very aspect whether the Ministers had approved the money so keeping the monetary aspect in view, we had solicited instructions from the headquarters based on the discussions in the last meeting. The Ambassador said we are bound by the instructions from the capital. However, he said that we can go back to the capital and make efforts for reconsideration with the explanation just furnished to the Council and will give consent once there is a clearance from capital and at the moment it was not possible to approve the amount of US\$50,000. He said he would like to have more details which will strengthen the Mission's case.

41. The Deputy Secretary General (Admn) brought to the attention of the Council one additional information which could be of some use when the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan again approaches the headquarters. He said that very important development happened since last discussion that ECO has been given "Observership Status" in the United Nations Convention for Combating Desertification. He said that for the first time invitation was extended to ECO Secretariat to attend the COP meeting. He said this issue is a big topic for the international community and financial resources are floating around and if we can make some case for international community there would be some chance to get funding.

42. The Director (EME) of the Secretariat also brought to the attention of the Council and the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan that the Extraordinary COM Meeting in New York on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2015 approved the Report of the 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting of Environment which mandated the Secretariat to pursue this project. He said that ECO-IEST is only the Project Manager and the benefits of the project will go to the Region. He said the project is very promising not only for the Region but beyond the ECO Region too and can attract partners as well. He said that having clear mandate, the CPR may kindly take a decision on the issue.

43. The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan while appreciating the explanation by Secretariat expressed his dissatisfaction regarding the inability of the Secretariat in sharing the information immediately after the Extraordinary COM Meeting which could have enabled the Mission to approach the headquarters but this information is being shared in this meeting informing that this has been approved and this is the interpretation of the Secretariat which would have been helpful. He said that in future this kind of information is timely shared which would be more useful for Permanent Representative and the Embassy to get an approval from the capital. He said that there might be some misunderstanding back at headquarters but with this clarifications might be useful to have their consent and approval. He said that he did not want to delay this project but there are rules and regulations and said that we work sub-ordinate to our capital and have to wait instructions from capital. He emphasised the Secretariat that such kind of information should be shared with the concerned Embassy timely so that the matter is taken up with the capital effectively.

44. After lengthy deliberations, the Council decided that the same agenda would be finalized in the next CPR.

#### **Agenda Item No.7**

##### Administrative matters

#### **a) Appointment for the post of Deputy Secretary General**

45. The Chairman informed the Council that it was supposed to have informal consultations between the two nominating countries i.e. Afghanistan and Azerbaijan and he did not have any update other than the information which he had already provided to the Council in the last CPR (206). The Chairman requested the concerned Member States (Afghanistan & Azerbaijan) to let the Council know if there was any development. In the absence of any development, the Council agreed the two countries continue consultations.

#### **b) Continued discussions on the post of Programme Officer of Projects, Economic Research and Statistics (PERS)**

46. As per instruction of the 205<sup>th</sup> CPR meeting, the Working Group on the post of "Programme Officer for PERS" convened its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2015 to discuss the future distribution of this post. The Secretariat circulated Report of the Working Group for consideration of the 206<sup>th</sup> CPR meeting. During the Meeting, the Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan proposed that the post may be circulated among the Member States for nomination of suitable candidates. Once the nominations are received, the meeting of the Working Group/Selection Panel is convened to finalize the candidate/allocation of the post to Member States.

47. The concerned Member States (Iran and Pakistan) agreed to have informal consultations and expressed the hope that an agreement would be reached between them before the next CPR (208). The Secretary General also informed the Council that Mr. Amini's tenure will finish tomorrow i.e. on 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2015, and, therefore, there is no option but to internally arrange/adjust his work temporarily by the Secretariat.

**c) Recommendations of the Selection Panel**

48. The Council was informed that since last CPR meeting no Selection Panel meeting had been held.

**Agenda Item No.8**  
Any other business

49. Under this agenda item, the Iranian delegate raised the following issues:

- (i) According to Para 31 of the report of the last BoT Meeting of ECO Science Foundation on 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2015 in Islamabad, the Meeting of the Eminent Scientists will be held in Islamabad on 28 - 30 December 2015 in order to determine the research priorities of the ECOSF in the framework of Science & Technology Fund. Given the fact that ECOSF is operating as the scientific arm of the Organization and on the other hand, there are various technical committees of the Bureau, such as the committees of Industry, Energy & Mining, Ecology, Transport & Communication and Agriculture, which are responsible for subjects that are connected directly to the Science & Technology issues, the Foundation should concentrate on the needs and requirements of the ECO region in the above mentioned fields. In this context, we would like to put on record the following points and ask for their reflection in the report of this meeting:
  - (a) ECO Science Foundation should be urged to design its research activities based on the ECO region's needs and priorities, which are decided in different meetings of the Member States and are pursued by relevant Directorates of the Secretariate.
  - (b) ECO Secretariat is requested to prepare a report containing the decisions made so far by the Member States to ECOSF and provide it to the next Meeting of the Eminent Scientists for contribution to their discussions and report on the outcome to the CPR.
  - (c) We recommend that a representative from the ECO Secretariat participates in the upcoming Eminent Scientists Meeting in Islamabad for observing the process and reporting back to the next CPR Meeting.
- (ii) The First Meeting of the ECO Public and Private Sector Energy/Petrochemical Consortium/Companies will be held on 18-19 January 2016 in Tehran. In this regard, Mr. Karbasi, Secretary of the Iranian Committee of the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ECO-CCI), is here to provide the Member States with more information on this event.

50. On the request of the Iranian delegate, the Chairman asked Mr. Karbasi, Secretary of the Iranian Committee of the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI) for his briefing to the Council regarding the "Conference and Exhibition"-First Meeting of the ECO Public and Private Sector Energy/Petrochemical Consortium/Companies scheduled to be held on 18-19 January 2016 in Tehran. Mr. Karbasi gave a detailed briefing on the meeting. He also requested the Council about regular meetings of Commercial Counsellors of the ECO Member States in collaboration with the ECO Secretariat in order to follow up the process of organizing the said meeting. ECO-CCI also distributed letters addressed to the Embassies of the

ECO Member States enclosing therewith brochures and other related information about the said meeting.

51. Under this agenda item, the Secretary General reminded the Council about the following issues:

- (i) The Ministerial meeting on Energy and Petroleum is scheduled to be held on 3 - 4 December 2015 in Istanbul and 5 Member States i.e. Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey confirmed their participation and one more member is required for completion of the quorum. He requested Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan; Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to confirm their participation.
- (ii) The Secretariat has sent a questionnaire to the Member States about ICT and Telecommunication infrastructure and until now Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic and Pakistan have submitted the filled questionnaire to the Secretariat. Secretary General requested the remaining Member States to send the filled-in questionnaire and submit it to the Secretariat which is required for the Feasibility Study on ICT and Telecommunication sector.
- (iii) About Feasibility Study on Custom Component of the ECO-IDB joint project, he said that until now 8 Member States have conveyed the names of their National Consultants and the Secretariat is waiting names of National Consultants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- (iv) COP 21 of the UNFCCC sideline activity in Paris which is scheduled on 7th December, 2015. Secretary General informed that first it was declared a Ministerial meeting and then it was learnt that the H.E. Dr. Masoumeh Ebtekar, Vice President and Head of Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran will be returning earlier so the meeting will be held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Minister. Until now Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Kyrgyz Republic have confirmed their participation whereas Pakistan and Tajikistan have also informally confirmed to attend the meeting. Remaining Member States were also requested to confirm their participation in the meeting.
- (v) Secretary General also requested the distinguished Ambassadors and Permanent Representative about the list of names of Eminent Persons for the Brainstorming Session on the sideline of the RPC Meeting (13-17 December, 2015).

52. The Chairman also emphasized participation of Member States in the important meetings mentioned on (i) and (ii) by the Secretary General. He said that if we want to present any tangible outcomes after 30 years of activities within the ECO, we could refer to two areas: **first transport corridors** where fortunately we have positive achievement and the **other is energy** where there exists lot of potential among the Member States and we should work on that for tangible outcomes under the framework of ECO.

53. The Iranian delegation asked regarding latest update on the environment meeting as initially it was being arranged as Ministerial meeting and now it is being

arranged at senior officials meeting. He also enquired whether the quorum has been achieved.

54. The Secretariat informed the Council that in view of mandate given by the 5<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment, held on 17 December 2014 in Istanbul (Turkey), to make necessary arrangements for active representation and participation of the ECO in COP21 of UNFCCC in Paris 2015 including through organizing ECO coordinating meetings on the sidelines of the Paris Conference. In this context, ECO Secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the Meeting – Vice President and Head of the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran – proposed to convene the ECO Coordinating Meeting at the level of Ministers from ECO Member States on 7 or 8 December 2015. Later on, the Chair of the Meeting proposed to convene this Meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

55. The Council was further informed that inaugural segment scheduled to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015 in Paris will be attended by the Heads of States/Government from the world countries. Due to this high level segment, some of the ECO Ministers expressed their unavailability to attend the ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2015. In this regard, the Secretariat proposed to reschedule this Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at the level of Senior Officials from ECO Member States to be chaired by Deputy Head of Department of Iran. In this backdrop, the Secretariat has already apprised the ECO Member States of this decision and proposed to hold the ECO Coordinating meeting at the level of Senior Officials on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015.

56. Secretariat further briefed the Council that so far, 7 ECO Member States namely Afghanistan, Iran (Chair), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkey have formally and informally confirmed their participation in the ECO Coordinating Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015 on the sidelines of high level segment of the COP21. The Council while appreciating the ECO Secretariat for making necessary preparations for the meeting, emphasized upon the remaining ECO Member States to expedite conveying their composition of delegations to the ECO Secretariat for the above mentioned meeting.

57. The Iranian delegate intervened and enquired that the meeting should be considered as “Informal Senior Officials level”? It was clarified by the Secretariat that in the Calendar of Events it has been stipulated as “ECO Coordinating Meetings/Activities”.

58. After deliberations, the Council decided that the name of the meeting would be “Informal Coordination Meeting” alongside COP 21 in Paris on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at the Senior Official level.

59. While concluding the meeting, the Chairman paid rich tribute to Mr. Sangmuhammad Zaurov, Minister/Counsellor of Tajikistan who has completed his tenure of service in Tehran. He extended his sincere thanks for his contribution to the CPR Meeting. The Chairman also extended his sincere thanks to all the distinguished delegates who attended the meeting.

#### **Agenda Item No.9**

Date of the next CPR meeting

60. The Council decided to convene its next CPR Meeting (208<sup>th</sup>) on **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2016** at the ECO Secretariat.

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Annex-I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

**The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:**

- H.E. Dr. Nasser Ahmad Noor, Ambassador
- Mr. Ahmad Haroon Najmpoor, Minister- Counsellor
- Mr. Mohammad Hakim Sidiqi, Second Secretary
- Ms. Zahra Badaghi, Administrative Assistant

**The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:**

- Mr. Kanan Nazarov, Counsellor

**The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran:**

- H.E. Mr. Majid Bizmark, Permanent Representative/Director General
- Mr. Abulfazl Mohammad Alikhani, Director of ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Ahmad Safari, Deputy Director of ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Seddigh Tofigh, Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Mohammad Hashemi, Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Sadegh Sadeghi, Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau

**The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:**

- H.E. Mr. Noor Muhammad Jadmani, Ambassador
- Mr. Saqib Rauf, Counsellor

**Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:**

- Mr. Sangmuhammad Zaurov, Minister- Counsellor
- Ms. Manizha Rahimi, Third Secretary

**The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:**

- H.E. Mr. Riza Hakan TEKİN, Ambassador
- Ms. Sevgi Ilhan, Second Secretary

**The ECO Secretariat:**

- H.E. Mr. Halil Ibrahim Akça, Secretary General
  - Mr. Seyed Jalaedin Alavi Sabzevari, Deputy Secretary General
  - Mr. Ahsan Ali Mangi, Deputy Secretary General
  - Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, Director (EME)
  - Mr. Bahodur Rahmonov, Assistant Director (CFU)
  - Mr. Gaffar Erbek, Chef de Cabinet
  - Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
  - Mr. Farhad Najafzadeh, Chief Accountant
  - Mr. Israr Ahmad Khan, Steno-Secretary
  - Ms. Aynur Mammadova, Russian Translator
  - Ms. Nurgul Duissenova, Russian Translator
  - Mr. Amir Mohammad Javaheri, Persian Translator
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