



ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

REPORT *of the* **23rd Meeting of Regional Planning Council** **6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat**

ANNEXURES

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The ECO Secretariat, Tehran

Report

23rd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council

(6-8 May, 2013 – ECO Secretariat)

The Twenty-Third Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was held on 6-8 May, 2013 at the ECO Secretariat, Tehran. Preparatory/Review Committee meetings were held on the sidelines of the RPC Meeting.

2. The Meeting was attended by the delegations from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The delegation of ECO Secretariat led by the ECO Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov, participated in the meeting. The meeting was also attended by the representatives of the Turkish Cypriot State and the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States as Observers. The representatives of ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated Bodies: ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Science Foundation, ECO Educational Institute, ECO Trade & Development Bank, ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ECO Consultancy & Engineering Company, ECO College of Insurance, , ECO Regional Center for Risk Management for Natural Disasters and ECO Regional Coordination Center for Food Security also participated. The list of participants is attached at **Annex-I**.

Agenda Item No.1

Inauguration of the Meeting

3. The ECO Secretary General, H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov, in his statement briefed the Council about the main activities of the Organization during the preceding year. He highlighted the progress achieved in some areas and the challenges lying ahead. He apprised the Council about the important meetings, decisions and follow-up actions taken during this period. The Secretary General mentioned the establishment of Parliamentary Assembly of ECO Countries (PAECO) as a milestone achievement by the Organization. He also highlighted the work done by the Eminent Persons Group (EPG). While giving the overview of Organization's performance, he urged the member states to demonstrate their willingness and determination to enhance cooperation for utilization of real potential of the region. A copy of his statement is attached at **Annex-II**.

4. The meeting was inaugurated by His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Mehdi Akhoundzadeh, Deputy Foreign Minister for International Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In his inaugural address, he welcomed the distinguished delegations of the Member States and participants from other ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions and Affiliated Bodies which were participating in the 23rd meeting of the RPC. He highlighted the role of the RPC and said that this

meeting provides an opportunity for the ECO Membership to transform a 'critical mass' of expertise and knowledge into a series of programmes and plans to be implemented in the years to come. He mentioned that the feasibility and viability of the decisions and programmes of our organization are still matters of concern which deserves careful attention by the ECO Membership and the Secretariat. He particularly mentioned that the RPC Review Committees should follow the "General Guidelines" adopted by the 21st RPC Meeting, while finalizing annual work programme which should, inter-alia, be project-based rather than meeting-based to consolidate the overlapping activities/institutions. A copy of his statement is attached at **Annex-III**.

Agenda Item No.2

Election of the Chairman

5. His Excellency Mr. Majid Bizmark, Director General for Multilateral Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of I.R. Iran was unanimously elected as the Chairman of the meeting. In his short statement, he welcomed the participants and thanked them for electing him the Chairman of the RPC. He emphasized the importance of the meeting and the need for appropriate decisions to promote economic cooperation among the member states.

Agenda Item No.3

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The Council adopted the following agenda:

1. Inauguration of the Meeting
 - Statement by the ECO Secretary General
 - Inaugural statement by the High Dignitary of the Islamic Republic of Iran
2. Election of the Chairman
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Progress Report by the Heads of the delegation on the implementation of the decisions taken during the 22nd RPC
5. Consideration of new recommendations on Programmes, Projects and Proposals to enhance economic activities in the region during the year 2013 in the following areas:
 - Trade & Investment;
 - Transport & Communications;
 - Energy, Minerals & Environment;
 - Agriculture, Industry & Tourism;
 - Projects, Economic Research & Statistics;
 - Human Resources & Sustainable Development;
 - Drugs & Organized Crime Coordination Unit;
 - Inter-Regional ECO Activities:

- i. ECO Regional Institutions/Specialized Agencies/Affiliated Bodies
 - ii. International Relations
6. Annual ECO Calendar of Events for 2013-2014
7. Any other business
8. Date and Venue of the next Meeting
9. Adoption of the Report
10. Vote of Thanks

Agenda Item No.4

Progress Report by the Heads of the delegation on the implementation of the decisions taken during the 22nd RPC

7. The heads of participating delegation from the Member States briefed the Council regarding their countries' policies and views on the programmes and activities of the Organization. They also shared the progress on the implementation of the decisions taken during the 22nd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council. Copies of their presentations/briefings are placed at **Annex-IV**.

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

9. The President of the ECO Cultural Institute as well as the Representatives of the other ECO Specialized Agencies and Institutions including ECO Trade Development Bank, ECO Science Foundation, ECO Educational Institute, ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, ECO College of Insurance, ECO Regional Center for Risk Management for Natural Disasters and ECO Regional Coordination Center for Food Security highlighted their activities and progress achieved since last RPC. Copies of their presentations/briefings are placed at **Annex-VI**.

Agenda Item No.5

Consideration of new recommendations on Programmes, Projects and Proposals to enhance economic activities in the region during the year 2013 in the following areas:

- Trade & Investment;
- Transport & Communications;
- Energy, Minerals & Environment;
- Agriculture, Industry & Tourism;
- Projects, Economic Research & Statistics;
- Human Resources & Sustainable Development;
- Drugs & Organized Crime Coordination Unit;
- Inter-Regional ECO Activities:

- i. ECO Regional Institutions/Specialized Agencies/
Affiliated Bodies
- ii. International relations

10. The sectoral preparatory/review meetings were presided over by representatives of different member states as shown below:

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|---|---|---|
| (a) Trade & Investment | - | Mr. Zeeshan Ahmad, Counsellor, Embassy of Pakistan in Tehran |
| (b) Transport & Communications | - | Mrs. Tahereh Rezapour, Director General of International Affairs, Export of Engineering & Technical Services, Ministry of Roads and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran |
| (c) Energy, Minerals & Environment | - | Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, Incharge of Regional Economic Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan |
| (d) Agriculture, Industry & Tourism | - | Mr. Selçuk Koç, Head of Department, Ministry of Development of the Republic of Turkey |
| (e) Projects, Economic Research & Statistics | - | Mr. Selçuk Koç, Head of Department, Ministry of Development of the Republic of Turkey |
| (f) Human Resources & Sustainable Development | - | Mr. Noor Ahmad Ahmadzai, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan |
| (g) Drugs & Organized Crime Coordination Unit | - | Mr. Hukum Khan Habibi, Deputy Minister for Technical Affairs, Ministry of Economy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan |
| (h) Inter Regional ECO activities: | - | Mr. Hamid Reza Anousheh, Deputy Director, ECO Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| (i) ECO Regional Institutions/
Specialized Agencies/Affiliated
Bodies | | |
| (ii) International Relations | | |

11. The Preparatory Review Committees thoroughly reviewed the Programmes, Projects and Proposals reflected in the Working Papers prepared by the ECO Secretariat in light of the decisions of 22nd RPC and 20th COM. The Council appreciated the work of the Preparatory Committees as well as the ECO Secretariat and approved the programmes, projects and Calendar of Events 2013-2014 proposed by the Review Committees. A brief resume, covering the main areas of activity, is given below:

(a) Trade & Investment

12. The Council requested the Kyrgyz Republic to announce dates for hosting the 2nd Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Corruption and Money Laundering and requested the Member States to confirm their participation in the EGM. The Council also requested the Member States, who did not do so, to convey

views/comments on the Draft Plan of Action on Combating Corruption and Money Laundering.

13. The Council thanked the Republic of Kazakhstan for proposing to host the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Economy and Finance on the sidelines of Astana Economic Forum in 2014.

14. The Council thanked the I.R. of Iran for hosting the 1st Meeting of ECO Heads of Tax Administration on January 14-15, 2013 in Tehran. The I.R. of Iran expressed its willingness to host the 1st Meeting of Experts of Tax Administration to discuss and finalize the three draft documents on tax issues as agreed by the 1st Meeting of the Heads of Tax Administration, including (1) Articles of Association of ECO Tax Administration Cooperation Society ECOTAX, (2) Limited Multilateral Agreement on Double Taxation Avoidance and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters among ECO Member States and (3) Guidelines for Multilateral Exchange of Information in Tax Matters among ECO Member States to be submitted to the 2nd Meeting of the Heads of Tax Administration for decision.

15. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to expedite the preparation of an updated/revised draft of "Limited Multilateral Agreement on Double Taxation Avoidance and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters among ECO Member States", as decided by the 1st Meeting of the ECO Heads of Tax Administration, and convey the draft to the Secretariat for circulation among the Member States.

16. The Council thanked the Republic of Azerbaijan for confirming to host a seminar on Taxpayers Services on September 10-12, 2013 in Baku. and requested the Member States to confirm their participation in the Seminar.

17. The Council thanked the I.R. of Iran for confirming to host a Seminar on Transfer Pricing on October 7-9, 2013 in accordance with the decisions of the 1st Meeting of ECO Heads of Tax Administration and requested the Member States to confirm their participation in the Seminar.

18. The Council requested the Republic of Turkey to confirm organizing the Seminar on Risk-Based Analysis Management System in accordance with the decisions of the 1st Meeting of the ECO Heads of Tax Administration and convey detailed information to the Secretariat i.e. dates, programme, basis of hospitality etc.

19. The Council acknowledging the role of the capital markets in the economies of the Member States requested the I.R. of Iran to announce the revised dates for hosting the 1st Meeting of the Heads of Capital Markets Supervisory Authorities.

20. The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for expressing its willingness to sign the Agreement on Protection and Promotion of Investment (APPI) among the Member States and requested the signatory Member States, who have not already done so, to ratify the Agreement at the earliest. The Council also urged non-signatory Member States to sign and ratify the Agreement. The Council recalled that I.R. of Iran ratified the Agreement and deposited the instrument of ratification to the ECO in June 2010.

21. Recalling the decision of the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy to set up an ECO Heads of Investment Promotion Agencies (ECO-IPA) forum on the pattern of ECO Heads of Trade Promotion Organizations, the Council requested the Member States to volunteer holding the first meeting of ECO-IPA. The Council noted the proposal of the I.R. of Iran to establish a Working Group on investment promotion to be preceded by the meeting of the ECO-IPA.

22. The Council asked the Member States to provide information to the ECO Secretariat highlighting the potential of public-private partnership in the ECO region and submit a report to the 4th ECO Investment Conference as well as Member States.

23. The Council requested the Member States to volunteer holding the 4th ECO Investment Conference in 2013.

24. The Council took note of the proposal of the I.R. of Iran for increasing cooperation between ECO Secretariat and International Organizations relating to promotion of Investment such as UNCTAD for finding an appropriate mechanism to attract greater FDI into the ECO region.

25. The Council while expressing its thanks to the Ministry of Economy of Turkey, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECOTDB) for offering to co-organize the second Seminar in June 2013 on “Doha Negotiations and Accession Process of ECO Member States to WTO” emphasized the importance of full participation of Member States in the subject seminar.

26. The Council congratulated the Republic of Tajikistan on becoming a member of WTO and agreed that seminars on accession of the Member States to WTO should be organized on regular basis. The Council requested the WTO members of ECO to volunteer hosting such seminars and asked the Secretariat to continue to seek financial and technical support from the relevant international institutions/organizations for arranging the seminars.

27. The Council also welcomed the initiative of the Secretariat to expand its cooperation with IDB, WCO and ECOTDB in WTO matters/accession process including organizing joint Seminars/Workshops for ECO Member Countries.

28. In order to assess the implications of joining the WTO for the economies of the ECO member countries, the Council welcomed the ECO-CCI proposal to hold the Workshop on WTO Accession and Its Impact on OIC Member Countries in 2013 in Tehran for the ECO National Chambers in cooperation with the IDB. Necessary coordination would be made by the ECO-CCI with ECO Secretariat and national chambers of ECO Members.

29. The Council reiterating the relevant decisions of the 18th COM and 20th RPC urged Member States not having hosted Trade Policy Review Sessions (TPRS) to host these Sessions during 2013-14.

30. The Council welcomed the I.R. of Afghanistan for signing the Articles of Agreement of ECO Trade and Development Bank (TDB) for membership on March 12, 2012 and requested Afghanistan to expedite the process of ratification of the Agreement. The Council also appreciated the Republic of Azerbaijan for signing and ratifying the Articles of Agreement of the Bank. The Council requested the aforesaid candidate Member States to complete their membership procedure and become members of the Bank in 2013. The Council also urged the other ECO Member States to commence their membership process of the Bank.

31. The Council thanked the ECO-TDB for preparing the Terms of Reference (TORs) to launch a periodic Regional Partnership Forum and requested the Bank to organize the said forum on project basis. The Council urged the Member States to encourage their relevant National Institutions/organizations to actively participate in the Forum. The TORs will be finalized in consultation with the Member States in due course.

32. The Council recalled that the Council of Ministers (COM), in its meeting held on March 19, 2009 in Tehran urged the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECOTDB) to create a Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) to assist development projects in the region and subsequently the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce/Foreign Trade held on July 13, 2011, in Kabul also recommended that the Bank may expedite establishing the TCF in close consultation with the ECO Secretariat and the Member States. The Council requested the ECOTDB to initiate action with respect to the creation of the TCF.

33. The Council thanked the UNIDO for its commitment to provide co-finance amounting to US\$ 250,000 to implement the 3rd phase of ECO-UNIDO Project on Trade Capacity Building of Member States in Standards, Metrology, Testing and Quality (SMTQ) with an estimated total budget US\$ 600,000. The Council also appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat to start implementing the 3rd phase of the Project and urged the Member States to provide technical and financial support for the implementation of the Project.

34. The Council agreed that in addition to financial support of the ECO Secretariat and UNIDO, other donors may be identified and approached to

finance the remaining amount for implementation of the projects. The Council requested the relevant Member States to consider to provide financial support to the project.

35. The Council urged the Member States to ensure regular flow of information to achieve the objectives of the Web Portal (www.tradeeco.org). Flow of information to the Web Portal is required mainly for the pages under the title of Member Countries i.e. economic indicators, regulatory regimes, policies, events, contacts/references, enquiries, trade marks, bilateral/multilateral arrangements, activities of member states in WTO, and companies forms and links.

36. The Council appreciated the project proposal prepared by the Secretariat for setting up ECO Data Base of Exporter/Importers and Manufacturers which will upgrade the existing Web Portal and requested the Member States to extend their support to the proposal. The Council further called upon Member States to expedite providing inputs for the Study on the trade related regional IT infrastructure.

37. The Council requested the Secretariat to start the 2nd Phase of the Study on Trading Patterns in the ECO Region and requested the Member States to give their full support to the Secretariat while hiring a relevant organization to carry out the study.

38. The Council requested the Member States to convey to the Secretariat the progress on implementation of the decisions taken by the 12th ECO Summit and 20th COM in the areas of Investment, Trade and Finance on priority basis.

39. The Council took note of the slow progress made in implementation of ECOTA and requested the Contracting Parties to complete all legal and procedural requirements for implementation of ECOTA by September 01, 2013, as decided by the 3rd and 4th Meetings of ECOTA Cooperation Council.

40. The Council welcomed the recommendation regarding effectiveness of ECOTA and ECO Vision 2015 made by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan during the 12th ECO Summit and reiterated its request to Tajikistan to fulfill its commitment made at various forums on signing/ratification of Annexes to ECOTA.

41. While recalling the decisions of the 3rd and 4th Meetings of ECOTA Cooperation Council, the Council noted that the Contracting Parties, namely Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey, which have submitted their Lists, may explore the possibility of implementing the trade liberalization process under ECOTA among themselves.

42. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 5th Meeting of ECOTA Cooperation Council in October 2013 and requested the I.R. of Pakistan to announce the exact dates for the Meeting.

43. In line with the decisions of the 12th ECO Summit and 20th COM, the Council requested the non-signatory Member States to consider joining the Agreement.

44. The Council thanked the ECO Secretariat for preparing a comprehensive paper containing (a) the contours of a proposed ECO multi-dimensional trade and investment strategy and (b) prospects of establishing a Free Trade Area in the region for consideration by Member States. The Council urged the Member States to volunteer hosting the 1st Meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) to discuss the content of the paper in order to prepare and finalize a Multi-dimensional Trade and Investment Strategy as well as to conduct a preliminary study on the prospects of establishing a Free Trade Area in the region under ECO Vision 2015 as decided by the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade.

45. The Council appreciated the I.R. of Iran for its willingness to hold the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade in July 2013 and requested the Member States to confirm their participation in the Meeting at appropriate level.

46. As per decision of the 12th ECO Summit and 20th COM, the Council requested the Members States to identify NTBs impeding intra-regional trade and convey measures taken by the relevant authorities on removal of NTBs, harmonization of regulations and trade facilitation.

47. Recalling the decision of 22nd RPC, the Council requested Turkey to indicate exact dates for hosting the 3rd Meeting of the Heads of ECO-TPOs in October 2013 in order to continue fruitful cooperation among the regional TPOs. The 3rd Meeting of the Heads of ECO-TPOs will also discuss the draft ECO Agreement on Joint Trade Promotion Activities, to be conveyed to the ECO Secretariat by the Republic of Turkey.

48. The Council encouraged the Member States to send specific proposals to the Secretariat to plan and execute activities under the umbrella of the ECO Project on Expanding Intra-Regional Trade.

49. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for its readiness to host 4th ECO Business Forum along with the buyers-sellers meeting in 2013 in Kabul. The Council also thanked the Republic of Azerbaijan for its readiness to host the 5th ECO Business Forum in 2014 in Baku.

50. The Council noted the postponement of the 1st Meeting of the Joint Working Group established by the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Commerce and Foreign Trade to draw up a draft ECO Trade Facilitation Agreement and requested the Republic of Turkey to announce fresh dates for hosting the Meeting.

51. Considering the significance of 7th meeting of Council of ECO Heads of Customs Administration (CHCA) for strengthening cooperation in customs matters, the Council took note of the postponement of the meeting by Pakistan and urged the country to provide fresh dates within three months of the holding of the 23rd meeting of the RPC. The Council also urged the Member States to confirm their participation accordingly in the 7th CHCA.

52. The Council requested the non-signatory Member States to sign/ratify and the signatory countries (except Pakistan and Turkey) to ratify the Agreement on the Establishment and Operation of ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank at the earliest. The Council further requested the Member States to inform the ECO Secretariat regarding their accession process within three months.

53. The Council welcomed the readiness conveyed by Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey to sign the Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters during the 7th Meeting of the ECO Council of Heads of Customs Administrations (CHCA). The Council requested the remaining Member States to convey the decision on signing the Agreement during the 7th CHCA.

54. The Council requested the Republic of Turkey to complete the ratification of Articles of Agreement of ECO Reinsurance Company at the earliest preferably in the 2nd half of 2013.

55. The Council appreciated ECO-CCI for organizing the 12th General Assembly and 17th Executive Committee meetings of ECO-CCI along with the 6th Specialized Committees Meetings (November 2012, Ankara). The Council requested the Member State to ensure active participation of their National Chambers in the events organized by the ECO-CCI including Business Forums and buyers/sellers meetings.

56. The Council called upon the ECO-CCI, to enhance its role in collaboration with the private sector of the ECO Member States and urged the Chamber to hold relevant activities for strengthening private sector cooperation in different Member States particularly in the Central Asian Member States. In this regard, the Council requested the ECO-CCI Secretariat to convey the schedule of the Business Forums, Fairs, Buyers- Sellers Meetings, Seminars and other useful trade events for strengthening private sector cooperation.

57. Recalling the decision of the 22nd RPC, the Council requested the I.R. of Pakistan to indicate exact dates for hosting the 2nd Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on E-Trade Cooperation in 2013. The Council further requested the I.R. of Iran to provide the schedule of hosting the 2nd Regional event of Trade Facilitation and e-Business (REFACT) in 2013.

(b) Transport & Communications

58. The Council asked the concerned authorities of the Kyrgyz Republic to expedite confirming the suggested dates for the 9th Ministerial Meeting, 6th Meeting of the TTCC and its auxiliary bodies Meetings. It also requested all the Member States to assure active participation in the 9th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport and its SOM Meeting, scheduled for 12-13 September 2013 in the Issyk Kul, the Kyrgyz Republic.

59. The Member States were requested to actively participate in the following Meetings of the TTCC and its auxiliary bodies to be held back to back with the Ministerial Meeting: The 6th Meeting of the TTCC (11 September), the 4th Meeting of the Customs Transit Committee (10 September), and the 6th Meeting of the Road Committee (09 September). The Meetings of the TTCC and its auxiliary bodies will be fully covered by the TTFA Fund and SSF.

60. The Meeting requested Turkmenistan to expedite ratification of the TTFA. It also invited Uzbekistan to expedite signing and ratifying the Agreement.

61. The Council noted with satisfaction the successful organization of the training course on the ECO White Card in Tehran on 18-21 November 2012. It asked the Secretariat to continue organizing such training courses and regional and national capacity building workshops on the White Card. The interested Member States were requested to offer organizing such courses. They were also requested to expedite launching the White Card in line with the decisions of the 4th Meeting of the Insurance Committee/3rd Meeting of the White Card CB, hosted by Central Insurance of Iran in Tehran on 21 November 2012.

62. The Council requested the Kyrgyz Republic to confirm for hosting and specify the exact dates for the 5th Meeting of the Insurance Committee/ 4th Meeting of ECO-CB. The Meeting will be covered by the TTFA and SSF.

63. Appreciating the Secretariat for preparing a comprehensive report on the White Card, the Council requested the interested Member States to provide their comments and views on the report by 30th June 2013. If no comments and views are received within the given deadline, the report would be considered as approved and the Secretariat would publish it through utilizing the funds from the ECO/IDB Project or other available sources.

64. The Secretariat was asked to follow up the issue of establishing the Financial Guarantees for the White Card Scheme as envisaged in Annex II of the Scheme, with the cooperation of the ECO Member States and interested regional and international institutions.

65. The Council requested the Member States enroute the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI) road corridor to expedite carrying out the

activities specified in the Action Plan for implementation of the White Card along this corridor as adopted by the 3rd Meeting of the Insurance Committee of the TTCC (Islamabad, 18th April 2012). It also requested the countries enroute the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) to expedite carrying out the activities specified in the records of the informal Meeting of the representatives of the national bureaux of the enroute member states (Tehran 21st November 2012).

66. The Council requested the Member States to actively participate in the 12th Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities/6th Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC, scheduled to be held in Tehran in January 2014. The Meeting will be covered by the TTFA Fund and SSF. Joint workshops with relevant international organizations, notably, UNECE, UIC and COTIF, may be organized on the sidelines of the Meeting.

67. The Islamic Republic of Iran was requested to expedite providing their proposed amendments in Annex III of the TTFA (technical parameters related to railway operations) by 31st May 2013 for circulation to the Member States.

68. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to provide their training needs to the Republic of Turkey in the field of railways. The Council appreciated the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the training course to Afghan railway staff to be held in Mashad. As nomination is still awaited from Afghan, the dates and programme and the details of hospitality for the course will be specified in due course.

69. The Meeting requested the Member States to convey to the ECO Secretariat the latest revisions in the ECO Railway Transit Routes Map and the ECO Road Transit Routes Map in their respective territories. This would enable the Secretariat to update the maps by the end of this year as per decisions of the 8th Meeting of the ECO Ministers of Transport.

70. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the accession of Azerbaijan and Pakistan to the COTIF is at final stages.

71. The Meeting requested the enroute countries and the ECO Secretariat to expedite the analysis for extending high speed passenger trains between Turkey and Iran in line with the decisions of the 11th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Railway. The Meeting took note of the information provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran for commencement of a new project for construction of parallel railway line from Tehran to Miyaneh and double track from Miyaneh to Tabriz (which will shorten the distance upto 100 km). This railway line will be extended to Bazargan Border with Turkey to connect to Turkish railway network. The Islamic Republic of Iran proposed to conduct a field visit in June 2013 of the enroute countries, the ECO Secretariat and ECCI would also participate in this field visit. The Republic of Turkey also briefed the Meeting about its high speed train projects.

72. The Council recommended the Secretariat and ECO Member States to actively participate in 5th and 6th Sessions of UNECE Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law in Geneva (4-5 July 2013 and 5-6 December 2013) and expedite implementing other recommendations of the ECO/UNECE Joint Workshop on Unified Railway Law (Ankara, June 2012).

73. The ECO Secretariat and UIC were requested to take concrete measures for implementing the activities envisaged in the Action Plan signed between the ECO and the UIC in June 2012.

74. The Council requested ECO-CCI to assist in organizing capacity building activities for modernizing border crossing points in the Member States.

75. The 3rd ECO-IRU Regional Conference on TIR Convention will be held on 8-9 October, 2013 in Tehran. The Secretariat and IRU will take measures to facilitate the participation of the stakeholders involved in customs transit and transport operations of the ECO Member States in this Conference. The Conference will be sponsored by the IRU and partially covered by the TTFA Fund.

76. The Member States, ECO Secretariat and ECO-CCI were requested to actively participate in the workshop on ADR, Modernization of Border Crossing Points and digital tachograph system, which will be held in Ankara in November 2013. The Meeting will be partially covered (airfare and translation facility) by the TTFA Fund and SS Fund. Local hospitality will be provided by the host authorities of the Republic of Turkey. The ECO-CCI was also invited to participate in the workshop non-hospitality basis.

77. The Council noted with satisfaction that the Republic of Turkey have been complementing its modernization projects under a “build-operate-transfer” model in collaboration with private sector. The Republic of Turkey also informed the Council that a new agreement was signed with the private sector for a group of new projects relating to border modernization whose total investment amounts 140 million US\$ and with such a model all the Government office and commercial facilities will be done by the private sector.

78. The Meeting requested the Member States and the Secretariat to actively participate in the 7th IRU Euro Asian Road Transport Conference, scheduled for 12-13 June 2013 in Amman.

79. The Member States and the Secretariat were requested to actively participate in the ECO Contact Group and the sessions of the UNECE WP.30 and AC.2 in Geneva. The Republic of Azerbaijan, as the current chair of COM, and the Secretariat would make all necessary arrangements for organizing the Meeting. The Secretariat will communicate to the Republic of Azerbaijan to follow up the issues.

80. The Council requested Pakistan to expedite specifying the dates and venue of the National TIR Capacity Building Workshop, to be organized jointly by the ECO Secretariat and IRU. The Workshop will be covered by the TTFA Fund. Pakistan would also expedite nominating the trainees for the Training Course on TIR System, to be organized by the Republic of Turkey on 20-23 May in Ankara for the relevant institutions from Pakistan.

81. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the Islamic Republic of Iran has proceeded with modernization of its border points with the following Member States: a) Establishment of Common Customs gates, b) Installation of X-ray Scanners on the Bazargan, Astara and Dogharoon border crossings, c) Installation of passenger X-ray scanners on Bozargan, Jolfa, Astara, Dogharoon and Mirjaveh border points, d) All Customs procedures are modernized (and are being handled electronically), e) All relevant border authorities are integrated in single hall to facilitate passage of cargo and passengers, f) The working hours of border crossings are being extended to shorten the waiting of the cargo and passengers.

82. The Council noted with satisfaction the progress achieved by Kazakhstan in decreasing administrative barriers, namely, electronic issuance of licenses to carry out carriage of passengers and dangerous goods.

83. The Council expressed satisfaction that the TIR system is expected to be reactivated in Afghanistan at the end of 2013. The Council recommended that instead of planning for the 2nd test run, the Secretariat and IRU should organize, after reactivation of the TIR, actual run of the Afghan trucks, in close cooperation with Afghan authorities.

84. The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the re-activization of the TIR system in Afghanistan and expressed readiness to accept Afghan trucks under TIR Convention.

85. The Meeting recommended the CPR to allocate from FGPF an amount of US\$ 50,000 for development of three corridors, namely Pakistan-Iran-Turkmenistan, Pakistan (Chitral)-Afghanistan-Tajikistan, and Pakistan (Torkham)-Afghanistan-Tajikistan-the Kyrgyz Republic. Pakistan would provide a detailed proposal on the project for circulation among the Member States. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan will provide their comments and views through diplomatic channel.

86. The Council noted with satisfaction that the activities of the Railway, Road and Insurance Components of the ECO/IDB Joint Project on the TTFA have been successfully completed. It asked the Secretariat to organize the wrap-up meeting of the Project in the second half of 2013 in the ECO region. The Meeting will be covered by the TTFA Fund and the ECO/IDB Joint Project budget.

87. The Council asked the ECO and IDB to expedite commencing the study of customs transit component of the said project or as a second phase of it according to the mutually agreed procedures with the IDB. According to the IDB's working rules, the study may be undertaken through UNCTAD or through experts recommended by UNCTAD or other relevant international organizations. The results of this project will be reported to the Council of Heads of Customs Administration, the TTCC and others relevant Meetings.

88. In line with decision of 20th COM, the Council requested the ECO-TDB to expedite preparing the draft TOR for the "Regional Partnership Forum for Implementation of the ECO Railway Network Development Plan" and circulate to the Member States and suggest dates for the Meeting. The Council also requested all relevant national, regional and international organizations and funding institutions, including IDB and WB to finance the projects envisaged in the plan.

89. The Council noted with satisfaction that the draft ECO Road Network Development Plan has also been circulated in February 2013. The Council requested the Member States to provide their comments and views on the draft plan by the end of July 2013. The Secretariat would then revise and re-circulate the document. The final plan would be included in the mandate of the abovementioned regional partnership forum.

90. The Council recommended that the donor conference and inter-agency meetings in the context of the trilateral MoUs among ECO-IDB/UNEESCAP and ECO/IDB-UNECE would be organized in the 2nd half of 2013. The dates and venue of the Conference would be specified jointly by the Secretariat and the aforementioned institutions. The Council asked the Secretariat and IDB to hold a joint meeting in Jeddah in the second half of 2013, in order to make the required arrangements. The OIC Secretariat may also be invited to this Inter-Agency Meeting.

91. The Council recommended the CPR to allocate USD 50,000 to the TTFA Fund for financing feasibility studies and other activities related to effective implementation and monitoring of the ECO Railway Network Development Plan and the ECO Road Network Development Plan.

92. The Council requested the enroute Member States of the ITI Container Train to take urgent actions to resume the freight services along this route, in line with the agreements reached in the meetings of the Heads of the Railway Authorities of the enroute Member States (Ankara, June 2012). The 8th Meeting of HLWG of this train will be held in Tehran on 10-12 September or 5-7 November 2013. Airfare will be covered from the ITI project budget. The Council requested ECO-CCI to share information on their efforts for marketing development on this route.

93. The Council asked IDB to expedite consideration of the projects for upgrading the Quetta-Taftan Segment (Pakistan) and sand dune fixation in Kerman-Zahedan segment (Iran). The ECO-TDB was requested to expedite their response to finance the feasibility for realignment of track between Sibi-Quetta.

94. The Council requested the countries enroute the ECO Container Train on Bandar Abbas-Almaty route to expedite the efforts for cargo mobilization to start regular operation of the said train. It requested the enroute Member States to remove the existing obstacles to regular operation of the ECO Container Train on Istanbul-Almaty route. The next Meeting of HLWG of the ECO Container Train on Istanbul-Almaty and the HLWG Meeting on Bandar Abbas Almaty will be held on 10-12 September or 5-7 November 2013 in Tehran respectively. Local hospitality will be provided by the host authorities. Airfare will be covered from the Feasibility Project of the said Trains and SSF.

95. The Council noted with satisfaction that the feasibility study on construction of the Tajikistan segment of the Kyrgyz Republic–Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran Railway (KTAI) has already achieved more than 50 percent progress and also out of the four phases, two phases of sub-structure in Iran (Sanghan) and one phase of substructure in Afghanistan (Herat) has been constructed by contributions from the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Council noted the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran for technical support on the feasibility study to Kyrgyz Republic. The Council requested the enroute Member State and the international institutions to provide financial support to undertake the feasibility study in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic as well.

96. The Council asked the concerned authorities of the Republic of Tajikistan to expedite specifying exact dates for Senior Officials' meeting and Ministerial meeting of Railway project connecting China to Europe through the Kyrgyz Republic-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran during the second half of 2013 in Dushanbe. Local hospitality will be provided by the host authorities.

97. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the construction work of the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran has been completed in Iran and Kazakhstan and partially in Turkmenistan. The Meeting requested the Member States and the Secretariat to participate in the inauguration ceremonies of the Iranian segment (to be announced) and the Kazakhstan segment (11th May 2013). The 3rd Meeting of the Trilateral Coordination Committee of this railway project will be held between 10-12 September or 5-7 November 2013 in Tehran back to back with the Meeting of Bandar Abbas-Almaty. Local hospitality will be provided by the host authorities. The Meeting asked the Secretariat to plan the test run on this route and also finalizes all the formalities before completion of the project. The 1st Meeting of the HLWG may be conveyed in 2013. The Secretariat will also be invited the for inauguration ceremonies.

98. The Council was informed by the Kazakhstan about the construction of new railway line Zhezkazgan-Beyneu (988 km) which enables to create new

Trans Kazakhstan rail connection from border of China to Aktau International Port. This project is the basis for launching Silk Wind Project for multi-model transport by signing quadrilateral MoU between Kazakhstan-Azerbaijan-Georgia and Turkey.

99. The Council satisfied to note that 80% progress in substructure construction on Qazvin-Rasht segment of the Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) Railway has been achieved and the detail design of Rasht-Astara has already been concluded and the contractor is procured. It requested Azerbaijan and Iran to provide regular report on the progress of works in the remaining segments. The HLWGM of this Project will be hosted by the Republic of Azerbaijan in Baku on 22nd May 2013. A field visit of the delegations of Iran and Azerbaijan together with the ECO Secretariat to the segment in the territory of Iran would be organized before the said Meeting. The Secretariat would organize the field visit in coordination with the enroute Member States. The field visit would be hosted by Iran.

100. The Council expressed with satisfaction that the draft final report of the ECO Project for Regular Monitoring of Truck in partnership with IRU has been prepared and is being circulated by the Secretariat in May 2013. The Council requested the Member States to provide their comments and views on the circulated draft report by the end of June 2013. The Secretariat will circulate the final version of the report by incorporating the comments and views received from the Member States.

101. The findings of the ECORMT study and arrangements to follow up this project will be included in the agenda of the relevant committees of the TTCC, the Ministerial Meeting and the 3rd ECO Regional Conference on TIR (scheduled for 8-10 October 2013).

102. The Council urged the enroute Member States to expedite implementing the Action Plan of ITI Road Corridor agreed in Islamabad, and the Joint Statement of ITI Road Corridor signed among the Customs Administration of enroute countries on the occasion of 6th International Forum on the Role of Custom Administrations on Facilitating and Promoting trade among the Silk Road Countries (Istanbul, 29-30 October 2012). It was noted that three options were suggested in parallel to set up a transit system applicable along the said corridor, namely a) accession of Pakistan to the TIR Convention, b) implementing a Pilot TIR Project to apply the TIR on provisional basis, subject to consultative opinion of the UNECE's relevant organs, and c) signing a trilateral agreement proposed by the Republic of Turkey based on the principles of the TIR.

103. As regards the first option, the Council requested Pakistan to expedite the accession process to the TIR. The Council asked the ECO to expedite obtaining the consultative opinion of the UNECE. As regards the third option, the Council requested the enroute member states to expedite providing their comments and views on the draft agreement proposed by Turkey. The Council recommended

rescheduling the date of the 3rd HLWGM on this Corridor proposed to be held in Ankara on 4-5 June to a date after the meeting of the relevant organ of the UNECE, which will be held on 10-14 June 2013 in Geneva. The Republic of Turkey will consider for rescheduling of the Meeting and will convey in due course to the Secretariat. The communication has been made with UNECE to obtain their consultative opinion on the suggestion made by the Secretariat.

104. The Council asked the ECO Secretariat to prepare the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the International and National Consultants and start the study for the ITI Road Corridor as soon as the transit system of the corridor is finalized.

105. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Council that they will provide the layout and other necessary information on the logistic centre planned for construction at the Iran-Pakistan border. The proposal would be further elaborated by the Road Committee of the TTCC.

106. The Republic of Turkey informed the Council on the International Forum on the Role of Custom Administrations on Facilitating and Promoting trade among the Silk Road Countries., and called all the Member States to support and actively participate in the said Forum, which includes all the ECO member States.

107. The Council requested the enroute Member States of Kyrgyz-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran Road Transport (KTAI) Corridor to expedite implementing the Action Plan signed during the 1st HLWG Meeting of the enroute countries (Herat, 2012). It requested the enroute countries to expedite nominating the National Focal Points.

108. The Meeting noted with satisfaction that the construction of the missing link between Herat-Mazar-e-Sharif along the ECO KTAI Road Corridor has already achieved 45percent progress and work will be completed by the end of 2013.

109. The enroute Member States were requested to offer hosting the 2nd Meeting of the HLWG of the KTAI Corridor in 2013. The enroute Member States were requested to assure active participation of the representatives of the relevant public and private sectors (transport, customs, insurance) in the Meeting. The airfare to participants of the public sector from Member States will be provided to the participants from the project fund. The ECO Secretariat was asked to convene the Meeting at the ECO Secretariat utilizing the project budget in case there was no offer received from the enroute member states by the end of July 2013, the meeting will be held at the ECO Secretariat.

110. The Islamic Republic of Iran informed the meeting about progress made so far in the issuance of ECO VISA Sticker and the modalities for implementation. Iran also informed that the issue was discussed informally with

the consular officials of the ECO Member States in Tehran. The Council took note of the efforts of Iran and asked them to provide the ECO Secretariat with revised version of ECO Visa Sticker and draft proposal to implement ECO Driver Visa. The Council took note of this information and also requested Iran to discuss further the proposal with the Embassies in Tehran and prepare the agenda for the ECO senior consular officials meeting which is due to be held in Tehran on 28-29 September 2013. The Local hospitality will be provided by the host authorities. The said Meeting will also be partially covered by the TTFA Fund and SS Fund.

111. The Council noted with satisfaction that the 20th COM (Baku, October 2012) approved the establishment of the ECO Logistics Providers Associations Federation (ECOLPAF) as an affiliated body of ECO and its Charter.

112. Since six countries namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Republic of Uzbekistan have already submitted documents for registration of the ECOLPAF in Istanbul, the Council asked UTIKAD to start the process of registering the ECOLPAF. Meanwhile the interested national freight forwarder associations of the remaining interested Member States were requested to expedite conveying the requisite documents. Pakistan's national association was asked to hold the 1st General Assembly of ECOLPAF in Karachi on a date between 10-15 October, 2013. Local hospitality and airfare of the participants of the 1st General Assembly will be provided by the host association.

113. The Council requested the Member States to expedite conveying their comments and views regarding the draft agreement proposed by the Republic of Turkey for establishment of a Working Group on Civil Aviation, as well as the proposal to convene training courses and workshops in this field. The Member States were requested to provide their views and comments till end of June 2013 and organization of the 1st Meeting of the said Working Group will be decided after receiving the views and comments. Local hospitality will be provided by the host authorities.

114. The Council requested Iran to expedite providing the Action Plan for activating the ECO zone in Chabahar. It also requested the landlocked Member States to expedite conveying their specific needs and proposals for utilizing the facilities of the ECO Zone.

115. The Council asked the Secretariat to keep contacts with the UNOHRLs and ASEAN on the proposed joint studies on two selected ports from ECO Transit Member States.

116. The Council took note the construction of the new international sea trade port in Azerbaijan and completion of the Baku-Kars railway line which would connect Azerbaijan railways with Turkish railways.

117. Subject to completion of the abovementioned seaport, the Council asked the Republic of Azerbaijan to consider hosting the 5th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Reference Marine Organizations in 2014 or 2015.

118. The Council requested the Member States to sign the SOP for online money order by circulation or in the meeting of the concerned authorities. If there was no volunteer to host the meeting, it would be held at the ECO Secretariat on non-hospitalities basis. The airfare will be covered from SS Fund.

119. The Council requested the Republic of Kazakhstan to expedite organizing the 6th Meeting of Postal Authorities. The Secretariat was asked to consider holding the Meeting at the Secretariat in case Kazakhstan or other Member States were not ready to host the meeting. The Meeting will be covered by the SSF.

120. Expressing satisfaction on the approval of the Pakistan Postal Staff College, Islamabad as ECO Postal Staff College and its Statute by the 20th COM. The Council hoped that the College will start offering courses at the earliest. The Council also recommended the Member States to support designing and implementing training courses by the ECO Postal College. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey were requested to provide further details on their proposed technical support to the ECO Postal College. The Council noted the offer of the Iranian postal authorities to provide short courses to the Member States in this field. The Council also asked the ECO Postal College to organize workshop and training courses in other Member States. The Member States were recommended to offer their plans for conducting short term and long term training courses for postal staff.

121. The Council recommended the Secretariat to approach CPR for allocation of US\$ 30,000 from the FSGP Fund for the feasibility study to identify the needs for development of infrastructure connectivity and services in the region. The Secretariat was asked to expedite preparing the draft project proposal.

122. The Council requested the Member States to cooperate on E-Government, E-Commerce, E-Banking, Mobile Banking, E-Health, and E-Education, transition from IP-v.4 to IP-v.6 technologies, development of ICT infrastructure and services and cooperation in the area of ICT Security and Combating Cyber Crimes.

123. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 1st Meeting of the High Level Working Group of ICT Communication Regulatory Authorities in the second week of June 2014. The airfare and local hospitality for 1+1 will be extended to the Member States by the host authorities. The Member States may also expedite nominating their National Focal Points on ICT Services.

124. The Council also welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on ECO ICT Security and Cyber Crime in November 2013. The airfare and local hospitality for 1+1 will be extended to the Member States by the host authorities. The venue of the Meeting will be communicated to the Secretariat in due course.

125. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 1st Preparatory Meeting for establishment of ECO ICT Providers Association of the private Sector in October 2013. The Islamic Republic of Iran will provide detailed proposal for circulation to the Member States.

126. The Council took note of the briefing by the delegation of Iran regarding availability of fiber optics connectivity with neighboring ECO Member States except Pakistan.

127. It was noted that efforts to establish the connection between Iran and Pakistan are ongoing. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in accordance with the decision of the 1st ICT Ministerial Meeting, have installed a STM64 fibre optic line on the Mirjaveh border point with Pakistan and requested the latter to connect their network to the said line.

128. The Council requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to provide the dates, venue and the details of hospitality for the second ICT Ministerial Meeting and the Exhibition on ICT hardware and software products.

129. In line with the decisions of the 1st ICT Ministerial Meeting, the Council asked the Secretariat to expedite collecting the requisite proposals from the relevant member states for establishing the ECO Mobile Operators Association, transfer of technology and expertise in design, operation and maintenance, setting up the database of hardware and software manufacturers, feasibility study on development of the common ECO telecom satellite, establishment of the ECO ICT Association for the private sector and ECO ICT Scientific Network, and establishment of the ECO ICT Digital Library and the ECO ICT Virtual University.

(c) Energy, Minerals & Environment

• Energy

130. The Council appreciated Iran for hosting the 3rd Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum on 4-6 March 2013 in Tehran and took note of the decision of the Ministerial Meeting on the adoption of its Report and Tehran Declaration. The Council requested the Member States for active implementation of the decisions of the Report and the Declaration. The Council also welcomed the offer of Turkey to host the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum in 2015 in Turkey.

131. While appreciating Turkey for hosting the 2nd High Level Expert Group (HLEG) Meeting on Energy on 24-25 September 2012 in Ankara, the Council

welcomed the offer of Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 3rd HLEG Meeting on Energy in the first half of 2014.

132. The Council appreciated Turkey for hosting 12th International Training Course for Energy Managers on 1-12 October, 2012 in Ankara, and expressed the hope that Turkey as well as other Member States will continue holding such Training Courses.

133. The Council welcomed the readiness of Azerbaijan to host the 2nd Meeting of the ECO Expert Group on Renewable Sources of Energy (RSE) and 4th Workshop on RSE in 2013 in Baku, Azerbaijan, exact date of which will be communicated by the end of May 2013. The Council requested the Secretariat to remind the Member States to fill the Questionnaire/Country Report preferably before the next RSE Meeting as decided in Tehran Meeting, October 2011.

134. The Council requested the Member States to accelerate nomination of their National Focal Points on RSE (except Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan and Turkey) in accordance with the decisions of the Report of the 1st Meeting of the ECO Experts Group on RSE (October, 2011, Tehran).

135. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting a Workshop on "Natural Gas and Petroleum Supply Security" on 19-20 November 2012 in Tehran-Asaluyeh. The Council requested Azerbaijan to intimate the Secretariat about date, venue and hospitality details of a Workshop on "Oil and Gas drilling" in 2013.

136. The Council recommended the Secretariat to continue seeking fund from the international financial institutions for rehabilitation of the Project on Interconnection of the ECO Countries Power Systems, since it was revealed at the 11th ECO Summit Meeting and 19th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (Istanbul, December, 2010), as well as 3rd Ministerial Meeting on Energy/Petroleum (Tehran, 6 March 2013) showing vast interest of the Member countries in this Project. The Council also recommended the Secretariat to continue its contact and communication with the international donors/financial institutions on pursuing the regional energy/electricity trade issues.

137. Taking into account the importance of cooperation and exchange of knowledge, experiences among the Member States in the field of Clean Coal Technology, the Council requested the Member States to consider hosting relevant events in 2013/2014 and inform the Secretariat, accordingly.

138. The Council welcomed the offer of Iran for conducting first training course "An Introduction to Drilling Engineering/Operation" at the "Iranian Oil and Gas Training Centre" on 28-29 May 2013 in Tehran. The Council also appreciated Iran for conducting other training courses in the second half of 2013 in Iran, and requested all Member States to take active part in the proposed courses. The Council requested the Member States (except Turkey) to expedite providing the

Secretariat with their views/comments on establishment of *Oil and Gas Training Centre for ECO* in Iran, at the earliest possible. The Council emphasized that establishment of any regional centre under umbrella of ECO is subject to the approval of the ECO competent body.

139. The Council appreciated Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey for updating/nominating of their National Focal Points (NFPs) on Energy/Petroleum and urged the rest of the Member States to expedite the same.

140. The Council recommended the Secretariat to consider further collaboration with UNESCAP and other Members of Inter-regional Working Group on Power Trade and Interconnection led by UNESCAP and ECO, and convene 1st Meeting of the Working Group sometime in 2013/14.

141. The Council emphasized the importance of formation of ECO Regional Electricity Market and in this regard, requested the interested Member States to organize relevant events in order to realize this idea.

142. The Council requested Iran to provide the Secretariat with the Report on the pre-feasibility study on the new mechanism for enhancement of ECO energy cooperation prepared by the Institute for International Energy Studies (IIES) of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and requested the Secretariat to circulate this Report to Member States for their view/comments. The Council also took note of the proposal of IIES for publishing of an "Annual ECO Energy Statistics Report".

143. The Council welcomed the offer of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI) to host the "1st Meeting of the ECO Public and Private Sector Energy/Petrochemical Consortium/Companies" in 2013/2014, exact date, venue of the event will be coordinated in consultation with the ECO Secretariat.

- **Minerals**

144. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 5th ECO Mineral Experts Group Meeting in 2014 in Iran and requested Iran to intimate to the Secretariat details of the said event in time, as well as requested the Member States to take active part in this Meeting.

145. The Council requested the interested Member States to consider hosting the 2nd Meeting of ECO Head of Surveying and Mapping Organizations sometime in 2013/2014 and inform the Secretariat, accordingly.

146. The Council appreciated Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for introducing their NFPs on "ECO Geomatics Committee" and Working Group on "ECO Economic Atlas", and urged the remaining Member States to do the same. The Council also requested interested Member States to consider hosting the events on above topics sometime in 2013/2014.

147. The Council was informed that the draft Terms of Reference on ECO Geomatics Committee and headlines of Economic Atlas prepared by National Cartographic Centre (NCC) of Iran and requested the NCC of Iran to provide the said draft to the Secretariat, in order to be circulated to the Member States for their views/comments.

148. The Council appreciated Azerbaijan, Tajikistan and Turkey for conveying their views on Mineral Distribution Map (MDM) of ECO region, which have been circulated to the Member States in July 2012, and requested the other Member States to provide the Secretariat with their views, to be conveyed to the Project Manager Country (Iran).

149. The Council welcomed the offer of Iran to host the ECO Mining and Geosciences Conference in 2014 in Tehran and requested the concerned Iranian authorities to intimate to the Secretariat details of the said event in time.

150. The Council urged Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to nominate/update their National Focal Points (NFPs) on Minerals.

151. The Council appreciated Kyrgyzstan and Turkey for their interest and readiness to be involved in the Project on "ECO Seismic Hazard Reduction Programme". The Council requested Iran to communicate with the Secretariat to bring this issue into Agenda of one of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) Meeting and follow getting an approval for partial financing of this Project from the ECO Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FGPF).

- **Environment**

152. The Council requested the Member States, to introduce/update regularly the information on their National Focal Points (NFPs) on Environment and Biodiversity, giving all relevant particulars, including Name, Position, Tel, Fax, and particularly E-mail addresses.

153. The Council appreciated Afghanistan and Turkey for providing their National Progress Report (NPR) on Environment for 2012 and Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey for providing their NPR for 2011. The Council also requested the other Member States to do the same at the earliest based on the format, which was prepared by the Islamic Republic of Iran and submitted to the Member States. The Council requested the Secretariat to provide a consolidated report on Environment based on the NPRs received from the ECO Member States.

154. The Council thanked Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey which have confirmed/updated the particulars of their officials for the E-mail Group and urged the other Member States to provide the particulars as well as the contact details of their officials for the e-mail group. Those countries, which nominated their focal

points, are strongly requested to follow the instruction of the concerned Turkish authorities for providing input and sharing relevant environmental information. The concerned authorities of the Republic of Turkey are also requested to keep this Secretariat abreast of progress in operating the E-mail Group.

155. The Council appreciated 4 Member States (Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan and Turkey) for assigning their Focal Points to the trans-boundary protected areas network establishment and requested other Member States to introduce their Experts-Focal Points for the establishment of the mentioned network at the earliest. The Council while urging all Member States to cooperate actively with the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO IEST) in this regard, requested the ECO IEST to keep this Secretariat abreast of progress in operating the said network.

156. The Council appreciated the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO IEST), Ramsar Regional Center in Central and West Asia (RRC-CWA), UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Center (UNEP-WCMC) and the Government of Norway for organizing two back to back events namely Workshop on “Ecosystem Management of Wetlands” and “Regional Meeting on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services” in Ramsar city, Iran in February 2013. The Council asked the ECO IEST authorities to provide the ECO Secretariat with the Report of the mentioned events at the earliest in order to enable the Secretariat to circulate it to the Member States. The Council also requested Kazakhstan as a coordinating country on Biodiversity to play more active role in this issue.

157. The Council was informed that the ECO Bulletin on Environment was included as a part of issue of the ECO Chronicle-The News Magazine of Economic Cooperation Organization- and thanked Iran for providing the material for the 5th issue of the mentioned Magazine. The Council requested all Member States to take active part in preparation and publication of the next issues of Bulletin and forward their relevant materials/articles to the Secretariat on regular basis.

158. The Council while appreciating Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, and Turkey which have nominated their Focal Points for the Feasibility Study on “Development and Harmonization of Environmental Standards in ECO Region”, urged the other Member States to designate their Experts-Focal Points for the above mentioned project. The Council requested all Member States to cooperate actively with the Project Manager (Iran) in implementation of this Feasibility Study. The Council also thanked the Project Manager for providing the ECO Secretariat with the draft report of the phase one of that Feasibility Study and requested all Member States to convey their views/comments on the aforementioned draft report to the ECO Secretariat.

159. The Council requested the concerned authorities of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to finalize arrangements for venue and dates of the Biodiversity Meetings and intimate to the Secretariat.

160. The Council requested the interested Member States and the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO IEST) to consider hosting the 6th Working Group Meeting on Environment (WGME) and Experts Meeting on Climate Change and Biodiversity with the assistance of the ECO Secretariat.

161. The Council while taking into account the financial contribution of ECO Secretariat an amount of US \$ 50,000/-, requested Iranian authorities to inform the Secretariat about procedure of getting their contribution (US \$ 100,000) for the Project Profile for implementation of the Framework Plan of Action on Environment Cooperation and Global Warming (2011-2015) and requested other Member States to consider contributing the rest of required amount (US \$ 100,000). The Council also requested the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO IEST) to cooperate with the Secretariat for implementation of this project.

162. The Council requested the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO IEST) to cooperate with the Secretariat in preparation of a Project proposal relating to combat desertification with a special emphasis on dust haze and sand storm in the region. The Council also requested all Member States to contribute to the mentioned proposal with their possible technical and financial assistance.

163. The Council requested ECO Member States to inform the Secretariat on the statues of their membership to the international and regional Environmental conventions.

164. The Council requested Member States to consider holding the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment and inform the Secretariat about the time and venue of the mentioned Meeting.

165. The Council appreciated the activity report of the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO IEST) and recommended to change the status of the ECO IEST as an ECO affiliated institute, subject to the approval of the ECO decision making bodies.

(d) Agriculture, Industry & Tourism

• Agriculture

166. The Council appreciated with thanks the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 5th Ministerial and 4th Senior Officials Meetings (SOM) on Agriculture on 13-15 November, 2012 in Antalya, Turkey.

167. The Council also appreciated the Republic of Turkey for organizing the 2nd Donors' Conference for mobilizing financial resources for implementation of

projects within the framework of the RPFS on the sidelines of 5th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture on 14 November, 2012 in Antalya, Turkey.

168. The Council welcomed the inauguration of the ECO Regional Coordination Centre (ECO-RCC) in Ankara, Turkey during the 5th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture. The Council requested the Member States to designate their national focal points for effective implementation of the RPFS and support the activities of the ECO-RCC. The Council received with appreciation the oral report by the RCC Coordinator on the latest development of the Centre and the ways and means to involve the Member States in the work of RCC. The Secretariat was accordingly mandated by the Council to facilitate and institutionalize ECO interested Member States involvement in the work of the RCC.

169. The Council requested the Member States to prepare project proposals on food security and convey them to ECO-RCC.

170. The Council welcomed the offer of Republic of Turkey to organize the 1st Steering Committee Meeting of the ECO-RCC on 24-25 June 2013, in Ankara, Turkey, and requested the Member States to actively participate in the Meeting.

171. The Council thanked the Republic of Turkey for their financial support on the implementation of RPFS and decided that the other Member States shall also inform the ways and dimensions of their contribution and financial/technical assistance for implementation of the said program through the ECO Secretariat.

172. The Council requested the Secretariat and Turkey as coordinating country for the implementation of the RPFS to arrange joint missions to donor/funding institutions to pave the way for their active participation and contribution to the implementation of the RPFS. Information regarding such missions may be circulated through the ECO Secretariat well in advance so that other interested Member States may also join the mission.

173. The Council appreciated the inclusion of the implementation of the ECO-RPFS in the agenda of the meeting of the ECO Ministers of Finance/Economy as decided by the 21st Regional Planning Council (RPC) Meeting held on 17 – 19 May, 2011 in Tehran.

174. The Council appreciated with thanks ECO, FAO and ICARDA for preparation of the following concept projects, which have been sent to FAO for finalization and submission to IDB and other Donor Institutions for financial assistance:

- a) Coordinated Research on Wheat Improvement;
- b) Participatory Management of Rangelands to improve Food Security and Sustain the Natural Research Base in Central Asia;

- c) Establishment of Genebank and Network for Coordinated Efforts among ECO Countries for Efficient Conservation and Sustainable Use of Plant Genetic Resources;
- d) Integrated Pest Management of Sunn Pest in West and Central Asia;

175. The Council welcomed the proposal of two projects for the ECO Region by the New Zealand Government through their Embassy in Tehran; on “Ensuring Supply and Security of Genetically Pure Pre-basic Seed for Improved Food Security”; and “Sustainable Sheep Production Improvement in the ECO Region”, which were sent to FAO for finalization and submission to IDB and other possible donor institutions for financial support besides New Zealand Government.

176. The Council also welcomed the planned official visit to the IDB Headquarters by representatives from ECO, FAO/FAO-SEC and ICARDA to discuss/finalize the financial matters regarding the above-mentioned projects in 2013. Information regarding this mission may be circulated through the ECO Secretariat well in advance so that other interested Member States may also join the missions.

177. The Council appreciated the two prepared projects on “The Establishment of ECO-RCC” and “Trans-boundary Animal Diseases”, which are approved with the budgets of USD 500,000 and USD 200,000 respectively by the Republic of Turkey, and requested other Member States to prepare project proposals to be submitted to the 1st Steering Committee Meeting of the ECO RCC scheduled to be held on 24-25 June, 2013 in Ankara. The Republic of Turkey is requested to convey further details about the project.

178. The Council appreciated with thanks the preparation of a Regional Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Project by FAO in cooperation with the ECO Secretariat for seeking financial assistance from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) for updating/reformulating the ECO Regional Programme for Food Security (ECO-RPFS) and converting it to a regional Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Project Proposal for submission to World Bank. The Secretariat is expected to circulate further details about this project proposal. The final proposal may also be circulated for comments and views of the Member States before submission to the World Bank.

179. The Council while thanking the Republic of Azerbaijan for submission the project proposal titled: “Development application and dissemination of advanced irrigation and cultivation technology that increase productivity of olive gardens” to be used as application for seeking financial support from the GAFSP, requested other Member States entitled financial support to do so.

180. The Council thanked the concerned authorities of the Republic of Turkey for organizing the 4th ECO Seed Association (ECOSA) International Seed Trade

Conference (ECOSA-2013) and 4th General Assembly Meeting of ECOSA in Istanbul on January 11-13, 2013, in which more than 200 private and public sectors representatives and seed sector specialists from ECO Member States participated. The Council also thanked Turkey/Kyrgyzstan for their proposals to host the 5th ECOSA International Seed Trade Conference and Seed Trade Fair ECOSA in 2013/14 in their respective countries and requested them to send the exact date/venue for the said events as soon as possible. The Council also requested the ECO Secretariat to consult with the Turkey and Kyrgyzstan for finalization the date/venue for the said Conference and Fair.

181. The Council while welcoming the proposal of organizing the workshops on the Plant Variety Protection (PVP) in September, 2013, Iran, the Seed Testing (in Pakistan) and Field Control (in Azerbaijan with assistance of Turkey), requested ECOSA to circulate concrete proposals to improve the functioning of the ECOSA and requested Member States to actively participate in its activities.

182. The Council welcomed the signing of the ECO/FAO-SEC Project on Seed Sector Development in the region by Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkey, which is financed by Turkey within the scope of FAO-Turkey Partnership Programme (FTPP) with an amount of 350.000 USD from FTPP + 50.000 from ECO Feasibility Fund = 400.000 USD. The Council appreciated the organization of the Coordination Meeting on the Implementation of the ECO/FAO-SEC Project on February 25th, 2013 in Ankara, Turkey in this regard.

183. The Council thanked Member States for announcing their support for the FTPP and particularly the Iranian Delegation expressed their willingness for active participation in and being a part of the Programme during the 5th Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture.

184. The Council welcomed the decision of the 19th COM on the approval of establishment of the ECO Center for Efficient Utilization of Water for Agriculture in Islamabad, Pakistan. The concerned Pakistani authorities have already sent the amended draft agreement included their views for the utilization of US\$ 50,000 from ECO Feasibility and General Purposes Fund (ECO-FGPF), which is under consideration by the ECO Secretariat for finalization/signing. The Council also requested Member States to consider approving plan of action and draft statute for establishment of ECO-CEUW besides supporting the Centre's activities.

185. The Council thanked the ECO-RCRM and IRIMO for organizing Working Group Meeting and Training Programs in Climate Modelling and Natural Disasters in ECO Region on June 25-27, 2012 in Tehran and Mashad, the Council requested the other Member States to hold similar meeting, in their respective countries.

186. The Council welcomed the ECO-RCRM's proposals on holding two workshops on natural disasters including flood forecasting using dynamical

model and climate change and a project on drought early warning over ECO-region.

187. The Council while appreciated the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran towards the establishment ECO-RCRM, requested all Member States to convey their views on the Draft Statute of ECO-RCRM until August 2013. The Council also requested the ECO Secretariat to re-circulate the Draft Statute of the ECO-RCRM to the Member States for their views/comments. All Member States are also requested to contribute and designate their focal points for the Working Group to draw up project proposals for cooperation, as per decisions made by the 2nd Heads of Meteorological Organizations (Antalya, 2010). The Council also requested the Member States to organize 3rd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Meteorological Organization in their respective countries.

188. The Council welcomed the ECO-RCRM's proposals for the following activities in 2013-14.

- ◆ Holding the 3rd ECO-RCRM Workshop entitled "Basic of Flood Forecasting using Coupled Climate and Hydrology Models" in October 2013;
- ◆ Launching the project entitled "Dynamical Drought Early Warning System over ECO Region" in August 2013; and
- ◆ Hosting a Symposium on "Climate Change and Impacts in ECO Region" in May 2014.

189. The Council welcomed the approval of the 20th COM for the establishment of the ECO-MCC in Ankara and requested the Member States to support its activities. In line with the decision of 20th COM the Council requested the relevant Member States and the Secretariat to expedite the establishment of the ECO-MCC in Ankara. For this purpose the Secretariat was asked to expedite preparing the draft basic document of the Centre for consideration of the Member States and approval of the next COM.

190. The Council welcomed the offer the Turkish State Meteorological Service for hosting the International Training Course on Basic of Calibration scheduled to be held on September 30-October 4, 2013 in Turkey, and requested the Member States to actively participate in this event.

191. The Council welcomed the signing of the Statute of ECO-VECO by the Islamic Republic of Iran and appreciated the inauguration of the premises of ECO Veterinary Commission (ECO-VECO) in Tehran by the Veterinary Organization/Ministry of Agriculture of Islamic Republic of Iran and invited the remaining Member States to sign/ratify its Statute.

192. The Council appreciated the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish Technical Steering Committee of ECO-VECO for early

operationalization of the ECO VECO. The exact date will be announced in due course.

193. The Council noted with satisfaction that the Islamic Republic of Iran has made all necessary arrangements for the establishment of the ECO-ABN and holding the 2nd ECO-ABN Expert Group Meeting.

194. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for redesigning and launching a new dynamic website for ECO-ABN at www.eco-abn.net for better communication with national focal points as well as biotechnologists and researchers in all member countries.

195. The Council requested the Member States to kindly provide necessary information regarding the available institutions and infrastructures in agricultural biotechnology through ECO-ABN new website at (www.eco-abn.net) to expedite the operationalization of ECO-ABN and nominate their national focal points for the ECO-ABN.

196. The Council welcomed the projects on biosafety and intellectual property right proposed by Turkey, Pakistan and Iran, which are to be discussed/considered during the 2nd ECO-ABN Experts Group Meeting in 2013.

197. The Council appreciated ECO Secretariat for the institutionalized relations with the international organizations such as FAO, IDB and ICARDA. The Council requested ECO Secretariat to communicate with ICARDA, FAO and IDB for their participation in the 2nd EGM to be held on 1-3 October, 2013, in Karaj.

198. The Council urged the Secretariat to be more active in getting the quorum for the 2nd ECO-ABN Expert Group meeting.

- **Industry**

199. The Council requested any volunteer member states to host the 4th ECO Ministerial and 3rd HLEG meetings on Industry in 2013/2014 and to may inform the ECO Secretariat in this regard.

200. The Council expressed its appreciations to the Republic of Turkey for successfully organizing the 5th Expert Group Meeting on Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology on 21-22 January 2013 in Izmir, Turkey.

201. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for ratifying the Statue of RISCAM and depositing the instrument and ratification with ECO Secretariat. The Council requested the Member States, which have not signed the RISCAM Statute yet to sign/ratify it. The Council also requested the Member States having signed the Statute of RISCAM to accelerate its ratification process.

202. The Council requested the Interim Coordinating Unit of the RISCAM to expand its activities by using the US\$ 50.000, allocated from FGP Fund for taking the steps envisaged in the Road Map drawn up for the provisional implementation of the Statue of the RISCAM, including the preparation of the basic documents and any projects to facilitate the establishment of RISCAM.

203. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the Workshop on the field of Standardization and thanked the Republic of Turkey for its offer to host workshop in the field of Standardization in 2013. It also thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its proposal to host the 6th EGM on Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology in 2014 with view to facilitating operationalization of RISCAM.

204. The Council expressed its appreciations to Turkey for launching the ECO Website on Privatization and requested the Member States to upload the required data to the website in coordination with the concerned Turkish authorities.

205. The Council welcomed the willingness of the Republic of Turkey and any other Member States to extend training services and technical assistance to the Member States on privatization practices.

206. The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the 6th Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration and the 5th Meeting of HLEG on Privatization and Private Sector Development in 2013/4 and to inform ECO Secretariat.

207. The Council thanked Turkey for hosting the 1st Coordination Committee Meeting on Industrial Property Rights in November 2012 and requested all Member States actively to follow up the recommendations of the meeting. The Council also thanked Azerbaijan for its readiness to host the 2nd Coordination Committee Meeting on Industrial Property Rights in 2013/14.

208. The Council welcomed the renewed offer of Islamic Republic of Iran to host the 4th Steering Committee Meeting on Entrepreneurship and SME development to be held on 6-7 July, 2013. The Council also supported the air travel charges for the participants being covered from SSF by the Secretariat. It reiterated its previous request to the Member States for their active participations in SME development cooperation.

209. The Council requested the Secretariat to follow up joint activities in the field of industry with the Regional Organizations having MoUs with ECO as well as to benefit facilities and expertise of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB).

210. The Council appreciated the willingness of Islamic Republic of Iran to proceed the ECO NANO network with the following recommendations:-

- Active engagement of the member countries and assignment of focal points;
- Islamic Republic of Iran will host a ECO NANO Steering Committee meeting on sideline of Iran NANO festival which will be held in Tehran on 5-9 October, 2013 by INIC;

211. Islamic Republic of Iran will host an ECO NANO joint workshop on Nanotechnology on sideline of 5th International Nano Structure Conference on 6-9 March, 2014 in Kish Island, Iran.

- **Tourism**

212. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism and 5th HLEG Meeting on Tourism in the first half of 2014 and called upon the ECO Members actively to participate in this event.

213. The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey for its efforts for transferring the pledged contribution to the ECO Tourism Promotion Fund. The Council also requested the remaining Member States to consider their contribution to this Fund as well.

214. The Council requested Member States (*except Turkey and Tajikistan*) to nominate their representative to the Board of Trustees of the ECO Tourism Promotion Fund.

215. The Council thanked the Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) for its readiness to host the 1st Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the ECO Tourism Promotion Fund in the first half of 2014.

216. The Council thanked Republic of Turkey for hosting the 3rd Experts Group Meeting on ecotourism and the “ECO Regional Ecotourism Training Program” on 17-22 September 2012. The Council called upon the other ECO Member States to organize related events.

217. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to prepare an Ecotourism Catalogue for the ECO region and requested all Member Countries to provide the necessary information for its preparation of this catalogue to the relevant Turkish authorities by August 15th, 2013.

218. The Council took note of the project proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran for establishment of ECOTOURISM Databank/Network in the ECO region and to submit it to the Secretariat to circulate it to the Member State for their views/comments.

219. The Council appreciated the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host a Workshop and Study Visit on Health Tourism to be held on 26-28 June, 2013 in Istanbul and Bursa and requested the ECO Member States to actively participate in this event.

220. The Council thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting the 1st Coordination Committee meeting on the prospects of Health/Medical Tourism cooperation in ECO Region in December 18, 2012 in Mashhad in collaboration with ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry on the sideline of the 3rd Conference on Health Tourism in OIC Countries. The Council also welcomed the proposal by ECO-CCI to host the 1st Conference on ECO Health Tourism in 2013/14 in Iran, preceded by 2nd Coordination Committee for Health Tourism in December, 2013.

221. The Council took note of the organization of the 1st ECO University Sports Games on 15-20 April, 2013 in Turkish Cypriot State, with more than 600 participants from the 6 member states namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan and Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot State, Observer.

222. The Council received the proposal of the organization of the Workshop on Tourism in the second half of 2014 in Turkish Cypriot State, Observer.

(e) Projects, Economic Research & Statistics

- **Project**

223. The Council noted that the PERS Directorate should regularize the quarterly meetings of the Project Monitoring Group, an intra-institutional project monitoring mechanism recommended by the 19th and 20th RPCs. To encourage efficiency in ECO operations, the 12th ECO Summit appreciated actions taken to implement ECO projects/programmes in advancement of the initiatives which would further strengthen ECO as an effective Organization for regional economic cooperation and encouraged further actions to this end. In this regard, the Council recommended that the Secretariat should follow the policies and implementation standards as reflected in ECO Project Guidelines with the objective to improve efficiency, dynamism, and visibility in ECO operations.

224. The Council appreciated the Regional Training Workshop on Project Risk Management for ECO Member States with the assistance of the IRTI/IDB and SESRIC/OIC in Ankara, Turkey, on 28 March - 1 April 2012. Also, the assistance of UNDP has been noted, in this regard. While encouraging continuation of such practices, the Council stressed the next step which should be the installation of project management information systems (PMIS) - to enable effective linkages amongst Implementing Units in the Member States, Executors, and the Secretariat.

225. To ensure replenishment of project funding, the Council considered in detail the List of ECO Projects and stressed the need to increase the five percent allocations from the ECO Feasibility Study and General Purpose Fund (FSGP) for projects implementation in line with the recommendations of the EPG.

226. The ECO Special Fund for Reconstruction of Afghanistan (SFRA) was supported by the 7th Summit of 14 October 2002 (Istanbul, Turkey). The 14th COM of September 12, 2004 approved the Modalities for Establishment of the SFRA thereby instructing the Secretariat to start project implementation. Contributions and pledges of member states stand at US\$ 11,150,000 (US\$ 5 million each pledged by Pakistan and Turkey, US\$ 1 million by Iran and US\$ 150000 by Azerbaijan.) To date, the total transfers amounted to US\$ 3,535,517 (US\$ 2 million by Pakistan, US\$ 1 million Iran, US\$ 399,946 Turkey and US\$ 149,975 Azerbaijan). The Council took note of the developments regarding the new project proposals, currently being considered by TIKA, Pakistan and Afghanistan and, requested both sides to finalize the consideration, soon.

- **Economic Research**

227. The Council noted that ECO Plan of Action for Economic Research is a road map in the area of economic research. It was initially proposed by 1st Leading Economic Research Institutions Meeting held on 1-2 March 2009 in Tehran and was then consulted, referenced by academia, and finally submitted for adoption to the 1st ECO Permanent Steering Committee Meeting held on 3rd May 2010, in Astana, Kazakhstan. The plan focuses the consolidation, development, and implementation of research study projects in the Member States.

228. The Council appreciated implementation of the ECO Joint Economic Research Programme (JERP) of which the core objectives is the development and continual review of the common development strategy and economic policies of the ECO region in line with major global trends.

229. The Council noted significant progress in finalizing the ongoing research projects of the ECO JERP such as: “Economic Research Policy Study on the Perspectives of Intra-regional Trade in ECO region” by Kazakhstan-Coordinating Country, and completion of the “Comparative Study on the relationship between Energy Consumption and Main Demographic and Economic Indicators in ECO Member States”, in December 2012, by Iran.

230. The Council urged that the research projects on: the “Strategy on Economic Management Modelling in ECO Countries” and “Analyzing Trade Liberalization and Food Security in ECO Countries” by Pakistan should be processed, at earliest, to be supported by external co-financing.

231. The Council appreciated active participation of the Kyrgyz Republic in modifying the project design of the research “Alternative Energy Sources in ECO

Countries” under the new title: “*Strategy of Development of Alternative Energy Markets in ECO and in Central Asia*”. It welcomed the regional FAO-ECO project on “Support to Development of CountryStat in the nine ECO Member States and establishment of the ECORegionStat at the Secretariat” on which the information was circulated for views of the Member States on April 30th, 2013 through the Secretariat’s Note No.702.

232. The Council appreciated the work of the ECO Permanent Steering Committee on Economic Research (PSCER), as a permanent body of the ECO at high academic level of economists who approve/disapprove the economic research projects. Since its establishment on 3 May 2010 in Astana, the Committee has discussed and approved, with essential comments, new economic research proposals: “Exchange of Experience and Strengthening Inter-Agency Cooperation on the Development of Ecologically Clean Agriculture in ECO Member Countries” and “Study on Applicability of General Equilibrium Model in ECO Countries and Capacity Strengthening”, which were presented by Azerbaijan during the 2nd PSCER on 7th November 2012 in Baku. The 3rd PSCER Meeting scheduled for 20-21 August 2013 in Kyrgyz Republic expects to see that the concepts would be supplemented with further details, including work plan, budget, and project activities and to be submitted for CPR approval.

233. The Council appreciated the ECO Editorial Board of the ECO Economic Journal as a central body in ECO for publications, editorials, opinionated, commentaries. At its first meeting on November 8, 2012, in Baku, the Board has reviewed its Terms of Reference, according to which, Editor-in-Chief and PSCER Chairperson is Azerbaijan (Dr. V. Valiyev), Deputy Chair Countries are Pakistan and Kazakhstan. The Board has adopted the ECO Editorial Policy and Work Plan for expeditious implementation of it during 2013. The web page of the ECO Editorial Board has already been developed on ECO Website. The 3rd issue of the ECO Economic Journal has been compiled and uploaded electronically. The 4th issue would be compiled based on the papers to be presented and discussed during the 1st Baku Forum of ECO Member States’ Economic Think Tanks on 5-6 September 2013 in Baku, Azerbaijan. In the framework of the above said Forum, the 2nd Meeting of the ECO Editorial Board will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan.

234. Recalling the membership of two Statisticians in the ECO Editorial Board of the ECO Economic Journal, the Council requested the Secretariat to follow-up the matter seriously.

235. The Council appreciated that the ECO Annual Economic Report has been prepared and circulated to the Member States. Due to the lack of statistical data for 2012, the arrangements have been allowed for the data to be collected from official statistics web as well and also requested the Member States to provide their statistical updates.

236. Recalling paragraph 90 of the Report of the 20th COM meeting on the establishment of ECO Economic Research Centre, the Council welcomed offer of

the Republic of Azerbaijan to host the Centre in Baku. The Council further requested the Secretariat to circulate for the consideration of the Member States proposed Statute of the Centre as and when received from the Republic of Azerbaijan.

- **Statistics**

237. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 4th Meeting of the ECO Heads of National Statistical Offices in the 4th quarter of 2013, in Ankara and called upon the Member States to actively participate in this meeting, and also, appreciated the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) for holding the 5th ECO High Level Expert Group Meeting (HLEG) on Statistics on 4-5 December, 2012 in Ankara.

238. The Council appreciated adoption by the above said 5th HLEGM of the Thematic Plan for Training as part of the regional statistics capacity building based on specific needs of Member States as stated by them throughout previous meetings. The process of harmonization of regional statistical methodology was noted as critical by the Council.

239. To ease the burden of regional training, the Council urged the Secretariat to create a regional partnership on statistics.

240. The Council has further noted that the Draft Framework for the HRSM was already prepared in 2010 and needs to be filled-in with region's specifics based on MetaData. On ECOSTAT, the Council urged for provision of automated links to National Statistical Offices.

241. The Council appreciated the Statistical Centre of Iran for its continuous support and joint cooperation with the Secretariat for upgrading and updating the ECO Statistical Network (ECOSTAT). The Council welcomed establishment of the Technical Advisory Group of Focal Points on ECOSTAT (TAGFP) adopted by the 5th HLEGM on statistics (4-5 December, 2012 – Ankara) and requested Member States for active participation in the work of the Group through their nominated Focal points on ECOSTAT, to contribute to further development of ECOSTAT by Implementation Plan of the aforementioned group. In this regard, interaction with the Secretariat on regular and timely provision of data, information, statistical reports, bulletins, news and completion of country profiles of the Member States for dissemination on the ECOSTAT was stressed by the Council.

242. The Council noted the need to timely update ECO Roster of Experts/Statisticians as well as ECO Directory of Consulting/Training/Research/Engineering Institutions.

243. The Council requested the National Statistical Offices of the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan to nominate their respective

representatives to the Committee on Regional Harmonized Statistical Methodology, at earliest.

244. The Council noted it critical that the time lag (from the moment when the decision was made to develop the Draft Methodology, *i.e.* October 2010) has elapsed and, therefore, requested the Secretariat to expedite first draft study of statistical methodologies and metadata of the Member States, to identify commonalities.

245. The Council urged that the Secretariat to issue statistical publications/bulletins/ECO Statistical Year Book.

246. The Council welcomed the proposal of the Republic of Kazakhstan for hosting the workshops on the SME gender focused statistical indicators in ECO countries and noted its interest in technical assistance for development of questionnaires for 2nd agriculture census to be conducted in Kazakhstan in 2016 and in 2017.

247. The Council welcomed the proposal of the Statistical Centre of Iran for hosting the Regional Training Workshop on Science, Technology and Innovation indicators scheduled to be conducted in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) for ECO countries on 8-10 December, 2013 in Tehran.

(f) Human Resources & Sustainable Development

248. The Council deliberated in detail on issues of the agenda of the Human Resources and Sustainable Development Directorate (HRSD) including Human and Human Resource Development, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Health and Disaster Risk Management. All the ECO Member States reiterated their commitment to achieving the goals and objectives in these fields of cooperation. The main points agreed upon are given as below:

- **Human and Human Resource Development**

249. The Council requested the Member States to positively consider hosting the events and activities in the field of Human Development (HD) in 2013/2014.

250. The Council requested the interested Member States to host the 3rd Meeting of the ECO High Level Experts Group (HLEG) on Human Development (HD) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2013/2014. The Council also requested the ECO Secretariat to make efforts to ensure early convening of this Meeting.

251. As per recommendations of the 2nd HLEG on MDGs, as well as previous RPC meetings, the 3rd HLEG meeting on Human Development (HD) and MDGs will focus on all or one of the health related MDGs *i.e.* goal 4 (Reduce Child

Mortality), goal 5 (Improve Maternal Health), and goal 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases).

252. The Council requested the interested Member States to prepare regional project proposals on Health related MDGs, taking into consideration the 'guiding principles' circulated among them by the ECO Secretariat and using the findings and recommendations of the ECO Regional Report on Health related MDGs.

253. The Council also called on the Secretariat to approach the IDB and other relevant UN and international specialized Agencies including UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNDP and WHO for their support both for preparation and also implementation of the Project Proposals.

254. The Council requested the Member States, to introduce/regularly update the information of their focal points on health related MDGs i.e. Reduce Child Mortality (Goal 4), Improve Maternal Health (Goal 5), and Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases (Goal 6), giving all relevant contact information (Name, Position, Tel., Fax, and particularly E-mail) at the earliest.

255. The Council requested the Member States (other than Iran and Pakistan) to provide the Secretariat with a directory/list of their respective leading public/private Human Resource Development (HRD) institutions/centers to be circulated among the Member States for enhancement of cooperation among these institutions.

256. The Council requested the Member States to introduce/regularly update the information regarding their focal points on Human Resource Development (HRD) in public sector.

257. The Council requested the Member States to positively consider hosting the training programmes, workshops, expert group meetings, study tours etc. in the years 2013/2014 in the HRD priority areas identified by the 1st ECO High Level Expert Group Meeting on Human Resource Development held on 21-22 November 2011 in Tehran. (i.e. Recruitment/promotion/payment system; Performance monitoring and appraisal system; Training and development of the civil servants; Public-private partnership; Establishment of E-Governments).

258. The Council requested the Member States to kindly provide to the Secretariat the address/s of their relevant website/s (English version) of their respective main State HRD bodies in order to link them with the webpage of Human Resource Development in the official website of the ECO Secretariat (<http://www.ecosecretariat.org/HRD>).

259. The Council was informed by the Iranian delegation that the new dates for the First Meeting of the ECO Heads of the concerned Authorities Responsible for Human Resource Development will be conveyed soon to the ECO Secretariat for circulation among the Member States through diplomatic channel.

- **Civil Registration**

260. The Council requested the Member States to:

- (a) introduce/regularly update the information regarding their related focal points on Civil Registration;
- (b) consider conducting of study tours in 2013-14 to observe the progress made by them in the field of Smart-Card;
- (c) hold the training programmes, workshops, expert group meetings (in 2013/2014) on the remaining priority areas i.e. (i) On-time registration of vital events and (ii) Production of Identity Documents.

261. The Council while appreciating the concerned Turkish authorities for intimating their readiness to host the 2nd Meeting of the ECO Heads of National Organizations/Centers for Civil Registration to be held in September 2013, requested them to furnish the exact date, draft agenda/ programme and hospitality details to the ECO Secretariat for onward circulation to the Member State.

262. The Council appreciated the Islamic Republic of Iran for holding ECO Workshop on Production of Population Statistics and Information (Tehran on 06-07 November, 2012) hosted by the Iranian National Organization for Civil Registration (NOCR) in collaboration with the ECO Secretariat and the financial support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

- **Health**

263. The Council requested the Member States (except Azerbaijan) to consider hosting the 2nd ECO Health Ministerial Meeting in 2013/14. The information received in this regard will be shared with the Member States through diplomatic channel.

264. The Council requested the Member States to consider hosting the 2nd Meeting of High Level Drug (Pharmaceutical) Regulatory Authorities in 2013-14.

265. The Council appreciated the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the Workshop on “Drug Registration and Licensing, Counterfeit Medicines and Good Manufacturing Practices” and requested the concerned Turkish authorities to furnish the exact date and other details of the Workshop to the ECO Secretariat.

266. The Council requested the Member States to introduce/regularly update the information of their focal points on Drug (Pharmaceutical) cooperation, giving all relevant particulars, including Name, Position, Tele, Fax, and E-mail addresses at the earliest.

267. The Council requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat with the addresses of their pharmaceutical websites (English version) in order to link them with the Pharmaceutical Web Page established in the ECO website (www.ecosecretariat.org/pharmaceutical).

268. The Council requested the Member States (other than Iran and Turkey) to positively consider hosting the Third Study Tour for Health Authorities of the Member States in 2013/2014 and inform the Secretariat accordingly.

269. The Council appreciated the I.R. Iran for starting the Academic Course on Master of Public Health for the ECO Member States, on 1st January 2013, and requested the concerned Iranian authorities to implement the Master of Public Health scholarship for the candidates of the ECO Member States on a regular basis.

270. The Council expressed its appreciation to the Republic of Azerbaijan for holding the 3rd Meeting of ECO Heads/Authorities of Blood Transfusion Organizations on 14-15 February 2013 and requested the Member States to implement the recommendations of the Meeting.

271. The Council encouraged the Member States (except Iran) to volunteer to host training courses/workshops, seminars from within the remaining priority areas, which were recommended by the First Meeting and reaffirmed in the 2nd Meeting of the Heads of Blood Transfusion Organizations/Authorities i.e.

- a) GMP in blood banks (training and inspection)
- b) Incorporation of IT and Automated Screening in blood transfusion system
- c) Procurement collaboration (Blood bags and equipments)
- d) Hemovigilance
- e) Research and Academic collaboration (training and education on transfusion sciences and medicine)
- f) Collaboration in Plasma Industry (plasma collection and plasma fractionation)

272. The Council requested the Member States to extend academic scholarships in the field of Haematology and other blood transfusion related topics to other Member States and inform the Secretariat about the relevant details.

273. The Council requested the Member States to review the Initial website designed for the ECO Blood Safety Network with the address: www.ecobsn.com and send their comments on the Website along with electronic (English) version of their related news, reports, publications and other relevant information to the email address of the Network i.e. intl@ibto.ir or/and info@ecobsn.com to be placed on the Website.

274. The Council requested the Member States to introduce/regularly update the information regarding their related focal points on Blood Transfusion Cooperation, giving all relevant particulars, including Name, Position, Tele, Fax, and E-mail addresses at the earliest.

275. The Council requested the interested Member States to introduce their contact person in the field of Osteoporosis so that the Secretariat could be able to coordinate their cooperation with the Iranian concerned authorities (Research Center for Endocrinology and Metabolism of Tehran University of Medical Sciences).

- **Cooperation on Natural Disaster Management**

276. The Council requested the Member States to regularly submit information on their activities on disaster risk management and related regulations to the ECO Secretariat for further circulation among the Member States in order to increase public awareness on the importance of the Natural Disaster Risk Management.

277. The Council requested ECO Secretariat to continue cooperation on Disaster Risk Management with the relevant international organizations and also approach the UN Specialized Agencies including UN-ISDR, UN/OCHA, UNDP, UNESCAP and UN-HABITAT for their technical and financial support towards the activities of ECO on Disaster Risk Management with particular reference to the Para 25 of UN General Assembly resolution No.A/RES/67/14 adopted on 14th February 2013.

278. The Council expressed its appreciation to the Republic of Turkey for organizing the “International Symposium on Disaster Economics” on 3-5 April 2013 in Istanbul and requested the other Member States to organize events in this manner by inviting other international organizations as well.

279. The Council appreciated the offer of the Republic of Azerbaijan to host the “7th ECO International Conference on Disaster Risk Management” in 2014. The exact date and other details will be communicated in due course of time.

280. The Council requested the Member States to nominate/regularly update the information regarding their related focal points on Disaster Risk Management cooperation, giving all relevant particulars, including Name, Position, Tele, Fax, and E-mail addresses at the earliest.

281. The Council recommended that the capacity of HRSD Directorate should be enhanced, using the internal and external sources including the technical and financial assistance of relevant international organizations. In order to avoid overlapping of the responsibilities and streamlining the activities of the ECO Secretariat, it is further recommended that all the activities having same nature should be dealt-with by one Directorate. In this regard, an ad-hoc committee

may be established comprising the interested Member States to consider this issue taking into account the best practices of other international organizations.

(g) Drug & Organized Crime Coordination Unit (DOCCU)

282. The Council reiterated its earlier request urging the Member States to extend their fullest support to the DOCCU and expedite sending their country reports and statistics on drug control to DOCCU for preparation of analytical reports.

283. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 2nd Meeting of Chiefs of Police of ECO Member States in Turkey by the end of 2013 and requested the Member States to actively participate in this meeting.

284. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 2nd Experts Group Meeting for finalizing necessary formalities/documents for establishment of ECOPOL in Turkey by the end of 2013, followed by the 2nd Meeting of Chiefs of Police. The Council further requested the Member States to actively participate in the meeting.

285. The Council requested the Member States to fully support establishment of the ECOPOL.

286. The Council took note of transferring an amount of US\$ 100,000/- by the Police of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Secretariat for allocating US\$ 50,000/- from the ECO-Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FGPF), approved by the 178th CPR Meeting, to the ad-hoc ECOPOL Fund and requested other Member States to consider pledging voluntary contribution for the ad-hoc ECOPOL fund.

287. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 4th ECO Interior Ministers Meeting in Islamabad and requested the host authorities to indicate exact date and hospitality details for the meeting. Member States were also requested to actively participate in the meeting at the highest level.

288. The Council appreciated the Republic of Tajikistan for hosting the 2nd Meeting of Heads of Anti Corruption Organizations and Ombudsmen of the ECO Member States in Dushanbe on 21-22 November, 2012. The Council while taking note of signing of the Statute of the ECO Regional Center for Cooperation of Anti Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen (RCCACO) by Afghanistan, Iran, Tajikistan, requested other Member States to expedite completing their respective national procedures so that the RCCACO could start functioning at the earliest.

289. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for hosting the 3rd Meeting of Heads of Anti Corruption Organizations and

Ombudsmen of the ECO Member States in Kabul and requested the concerned authorities to indicate exact dates and hospitality details for this meeting.

290. Welcoming the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for hosting the 2nd Meeting of Heads of INTERPOL of ECO Member States, the Council requested the host authorities to indicate exact date and hospitality details for the meeting.

291. The Council appreciated offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 2nd Meeting of Attorneys and Prosecutors General of the ECO Member States in Antalya and requested the concerned Turkish authorities to indicate exact date and hospitality details for the meeting.

292. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the Experts Group Meeting (EGM) for preparation of a Plan of Action against Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration in Tehran and requested the concerned Iranian authorities to convey the Secretariat exact date and hospitality details for the meeting.

293. The Council appreciated the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host an Experts Group Meeting for preparation of a Plan of Action on Terrorism and requested the concerned authorities of Iran to convey exact dates for this meeting provided that the Member States agree on the need of such a meeting.

294. The Council appreciated the European Commission and the German International Cooperation Agency (GIZ) for financial support to the ECO-DOCCU in implementing the EU-funded project titled "Fight Against Trafficking from/to Afghanistan with the ECO Member States". In this regard, the Council acknowledged the efforts by the ECO-DOCCU in facilitating implementation of the EU-funded project.

295. The Council took note of the proposal to organize 2 meetings of National Focal Points and 2 Drug Liaison Officers Meetings on drug control as also the two remaining workshops, totally funded by the EU Project and requested the Member States to actively participate in these activities.

296. The Council welcomed the proposal of DOCCU for preparing two reports for harmonization of the legal policies of the Member States. The Council further requested the Member States to facilitate implementation of this activity as and when required.

297. The Council appreciated holding of the Undercover and Surveillance Techniques workshop within the framework of the EU-funded project and with the technical support of TADOC, at Ankara, on 4-8 March, 2013.

298. The Council appreciated the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their technical support to organize the workshop titled

HIV/AIDS related to Drugs on 15-17 October, 2012 within the frame-work of the project.

299. The Council took note of the offer by the Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their willingness to support organizing a workshop titled Best Practices on Drug Demand Reduction in 2013. It requested the concerned authorities to convey the Secretariat exact dates for this workshop.

300. The Council appreciated the Police of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting an Experts Group Meeting on Scientific Detection of Crime in Tehran on 18-19 February, 2013.

301. Referring to the proposal of DOCCU for establishing its exclusive website out of the funding of the project, the Council urged the Drug Liaison Officers of the Member States to facilitate smooth functioning of this website which is especially being designed for enhancing exchange of information and best practices.

302. The Council appreciated holding of a workshop titled “International Cooperation in Assets Recovery”, on 10-11 October, 2012, at the ECO Secretariat, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drug and Crime (UNODC) and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

303. The Council requested the Secretariat to continue pursuing the donor agencies like European Commission, UNODC and other international organizations to undertake drug related activities and combating all forms of trans-national organized crimes.

304. Urging the need for active implementation of the Revised Joint Regional Strategy to combat Drugs, Terrorism and Trans-national Organized Crimes, the Council reiterated that those Member States who have offered to host the meetings in line with this Strategy to provide exact dates and hospitality details to be extended to the delegates at the earliest so that the meetings could be convened without further delay.

305. Based on the decisions of the 3rd ECO Interior Ministers’ Meeting (Istanbul, December 2010), the Council appreciated nomination of focal points for cooperation in the field of (i) Drug, (ii) Terrorism, (iii) Organized Crime, (iv) Human Trafficking and (v) National Coordinator by Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkey. It requested Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to kindly expedite nominating their focal points, giving all relevant particulars, including Name, Position, Tele, Fax, and E-mail addresses at the earliest.

306. The Council appreciated nomination of Liaison Officers for Police cooperation among the NCBs by Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kyrgyzstan,

Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and requested the remaining Member States i.e. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to expedite nominating the same.

307. The Council appreciated the Republic of Turkey for timely indicating dates and hospitality details for the EGM for formulating modalities for the preparation of a Regional Threat Assessment Report on Organized Crime and Terrorism and requested the Member States to take necessary measures in order to avoid postponing the meeting again. It further requested the concerned Turkish authorities to indicate fresh dates and hospitality details for the meeting. Member States were also requested to expedite sending back the questionnaire which would be used as the basis for preparing the Regional Threat Assessment Report.

308. The Council underscored the need for preparing grounds for implementation of the plans of action earlier approved by the 3rd Interior Ministers Meeting namely (i) the ECO Plan of Action on Drug Control Matters and (ii) the Plan of Action on Combating Trans-National Organized Crime, expeditiously.

309. The Council welcomed the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host two Workshops on (i) Countering Cybercrime and (ii) Training Course on Crisis Management and requested to convey exact dates and hospitality details to the Secretariat at the earliest.

(h) Inter-Regional ECO Activities

(i) ECO Regional Institutions/Specialized Agencies/Affiliated Bodies

ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)

310. The Council appreciated the work and activities of the Institute in promoting the cultural ties amongst the member states in the region.

311. Recalling the previous decisions of the COM as well as the recommendations of the last RPC whereby the relevant member states have been requested from time to time to ratify the Charter of the ECI, the Council, once again, emphasized the need for the signatory and non-signatory member states to this Charter to ratify/accede to the Charter of the Institute at the earliest. Reiterating the request made at the last RPC, the Council requested the Institute to work out a detailed strategy for regular follow-up on the matter with the concerned Member States.

312. The Council acknowledged the critical financial situation of ECI which has severely undermined its capacity to perform the ECI core mandate. The Council further urged—the ECI member states which are in arrears to clear their outstanding dues in accordance with ECI CPR decisions. The Council also noted the importance of the recommendations of the audit board.

313. The Council called on the Institute to broaden its current scope of activities, subject to availability of funds, in order to make meaningful progress in achieving all the goals outlined in its Charter; especially those pertaining to promotion of people-to-people contacts, research in common cultural heritage of the member states and promotion of languages of the region. The ECI was also asked to facilitate interaction and contacts amongst the scholars, writers, youth and women organizations of the member states, facilitating exchange of ideas in the cultural and literary spheres.

314. In order to achieve the multi-faceted agenda and objectives of the Institute, the Council asked ECI to intensify its efforts through effective planning, implementation and regular evaluation of its initiatives/activities, giving priority to all aspects of its mandate, as contained in the Charter.

315. The Council appreciated the role played by the ECI CPR since its establishment and highlighted the importance of holding regular ECI CPR meetings, preferably back to back with the ECO CPR meetings, as envisaged in the ECI's Rules of Procedure.

316. The Council requested ECI to prepare the new Long Term Plan of Action (3 years) to be submitted to the ECI CPR at the earliest, with an analytical evaluation of implementation of its previous long-term Plan of Action.

317. The Council requested ECI to expedite its efforts to organize the ECO Sports Cup in 2013. In order to mobilize financial assistance for this initiative, the Institute may explore the possibility of enlisting support of the sponsors/private sector and/or sports associations of the member states. The Council also called on the member states to facilitate the Institute in organizing this event.

318. The Council reiterated its request to ECI to organize the ECO Cultural Week in the ratifying member states in order to increase awareness about ECO and the region's culture. The Council also requested member states to share proposals for hosting such events with ECI and to assist the Institute, both financially and logistically, in holding these through their relevant cultural authorities.

319. The Council requested the Institute to seek the approval of the ECI-CPR before entering into any cooperative arrangement with non-ECO countries and to share the outcome of its MoUs with ECI CPR/BoT meetings on regular basis

320. The Council renewed its call for the ECI to develop modalities for establishing coordination units on Youth Affairs and Sports, as advised by the 21st and 22nd RPC, subject to the availability of funds. The Council took note of the establishment of ECI's Coordination Units in Dushanbe and Kabul and requested the ECI CPR to evaluate the ongoing operation of the Coordination Units, due to budgetary constraints.

321. With regards to the establishment of ECO Park in Tehran, the Council called on the ECI to follow-up the matter with relevant authorities of Iran so that the inauguration ceremony of the Park could be organized at the earliest. The Council also invited the member states to provide detailed proposals to showcase their national, cultural and civilization heritage at the space allocated in the park to each member state by the Tehran Municipality.

ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF)

322. The Council appreciated the activities organized by the ECOSF during the period under consideration, despite the financial problems being faced by the Foundation.

323. Recalling the decision of the 20th COM as well as the recommendations of the 22nd RPC whereby the non-ratifying member States were requested to ratify the ECOSF Charter, the Council requested the concerned countries to complete their ratification procedures at the earliest. The Council again stressed that the full potential of the Foundation would be realized once all the signatory member states have joined it.

324. Taking note of the announcement made by the Republic of Kazakhstan at the High-Level Task Group Meeting (July, 2011-Tehran) and later endorsed at the first BoT of the ECOSF; and of the Kyrgyz Republic as conveyed at the High-Level Task Group Meeting (July, 2011-Tehran) to ratify the Charter, the Council encouraged the two member states to speed up their respective ratification procedures. The Council while appreciating that Turkey had initiated the requisite procedure to complete the ratification process, requested the Republic of Turkey to conclude this before the next COM Meeting. The Council also requested the ECOSF to follow up the matter with the concerned member states.

325. Recalling the decisions made at the 21st and 22nd Meetings of the RPC, whereby it was agreed that if the instrument of ratification of the Republic of Azerbaijan could not be found, Azerbaijan would initiate ratification of the ECOSF Charter anew, the Council urged Azerbaijan to expedite the procedure for the ratification of the ECOSF Charter.

326. Recalling the decision of the 21st and 22nd RPC Meetings concerning the need for nominating national focal persons by the member states to coordinate with the ECOSF, the Council appreciated the countries which have introduced their respective focal points (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, the Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan and Turkey). The Council also requested the remaining member states to nominate focal points to facilitate the coordination between ECOSF and the member states on various issues.

327. The Council laid stress on the need to implement the decisions of the 1st BoT Meeting and urged the Member States to nominate eminent scientists for the Board of Trustees as well as Executive Committee of the Foundation.

328. The Council took serious note of the financial problems being faced by the ECOSF due to non-payment of the annual contributions by the member states. The Council urged the ratifying member states to make arrangements for the transfer of annual contributions to the Foundation without any further delay. Furthermore, the Council requested the member states to make generous voluntary contributions (in cash/ kind) to the S&T Fund of the Foundation. In this regard, the Council also requested the member states which have already pledged their contributions (Afghanistan: US\$ 200,000; Iran: US\$ 100,000 and Pakistan: US\$ 1 million) to transfer the pledged amount to the Foundation at the earliest. The Council also expressed its concern over the fact that lack of funds was resulting in the delay of the Foundation's planned activities, particularly the Regional Conference on Science & Technology, which was scheduled to be held in 2012 in Pakistan pursuant to the decision of the 1st BoT Meeting.

ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI)

329. The Council appreciated the activities of the Institute for promoting common welfare of the region's people in the field of education and training.

330. The Council in particular, appreciated the Institute for its decision to hold the 'First International Conference on Education of the ECO Member States' in Istanbul in the coming period. It also requested the member states to actively participate in the event which will help in assessing the current situation of the educational institutions of the ECO member states and to enhance collaboration for the promotion of education in the region. The Council also commended the support and generous contribution of the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey for promoting the activities of the Institute.

331. The Council called on the concerned member states which have not yet signed/ratified the Charter of the Institute to expedite their ratification/accession procedures. Taking note of the announcement made by Pakistan at the 1st High-Level Task Group Meeting (Tehran-July, 2011), conveying its readiness to ratify the Institute's Charter, the Council urged expeditious action in this regard. The Council also requested ECOEI to actively follow-up the matter with the concerned member states.

332. Recalling the decision of the last RPC Meeting, the Council re-emphasized the establishment of an ECO Educational Trust Fund with the voluntary contributions (cash and/or kind) from the member states and in line with Article VII of the Institute's Charter for the Institute to finance its programmes for educational development. In line with the decision of the 22nd RPC Meeting, the Council urged the ECOEI to finalize the Draft Terms of Reference for the

Fund which will be circulated to the Member States for their views and comments.

333. The Council asked the Member States to expedite nomination of their respective focal points, as well as the introduction of experts to the Academic Council of the Educational Institute (according to Article III (3) of the Charter and as reiterated in the First BoT Meeting) as soon as possible. These nominations would enhance Institute's coordination with the member states resulting in its efficient and smooth functioning.

334. The Council appreciated ECOEI for initiating efforts for designing the Institute's website (www.ecoei.org) and requested ECOEI to make it fully functional at an early date.

ECO Consultancy & Engineering Company (ECO-CEC)

335. Taking note of the severe financial hardships being faced by the Company because of non availability of assignments in the ECO region, the Council urged the member states to support ECO-CEC in becoming an active regional institution of ECO and benefit from its expertise and services in the engineering sector. The Council also requested 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, particularly, by timely exchange of information.

336. Recalling the decision of the last RPC Meeting, the Council also reiterated the need for the member states and the ECOCEC to take early steps in pursuance of the "Study on impediments faced by ECO-CEC" (endorsed at 21st RPC and the 19th COM Meetings) jointly prepared by the Secretariat and ECOCEC in 2010.

ECO College of Insurance

337. The Council encouraged the Member States to share proposals for improving the educational standards and performance of the College. The Council also asked the member states to encourage their talented students to avail scholarship opportunities offered by the College.

338. The Council asked the College to follow-up and implement the decisions reached at the 1st Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the ECO College of Insurance held on June 6, 2012.

339. The Council recommended the College to host seminars in ECO member states to attract students, subject to the availability of funds. To begin with, such an activity may be organized in Tehran, preferably at the College campus, with the participation of Permanent Representatives of all the Member States. The

Council appreciated Secretariat's willingness to extend any possible assistance, if required, in this regard.

340. Recalling its recommendations made at the 21st and 22nd RPC Meetings, the Council requested the College to accelerate efforts towards promoting networking with educational institutions of the member states in the field of insurance.

Establishment of "Group of Diplomatic Training Institutes of ECO Member States"

341. The Council requested the member states which have not yet nominated their focal points for the Online Network of Diplomatic Training Institutes, to do so at the earliest. Following the establishment of such a network, the member states may then share the requisite preliminary information through the network. Following this, Pakistan can then initiate preparations for holding the 1st Meeting of the Heads of ECO Diplomatic Training Institute in 2013.

(ii) International Relations

ECO's External Relations

342. The Council appreciated Secretariat's commitment to take further concrete steps in accordance with the Article XIV of the Treaty of Izmir, relevant decisions of the ECO Summit and COM and the 'Comprehensive Plan of Action: Enhancing ECO's External Relations', in order to improve the cooperative relations with the United Nations system, Regional/International Organizations and relevant non-ECO states.

343. The Council took note with appreciation of the support being provided by the ECO Contact Groups and requested the member states to send fresh instructions to their respective missions for better utilization of the contact group mechanism.

344. The Council also welcomed the adoption of biennial Resolution on "Cooperation between UN and ECO" at the 67th session of the United Nations General Assembly and called on the Secretariat to actively follow-up on its implementation along with the Member States and ECO Contact Groups.

345. Considering that a resolution on the cooperation between the UN and the ECO will be tabled by the latter at the 69th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York, the Council requested the CPR to send timely instructions to ECO Contact Group in New York to sponsor the draft Resolution on UN-ECO cooperation later next year.

346. The Council appreciated that the 20th COM held in Baku on October 15, 2012 had approved the Modalities for granting Observer and/or Dialogue

Partnership Status to other Regional or International Organizations, States and Institutions. It also commended the approval of the modalities for signing new agreements/MoUs with Regional/International Organizations, States and Institutions during the 20th COM. The Council expressed hope that these modalities will help ECO in promoting meaningful cooperation with interested partners.

347. The Council expressed its satisfaction on the progress of the ministerial-level consultations held between ASEAN and ECO and in this regard appreciated the outcome of the 12th ASEAN-ECO Joint ministerial Meeting held in New York in Sep, 2012 and called on the Member States and the Secretariat for taking steps to maintain and promote meaningful cooperation with ASEAN in the light of the decisions reached in the last meeting. While appreciating the offer made by the Republic of Azerbaijan to hold the next Joint-Ministerial Meeting in Baku later this year, the Council asked the Secretariat to actively follow-up the matter with the ASEAN Secretariat. The Council also requested the member states to share concrete proposals to be presented at the next ASEAN-ECO Joint Ministerial Meeting to enhance cooperation with ASEAN.

348. The Council acknowledged the potential cooperation between ECO and IDB and ECO and OIC, and asked the Secretariat to prepare a proposal for a framework of cooperation for the consideration by the Member States.

349. The Council also asked the Secretariat and the member states to explore the possibility of signing a framework agreement with the OFID (OPEC Fund) for institutionalizing the cooperative relationship between the two organizations.

350. The Council requested the Secretariat to consider undertaking project-based cooperation instead of signing new institutional framework agreements with potential partners.

351. Appreciating the steps taken to implement the 'Comprehensive Plan of Action: Enhancing ECO's External Relations', the Council encouraged the Secretariat to undertake an analytical assessment of the Plan. Meanwhile, the Council requested the member states to share their evaluation of the implementation of the Plan of Action along with recommendations to revise it.

352. The Council noted that the relationship between ECO and UN and its specialized agencies, funds and programmes has grown since its inception in 1993 when the UNGA granted observer status to ECO. However, greater efforts are required to improve the ongoing cooperation with the UN system. In this regard, the Council requested the member states to share substantive proposals with the Secretariat to promote this cooperative relationship.

353. The Council advised that ECO's participation in multilateral regional/international initiatives on Afghanistan must be guided by the ECO 'Modalities for the Establishment and Operationalization of ECO Fund for

Reconstruction of Afghanistan' to attract financial assistance of donor countries and international organizations for implementing joint development projects in Afghanistan.

354. The Council asked the Secretariat to give special focus to expanding relationship with funding agencies/institutions as identified in the Plan of Action like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in order to enlist their support for ECO projects/programmes. The Secretariat may consider establishing senior-level contacts with these organizations.

Agenda Item No.6

Annual ECO Calendar of Events for 2013-2014

355. The Council approved the Annual ECO Calendar of Events for 2013-2014 which is placed at **Annex-VII**.

Agenda Item No.7

Any other business

356. No issue was raised under this agenda item.

Agenda Item No.8

Date and Venue of the next Meeting

357. The Council welcomed the decision of the 184th CPR meeting, to hold the 24th RPC meeting before January/February, 2014 and requested the Secretariat to consult with the interested Member States to finalize the exact date and venue of the next RPC meeting.

Agenda Item No.9

Adoption of the Report

358. The Report of the 23rd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) was adopted unanimously.

Agenda Item No.10

Vote of Thanks

359. On behalf of all the participating delegations, the Council expressed its appreciation and thanks to the ECO Secretariat for making arrangements for successful holding of this important meeting with limited time frame.

360. The Council concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair for conducting the deliberations of the meeting in a smooth and efficient manner. The Council also thanked the Chairmen of Review Committees for successfully conducting the business of their respective meetings. It also appreciated the efforts made by

the Secretary General and his staff for preparing comprehensive Working Papers and other documents for the Council.
