

The 14th RPC Meeting

ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) Status Report 2002 - 2003

(Istanbul, 04-06 December, 2003)

Annex-V

1. ECI is fully functional and carrying out its responsibilities. So far two meetings of its Board of Trustees have taken place in October, 1996 and January, 2000. The 12th and 13th Regional Planning Council (RPC) reiterated its earlier calls to member states who had not yet ratified the ECI Charter to do so and invited the two non-signatory member states namely the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan to consider acceding to the ECI Charter. Meanwhile, the signatory member states were expected to participate fully in the meetings and activities of the Institute as well as the Institute was advised to encourage participation of all the member states in its activities and the Institute is taking steps to implement its mandate.

2. ECI engages in various cultural activities, among these are research on the common cultural heritage of the countries of the region, publishing of journal covering the works of eminent contemporary writers, photographers, painters etc., It coordinates for cultural exchange programmes, such as visits of academicians, scholars, artists and students. ECI conducts various scientific seminars, and lectures. During the period, the Institute has kept follow-up of the research works assigned to scholars of the region on topics of cultural and historical importance. However, some research works are still under process of completion. The research work on 'Iqbal Shinasi (Knowing Iqbal) in Iran', by Dr. Shahid Chowdhury is near completion but is delayed due to hospitalization of the scholar who is undergoing neuro-surgery. The work on 'Translation into English language of **Rubaiyyat-i-Khayyam**' has been printed and distributed to the member states and other relevant agencies and organizations. Another work, 'Comprehensive Grammar of Urdu Language for Persian-speaking people' has been printed and distributed. The book, titled 'The Kazakh Philosophy', in the Kazakh language, by Professor Dr. **Abdumalik Nysanbaev**, has also been published and distributed.

3. ECO Cultural Institute has kept the library facilities open for reading purpose to the students of the ECO College of Insurance, Tehran and also for members of the embassies from the ECO member states.

4. ECO Cultural Institute was represented at the '**Open Day**' organized by the ECO College of Insurance for students, parents and the media people on Monday, 21st October, 2002. ECO Cultural Institute had also participated at the **Research Week Academic Symposium** held on Tuesday, 17th December, 2002 on '**Information Culture and Industry**' at the ECO College of Insurance, Tehran.

5. As for the nomination for '**focal points**' of the Institute meant to maintain effective and constant liaison and communication between the Institute and the member states, only Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan and Pakistan have so far done the needful while response from other member states was still awaited.

6. ECI has been able to publish eight issues of the **Quarterly journal** up to December, 2002, which contained subjects on national customs, art, literature, science and history of the region. These issues have been sent not only to the embassies of the ECO member states in Tehran but also to so many other embassies, regional and international organizations and agencies in Tehran and outside Tehran. However, in view of budgetary constraints and also due to poor response regarding receipt of contributions in the shape of articles and other material from the member states for publication in the quarterly journal, the Institute has decided to start publication soon of ECI Newsletter/Bulletin on bimonthly basis which will contain current news and information on the cultural events taking place in the ECO member states.

7. ECI has been pursuing the matter with regard to composition of the **Executive Committee** to be set up under the provisions of **Article III** of the **Charter** to assist the Executive Director of the Institute who is vested with the functions to conduct and manage the affairs of the Institute. The nomination of one cultural expert from each of the Charter-ratifying member states on the **Executive Committee** was still awaited.

8. ECI has requested the ECO member states to provide items for display, such as books, magazines, brochures, posters, pictures, paintings, audio visual substance, pieces of art (folk, traditional, or modern), handicrafts, traditional clothes or costumes, postage stamps, coins etc., or other similar items for the proposed '**Display Centre**' proposed to be set up at the Institute. In this regard, except for Iran, Kyrgyz, Turkey and now, Kazakhstan as well, there has been poor response from the other member states.

9. On the occasion of **ECO Day** on 28th November, 2002, the Institute in collaboration with the member states of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, under the auspices of ECO Secretariat, had organized a photographic exhibition. The Institute is pursuing about organizing more similar exhibitions through participation of other member states in future.

10. ECI participated fully at the ECO pavilion set up during the **International Book Fair** held in Tehran in the month of May, 2003.

11. As part of coordination with the international organizations, ECI participated in the **Sub regional Cluster Meeting of the National Commissions for UNESCO and the UNESCO Field Offices** held in Tehran from 16th to 19th August, 2003.

12. ECI was represented at the Meeting held at **UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office** between ECO and the Representative/Director of UNESCO Tehran Cluster Office on Thursday, 28th August, 2003 and it was agreed that the ECI and the UNESCO representatives would separately discuss further actions in the field of culture. As a follow up to it, subsequently, another Meeting was held on 23rd November, 2003 in the office of Ms. Junko Taniguchi, Programme Specialist of Culture in UNESCO Office, Tehran, to discuss prospects of future cooperation in cultural activities between the two

organizations. The Executive Director, ECI also presented to H.E. Mr. Abdin Saleh, Head of the UNESCO Office, Tehran, a copy of the 4 Years' Performance Report, who very much appreciated the contents of the Report and acknowledged the efforts of the Institute made for promotion of cultural activities within the ECO member states.

13. In the last week of November, 2003, the Institute was able to initiate the process of computerization of its Accounting System which would also convert the version of the Accounting Programme to English language so as to meet the required standards due to which handicap, the Audit work of the Institute with the approval of the President of the Institute had been performed by the local Audit team of experts, which fact had also been observed by the ECO Audit team visiting the Institute along with the Accounts officials of the ECO Secretariat on 27th May, 2003. The process of computerization has now been possible due to the special interest taken by the President of the Institute, H.E. Mr. Mohammad Ali Shoaee, who was able to seek cooperation of expertise from the I.C.R.O. (Islamic Culture and Relations Organization), Ministry of Culture & Islamic Guidance, Iran and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Iran. Besides, the Institute has also received support and cooperation from the officials of the Accounts Wing and the Data Base Wing of the ECO Secretariat.

14. **ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)**, had organized its **10-Day Theatre Festival** in the month of October, 2003, (12th October to 22nd October, 2003) in the three provinces of Iran (**Mazandaran, Golestan and Gilan**) aimed to project the regional potential available in this field of art. The govt. of the Islamic Republic of Iran was kind enough to support ECI to organize this festival which consisted of experts meetings, a workshop and the theatre performances as main events besides presentation of brochure, release of daily news bulletin on the festival and an album on events held during the festival. The inauguration ceremony of the festival was performed by the Minister of Culture & Islamic Guidance, Islamic Republic of Iran, **H.E. Mr. Ahmed Masjed Jamei**, on 12th October, 2003, in the Niavran Cultural Centre, Tehran which was attended by diplomats, high ranking officials, artists and scholars of the region. This festival was greatly appreciated by the representatives of the regional and international organizations in Iran. The festival was held in collaboration with **Niavran Artistic Creations Foundation (NACF), Tehran**. It is worth mentioning that the festival had succeeded in attracting several theatre groups from the ECO countries in the region. Besides the host country, Iran, theatre groups from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Republic of Turkey participated. It is hoped that as logistics support is developed, such festivals in future will be held in rotation in other ECO countries as well so that these could help promote better understanding among peoples of the ECO region.

15. ECI has introduced its own '**web site**' containing useful information about the Institute which will be up-dated on regular basis. The Institute has launched this web site officially on the 28th November, 2003, to mark the **ECO Day**.

16. The other remarkable work done by the Institute has been the compilation of the 4 Years' Performance Report containing in glimpses with illustration the story of its

growth in stages which describes in narration briefly the activities undertaken by the Institute during the period from 1999-2003. The copies of this Report along with 16 CDS on individual performance of some of the theatre groups participating in the festival have been distributed to the member states and other important organizations.

17. In commemoration of **ECO Day** on 28th November, 2003, ECI published its **1st Newsletter** and distributed it during the **ECO Day Reception** held at the **ECO Secretariat** on 30th November, 2003.

Required Actions :

- i) Remaining four signatory Member States namely: Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan may expedite the ratification process of the **ECI Charter** since out of them, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, have already ratified the **ECO Science Foundation Charter**.
- ii) The two non-signatory member states of Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Uzbekistan may be requested to accede to the ECI Charter while they are already signatory to the Charter of **ECO Science Foundation**.
- iii) Member states that have not done so far are requested to nominate their '**focal point**' so as to maintain constant liaison with the ECI.
- iv) The four contributing member states may send their nominations of cultural experts to constitute the **Executive Committee** of the Institute.
- v) All concerned member states may take necessary steps to ensure timely remittance of their share of financial contribution to the **ECI Budget** each year.