

The 12th RPC Meeting

Status Report on the ECO Cultural Institute for the year 2000-2001

(Tehran, 06 March, 2002)

Annex-VI

Background

1. The **Charter of the ECO Cultural Institute** was adopted by the 5th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) held at Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on January 21-23, 1995 and was signed on March 15, 1995 in Islamabad during the Third ECO Summit.

2. Islamic State of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan have signed the Charter except Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Uzbekistan. Out of these member states, only Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, and Tajikistan have so far ratified the Charter of the Institute. **However, Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Uzbekistan have signed the Charter of the ECO Science Foundation while they have yet to accede to the ECI Charter. As for ratification of the ECI Charter, Republic of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have ratified the Charter of ECO Science Foundation while ratification of ECI Charter by them is still awaited.**

3. The first meeting of the **Board of Trustees** of the ECO Cultural Institute was held in Tehran on October 22-23, 1996. The Board had approved the nomination of the President of the Institute, H.E. Mr. Ali Akbar Parvaresh. The basic Documents of the ECI were approved by the Council of Permanent Representatives and later adopted by the 8th COM Meeting held in **Almaty** on May 9, 1998.

4. Later on, some discrepancies were detected in the **Staff Regulations** of the Cultural

Institute, which were inconsistent with the relevant provisions of the Charter signed in 1995. They were brought to the notice of the President of the Institute vide Secretariat's letter No. CUL/98 dated August 22, 1998 requesting the Institute to take appropriate remedial steps so as to bring these regulations in conformity with each other. In compliance to the decisions of the 34th CPR Meeting held on 27th July, 1999, this task was taken up jointly by the Committee comprising the Executive Director of the Institute and the Legal Advisor of the ECO Secretariat who were assisted by an Assistant Director of the ECO Secretariat. The Committee submitted a **"Report on the Removal of Anomalies in the Basic Documents of the ECO Cultural Institute"** which was approved at the 36th Meeting of the CPR held on 31st October, 1999 and further by the 2nd BOT Meeting held on 25th & 26th January, 2000 and subsequently, approved by the COM held in Tehran on 8th June 2000.

Developments during the years 2000 & 2001

5. On January 25th & 26th, 2000, the Second Meeting of the ECI's Board of Trustees was held in Tehran. This Meeting approved the annual budget of the ECI for the year 2000. It also approved, in principle, the contents of the 3-year Plan of Action pertaining to the ECO Cultural Institute's activities subject to review in the light of ratification by the remaining member states and resulting budgetary implications. This meeting, inter alia, approved the design of the Emblem and the Seal of the Institute provisionally. The BOT Meeting also endorsed the amendments in the Basic Documents of the Institute. The BOT Meeting taking note of the need of his (Mr. Ali Akbar Parvaresh, then President of the Institute) service in other positions, elected unanimously Dr. Mahmoud Broujerdi, as the new President of the ECO Cultural Institute as of January 27, 2000, for the remaining period ending May 10, 2001. However, on expiry of the term of Dr. Mahmoud Broujerdi, on May 10, 2001, he was given an extension up to October 10, 2001.

6. The 2nd BOT Meeting appreciated the announcement made by the delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan to donate a full-fledged library relating to cultural subjects to ECI. This donation was to be over and above the contribution to be made by the Republic of Tajikistan to the ECI budget. However, neither the donation of library books nor the financial contribution to the ECI budget for the years 2000 and 2001 have yet been received from the Republic of Tajikistan.

7. **ECI Guide Book** containing basic information about the Institute had been accomplished during the year 2000, the copies of which had been distributed to the ECO Secretariat and the embassies of the ECO member states in Tehran and to the International and Regional organizations and agencies and also other embassies in Tehran.

8. In view of poor response from the member states on research projects earlier announced by the ECI, it was decided by the President of the Institute to take in hand the research work on a few other topics of cultural and historical importance and assign this job to a few research scholars of the region, the explanation of which had already been submitted by the Institute at the time of submission of the ECI Budget for the year 2001. However, due to delay in the approval of ECI Budget as late as in the month of June, 2001 and resultantly, late receipt of the budget contributions, the topics selected for research work could not be accomplished and will be completed by the end of the year 2002 during which period hopefully, a few more research topics will also be initiated. These topics related to 'editing and analyzing of Jam Sultan's (son of Sultan Mohammad Fateh) Diwan', 'Scientific progress during the **Ottoman** period', 'Iqbal Shinasi (Knowing Iqbal) in Iran', 'Knowing about culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan', 'History of culture & geography of the northern areas of Pakistan', 'Influence of mysticism of Khorasan in the Indo-Pak sub-continent and Anatolia', 'Translation of stories about Silk Road into Farsi' on the proposal of the **UNESCO** Office in Tehran and Tashkent, printing of the 'Translation into English language of **Rubaiyyat-i-Khayyam**', printing of the book titled 'Philosophy of Kazakhs' and 'Overview of Central Asia'.

9. There have been slightly better response during these years by a few member states including Azerbaijan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey on supply of video documentary films, CDs and audio cassettes which have been kept in the library of the Institute for use as and when necessary. Some of these documentary films have been utilized at the **Tehran International Trade Fair** held in the year 1999 & 2000 and also made available to ECO Secretariat during the **ECO Day** celebrations in November, 2001.

10. There have been constant efforts by the ECI to request the member states to nominate their coordination units to work as '**focal points**' for the Institute so as to maintain effective liaison and communication between the Institute and the member states. Despite best efforts, only Azerbaijan, Iran, and Pakistan have so far done the needful while response from other member states is still awaited.

11. ECI has been able to publish three issues of the **Quarterly journal** during the year 2001 focussing on national customs, art, literature, science and history and sent these 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. In some cases, letters of appreciation or request for supply of more copies of the issues of **Quarterly journal** have been received by the Institute. However, **the Institute has not received the desired material from the member states for publication in the issues of the Quarterly journal.**

12. On recommendation of the Working Group Meeting held on September 20, 1999 and subsequently approved by the CPR, ECI had remained associated with the ECO Secretariat for the **ECO Award** in the field of literature & fine arts. However, during the year 2001, the ECI could not implement the proposal for the Award to be known as **ECI Award** due to delay in nomination of one representative each on the Selection Committee or panel of the Award by the contributing member states of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan along with one nominee of the ECO Secretariat. Till now, only the ECO Secretariat and Iran have sent the names of their nominees while intimation from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan was yet to be received.

13. ECI was able to make significant contribution to ECO through preparation of a list of proposals with a brief description of the events contained therein on the '**methodology designed to educate people of the member states about the benefits of ECO**' which would help to promote awareness about ECO as an organization in the region.

14. ECI has requested the four contributing member states to send their nominations for one cultural expert each on the **Executive Committee** of the Institute which under the provisions of **Article III** of the **Charter** would assist the Executive Director of the Institute who is vested with the functions of conduct and management of the affairs of the Institute. It is expected that an early action will be taken by the concerned member states.

15. ECI intends to compile a list of renowned universities, research centers, libraries and bona fide cultural associations and organizations in the ECO member states for the benefit of students, teachers and scholars of the region. ECI has repeatedly requested the member states to provide the necessary information to the Institute but except for Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Turkey, the other ECO member states have yet to take necessary action due to which the compilation of the directory has been delayed.

16. ECI has several times requested the ECO member states to provide items like 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 display at the '**Display Centre**' proposed to be set up at the Institute. In this regard, except for Iran, Kyrgyz, and Turkey, there has been poor response from the other member states.

17. At the International Conference on "Poet-Philosopher Allama Iqbal and Challenges of Modern Times" held on 24th February, 2001, organized jointly by the Cultural Coordination Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Embassy of Pakistan, Tehran, the President of the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI), Tehran delivered a speech on the subject.

18. ECI has a plan to display wax-statues of one cultural personality from each member state which will either be permanently exhibited at a sort of small wax-museum within the premises of the Institute or put on view at different conspicuous locations inside the Institute. In this context, the member states have been requested to nominate a cultural personality and send the full-size photograph along with the life-sketch or brief description of the particular personality after which the Institute will ask the concerned artist to submit estimation for expenditure on this account which will be met in phases through re-appropriation or adjustment of available funds due to budget constraints. Despite repeated requests, since July, 2000, the Institute has recently received one nomination from only Pakistan while other member states have yet to intimate about their decision in the matter to the Institute.

19. In connection with the **ECO Day** celebrations during November, 2001, and in view of the significance of the year 2001 as the **U.N. Year of Dialogue among Civilizations**, ECI has been able to contribute an article on the subject of 'Dialogue among Civilizations' published in two parts in the issues of 28th & 29th November, 2001 of **IRAN NEWS** in which the role of ECO as an organization working towards 'interaction' which practically, also meant promotion of 'dialogue among civilizations' within the member states of this region had been highlighted. In addition, another article on the same theme had been contributed for the Special issue of **ECO News Bulletin**. On December 18th, 2001, ECI in collaboration with the ECO Secretariat had been able to organize a **Cultural Evening** in which a group of a Pakistani Embassy School children along with a few other cultural items of music and songs played by the artists on "Duff" and "guitar" were arranged through the courtesy of ECI on this occasion. Another event arranged by the ECI was an **exhibition of paintings and art** by an Iranian artist

(winner of ECO Award for the year 2000 on her theme of damage done to environment as a result of industrialization) on the evening of 28th November in the premises of the ECO Secretariat which was also appreciated by the visitors.

20. ECI has circulated among the embassies of the ECO member states a list of proposed cultural events for its next '**long term plan**' commencing from the year 2003 and reminded them several times to offer their views or recommendations to enable the Institute finalize it , the success of which, however, will ultimately depend on the availability of budgetary funds and the progress in respect of ratification of the **ECI Charter** in the succeeding years by the remaining member states. It is hoped that the member states will soon send their views on the subject to the Institute.

21. The Institute has allocated one Section to each Member State in its Library for books on philosophy, sociology, geography, politics, science, education etc. in English language and also in other regional languages as well as availability of two-way English/Regional language dictionaries for the benefit of the visitors to the Library.

22. ECI has recently requested the member states to provide sufficient number of photographs in different sizes depicting the ceremonies, customs and traditions of their countries so as to enable the Institute organize an exhibition of photographs about the same which will help in promotion of understanding among the peoples of the region.

Required Actions

- i) Full participation by all concerned Member States in the activities of the ECI.
- ii) 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**.
- iii) The Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Uzbekistan may consider to accede to the **ECI Charter**.
- iv) Member states may take appropriate steps to supply on regular basis an English daily/local newspaper and fortnightly magazines published in their countries, as requested by the Institute. They may also exchange information on cultural/art events held in their countries from time to time, with the ECI.
- v) Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan are requested to nominate one representative each on the **Selection Panel of the ECI Award**.
- vi) Member states that have not done so far are requested to nominate their '**focal point**' for liaison with the ECI.
- vii) The contributing member states are also requested to send their nominations comprising cultural experts to constitute the **Executive Committee** of the Institute.
- viii) Member states are requested to send books on philosophy, sociology, geography, politics, science, education etc. in English language and also in other regional languages as well as two way English/Regional language dictionaries for the benefit of the visitors to the **ECI Library**.

- ix) The member states are also requested to provide items as requested for display at the proposed **Display Center** to be set up in the Institute.
- x) The member states are requested to furnish their proposals/suggestions on the list of cultural activities already circulated to them for inclusion in the next three-year **Long Term Plan** of ECI commencing from the year 2003.
- xi) ECO member countries that have not so far provided to ECI the names of renowned Universities, research institutes, centers, libraries and bona fide cultural associations and organizations, may kindly do so as to enable the Institute compile the proposed **directory**.
- xii) Member states may kindly supply material on regular basis to the Institute for publication in the issues of the ECI Quarterly journal.
- xiii) Member states may send the necessary information to the Institute about their cultural personalities as requested for preparation and display of **wax-statues** by the Institute.
- xiv) All concerned member states may take necessary steps to ensure timely remittance of their share of financial contribution to the ECI Budget each year.