

The 8th RPC Meeting

Report

(Tehran, 19-21 April, 1998)

ADOPTED

No.RPC-8/98/RPT Dated: 22-4-1998

1. The Eighth Meeting of the Regional Planning Council of the Economic Cooperation organization (ECO) was held in Tehran on 19-21 April, 1998 in the ECO Secretariat. The Meeting was preceded by the Preparatory/Review Meetings held on 15-16 April, 1998 in the premises of the ECO Secretariat. The Meeting was attended by the delegations of all Member States; the Islamic State of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan Republic, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan, Republic of Uzbekistan. The Turkish Muslim Community of Cyprus and the Secretary General of ECO also attended the Meeting. The list of the participants is placed at ANNEX-I.

Agenda Item No. 1:

INAUGURATION AND OPENING STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRMAN.

2. The meeting was inaugurated by H. E. Mr. Bacjharian, Vice- President and the Secretary General of the State Organization of Employment Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. A copy of his inaugural speech is placed at ANNEX-II.

3. In accordance with the Rules of Procedures of ECO, H.E. Mr. H. Kazempour Ardebili, Adviser to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the head of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran was unanimously elected as a Chairman of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No. 2:

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA.

4. The Agenda as revised and adopted by the Council is placed at ANNEX-III.

Agenda Item No. 3:

APPOINTMENT OF THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE.

5. The Council decided to form an open-ended Drafting Committee to prepare the Report of the meeting.

Agenda Item No. 4:

OPENING STATEMENTS BY THE HEADS OF THE DELEGATIONS.

6. The heads of the participating delegations made their opening statements outlining their policies and views in general regarding the Projects/Programmes and activities of the organization. Copies of the statements made available to the Secretariat are placed at ANNEX-IV.

Agenda Item No. 5:
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL.

7. The Secretary General of ECO presented a Report, a copy of which is placed at ANNEX-V. In his Report, the Secretary General highlighted the salient activities of the Organization during the year under review and also presented several concrete ideas and proposals for consideration by the Council. The Secretary General also apprised the Council of the status of ECO's relationship with various international organizations.

8. The Secretary General's proposal of review/preparatory meetings scheduled as part of Secretariat's annual work programme to facilitate smooth transition during the course of 1998-1999 was favourably received by the Council.

9. The Council noted with appreciation the comprehensive report presented by the Secretary General on the activities of the organization as a whole and endorsed, in particular, the recommendations made in paras 5(a) & (b) of Part-1, para 11 of Part 11 and para 25 (A to F) of Part IV of the Report for approval of the 8th COM.

10. The Council also supported the efforts of the Secretariat to further enhance the ongoing cooperation with the international organizations particularly with UNOP and ASEAN in the fields of mutual interest.

11. The Council advised the Secretariat to gradually advance the time of the Annual Meetings of RPC so that these are concluded before the end of each Calendar year followed by the COM Meetings to be held preferably in March, the following year.

12. It also appealed to the Member countries to support the Secretary General's recommendations to equip the Secretariat with the latest computer, E-mail and Internet facilities and for the establishment of a well-equipped library/documentation centre.

Agenda Item No. 6:
REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ECO APPROVED PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS.

13. The Regional Planning Council (RPC) reviewed Working Papers and Reports of the different Directorates of ECC) Secretariat, including the Status Reports prepared by the Secretariat outlining the progress achieved in implementation of activities slated in the ECO Calendar of Events/Meetings 1997-98 and considered the proposals, plans and projects proposed by the Secretariat for the year 1998-99 and made following recommendations as mentioned under

A) TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE.

14. The Regional Planning Council took note with satisfaction of the outcome of the 2nd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications held in Ashgabat on 14 March, 1998 and fully endorsed decisions taken in that meeting.

15. The Regional Planning Council welcomed the decision to hold Ministerial Meetings on Transport and Communications at least once in every two years in order to provide necessary push for expeditious implementation of the projects and programmes envisaged in different ECO plans and documents such as Almaty Outline Plan and the Ashgabat Declaration (1997). The Council appreciated the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the next (3rd) ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications in the year 2000 at Islamabad.

16. The RPC endorsed the decision to set up a High-Level Experts Group to work out an organizational structure, terms of reference and working mechanism of the proposed -Permanent Commission on Transport and Communications to be set up in Ashgabat under ECO as provided in para 16 of the Ashgabat Declaration (1997) and urged the ECO Secretariat to fix its first meeting in consultation with the Member States as soon as possible.

17. The Council urged the Member States to take the required actions in accordance with the decisions and recommendations of the 2nd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications particularly on implementation of the Programme oil Action for ECO Decade of Transport and Communications (1998-2007) including the Plan for Development of Telecommunications and Postal Links in the ECO Region.

18. It was further agreed that the Member Countries may suggest modifications if any, in the Programme of Action if they felt necessary during the course of its implementation within one year.

19. The RPC adopted with appreciation the comprehensive Status Report on Regional Cooperation in the field of Transport and communications prepared by the ECO Secretariat with the recommendations as recorded in the succeeding paras.

20. The Council urged the Member Countries namely Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Tajikistan who have not yet done so to expedite their views on the final draft ECO Road and Railway Network maps prepared by Islamic Republic of Iran to the Secretariat within two months. These maps shall be considered finalized and shall be published thereafter.

21. The Council recommended the request of the Second ministerial Meeting on Transport and Communications to CPR to sanction the necessary funds and requested the Republic of Turkey to furnish as soon as possible the breakdown of costs to be incurred on preparation of :

i) Recommendations to bring ECO Road Network in line with the international standards including identification of locations and consideration of the minimum road infrastructure requirements (e.g. filling-stations, vehicle service workshops, motels, cafes etc.)

ii) A draft directory of ECO Road Network, both in English and Russian, specifying the existing (and planned road infrastructure.

22. The Council noted with appreciation the generous offer of the Republic of Turkey to include the printing of the road network maps also in the services to be rendered by them to the Secretariat within the limit of the funds sanctioned for the above projects.

23. The RPC endorsed the results of the inter-agency consultative meeting on ECO/IDB/ESCAP/ UNNCTAD Joint Project on International Transport Development in the ECO Region held in Bangkok in October 1997 and appealed to the Islamic Development Bank to release the required funds for the project for its implementation.

24. The Council urged the Member States to furnish their proposals for cooperation in the field of international Air Services in the ECO region and comments/views on the possibility of preparing an ECO Air Cargo Agreement and further developments in the ECO Airlines Project, to the Secretariat by the end of June 1998 for preparation of the draft Agenda of a joint meeting of civil Aviation Authorities and Heads of Airlines of ECO Member States to be held in the second half of 1993.

25. The RPC urged the signatory Member States of ECO Shipping Company to fulfill their obligations regarding payment of their- contributions to the capital. of the company on the basis of the terms of payment determined by the Extraordinary General Assembly Meeting of ECO Shipping Company held in Tehran on 23 December, 1997 or pass on their rights to the private sector in their respective countries.

26. The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to continue its efforts to encourage other Member States or their private-sector companies operating in-the fields of trade and transportation, to join ECO Shipping Company as emphasized in the para 7 of the Ashgabat Declaration (1997) and the non-signatory countries to participate in the next General Assembly and Board of Directors meetings scheduled to be held in Tehran in 1998 and in Aktau (Kazakhstan) in the first fortnight of September, 1998.

27. The Council noted with appreciation the statement of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran that they had already submitted necessary documents to the Islamic Development Bank for extending leasing facility -to the ECO Shipping Company for procurement of more vessels.

28. The RPC also endorsed the procedure of annual review of the Regional Action Programme for implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and Pacific by sub-regional organizations under the aegis of the Regional Inter- Agency Committee for Asia and Pacific (RICAP) of which ECO is also a member. They also encouraged the Member States to fully cooperate with UNESCAP in implementation of the ESC.NP Regional Action

29. The Council adopted the Report of the 10th meeting of the ECO Directors General of Telecommunications with the following recommendations:

- i) to complete and finalize the Terms of Reference for ECO- CEC to carry out an analysis of the present level of production of different types of telecommunication equipment components being produced in the Eco

region with total item-wise quantity and their unit cost to determine the possibility of joint venture with participation of private companies for production of those components to decrease dependence on countries outside the region and to identify -the source of funding this study;

ii) the forthcoming 10th Meeting of ECO Directors General on Telecommunications in pursuance of the para 1.5 of the Plan for the Development of Telecommunications and Postal Links in the ECO Region should work out a method of formulation of a joint programme of activities of scientific research and design institutions of the ECO Member States;

iii) Member Countries may expedite their views to the Secretariat on the proposed MOU to be signed with the INMARSAT on cooperation in mobile telecommunications in the ECO Region.

iv) the new ECO Member States should be recommended to consider their accession to South West Asian postal Union (SWAPU) and to attend, as a first step, the forthcoming annual meeting of this Union to be held in Tehran in the first half of June, 1998.

30. The RPC reviewed in detail the report of the High Level Experts Group (HLEG) Meeting on the draft Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) held in Islamabad on 2-5 April 1998, as well as information provided by the ECO Secretariat on this issue and in accordance with Paras 14 and 15 of the Report of the 2nd Ministerial Meeting on Transport & Communications of the ECO Member States held in Ashgabat on 14 March, 1998, recommended to the Secretariat in cooperation with HLEG to make necessary arrangements to finalize the main text of the TTFA on the sidelines of the Senior Officials Meeting to be held in Almaty on 5-7 May, 1998 and submit it, if finalized, for consideration and, if approved, for signing to the 8th Meeting of the Council of Ministers.

31. The Council also recommended that the HLEG should continue their work on elaboration of the texts of the Annexures and Protocols of TTFA in accordance with the ECO Calendar of Events for 1998-99 so as to complete this work not later than October 1998.

B) TRADE AND INVESTMENT DIRECTORATE.

32 The Council noted with satisfaction the Iranian authorities proposal to hold the High-Level Experts Group Meeting on Tariffs and Non-Tariff Trade Barriers in the ECO Region on 2-3 August 1998 in Tehran (exact dates to be reconfirmed) . The Council requested the Member States to make necessary preparations for the meeting and submit their respective papers regarding tariffs and non-tariff barriers by the end of July 1998 to the Secretariat.

33. The RPC welcomed the entry into force of Transit Trade Agreement and requested that signatory Member States who have not yet ratified the Agreement (i.e. Azerbaijan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkey) should expedite the process and requested Afghanistan and Uzbekistan to consider joining the Agreement.

34. The Council urged the Member States (except Iran, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Turkey) to communicate their National Guaranteeing Associations to the Secretariat at the earliest. Member States are requested to prepare their own maps of land routes, railway routes, ports and designate border customs units to be used in transit cargo movements.

35. The RPC adopted the report of the 'First Meeting of Transit Trade Committee (TTC) and stated that Transit Trade Committee may review the proposal regarding the invitation to a member of ECO- CCI to represent the private sector in the TTC meetings, on case by case basis.

36. The Council requested the Member States to take necessary actions regarding the list of guidelines for the implementation of the ECO TTA, which was adopted during the Third Meeting of Heads of Customs Administrations held in Tehran on 22-23 December, 1996 and. Communicate to the Secretariat the progress and developments in this connection.

37. The RPC expressed its satisfaction regarding the entry into force of the Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businessmen of the Member States and requested that signatory Member States who have not yet ratified the Agreement (i.e. Azerbaijan & Turkmenistan) to expedite the process and also invited the Non-signatory Member States (i.e. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan & Uzbekistan) to join the agreement.

38. The Council requested the Member States to provide their concerned units with necessary directives for expeditious, smooth and effective implementation of the provisions of the Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for the Businessmen of the Member States and may inform the Secretariat about the implementation of the said Agreement.

39. The RPC recommended that ECO-CCI may be invited to attend the relevant ECO Meetings, Seminars etc, and also- expressed its wish that the remaining Member States (i.e. Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) whose national chambers have not sought affiliation to the ECO Chamber to join the ECO-CCI

40. The Council adopted the report of the Fourth Heads of Customs Administrations Meeting held in Almaty in September 1997, and endorsed the recommendation of the said meeting for signing the MOU on Cooperation Against Smuggling and Customs Frauds. In this regard, Pakistan stated that Article 1 (2) of the MOU may be amended as follows:

"The following to be defined according to the definitions contained in the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961; and UN Single Convention on Psychotropic Substances 1971".

Pakistan's amendment to the Article 1 (2) shall be circulated to all the relevant authorities in the Member States for their consent. In the absence of any objection, the MOU shall be signed with this amendment in Almaty during the 8th Meeting of the COM.

41. Taking note of the proposal of the Turkish delegation that the UN Convention against illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances-1988, may be incorporated in the amendments proposed by Pakistan in the Article I (2) of the MOU and to consider the ECO Passage Document (EPD) issue, the Council proposed to include these two issues in the agenda of the 5th Meeting of the Heads of Customs Administrations of ECO Member States for consideration.

42. The Council also welcomed the cooperation between UNDP/UNCTAD and ECO Secretariat regarding the Trade Facilitation Project in the ECO Region and requested the Secretariat to follow-up this activity. It was also agreed that UNCTAD experts be invited to the Fifth Heads of Customs Administrations Meeting to be held in Turkey, to make a presentation in a Special Session.

43. The RPC meeting recommended the early establishment of the ECO Trade and Development Bank and ECO Reinsurance Company and requested the remaining Member States to consider the joining of the said institutions after their establishment.

44. The Council requested the ECO Secretariat to continue its efforts to elicit the views/comments of the Member States on the UNDP study regarding-the Economies and Resource Complementarities of ECO Member States and organize the Workshop on the said study.

45. The Council requested that the Secretariat may follow up the study visit to the ASEAN Secretariat, scheduled to take place sometime in July 1998 and to pursue the issue regarding the Workshop on International Trade with the ASEAN Secretariat and ECO Member States, to be held in New York in October, 1998.

46. The Council expressed its satisfaction regarding the holding of WTO Workshop in Istanbul and recommended that since five ECO Member States are either in the process of accession or application, the 2nd Workshop on Accession Procedures and its related negotiations with WTO be organized with the technical assistance of WTO. The agenda of the said workshop could be prepared by the ECO Secretariat with the cooperation of WTO experts. The Member States who wish to host this activity may inform ECO Secretariat of the venue and proposed date within three months. The Secretariat should however, host this in case no Member States shows readiness to hold it.

47. The Council reviewed the issue of ECO Mutual Payments Arrangement and agreed that an expert group meeting comprising of the Central Bank representatives or the related authorities of the Member States may be convened to consider the issue of a mutual payments arrangement among the ECO Member States.

C) ENERGY, MINERAL AND ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE.

48. The Council adopted the reports of the First Ad-Hoc Committee Meeting on ECO Oil & Gas Pipeline Routes (held in Ashgabat 10-11 November, 1997) and the First High level Experts Task Group (HLETG) meeting on ECO Oil & Gas Pipeline Routes (held in Ashgabat 23-24 February, 1998). The Council moreover, requested the Member States active participation in implementation and follow up of the said reports so that the most suitable export route(s) from and within the ECO region, as per Ashgabat Declaration (14 May 1997) may be identified and the report in this regard may be submitted to the next RPC meeting in 1999.

49. The Council adopted the reports of the First Ad-Hoc Committee Meeting on Power (held in Ashgabat 12-13 November, 1997) and the First Specialized Experts Task Group (SETG) Meeting on Power (held in Ashgabat 25-26 February, 1998).

50. The Council recommended the active participation of the Member States experts in SETG meeting(s) on power so that necessary bankable documents as required by IDB, may be made available for attracting needed funds for this important regional project.

51. The Council welcomed the Secretariat's contact with different international financial institutions and took note of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB)'s interest to attend the future meeting(s) of SETG on Power. The Council further agreed that as it was outlined in the SETG Report on Power and in pursuance of Ashgabat Declaration (14 May 1997) a preliminary report in which the power systems of Member States are analyzed should be produced and appreciated the Turkish authorities offer to prepare the said report.

52. The Council noted with appreciation Turkish commitment to publish the ECO Energy Data Booklet and expressed that, publication of a comprehensive Energy Booklet would be a useful addition to the ECO publications. The Turkish authorities informed the RPC that only Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Kazakhstan and Turkey have submitted the required data. Therefore, the Council requested the remaining Member States to expedite the matter. In the absence of the primary data furnished by Member States within four months (September 1998), the Turkish authorities shall proceed to publish the Energy Data Booklet using international sources.

53. The Council noted with satisfaction the draft Phase I report on Joint Study on Long Term Development of ECO Energy Supply and Demand submitted by the Managing Director of the Iranian International Bureau for Energy Studies (IBES) London. As the said draft report had been compiled and produced by IBES using international sources, the Council requested the Member States to review the report and forward their corrections, comments and views, if any, to the Secretariat not later than 15 June 1998, after which the phase I report shall be published.

54. While appreciating the meritorious work done by IBES, the Council noted that due to financial constraints IBES may face difficulties in preparing the final report and recommended Member States to provide required information and assistance in this regard.

55. The Council noted the Islamic Republic of Iran's proposal that in this respect IBES may organize a seminar/workshop for ECO representatives to meet the IBES researchers/information gathering system, staff etc., on non-hospitality basis-.

56. The Council noted that the Meeting of the Chief Executives of ECO Oil, Gas, Petrochemical and Energy Industry may be held as per ECO Calendar of Events 1998-99 and that meeting may consider the need for holding the Ministerial meeting in the Energy Sector. The date and venue of such meeting may also be decided by the Chief Executives Meeting. Member countries were also requested to send proposals for preparing agendas for these meetings.

57. The Council welcomed the idea, in principle, for establishing the ECO Drilling Company (EDC) during the Meeting of the Chief Executives of National/Private Drilling Companies of ECO Member States (held in Ahwaz/Islamic Republic of Iran 6-7 April, 1998) and adopted the report of the said meeting. The Council appreciated Pakistan's 'willingness to hold the 2nd Meeting of the Chief Executives of National/Private Drilling Companies of ECO Member States in Karachi (Pakistan) from 29-30 September, 1998.

58. The Council adopted the Plan of Action for ECO region's environment as it was circulated to the Member States vide Secretariat Note No.EM&E/ENV-AIR-POLL/ 801210 dated 6 January 1998.

59. The Council supported the ECO Secretariat suggestions for coordination, standardization and methods for measuring air and water pollutants which were outlined in the Secretariat Note No.EM&E/ENV/ 801260 dated 27'January, 1998 already circulated.

60. The Council welcomed the Turkish proposal on the establishment of a Regional Training Centre under the auspices of the REFTK SAYDAM CENTER OF HYGIENE to provide support to the ECO Member States with regard to air pollution problems. The Member States were requested to study the proposal and furnish their views and comments to ECO Secretariat for appropriate decision.

61. For promoting environmentally sustainable energy and industrial development etc., within ECO region, the Council supported the pursuance of more regional cooperation and actions by ECO Secretariat on issues related to active collaboration with governments as well as private sectors within the ECO region for integrating environment and development, management and protection of fresh water resources, rehabilitation of the Aral Sea.

62. The Council also emphasized on the Member States cooperation concerning the promotion of environmental awareness within ECO region, urban environmental improvement, harmonization on relevant environmental rules, regulations and legislations, coordination for reduction/control of natural/accidental land/sea disasters etc.

63. The Council reviewed the Working Paper prepared by the Secretariat on Minerals sector and recommended the proposal for holding an international Round Table Conference (RTC) on Investment Promotion for the Mining Industry in the ECO countries either in Iran or Kazakhstan with the cooperation of UN ESCAP and requested all Member States to provide necessary assistance for the said Conference as it has been outlined in the said Working Paper.

D) AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY DIRECTORATE.

64. The Council took note of the urgency of receipt of information from the Member States in the following areas and urged the Member States who have not yet done so to supply the requisite information/data latest by August, 1998:

- i) the Existing Agricultural Research Institutes in the Member States and status of their Institutional Linkages;
- ii) data on Exportable Surpluses and Deficits necessitating imports of Agricultural Commodities in the ECO Member State's. The Council requested the Secretariat to prepare a common format, to enable the Member Countries to provide the requested data and information in an orderly manner.

The Secretariat-is however, urged to facilitate the development of the institutional linkages amongst agricultural research institutes of the Member States.

65. The Council appreciated the offer of the Iranian Technical Center for Desertification to prepare a proposal for cooperation in the field of Desertification, Forestry and Environment and urged the Member States to share their experiences and knowledge to deal with this matter on regional basis. On the basis of the views/comments received from Member States on the proposal, the Secretariat will prepare a working paper for an Expert-Level meeting of the Member States to be held during second half of 1998.

66. The Council reiterated the need for regional cooperation in identification and development of dwarf fruit trees and agreed to include mangoes, bananas, date-palms, grapes, citrus fruits in addition to apples in the proposal and urged the Member States to share their experiences with each other in this important area. The Council requested the interested Member States to send their national reports to the Secretariat on the possibility of cooperation in these areas for circulation among the Member States to elicit their views.

67. The Council welcomed the offer of Pakistan to share their experience with other Member States in the Management of Mangrove woodland in Arid and Semi-Arid Zones.

68. The Council noted with appreciation the cooperation among Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan in the field of sugar Beet Seeds Development and encouraged the other Member States to share the available experiences on regional basis.

69. The council reviewed the following five proposed seminars/studies:

- i)** Comprehensive Study for the Application of Improved Methods for Maximization of Agricultural Production.
- ii)** Regional Survey to determine Exportable Surpluses and Deficits necessitating imports of Agricultural Commodities.
- iii)** Regional Study on the Prevention of Plants Diseases.
- iv)** Regional Study on the Prevention Livestock Diseases.
- v)** Seminar on Food Security in the ECO Region in cooperation with the FAO during 1998.

Regarding the above studies the Council recommended that the first study may be taken up during 1999. Regarding the Regional Survey at (ii) above, the Secretariat shall prepare a short research paper on receipt of complete data/information by August, 1998 and circulate it among the Member States. The Council welcomed the offer of Turkish Government to host three events included in the ECO Calendar of Events/Meetings of Agriculture Directorate at serial No. 2 to 4 and agreed that the Seminar on the Food Security in the ECO Region sponsored by FAO during 1998 may be held in Iran with the cooperation of ECO/FAO.

Industry

70. The Council urged Member States to send requisite information regarding the following areas latest by August, 1998:

- i)** Focal points in the Member States for dissemination of information on Scientific and Technical fields.
- ii)** Information regarding compendium of incentives and concessions may be furnished by the Member States to the ECO Secretariat to enable it to prepare the compendium of incentives and concessions.
- iii)** Focal points in R&D and Technological Development.

71. The Council emphasized the need for early finalization of Regional Treaty for Promotion and Protection of Investment among the ECO Member States and proposed that the OIC agreement along with the draft prepared by ECO Secretariat may be circulated to the Member States for their views/comments. In the light of comments received thereon the ECO Secretariat will prepare a draft for consideration by the of the Experts Group from the Member States to be held in one of the Central Asian Republics, Azerbaijan or the ECO Secretariat Headquarters.

72. Regarding the utilization of expertise the ECO-Consultancy Seeds Development and encouraged the other Member States to share .the available experiences on regional basis.

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72. Regarding the utilization of expertise of the ECO-Consultancy and Engineering Company (CEC), the Council asked that the relevant Company may hold 1-2 days meeting to brief the Member States' relevant officials about the available expertise and resources of the Company either in one of the Member States willing to host it or in ECO HQs.

73. The Council welcomed the recent initiatives of ECO Secretariat for strengthening cooperation with UNIDO and ESCAP. While appreciating the recent proposals in the Industrial Sector received from UNIDO, the Council urged Member States to furnish their views and comments thereon latest by August, 1998. The Council also asked the ECO Secretariat to follow up on the issues which have been discussed by ESCAP.

E) COOPERATION IN THE FIELDS OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND CULTURE, DRUG CONTROL AND THE NEW DIRECTORATE OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND STATISTIC.

HEALTH AND POPULATION WELFARE:

74. The RPC recalling the meeting of ECO Health Ministers held in Tehran in January 1994, made the following recommendations in this regard:

- A Regional Plan of Action in the field of Health and Environment may be formulated in collaboration with and support of WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and other relevant international institutions.
- ECO Member States were urged to furnish full details on their specialized training and research institutions.
- ECO Member States were requested to furnish to the Secretariat full details of their focal points in the Health Sector by July 1998.

75. The Delegation of Islamic Republic of Iran, reiterating their earlier proposal undertook to submit detailed programmes in the following areas of cooperation:

- Management in the primary health care.
- Disease surveillance networking.
- Safe Delivery and Maternal Care.
- Community Involvement and Intersectoral Collaboration.
- Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Center in Population and Family Planning.
- Control Iodine Deficiency of Disorders.

76. The Delegation of the Republic of Tajikistan undertook to send to the Secretariat their written proposal related to "Surveys and Monitoring on State of Epidemics in the ECO Region".

EDUCATION SCIENCE AND CULTURE:

77. The RPC took note of the document on Modalities of ECO Awards as finalized by CPR which will be submitted to COM for approval.

78. The RPC noted with satisfaction that all relevant documents of ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Educational Institute and the ECO Science Foundation as well as the charter of ECO Educational Institute have been finalized by the tripartite working group. After due consideration by the CPR these will be submitted to the COM for approval.

79. The RPC agreed that the following projects shall continue to remain on the agenda and shall be followed up by the Secretariat until the above-mentioned three ECO Institutions had been established and become operational.

- i) Production of video-clip on the cultural heritage of the Member States.
- ii) Preservation and restoration of common cultural and architectural heritage.
- iii) Familiarization with ECO languages and literature.
- iv) Directory of ECO educational systems, institutions and curricula of major higher educational Institutions.
- v) Provision of higher expanded vocational training within the region for skilled workers in specific fields.
- vi) Establishment of the regional network on biotechnology. vii) cooperation in the field of sports.

80. The RPC called upon the Member States to send their up-dated information about ECO Scholarships and Students Exchange Programme including the teaching languages as per the questionnaire already circulated by the Secretariat.

DRUG CONTROL:

81. Considering the alarming dimensions of drug problems in the ECO Region, RPC welcomed the signing of the UNDCP Project Document titled; "Establishment of Drug Control Coordination Unit (DCCU) at the ECO Secretariat" and expressed the view that the implementation of the project is expected to play a crucial role in the promotion of coordination of drug control activities in the ECO Region.

82. The Council also expressed its full support to the Secretariat to establish DCCU, providing necessary assistance for its operations in accordance with the parameters agreed to in the CPR. In this connection, Member States were urged to furnish to the Secretariat their focal points and attend training seminars as

83. The RPC agreed to recommend to the COM the necessity to adopt a Resolution on measures with regard to enhancing control of international trade of precursors which are used in illicit manufacturing of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE DIRECTORATE OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH AND STATISTICS

84. RPC welcomed the establishment of the new Directorate for Economic Research and Statistics and urged the relevant institutions in the Member States to fully cooperate with this Directorate by ensuring regular supply of data and statistics on different sectors of their respective economies and by designating as Focal Points their corresponding institutes or departments.

85. RPC expressed satisfaction with regard to the Secretariat's efforts to obtain technical assistance/experts from international organizations such as, UNDP, OIC, etc.,

and encouraged the development of such relationships with other relevant international organizations.

86. While appreciating the idea of the ECO Guidebook with an Internet version, the Council called for comprehensive revision of the first draft of the said Guidebook which has been circulated to the Member States. The Meeting also requested that the Secretariat continue its efforts to obtain views/comments of the Member States regarding the Guidebook. The Secretariat may convene a high-level experts meeting of the Member States to arrive at a common understanding on definition, scope, format etc. for preparation of ECO Guidebook to ensure its comparability with the international standards.

Agenda Item No. 7:

FINALIZATION OF THE DRAFT ANNUAL ECO CALENDAR OF EVENTS/MEETINGS AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 1998.

87. The Council reviewed the draft ECO Calendar of Events/Meetings of ECO Secretariat and initiated certain modifications as well as relevant suggestions/recommendations and finalized it for submission to the COM for approval. The said ECO Calendar of Events/Meetings 1998-99 is placed at ANNEX-VI. The Council also appreciated the kind offer of some Member States who accepted to host certain ECO Events/Meetings and called upon the other Member States to volunteer to host those events for which venues have not yet been finalized yet. The Council also urged all Member States to confirm their participation in the scheduled events.

88. The Council shall endorse the Calendar of Meetings/Events and Work Programmes in its next year's report based on the appraisal and evaluation of the Secretariat about the achievements of the said meetings.

Agenda Item No. 8:

PREPARATION AND CONSIDERATION OF THE ANNUAL ECONOMIC REPORT FOR 1997.

89. In pursuance of Article XXVI of the Treaty of Izmir, the draft Annual Economic Report of ECO for 1997 prepared by the newly established ECO Directorate of Economic Research & Statistics was circulated during the meeting for consideration. The Council was informed that this year's report includes separate components as country profile, economic outlook and basic statistical data on each Member Country. This is followed by comparative data on the economies of the Member States in the form of Summary Tables.

90. The Council was further informed that efforts have been made to use the first hand information/data supplied by some of the Member States. However, where the upto date figures were not available international sources have been utilized to fill the gaps.

91. The Member States were requested to convey their views/comments on their respective portions of the ECO Annual Economic Report, within a period of one month, to enable the Secretariat to finalize the Report for circulation among relevant institutions, organizations, agencies etc.

Agenda Item No. 9:
ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

92. No issue was raised under this item of agenda.

Agenda Item No. 10:
DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

93. The Council welcomed the offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the 9th meeting -of the RPC in Istanbul during the second half of February 1999,-on dates to be notified later.

Agenda Item No. 11:
IADOPTION OF THE REPORT.

94 The Report of the Eighth Meeting of the Regional Planning Council was adopted unanimously.

Agenda Item No. 12:
VOTE OF THANKS.

95. The Heads of the delegations of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey expressed their deep appreciation and thanks to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and the warm hospitality extended to them.

96. The Council concluded with a vote of thanks to the Chair for conducting the deliberations of the meeting in a smooth and efficient manner. Expressing its satisfaction with the arrangements made by the ECO Secretariat to hold this meeting in their own premises for the first time, the Council also appreciated the efforts made by the Secretary General and his staff for preparing the comprehensive Working Papers which facilitated the work of the Council.