

**Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the
ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**
(13th August 2014, 1500-1800 hours, ECO Secretariat)

Report

The Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) held its Extra-ordinary Meeting at ECO Secretariat, on 13th August, 2014, under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Majid Bizmark, Permanent Representative/Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The meeting was attended by the Ambassadors, the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of all ECO Member States except Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan. The ECO Secretary General alongwith concerned staff also attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached as **Annex-I**.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

2. The Council adopted the following agenda for deliberations:
 1. Adoption of the Agenda
 2. Briefing by the ECO Secretariat on the state of play of the reform process (COM mandate)
 3. Exchange of views and discussions on "Proposed Outline for Implementation of the Recommendations by 3rd ECO Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on Enhancing efficiency, dynamism and visibility of ECO" and its finalization (as per paragraph 3 of Tehran Communiqué)
 4. Any other Business
 - i. Secretariat Budget 2014

Agenda Item No.2

Briefing by the ECO Secretariat on the state of play of the reform process (COM mandate)

3. During the 194th CPR Meeting, the Member States were requested to provide their views/comments, in writing, on outline paper till 31st July, 2014. The Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey had submitted their views/comments to the Secretariat. The Republic of Azerbaijan proposed to reschedule the instant meeting to the first week of September. The Secretariat apprised the Council that the COM had given a mandate to the CPR to adopt the roadmap for implementation of the EPG recommendations till August, 2014, so to meet the deadline given by the COM, meeting has not been postponed. Secretariat further informed that 12th Working Group Meeting on Amendments to the ECO Staff Regulations (held on 8th July 2014), requested the Secretariat to provide Terms of Reference (ToR) for hiring Consultant on reform

process, for consideration by Special CPR Meeting on 13 August 2014. The Secretariat vide its Note Verbale No.ADM/PER/2014/1165 dated 24 July 2014 has circulated the above-mentioned ToRs and only received comments from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, which will soon be circulated to the Member States for consideration.

Agenda Item No.3

Exchange of views and discussions on "Proposed Outline for Implementation of the Recommendations by 3rd ECO Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on Enhancing efficiency, dynamism and visibility of ECO" and its finalization (as per paragraph 3 of Tehran Communiqué)

4. The 21st Meeting of the Council of Ministers decided to boost up EPG sponsored changes as well as any other regulatory, institutional and budgetary reforms to make ECO an efficient and dynamic Organization. The CPR was mandated to provide the Secretary General with necessary support to mobilize in house and external resources and expertise.

5. On the sidelines of the 24th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (February 2014) held in ECO Secretariat, Tehran, the Secretary General chaired an informal brainstorming meeting with the participation of the heads of delegation of the Member States. The purpose of the Meeting was to discuss the reform process. The brainstorming meeting was in consensus that the ECO Secretariat would soon revisit the proposed roadmap for the implementation of the EPG recommendations and submit it to the Member States for their consideration. The revised roadmap will then serve as the outline for implementation of the mandate given by the 21st Meeting of the Council of Ministers.

6. Secretariat vide its Note Verbale No.ADM/PER/2014/626 dated 27th April, 2014, circulated a document titled "Proposed Outline for Implementation of the Recommendations by 3rd ECO Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on enhancing efficiency, dynamism and visibility of ECO" for views/comments of the Member States.

7. The ECO Secretariat presented the proposed Outline paper during the 194th CPR meeting. The Member States, while appreciating the Secretariat for preparing the Outline, entered into a general discussion on the document. It was decided to allocate an Extra-ordinary CPR meeting, scheduled for 13 August 2014, to discuss the proposed Outline in detail. Member States were also requested to submit their written views/comments on the Outline by 31st July 2014.

8. Ambassador of Pakistan apprised the Council that the outline paper is still under consideration by the capital. Ambassador, while giving the preliminary views on different sections of the outline paper, reiterated that Pakistan's commitments/obligations to the ECO's activities and objectives. Pakistan will keep on playing constructive role in the activities and events of ECO. He stated that the formal

views on the outline paper will be shared with the Secretariat as and when received from the capital. Pakistan delegation drew the attention that the Member States provided different views on subject document and asked the Secretariat to share the methodology to converge on one point by all Member States. Delegation opined that the outline paper may be divided into different parts and Member States be requested to submit their written views either in agreement or disagreement to the Secretariat before convening the next meeting.

9. Turkish delegation supported the contention of the Ambassador of Pakistan and proposed to work on the general principal including functionality, practicality and beneficial situation of the organization.

10. Iranian delegation insinuated that the ECO should focus on the concrete projects rather than holding of conferences/meetings.

11. Secretary General, while stressing the participation of the Ambassadors of ECO Member States in the CPR meeting, suggested to convene Senior Officials Meeting with the participation of the responsible officials from Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the ECO Member States, enabling the Secretariat to finalize the subject document. Secretary General further proposed the Council to set a deadline for submission of written views by the Member States.

12. Delegations of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan informed that they are still waiting feedback from their capitals and supported the proposal for postponement of the instant meeting.

13. After extensive deliberations, the Council decided to convene the High Level Expert Group Meeting (HLEGM) in mid October, 2014 at the ECO Secretariat with the participation of responsible officials from Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the ECO Member States, for finalization of the outline paper for implementation of the EPG recommendations. It urged the Member States to provide their inputs till 15th September 2014, however, the Member State who failed to submit their inputs within stipulated period, their position will be considered in agreement.

Agenda Item No.4

Any other Business

i. Secretariat Budget 2014

14. Secretary General, while appreciating the efforts of the Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic for remitting the partial amount of arrears for one year towards the Secretariat's budget, hoped that they may soon transfer the remaining amount of their outstanding dues. He informed that the Secretariat have received a communication from the Republic of Kazakhstan wherein they have reduced their budget contribution to US\$220,000/- unilaterally and remitted said amount to the Secretariat account. He suggested the Council to consider the Secretariat budget

2014 as approved because the Republic of Kazakhstan already paid the partial amount with the abovementioned understanding. He gave an overview of the outstanding dues of the Member States towards the Secretariat budget which exceeds about five million dollars. Due to the arrears, the Secretariat finds itself in a precarious financial position, which is hampering the smooth functioning of the organization. He requested the Member States to resolve the issue of outstanding dues amicably in order to mitigate the financial situation of the organization. He advised the Member States to pay their contributions according to the scale of assessment approved by the 18th COM for the period 2009-2015 which cannot be changed until the next consideration by the COM. He mentioned that pending the approval of budget 2014 will not allow the Secretariat to prepare/submit the budget 2015 for approval and requested the Republic of Kazakhstan to do so, as soon as possible.

15. Kazakhstan delegation expressed their position regarding revision in scale of assessment relating to Kazakhstan for subsequent financial years. He informed that they will clarify their position regarding budget approval within one week.

16. Afghanistan delegation informed that the Ministry of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has approved the Secretariat budget 2014 and instructed their Consulate in Bonn to pay their contributions towards Secretariat account as soon as possible. One of the reason for non-transfer of their contributions is the economic sanctions imposed on the host country.

17. After extensive deliberations, the Council urged the Republic of Kazakhstan to clarify their position regarding approval of budget 2014 until the upcoming CPR meeting, which is scheduled for 27th August, 2014. It urged the Member States, who are in arrears, to pay their outstanding dues at the earliest possible.

ii. *Inclusion of “2nd International Conference on Energy, Regional Integration and Socio-economic Development” in the list of events to be supported from Special Support Fund (SSF).*

18. Secretary General informed that the 2nd Baku Forum of ECO Economic Think-Tank is being organized by the Institute for Scientific Research on Economic Reforms (ISRER) under Ministry of Economy and Industry of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 1-3 October, 2014 at Baku, Azerbaijan, which has already been included in the Annual ECO Calendar of Events for 2014-2015 and the list of events to be supported from Special Support Fund (SSF). On the sidelines of the Forum, the host authorities are hosting, back-to-back, 2nd International Conference on Energy, Regional Integration and Socio-economic Development. The host authorities are providing hospitality to one participant from each ECO Member States to attend the said Conference. At the same time, requested the Secretariat to cover the cost of air tickets for one participant from each ECO Member States, participating in the subject Conference. He proposed the Council either to include

this event in the list of events to be supported from Special Support Fund or to substitute with another event which could not be realized in 2014.

19. Pakistan delegation intervened that the Secretariat should follow only those events which have already been approved by the Council rather than introducing new events at this stage. Delegation added that if the Secretariat wants to substitute this event with another approved event then they may bring separate agenda item in the next CPR meeting.

20. The Council instructed the Secretariat to bring this issue as a separate agenda item in the upcoming CPR meeting.

iii. Post of Steno-Secretaries

21. Afghanistan delegation referred to the Secretariat's Note Verbale dated 16th July, 2014 wherein it was mentioned that the post of Mr. Shir Agha Hamidi (Steno-Secretary, Cat-II, P1) will expire on 30th November, 2014. He expressed his concern regarding insufficient representation of Afghanistan in the Secretariat despite the fact that Afghanistan is paying contribution more than some other Member States. Delegation cautioned that marginalizing one Member State will not serve the purpose of mutual cooperation and urged the Council to pay more attention to this issue.

22. Secretary General explained that they are trying to increase the number of professional staff, to supplement the core activities of the organization. The Secretariat requested the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to nominate a professional candidate in place of Mr. Shir Agha Hamidi, who can be more useful for the organization. Referring to the request of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for allocation of higher positions in the Secretariat, he stated that this issue will be considered during ongoing reform process. He suggested to freeze these posts until the new proposals are adopted by the upcoming COM for strengthening the core activities of the organization.

23. Pakistan delegation raised the similar concern that three Steno-Secretaries are going to complete their tenure in a few months. Since, the selection procedure in Pakistan is lengthy, he requested the Secretariat to announce these post as soon as possible. He pointed out that the nomenclature and qualification of these posts had already been approved and the Secretariat or countries itself cannot nominate any other candidate except the one who fulfils the prescribed qualification. He persuaded the Secretariat to follow the existing procedures until the re-distribution of posts is finalized among the Member States. He expressed that Pakistan will nominate their candidate according to prescribed procedures and will not leave their posts vacant.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr. Mohammad Ebrahim Barekzai, Counsellor

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

- H.E. Mr. Majid Bizmark, Permanent Representative/Director General
- Mr. Abulfazl Mohammad Alikhani, Director of ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Ahmad Safari, Deputy Director of ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Ahmad Karimi, Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau

The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- Mr. Ermek Sadykbekov, Second Secretary

The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- Mr. Zamirbek Beishenaliev, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- H.E. Mr. Noor Muhammad Jadmani, Ambassador
- Mr. Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmad, Counsellor

The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- Mrs. Dilorro Mirova, Economic Attaché

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:

- Mr. Baris Saygin, Counsellor
- Mr. Murat Selim Beken, Third Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- Mr. Bakhodir Tashmanov, Third Secretary

The ECO Secretariat:

- H.E. Mr. Shamil Aleskerov, Secretary General
- Mr. Altaf Asghar, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Hayri Maraslioglu, Deputy Secretary General
- Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, Deputy Secretary General
- Mrs. Mavjuda Nurova, Assistant Director (CFU)
- Mr. A. Gaffar Erbek, Chef d' Cabinet
- Mr. Bahram Heidari, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Shafqat Amir, Secretary
- Mr. Muhammad Adnan, Administrative Assistant
- Ms. Aynur Mammadova, Russian Translator
- Mrs. Rakhshon Gardakova, Russian Translator
- Mr. Amir Mohammad Javaheri, Persian Translator
- Mr. Mohammad Reza Malakooti, IT Expert