

202nd Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Report

11th May 2015
Kashan City, Iran

Report

INAUGURATION OF THE MEETING

The 202nd Meeting of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) was inaugurated in a formal ceremony in Fin Garden in Kashan. In his inaugural remarks, H.E. Mr. Seyed Mohammad Nazem Razavi, the honourable Mayor of Kashan welcomed the visiting delegates and briefed them about the glorious historic and cultural past of the Kashan City. The Mayor presented a brief overview of the small, medium and large industries of Kashan and touched upon the touristic potential of the City. Based on the City's rich cultural and historic legacy, the Mayor also presented a series of potential area for cooperation with ECO and its Member States in various sectors including tourism, culture, industry and agriculture. These included, among others, a "Regional Fund for Cooperatives"; Regional Handicrafts Market; cultural, historical and Eco-tourism; herbal medicine manufacturing and marketing; ornamental fish farming and marketing; traditional architectural rehabilitation; as well as in energy and transit. He also offered readiness to enter into Sister City agreements with the cities of the ECO Member States.

2. In his opening statement, ECO Secretary General H.E. Dr. Shamil Aleskerov expressed his gratitude to the Mayor of Kashan for hosting CPR meeting in the historic and beautiful city of Kashan. He described CPR as one of the most important forums of the ECO where most of the major issues are discussed by the Member States. He further referred to the role played by the CPR and the Permanent Representatives of ECO Member States in nearly three decades contributing to the development of this Organization. He again appreciated hosting CPR in Kashan, the city of a great history and civilization. Referring to the Mayor's proposed areas for cooperation with ECO, Secretary General welcomed the proposals and expressed readiness to examine them.

3. President of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) H.E. Mr. Iftikhar Hussain Arif, while acknowledging the continuous cooperation of the Kashan Municipality with the ECI, articulated his profound thanks to the Mayor of Kashan for providing a platform to share a common cultural heritage. He highlighted that the main objective of the ECI is to raise awareness in public and promote the common cultural heritage of the Region and underscored the distinctive features of the Kashan city in this regard.

4. The working session of the 202nd CPR meeting was held in University of Kashan where Chancellor of the University, Professor Abbas Zeraa'at, welcomed the visiting delegates and gave an overview of the curriculum activities of the Kashan University. He also made a proposal to organize a conference in Kashan University on the establishment of an "ECO Observatory Center".

5. The CPR was chaired by H.E. Mr. Majid Bizmark, Permanent Representative/Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was attended by the Ambassadors, the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of all ECO Member States except Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The ECO

Secretary General along with concerned officials of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex-I.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The Meeting considered the request of the Islamic Republic of Iran to explore the possibility of the participation of the Minister of Health of Iraq in the 2nd ECO Health Ministerial Meeting scheduled for 19 May 2015 on the sidelines of the 68th World Health Assembly in Geneva. The Council adopted the following agenda for its meeting:

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of 201st CPR meeting
3. Implementation of the EPG Recommendations and ECO Reform Process: Consideration of the proposed decisions by the Working Group
4. Consideration of the requests for renewal of Observer Status
5. Preparation for the Extraordinary Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting
6. Administrative matters
7. Any other business
8. Date of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of the Draft Report of 201st CPR meeting

7. The Council adopted the Draft Report of 201st CPR meeting. The adopted Report, contained in the document ECO/CPR/201/3, was consequently circulated to the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale dated 13th May, 2015.

Agenda Item No.3

Implementation of the EPG Recommendations and ECO Reform Process: Consideration of the proposed decisions by the Working Group

8. The Working Group had so far drafted some decisions for the implementation of EPG recommendations. The 25th RPC meeting, *"encouraged the Secretariat to submit to CPR the already drafted decisions for approval, expediting the implementation of some EPG recommendations."* (Paragraph 20 of the Report of the 25th RPC meeting) Accordingly, the Secretariat circulated among the Member States the proposed decisions by the Working Group through its Note Verbale No. No.CFU/201st CPR/2015/420 dated 24th March 2015, for possible consideration during the 201st CPR Meeting. During the 201st CPR Meeting, the Secretariat briefed the Council on the outcome of the Working Group reflected in around 40 proposed decisions, some of them had already been implemented on ad-hoc basis. Secretariat also brought to the attention of the CPR that two meetings of the Working Group dedicated to the critical issue of scale of assessments had not produced any result, mainly because of lack of participation of most of the Member States as well as the sensitivity of the issue.

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9. The 202nd CPR Meeting was informed by Secretariat that the Working Group had convened its meetings on 22 April, 2015 and 6 May 2015 to work on the package of decisions, scale of assessments and arrears. On the issue of arrears, the Working Group had proposed visits to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. (Note Verbale No. ADM/EPG/2015/678 dated 30th April 2015) Only the Islamic Republic of Pakistan had conveyed its consent to the proposed visits through its formal correspondence.

10. Secretary General also briefed the Meeting on his recent talks to embassies of countries in arrears which showed that the proposed visits had not been welcomed. Some Ambassadors and Representatives of the Member States also shared their views on how to deal with the critical issue of arrears. Accordingly, CPR discussed in details the optimal course of action and decided that the Secretary General may send a letter to the honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan explaining the state of play of relationship between ECO and Uzbekistan highlighting the critical issue of outstanding arrears of Uzbekistan which has seriously affected the Organization and its activities. The CPR also proposed that the honourable Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the ECO Member States may also take up the issue in their bilateral talks with the Uzbek high-level authorities.

11. On the scale of assessments, the Secretariat explained that upon the mandate by the Working Group, a detailed report on scale of assessments along with supporting documents will be submitted to the Member States for their consideration. In this regard, the Secretariat had already requested the Member States to provide necessary information on their cash and in-kind contributions to the Organization in the last 10 years to be utilized as the supporting materials for the Report so as to enable proper decision on new scale of assessments.

12. On the first package of proposed decisions for implementation of the EPG recommendations, the Secretariat informed the CPR that Working Group had agreed on the proposed "Five-year Calendar of ECO Principal Meetings". Therefore, the first package of proposed decisions contains the proposed decisions as already circulated to the Member States through Note Verbale CFU/201st CPR/2015/420 and the proposed Calendar.

13. The Council agreed that the first package of the proposed decisions (Attached as Annex-II) be considered by the Member States with a view to early decision on their approval.

Agenda Item No.4

Consideration of the requests for renewal of Observer Status

14. The Council of Ministers (COM) in its 20th Meeting held on 15 October 2012 in Baku granted observer status to the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) in accordance with Article XIV (4-5) of the Treaty of Izmir. The Council had also agreed with the proposal of the Republic of Turkey to grant Observer Status to the Turkish Cypriot State. As per the *Modalities for Granting Observer and Dialogue Partnership Status at ECO*, "the grant of observer status shall enter into force immediately

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after the approval of the COM” and “shall be granted for an initial period of three years. It may be renewed for three-year periods upon receipt of a request from Regional and International Organizations/ States/Institutions to continue their observer status, and keeping in view the progress made by ECO in promoting mutually beneficial cooperation with the concerned partner”. In the light of the aforementioned Modalities, the Observer Status granted to the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States and the Turkish Cypriot State shall come to an end on 14 October 2015.

15. Turkish Cypriot State and the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States in their communications dated 11 and 16 April 2015 respectively, had submitted their requests for renewal of their Observer Status at ECO. These requests had been shared by the Secretariat with the Member States on 21 April 2015 (No.IR/Turkic Council-TCS/2015/578). The inclusion of this issue in the agenda of the upcoming Extraordinary COM Meeting had also been discussed during the 201st Meeting of the CPR held on 13 April 2015 where CPR approved the Draft Agenda for the Extraordinary COM Meeting along with the proposal of the Republic of Turkey for Renewal of "Observer Status" of Observer Members to be included in the COM agenda. The Secretariat vide its Note Verbale No.IR/Turkic Council-TCS/2015/685 dated 3 May, 2015 had circulated a review report on the progress of cooperation between ECO and the Observer Members.

16. The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan had conveyed the concurrence of its Government to the extension of the Observer status of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States and the Turkish Cypriot State on 30 April 2015.

17. Representative of Kyrgyz Republic informed the CPR that they were still waiting a response from the capital regarding inclusion of subject agenda item in the Draft Agenda of Extraordinary COM meeting. The Ambassador of Turkey reminded the Council that in its previous meeting, the Council had agreed to make a decision on this matter and expressed its disappointment that a delegation still requested additional time for agreeing on the extension of the observer status of the Turkish Cypriot State and the Cooperation Council of Turkish Speaking States. He therefore proposed a silence procedure for taking a decision to this end in a timely manner.

18. Ambassador of Tajikistan supported the proposal of the Republic of Turkey to renew the observer status of observer members in ECO and proposed to grant such status to the Cooperation Council for the Persian Speaking States which includes Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan. Iranian delegation informed that upon completion of legal procedures of the Council of Persian Speaking States, a request for observer status may officially be submitted to ECO.

19. Upon the proposal of the Ambassador of Turkey, the Council requested Kyrgyz Republic to convey their feedback within two weeks timeframe. In absence of any observations from the Member States within two weeks, the issue will be incorporated in the Agenda of the Extraordinary COM meeting. CPR, in line with the “Modalities for Granting Observer and Dialogue Partnership Status at ECO”, may also recommend to

COM to consider renewal of the "Observer Status" of the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States and Turkish Cypriot State.

Agenda Item No. 5

Preparation for the Extraordinary Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting

i. General Information

20. Iranian delegation informed the CPR of the postponement of NAM Ministerial Meeting. Accordingly, the Extraordinary COM meeting scheduled to be held back-to-back with the NAM Meeting, (8th June 2015) may also be postponed. Delegation further informed that the new dates will be communicated through further coordination with ECO Secretariat.

21. The Council requested the Secretariat to officially convey the postponement to the Member States, at the earliest.

ii. Draft Agenda

22. The Council reviewed the Draft Agenda of Extraordinary COM Meeting and took note of its discussions under Agenda Item 4 above.

Agenda Item No. 6

Administrative matters

a) Nomination for the post of the Secretary General

23. Turkish Ambassador informed that the Republic of Turkey had nominated H.E. Ambassador Halil Ibrahim Akca for the post of ECO Secretary General which will fall vacant as of 13th August 2015. The Secretariat had accordingly circulated among the Member States his nomination along with his C.V. for consideration by the instant CPR meeting.

24. After deliberations, the Council acknowledged that as per Articles IX-2 and XII-1 of the Treaty of Izmir, the Secretary General shall be elected and appointed unanimously by the Council of Ministers for a non-renewable term of three years. In view of the fact that the next meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers was still pending, the Council agreed that the concurrence of honourable Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the ECO Member States with the appointment may be sought through circulation and instructed the Secretariat to take necessary actions in this regard.

b) Recommendations of the Selection Panel

25. The Council received the recommendations by the Selection Panel and made the following decisions:

i. Assistant Director Coordination & Follow-up (Category-I, D1)

26. The Council appointed Mr. Rahmonov Bahodur (**Tajik national**), as Assistant Director, (Category-I, D1) in place of Mrs. Nurova Mavjuda Mulloevna, for a period of three years effective from the date of his joining the Secretariat.

27. Upon the request of the Secretariat, the Council extended the tenure of Mrs. Nurova Mavjuda Mulloevna for one month until 18th June 2015.

ii. Legal Adviser (Category-II, P3)

28. The Council appointed Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar (**Iranian national**), as Legal Adviser, (Category-II, P3) in place of Mr. Bahram Heidari, for a period of four years effective from the date of his joining the Secretariat.

29. Some Member States expressed their gratitude to Mr. Bahram Heidari for his services rendered to the Organization and wished him a successful and prosperous future.

iii. Social Secretary designated as the Programme Officer for Human Resources and Sustainable Development (Category-II, P2)

30. Pakistan delegation informed the Council that although his delegation was not yet satisfied by the information presented by the Secretariat on the allocation of the post of Social-Secretary and based on the commitment made by the honourable Ambassador of Pakistan made in the last CPR meeting, Pakistan would approve the Iranian nomination. The delegation of Pakistan also brought to the attention of the CPR that his delegation may raise the issue of distribution of posts when the replacement of Mr. Mohammad Hosein Amini, Iranian national, will be discussed in the Selection Panel at the end of his tenure.

31. Accordingly, the Council, appointed Mr. Hossein Alibakhshi, Iranian national, against the post of Social Secretary (Category-II, P2), designated as the Programme Officer for Human Resources and Sustainable Development, for a period of 4 years effective from the date of his joining the Secretariat. .

iv. Russian Translator (Category-II, P2)

32. Upon request by the Secretary General and agreement of the delegation of Tajikistan, the Council decided that following a successful interview by the Secretariat, Mr. Boboev Amriyo (**Tajik national**), will be appointed as Russian Translator (Category-II, P2) for the remaining period of Mrs. Rakhshon Gardakova, Tajik National, who will leave the Secretariat before the end of her tenure.

v. Programme Officer (Category-II, P1)

33. The Council appointed Mr. Alireza Zolfagharizadeh (**Iranian national**), as Programme Officer (Category-II, P1), in place of Ms. Fereshteh Khorsandnia, for a period of four years effective from the date of his joining the Secretariat.

Agenda Item No.8

Any other business

34. Under this agenda item, the following issues were raised:

i. Participation of the Minister of Health of Iraq in the 2nd ECO Health Ministerial Meeting

35. Secretariat informed that so far the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran (host), the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Turkey had confirmed their participation in the 2nd ECO Health Ministerial Meeting scheduled to take place on 19th May, 2015 on the sidelines of the 68th World Health Assembly in Geneva. It was also informed that the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to United Nations in Geneva had made necessary arrangements for the meeting and conveyed that the Minister of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran will host official dinner for the participating delegates.

36. Iranian delegation recalled that the Minister of Health of the Islamic Republic of Iran had proposed to invite the Minister of Health of Iraq in the 2nd ECO Health Ministerial Meeting for enhancing bilateral and multilateral cooperation between ECO Member States with Iraq in the field of health.

37. The Council agreed to extend invitation to the Minister of Health of Iraq to participate in the 2nd ECO Health Ministerial Meeting scheduled to be held on 19th May, 2015 on the sidelines of the 68th World Health Assembly in Geneva.

ii. Financial Contributions of the ECO Member States

38. Secretary General informed that so far Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of Turkey had paid their annual assessed contributions towards the Secretariat budget 2015. He urged the remaining Member States to pay their contributions as well as their arrears at the earliest as required for the smooth functioning of the Organization.

39. Ambassador of Tajikistan informed that they would pay their contributions in the third quarter of this year. Afghanistan delegation also made its commitment to pay their annual contributions soon.

Agenda Item No.9

Date of the next CPR meeting

40. The CPR decided to convene its next (203rd) meeting on **Monday, 8th June 2015** at 1000 hours at the ECO Secretariat.

Annex-I
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr. Mohammad Ebrahim Barekzai, Counsellor

Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- H.E. Mr. Javanshir Akhundov, Ambassador
- Mr. Kanan Nazarov, Counsellor

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. Tofigh Sedigh Mostahkam, Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau

Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- Mr. Kochorbaev Musa, First Secretary

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Mr. Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmad, Counsellor

Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador
- Mrs. Manizha Rahimi, Third Secretary
- Mrs. Farangis Bekova, Attaché

Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:

- H.E. Mr. Rtza Hakan TEKİN, Ambassador
- Ms. Sevgi Ilhan, Second Secretary

The ECO Secretariat:

- H.E. Mr. Shamil Aleskerov, Secretary General
- Mr. Seyed Jalaedin Alavi Sabzevari, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Jehanzeb Khan, Assistant Director (IR)
- Mrs. Mavjuda Nurova, Assistant Director (CFU)
- Mr. Bahram Heidari, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Shafqat Amir, Steno-Secretary
- Ms. Nurgul Duissenova, Russian Translator
- Mr. Amir Mohammad Javaheri, Persian Translator
- Mr. Hamid Reza Soltani, Protocol Officer
