

200th Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Report

18th February 2015
Qazvin, Iran

Report

The Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) held its 200th Meeting in the City of Qazvin, the Islamic Republic of Iran, on 18th February, 2015. Mr. Masoud Nosrati, Mayor of Qazvin Province, in his inaugural address, welcomed the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of the ECO Member States as well as the ECO Secretary General to Qazvin and thanked them for convening their 200th CPR Meeting in this historic city of Iran. Highlighting the great potential resources in Qazvin province, he called upon the ECO Member States to explore the possibility of collaboration with this Province, particularly in different fields, including trade, investment, transport, agriculture, industry, etc. He also extended following offers to ECO and its Member States:

- i. Cooperation in health tourism utilizing Qazvin facilities;
- ii. Cooperation between ECO municipalities and the Qazvin-based World Assembly of Islamic Cities, including the participation of Mayors of ECO Member States in the exhibition on investment opportunities in Qazvin in September 2015.
- iii. Joint programmes/events utilizing the facilities of the city of Qazvin, such as the famous Silk Route Caravansary (Sa'd Al-Saltaneh) and the Barajin tourist sites as well as Qazvin diplomatic village;
- iv. To organize the Silk Route Caravansary (Sa'd Al-Saltaneh) into a "Nations Bazaar";
- v. To develop a strong sister relationship between Qazvin and selected cities of ECO Member States.

2. Secretary General, in his opening statement, expressed his deep gratitude to the Mayor of Qazvin for hosting the 200th meeting of ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) in Qazvin City and thanked for the warm hospitality extended to the delegates. He welcomed the proposals made by the Mayor of Qazvin and assured him of proper follow up which would further pave the way for close cooperation among Member States.

3. The Chairman and the members of the Council also expressed their gratitude to the Mayor of Qazvin for providing an opportunity to hold this important session of CPR in Qazvin as well as for his generous offers for cooperation with ECO Member States.

4. The delegations of the ECO Member States and the ECO Secretariat also participated in some side events arranged by the host authorities. They visited the historic sites of Qazvin. They also visited the Qazvin Islamic Azad University

where the scientific and technological achievements of the University were presented by the Chancellor, professors and students.

5. The CPR meeting 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 and Permanent Representatives/Representatives of all ECO Member States (except Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) as well as the ECO Secretary General alongwith the concerned officials of the Secretariat. The list of participants is placed at **Annex-I**.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The Council adopted the following agenda for deliberations:

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of 199th CPR meeting
3. Preparation for the 25th Meeting of Regional Planning Council (RPC)
4. Preparation for the Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting
5. Authorization by the CPR for Secretariat negotiations with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) on a possible Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for mutually beneficial cooperation
6. Allocation of US\$ 50,000/- from the FSGPF in support of the Regional Project to Combat Desertification with a Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storm in the ECO Region
7. Administrative matters
8. Any other business
9. Date of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of the Draft Report of 199th CPR meeting

7. Kyrgyz delegation proposed to delete the second sentence of the paragraph 35 under agenda item No.7 (ii) "Any other business" from the Draft Report of 199th CPR Meeting.

8. The Council adopted the Draft Report of 199th CPR meeting with the deletion proposed by the Kyrgyz delegation. The adopted Report, contained in the

document ECO/CPR/199/4, was subsequently circulated to the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale dated 19th February, 2015.

Agenda Item No.3

Preparation for the 25th Meeting of Regional Planning Council (RPC)

i. Documentation

9. As per ECO Rules of Procedure and as agreed by the 199th CPR Meeting, the Draft Agenda and Annotated Draft Agenda for the 25th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council, contained in the document ECO/RPC/25/1, was circulated by the Secretariat to the Member States on 1st February, 2015.

10. The Secretariat prepared Working Papers alongwith proposed draft Calendar of Events for the year 2015-16 with a view to facilitating deliberations of the Member States in the sectoral RPC Committees. The Working Papers were forwarded to the Member States on 1st February 2015 in hard copies as well as electronic formats. The same had already been uploaded on the ECO website.

11. The Secretariat was also in the process of preparing a background document for the discussions under agenda item 6 of the RPC Meeting, namely, the exchange of views between the Heads of delegation and the Secretary General on the "ECO Vision 2016-2025". The same would be circulated well before the RPC Meeting.

12. Tentative Programme and Information Note for the 25th RPC Meeting had been conveyed to the Member States as well as ECO Specialized Agencies, Affiliated Bodies and Regional Institutions on 2nd February, 2015 and 16th February, 2015 respectively.

13. Iranian delegation requested the Secretariat to provide the first draft of ECO Vision 2016-2025 before the RPC Meeting. Secretariat informed that a non paper on ECO Vision 2016-2025, aimed at facilitating the discussions of the Heads of delegation of ECO Member States between ECO Secretary General during RPC meeting, would be circulated to the Member States.

14. Pakistan delegation requested the Secretariat to highlight in the non paper the targets set in the ECO Vision 2015 as well as the major impediments preventing the realization of these targets.

15. Acknowledging the views of the Member States, the Secretary General invited the interested Member States to share their ideas for the ECO Vision 2016-2025 to make it more practical and useful.

16. The Council, while appreciating the Secretariat for timely circulation of necessary documents to the Member States, requested the Secretariat to prepare and circulate the non-paper on New ECO Vision 2016-2025 to the Member States before the RPC Meeting.

ii. Confirmation of Participation

17. Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Turkey, Turkish Cypriot State (Observer), ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) and ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) had already confirmed their participation in the 25th Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council. In the CPR meeting, Delegations of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Tajikistan also confirmed their participation in the forthcoming RPC meeting.

18. The Council strongly urged the remaining Member States to expedite their confirmation of participation and convey the composition of their delegation alongwith flight details, at the earliest possible, enabling the Secretariat to make necessary logistical arrangements for the participants.

iii. Any Other Issue

19. Turkish Ambassador informed that on the sidelines of the 25th RPC Meeting, the head of delegation of Turkish Cypriot State would like to hold bilateral meetings with the heads of delegation of ECO Member States. Ambassador requested the ECO Member States to disseminate this information to the relevant authorities in their capitals.

Agenda Item No.4

Preparation for the Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting

i. Date and Venue

20. Pursuant to the decision of 199th CPR Meeting, the Secretariat through its Note Verbale dated 18th January 2015 submitted its proposal to the Member States, including the host country (Pakistan), highlighting the elements for holding the Extraordinary Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers in April 2015.

21. The Secretariat vide its Note Verbale No.CFU/Extraordinary COM/2015/231 dated 17th February, 2015 circulated the concurrence of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the proposed Extraordinary

Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) on 22 or 29 April 2015 as well as its proposed Draft Agenda.

22. Delegation of Republic of Azerbaijan informed that it had already conveyed its comments on 16th February, 2015 to the Secretariat and enquired why its position was not circulated to the Member States. The delegation further informed that his country considers it reasonable that the next COM meeting to be held in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in line with the decision of 21st COM Meeting. Meanwhile, as per established practice the Council of Permanent Representatives may take decisions on the pending issues subject to the final approval by the 22nd COM Meeting in Islamabad. The delegation intended to know the exact date of the 22nd regular COM meeting to be hosted by Pakistan. Should Pakistan will hold the regular COM meeting in 2015, there is no need for the extraordinary COM meeting in April 2015. The delegation emphasized that Republic of Azerbaijan may reconsider its position if the Islamic Republic of Pakistan will officially convey its decision for non-holding of 22nd regular COM meeting in 2015.

23. Pakistan delegation proposed the Secretariat to send another request to his Embassy, highlighting the observation of Member States, in order to seek the requisite information from Islamabad.

24. Iranian delegation informed that the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran may not be available in the dates proposed by the Secretariat. He proposed that the decision on the date of the Extraordinary COM meeting may be taken upon receiving the required information from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

25. Turkish Ambassador, while acknowledging the need for holding the COM meeting, encouraged to organize the meeting as originally agreed upon. He further emphasized that the decision on extra-ordinary COM meeting should be taken by consensus without singling-out any Member State. He also called on Pakistani delegation to again convey current situation to the relevant authorities.

26. Kazakhstan delegation enquired about the repercussion faced by the Organization if the Extraordinary COM meeting cannot be held in April 2015. The delegation, while acknowledging the contention of the Azerbaijan delegation, also acknowledged the importance to hold the COM meeting as soon as possible in order to address the substantial issues such as budget and scale of assessments.

27. Secretary General explained that in accordance with Article VI of the Treaty of Izmir, the Council of Ministers (COM) **shall meet** at least once a year. However, the 22nd COM meeting had already been delayed about one and a half

year. He brought to the attention of the Council that the pending COM meeting has to approve, among others, annual ECO work programme and Calendar of Events, budget, audit reports, scale of assessments, appointments of new Secretary General and Deputy Secretaries General. He explained that the CPR can make decisions on some issues only upon authorization by the COM. He also requested the Azerbaijan delegation to reconsider its views and comments for an extraordinary COM meeting.

28. After taking into account the observations of Member States, the Council deferred this sub-agenda item and requested the Secretariat to approach the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the dates of the 22nd regular COM meeting with a view to reaching a final decision on extraordinary COM meeting.

ii. Draft Agenda

29. The proposed Draft Agenda of the Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting, contained in the document ECO/COM/Extraordinary/2015/1, circulated to the Member States through Secretariat's correspondence dated 5th February, 2015 for consideration/deliberation by the CPR meeting.

30. In line with the discussions on the date and venue of the next COM meeting, the Council deferred consideration of the proposed Draft Agenda to a later stage when decision on the date and venue of the COM meeting is finalized.

iii. Any Other Issue

31. No issue was raised under this sub-agenda item.

Agenda Item No.5

Authorization by the CPR for Secretariat negotiations with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) on a possible Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for mutually beneficial cooperation

32. The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) had sent a formal request to the Secretariat expressing its willingness to enter into a memorandum of understanding with ECO in order to develop and promote cooperation on migration related issues.

33. In line with the 'Modalities for Signing Agreements with Regional and International Organizations, States and Institutions', a comprehensive background paper was prepared by the Secretariat containing information, inter alia, about the work of the ICMPD, possible areas of cooperation and potential benefits for ECO

from entering into a cooperation arrangement with ICMPD. The background paper had been circulated among the Member States for their views/comments (Note verbale No.IR/ICMPD/2014/1898 dated 10 December 2014).

34. Embassies of Republic of Turkey and Kyrgyz Republic had conveyed their approval for signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ECO and ICMPD. The delegations of Azerbaijan and Pakistan informed that they are still waiting for feedbacks from their capitals.

35. The Council decided to defer consideration of this agenda item to its next meeting.

Agenda Item No.6

Allocation of US\$ 50,000/- from the FSGPF in support of the Regional Project to Combat Desertification with a Special Emphasis on Dust Haze and Sand Storm in the ECO Region

36. The 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment welcomed the proposal for developing a regional project to combat desertification with a special emphasis on dust haze and sand storm in the region. The 23rd Meeting of Regional Planning Council (RPC) (6-8 May, 2013, Tehran) requested the ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO IEST) to cooperate with the ECO Secretariat in preparation of a Project proposal on combating desertification with a special emphasis on dust haze and sand storm in the region. RPC also requested all Member States to contribute to the mentioned proposal with their possible technical and financial assistance. The 24th RPC Meeting (23-26 February 2014, ECO Secretariat), acknowledged the negative impacts of the desertification and deforestation on the overall environmental situation of the ECO Region and requested the ECO-IEST to provide the Secretariat with detailed project proposal in order to enable the Secretariat to embark on necessary preparations. In line with RPC recommendations, the ECO Secretariat through its Note Verbale dated 16th March 2014 requested the ECO IEST authorities to provide the Secretariat with the detailed project proposal.

37. During bilateral talks between ECO Deputy Secretary General and UNEP officials on the sidelines of the "United Nations Environment Assembly" on 26-27 June 2014 in Nairobi, UNEP expressed interest to assist ECO in implementation of this project. The ECO IEST was subsequently requested to make preliminary coordination with the UNEP and provide the Secretariat with the detailed project proposal for possible decision by CPR. In October 2014, the ECO IEST provided the Secretariat with the draft outline for that project and also made a presentation

during the 2nd Experts Group Meeting on Biodiversity, held on 4-5 November 2014 in Antalya, Turkey.

38. The 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment (15-17 December 2014, Istanbul), while acknowledging the importance of combating desertification in the Member States and the ECO Region as a whole, requested the ECO Secretariat to allocate 50,000 USD from the Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FSGPF), for implementation of a project with the objective of preparation of a detailed needs assessment of the ECO Member States along with the design of the pertinent training/capacity building programs and contents. The ECO-IEST was mandated with the above project implementation, including a number of pilot training/workshop sessions.

39. Pakistani delegation informed that the feedback from the capital is still awaited. The delegation asked the Secretariat to clarify on estimated total cost and length of the project, key activities within the implementation framework and major contributors for the remaining cost of the project. The delegation advised the Secretariat to explore the possibility to finance such projects from the beginning in order to avoid delay as happened earlier in case of 3rd Phase of ECO-UNIDO project. Moreover, the delegation requested the Secretariat to provide update on implementation status of ECO-SHARP project, funding for which was approved by the CPR.

40. Turkish Ambassador appreciated the decisions taken by the Ministers of Environment and requested the Member States to go ahead rather than delaying the issues approved by the Ministers of Environment in Istanbul.

41. Given the importance of the project, Iranian delegation proposed the Council to approve the funding of the project subject to the confirmation by Pakistan.

42. Kazakhstan delegation enquired whether the Secretariat has a list of priority projects for the Organization and whether it has sufficient funds available for allocation of the requisite amount for the said project. Secretariat informed that the Feasibility Study and General Purpose Fund (FSGPF) may support this project given the fact that the financial year of 2015 is still in its first months.

43. Secretariat also briefed the Council on the outline and key action areas of the project and mentioned that the total estimated cost of project is about 1.7 million US\$ within four years completion time. It was emphasized that the several workshops and focal point meetings will be held with involvement of national as well as international consultants. It was stated that current 50,000 USD constitutes

very small portion of whole project and will only serve to reaffirm the commitment of the Member States that the ECO Region is ready to involve in this domain and allow ECO-IEST to prepare comprehensive project proposal in line with international standards to seek necessary funding. Furthermore it was mentioned that 21st Session of the Conference of Parties of the Climate Change Convention (COP 21) will be held in Paris, France in 2015 with the participation of key global and regional players and hopefully the parties will adopt new global climate regime. In this regard this project would also be helpful to reach major stakeholder groups, as well as to increase ECO's visibility during and after COP 21. It was noted that once the project proposal has been prepared, the Secretariat may explore the possibility for financing from relevant financial and international entities.

44. The Council therefore deferred decision on this agenda item to its next meeting. Meanwhile, a presentation by ECO-IEST may be organized by the ECO Secretariat.

Agenda Item No.7

Administrative matters

- a. *Appointment of Deputy Secretary General (Transport & Communication, Project & Economic Research and Statistics, and Coordination and Follow-Up)*

45. The Secretariat vide its Note Verbale No.ADM/PER/2014/981 dated 30 June, 2014 informed the Member States that Mr. Altaf Asghar (Pakistani National), Deputy Secretary General (Category-1, D3) responsible for Transport & Communications, Projects, Economic Research & Statistics; and Coordination & Follow-up would complete his tenure on 2nd January, 2015 and requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to nominate a suitable candidate against this post.

46. The Secretariat vide its Note Verbale No.ADM/PER/2015/135 dated 27 January, 2015, informed the Member States that Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan had conveyed the nomination of Mr. Ahsan Ali Mangi for the post of Deputy Secretary General (Transport & Communications, Projects, Economic Research & Statistics; and Coordination & Follow-up), vacated by Mr. Altaf Asghar on 2nd January, 2015.

47. As per Article 6.4 of the Staff Regulations "*appointment to the post of Deputy Secretary General in Category-1 shall be made by the Council of Ministers (COM) at the recommendation of the Council of Permanent Representatives*". Accordingly, CPR recommended the nomination of Mr. Ahsan Ali Mangi (Pakistani National)

against the post of Deputy Secretary General (TC,PERS&CFU), in Category-1, to the COM for final approval.

48. Since the decision on the next meeting of Council of Ministers was still pending, the Council directed the Secretariat to obtain the approval of COM for the appointment of Mr. Ahsan Ali Mangi within two weeks through circulation among the Member States.

b. Recommendations of the Selection Panel

i. Database Officer (Category II, P3)

49. The Council appointed Mr. Waqar Siddique (Pakistani national), as Database Officer, (Category-II, P3) in place of Mr. Muhammad Yousaf, for a period of four years effective from the date of his joining the Secretariat.

ii. Steno-Secretary (Category-II, P1)

50. The Council extended the tenure of Mr. Shafqat Amir (Pakistani national), Steno-Secretary (Category-II, P1) till 8th June, 2015.

Agenda Item No.8

Any other business

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

i. Arrears of Member States towards the ECO Secretariat's budget

52. Iranian delegation informed that the Working Group on the finalization of the outline for implementation of the EPG recommendations in its meeting on 4 February 2015 discussed the state of play of the outstanding arrears in the Member States' contributions to the budget of the Organization. He said that the Working Group had requested the Secretariat to bring the following proposed course of action to the attention of the instant CPR meeting:

"In line with the mandates given by 19th & 21st COM meetings, the Working Group recommended that a Secretariat-Membership delegation composed of ECO Secretary General and Permanent Representatives of previous, current and incoming COM Chairmen, namely, Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan may visit Uzbekistan and discuss the state of play of its outstanding arrears to the Organization. The Report of the visit along with any recommendations/agreed arrangements should be submitted to the upcoming COM

for any decision/action. The Secretariat should also be mandated to prepare a document indicating all budgetary implications of the outstanding arrears on the Organization and its membership."

53. Turkish Ambassador informed that his country does not support the proposed arrangement to visit Republic of Uzbekistan.

54. Considering the importance of the issue, Secretary General warned the Council over the continued non-payment of the arrears which may put the Organization in serious difficulties in coming period.

ii. Scale of Assessments

55. Secretary General drew the attention of the Council that the Scale of Assessments had been approved until 2015. He informed that the Working Group on the finalization of the outline for implementation of the EPG recommendations in its meeting on the financial and budgetary matters on 4 February 2015 discussed in details the EPG recommendation on the scale of assessments and proposed possible scenarios for distribution of budgetary contributions for consideration of ECO Member States. He expressed hope that new scale of assessments would be decided upon as early as possible.

iii. Observation by the delegation of Republic of Kazakhstan

56. Kazakhstan delegation observed that their views expressed in connection with approval of Secretariat Budget 2015, had not been properly reflected in the Report of 198th CPR meeting and requested to reproduce their intervention in the said report. The delegation expressed that his country approved the Secretariat's Budget 2015 with an understanding that the decreased scale of assessment for Kazakhstan be applied.

57. The Secretariat explained that Draft Report of 198th CPR was approved by the 199th CPR Meeting while no amendment had been sent by Republic of Kazakhstan to the Secretariat. The Secretariat further restated that according to the financial rules of the Organization, adoption of the budget and the application of the assessed contributions by the Member States are separate issues and cannot be linked together. The new scale of assessments can be applied only after respective decision of the COM is made.

58. As requested by delegation of Kazakhstan, and since the Report of the 198th CPR had already been approved, the Council decided to reflect observation of the

Republic of Kazakhstan in the Report of its 200th meeting (reflected in paragraph 56 above).

iv. Invitation for participation in Investment Exhibition

59. Iranian delegation informed that the Municipality of Qazvin is organizing an exhibition on investment opportunities in Qazvin in September 2015. Formal invitation will be extended to the Mayors of the ECO Member States and requested the Secretariat to include in the ECO Calendar of Events for the year 2015.

Agenda Item No.9

Date of the next CPR meeting

60. The CPR decided to convene its next (201st) meeting on **Wednesday, 8th April, 2015** at 1000 hours at the ECO Secretariat.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTSEmbassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- H.E. Dr. Nasser Ahmad Noor, Ambassador
- Mr. Mohammad Ebrahim Barekzai, Counsellor

Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- 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
- Mr. Ahmad Karimi, Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Hossein Darvishi, Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau

Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- Mr. Ermek Sadykbekov, Second Secretary

Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- Mr. Kochorbaev Musa, First Secretary

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Mr. Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmad, Counsellor

Embassy of Republic of Tajikistan:

- Mr. Zaurov Sangmuhamad, Minister Counsellor
- Ms. Manizha Rahimi, Third Secretary

Embassy of Republic of Turkey:

- H.E. Mr. Rıza Hakan TEKİN, Ambassador
- Ms. Sevgi İlhan, Second Secretary

ECO Secretariat:

- H.E. Mr. Shamil Aleskerov, Secretary General
- Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, Director (EME)
- Mrs. Mavjuda Nurova, Assistant Director (CFU)
- Mr. Gaffar Erbek, Chef de Cabinet

- Mr. Bahram Heidari, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Shafqat Amir, Secretary
- Ms. Aynur Mammadova, Russian Translator
- Mr. Amir Mohammad Javaheri, Persian Translator
- Mr. Hamid Reza Soltani, Protocol Officer
