

**Report of the  
10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities  
(Islamabad/Pakistan, 13-14 August, 2009)**

The 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities was held in Islamabad on August 13-14, 2009. Full quorum was achieved for the Meeting and all the ECO Member States attended the Meeting. The delegations of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the ECO Secretariat also participated in the Meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex-I.

**Agenda Item No.1  
Inauguration of the Meeting**

1. The Meeting was inaugurated by His Excellency Haji Ghulam Ahmed Bilour, Federal Minister of Railways, the Government of Pakistan. A copy of his statement is attached as Annex II.

**Agenda Item No. 3  
Election of the Chairman**

2. Based on Article 25 of the ECO Rules of Procedure, Mr. Saeed Akhtar, the Head of the host country's delegation, was elected as Chairman of the Meeting.

**Agenda Item No. 3  
Adoption of the Agenda**

3. The Meeting approved its agenda as follows.
1. Inauguration of the Meeting.
  2. Election of the Chairman.
  3. Adoption of the Agenda.
  4. Appointment of the Drafting Committee.
  5. Statements of Heads of Delegations/country reports (including briefings on the national strategies for rail transport development and railway infrastructure, railway fleet/rolling stock, etc.).
  6. Review the Implementation of decisions/recommendations of previous meetings.
  7. Implementation of the Relevant Articles of TTFA.
  8. Review of the implementation of regional railway projects along different routes in the ECO region.
  9. New ECO Program of Action for Transport & Communications, with a focus on Railway Projects, ECO Member States experiences, needs for financing railway projects, with possible regional financial mechanisms and involvement of external investors.
  10. Review of the Status of cooperation with international organizations in the field of railway.
  11. Any other business.
  12. Date and venue of the next Meeting.
  13. Adoption of the Report.
  14. Vote of thanks and closing of the Meeting.

**Agenda Item No. 4.  
Appointment of the Drafting Committee**

4. As per common practice in the ECO Meetings, an open-ended Drafting Committee was appointed to prepare the Report.

**Agenda Item No. 5.**

**Statements of the Heads of Delegations/country reports.**

5. Under this item, the heads of delegation made their statements. Copies of their statements are attached as Annex III.

6. In his statement, the representative of IDB renewed the Bank's commitment to enhancing regional cooperation in the context of the ECO, as a strategic thrust of the Bank under its Vision for 1440 (H). The Bank would consider financing projects of regional significance for development of transit transport in the region. The Meeting appreciated IDB for continuous support to the activities of the ECO, particularly in the field of transport development.

**Agenda Item No. 6.**

**Review of Implementation of decisions/recommendations of previous meetings**

7. Under this Agenda Item, the ECO representative briefed the Meeting on the key decisions and agreements made in the previous Meetings of the Heads of Railway Authorities.

8. The Meeting expressed satisfaction that obvious progress was achieved in implementing most of measures taken by the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting (Astana, June, 2007).

**Agenda Item No. 7.**

**Implementation of the Relevant Articles of the TTFA.**

9. Under this Agenda Item, Director Transport and Communications of the ECO briefed the Meeting on the latest developments in implementation of the railway related articles of the TTFA.

10. The Meeting appreciated the Islamic Development Bank for granting a Technical Assistance Project to ECO for preparing a regional Programme for Implementation of the TTFA. The Meeting took note that the railway component constituted a large part of the joint IDB-ECO Project. In order to expedite the implementation of the railway component of the Project, the Meeting urged the Member States to expedite nominating their National Focal Points and National Consultants, as circulated through notes verbale by the ECO Secretariat. The Meeting also asked the Secretariat to expedite identifying and recruiting the international consultant of the railway component of the project as soon as possible. The Secretariat may propose the theme, dates and venue of the railway related events anticipated in the Project.

11. The Secretariat was asked to further intensify contacts with the relevant international railway institutions such as OTIF, UIC, OSJD, and CIT to secure their support to capacity building of the member states for accession and implementation of the railway related conventions and agreements enlisted in the TTFA.

12. The Secretariat may recruit a professional from CIT or other international institutions to transfer to the ECO their experience in promoting common consignment notes and legal interoperability between CIM/SMGS systems. The draft regulations developed by CIT could be considered by the next Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC as a basis for preparation of the ECO's rules and regulations for rail freight and passenger traffic.

13. Welcoming decisions the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Railway committee, the Meeting urged the Member States to ensure the timely implementation of those decisions.

14. The meeting stressed on the need to finalize the ECO Railway Transit Routes Map as Annex I of the TTFA. For the same purpose, the ECO Secretariat distributed the draft ECO Railway Transit Routes Map prepared based on the available information from the member

states. The Member States were requested to furnish the Secretariat with their comments and views on the Map within one month. The Secretariat will amend the map accordingly and submit to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Railway Committee and the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the TTCC for approval.

15. The Meeting requested the Member States to participate actively in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC, to be held in Kazakhstan in 2009.

**Agenda Item No. 8.**

**Review of regional railway projects along different routes in the ECO region.**

16. Under this Agenda Item, the Meeting reviewed the latest status of railway projects in the region as considered by the previous meetings of the Heads of Railway Authorities and other decision-making bodies of the ECO.

**a. Upgrading railway around Van Lake, Taftan-Quetta railway, and Sarakhs (Iran) and Sarakhs (Turkmenistan) stations:**

17. The Meeting expressed satisfaction over the completion of the feasibility study of the project for upgrading the Quetta-Taftan segment. The Meeting hoped that implementation phase of this project would start soon. The participants appreciated IDB for its interest in this Project. The Feasibility Report of the Project has already been conveyed to IDB through the ECO Secretariat. The Government of Pakistan is expected to place official request to IDB for financing the project as soon as possible.

18. The Meeting reiterated the significant regional importance of the Project for increasing the capacity of Sarakhs (Iran) and Serakhs (Turkmenistan) stations. The Meeting took note that a project proposal was prepared by Iran for increasing the capacity of the Iranian Sarakhs station. The document has been forwarded to IDB by the ECO Secretariat. IDB has shown interest in the project but is awaiting official request from the concerned authorities of Iran as well. Iran was requested to submit, through official channels, application for financing Sarakhs Station project to IDB and ECO-TDB.

19. As regards the railway bypass on Van Lake, the delegation of Turkey stated that the Project was under consideration by the concerned authorities of Turkey. Considering the importance of the Van Lake Project for the Almaty-Istanbul and Islamabad Istanbul trains, the Meeting requested the relevant Turkish authorities to expedite sending official request to IDB for financing this project.

**B. The ECO Container Train on Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul Route:**

20. Under this Agenda Item, the Representative of the ECO Secretariat briefed the Meeting on the course of actions leading to actualization of this train through a Trilateral Ministerial Meeting and three high level working group meetings.

21. The Meeting welcomed the initiative adopted by the HLWG and the Secretariat to conduct a Field Survey during the Demonstration Train. The Meeting wished success to the team of experts who were due to accompany the demonstration train to conduct the survey. This team includes one international consultant, three national experts (one from each enroute country) and the representative of the Secretariat.

22. The Meeting took note of the objectives and activities of the study as presented by the International Consultant. The enroute countries were requested to prepare, within two weeks, the country information required to complement the report of the Field Survey team.

23. As per information provided by the delegation of Pakistan, an elaborate Inauguration ceremony was arranged on 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2009 for launching the demonstration train. Other member countries were expected to make similar arrangements for advocacy purpose.

24. The next High Level Working Group Meeting will be held to review the report of the Field Survey Team and plan for the return demonstration train from Istanbul to Islamabad. The Secretariat will suggest the date and venue of the Meeting accordingly.

25. Upon arrival of the Train to border stations (Iran-Pakistan and Iran-Turkey), the local customs official of the respective countries along with the representative of the ECO will hold coordination meetings. It was also decided to convene a sub-committee of the HLWG, comprised of the customs officials of the three enroute countries to finalize all the customs issues related to operation of the train. The meeting would be held at the ECO Secretariat under the auspices of the Field Survey or other sources. Dates would be intimated by the Secretariat in due course.

26. A declaration was signed between the concerned authorities of the three enroute countries regarding the application of International Carriage of Goods by Rail (CIM Uniform Rules- Appendix B to COTIF 1999) on the demonstration run of the Container Train. The declaration was signed by the following officials as heads of their delegations (a copy of the declaration is attached as Annex IV):

- Mr. Mansoor Arab Yarmohammady, Acting President of the Iranian Railways (RAI)
- Mr. Samiulhaq Khilji, Secretary/Chairman of Pakistan Railways.
- Mr. Ibrahim Celik, Head of Operations Department, Turkish Railways (TCDD)

27. The Meeting asked the Secretariat to follow up the rail connection of other countries, particularly Afghanistan to the Train.

### **C. Pending issues about the ECO Almaty-Istanbul Container Train, transit timetable and tariffs rates.**

28. Under this Agenda Item, Director Transport and Communications of the ECO briefed the Meeting on the progress made since the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of Railway Authorities in resolving the remaining issues on the way of effective operation of the train.

29. The Meeting appreciated the CPR for funding a Feasibility Fund on the Train. The CPR was requested to approve, upon request of the Secretariat, increasing the fund allocated to the study to ensure that all the anticipated activities for the study are fulfilled.

30. The Meeting welcomed the initiative of the Secretariat in selecting the international consultant for this feasibility study, the Swiss-based firm, POYRY, through open vacancy announcement. The Meeting urged the enroute member states to expedite nominating their national focal points and national consultants to the Secretariat, so that the implementation of the project could be expedited. Once the national consultants have been nominated, the Secretariat will convene the first meeting of the consultants and focal points under the auspices of the project approved by the CPR.

31. The Meeting welcomed the decisions of the committee of the five enroute Member States and China (Tehran, 11 December, 2008) to make Urumchi as the destination of eastward extension of the ECO Istanbul-Almaty Train, thus making it Istanbul-Almaty-Urumchi Train.

32. The Meeting took note that all the enroute countries, including China, had forwarded their respective timetables to the Secretariat. Moreover, all the enroute countries, excluding Uzbekistan, had furnished their tariff tables for their segments of the route. The Meeting

hoped that the next meeting of the committee of the enroute countries, due to be held in Kazakhstan in 2009, would review these tables along with other arrangements to promote this important train. All enroute countries were requested to furnish the Secretariat with their revised tariffs and timetable for 2009.

33. The Meeting requested the Secretariat to expedite feasibility study and necessary arrangements for launching a demonstration train from Urumchi to Istanbul and vice-versa in the near future.

#### **D. The Almaty-Bandar Abbas Train**

34. The Meeting took note, with satisfaction, that the 19<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting and 18<sup>th</sup> COM Meeting had positively considered the proposal of the Republic of Kazakhstan to have a study conducted on the feasibility of launching a Container Train run along Bandar Abbas-Almaty Route. The Study would involve participation of the National Focal Points of the concerned Member States. The Council also recommended that a meeting of the en-route countries be held in Kazakhstan in 2009 as part of this Study. This meeting may be organized back-to-back with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Railway Committee of the TTCC. The CPR was requested to approve the funds required for this study from FGPF.

35. The representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan stated that they were considering different destinations for this train in the territory of Kazakhstan. Therefore, the Meeting agreed to change the name of this Train from Almaty-Bandar Abbas to Kazakhstan-Bandar Abbas, or a more specific name to be designated on the meeting of the enroute countries.

36. The Secretariat will prepare the Project Document for submission to the Meeting of enroute countries, as well as the CPR, for funding.

#### **Agenda Item No. 9.**

#### **New ECO Program of Action for Transport & Communications, with a focus on Railway Projects.**

37. Under this Agenda Item, Director Transport and Communications of the ECO briefed the Meeting on the measures taken by the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the High Level Working Group on the New Programme of Action for ECO Decade of Transport and Communication (Tehran, December).

38. The Meeting urged the member states to forward to the Secretariat their respective railway projects with regional significance. The proposals should reach the Secretariat by 15 November 2009. These proposals will be incorporated into the New Programme of Action, and they will be showcased in the Donors' Conference to be convened soon.

39. The programme of Action would include projects of regional and international significant, the feasibility studies for which are finalized and are included in the national development plans. The official request of the Member States for inclusion of the Projects in the New Programme of Action should be conveyed to the Secretariat together with feasibility study reports. The member states in their official request to the Secretariat would indicate their willingness to apply for funding the projects by possible donor countries/institutions.

40. The delegation of Kazakhstan stated that they had prepared a list of projects under the framework of OSJD. Taking into account the said list of projects, they will come with concrete project proposals and convey them to the Secretariat within one month.

## **Agenda Item No. 10.**

### **Review of the Status of cooperation with international organizations**

41. Under this Agenda Item, the Meeting commended the recent progress in expanding relations between the ECO and the relevant international organizations. The Meeting welcomed the trilateral agreement signed in 2009 between the ECO, IDB and UNESCAP to promote transport infrastructure development in the region. These organizations were requested to actively follow up the implementation of the MoU.

42. The meeting took note, with satisfaction, of the MoUs signed between the ECO and OTIF in 2009, and another MoU with TRACECA in the same year.

43. While taking note, with appreciation, of the recent joint ECO/UNECE/CIT (Tehran-April 2009) and ECO/OTIF (Istanbul, June 2009) workshops, the Meeting asked the Secretariat to organize similar workshops in various fields of railway transport with active participation of the member states.

44. The Meeting asked the Secretariat to intensify contacts with such international organizations to secure their technical assistance for accession to, and/or implementation of the international railway agreements and conventions by the ECO member states.

45. The Secretariat was requested to consider signing an MoU with CIT to institutionalize cooperation between the two organizations.

## **Agenda Item No. 11.**

### **Any other business**

46. Under this agenda item, the Meeting reiterated the need to have a master plan for the regional railway development. As a part of the Master Plan, we should identify the possible routes, their commercial potential, impediments and bottlenecks and an Action Plan to make the routes operational. It was deliberated that the New Programme of Action of the ECO for Transport and Communications (currently under formulation) could be an ideal context for such master plan. In addition, the Railway Transit Routes designation under Annex I of the TTFA could also act as a means to strengthen regional planning of the ECO railway transit system. These mechanisms can be strengthened by developing the Geographic Information System (GIS) which is going to be set up utilizing the ECO Feasibility Study Fund, with technical assistance of UNECE.

47. The meeting took note, with satisfaction that the Secretariat was being equipped with video-conferencing facility, utilizing funds made available by IDB under the Multimodal Transport Project. The Member States would take necessary measures for connection to the Secretariat through video-conferencing facility. The first test video-conference among the railway authorities of the Member States would be organized by the end 2009.

48. The Meeting reiterated the need for greater efforts to be undertaken in the context of the ECO to help Afghanistan in developing her railway system. The Meeting took note, with satisfaction, that the railway segment in Herat was being completed with the assistance of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

49. The Meeting took note, with satisfaction, that the feasibility study of constructing railway on Chaman-Spinbuldak and Spinbuldaq Qandahar segments had been finalized by Pakistan. The Meeting requested the concerned member states and the Secretariat to expedite the commencement of the construction phase of these projects, through showcasing in donor conferences, as soon as possible.

50. The Meeting appreciated the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation of Afghanistan for hosting the first Senior Officials Meeting on Feasibility Study on Railway Project for connecting China to Iran and Turkey through the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Afghanistan with standard gauge. The Secretariat and the enroute countries were requested to expedite implementing the decision of the SOM within the given timeframe. Tajikistan may host the next Meeting of the SOM in the year 2009.

**Agenda Item No. 12.**

**Date and venue of the next Meeting.**

51. Under this Agenda Item, the Meeting asked the Secretariat to keep contact with the Member States to specify the dates and venue of the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of ECO Railway Authorities. The concerned member states may inform the Secretariat of their willingness to host the Meeting within one month.

**Agenda Item No. 13.**

**Adoption of the Report**

52. Under this Agenda Item, the Meeting adopted its Report prepared by the Drafting Committee.

**Agenda Item No. 14.**

**Vote of thanks and closing of the Meeting.**

53. Under this Agenda Item, the participating delegations thanked the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, in particular His Excellency Haji Ghulam Bilour, Federal Minister for Railways, and Pakistan Railways for excellent arrangements made for the Meeting and exemplary hospitality extended to the participants. The Meeting also appreciated the efforts of the ECO Secretariat for organizing the Meeting.

54. With this, the Chairman announced the closing of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of ECO Authorities.