

230th Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Report

15th May, 2018
ECO Secretariat - Tehran

Report

The 230th CPR Meeting was held on Tuesday 15th May 2018 at the ECO Secretariat, Tehran. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador of the Republic of *Tajikistan* to Iran. It was attended by the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of all ECO Member States. The ECO Secretary General along with concerned officials of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. The list of participants is enclosed as *Annex-I*.

Handover-Takeover Ceremony of the Chairmanship of the CPR

2. At the outset, outgoing Chairman H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Khan Durrani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of *Pakistan* to Iran in his brief remarks expressed gratitude to all the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of the Member States, ECO Secretary General and his team for supporting him during his Chairmanship of the Organization.
3. The outgoing Chairman said that during Pakistan's Chairmanship since the 22nd Meeting of the Council of Ministers, the following positive developments took place:
 - (i) ECO Smuggling and Customs Offences Data Bank was established;
 - (ii) ECO Reinsurance Company came into being
 - (iii) ECO Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology (RISCAM) entered into force

In addition, the Statute of ECO Regional Centre of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen (RCCACO) has been signed by Pakistan in June 2017 and ECO Plan of Action on Health is also expected to be finalized this year. He said we owe our achievements in the past year to cooperation and support of the Member States and the Secretariat. The Ambassador thanked the Council for support extended during the 13th Summit, 22nd COM and 28th RPC held in Islamabad last year and recently held 23rd COM Meeting during which Pakistan handed over the Chair to the Republic of Tajikistan.

4. While concluding, the outgoing CPR Chairman stated that the potential of this Organization is enormous. This needs to be channelized in order to ensure our success. He said, with commitment and sincerity of purpose, the region has the potential of becoming one of the most prominent economic blocs in the world. He hoped that under the able guidance of new Chairman, this esteemed Organization would move closer to its objectives.
5. After his remarks, the outgoing Chairman invited H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan for assumption of the CPR Chairmanship.
6. Assuming the CPR Chairmanship, H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador of the Republic of *Tajikistan* to Iran stated that it's a great honour and responsibility bestowed upon him to Chair this prestigious Council. He appreciated the valuable efforts and standards set by the outgoing Chairman H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Khan Durrani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Iran for his able and efficient handling the CPR Meetings. The new CPR Chairman said he would be looking forward to the support of all the distinguished Member States during his tenure of Chairmanship.

7. The ECO Secretary General in his statement thanked the outgoing Chairman H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Khan Durrani for his exceptional Chairmanship in CPR and RPC

Meetings. He profoundly appreciated the outgoing CPR Chairman's management skills in handling sometimes difficult and complexed issues and coming-up with their practical solutions. The Secretary General further hoped that the Organization will be able to take benefit from the outgoing Chairman's valuable acumen in some future CPR meetings as well. A gift was also presented by the ECO Secretary General to the outgoing Chairman H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Khan Durrani.

8. The ECO Secretary General while congratulating H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador of the Republic of *Tajikistan* on assumption of the Chairmanship of Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) thanked him for the excellent coordination in hosting the 23rd COM Meeting held on 17th April 2018 in Dushanbe. He said he is looking forward to work closely and is confident that under his able leadership, the CPR Meetings will continue to be successful.

9. The Council also expressed thanks to the outgoing Chairman H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Khan Durrani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of *Pakistan* to Iran for his excellent and extraordinary performance as Chairman of the CPR Meetings. The Council also congratulated H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador of the Republic of *Tajikistan* on assuming the Chairmanship of CPR and assured their full support and cooperation for enhancing the activities of the Organization.

10. The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Khan Durrani reciprocated the sentiments expressed by the Council in his favour.

11. After the "**Handover-Takeover Ceremony**" of the Chairmanship, the Council started its normal proceedings

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

12. The Council adopted the following Agenda of 230th CPR Meeting for deliberations:

Agenda

1. *Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 230th CPR Meeting*
2. *Adoption of the Draft Report of the 229th CPR Meeting*
3. *Follow-up to the decisions of 23rd Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting:
New ECO Scales of Assessment and ECO Reforms etc.*
4. *The Request of Educational Institute (ECO-EI) to revise its Budget (Continued)*
5. *Consideration of the Draft Modality of ECO Fund for Afghanistan*
6. *Administrative matters:*
 - (a) *Nomination for the post of Programme Officer of Project,
Economic Research and Statistics*
 - (b) *Appointment of new Deputy Secretary General*
 - (c) *Recommendations of the Selection Panel*
7. *Any other business*
8. *Date of the next CPR Meeting*

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of the Draft Report of 229th CPR Meeting

13. The Council adopted the Draft Report of the 229th CPR Meeting contained in the document ECO/CPR/229/2018/2 (29th April 2018) and circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No.CFU/CPR/229th Meeting/2018/560 dated 30th

April, 2018, along with amendments proposed by the Republic of *Turkey* in paragraphs 41 and 66 of the Draft Report.

Agenda Item No.3

Follow-up to the decisions of the 23rd Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting: New Scales of Assessment and Reforms

14. The 23rd Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting held in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) on 17th April 2018 mandated the CPR to finalize the issues of (i) “*ECO Scales of Assessment*” and (ii) “*ECO Reforms*” as soon as possible preferably by 15th September 2018 in order to keep the Organization financially stable and viable.

15. Deputy Secretary General (Admn) Mr. Hadi Soleimanpur briefed the Council and stated that the 23rd COM Meeting on the Agenda Item No.7 “*New Scales of Assessment*” mandated the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to finalize the issue as soon as possible preferably by 15th September 2018. It was further mentioned that during 23rd COM Meeting under Agenda Item No. 9 “*Proposed ECO Reforms*”, the ECO Secretariat circulated a revised proposal containing a table on ECO Reforms, reflecting proposed country-wise distribution of posts at the ECO Secretariat. The COM Meeting considered the revised proposal and strongly desired that the CPR may resume discussions on the issue within the framework of existing Working Group for its finalization preferably by mid-September 2018.

16. Deputy Secretary General (Admn) sought Council’s approval for *revival of the existing Working Group* enabling it to discuss the issue with active and highest-level participation in the meeting(s) by the esteemed Member States. The Council was also requested to mandate the *Working Group* to take into consideration the latest developments and decisions made by the 23rd COM Meeting focusing on the Organizational Chart of ECO Secretariat to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness.

17. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of *Iran* taking the floor said that almost one month has elapsed after the 23rd COM Meeting but as yet nothing has been done on both these important issues of the Organization i.e. “*Scales of Assessment*” and “*ECO Reform*”. He said that these issues are being deliberated more than 2-3 years. The Permanent Representative said all Member States have their concerns and to accommodate their views is not an easy task. However, he supported the proposal of the Secretariat for revival of the Working Group and convening of its meeting(s), as soon as possible, with full participation by all the Member States enabling it to come-up with conclusive decisions.

18. The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of *Pakistan* stated that as the issue(s) has been being dragging-on for the past three years, it is better that after the 23rd COM Meeting, with the renewed vigor, we should invite the interests of all the Member States and gather their views, give a deadline and then convene the meeting of the Working Group. He proposed that the Secretariat may circulate or invite the views of the Member States with regard to the Scales of Assessment and ECO Reforms as certain Member States wanting to enhance their share in the ECO budget, with some conditions, so we can go step-by-step. The Ambassador said just convening the Working Group’s meeting would not solve the issue unless some cards are on the table to show.

19. The Ambassador of the Republic of *Turkey* while appreciating the concerns of delay shown by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of *Iran* in dealing with the issues, stated that these issues are being under discussion for more than three years and it will not be easy to make a break through although they are prepared to actively participate

and contribute in order to find a solution but said for this, political will of all the Member States, is required. Moreover, for achieving this goal, the Ambassador called upon all the delegates to show some more flexibility and constrictive approach. He supported the proposal of the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of *Pakistan* to invite views/new positions of the Member States as having unfruitful meeting of Working Group is not feasible.

20. The Representatives of the Republic of *Kazakhstan* and *Kyrgyzstan* proposed holding of Working Group's meeting as soon as possible.

21. The Representative of the Republic of *Kazakhstan* also informed that Kazakhstan, as discussed in the 23rd COM Meeting in Dushanbe, is ready to adopt the new Scales of Assessment and ECO Reforms wherein its shares is 18% with the condition of increasing the positions in the ECO Secretariat and writing-off arrears of Kazakhstan accumulated so far.

22. After deliberations, the Council decided (i) *Revival of the Working Group* to discuss the issues of "Scales of Assessment" and "ECO Reforms: and (ii) asked the Secretariat to circulate a Note Verbale to the Member States soliciting their fresh views/positions from the respective capitals on the issue and a date will be set for convening of Working Group's Meeting for the purpose.

Agenda Item No.4

Request of ECO Educational Institute (ECO-EI) to revise its Budget (Continued)

23. Detailed discussion took place in 229th CPR Meeting held on 11th April 2018 to consider the revision of the Budget of ECO Educational Institute (ECO-EI). The Council asked the President ECO-EI and the Secretariat to formally submit the Educational Institute's budgetary proposal with relevant administrative and financial rules along with power of the President EI for further evaluation.

24. The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Tehran vide its Note Verbale No. ECO-7/20/2018/06 dated 22nd April 2018, informed the Secretariat that the Government of Pakistan endorsed the proposed revised Annual Budget of ECO-EI on the grounds that the revision will not change the approved total amount of the Annual Budget of the Institute. The Government of Pakistan further endorsed the proposed increase in salaries of 'D' level positions at par with ECO sister organizations and based on the cost of living and standards in Ankara (Turkey).

25. Director (HRSD) of the ECO Secretariat gave a briefing stating that as was asked by the Council in its 229th CPR Meeting for provision of ECO-EI's budgetary proposal with relevant administrative and financial rules along with powers of the President of Education Institute for further evaluation, the supporting documents, including annotated rationale for revision of the ECO-EI's Salary Scales and an Information Note of the Secretariat were circulated to the Member States vide Note Verbales No. HRSD/2018/589 & HRSD/2018/592 both dated 10th May 2018 respectively. Moreover, concurrence of the Government of the Islamic Republic of *Pakistan* regarding the proposed increase in the salaries of 'D' level positions of ECO-EI has also been circulated to the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/229th Meeting/2018/560 dated 30th April 2018. It was further noted that the proposal has been put before CPR in the absence of ECO-ECI BoT as per Chapter-I, Section 'A' para 2 of ECO-EI's Rules of Procedure. The Council's approval was sought for adopting the proposed "*Revision in the Salary Scales*" of the ECO Educational Institute without any change in the total budget of the Institute.

26. The Council considered and approved the proposed *Revised Salary Scales* of the ECO Educational Institute without any change in the total budget of 2018 which was adopted in the second meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT). Moreover, the extra costs under the respective Chapter shall be met from within the limits of the financial regulations of the ECO Educational Institute.

Agenda Item No.5

Consideration of the Draft Modalities of ECO Fund for Afghanistan

27. The 23rd Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting held in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) on 17th April 2018 adopted the “*ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan*”. The COM mandated the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to consider finalization of revised Modalities of ECO Fund for Afghanistan to be prepared by the ECO Secretariat. The Revised Draft text of the Modalities of the ECO Fund for Afghanistan, prepared by ECO Secretariat, has been circulated to the Member States vide its Note Verbale No. LA/Modality-Fund-Afghanistan/2018/582 dated 8th May 2018.

28. The Legal Adviser briefed the Council about the salient contents of Draft “*Modalities for the Operation of the ECO Fund for Afghanistan*” such as Objectives, Guiding Principles, Fund’s Administration and Governance, Fund’s Resources, Eligibility and Project Contracts, Funding Modalities, Monitoring, Auditing, Termination of the Fund etc.

29. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of *Afghanistan* taking the floor informed the Council that the Draft “*Modalities for the Operation of the ECO Fund for Afghanistan*” received from the ECO Secretariat has already been forwarded to the authorities in Afghanistan and waiting a response in this regard. As soon as it is received, the Secretariat will be informed accordingly.

30. The Council decided to take up the issue of the Draft “*Modalities for the Operation of the ECO Fund for Afghanistan*” in the next CPR meeting, once response of the Member States (s) is received.

Agenda Item No. 6

Administrative matters

a. Nomination for the post of Programme Officer of Projects, Economic Research and Statistics

31. Discussion to fill the post of Programme Officer (PERS) in the ECO Secretariat is going on for a long time. Moreover, after consensus between *Iran* and *Pakistan*, it was decided to approach the Member States(s), which are not represented in the ECO Secretariat especially the Central Asian Republics, for nomination of a suitable candidate for the post of Programme Officer (PERS). However, none of the Member State(s) nominated any candidate for this post.

32. It is pertinent to mention that due to 23rd COM Meeting (17 April 2018) and as requested by the ECO Secretariat, CPR in its 228th Meeting held on 14th March 2018 approved “appointment of Mr. Akim Urmantayev (**Kazakh national**) – former Director (PERS) of ECO Secretariat, as a temporary staff to fulfill the function and duties of the Programme Officer for Project, Economic Research and Statistics in the (*Category-II, P-2*) for a period of two months effective from **28-02-2018 to 27-04-2018**, non-extendable and subject to the condition that “*this specific temporary appointment will not set a precedence for filling the vacant posts of the ECO Secretariat*”.

33. Deputy Secretary General (T&I, AIT & IR) Mr. Kanan Nazarov gave a briefing stating that the Council in its meeting (223rd), decided to offer the said post to the Central Asian States, having no representation in the ECO Secretariat. However, he said unfortunately no nomination has yet been received and without a qualified person, work of the ECO Secretariat in PERS Directorate is suffering badly. He requested Council's intervention in solving the issue by nominating a qualified person for the post of Programme Officer (PERS) as soon as possible.

34. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of *Pakistan* informed the Council that, informally, it has come to the notice that one of the Member States is considering this position and may forward the nomination soon. Moreover, regarding temporary arrangement by the Secretariat, the Representative requested to know who will be the person performing this task and what kind of financial benefits will be extended to him. He requested the Secretariat to provide details through a Note Verbale before taking any decision on temporary arrangement. The Representative further said that they are not against the temporary arrangement but would appreciate if the details are provided and said the same agenda item can be taken up in the next CPR.

35. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of *Iran* said that it was already decided between concerned parties (Iran & Pakistan) to offer the said post to Central Asian States (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) having no representation in the ECO Secretariat, for nomination of a qualified candidate for the post of Programme Officer but unfortunately until now nothing has been received from them. He further enquired from the Representative of the Islamic Republic of *Pakistan* about the name of the Member State(s) considering nominating a person for the post. He further said that he has a proposal but would announce it after consulting the colleagues from Pakistan.

36. The ECO Secretary General said there are several options such as:

- (i) Nomination for Permanent Employment from Central Asian States (Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan);
- (ii) Wait for the outcome of Scales of Assessment and ECO Reforms Process; and
- (iii) Have a qualified person on "Secondment" to perform the job for which the salary can be paid by the nominating Member State(s).

37. The ECO Secretary General also said that presently, there is no one in the Secretariat who is shifted from other Directorate to PERS Directorate in order to perform the job. He further informed that the said post is "*Category-II, P2*" post and if it is filled on a temporary arrangement by nominating a candidate on '*secondment*', the Secretariat is not obliged to pay any remuneration.

38. The Representative of the Republic of *Azerbaijan* raising questions asked (i) by which regulation this vacant post is defined to be given to the Central Asian countries (Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan – *who are not the only Central Asian countries*) and (ii) if nomination is not made by them whether any other Central Asian Country can nominate a candidate for the post?

39. The Legal Adviser replying to the query by the Representative of Republic of *Azerbaijan* said that as a compromise among the concerned Member States (*Iran & Pakistan*), it was decided to offer the said post of Programme Officer (PERS) to those Central Asian States (Turkmenistan & Uzbekistan) having no representation in the ECO Secretariat and this decision was accepted by the CPR.

40. After deliberation, the Council asked the Secretariat if it intends to adopt temporary arrangement then as proposed by the Representative of the Islamic Republic of *Pakistan*, may provide all the necessary back ground information along with

financial details to the Member States. Furthermore, the same agenda item will be discussed/considered in the next CPR Meeting.

b. Appointment of the New Deputy Secretary General (Admn, EME, HRSD & DOCCU)

41. The nomination made by the Republic of *Turkey* for appointment of H.E. Ambassador Huseyin Avni Bicakli, (**Turkish National**) as Deputy Secretary General (ADMN, EME, HRSD & DOCCU) was formally submitted for approval of 23rd Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting held in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) on 17th April 2018. However, Turkmen delegation made reservations on the appointment by stating that since the nomination was received recently, therefore, it requires more time for a decision. The Turkish delegation in the COM meeting clarified that Turkey's communication in this regard was circulated by the ECO Secretariat to the Member States on 10 April 2018.

42. Responding to the query by the CPR Chairman with regard to the appointment of new Deputy Secretary General, the Representative of **Turkmenistan** informed the Council that a response is still expected from the capital and as soon as it is received, will be communicated to the Secretariat.

43. The Ambassador of the Republic of *Turkey* mentioned that it was expected that Turkey's candidature for the post of Deputy Secretary General in the ECO Secretariat will be approved by the 23rd COM Meeting held on 17th April 2018 in Dushanbe but Turkmenistan voiced their reservations by stating that they need some time to make a final decision on the nomination. The Ambassador said he was hoping that after passing of one more month, the process would have been completed by the authorities of friendly country of Turkmenistan but, with regret stated, it seems that it has not yet been finalized. He said the post of Deputy Secretary General will be vacant in August 2018 and wanted to fill the post timely. The Ambassador urged the distinguished authorities of Turkmenistan for finalization of the decision in respect of the appointment of new Deputy Secretary General, nominated by the Republic of Turkey. He hoped that the Representative of Turkmenistan would come-up with whatever decision in the next CPR and that they do not want a delayed decision in this regard.

44. The CPR Chairman, on the remarks by the Ambassador of the Republic of *Turkey*, urged the Representative to approach the authorities in Turkmenistan to convey whatever decision with regard to the nomination for appointment of new Deputy Secretary General of Turkey in the ECO Secretariat before the next CPR Meeting.

c. Recommendations of the Selection Panel

45. No Selection Panel meeting was held.

Agenda Item No.7

Any Other Business

46. Under this agenda item, ECO Director for Transport and Communications briefed the Council on overall proceedings and outcomes of the 9th Meeting of the Ministers of Transport of the ECO Member States (3 May 2018), preceded by Senior Officials Meeting (1 May 2018), held in Turkmenbashi (Turkmenistan) with active participation of Ministers/Heads of Delegation from all ECO Member States and International Organizations including UNECE, UNESCAP and IRU. The Director further informed that during the Ministerial Meeting, the Republic of Uzbekistan conveyed that signing of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) is being

considered by the capital and final decision on the matter will be communicated to the Secretariat in near future.

47. Moreover, ECO Director (T&C) while mentioning the outcome documents of the Meeting, duly adopted by the Ministers and circulated to the Member States, requested the Member States to extend cooperation for implementation of key outcome decisions contained in the Reports of the Meetings.

48. The Council while appreciating Turkmenistan for graciously hosting the 9th Meeting of the ECO Ministers of Transport and the Senior Officials Meeting in Turkmenbashi (Turkmenistan), urged the Member States, as requested by the ECO Secretariat, to implement decisions of the above Meetings in close cooperation with the Secretariat and relevant partners.

Agenda Item No.7

Date of the next CPR Meeting

49. The Council decided to convene its next (231st) Meeting on **Tuesday 19th June, 2018.** *The venue and time of the meeting will be communicated later.*

50. While adjourning the meeting, the CPR Chairman expressed his sincere thanks to the distinguished Permanent Representatives/Representatives of all ECO Member States for their participation and valuable contributions in the proceedings of CPR.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr. Ahmad Haroon Najmpoor, Minister-Counsellor
- Ms. Zahra Badaghi, Administrative Assistant

The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- Mr. Javid Musayev, Counsellor

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

- H.E. Mr. Majid Bizmark, Permanent Representative/Director General
- Mr. Shahrokh Edrisabadi, Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau

The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- Mr. Yerbol Akhmetov, Minister-Counsellor

The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- Mr. Aziz Kurumbaev, Counsellor,

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- H.E. Mr. Asif Ali Khan Durrani, Ambassador
- Mr. Imran Haider, Deputy Head of Mission
- Mr. Ghulam Hussain, Second Secretary

Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador
- Mr. Firdavs Yusupov, Second Secretary
- Mr. Mirzosharif Kabirov, Third Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:

- H.E. Mr. Riza Hakan TEKİN, Ambassador
- Ms. Hatice ÖZDİL, Third Secretary

The Embassy of Turkmenistan:

- Mr. Islam Sakhatow, Third Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- Mr. Umid Babaev, Third Secretary

The ECO Secretariat:

- H.E. Mr. Halil Ibrahim Akça, Secretary General
- Mr. Kanan Nazarov, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Hadi Soleimanpur, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Kaan Sayin, Director (HRSD)
- Mr. Ahmad Saffari, Director (TC)
- Mr. Bahodur Rahmonov, Assistant Director (CFU)
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Israr Ahmad Khan, Steno-Secretary
- Ms. Aynur Mammadova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator
- Ms. Nurgul Duissenova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator
- Mr. Amir Javaheri, English-Persian Interpreter/Translator
