



# **232<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

## **Report**

***30<sup>th</sup> July, 2018  
ECO Secretariat - Tehran***

## Report

The 232<sup>nd</sup> CPR Meeting was held on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at the ECO Secretariat, Tehran. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador of the Republic of *Tajikistan* to the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was attended by the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Republic of Uzbekistan. The ECO Secretary General along with concerned officials of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. The list of participants is enclosed as *Annex-I*.

### Agenda Item No.1

#### Adoption of the Agenda

2. The Council adopted the following Agenda of the 232<sup>nd</sup> CPR Meeting for deliberation:

1. *Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 232<sup>nd</sup> CPR Meeting*
2. *Adoption of the Draft Report of the 231<sup>st</sup> CPR Meeting*
3. *Follow-up to the decisions of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting; New Scale of assessments and Reforms etc. (continued)*
4. *Consideration of the Draft Modality of ECO Fund for Afghanistan (continued...)*
5. *Utilization of Special Support Fund (SSF) for the following Events/Meetings and Training Course scheduled to be held in 2018 in Azerbaijan and Turkey respectively*
  - *6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration*
  - *5<sup>th</sup> HLWG on "Privatization and Private Sector Development"*
  - *Training Course on "Current Routes and Trend of Narcotics Drugs Types"*
6. *Launching of the Preparatory Phase of the establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre (CECECO) and approval of allocation of 50000,00 USD from the ECO Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FGPF) as a partial financing of this Preparatory Phase*
7. *Administrative matters:*
  - (a) *Nomination for the post of Programme Officer of Projects, Economic Research and Statistics (continued)*
  - (b) *Appointment of the new Deputy Secretary General (continued)*
  - (c) *Recommendations of the Selection Panel*
8. *Any other business*
9. *Date of the next CPR Meeting*

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### Agenda Item No.2

#### Adoption of the Draft Report of 231<sup>st</sup> CPR Meeting

3. The Council adopted the Draft Report of the 231<sup>st</sup> CPR Meeting circulated to the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No.ECO/CPR/231st Meeting/2018/769 dated 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 along with amendment proposed by the Republic of Turkey in Paragraph 23 of the Draft Report.

### **Agenda Item No.3**

#### Follow-up to the decisions of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting: New Scales of Assessment and Reforms (continued)

4. Second Secretary of the Embassy of Republic of Tajikistan and the **Chairman of the Working Group Meeting** briefed the Council that so far two Working Group Meetings on "Scales of Assessment" and "ECO Reforms" have been convened on 26 June and 10 July 2018, respectively, which discussed the issues related to ECO Reforms, *inter alia*, Scales of Assessment, distribution of posts; proposed organizational chart of the Secretariat; structure of the organization; and creation of a new post of Deputy Secretary General to be offered to Kazakhstan. He mentioned that some Member States observed that professional staff strength should also be increased. The Working Group also deliberated on the proposed portfolios of the 3 DSGs, which would include Trade, Transport, Coordination and Administration, whereas a new portfolio viz. Socio-Economic Development, to be occupied by the fourth DSG, would also be created. It was also proposed that one of the DSG may deal with both Administration and Coordination issues together.

5. The **Chairman** of the Working Group added that the Working Group in its forthcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> Session (6 August 2018) would also deliberate on the "D 1 & 2" and "P" Category posts, respectively. While apprising that only Republic of Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have provided their written positions on the proposed ECO Reforms and Scales of Assessment and Turkmenistan on Scale of Assessment, he called upon the remaining Member States to expedite communicating their feedbacks to the Secretariat before the next Meeting so that those could be deliberated and concrete decisions on issues made accordingly.

6. The Ambassador of Republic of **Kazakhstan** taking the floor pointed out that since the deadline of 15 September 2018 set by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Council of Ministers Meeting for finalization of ECO Reforms and Scales of Assessment is very near; thus, it seemed that the objectives would not be achieved within the stipulated timeframe. The Ambassador further said that Kazakhstan has already provided its stated position to the Secretariat, confirming its consent to the proposed 18% country wise share for new Scales of Assessment, which is very close to the Founding Member States.

7. Moreover, the Ambassador of **Kazakhstan** made a proposal that due to paucity of time and that in case the whole package on ECO Reforms is not decided or adopted jointly, Kazakhstan would suggest that the CPR may consider the proposal of Kazakhstan and authorize the Secretariat to start negotiations with Kazakhstan on its part of ECO Reforms. He further cited that this arrangement would be quite beneficial for the Secretariat and help in finalization of the ECO Reform at the earliest, otherwise it would take more time to conclude the issue. Moreover, the Ambassador opined that bilateral talks between the Secretariat and Kazakhstan can be applied to the whole negotiating process as a solution, which if succeeded, would at the end get the same results and encourage other Member States to accelerate their countries' decision making process.

8. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** taking the floor informed that Council that Pakistan supports the ECO Reform process and has

already communicated its position to the Secretariat. However, with regard to the proposal of Kazakhstan on expansion in DSG posts, he clarified that Pakistan is not averse to the proposal of Kazakhstan; but, the matter is still with the capital for deliberations and decision, and the feedback in this regard, would be shared with the Secretariat as soon as received from the capital. While referring to another proposal made by Kazakhstan, regarding bilateral consultations with Secretariat, he requested the delegation of Kazakhstan to share its proposal in writing as the same is not clear at this stage. Moreover, the Representative of Pakistan viewed that since ECO is a multilateral forum and thus all the issues should be discussed and decided by the CPR rather than through bilateral arrangement.

9. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** appreciating the briefing given by Chairman of the Working Group Meeting on ECO Reforms lauded Kazakhstan for agreeing to 18% budgetary share and supported the idea of creation of new DSG post for Kazakhstan, which was discussed during the Working Group Meeting. He also supported the proposal of Kazakhstan pertaining to bilateral consultation between Kazakhstan and the Secretariat for which he requested the former to provide its proposal to the Secretariat for circulation among the Member States. Besides, he said that the reform process should be finalized at the earliest in a professional manner while taking into account providing equal opportunity to all Member States in different categories of D & P posts and preventing from categorization or grouping Member Countries as founding and non-founding Members. Moreover, while mentioning that the Organization is lacking in professional staff, he emphasized on enhancing the strength of Programme Officers.

10. The **Chairman** of the Council commented that the proposal of Kazakhstan is quite viable and shortest way to reach the conclusion on ECO Reforms in a timely manner as the latter is agreed to its proposed share of new scales of assessment and intends to finalize its segment of the reform, which would give further boost to finalizing the overall issue at the earliest.

11. The **ECO Secretary General** briefed the Council that Secretariat has been consulting both issues with Member States bilaterally and received some feedback from the Member States. However, he clarified that though CPR authorizes the Secretariat to start negotiations with Kazakhstan bilaterally and even some outcome is achieved, the same will ultimately have to be brought to the CPR for getting approval and adoption of the COM either through silence procedure via circulation or regular COM Meeting. While supporting the proposal made by Kazakhstan for starting its negotiations with the Secretariat and Member State(s) concerned, he affirmed that it would give a push to speed up the process of finalizing the issues in a timely manner.

12. **ECO Deputy Secretary General (Admn)** informed the Council that Meetings of the Working Group are going in a smooth way and some tangible progress has been made. He further apprised that in order to reach the consensus, two potential phases were agreed upon during the WG Meetings; *firstly*, share of the ECO Member States was fixed on the basis of assumption; and *secondly*, it was decided that the organizational structure would be discussed and decided category-by-category. In this context, most of the Member States gave nod to the creation of new proposed post of Deputy Secretary General as put forward by Kazakhstan. He further mentioned that the upcoming WG Meeting would discuss and finalize the remaining

segment related to "D" and "P" category posts. While backing the solid proposal of Kazakhstan, ECO Deputy Secretary General suggested that if CPR mandates, the Secretariat due to paucity of time, would start constructive in-corridor consultations with all Member States (including Kazakhstan) in addition to the existing Working Group mechanism so as to reach the final solution as per deadline fixed by 23<sup>rd</sup> COM.

13. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** while supporting the views expressed by the ECO Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General and Ambassador of Kazakhstan's proposal, recommended early commencement of informal in-corridor negotiations among the Ambassadors besides regular WG Meetings to conclude scales of assessment, ECO Reforms and other pertinent issues soonest possible. In this regard, he also suggested that Secretariat may play the role of mediator as the same mechanism has been exercised in many other issues in past as well.

14. After in-depth deliberations, the Council while sensitizing the Member States that since 3 months have already passed, but no tangible decisions have been taken yet on the issues of ECO Reform and Scales of Assessment, urged Member States again to speed up providing their final official positions before next Working Group Meeting (6 August 2018) so that the matters could be finalized before the deadline of 15 September 2018.

#### **Agenda Item No.4**

##### Consideration of the Draft Modality of ECO Fund for Afghanistan (continued)

15. **Legal Adviser** of the Secretariat briefed the Council that so far Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey have furnished their proposed amendments to the Secretariat on the revised draft on Modalities of the ECO Fund for Afghanistan, which were duly incorporated in the final document and a revised version of the text was circulated among the Member States for feedback. He further mentioned that if the Member States have taken into account the draft modalities in which proposed amendments have been incorporated, are acceptable to them, the Council may finalize the draft modalities as per mandate given by the 23<sup>rd</sup> COM.

16. The Representative of Republic of **Turkey** informed the Council that Turkey has "No Objection" to the proposed amendments put forward by Afghanistan and Pakistan.

17. The Ambassador of Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** appreciated the Secretariat for incorporating positions of the Member States, including Afghanistan as well as circulating the revised draft on Modalities of the ECO Fund for Afghanistan among the Member States. He informed that views and comments of Afghanistan on the revised document would be conveyed to the Secretariat as soon as received from the Capital.

18. The Representative of Republic of **Azerbaijan** noted that the views and comments of Azerbaijan are not reflected in the revised document on the Modalities of the ECO Fund for Afghanistan, which he recalled were communicated to the Secretariat a few days ago. However, he requested the Secretariat to check if Azerbaijan's position has been received otherwise his Embassy would resend it to the Secretariat. The Representative further added that on Azerbaijan's part, there is no

objection to the overall document except a slight change in the text, which should be considered in the document.

19. In reply, the **Legal Adviser** mentioned that no comments from Azerbaijan have been provided to his office yet; however, he would check the receipt of document with the concerned section of the Secretariat. He also mentioned that after receiving final position of Afghanistan and the remaining Member States, a revised version would be circulated to the Member States at the earliest.

20. The Representative of Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** informed the Council that, generally, Pakistan is not averse to the proposal of Afghanistan and agree to the draft document. He, however, added that a small query has been asked from the capital, which his delegation would take up with the Afghanistan Delegation after the Meeting and transmit to Islamabad for final position; and ultimately convey to the Secretariat accordingly.

21. The Council, while taking into account the views expressed by the Member States, decided to defer the matter till the next CPR.

#### **Agenda Item No. 5**

##### Utilization of Special Support Fund (SSF) for the following Events/Meetings and Training Course scheduled to be held in 2018 in Azerbaijan and Turkey respectively

22. The Council was briefed that the Republic of Azerbaijan has requested for approval of the Council to include (i) 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration and (ii) 5<sup>th</sup> HLWG on "Privatization and Private Sector Development", to be held on 25-26 October 2018 in Baku Azerbaijan to the list of the Meetings to be financed from the Special Support Fund (SSF).

23. It was further informed that these two Meetings were already approved by the 28<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting as part of ECO Calendar of Events 2018, but not included earlier, for approval of the Council, in the list of events to be financed from SSF.

24. Besides, the Council was informed that the Republic of Turkey has requested for approval of the Council to include the Training Course on "Current Routes and Trend of Narcotics Drugs Types" in the list of Conferences/Seminars/Training Courses to be financed/supported from SSF in 2018. It was further briefed that the authorities concerned of the Republic of Turkey have rescheduled the cited above Training Course on 10-14 September 2018 in Ankara and called upon the Member States for active participation in the event.

25. The **Chairman** of the Council suggested that these events, as proposed by the Member States concerned, may be considered and approved; and at the same time he requested the Member States to participate in the Meetings and Training Course actively.

26. The Representative of Islamic Republic of **Iran**, while supporting the important events to be held in Azerbaijan and Turkey, enquired from the Secretariat if these Meetings were included in the ECO Calendar of Events 2018, and secondly, whether the Secretariat has enough fund to support these ECO events financially or not as the Secretariat has been facing the budgetary constraints.

27. With regard to the above mentioned Meetings scheduled in Baku and a Training Course on "Current Routes and Trend of Narcotics Drugs Types" to be held

in Ankara, the **ECO Secretary General** informed the Council that ECO has enough funds and will not face any problem in supporting these 3 ECO events, respectively.

28. **ECO Deputy Secretary General (T&I, CFU, AIT & IR)** also confirmed that 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration and 5<sup>th</sup> HLWG on "Privatization and Private Sector Development", to be held on 25-26 October 2018 in Baku Azerbaijan are concerned, are already reflected in the ECO Calendar of Events 2018. With regard to the Training Course, it was clarified that the proposed event is not included in the ECO Calendar of Events 2018.

29. The Representative of Republic of **Turkey** asked the clarification from the Secretariat if there is any legal barrier to include the ECO Training Course on "Current Routes and Trend of Narcotics Drugs Types" in the SS Fund. He viewed that all Member States attach high importance to addressing the narcotics issue, which highly impacts whole ECO Region, especially Iran as one of the main routes of the drug trafficking. Therefore, he requested Iran and other Member States to consider approving the proposal of Turkey for financing the Training Course from the SS Fund because it would increase the level of participation from the Member States. He also asked the Secretariat to search in ECO record and inform the Member States if in past practices same kind of events, which were not approved by the RPC, but later on included in the SS Fund with approval of CPR and subsequently hosted by any Member State.

30. The Representative of **Azerbaijan** informed the Council that the proposed events to be held in Baku are in the list of ECO Calendar of Events 2018 and already were approved by the RPC. Therefore, he proposed that the Council should approve two above-mentioned Meetings scheduled in October 2018 in Baku. While supporting the proposal of Turkey, he also requested the Council to approve its financing from the SS Fund as an exceptional case because Turkey has expressed willingness to host this important training course in September 2018.

31. **ECO Legal Advisor** taking the floor clarified that the list of events, submitted to the CPR, is selected from the events, which have already been approved by the RPC and the COM as the ECO Calendar of Events. He added that events already mutually agreed upon and included in the calendar of events can be supported financially under SS Fund and those events which are not reflected in the calendar of events cannot be listed to be supported from the SS Fund. He further briefed that the proposed event by Turkey, is an exceptional case which has been put before CPR. However, he said that if Council approves this as an event, that may be supported by SS Fund, this should not create a precedence for future, otherwise SS Fund will seriously be affected.

32. The **Chairman** listening to the point of view of Legal Advisor observed and requested the Secretariat to check and confirm initially if the events proposed by any Member State are reflected in the list of ECO Calendar of Events and approved by the RPC and COM; then may include the item in agenda of the CPR Meeting. He, however, while supporting the proposal of Turkey also asked the Member States to accede to this proposal.

33. After hearing the views expressed by Representative of Republic of Azerbaijan and legal advisor of the Secretariat, Representative of Islamic Republic of **Iran** affirmed Iran's support to the proposal of Turkey in order to show a good-will gesture; and further added that principally Iran has always been in favor of holding

of such kind of important events in the Member countries for enhancement of Organization's activities.

34. The Council, on request of Republic of **Azerbaijan**, considered and approved inclusion of (i) 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Heads of Privatization Administration and (ii) 5<sup>th</sup> HLWG on "Privatization and Private Sector Development" (*25-26 October 2018 in Baku Azerbaijan*), which would be financed from the SSF within the ECO Calendar of Events 2018.

35. The Council also, on the request of Republic of Turkey and while noting the importance of addressing issue of narcotics drugs in the ECO Region, considered and approved inclusion of Training Course on "Current Routes and Trend of Narcotics Drugs Types" in the list of Conferences/Seminars/Training Courses to be financed/supported from Special Support Fund (SSF) in 2018, but "as an exceptional case", which would not make the precedent in any ECO Events in future.

#### **Agenda Item No. 6**

##### Launching of the Preparatory Phase of the establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centre (CECECO) and approval of allocation of USD 50000 from the ECO Feasibility and General Purpose Fund (FGPF) as a partial financing of this Preparatory Phase

36. ECO Director for Energy, Minerals and Environment (EME) briefed the Council on the idea, rationale and background of initiation on "Establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centered (CECECO)", which was pioneered by the ECO Secretariat as an outcome of the ECO-UNIDO consultations held in Tehran and Vienna in the past few years. This initiative was also reflected in the ECO Vision 2025 and its Implementation Framework, which stipulates the establishment of the Center upto 2025 by the Secretariat and the Member States, and in this regard, 23rd ECO Council of Ministers (*held in April in Dushanbe 2018*) and ECO RPC Meetings also mandated the Secretariat to proceed further on the issue. Similarly, the UN Resolution on Cooperation between the UN and ECO (A/RES/69/111), adopted in the 69<sup>th</sup> session of the UNGA (December 2014) also welcomed the idea of establishment of regional energy center with possible assistance of UN agencies.

37. The ECO Secretariat also emphasized that the launching of the preparatory phase was in line with the UNIDO's and ECO's project cycle and envisages carrying out the consultative needs assessment/feasibility study, organization of validation workshop(s), consideration and approval of more detailed project document. The concept, financial aspects, institutional and technical design of the Centre should be deliberated and agreed upon among the Member States with possible participation of other stakeholders in consultation process during the Preparatory Phase of the implementation of the project. "

38. ECO Director further cited that, in continuation of the process, "the First Draft Project Document on the Preparatory Phase for the Establishment of ECO Clean Energy Centered (CECECO)" was jointly elaborated by UNIDO and ECO in September 2017 and as an indicated paper agreed upon on (*entailing rationale, background, technical and financial details of the initiative*). This paper was circulated to the ECO Member States (*vide Note Verbale No. EME/CECECO/2018/654, dated 4 June 2018*) for seeking views and comments on launching of preparatory phase of the stated Project. With regard to budgetary aspects of the project, the Council was briefed that the First Draft Project Document specifies launching of the preparatory



phase of the Project with the estimated budget of 266900/- EURO, including support costs, out of which ECO Secretariat will provide in kind support for convening of the meetings, political process and technical input etc. In this connection, UNIDO and Austrian Development Agency (ADA) signed the funding agreement on 15 May 2018, concerning the preparatory phase of the ECO Clean Energy Centre on the margins of the Vienna Energy Forum 2018 envisaging ADA's financial contribution of USD 50,000/-, which is considered as UNIDO's contribution as seed money. Meanwhile the Secretariat continues its engagements with other potential international donors for fund-raising of the project, and in this vein, ECO has appealed the Islamic Development Bank (IsBD) and its response is awaited. Moreover, he also briefed that a delegation from Secretariat is planning to visit Vienna in October 2018 to attend the High-level International Sustainable Energy Cooperation Events jointly organized by the UNIDO and European Union's Austrian Presidency, where ECO Delegation will have extensive consultations with the ongoing and potential partners and stakeholders.

39. In view of above briefing, the Director requested the Council to consider and approve launching of the preparatory phase of the Project and allocate USD 50,000 from the ECO Feasibility and General Purpose Fund as a partial financing of the preparatory phase, which could cover consultancy, contractual services, international travel, workshop etc.

40. The Representative of Republic of **Turkey** informed the Council that the matter has been sent to the Capital and the feedback is still awaited, which would be communicated to the Secretariat on receipt. Moreover, he mentioned that, in general, Member States support this project, however, while noting that the information given by the Secretariat does not specify inclusive explanation concerning overall utilization of US \$ 50,000. Therefore, he suggested deferment of this agenda till the next CPR and in the meanwhile requested the Secretariat to provide a detailed write-up elaborating item by item expenditures to be incurred on the preparatory phase of the Project so that it could further be discussed during the next CPR Meeting for a decision.

41. The Representative of Islamic Republic of **Iran** while supporting the comments made by Turkish Delegation on the project proposal and appreciating briefing given by the Secretariat, informed the Council that the final decision has not yet been taken by the authorities concerned of Iran, which would be conveyed to the Secretariat at the earliest. He further commented that the idea on Establishment of ECO Clean Energy Center would certainly enhance the cooperation among ECO and the relevant international Organizations, including UNIDO. However, he added that given the audit aspects of spending of sum and noting that there is no deadline to meet, he therefore, suggested that matter may be deferred till the next CPR Meeting so that comments could be received by the remaining Member States from their relevant departments of the capitals.

42. On the queries regarding financial and other aspects of the Project raised by the Member States, **ECO Deputy Secretary General (Admn, EME, HRSD & DOCCU)** clarified that the Secretariat at this stage is wholly focusing on fund-raising aspect of the project and the initial project proposal also specifies different heads on part of ECO, UNIDO, Austrian Development Agency, IDB and other donors; however, other aspects of the project, including Terms of References (ToRs), job descriptions, budget, etc., as raised by the Member States, would be identified and

circulated to the Member States for their feedback at a later stage. He further pointed out that after completion of the first phase, ECO would also approach other financial institutions, including IDB, to attract their interest to join in implementation process of this project. In this rationale, at this stage, he solicited approval of the Council to accept allocating USD 50,000/- in order to show interest of the ECO Member Countries in implementation of this important energy project to UNIDO, Austrian Development Agency and IDB, whereas other aspects could be discussed later on.

43. The Representative of Republic of **Azerbaijan** appreciating the inclusive briefing given by the ECO Deputy Secretary General on this matter, supported the project initiative, which he viewed would further enhance the cooperation between ECO and the UNIDO. In this vein, he also proposed to the Council to consider the possibility of allocating the budget for this important initiative.

44. After protracted deliberations, the Council, in principle, supported the idea of this project; however, deferred the matter till the next CPR as requested by Iran and Turkey in order to receive comments from the remaining Member States and consider the matter at the 233rd Meeting scheduled in September 2018 for decision.

#### **Agenda Item No. 7**

##### Administrative matters

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

45. ECO Deputy Secretary General (Admn, EME, HRSD & DOCCU) briefed the Council that after discussion in the last 231st CPR Meeting, Uzbekistan came up with the idea that it would nominate a suitable candidate for the post of Programme Officer for Projects, Economic Research and Statistics (PERS) and convey to the Secretariat. However, the Representative of Uzbekistan conveyed that response regarding the post of Programme Officer (PERS) was still awaited, which would be communicated to the Secretariat once received from the Capital.

46. The Deputy Secretary General further informed that the Secretariat received a note verbale from Turkmenistan, indicating its interest for the post of Programme Officer (PERS). On request of Turkmenistan, the Secretariat has already shared requisite information, pertaining to the above mentioned post, including qualification, job description, emoluments and other details. Until now, Secretariat has not received any nomination from both Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan against this post.

47. The Representative of **Uzbekistan** informed the Council that the matter is under consideration with the Capital, which would be communicated to the Secretariat as soon as received.

48. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** taking the floor commented that since other administrative issues, under consultations, are also linked to the post of Programme Officer (PERS); therefore, he recommended that a deadline of "One or Two Months" for provision of the information may be fixed that in case feedback from Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan is not received Iran and Pakistan may hold bilateral consultation to finalize this issue. Moreover, he recalled the proposal made by the Ambassador of Pakistan during the previous CPR Meeting that in case there is

no nominee from Turkmenistan or Uzbekistan, this post would be decided through internal arrangement between Pakistan and Iran for a term of 2 years or 4 years.

49. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**, while reiterating earlier position and supporting the proposal of Iranian side, urged Uzbekistan side to come up with some deadline at the earliest, enabling the Council to accept the nomination from Uzbekistan, or otherwise, as decided in the last CPR, Iran and Pakistan would decide on the issue bilaterally.

50. The Council asked the Secretariat to send a Note Verbale to the concerned Embassies for onward transmission to their respective capitals to expedite response on this issue so that it could be finalized in the next CPR Meeting.

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

51. The Chairman of the CPR while noting the absence of delegation in the CPR Meeting, who was supposed to provide the position on proposed appointment of H.E. Ambassador Huseyin Avni Bicakli, (**Turkish National**), sought views of Member States and the Secretariat on this issue.

52. Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** pointed out that since the matter is still pending with Turkmenistan for a decision and its Delegation is also not representing in this Meeting; thus, he said that he does not intend to repeat the same position of Turkey, as conveyed during the last Meetings. He broached the idea that if Secretariat may send a Note Verbale, reminding Turkmenistan to seek its position on the matter as per ECO Rules on appointments.

53. The **Chairman** while supporting the views expressed by the delegation of Turkey also asked the Secretariat to send a reminder to the Embassy of Turkmenistan in Tehran to clarify its position or otherwise this issue be discussed in the next CPR Meeting.

54. The **ECO Secretary General** taking the floor informed the Council that Secretariat has already sent the previous CPR Reports to the Embassy of Turkmenistan for onward transmission to the Capital. He was of the view that it would not be advisable to remind a Member State through a Note Verbale to get its position on this issue.

55. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** noted that since post of Deputy Secretary General (Admn, EME, HRSD, DOCCU) is very important, it should not remain vacant for a time. He, however, backed the idea expressed by ECO Secretary General and added that from diplomatic norms point of view, it would not be prudent to send an official communication a Member States, ascertaining its position. He, therefore, suggested that Turkey and Turkmenistan could hold an informal consultation to find a way out on this matter.

56. The Council taking into account the views expressed by the Member States and the Secretariat deferred the issue till the next CPR Meeting.

**c. Recommendations of the Selection Panel**

57. The Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan and Chairman of the Selection Panel briefed the Council on outcome of the Meeting of the Selection Panel held on

30 July, 2018. The Council considered the recommendations of the Selection Panel and discussed the following:

(i) Director for Agriculture, Industry & Tourism (Category-I, D2)

58. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** informed the Council that his delegation at the level of Selection Panel had no objection to the re-appointment or renewal of term of Mr. Memduh Unal (**Turkish National**) as Director (Agriculture, Industry & Tourism (*Category-I, D2*)) for another term of three years effective from 5th November 2018. However noted that there is enough time in expiry of tenure of the incumbent and similarly issue of ECO Reforms has yet to be finalized by 15 September 2018, as directed by the 23rd Council of Ministers. He, thus, proposed the Council to consider all extensions including D-Category as a package subject to redistribution of all posts as enshrined in the reform process package and keeping in view of proposals to be made by Kazakhstan and other Member States. He further suggested that the matter of renewal of term of Mr. Memduh Unal may be referred to the next CPR or after finalization of Reform Process. Besides, talking about ECO Reforms, he also suggested that all Member States should be given equal opportunities, concerning strength of the personnel at the Secretariat, including Professional and Director level posts.

59. Representative of the Republic of **Turkey**, referring to the views presented by Iran, expressed Turkey's concern and did not view this proposal as a positive approach, and in this regard, asked the logic behind freezing the posts and if the same will be applied to all posts including the programme officers and other posts. He also enquired whether the reform process would be completed within the stipulated timeframe by 15 September 2018 or otherwise any delay in appointments or extensions would create the vicious cycle, causing difficulties for the Secretariat to manage. He further added that since the post of Director (AIT) belongs to Turkey and hence there should be no problem with extension and be approved by this CPR Meeting.

60. Replying to the query raised by Turkey, the Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** said that Iranian delegation in principle has no objection to the re-appointment of Mr. Unal. He, however, added that the main objective of the reform process is restructuring of ECO in order to enhance the efficiency of the Organization. At the end of the reform process, there will be problem with redistribution of posts with existing officials from the countries, including Iran.

61. The **Chairman** suggested the Selection Panel and the Secretariat that since all the posts are interlinked with the Reform Process to be redistributed among the Member States; therefore, appointments and extensions might be considered taking into account the Reform Process.

62. With regard to Iranian proposal on extensions or new appointments till finalization of the ECO Reforms, the **Secretary General** clarified that based on his past experiences, both the issues would not make any difference and cautioned that this approach would ultimately harm and create problems in overall functioning of the Organization. Besides, he added that as per prescribed procedures, the Secretariat is required to circulate the post to be vacant by the officials from the Member States to secure timely nomination. The Secretary General inquired the logic behind freezing of the posts and added that if it would apply to extensions and reappointments as a whole, if so, what approach Secretariat should apply in case of appointment of Director

Trade and Investment from Pakistan, as current incumbent is supposed to vacate the post in end of September 2018. He further said usually internal process takes too much time for some Member States in nominating the official, which would eventually cause freezing the issue. He also commented that there should be no distinction between extensions and new appointments of officials.

63. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** replying to the Secretary General's views, stated that suppose if the reform process is finalized and posts are redistributed, what would be decision about the current incumbents as some posts of Member States would be designated to others. He added that his delegation is not specifically objecting Turkish proposal, but it covers general cases. Moreover, he said that his views are not regarding the case of freezing but revising the organization through redistribution of the posts as today the case is from Turkey and similar cases would emanate from other countries, including Iran. He also commented that most of the "D" level posts are appointed by Member States, including Iran on political basis, which is not good and a fair approach for betterment of the organization and thus Director level appointments should also made through interview process. At the end, he assured that the case of Turkey would be sorted out shortly in consultation with the Member States, especially Iran, Turkey and Pakistan.

64. The **Secretary General** clarified to the Iranian delegation that if the reform process is concluded, a "Transition Period" would be worked out and decided for the incumbents, which would include not only "D" but also "P" and "A" Categories. He also mentioned that it would be worst situation in the case of "A" Category as the officials in this category are appointed till their retirement. Therefore, a constructive approach should be applied for overall process. The Secretary General with regard to selection of programme officers and A Category Staff stated that evaluation option could be opted, but in case of D category, it would not be feasible. Referring to article enshrined in the reform process, he added that 20% Programme Officers will be selected from the open market, but it does not cover the appointment of D-Category.

65. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** stated that request of the Iranian Delegate to wait the reform process for the re-appointment of Mr. Memduh Unal as Director is unreasonable and in contradiction with their request from Uzbekistan side to determine "one-two months" deadline for the nomination of the candidate for the post of Programme Officer.

66. The Representative of **Islamic Republic of Pakistan** referring to the comments made by Iranian delegation, saying that "D" level appointments by Member States are made on political basis, he put statement on the record that in case of Pakistan any delay in appointments of officers and officials are due to transparency, fairness and merit, and in this regard, candidates are appointed after thorough procedure of written score exams, followed by interview process which finalizes the suitable candidates. Therefore, if it was political appointments case, it would have not taken days or minutes in Pakistan to finalize the candidates.

67. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** once again taking floor stated that in past, there was a procedure of interview and qualification, which was removed on the proposal of one of the Member State in one of the past CPR Meetings. He further added that Iran is ready to suggest revision in recruitment policy so that the appointments at the Secretariat should be made through tests and interview mechanisms. He also proposed that Secretariat may also provide opportunity to

selection of some professionals from the open Market as most of the similar international Organizations are following this process, including ASEAN as a case of reference. He reiterated that the main objective is not to freeze the post of Turkey but at least request the concerned Member State to defer the case till the next CPR Meeting as the incumbent has more time till expiry of his tenure and Secretariat is also in finalization of the reform process.

68. The Chairman noting that there is no consensus between Iran and Turkey, therefore, urged Iran and Turkey and Secretariat to discuss the issue bilaterally and come up with the final proposal till the next Working Group Meeting scheduled on 20 August 2018. He also added that if this post is related to a Member State, other Member States should accept its proposal as the appointing country proposes for appointment on the basis of qualification, and interview already conducted in that country.

69. The Council decided that the issue related of appointment of posts of Directors will be consulted among Turkey, Iran and Pakistan internally to solve the issue and urged Member States concerned to come up with a decision before the next CPR Meeting scheduled in September 2018.

**(ii) Programme Officer for Drugs and Organized Crime Unit (Category-II, P3)**

70. At the outset, the Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** mentioned that the delegation of Iran and Pakistan through bilateral consultations prior to this CPR Meeting have agreed to extension in tenure of incumbent official, Mr. Raheel Ahmad Cheema (Pakistan national), Programme Officer for Drugs and Organized Crime Unit (Category-II, P3) till the joining of his replacement to the maximum period of one year.

71. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** taking the floor recommended that the decision for this post has been discussed with Pakistan as a package; hence, he recommended to freeze the post till the next CPR Meeting and hoped that both delegations will finalize the issue bilaterally at the earliest.

72. The **ECO Secretary General** on Iranian proposal commented that agreement of the incumbent will expire in August 2018; therefore, a decision should be made in this Meeting.

73. The Chairman reminded the Member States that all issues related to appointments will have to be discussed till 15 September 2018.

74. In reply to the Secretary General's query, the Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** suggested extension in tenure of Mr. Raheel Cheema for 3 months of time. In the meanwhile, Pakistan and Iran, through bilateral arrangement, will decide on two posts of Programme Officers. He reminded that Iran has already informed the Secretariat its nomination against the post of Programme Officer (DOCCU), which is also under consideration with the Iranian authorities concerned, and added that the matter could also be discussed with Pakistan bilaterally as well once it is decided by concerned authorities of Iran.

75. Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** repeated the decision of Iran that extension in tenure of Mr. Cheema will be approved by the Council for 3 months, subject to further extension if the replacement does not join by the bilateral agreement between Iran and Pakistan.

76. The Council approved extension in tenure of Mr. Raheel Ahmad Cheema for the period of 3 months effective from 6 August 2018 to 5 November 2018 and for further extendable if the replacement of the incumbent does not join by bilateral agreement between Iran and Pakistan.

**(iii) Russian Interpreter (Category-II, P3)**

77. Ms. Nurgul Dusenova (Kazakh **National**) was appointed as Russian Interpreter (**Category-II, P3**) for another term of four years effective from 1 August 2018.

**(iv). Steno-Secretary (Category-II, P1)**

78. Mr. Shahzado Lund Baloch (*Pakistan national*) was appointed as Steno-Secretary (**Category-II, P1**) for a term of four years effective from the date of his joining at the Secretariat, who would replace Mr. Arshad Ali Jatoi.

**Agenda Item No.8**

**Any Other Business**

i. Tajikistan's proposal on ECOTA

79. The Representative of the Republic of **Tajikistan** reminded about the Secretariat's Note Verbale No. T&I/ECOTA/2018/790 dated 11 July 2018, circulated to the Member States by the Secretariat, containing proposal of Tajikistan regarding views and comments on revival of the ECOTA. He called upon the Signatory Countries to expedite providing their views and comments on revival of this important trade agreement.

80. The Council while noting the importance of ECOTA, urged the Member States concerned to speed up communicating their feedback to the Secretariat before the next CPR in order to discuss and finalize the issue during that Meeting.

ii. Audit Report for the Year 2017

81. Chief Accountant of the Secretariat briefed the Council that Audit Team comprising of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey visited the Secretariat in mid of July 2018 and conducted audit of the accounts of the Secretariat for the Year 2017. After going through all relevant accounts, documents and systems, the Team prepared "Audit Report for the Year 2017", which has already been circulated to the Member States for their views and comments. She further briefed that the Report does not contain substantive issues, except nine general technical issues, pertaining to accounting system, software and other matters. In reply to the audit observations, the Secretariat prepared comments on observations as raised by Audit Team, which were also shared with the Member States.

82. The Chief Accountant requested Council's approval on the ECO Audit Report for the Year 2017, which would be submitted to the COM for final endorsement and subsequently surplus of the accounts would be transferred to Budget 2018 to facilitate in streamlining the expenditure.

83. ECO Secretary General taking floor informed that the Audit Report was circulated to the Member States after circulation of draft agenda of the CPR Meeting

because at that time the report was not ready for dissemination to the Member States. While drawing the attention of the CPR and said if Member States wish the same issue could further be discussed during the next CPR Meeting.

84. The Council took note of the ECO Audit Report for the Year 2017.

- iii. ECO Capacity Building Workshops on Biodiversity and 4<sup>th</sup> Experts Group Meeting on Ecotourism to be co-hosted by Republic of Turkey and in Turkish Cypriot State in Nicosia

85. The Representative of Republic of Turkey raised the issue regarding ECO Workshops on Biodiversity and the Meeting on Ecotourism, which would be co-hosted by Republic of Turkey and Turkish Cypriot State in October 2018 in Nicosia. He stated that upon the written request of the Secretariat, Turkey confirmed co-hosting of 3 ECO Workshops on Biodiversity and the Experts Group Meeting on Ecotourism with Turkish Cypriot State in 2018. In this context, he underlined that Turkey does not deem it necessary to confirm once again co-hosting of the event with an observer state if the same had already been notified to the Secretariat by an Observer Country, if the events are already approved and reflected in the ECO Calendar of Events. Therefore, the Representative requested the Secretariat, that in future, information regarding Meetings should be circulated to the Member States instead of reconfirming with another country.

86. The Council asked the Secretariat to take into account the issue raised by the Representative of Republic of Turkey.

- iv. ECO Energy Consortium Meeting hosted by Iran in Tehran

87. Representative of the Republic of Iran informed the Council that a Note Verbale was sent to the Secretariat regarding the proposal of Iranian National Committee of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO-CCI) for hosting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the ECO Energy Consortium for which two sets of date in December 2018 were conveyed. However, Secretariat informed that since the event is not included in the list of Conferences/Seminars/Training Courses to be financed/supported from SSF in 2018 and thus it could be included in the next RPC Meeting. He requested the Secretariat to intimate the date of the next RPC Meeting.

88. The Chairman of the CPR asked the Secretariat to take into account the views of the delegation of Iran regarding the date of upcoming RPC Meeting and coordinate the dates for the above mentioned Meeting.

89. The Secretary General informed that the Secretariat itself cannot set the date for the RPC and at this time it is too early to set the date; however, the matter could be included in the agenda of the next CPR Meeting to fix the date for convening of the next RPC Meeting scheduled for 2018.

- v. Informal Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) to be held in New York on the sidelines of the UNGA

90. The Chairman of the CPR while reminding on convening of the Informal Meeting of the Council of Ministers, to be held in New York on the sidelines of the UNGA in September 2018, asked the Secretariat to take the matter into account.



*Words of Appreciation to the outgoing ECO Secretary General*

91. The Council expressed vote of a great appreciation and profound gratitude to H.E. Mr. Halil Ibrahim Akça on successfully completing his assignment as the ECO Secretary General. The Chairman, Permanent Representatives and Heads of Delegation of the Member States extensively recognized Mr. Akca's meritorious services rendered to the betterment of Organization and acknowledged his brilliant performance in 3 years of tenure. He was also credited that during his tenure, ECO achieved milestones and finalized ECO Vision 2025 & Implementation Framework; 13 ECO Summit, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> ECO Council of Ministers Meetings were successfully and efficiently organized; many outstanding issues were resolved, which could not be sorted out in previous times; sense of ownership and participation of Member States were encouraged. Most importantly, Mr. Akca handled the complex issues very diplomatically, as well as while steering the Organization, took all the Member States onboard in the decision making process. At the end, the distinguished participants wished him a great success in his future endeavors to achieve more milestones in his life.

92. At the same time, the Council also welcomed the incoming Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Hadi Soleimanpur and hoped that the Organization would also achieve the milestones as did under the able leadership of H.E. Mr. Akca.

93. H.E. Mr. Halil Ibrahim Acka also reciprocated and shared his thoughts and fond memories while performing the duties as ECO Secretary General. Mr. Akca profoundly thanked the Council for the views expressed for him and confidence showed into him during his tenure. The outgoing ECO Secretary General expressed his special thanks to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for staunch support extended to him during the Chairmanship of Iran when he assumed the charge as Secretary General. He also profoundly thanked Government of Pakistan for its exceptional support to him during its chairmanship and fondly recalled the participation of honorable President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the ECO Day on sidelines of the 28<sup>th</sup> RPC Meeting in 2017 in Islamabad. He also mentioned thanks to the Government of Tajikistan for showing ownership and holding of the 23<sup>rd</sup> COM Meeting in Dushanbe.

94. Mr. Acka also thanked Republic of Turkey, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Central Asian Countries for supporting him fervently and backing the ECO activities during his tenure. He shared his three memorable views while working as the ECO Secretary General. *Firstly*, he mentioned that he tried to give hope and vision to the related parties including ECO Member States and ECO Secretariat Staff so that achieve something tangible for the Region. *Secondly*, he tried to keep all the stakeholders onboard, in this regard, he paid special attention to the long-lasting and difficult issue of ECO Reforms and ECO Scales of Assessment and hoped that it would be finalized soon; and further mentioned that during his tenure he gave high respect and was honoured to work with ECO Secretariat Staff. *Thirdly*, he gave emphasis to the priorities of the Organization, and in this regard, he is happy with the finalization of the ECO Vision 2025. He believed that the new ECO Secretary General, Mr. Hadi Soleimanpur, with guidance of the Council will enrich the portfolio of the Organization by accelerating and introducing substantial ECO Regional projects and programmes; as well as expressed best wishes for the participants.

**Agenda Item No.9**

Date of the next CPR Meeting

95. The Council decided to convene the forthcoming 233<sup>rd</sup> CPR Meeting in middle or end of September 2018 and ask the Secretariat to coordinate the exact date of the meeting with the Chairman and communicate to the member states accordingly.

96. 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.

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**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

**Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:**

- H.E. Dr. Nasser Ahmad Noor, Ambassador
- Mr. Sayed Nader Pajohesh, Second Secretary
- Ms. Zahra Badaghi, Administrative Assistant

**Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:**

- Mr. Javid Musayev, Counsellor

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

- H.E. Mr. Ali Khani, Deputy Director General
- Mr. Shahrokh Edrisabadi, Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Fallah, Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau

**Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:**

- H.E. Mr. Baghdad Amreyev, Ambassador
- Mr. Yerbol Akhmedov, Minister, Counsellor

**Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:**

- Mr. Imran Hayder, 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

**Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:**

- Mr. Murat Muhajiroglu, Counsellor, DHM

**Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:**

- Mr. Umid Babaev, Third Secretary

**ECO Secretariat:**

- H.E. Mr. Halil Ibrahim Akça, Secretary General
- Mr. Hadi Soleimanpur, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Kanan Nazarov, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Salohiddin Kiromov, Assistant Director (CFU)
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Arshad Ali Jatoui, Steno-Secretary
- Mr. Chaudhry Hadees Muhammad, Steno-Secretary
- Ms. Aynur Mammadova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator
- Ms. Nurgul Duissenova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator
- Mr. Amir Javaheri, English-Persian Interpreter/Translator

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