



235th Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Report

24th December, 2018
ECO Secretariat - Tehran

Report

The 235th CPR Meeting was held on Monday 24th December 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, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan 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. Under this agenda item the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, proposed inclusion of a new agenda item concerning the draft Modalities for the Operation of ECO Fund for Afghanistan. The Council after a long deliberation, considering the reference made by the Islamic Republic of Iran to the ECO Rules of Procedure, that is Rule No. 18, decided to address the issue under any other business.
3. The Council adopted the following Agenda of the 235th CPR Meeting for deliberation:
 1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 235th CPR Meeting
 2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 234th CPR Meeting
 3. Follow-up to the decisions of the 23rd Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting; New Scales of Assessment, ECO Reforms etc. (continued)
 4. Administrative and financial matters:
 - a) Secretariat Budget proposal for the financial year 2019 (continued)
 - b) Recommendations of the Selection Panel
 5. Any other business:
Draft Modalities for the Operation of ECO Fund for Afghanistan
 6. Date of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of the Draft Report of the 234th CPR Meeting

4. The Council adopted the Draft Report of the 234th CPR Meeting circulated to the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No.CFU/CPR/234th Meeting /2018/1267 dated 2nd December 2018.

Agenda Item No.3

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

5. **The ECO Secretary General** informed the Council on the latest development on the reform process. He made a reference to the informal consultation with the founding Member States and noted that the founding Member States may accelerate the reform process, in terms of providing some positions, to be redistributed under the reform process. He appreciated the general consent expressed by the Member States, to this end. He added that, with the relinquishment of some posts by the founding Member States to the non-represented Member States, that is Uzbekistan

and Turkmenistan, could be offered some position, under the reform process. It was highlighted that Kazakhstan, under the reform process, is also expected to be offered some extra positions at the ECO Secretariat, which could also be addressed by the released posts. He continued that there would be no increase in the number of staff at the ECO Secretariat under the reform process. Under this context, it was suggested that the Council may appreciate the founding Member States for accepting the relinquishment of some of their posts to be offered to the non-represented Member States.

6. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, while taking the floor, appreciated the efforts made by Secretary General to move forward with the reform process and mentioned that while Iran has no problem with this proposal, he believes that reform process has different dimensions - it is not just giving the posts by the Founding Member States to other Member States and it needs comprehensive conclusion. He emphasized that the most important aspect of the reform process is increasing the efficiency of the Organization which requires among other things determination of the scales of assessment and realization of the commitments of the Member States.

7. He further added that one of the other challenges of the Organization is filling of vacant positions when the posts are offered to them. In this context, he referred to the post of PERS, which has been offered to be filled by non-represented Member States but no-feedback was received for a long time, and finally the CPR decided on the filling of this post by Iran. He added that this position has not been included in the table drawn up in the non-paper reflecting the number of positions of Iran.

8. He continued that the request for writing-off of arrears was brought up by a Member State last year, which was treated positively by the Council of Ministers, with the aim of increasing the contribution in future; however for the current year the hope for realization of the contribution of the share of the concerned state was faded.

9. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** taking the floor, mentioned that during the 18th COM Meeting in 2009, the scale of assessment was approved up to 2015. He said that in the new scale of assessment, Kazakhstan is ready to increase its contribution. Taking this opportunity, he once again urged the member States to support the Kazakhstan's proposal and provide their response at the earliest possible. He further said that Kazakhstan is ready to increase their share and would enhance their activities with the Secretariat.

10. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** while taking the floor, principally supported the proposal made by the Secretary General and stated that Pakistan has no objection as to giving up some of their posts. He added that formal decision will be conveyed to the Secretariat after receiving from Islamabad. He also endorsed the observation of the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran and it was also conveyed during the previous CPR that the net effect of the reforms is to focus on the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire organization. The founding Members, he added, decided to relinquish from their share of the posts with the net result that overall effectiveness and efficiency of the entire organization would be greatly improved.

11. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey**, taking the floor mentioned that idea of the reform process is to increase the efficiency of the Organization and observe commitments by the Member States. He said that this process should not be taken as give and take, he added that this approach has created suspicion about the outcome of the reform process. He further referred to their readiness of giving up posts with the aim of increasing of the efficiency of the Organization.

12. **The ECO Secretary General** appreciated the founding Member States for showing flexibility in the negotiations of the reform process in terms of relinquishment of some of their positions in favor of non-represented Member States. He further referred to the need for enhancing the sense of partnership and ownership among all Member States which is expected to be observed at all dimension of the activities of the Organization, including the presence of nationals of all Member States at the Secretariat. He further informed that the whole reform process would be considered as a package and in the beginning of the reform process the new scales of assessment, proposed by the Ambassador Akca, former Secretary General of the Organization in the 23rd COM Meeting in Dushanbe was assumed fixed. The Secretary General continued that 8 Member states had already expressed their views on the new scales of assessment. He further said that in the end of this process, the new arrangements and structural organization would be another part of this reform adopted as a package and considered by Ministers in the forthcoming COM Meeting. He, then, mentioned that, the Council may agree on the relinquishment of some posts by founding Member States to be offered to the non-represented Member States i.e Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan as well as Kazakhstan, under the reform process. He further said that these Member States should also show their flexibility in the reform process.

13. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan**, while again taking the floor stated that he appreciated the founding Member States for providing posts to countries, which have no posts at the Secretariat. He also underlined that scales of assessment is related to the package of Kazakhstan, which was not approved so far. In reply to the query raised by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as to their respective share under the new scales of assessment, he said that Kazakhstan agrees with increase of its share of contribution subject to the adoption of its package.

14. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** queried about the measures should have been taken by the Secretariat in terms of fate of the PERS posts and declaration of the vacancy of the post of PERS. He also sought clarification from Representative of Kazakhstan, on the comments made by him concerning of scales of assessment.

15. As for the query on the PERS, the legal advisor, informed that the post of PERS is to be treated as decided by CPR, and while, referring the need for declaration of the vacancy of this post similar to other posts, guessed that, the delay in this regard, could be attributed to the ongoing negotiations in terms of redistribution of posts under the reform process , for which the availability of vacant posts could be considered a great help.

16. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan**, while again taking the floor stated that the proposal of Kazakhstan as a package has been put before the Council for a long time without any concrete result. However, Kazakhstan

principally agreed to address the staff issue and new scales of assessment in CPR and consider the issue of writing-off its arrears in COM.

17. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey**, while taking the floor, stated that there is some mismatch between expectations. He said that idea for package and getting new posts and minimizing the budgetary contribution should not be acceptable to Turkey. He mentioned that Pakistan, Iran and Turkey have a vision to empower the Secretariat and increase commitment from other non-represented Member States.

18. The **ECO Secretary General** further apprised the Council that he had a continuous process of his consultations with founding Member State and as a result of these consultations, founding Member States had agreed to relinquishment of some of their posts. At this stage, the Secretariat would not identify the number of these needed posts. He further informed that regarding the posts which are expected to be reformulated, there is an agreement at CPR level and the issue of writing-off may be referred to higher body, i.e COM. He also informed that principally, the Member States almost agreed on the 90 percent of the issue of reform process in terms of the structure of the Secretariat and further results would be achieved later. On the issue of post of Programme Officer (PERS), he informed the Council that, the post has not been declared only with this understanding that, under the reform process, some positions are expected to be vacant in favor of others. He added that, however, this is up to the concerned Member State to decide on the posts that may be relinquished to this end. He also informed the Council that structural organization will be addressed properly at the Secretariat and the Member States will be informed accordingly. He, then, in line with the proposed reform process, suggested that the Council may appreciate the gesture of founding members for relinquishment of some of their posts to be offered to the non-represented Member States and also allow the Secretary General to continue its consultations with Member States.

19. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** once again took the floor and expressed his concerns on the conclusion. He said that relinquishment of posts from founding Member States to non-represented Member States is not the only expected thing from the reform process, for which the founding member states should be appreciated, the most important part is active participation of the Member States in the affairs of the Organization. He further said that conclusion statement should be balanced, for both directions.

20. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** said that relinquishment of some posts from founding Member States to the non-represented Member States is not only the aim of the reform process, it has a broader vision, Turkey also wants from the non-represented Member States, to give their utmost commitment and ownership to the organization.

21. Referring to the comments on the writing-off of the arrears at 23rd COM Meeting, the Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** said that during the COM Meeting in Dushanbe, the arrears of Uzbekistan was written-off, which includes the year 2018. He also mentioned that Uzbekistan will pay according to the rate of 4% subject to the availability of 2 posts (one head of Directorate and Programme Officer) to them.

22. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** apprised the Representative of Uzbekistan to clarify that which documents mentioned the contribution for the year 2018 is written-off. He further said that Uzbekistan's share for the year 2018 is 8.98% as per the Scales of Assessment for this year. In this context he sought clarification from the Secretariat.

23. The **Chief Accountant** briefed the Council on the issue and stated that COM was held in April 2018 and in this meeting the Council decided on writing off of the arrears of Uzbekistan. She added that when the financial year terminates, the contribution which was expected to be paid during that financial year, is considered unpaid and calculated as arrear of the respective Member State. Writing-off of arrears in 2018, cover the unpaid contribution till the end of financial year of 2017, and it could not technically include the current year contribution which can be paid until the end of the year.

24. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** underlined that there is need to actually refine the procedure and reflection of the outcome document to ensure that such misunderstanding should not take place.

25. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** stressed that the idea of budget should be clear and it is specified that this goes back not forward.

26. After deliberations, the Council decided to appreciate the founding Member States for relinquishment of some of their posts to be offered to the non-represented Member States i.e Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, as well as Kazakhstan, under the reform process, which aims at the enhancement of the efficiency of the Secretariat and more commitment from all Member States to the organization.

Agenda Item No.4

Administrative and financial matters:

a) Secretariat Budget proposal for the financial year 2019 (continued)

27. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** taking the floor informed the Council that the draft budget for the year 2019 is under consideration with the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

28. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** stated that his country endorses the budget for the year 2019.

29. The Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** cited that the draft budget for the year 2019 is under consideration with the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as it is received, would be conveyed to the Secretariat.

30. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, taking the floor stated that Iran endorses the budget for the year 2019. He also expressed his concerns regarding the approval of the budget for the year 2019 and some Member States tendency to refer to usually lengthy procedure of waiting instructions from their capitals. He mentioned that with this approach, it is difficult to run the affairs of the Organization.

31. **ECO Deputy Secretary General (T&I, AIT, IR, TC, CFU)** informed the Council that in November 2018, the Secretariat received a Note Verbal from the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, informing the Secretariat that initial analysis of budget has been conducted by Kazakh side. In response, the Secretariat provided the esteemed Embassy with the required explanation. The Secretariat has not yet received any feedback from Kazakhstan.

32. **The ECO Secretary General** underlined that eight (8) member states have no objection with regard to the proposed budget for the year 2019. He informed the Council that Uzbekistan's position on the budget is new to the Secretariat. However, he said that without approval of the budget by the Council by the end of this year, the whole affairs of the Secretariat would be undermined. Hence, the Secretary General requested the Council to consider the budget for the year 2019, and taking into account, inquiry made by some member states on the draft budget, he proposed that this budget may be considered as approved and the Council may set 15 days time limit for any possible new concerns raised by the Member States.

33. After deliberations, the Council decided to set a time limit of 15 days, for any comments from the Member States as to the draft budget for the year 2019 and in case of no comments received during the said duration, the draft budget will be considered as approved by CPR.

b) Recommendations of the Selection Panel

34. The Selection Panel met on December 24, 2018. The meeting, coordinated by Mr. Kanan Nazarov, ECO Deputy Secretary General, was chaired by the Representative of the Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan. Other Members of the Selection Panel included, the Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey.

35. The selection Panel made the following recommendations for consideration by the CPR:

Steno Secretary (Category-II, P1).

Mr. Zeeshan Altaf Khan (Pakistani national) may be appointed against the post of Steno Secretary (**Category-II, P1**) taking effect as of his joining date. The tenure of the incumbent **Mr. Muhammad Ayub Brohi** may be extended till the joining date of his successor.

Programme Officer for Agriculture, Industry and Tourism (Category-II, P3).

Taking into consideration the request made by the Representative of the Republic of Turkey during the meeting of Selection Panel, the term of service in respect of **Mr. Hasan Sahin (Turkish national)** may be extended till the next (236th) meeting of CPR.

36. The Council, on the briefing by the Selection Panel, approved the above mentioned recommendations.

Agenda Item No. 5

Any Other Business

Draft Modalities for the Operation of ECO Fund for Afghanistan

37. Taking into account the request of Afghanistan for consideration of the draft Modalities for the Operation of ECO Fund for Afghanistan, the Legal Advisor referred to the ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan adopted by 23rd COM, under which the CPR was mandated to finalize the aforesaid draft Modalities. He also provided the Council with the information on the content of the amendments and the request of Afghanistan.

38. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** suggested to convene the working group meeting and then give the report for the next CPR for the final decision. He further stated that if there is no need for working group, this issue may be finalized in the next CPR Meeting.

39. The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** stated that proposal for establishment of working group is not feasible, as Afghanistan already received positive views from Kabul. Though, Representative of Azerbaijan is not present at the Meeting, they have agreed upon all the new wordings. He further mentioned that Afghanistan and Turkey also agreed upon on all new wordings during RPC Meeting.

40. The **ECO Secretary General** stated that there is some amount of money in the bank in London and this amount may be transferred to the bank account in Kabul, at the earliest possible. He further said that content of the amendment did not change drastically the modality and there were some minor issues between Afghanistan and Turkey on the modalities, which are addressed properly. He suggested that the Council may set 15 days time limit for any possible concerns raised by the Member States. If there are some concerns, we may put this issue as an agenda item in the next 236th CPR Meeting.

41. The Council decided to observe silence procedure for finalization of the Draft Modalities for the Operation of ECO Fund for Afghanistan and to this end decided to set one week time-limit for getting approval of CPR. In case of no objection received from the Member States within the aforesaid duration the draft modalities will be considered finalized and COM approval will be sought through the silence procedure for which the Council set two weeks time-limit.

Agenda Item No.6

Date of the next CPR Meeting

42. The Council decided to convene its next **(236th) Meeting on Monday, 4th February 2019 at 10:00 hours at the ECO Secretariat-Tehran.**

43. 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 contribution in the Meeting. As this CPR was the last CPR Meeting in the year 2018, the Chairman wished all the participants Happy New Year.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- H.E. Mr. Nasser Ahmad Noor, Ambassador
- Ms. Zohra Badaghi, Administrative Assistant

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 Akhmedov, Minister, Counsellor, Charge d' Affaires
- Mr. Ulan Mussaliyev,

The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- Mr. M. Baisymakov, Counsellor

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Mr. Mian Azmat Farooq, First Secretary,

Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

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

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:

- Mr. Emirhan Yorulmazlar, DHM, Charge d' Affaires
- Ms. Hatice Ozdil, Third Secretary

The Embassy of Turkmenistan:

- Mr. Perhat Ojarov, First Secretary
- Mr. Sakhatov Islam, Third Secretary,
- Ms. Mohammedova Selbi, Attaché

The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- Mr. Umid Babaev, Third Secretary

The ECO Secretariat:

- H.E. Mr. Hadi Soleimanpur, Secretary General
- Mr. Kanan Nazarov, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Salohiddin Kiromov, Assistant Director (CFU)
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
- Ms. Mojgan Golchin, Chief Accountant
- Mr. Chaudhry Hadees Muhammad, Steno-Secretary
- Mr. Mohammad Akbar Azizi, Steno-Secretary
- Ms. Aynur Mammadova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator
- Ms. Nurgul Duissenova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator
- Mr. Amir Javaheri, English-Persian Interpreter/Translator
