



# **238<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

## **Report**

**29<sup>th</sup> May 2019**  
***ECO Secretariat - Tehran***

## Report

The 238<sup>th</sup> Meeting of CPR was held on May 29, 2019 (Wednesday) at the ECO Secretariat, Tehran. Since the presentation of credentials by newly appointed Permanent Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan was yet to be made, the Secretary General requested the Council to elect a temporary chair to preside over the meeting without prejudice to the chairmanship of Tajikistan.

2. The Council elected Ms. Riffat Masood, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as the chair of the 238<sup>th</sup> Meeting of CPR. The Meeting was attended by Permanent Representatives/Representatives of Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan**, Republic of **Azerbaijan**, 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 relevant officials of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. List of participants is enclosed as *Annex-I*.

### Agenda Item No.1

#### Adoption of the Agenda

3. The Council adopted the following Agenda of the 238<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting for deliberations:

### Draft Agenda

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 238<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting;
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 237<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting;
3. Follow-up to the decisions of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting; ECO Reforms etc. (*continued*);
4. The Lists of Meetings/Events and Conferences/Workshops/Seminars/Training courses to be supported/financed from Special Support Fund (SSF) ;
5. Administrative matters:
  - Appointment of Deputy Secretary General (T&I, AIT and IR) (*continued*);
  - Recommendations of the Selection Panel;
6. Any other business; and
7. Date of the next CPR Meeting.

### Agenda Item No.2

#### Adoption of the Draft Report of the 237<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting

4. The Council adopted the Draft Report of the 237<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No.CFU/CPR/237<sup>th</sup> Meeting /2019/256 dated 27 March 2019 along with amendments proposed by the Republic of Turkey in paragraphs 30, 33 and 66 of the Draft Report.

### Agenda Item No. 3

#### Follow-up to the decisions of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting; ECO Reforms etc. (*continued*)

5. Referring to the reform proposals considered by the Council at its 237<sup>th</sup> meeting, the **Chair** briefed the Council that the draft reform proposals developed by

the Secretary General in consultation with the Member States were put before the Council for its consideration at its previous meeting. She added that, the Council deliberated on the draft proposal and with some modification considered the draft proposal positively. She continued that invoking to silence procedure for obtaining the approval of COM as to the reform proposal was deferred to be considered at 238<sup>th</sup> CPR meeting after gaining the views of the Member States if any. The **Chair** further informed the Council of a Note Verbale dated 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019 received from the Republic of Turkey expressing views on draft reform proposal which was circulated amongst the Member States on 15<sup>th</sup> of April, 2019. Realizing the importance of the reform process with a view to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization the **Chair** noted that a lot of discussion has already been made in this regard, in order to secure a consensus to move forward. The **Chair** invited the Secretary General for updating the Council on the issue.

6. While thanking the Chair, the **Secretary General** underlined that under the mandate given to the CPR by 23<sup>rd</sup> COM, the reform process as well as scale of assessment were desired to be finalized by mid-September 2018. He further said that the 233<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of CPR on September 11, 2018 expressed its consent as to the new scale of assessment as well as endorsed creation of 4<sup>th</sup> post of DSG for the Republic of Kazakhstan, whereas it authorized the Secretary General to consult with Member States and develop a mutually agreeable and effective formula of organizational reform based on the recommendation of the COM and the reform proposal developed by former ECO Secretary General Ambassador Akca.

7. The **Secretary General** further stated that the 234<sup>th</sup> Meeting of CPR held on November 5, 2018 agreed to maintain the existing six directorates each to be supervised by a director (Category-I, D2) and the establishment of seven heads of section including four existing posts of Assistant Directors (D1) re-titling their designations as heads of section. It also mandated the Secretary General to rationalize the posts through consultations with concerned Member States, he added.

8. The **Secretary General** said that after extensive consultations with Member States, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan agreed to relinquish three posts each to be offered to the Republic of Kazakhstan and non-represented Member States, while the Republic of Turkey sought to maintain their existing posts without any changes. The **Secretary General** informed the Council that he also discussed the issue of unpaid contribution of Kazakhstan till the end of 2018 with all concerned to ascertain a formula in this regard. He referred to the formula presented before the 237<sup>th</sup> Meeting of CPR to cover the issues under discussion including write off of the arrears of Kazakhstan to the organization and the redistribution of posts, adding that paragraph 47 of the report of 237<sup>th</sup> Meeting of CPR contained therein the proposed detail for redistribution of posts as well as decisions/consideration thereon by the Council.

9. The **Secretary General** recalled that as the 237<sup>th</sup> CPR mandated him to continue consultations with Member States on the remaining parts of reform process and provide the next CPR with the outcome of his consultations and proposals, he continued the process and developed three different formulas to address adjustment of unpaid contribution of Kazakhstan till 2018, one of which was acceptable for Kazakhstan, Iran and Pakistan, while Turkey required some time to consider it. He underlined that under the given formula *“at the end of every financial year, during which the full contribution of Kazakhstan, as per the new scale of assessments, has been paid,*

*the Secretariat, subject to the existence of savings, may allocate an amount from the savings, equivalent to two percent of the size of the budget, for writing off the arrears of Kazakhstan which accumulated until the end of 2018."*

10. The **Secretary General** added that in case of the approval of changes in the structure of the Secretariat as reflected in the report of 237<sup>th</sup> CPR meeting, there would be a need for preparation of the draft portfolios of the newly established posts and implementation of modifications in the portfolio of existing posts along with the drafting of job descriptions as well as drawing up of the new organizational chart of the Secretariat. He said that such documents shall be submitted to COM through CPR under the reform process. The **Secretary General** sought further authorization, until the adoption of the aforesaid documents by COM, to make the required temporary arrangements as to the assignments of duties to the staff, filling the established posts.

11. The **Secretary General** also informed that the Secretariat has received a Note Verbale dated May 27, 2019 from the Republic of Turkey regarding the method for adjustment of balance of contribution of Kazakhstan and repercussions of such a formula, which was circulated amongst the Member States on May 29, 2019.

12. The **Secretary General** proposed the Council for consideration of the whole package (which was presented to the 237<sup>th</sup> meeting of CPR) with amendments in Para 47-D of relevant CPR's report, seeking the adoption of the prescribed silence procedure in order to seek COM's concurrence, in this regard.

13. The **Chair** appreciated the efforts of the Secretary General made on reform process to bring about an understanding amongst all Member States for resolving the issue. She also said that the Secretariat has received some feedback from the Republic of Turkey and Republic of Kazakhstan on the proposals. She added that other Member States may also consult with their capitals and provide the Secretariat with their own suggestions/counter-proposal or acceptance to the given formula in writing, by June 17, 2019.

14. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** said that the increase in Afghanistan's share from 1.28% to 2% was subject to acceptance of some conditions conveyed earlier regarding allocation of three posts to Afghanistan. He sought to know any development in this regard.

15. The **Chair** underlined that all such issues regarding scale of assessment and allocation of posts are considered under the umbrella of reform process, adding that the deadlock was there due to Kazakhstan's request for writing-off its arrears as some Member States had reservations in this regard. She expressed optimism that once this issue would resolve, the Council could move forward with the scale of assessment already approved by COM and agreed upon by Member States as well as decide on the distribution of posts.

16. The **Secretary General** informed that under the reform process and based on the formula developed by former Secretary General, Afghanistan was supposed to receive one post of head of section. However, he added that after consultations with Member States Afghanistan may be treated specially by allocation of two posts i.e. one head of section and one programme officer. Referring to their request for allocation of three positions, he conveyed that the issue was already under negotiations with Afghanistan to find a way forward, outcomes of which would be brought before the next meeting of CPR.

17. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** stated that some of the decisions though taken with noble intention in the past resulted in the present day deadlock, adding that there should be some general rules to avoid such a situation leading to a standstill. He noted that any request for allocation of posts by Member States might be taken into consideration in light of the amount of their budgetary contribution to the Secretariat as after all the Member States are believed to collectively share the responsibility of strengthening the organization. He estimated that a Member State making 1% contribution of the total annual budget of the organization might hold one D1 level post, whereas the one paying 2% on such account could possess one D1 level post and one P level Post respectively. Likewise, the formula for distribution of posts should be based on each Member State's annual contribution to the organization, discouraging the element that could create an environment to receive future ambitious demands for allocation of more positions by other Member States, he added.

18. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** inquired about the existence of rules linking the contribution of posts to the budget. He continued that whether the rate of scale of assessments is subject to positions held by the Member States.

19. The **Legal Adviser** in response to the inquiry, stated that there is no rule imposing linkage between the number of positions at the Secretariat and the rate of assessed scale of contributions of the Member States. These two issues have been interlinked with each other, by some Member States, due to the coincidence of the discussions on the scale of assessments and the reform proposal. He added that contribution is normally considered as a salient factor in distribution of posts.

20. Taking the views of Legal Advisor into consideration, the **Chair** requested the Secretary General to work out on the Secretariat's requirement as well as posts to be needed and their adjustment amongst the relevant Member States who agreed to increase/decrease their share.

21. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** thanked the Secretary General for his ongoing efforts for the reform process. He, however, stated that indeed there were written and unwritten rules being implemented or, at certain times, not implemented for the sake of solidarity in this organization. He expressed that the reform process and still pending distribution of posts was to actually increase Member States' commitment towards the organization. Therefore, those who pay the past and present budgetary contribution might be allocated more posts with an understanding that the reform process entails final approval from all Member States.

22. The Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** said that there was a high time for us to reach to certain consensus and solve this issue of distribution of posts and contribution. He expressed his gratitude for the position of his Pakistani counterpart. He also thanked for allocation of one P2 post to Uzbekistan, stating that one issue regarding D level position was still pending. He said that Uzbekistan would express its views in writing. However, he noted that the ECO should work effectively and efficiently but no country could actively participate in the organizational affairs without having posts.

23. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** appreciated the efforts made by the Secretary General on reform process. Giving reference of the Izmir treaty as well as supporting his Uzbek counterpart, he said that Afghanistan

would like to see itself in the organization. He added that since Afghanistan agreed to pay more, it requested more positions to appropriately represent in the organizational affairs.

24. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** appreciated the Secretary General for his constructive work in the reform process, conveying that the Republic of Kazakhstan supported the proposals prepared by Secretary General. He stated that Kazakhstan informed the Secretariat as well as Member States its position, adding that in order to make the organization more active and project-oriented, such issues should be resolved. He discouraged the difference of founding and non-founding Members.

25. Taking all aspects of discussions into account, the **Council** required the Member States to convey their written comments/views over the proposed formula by June 17, 2019. It further desired the Secretary General to hold further consultations, expecting some substantive progress in the next meeting of CPR.

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

##### The Lists of Meetings/Events and Conferences/Workshops/ Seminars/Training courses to be supported/financed from Special Support Fund (SSF)

26. The **Chair** briefed the Council that the Secretariat received a Note Verbale from the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan dated 2 May 2019, regarding inclusion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistics Offices (MHNSO) in the Lists of events to be supported under SSF. The said Note Verbale was circulated to Member States by the Secretariat on 5 May 2019.

27. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** stated that Statistics Bureau of Pakistan requested the inclusion of 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistics Offices (MHNSO) in the event supported by Special Support Fund. He further mentioned that 6<sup>th</sup> ECO High Level Expert Group Meeting (HLEG) on Statistics already included in the list of Meetings/Events and Conferences/Workshops/ Seminars/Training courses to be supported/financed from Special Support Fund (SSF). He said that this would enable Pakistani authorities to convene both meetings as planned back- to- back.

28. The **Council** approved the inclusion of 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Heads of ECO National Statistics Offices (MHNSO) in the List of Meetings/Events and Conferences/Workshops/ Seminars/Training courses to be supported/financed under Special Support Fund (SSF).

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

##### **Administrative matters**

##### (a) Appointment of Deputy Secretary General ( T&I, AIT and IR) (continued)

29. The **Chair** briefed the Council that in the 237<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting, there was recommendation to the COM to appoint Mr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi (Afghan National) against the post of DSG (T&I, AIT and IR) for a full term of three years to be effective from the date of his joining. It also agreed to seek the approval of the COM in this regard through adoption of the silence procedure. The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan sent a Note Verbale dated 24 March 2019 to all the Member States as well as the ECO Secretariat requesting a deferral of the approval of the appointment through the silence procedure as they were awaiting instructions from

their capital. She added that this held on the adoption of silence procedure and no formal position was conveyed before the expiry date of the procedure, adding that the Council was now informed that the procedure set forth by CPR at its 237<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting terminated on 27 March 2019.

30. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** informed that the formal instructions were still awaited from their capital. However, he added reasoning for confusion on some of the key points that included the full term of three years for the new DSG from Afghanistan taking the Iranian position into account expressed in the previous meeting of CPR. To avoid any ambiguity, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan needed some more clarity on the issue as if, for instance, this appointment is made for full term of three years what would be the case on completion of tenure of the Secretary General from a founding Member State whose post of DSG left for a non-founding for the duration taking over the post of SG, and how things would be adjusted. In such a situation, how the post of DSG would be given back to the founding Member i.e. Iran, he underlined. He said that the Secretary General was requested to negotiate with Afghanistan to find out a way forward as to somehow these administrative matters as well as additional post and tenure were linked with each other.

31. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** informed that Pakistan's communication, under reference, was not received by their Embassy. However, he said that as per conclusion made in the last meeting of CPR, the said post of DSG was supposed to be given to Afghanistan, seeking Afghanistan's position regarding acceptance of silence procedure in this regard.

32. **Deputy Secretary General (T&C, AIT and IR)** stated that the Secretariat had circulated the communication received from Pakistan regarding appointment of DSG from Afghanistan vide Note Verbale No. 259 dated 28 March 2019.

33. The **Chair** reiterated that the entire issue was falling in one basket, adding that the Pakistan's concern was to ascertain scenario in case of occupation of the post of DSG by an Afghanistan candidate as the said post was supposed to be given back to Iranian candidate on completion of tenure by incumbent Secretary General who would relinquish the charge sometime in the middle of term of service of Afghan's DSG. She added that Secretary General may continue his consultations with Afghanistan on these issues to find out a solution before next CPR's meeting.

34. The Representative of **Afghanistan** stated that they would convey their official position in the matter after conclusion of negotiations with the Secretary General.

(b) Recommendations of the Selection Panel

35. A meeting of the Selection Panel held on May 29, 2019 was coordinated by Mr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, ECO Deputy Secretary General. The meeting 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 and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

36. The selection Panel made the following recommendation (s) for consideration by the CPR:

**Legal Advisor (Category-II, P3)**

Term of service in respect of Mr. Mahmoud Khobkar (**Iranian national**) as Legal Advisor may be extended for one year with effect from June 7, 2019

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

Mr. Farman Ali (**Pakistani National**) may be appointed as Steno-Secretary for a full term of four years with effect from the date of his joining the Secretariat. However, the incumbent Mr. Muhammad Omair may be relieved of his duties upon joining of duties by Mr. Farman Ali.

37. The Council approved the above mentioned appointments as recommended by the Selection Panel.

**Agenda Item No.6**

Any other business:

38. The Representative of the **Kyrgyz Republic** emphasized that while discussing the reform process as well as taking up the matter of increasing contribution and posts, the organizational efficiency and effectiveness must be taken into account, prioritizing the ECO regional issues of energy, connectivity, economic cooperation and trade.

39. The **Secretary General** desired the Member States to actively participate in the some upcoming ECO events that include the following:

- 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) preceded by the 5<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee Meeting, 9 June 2019, Isfahan- Iran
- Informal meeting comprising of relevant one eminent person from each ECO Member State to discuss on forming ECO Clearing Union, 12 June 2019 at the ECO Secretariat, Tehran, I.R. Iran.
- 2nd Confobition (conference + exhibition) on Health Tourism as well as the ECO- NGO and Tourism agencies meeting, 18-20 June 2019, Ardabil, I.R.Iran
- 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ECO Heads of Railway Authorities/8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Railway of Committee of TTCC, 20-21 June 2019, Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan
- Capacity Building Seminar/Workshop titled "Perspectives and Challenges of Regional Electricity Markets: Harnessing Trade and Investment Opportunities" on 2-3 July 2019 in Zanjan, I.R of Iran.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ECOTA Cooperation Council, 18-19 August 2019, ECO Secretariat, Tehran, I.R.Iran
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of ECO Heads of Central Banks, 29 August 2019, Tehran, I.R.Iran

40. The **Secretary General** requested the Republic of Tajikistan to consider important Meeting on Energy issues i.e 2<sup>nd</sup> Experts Group Meeting on establishment of the ECO Regional Electricity Market, proposed to be held in Tajikistan. He further requested the Tajik authorities to convey the exact date and hospitality details in this regard. This meeting would prepare ground for energy ministerial meeting in future to address these important issues.

41. The **Secretary General** also requested the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to inform the Secretariat about the High Level Working Group Meeting on Energy, scheduled to be held in Pakistan on country's own proposal made in the last RPC, seeking the exact date and hospitality details in this regard. He expressed optimism that such events would pave a way forward to host the Ministerial Meeting on Energy.



42. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** inquired about the progress of opening of new bank account for ECO Fund for Afghanistan in Kabul and transferring of the amount from Habib Bank London to the National Bank of Pakistan in Kabul.

43. **Director (HRSD)** informed that ECO Secretariat was awaiting response from Pakistani side pertaining to the issue pointed by Afghan Representative.

44. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** underlined that the relevant Pakistani authorities had already conveyed, in principal, the concurrence on the issue. However, a formal response on relocation of the said fund and opening of bank account in the National Bank of Pakistan at Kabul would be intimated, in due course.

**Agenda Item No.7**

Date of the next CPR Meeting

45. While adjourning the Meeting, the CPR Chairman expressed her sincere thanks to the distinguished Permanent Representatives/Representatives of all ECO Member States for their participation and valuable contribution in the Meeting.

46. The Council decided to convene its next **(239<sup>th</sup>) Meeting on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 10:00 hours at the ECO Secretariat-Tehran.**

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Annex-I

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

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

- Mr. Ahmad Hasan Najmpoor, Minister, Counsellor, CDA
- Mr. Sabir Ahmad Ahadi, In charge of economic and ECO section
- Ms. Zahra Badaghi, Administrative Assistant

**The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:**

- Mr. Javid Musayev, Counsellor
- Mr. Rauf Abdullayev, Second Secretary

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

- H.E. Mr. Majid Bizmark, Permanent Representative/Director General
- Mr. Sayed A. Shabibi, Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau

**The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:**

- Mr. Yerbol Akhmedov, Minister, Counsellor
- Mr. Gamzat Khairov, Counsellor

**The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:**

- H.E. Mr. Avazbek Abdurazakov, Ambassador
- Mr. Akilbek Kilichev, Minister, Counsellor

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

- H.E. Ms. Riffat Masood, Ambassador
- Mr. Mian Azmat Farooq, First Secretary

**Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:**

- Mr. Firdavs Yusupov, Second Secretary

**The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:**

- Mr. Emirhan Yorumazlar, Deputy Head of Mission
- Ms. Hatice ÖZDİL, Third Secretary

**The Embassy of Turkmenistan:**

- Ms. Selbi Mukhammedova, Attache

**The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:**

- H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullaev, Ambassador
- Mr. Umid Babaev, Third Secretary

**The ECO Secretariat:**

- H.E. Mr. Hadi Soleimanpur, Secretary General
- Mr. Kanan Nazarov, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Husyein Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Sayin Kaan, Director (HRSD)
- Mr. Salohiddin Kiromov, Assistant Director (CFU)
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Mohammad Ahmad Raza, Steno-Secretary
- Mr. Mohamamd Akbar Azizi, 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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