



243rd Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Report

28th October 2019
ECO Secretariat - Tehran

Report

The 243rd Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR), held on October 28, 2019 at the ECO Secretariat, was chaired by H.E. Mr. Nizomiddin Zohidi, Ambassador of the Republic of **Tajikistan** to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Permanent Representative to ECO. 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 concerned officials of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. The list of participants is enclosed.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 243rd CPR Meeting

2. The Secretariat proposed the following Draft Agenda of the 243rd CPR Meeting for adoption:

Draft Agenda

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 243rd CPR Meeting
2. Preparations for 24th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) preceded by Senior Officials Meeting on 8-9 November 2019 in Antalya, Republic of Turkey:
 - a) Draft Agenda and Annotated Draft Agenda of the 24th Meeting of Council of Ministers
 - b) Scale of Assessments for the years 2020-2022
 - c) Draft Antalya Communiqué
3. Participation of Turkish Cypriot State in the 8th ECO Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (20-21 November, Ankara, Republic of Turkey)
4. Any other business
5. Date of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No. 2

Preparations for 24th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) preceded by Senior Officials Meeting on 8-9 November 2019 in Antalya, Republic of Turkey:

a) Draft Agenda and Annotated Draft Agenda of the 24th Meeting of Council of Ministers

3. The **Chair** requested the Secretariat to brief on the status of developments made during the 3rd Prepcom Meeting in connection with forthcoming 24th Meeting of the Council of Ministers..

4. **Deputy Secretary General (T&C, PERS & CFU)** informed the Council that the Secretariat received a Note Verbale from the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey on October 27, 2019 about the details of local hospitality for the 24th COM Meeting, which was circulated among the Member States.

5. **DSG (T&C, PERS & CFU)** underlined that the 3rd Meeting of Prepcom considered and revised the draft agenda of 24th COM which was circulated among the Member States and made available to the participants of this meeting, as well. While repositioning some agenda items, the Prepcom recommended the removal of agenda item No. 9 about ECO reforms, however, the Representative of Afghanistan requested for retention of this item in the COM's agenda, the DSG noted. He added that the Prepcom also proposed the deletion of agenda item 13 from the draft agenda of the 24th COM.

6. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** recalled that the CPR decided earlier to refer agenda No. 9 to SOM for deliberations. He inquired the reason to retain this item in the COM's agenda, considering that the Ministers would have no enough time to deliberate the ECO reform. He proposed the removal of this item from COM's agenda or its referral to SOM for discussion and submission of report to the COM.

7. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** underlined that ECO reform remained one of their important issues, as Afghanistan has been awaiting a decision in this regards. He conveyed that Afghanistan already mentioned to pay 2% of its share as Scale of Assessment of 2019 on possession of the requested posts in the Secretariat. In the given context, it was requested to retain this item in the agenda of the 24th COM, he apprised.

8. The **Deputy Secretary General (T&C, PERS & CFU)** conveyed that the removal of item 9 from COM's agenda would mean the omission of this item from SOM agenda, informing that the SOM would be discussing only the agenda of COM to facilitate the work of Ministers. He underscored that the Senior Officials gather to deliberate all issues contained in the agenda of COM as per the authorization which is given to them by the Members of the Council. SOM reviews the agenda items of COM one by one and prepare the draft report of COM for its consideration by the Council, he added. The finalized draft report of COM discussed and prepared by SOM will be submitted to COM along with issues-with-no-agreement for their finalization by the COM, he emphasized.

9. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** considered that the SOM's position is similar to that of CPR, reiterating that the SOM could discuss and submit report as suggested during the last CPR, adding that the Secretariat might delete many of such issues during discussions at SOM's level. He proposed that it would be better to discuss the issues in detail in the Senior Officials Meeting to come up with conclusion to facilitate the decisions of the COM.

10. The Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** recalled that the CPR had already discussed this issue a lot, inquiring how the deletion of an issue from one meeting would justify its non-deliberation also in the other meeting. She stated that in all regional and international organizations the Senior Officials Meeting (s) are basically convened to discuss the agenda (s) of Ministerial Meetings for facilitation of the Ministers. A report incorporating the detail of agreement or disagreement on any agenda (s) to be developed by SOM on behalf of the COM would be submitted to the Council of Ministers that had the discretion to accept, further deliberate on some unconcluded issues or reject it, she noted. She also

questioned the suitability of SOM if the COM was to deliberate the whole agenda items one-by-one

11. The Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** recalled that during the last meeting of CPR it was decided to exclude agenda item 9 from CPR's agenda but to retain it in the COM's agenda, considering a lot of discussions already made at CPR's level in the matter. She emphasized that the SOM would be in a better position to decide on the issue of reform, proposing the addition of this item in the SOM's agenda but its exclusion from COM's agenda. She also suggested repositioning of adoption of the SOM report after the adoption of agenda.

12. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** stated during last PrepCOM Member States were not willing to discuss the ECO reforms in the SOM. Since the Reform Process is interlinked with the Scale of Assessments, he opined to retain it for discussion in the SOM that might help in reaching a conclusion on Scale of Assessments. He desired deletion from agenda the inaugural statement by high-level dignitary. He further wished not to include the presentation by SOM in the COM program in view of the paucity of time and tight schedules of the Ministers.

13. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** further said that he had no issue with the draft agenda of SOM but the agenda of COM disseminated today that still required the final approval from concerned authorities of Turkey. He agreed with the proposal of Pakistan's Representative for change of place of adoption of the SOM report after the adoption of agenda.

14. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** hoped that the ECO reform and scale of assessments might be adopted by COM, considering it an important issue for the organization.

15. The **ECO Secretary General** underlined that the agenda items 5 to 12 will be discussed by SOM to develop draft report for approval of the COM. He further requested the Council to keep these items in the draft Agenda of COM and by this the SOM could make deliberations and report to COM for consideration/approval. The views of Legal Advisor was also sought with respect to the draft agenda of SOM and COM.

16. The **Legal Advisor** recalled that a detailed explanation was already made in the matter during previous meeting of the CPR. However, it was brought to the attention of the Council that decision-making on some issues falls exclusively within the prerogative of the Council of Ministers. Accordingly, the agenda of COM should contain items on which the decision of COM is required. By illustration, review of reports of Specialized Agencies and Regional Institutions and adoption of the scale of assessments and budget were enumerated as responsibilities of COM. He added that drawing up of the draft agenda of 24th COM should be done in view of the responsibility of COM as set forth under the Treaty of Izmir and Rules of Procedure.

17. The **Council** endorsed the 24th COM's draft Agenda, excluding the inaugural statement of a high-level dignitary.

b) Scale of Assessments for the years 2020-2022

18. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** appreciated the consideration of their proposal for Kazakhstan's share at 16% in the Scale of Assessments for 2020-2022. However, he requested to reflect Kazakhstan's share as 16% also in the Scale of Assessments for 2019 instead of 18%.

19. The **Chair** stated that the Scale of Assessments for 2019 was already approved under decision of the CPR. He requested the Representative of Kazakhstan to focus on the Scale of Assessments for 2020-2022.

20. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** stated at the time of approval of the scale of assessments for 2019, Kazakhstan's concurrence to 18% was subject to certain conditions that remained unaddressed.

21. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** recalled that during the negotiations process, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan agreed on the allocation of posts to be relinquished by Iran and Pakistan as well as payment of their shares as per Scale of Assessments for 2019. He lamented that if any country had reservations over the Scale of Assessments for 2019, such reservations should have been raised at the time of SoA's adoption by 233rd CPR. He deplored the objections after approval of the Scale of Assessment for 2019 expecting their recurrence in future if such negative precedent made that would cause great embarrassment for the Secretariat, increasing its debts manifold. He categorically said that the Scale of Assessments should absolutely be 100%.

22. **The Secretary General** underscored that the Scale of Assessments for 2019 were already approved, adding that any Member State's post-reservations might be taken up before the COM. He requested the Council's focus on Scale of Assessments for 2020-2022, supporting the stance of Iran's Representative regarding 100% SoA.

23. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** expressed concerns over the approach of linking the Scale of Assessments with allocation of posts. He stressed that the Scale of Assessments should be decided without any condition for allocation of posts. He underlined that this approach continued to make the finalization of Scale of Assessments quite difficult, proposing discussion on both the issues in a separate manner. He noted the persistence of such issues would create difficulties for the SOM to ascertain a way forward.

24. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** clarified that during the 233rd CPR's Meeting, Afghanistan concurred with its share of 2% conditionally. He expressed optimism as regards solution of the matter if the issue was taken up at COM's level.

25. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** proposed that reform process might be put aside for the time being, proposing to finalize 100% Scale of Assessments and not lesser.

26. The **Secretary General** sought the alternative (s) if the reform process was put aside. He added that the Secretariat was currently undergoing almost - 14 in SoAs

deficit, seeking who would accommodate such a difference in case of a pause in reform process. He recalled the core idea behind reform process was to increase the scope and sense of partnership, inviting simultaneously the non/under-represented Member States to involve in decision-making and meet their responsibilities in the organization inter alia fulfilling or increasing the share in SoAs. The Secretary General underlined that negotiations were always difficult but remained the best option for moving ahead, conveying that he had a fruitful meeting with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan in Baku whereby the Kazakh's dignitary assured for exploring some better options. He also informed about his negotiations with Afghanistan to increase their share and activities in the organization, expressing optimism to resolve the issue of deficit in SoAs together while meeting in Antalya.

27. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**, considering the complexity of the issue under debate, said that the chart provided by the Secretariat did not indicate the real image of Scale of Assessments, noting that the Scale of Assessments for 2019 approved by the 233rd CPR was yet to be approved by COM. She recalled that there was one Member State who refused to accept its allocated SoA on the assumption that the decision of CPR was not endorsed by COM finding some room to maneuver as it was not paying even according to 16% of its share for quite some time. She said that the Secretariat's budget should not be assumptions-based but according to existing situation. She expressed concerns over the sufferings of some Member States who agreed to pay in line with new Scale of Assessment, expecting this situation might persist during the fiscal years 2020 and 2021 in the event of refusal to pay by some other Member States, doubling the Secretariat's deficit. In the given situation, all Member States should revise their budgetary share as all of them have been experiencing budget crisis due to their tough economic conditions.

28. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** stated that since the beginning of the organization, there was initiation of reform and restructuring of the organization, in order to make it project-oriented and innovative. He expressed his discontent over the unpleasant remarks by some Member States regarding the utility of reform process. He lamented that despite their acceptance to welcome the process during 23rd COM, some delegates seemed to halt the follow-up of reform process. He appreciated the tremendous efforts of ECO Secretary General to make this organization move forward, stressing on the need to shoulder the reform process for making it successful. He further pointed out that in the absence of such reform process or movement ahead, some Member States would be forced to consider quitting their membership. He underlined that finding a solution on any technical or administrative differences might be placed on the disposal of the Secretariat.

29. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** agreed with the views of Pakistan, Iran and Uzbekistan, seeking Member States to fulfill their promises to finalize the matter. He said that it was surprising to note that despite their agreements regarding budgetary contributions for 2019, some countries backed away disowning their commitments.

30. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** reiterated that regarding the Scale of Assessments for 2019 approved by 233rd CPR meeting, Kazakhstan's concurrence to 18% share was under the condition that it would be allocated 9 posts

including one post of DSG in D3 level. He said that if the Council agreed to maintain with that package, he would take up the matter with his capital again for consideration of 18% share of Kazakhstan. Regarding unpaid contribution, he stated the matter was under consideration in Kazakhstan to figure out some way forward. He, however, requested the Secretariat to reflect in the given table their share as 16% for 2019 instead of 18. He also underlined that earlier Kazakhstan conveyed its termination on negotiations to increase its share from 16% to 18%, whereas it asked for separate discussions all financial disputes between Kazakhstan and the ECO Secretariat

31. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** recalled that Kazakhstan asked for four extra posts to effect increase in their share from 16% to 18%, whereas the Council agreed for three posts. She added that Kazakhstan did not accept their un-paid contribution, causing a constant deadlock to persist there on the reform process. She acknowledged the flexibility in Kazakhstan's Representative stand on their arrears, noting their readiness to enter into some discussions with the Secretariat.

32. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** reiterated that the ECO Reforms and Scale of Assessments were two different things, expecting Member States to dislink their contributions with the allocation of posts that seemed a sort of bargaining, spoiling the amicability in the organization. He underscored that the main thing should remain the commitment of the Member States with the organization, as mentioned by the Representatives of Turkey and Pakistan respectively.

33. The **ECO Secretary General** stated that if the Council agreed, the Secretariat would prepare a report for SOM on Scale of Assessments, containing facts and figures to secure a decision or otherwise mandate the CPR to find out alternatives for the Proposed Scale of Assessments (2020-2022).

34. Acknowledging the proposal of the Secretary General deeming it quite optimal, the **Council** asked the Secretariat to prepare a detailed report for submission to the SOM/COM for final decision with a view to meeting the budget deficit in a bid to make it 100%.

c) Draft Antalya Communiqué

35. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** expressed concerns over receipt of changes from Turkey to be incorporated in the communiqué within a very short time. He noted that it would be quite difficult not only for Iran but also for other Member States to peruse the proposed amendments/additions. He suggested the finalization of the communiqué without any further changes in view of the paucity of time. He also discouraged the incorporation of political issues in the communiqué as suggested by Azerbaijan, recalling that the organization is not to address political matters.

36. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** stated that as the communiqué was yet to be finalized, there would be no harm to incorporate new proposals therein, leaving the final decision on SOM/COM's disposal. However, he supported

the views of Iran's Representative regarding non-inclusion of political issues keeping the very economic nature of the organization in view. He further said that the text of this communiqué was not discussed a lot as it was immediately required, advising to adopt practical approach for development of the ECO.

37. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Azerbaijan** clarified that there was nothing political in the text proposed by Azerbaijan, adding that the given proposed text was absolutely based the previous text accepted in the previous communiqué. He sought consideration of the Council as regards text proposed by Azerbaijan.

38. The **Chair** resolved the consideration of the said text by SOM, which would examine and discuss each and every paragraph of the communiqué.

Agenda Item No.3

Participation of Turkish Cypriot State in the 8th ECO Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (November 20-21, 2019 Ankara, Republic of Turkey)

39. The Secretariat received a Note Verbale No.2019/99530379/24071309 dated October 24, 2019 from the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey regarding participation of Turkish Cypriot State in the 8th ECO Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Ankara, Republic of Turkey on 20-21 November 2019.

40. The **Council** considered and approved, in accordance with the ECO Modalities for Granting Observer and Dialogue Partnership Status at ECO, the participation of Turkish Cypriot State, in its capacity as "observer" without right to vote in inaugural and closing ceremonies of 8th ECO Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Ankara, Republic of Turkey scheduled to be held on November 20-21, 2019

Agenda Item No. 4

Any other business

41. The **Secretary General**, while informing that the 6th ECO-Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture is scheduled to be held on December 4, 2019 in Baku, invited all Member States to actively participate in the meeting. He considered participation of the Ministers quite necessary realizing that this important meeting would be taking place after seven years. He further informed that the invitation letters from the Minister for Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan were already forwarded to respective Ministers of Member States.

42. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** brought the attention of the Council on participation of Turkic Council in the COM on invitation by the Secretariat. He proposed the inclusion of Turkic Council's request on ECO's observership at Turkic Council.

43. The Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of **Iran** inquired about the prescribed procedure of communication between the ECO and the organization seeking observer status.

44. The **Legal Adviser** of ECO Secretariat conveyed that the Secretariat could communicate with any ECO's observers under the available modes of communication including email, note verbale etc. through the dealing directorate. He further clarified that these organizations forward their interest for participation in the meeting(s) of ECO directly or through Member States on the basis of ECO-calendar of event and participate with the prior approval of the CPR.

45. The **Secretary General** added that having the observer status, such bodies had the right to have documents of ECO such as decisions made in RPC and access to the Calendar of Events. The ECO Observers could request for participation directly or through Member States. Based on such requests, the Secretariat put the matter on the agenda for approval of CPR. After acceptance of their request by CPR, the ECO Secretariat informs them through official note verbale. It also depends on the host country either it desires to invite them or otherwise under the decision of CPR there would be no objection for their presence in the event but no hospitality would be made. Regarding ECO observer status in Turkic Council, he proposed that the issue would be placed on the agenda of the next CPR after receiving a note from one of Member State or a letter from Turkic Council. If CPR decided in favour of the Turkic Council, the approval of COM would be obtained through silence procedure.

46. The **Legal Adviser** informed that reports of 242nd and 243rd CPR meetings were to be submitted to the COM along with other reports of previous meetings of the CPR. However, due to paucity of time, he requested the adoption of these two reports through silence procedure.

47. The **Chair** agreed with the proposal of Secretariat and requested the Member States to consider the adoption of the reports of 242nd and 243rd meetings of CPR through silence procedure when circulated by the Secretariat.

Words of Appreciation

48. Considering that H.E. Mrs. Riffat Masood, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is scheduled to leave Tehran on completion of her tenure in Iran; the Council expressed its appreciation to outgoing Ambassador, acknowledging excellent working relationship with her and the significant contributions and assistance that she made for development of the organization. The Council also acknowledged the exceptional professional and personal tolerance level of the Ambassador Riffat and her visionary diplomatic insights.

49. The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** extended her gratitude for the kind words expressed by the Council to honor her and reciprocated the gesture.

50. While appreciating the services of H.E. Mr. Nizomiddin Zohidi, Ambassador of the Republic of **Tajikistan** as a CPR Chairman, the ECO Secretary General said during his tenure the Organization made milestone achievements. The Secretary General said that he is highly grateful for his contribution made to accelerate the performance of the organization.

51. The **Council** also expressed its appreciation for the excellent services H.E. Mr. Nizomiddin Zohidi that he rendered as CPR's Chairman.

Agenda Item No.5

Date of the next CPR Meeting

52. The **Chair** expressed his sincere thanks to the distinguished Permanent Representatives/Representatives of all ECO Member States for their participation and valuable contribution in the Meeting. He also extended his utmost gratitude to the Council for expressing kind words and appreciation for him.

53. The **Council** decided to fix the date of their next meeting after the 24th Meeting of the Council of Ministers.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr. Abdul Qayum Suleyman, Deputy Head of Mission
- Mr. Shabir Ahmad Ahadi, In charge of Economic department and ECO

The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- H.E. Mr. Bunyad Huseynov, Ambassador
- Mr. Javid Musayev, Counsellor

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

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

The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- Mr. Gamzat Khairov, Counsellor

The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- 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:

- H.E. Mr. Nizomiddin Zohidi, Ambassador
- Mr. Firdavs Yusupov, Second Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:

- Mr. Emirhan Yorulmazlar, Deputy Head of Mission
- Mr. Ozgur Murat, Third Secretary

The Embassy of Turkmenistan:

- Mr. Perhat Ojarov, First Secretary
- Mr. Ovezmuradov M., Referent

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. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Salohiddin Kiromov, Assistant Director (AD CFU)
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Mohammad Ahmed Raza, 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
-
