

**249th Meeting of the
Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

Report

*January 11, 2021
ECO Secretariat*

Report

The 249th CPR Meeting was held on January 11, 2021 under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Derya Ors, Ambassador of the Republic of **Turkey** to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the 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** and Republic of **Uzbekistan**. The ECO Secretary General and the relevant staff of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. List of participants is enclosed as **Annexure-I**.

2. **H.E. Ambassador Derya Ors, the Chairman** while welcoming the delegates congratulated the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Kazakhstan for holding the successful Presidential and Parliamentary elections in their respective countries.

3. **H.E. ECO Secretary General** welcomed the participants and felicitated the Government and people of the Kyrgyz Republic over the successful Presidential election and Referendum of the Government system. He also congratulated the Republic of Kazakhstan for successfully conducting the elections for Lower Chamber of the Parliament and Local Council in the country.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

4. The **Council adopted** the following Agenda of the 249th CPR Meeting for deliberations:

Agenda

- 1) Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 249th CPR Meeting
- 2) Adoption of the Draft Report of the 248th CPR Meeting
- 3) Preparations for holding virtual 14th ECO Summit
- 4) ECO Secretariat Job descriptions
- 5) Administrative matters:
 - Recommendations of the Selection Panel
- 6) Any other business
- 7) Date of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of the Draft Report of the 248th CPR Meeting

5. The **Council adopted** the Draft Report of the 248th CPR Meeting, circulated by the Secretariat to the Member States on December 28, 2020, with the amendments provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Agenda Item No.3

Preparations for holding virtual 14th ECO Summit

6. Referring discussions in the matter made during the last CPR Meeting, the **Chair** underlined that the Republic of Turkey proposed February 25, 2021 and March 4, 2021 as two alternative dates to hold the 14th ECO Summit. The information was circulated vide Secretariat's Note Verbale dated January 07, 2021 to ascertain views of the Member States. While requesting the Member States to expedite the requested views, enabling the host country and the Secretariat to finalize the date and arrangements of the next Summit, he desired the Council to deliberate on the issue.

7. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** appreciated the Republic of Turkey to decide for organizing the 14th ECO Summit and supported the idea, preferring March 04, 2021 to hold the event provided that other Member States may also convey their views in this regard. He sought the legal and administrative aspects of the holding Summit with or without the COM's meeting.

8. The **Legal Advisor** clarified that the Summit meeting is a regional forum provided for under the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization aimed at reviewing the regional issues within the context of Organization, including the progress of its activities and exchange of views on regional and global issues. He added that, on the other hand, the Council of Ministers is an organ of ECO. It was noted that holding of the meeting of Summit and COM back-to-back, given their legal status, is not obligatory and these events could be held separately, however, the practice of the Organization was holding the said events back-to-back.

9. The **Chair** stated that they have also reached out to their relevant authorities in Ankara as to explore the possibility of organizing the Summit and the COM's meeting in parallel, adding that the Republic of Turkey was expecting to handover the chairmanship of the ECO to Turkmenistan in an alphabetical order or otherwise to any other interested country. He requested the Council's consideration to figure out a way forward.

10. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** expressed gratitude to the Republic of Turkey to offer fresh dates for the Summit. He, however, underlined the importance of the COM stressing that, based on the ECO Rules of Procedure, the COM's meeting should be organized on regular basis. Referring his previous experience of ECO, he proposed that a five or ten years calendar of chairmanship of the organization might be developed to ensure timely rotation of the chairmanship, noting that there was no confusion between the chairmanships of the Summit and the COM. He added that, similar to other international organizations, the chairmanship of the organization could be handed over automatically as of January 1st of each year to the next Member State and with the expectation that the meeting of COM could be hosted during the year. It was noted that in case of the need for amending Rules of Procedure the issue could be addressed appropriately.

11. The **ECO Secretary General** sought the Council's mandate to: (i) follow up the issue of chairmanship and the date of the next meeting of the COM with Turkmenistan through

written communication; (ii) ascertain views of the Member States on the preparation of table of rotation of chairmanship and; (iii) request the Member States views on the dates proposed by Turkey for the Summit within a two week time as well as decide the date in consideration of the majority's preference. He further requested the Republic of Turkey to expedite the provision of relevant agenda and theme of the Summit. It was added that if Turkey desires a declaration or communiqué to be adopted during the Summit, the Secretariat might be mandated to develop the zero draft.

12. The **Chair** supported and agreed with the proposals of the Secretary General seeking the views of the Republic of Turkey as to the preparation of said communiqué or declaration of Summit.

13. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** supported and agreed with the proposal of the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on automatic handover of the chairmanship to be effective from 1st of January. Moreover, he urged the Council to begin this practice already from 2021. In this regard, he sought views of the Legal Adviser on whether the Rules of Procedure permit to do it.

The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** also underscored that the ECO Rules of Procedure clearly define the rotation cycle of the organization's chairmanship which is in alphabetical order. As per such alphabetical order the chairmanship should be rotated automatically without asking the consent of the concerned Member State. He added that it would be a different issue if the concerned Member State appears to be reluctant to assume the chairmanship of the Organization, stressing that such a rotation should be ensured in anyway.

14. **The Chair** clarified that the Council's intent of discussion is to remind next Member State in alphabetical order after Turkey, that is Turkmenistan, about their turn of ECO chairmanship and seek their convenience for holding the next meeting of COM.

15. On the question raised by the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, **Legal Advisor** said that the proposal may not be precisely consistent with the rules providing for resting of chairmanship with a Member State hosing the COM meeting until the election of successor in the following annual meeting of the Council. He continued by reading out Rule No. 23 of the ECO Rules of Procedure and added that in case of acceptance of the new approach for rotation of chairmanship, the rule might be in need of modification.

16. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Tajikistan** pointed out that the issue was not only related to the chairmanship of the COM, but also the ECO specialized agencies of the Organization, underlining that Tajikistan's chairmanship of the ECO Cultural Institute continued for four years. Considering the deliberations and views, he proposed the Secretariat to streamline the procedure not only for the chairmanship of the organization but also for the agencies affiliated with it.

17. Supporting the ideas expressed by the Representatives of Iran, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan regarding rotation of the Chairmanship, the Representative of **Pakistan** proposed a Calendar of COM's meetings to be developed, enabling the Member States to be

clear about the preparations of such meetings. He suggested that regular COM's meetings may be organized sometime in November or December each year, thereby rotating the chairmanship in January that doesn't need any extensive deliberations to amend the rules.

18. The Deputy Secretary General (TC, HRCD, in-charge of CFU) brought to the attention of the Council that the Council of Ministers at its 22nd Meeting held in Islamabad agreed to hold Meetings of COM in alphabetical order, which could be a basis for drawing up ten years' table for rotation of the Chairmanship.

19. The **Council**, taking into consideration the ideas and proposals expressed during the Meeting, mandated the Secretariat to develop such document(s) containing the Calendar of rotation of COM Chairmanship for circulation amongst the Member States to seek their views/comments.

20. The **Council** further agreed that the Secretariat might follow up the issue of chairmanship and the date of the next meeting of the COM with Turkmenistan through written communication and request the Member States views on the dates proposed by the Republic of Turkey for the Summit within a period of two week time and decide the date in consideration of the majority's preference.

Agenda Item No.4

ECO Secretariat Job descriptions

21. The **Chair** referred the previous discussions on the subject as well as 24th COM's mandate to the Secretary General in this regard. He informed that the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey in Tehran provided comments/proposals regarding first part of job description on December 21, 2020 which was circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale dated December 22, 2020. The Republic of Turkey also conveyed amendments/proposals with regard to second part of job description on January 07, 2021 which were also circulated vide Secretariat's Note Verbale dated January 10, 2021. He requested Council's consideration to finalize the matter.

22. The Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of **Iran** reiterated for strict observance of the job descriptions by both the Member States as well as ECO Secretariat, proposing scrutiny of qualification and conducting interview of the nominated candidate(s) in a possible manner. As regards the job descriptions, he suggested some readjustment in the area of responsibilities mentioned therein, seeking some time to further evaluate the staff strength which is also under consideration.

23. As regards the condition TOFEL and IELTS given in the job descriptions, the Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** stressed that the candidates/nominees of the ECO Member States whose official or second language is English, should be excluded from such a condition.

24. Giving due consideration to the amendments proposed by Turkey, as well as the views expressed by Iran and Pakistan, the **Council** adopted the job descriptions and agreed that the matter of staff strength could be included in the Agenda of the coming CPR.

Agenda Item No.5

Administrative Matters

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

25. The Selection Panel met on January 11, 2021. The Meeting was coordinated by ECO Deputy Secretary General (Administration, EME and IR) and Chaired by the Representative of the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey. Other participants of the meeting included the Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey.

26. The selection panel made the following recommendation for consideration by the CPR:

Program Officer for Human Resources and Sustainable Development (Category-II, P2)

While approving the nomination of Mr. Mohammad Akbar Azizi for appointment against the post of Program Officer for HRSD (Category-II, P2) which is newly created post according to the 24th COM decision, the selection panel recommended the CPR to kindly approach the Afghanistan Embassy, representative of the nominating state, to clarify the term of duty of Mr. Mohammad Akbar Azizi. Furthermore, the understanding reached at the Selection Panel, is that the incumbent staff would be entitled to receive end of service accumulative benefits, as P2 staff. His appointment will be effective from the date of CPR decision.

27. **The Secretary General** requested the Council to consider retroactive effect as to the said appointment from November 2020, the date in which the contribution of Afghanistan has been materialized at the level of 2% as per decision of 24th Meeting of COM, whereby the current post of incumbent staff has been replaced by the new post of P2.

28. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** stated that the appointment could take place from the date of its approval, i.e. upon the decision of the 249th Meeting of the Council which happened on 11 January 2021 for a full term, as a normal practice, and in case Afghanistan deemed to replace the incumbent staff it may occur at any time they desire.

All payments related to the End of Service Gratuity should be paid once upon completion of the period of this new appointment.

29. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan**, responding to the inquiry of the Chairman, said that the term of appointment could be until completion of the current tenure of the nominee, which could be renewed subject to concurrence of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

30. Taking into account the recommendations of the Selection Panel as well as clarification made by the Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** as to the duration of the nominee's appointment, the **Council** approved the appointment of Mr. Mohammad Akbar Azizi as Program Officer for Human Resource and Sustainable Development (**Category-II, P2**) for the remaining period of his existing tenure of service.

Agenda Item No.6

Any other business

31. The Secretary General brought to the attention of the Council that the draft budget of the Organization has been drawn up based on the needs of the Organization by the Secretariat, in accordance with the authorization given under the ECO Financial Regulations, which has been put before the 248th Meeting of the Council for its consideration. It was subject for modification made thereto by some Member States and the revised draft budget has been re-circulated. Still the draft budget is requested to be negotiated. The Secretary General informed the Council that Secretariat will facilitate the negotiation process among the Member States, and provide them with required information, even though it could not be a part of negotiations. It was reiterated that the outcome will be considered as the budget drafted by the CPR. The Secretary General also informed the Council the expenditure for the first quarter of 2021 could take place in accordance with Budget of 2020.

32. The Representative of the Republic of Turkey stated that Turkey was in favour of continuation of budget negotiations based on the latest figures requested from the Secretariat. During the negotiations, he signaled, despite the consensus on non-utilization of GRF, Delegations may now consider the utilization of General Reserve Fund, already secured from previous years' to meet the cost of some staff's benefits arising out from possible staff movement in 2021. He further suggested that a Working Group may soon convene to facilitate the finalization of draft ECO Budget for 2021".

33. After deliberations and in view of the fact that the draft budget of 2021 has not been finalized before the financial year of 2020, the Council requested the Secretary General to make payments with regard to the expenditures of the Organization based on the last year Budget for the first quarter of the year.

34. **The Council** also agreed on the establishment of a Working Group (**WG**) for finalizing the draft ECO Budget 2021.

Agenda Item No.7

Date of the next CPR Meeting

35. The **Chair** expressed his gratitude to the delegates for their active participation.

36. The **Council** decided that the next (250th) Meeting of CPR will be held at the ECO Secretariat on Monday, February 8, 2021.

Annex-I

List of Participants

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr. Lutfullah Khepulwak, First Secretary, In-Charge of Economic and ECO Section
- Mr. Abdul Ghani Farahi, Second Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- Mr. Rauf Abullayev, First Secretary
- Mr. Subhi Ismailzade, Third Secretary

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

- H.E. Mr. Sayed J. Alavi, Permanent Representative
- Mr. Abolqasem Tahmasebi, Director of ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Khosravi, Attaché, ECO Affairs Bureau

The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- H.E. Mr. Askhat Orazbay, Ambassador
- Mr. Gamzat Khairov, Counsellor

The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

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

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Mr. Mian Azmat Farooq, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- H.E. Mr. Nizomiddin Zohidi, Ambassador
- Mr. Ismoilov Salohiddin, Attache

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:

- H.E. Mr. Derya Ors, Ambassador
- Mr. Emirhan Yorulmazlar, Deputy Head of Mission
- Mr. Mehmet Zahit Uzun, Counsellor

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. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Jandos Asanov, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Salohiddin Kiromov, Assistant Director (Head of CFS)
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Raza Muhammad Ahmed, Steno-Secretary
- Mr. Amjad Saeed Abbasi, Steno-Secretary
- Ms. Aynur Mammadova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator
- Ms. Nurgul Duissenova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator
- Mr. Amir Javaheri, English-Persian Interpreter/Translator