



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

**Report**

***October 20, 2021***  
***ECO Secretariat***

## Report

The 257<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting was held on October 20, 2021 under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov, Ambassador of **Turkmenistan** to the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Permanent Representative to ECO. The Meeting was attended by the Permanent Representatives of Republic of **Azerbaijan**, Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Kazakhstan**, **Kyrgyz Republic**, Republic of **Tajikistan** and Republic of **Uzbekistan** as well as Representatives of Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan**, Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** and Republic of **Turkey**. 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. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov, the Chairman** while welcoming the participants also felicitated the new Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Iran as well as country's Permanent Representative to ECO, H.E. Mr. Ali Alizade for the new assignment, conveying best wishes for the success of his office tasks.

3. **The Permanent Representative/Representative of the Member States** joined the Chair to extend their felicitations to the new Ambassador of Azerbaijan on assumption of his responsibilities, welcoming him to the Council.

4. **H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri** also welcomed Ambassador Alizade in his inaugural participation in the CPR. While conveying best wishes to him, the Secretary General believed that the new Ambassador's significant experience and expertise would be helpful to enrich the agenda of the organization.

### **Agenda Item No.1**

#### Adoption of the Agenda

5. The **Council** adopted the following Agenda of the 257<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting:

- 1) Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 257<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting
- 2) Adoption of the Draft Report of the 256<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting
- 3) Preparation for the 15th ECO Summit, preceded by 25th COM (continued)
- 4) Follow-up and mid-term review of ECO Vision 2025 (continued)
- 5) Submission of Midterm RPC Meeting Report along with reviewed Work Programme and Calendar of Events for 2021 to the upcoming COM for approval
- 6) Signing of revised Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) and ECO
- 7) Administrative matters:
  - Renewal of tenure of Deputy Secretary General (Admin, EME, IR, IT) (continued)

- Appointment of new Deputy Secretary General (Transport and Communications and Human Recourses and Sustainable Development)
  - Recommendations of the Selection Panel
  - Replacement of Secretariat's old vehicles
- 8) Any other business
- 9) Date of the next CPR Meeting

## **Agenda Item No.2**

### Adoption of the draft Report of the 256<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting

6. The **Council** adopted the draft report of the 256<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting circulated to the Member States vide Secretariats' Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/256<sup>th</sup> Meeting /2021/1028 dated September 22, 2021.

## **Agenda Item No.3**

### Preparation for the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit, preceded by 25<sup>th</sup> COM (continued)

7. Recalling that that the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit is scheduled for November 28, 2021 at Ashgabat under the theme "**into the future together**", the **Chair** informed that a Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) established by 255<sup>th</sup> CPR held several sessions to finalize the Draft Agendas of 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit and 25<sup>th</sup> meeting COM as well as the contents of the draft Ashgabat Consensus for Action. The Chair noted that the PrepCom finalized the Draft Agendas of the next Summit and COM. Moreover, it discussed the draft Ashgabat Consensus for Action along with the proposals made therein by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. However, Azerbaijan has forwarded some fresh amendments in the text of the document, he said.

8. The Permanent Representative of **Tajikistan** sought the status of Afghanistan's participation in the upcoming Summit.

9. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** inquired either the draft Ashgabat Consensus for Action was supposed to be finalized still at PrepCom level or by CPR Furthermore, he requested Turkmen side to provide complete information regarding the administrative and protocol arrangements of the Summit, including the requirement and validity of PCR tests for participating delegations, considering the unavailability of any flights to Ashgabat. He looked for some flexibility in this regard.

10. The Permanent Representative of Republic of **Azerbaijan** extended his gratitude to all participants of the Council for their deep receptivity. Regarding amendments proposed by Azerbaijan in the draft Ashgabat Consensus for Action, he requested that the same may be considered in another session of PrepCom.

11. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** supported his Azerbaijani counterpart concerning the discussion on Azerbaijan's amendments in the draft Ashgabat Consensus for Action during next PrepCom. In addition, he suggested

re-titling of item-5 of the draft agenda of 25<sup>th</sup> COM as "*ECO Vision 2025 Midterm review and adoption of the report*". He also looked for the updates regarding participation of the Heads of State/ Government in the next Summit.

12. The **Chair** informed that the issue of Afghanistan's participation in the Summit is under consideration by relevant authorities in Ashgabat, adding that the outcome in the matter will be shared with the Member States soon. Regarding the events to be held on the sidelines of the Summit, he stated that Turkmenistan side was considering to organize (i) Ministerial Meeting on Transport (physical mode) and(ii) Business Forum (hybrid mode). Concerning the PCR tests, he mentioned that the requirements are as per international standards. The same were included in the concept note of the Summit which was circulated earlier among Member States. About the hospitality and logistic details, the information will shortly be provided, he added. However, he requested the Member States' proposals concerning the required flexibility and felicitation in regard to PCR tests for consideration by the host authorities. As regards participation of the Heads of State/Governments in the Summit, he said that so far two official and three verbal confirmations were received. To this end, he requested the Member States to expedite their confirmations.

13. The **Chair** announced that the 5<sup>th</sup> round of PrepCom would be held on November 01, 2021 to discuss and finalize the draft Ashgabat Consensus for Action alongwith Azerbaijan's amendments.

14. Considering the views/comments of the Member States, the **Council** endorsed the draft agendas of the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit and 25<sup>th</sup> COM, attached as **Annexure-II and III**.

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

##### Follow-up and mid-term review of ECO Vision 2025 (continued)

15. Referring the previous discussion on the agenda, the **Chair** recalled that the draft report of the mid-term review of ECO Vision 2025 prepared by High Level Committee (HLC) was circulated amongst the Member States for consideration; vide Secretariat's Note Verbale dated October 11, 2021. He requested the Co-Chair of HLC to brief the Council in the matter.

16. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** being HLC's Co-Chair informed that based on the inputs received from the ECO Secretariat and consultations made in several sessions of HLC, the Committee developed the first draft of review of the ECO Vision 2025 as well as the follow-up of the outcomes of the 14<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit. The said draft review report, which includes the stocktaking, impediments in implementations of ECO Vision and way forward, has been circulated amongst the Member States for securing their feedbacks by October 21, 2021. On receipt of feedbacks/inputs from the Member States, the HLC in its next session scheduled for October, 25, 2021 will consider the remaining parts of the document that are related to recommendations of HLC and draft decisions by COM. He expected that the draft

review report of ECO Vision 2025 will be finalized by or before November 14, 2021 and submitted to the SOM/COM through CPR for adoption.

17. The **Council** commended the efforts made by the HLC for preparation of draft review report of ECO Vision of 2025 and encouraged the Member States to expedite their views/comments for finalization of the said report.

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

Submission of Midterm RPC Meeting Report along with reviewed Work Programme and Calendar of Events for 2021 to the upcoming COM for approval

18. The **Chair** recalled that meeting of Midterm RPC was held on July 28, 2021 to review the progress of the Organization's activities and engagements made in line with the Work Programme and Calendar of Events for 2021. The Report of the meeting along with the reviewed Work Programme and Calendar of Events for 2021 was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat Note Verbale No.CFU/RPC/Midterm Meeting/2021/946 dated August 29, 2021.

19. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan informed that two events under Agriculture Sector reflected in the ECO Calendar of events for 2021 have been postponed by host authorities for 2022 due to upcoming important political event in the country. He requested to make the required amendments in the Calendar of Event for 2021.

20. Giving due consideration to the request of Uzbekistan, the **Council** approved the submission of the report of Midterm RPC Meeting, along with reviewed Work Programme and Calendar of Events for 2021, to the upcoming COM for approval.

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

Signing of revised Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) and ECO

21. The ECO Secretary General underscored that the cooperation between ECO and UNESCAP witnessed growth, and consequently support of the ESCAP is very vital for implementation of ECO projects. Keeping in view the global developments and especially the current priorities of the two organizations, the Regional Planning Council (RPC) has made recommendation for revising the existing MoU between the two sides. At the same time, the ESCAP approached the ECO Secretariat for initiating the process to draft a fresh MoU in order to meet the prerequisite of the ESCAP's new policy for collaboration with regional organizations. Accordingly, ECO and ESCAP have finalized the revised draft MoU in order to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in the priority areas. The agreed text of the revised draft MoU has been shared with the Member States vide Note Verbale No. IR/ESCAP/2021/1047 dated September 28, 2021. The CPR may discuss and approve the subject draft MoU for signing.

22. Furthermore, the Secretary proposed that the signing ceremony of the MoU may be organized on the sidelines of the 15th Summit, and the Under-Secretary-General of the UNESCAP may be invited to participate in the event in concurrence with the host authorities.

23. The Chair informed that the host authorities are also considering the organization of treaty event during the Summit and the said MoU is expected to be signed during the event. He suggested endorsement of revised MoU for signing, assuring that the issue of participation of the UNESCAP's Executive Secretary would be taken up with the host side and, if concurred, an invitation will be extended to the Executive Secretary for participation in the event as a special guest.

24. The permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** appreciated the Secretariat for revising the text of the MoU to be signed between UN ESCAP and ECO. He said that the document is very much important to enhance cooperation with UN and hoped that this will bring added value for the organization. Stressing that the Secretariat while implementing the said MoU with UN ESCAP may increase the visibility of the ECO Region. Moreover, while appreciating the Secretariat for circulation of UNGA Resolution on cooperation between UN and ECO, he stressed for circulation of the matrix/frame-work for implementation of the tasks reflected in the said resolution.

25. The ECO Secretary General explained that the Secretariat is developing a draft roadmap for implementation of operative paragraphs of the UNGA's Resolution for cooperation among UN and ECO, which would be circulated among Member States on finalization.

26. The **Council** endorsed the signing of the revised MoU between the UNESCAP and ECO.

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

#### Administrative matters:

- Renewal of tenure of Deputy Secretary General (Administration & Energy, Minerals, Environment, International Relations and Information Technology)

27. In continuation of discussion made during the last session of CPR regarding renewal of service tenure of incumbent Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Huseyin Avni Bicakli, the **Chair** requested the Council to consider the matter.

28. The Permanent Representatives/Representatives of the Member States expressed their support for renewal of tenure of Ambassador Hyuseyin Avni Bikcakli as Deputy Secretary General.

29. While thanking the Member States for their support and reaching consensus on the issue, the Representative of the Republic **Turkey** requested the Council to consider

the adoption of the prescribed silence procedure for securing approval of the COM in this regard.

- Appointment of new Deputy Secretary General (Transport and Communications and Human Recourses and Sustainable Development)

30. The **Chair** recalled that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan nominated Mr. Muhammad Zubair for appointment against the post of Deputy Secretary General (Transport & Communications and Human Resources & Sustainable Development).

31. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** expressed his gratitude to the Member States for welcoming and supporting the nomination of Mr. Muhammad Zubair as Deputy Secretary General (TC and HRSD). Citing the proximity of upcoming Summit and COM, she proposed a one-week silence procedure for securing COM's approval in the matter. Moreover, she informed that Mr. Zubair had already completed his pre-departure formalities to join the Secretariat.

32. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** requested the Council's consideration for continuation of service by the incumbent Deputy Secretary General Dr. Syed Yahya Akhlaqi till the completion of his three years' tenure.

33. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** noted that upon completion of the actual/agreed term of service of Dr. Akhlaqi, the COM has approved temporary extension in his service against the post of Deputy Secretary General (TC and HRSD) until the joining of DSG from Pakistan.

34. The Representative of Islamic Republic of **Iran** emphasized that the silence procedure was required to be resorted to in the absence of COM's meeting. Discouraging the adoption of silence procedure that he considered inappropriate at this stage, the Iranian Permanent Representative proposed that since the next (25<sup>th</sup>) COM has been scheduled for last week of November 2021, the said nominations for renewal or service/appointment of DSG's may be referred to the COM for approval. As regards Dr. Akhlaqi, he informed that the Iranian candidate Mr. Mohammad Hasan Sheikholeslami, who was earlier nominated and appointed against the post of DSG (T&I and A&I), could not assume his responsibilities in the ECO Secretariat due to appointment as Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran, adding that the process for nomination of a new candidate against the said post of DSG is underway. However, he suggested that upon joining of DSG from Pakistan, Dr. Akhlaqi might move to the post of DSG (T&I and A&I) until the arrival/appointment of DSG from Iran.

35. Taking all aspects of discussion and exigencies of service into account, the **Council** made the following recommendations for securing the COM's approval through a two-week prescribed silence procedure:

- i. Renewal of service in respect of Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli (**Turkish National**) against the post of Deputy Secretary General for Administration, Energy,

- Minerals, Environment, IR & IT (Category-I, D3) for another term of three (03) years to be effected from November 1, 2021.
- ii. Appointment of Mr. Muhammad Zubair (**Pakistani national**) against the post of Deputy Secretary General for Transport & Communications, and Human Resources & Sustainable Development (Category-I, D3) for three (03) years from the date of his joining.
  - iii. The incumbent Deputy Secretary General for Transport & Communications & HRSD (TC&HRSD), Dr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi (**Afghan National**) will relinquish the charge of the post of Deputy Secretary General for Transport & Communications and Human Resources & Sustainable Development upon assumption of responsibilities of the said post by Mr. Muhammad Zubair from Pakistan while moving to the post of Deputy Secretary General for Trade & Investment and Agriculture & Industry until the appointment/joining against the said post of DSG from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

- Recommendations of Selection Panel

36. The Selection Panel met on October 20, 2021, the meeting was coordinated by Deputy Secretary General (Administration) and Chaired by the Representative of the Embassy of Turkmenistan. Other participants of the meeting included the Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan.

37. The Selection Panel made the following recommendation(s) for consideration by the CPR:

- i. **Head of Section for International Relations (IR) (Category-I, D1)**  
The tenure of service of Mr. Muhammad Farooq, (**Pakistan National**) may be extended till the arrival of his successor.
- ii. **Russian-English & English-Russian Interpreter (Category-II, P3)**  
The tenure of service of Ms. Aynur Mammadova, (**Azerbaijan National**) may be extended till the end of December 2021.
- iii. **Chief Accountant for Financial Management and Accounting (Category-II, P3)**  
The tenure of service of Ms. Mojgan Golchin, (**Iranian National**) may be extended till the arrival of her successor.
- iv. **Program Officer for Trade & Investment (T&I) (Category-II, P1)**  
Mr. Hossein Rahimi, (**Iranian National**) may be appointed for a full term of four (04) years against the newly created post of Program Officer for Trade & Investment.
- v. **Steno Secretary (Category-II, P1)**  
The service tenure of Mr. Amjad Saeed Abbasi, (**Pakistan National**) Steno-Secretary may be extended till the arrival of his successor.

38. The **Chairman** of Selection Panel also underlined that the Republic of Turkey requested the inclusion of the name of Mr. Gorkan Polat (**Turkish National**) nominated



for the post of Director (A&I) in the agenda of Selection Panel. He added that the said nomination was not included in agenda of the Selection Panel due to its belated receipt. The Selection Panel, therefore, agreed to refer the matter to CPR for final consideration

39. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** explained that the proposal for inclusion of the said nomination of Turkey against the Post of Director (A&I) in the agenda of Selection Panel, is based on Secretariat's request for expediting nominations against the vacant posts vide its Note Verbale dated October 04, 2021. However, he agreed to defer discussion on their nomination for next meeting of Selection Panel/CPR considering the observance of criteria as contained in the staff regulations for processing any such nominations. In addition, he informed that the nominations against the posts of Director (HRSD) and Chef de Cabinet are also under consideration and would be forwarded for consideration in due course.

40. The council approved the recommendations of the Selection Panel.

- Replacement of Secretariat's old vehicles

41. The **Head of Section** (Administration) informed that five out of the Secretariat's six motor vehicles, which are more than ten years old, have been utilized more than their prescribed limits and need to be replaced. He said that the Secretariat intends and proposes to sell out such old vehicles and replace them with new ones without any financial or budgetary implications. He, therefore, requested the Council to consider the proposal and authorize the Secretariat to sell out and replace the old vehicles that would bear no financial or budgetary implications.

42. The **Council** authorized the Secretariat to sell out and replace the old vehicles with new ones without any financial/budgetary implications.

### **Agenda Item No.8**

#### Any other business

43. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** referred the agenda item-6 of the draft agenda of 25<sup>th</sup> COM regarding "**Rotation of ECO Secretary General Post** (subject to the acceptance of any formula/criteria in this regard by Member States as well as endorsed by the CPR)" which would determine the future planning for appointment of ECO Secretary General. He inquired that how could the council proceed further in the matter since there would be only one more CPR meeting before the next Summit and COM.

44. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** mentioned that the issue of rotation of the post of ECO Secretary General also comes into the purview of the High Level Committee (HLC), established by 252 CPR for the midterm review of ECO Vision 2025 and follow-up of 14<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit. He proposed that the matter may be taken up for discussion either by HLC or PrepCom during their next sessions.

45. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** seconded the viewpoint of his Iranian counterpart. Given the paucity of time, he proposed that the issue may be referred for discussion by next meeting of the PrepCom. In addition, he said that due to the imminence of next Summit, it would be appreciated if Turkmen side could kindly expedite the provision of logistic and technical information regarding the travelling of delegations from the Member States as well as from Tehran in the absence of any flight operations.

46. The **Council** agreed that the issue of the rotation of the post of ECO Secretary General may be discussed by the next meeting of PrepCom. It further encouraged the Member States to expedite their views/comments for early finalization of the matter.

47. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** requested the Secretariat to provide all necessary documents relating to the last year's budget along with the Budget proposals for 2022.

48. The Secretary General informed that the Secretariat is in process of finalizing the draft Budget proposal for 2022 which will shortly be circulated amongst the Member States.

#### **Agenda Item No.9**

##### Date of the next CPR Meeting

49. The next (258<sup>th</sup>) CPR Meeting will be held on November 14, 2021 at 1030 hours.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Annex-I**

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

- Mr. Abdul Qayoom Soleymani, Deputy Head of Mission
- Mr. Abdul Ghani Farahi, Second Secretary

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

- H.E. Mr. Ali Alizade, Ambassador
- Mr. Subhi Ismailzade, Third Secretary
- Mr. Ulvi Mamadli, Attaché

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

- H.E. Mr. Sayed J. Alavi, Permanent Representative
- Mr. Khosravi, Attaché, ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Behzad Azarsa, Senior Expert, 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. Mr. Turdakun Sydykov, Ambassador
- Mr. Akilbek Kilichev, Counselor

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

- Ms. Zaib Tayyab Abbasi, Counselor

**The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:**

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

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

- Mr. Mehmet Zahit Uzun, Counsellor

**The Embassy of Turkmenistan:**

- H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov, Ambassador
- Mr. Bairamov Atamirat, First Secretary
- Mr. Kemal Atayev, Attaché

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

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

**The ECO Secretariat:**

- H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, Secretary General
- Mr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Salohiddin Kiromov, Head of CFS
- Mr. Farooq Muhammad, Head of IR
- 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. Dilbar Muminova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator

\*\*\*\*\*