



**260th Meeting of the
Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

Report

December 21, 2021
ECO Secretariat

Report

The 260th CPR Meeting was held on December 21, 2021. The meeting was attended by the Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** and the Republic of **Kazakhstan**, as well as representatives of the of Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan**, Republic of **Azerbaijan**, **Kyrgyz Republic**, Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**, Republic of **Tajikistan**, Republic of **Turkey**, **Turkmenistan** 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. At the beginning of the Meeting, ECO Secretary General Ambassador Khusrav Noziri while welcoming the participants, expressed thanks and congratulated the Government of Turkmenistan for the successful organization of 15th ECO Summit and 25th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM). He further extended sincere gratitude and appreciation to the esteemed Member States for kindly ensuring their high level participation and making significant contribution to enrich the proceedings of the said meetings.

3. The ECO Secretary General expressed confidence that the outcomes of the 15th Summit and 25th COM would be quite productive and beneficial to secure the ECO's envisioned aims and objectives for the collective development in the region. He believed that the adoption of Ashgabat Consensus for Action would further facilitate future actions in special consideration of the post-pandemic conditions.

4. In view of the unavailability of the current Chair, H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Gurbanov due to his preoccupation, the Secretary General requested the Council to elect an interim Chair to lead the meeting without prejudice to the Chairmanship of Turkmenistan.

5. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan proposed that H.E. Mr. Sayed J. Alavi, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to ECO may be elected as interim Chair to lead the proceedings of the 260th CPR Meeting.

6. Upon his unanimous election by the Council, **H.E. Mr. Sayed J. Alavi, the Chairman** while welcoming the participants formally initiated the proceedings of the meeting.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

7. The **Council** adopted the following Agenda of the 260th CPR Meeting for deliberation:

- 1) Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 260th CPR Meeting
- 2) Adoption of the Draft Reports of the 258th and 259th CPR Meetings
- 3) Review and follow-up of the outcomes of the 15th ECO Summit and 25th COM

- 4) Preparation for 32nd Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council
- 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 Reports of the 258th and 259th CPR Meetings

8. The Draft Reports of the 258th and 259th CPR Meetings were circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/259th Meeting/2021/1279 dated November 17, 2021 and Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/259th Meeting/2021/1315 dated November 24, 2021.
9. The Council adopted the Reports of 258th and 259th CPR Meetings.

Agenda Item No.3

Review and follow-up of the outcomes of the 15th ECO Summit and 25th COM

- Implementation of Proposal & Suggestion of 25th COM preceded by 15th ECO Summit
10. The **Chair**, while referring the 25th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) followed by 15th ECO Summit in Ashgabat late last month, requested the Council for review and follow-up of the events' outcomes.
 11. The **ECO Deputy Secretary General** (Tourism, Project Management, Judicial and Parliamentary Coordination and EAPA) briefed the Council about the suggestions made Heads of State/Government during the 15th ECO Summit for enhancement of ECO activities, projects and programs. He considered that the declaration of 2022 as the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity" by the Republic of Uzbekistan, the next ECO Chair, was quite encouraging. Presenting a draft plan of work concerning the implementation of the proposals of ECO leaders, he sought Council's consideration on the given document.
 12. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** stated that they had just received the said draft plan of work. Seeking some time for securing views of their relevant authorities on the document, he requested the Council to defer the issue for next meeting of CPR. Regarding declaration of 2022 as the Year of Strengthening Connectivity, he said that the issue was not included in the agenda though the information, in this regard, was circulated a few days ago. He underlined that such practice was not witnessed previously, adding that what about the years after 2022 if it is

declared as the year of strengthening connectivity. He considered setting this precedent would require the years after this to be dedicated for something else.

13. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** conveyed that the proposal regarding declaration of 2022 as the Year of Strengthening Connectivity was forwarded to their Capital for consideration. He said that the response of their relevant authorities was still awaited. Moreover, he expected Uzbekistan to provide a concept paper and priorities concerning their ECO Chairmanship to be taken over in January 2022 and assured Turkey's cooperation and support in this regard.

14. The Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** emphasized that during the 15th Summit, the 2022 was proposed by their President to be declared as the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity". He requested the Council's consideration in this regard. Regarding their Chairmanship's concept paper, he assured that the same would be conveyed shortly.

15. The **Chair** said that this plan of action was a very initial draft. He noted that there was a need to come up with a tangible set of actions to ensure smooth implementation of the Summit's outcomes. He considered that the Member States would require some time to mull over the document and convey their views for enriching its text. Referring the proximity of upcoming meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC), he proposed to make such proposals of the ECO leaders available to the RPC since the forum was supposed to draft the annual work program of the organization. He believed that the RPC's occasion would provide us an opportunity to develop a better document and the way forward to deal with the implementation of proposals given by our leaders and the declaration expressed in the Ashgabat Consensus for Action. In addition, he inquired the procedure to dedicate a year with some important subject or about the relevant practice, if exists.

16. The **ECO Secretary General** informed that the practice of declaring a year with particular subject is an established practice in the United Nations. He added that it would be useful for ECO to dedicate every year with some important subject (s). He further suggested that if the issue was discussed and considered favourably, a two-week silence procedure might be approved as to secure COM's concurrence for declaring 2022 as the Year of Strengthening Connectivity.

17. Referring the views of the Secretary General, the **Chair** noted that, if agreed, the Council might consider the silence procedure to seek COM's approval as regards declaration of 2022 as the Year of Strengthening Connectivity.

18. Considering the views of the Chair and the Secretary General as well as participants of the Meeting, the Council agreed to defer discussions on the issues to the next meeting of CPR.

19. The **Chair**, also being the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, recalled about a letter of the Iran Chamber of Commerce (ICC) addressed to the ECO Secretary General in citation of the 15th ECO Summit. He informed that the ICC's

letter, in line with the statements delivered by ECO Heads of State/Government, contained information regarding some ongoing projects within the ECO framework, including (i) ECO Visa Sticker Scheme, (ii) full implementation of the agreement among the member states, (iii) establishment of ECO Clearing Union and Activation and Exploitation of the Rail and Road Corridor. This information is being shared with the Council in view of its importance and relevance with the ECO Summit, he added.

Agenda Item No.4

Preparation for 32nd Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council

20. The **ECO Secretary General** informed that as decided by 31st Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC), the 32nd Meeting of RPC was scheduled to be held from January 16 - 19, 2021. However, the ongoing conditions taking place in the aftermath of COVID-19 as well as due to emergence of the pandemic's new variant 'Omicron', the next RPC may be organized either virtually or in hybrid mode, he proposed, requesting the Council's consideration in the matter to finalize the dates and mode of the said event.

21. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey**, while expressing their acceptance for virtually holding the RPC, also concurred with the event's hybrid format to enable those of the delegates who intend their physical participation in the meeting. However, considering the pandemic's situation, he appeared open for both virtual or hybrid format. Moreover, he recommended consideration on Turkish Cypriot State's request for participation in the next meeting of RPC.

22. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** stressed that participation of ECO Observers in the COM's and RPC's meetings was based on well-established practice. He considered that the procedure should automatically take effect, discouraging the Representative of Turkey to, every time, seek fresh agreement to this end.

23. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** appeared pleased to listen to the proposal made by the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, wishing it to be done by design to avoid making such repeated requests for processing Observers' invitations. He added that ECO modalities did not allow the automatic extension of invitations to the Observers for their participation in the ECO Events. It was, therefore, required to remind the Council for extension of invitations to the Observers since this had yet to be done. As regards mode of RPC's meeting, he desired that being Chair of the event, Uzbekistan side might also convey their choice/method of holding the RPC as it would be first meeting under their Chairmanship.

24. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** informed that their delegation was preparing to visit Iran for in-person participation in the next RPC.

25. The **Council** looked into all aspects of discussions as well as views of the Member States and decided to organize the 32nd Meeting of RPC in hybrid mode. Considering the number of RPC's sectoral committees that is nine, the Council decided

that the 32nd Meeting of RPC would be held from January 17-26, 2021, enabling all committees to have enough time for finalizing their respective Work Program and Calendar of Events for 2022.

26. Based on the Modalities for granting Observer and Dialogue Partnership Status of ECO, the Council also agreed for extension of invitations to all the ECO Observers for participation in the upcoming Meeting of RPC as “**Observers**”.

Agenda Item No.5

Administrative matters:

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

27. The Selection Panel met on December 21, 2021. The Meeting was coordinated by ECO Deputy Secretary General (Administration, EME and IR) and Chaired by the Representative of the Embassy of Turkmenistan. Other participants of the meeting included the Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan.

28. The Selection panel made the following recommendation for consideration of the CPR:

Program Officer for Human Resources & Sustainable Development (Category-II, P1)

29. The tenure of services of Ms. Maryam Torabi (Iranian National) may be extended till the arrival of her successor.

30. The **Council** approved the above recommendation of the Selection panel.

Agenda Item No.6

Any other business

31. The Chair, also being Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, highlighted an offer received from Turkmenistan to organize the First Meeting of the Working Group established under an MoU signed at Ashgabat during 15th Summit, concerning the Commercialization of one of the Road Corridors in the ECO i.e. KTI. He conveyed that the Rail and Road Company of Iran were ready to participate in the meeting. However, in view of the very short notice and importance of the meeting, he requested if the event’s date could be rescheduled for alternative date.

Agenda Item No.7

Date of the next CPR Meeting

32. The **Council** decided that Secretariat may finalize the date of next (261st) CPR Meeting in consultation with Chair and Member States.

Annex-I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr. Abdul Ghani Farahi, Second Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- Mr. Khayyam Dashdamirov, Counselor
- 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. Behzad Azarsa, Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Khosravi, Attaché, ECO Affairs Bureau
- Ms. Shokoofeh Shadi, Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau
- Ms. Nasrin Esmaeli, 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:

- Mr. Akilbek Kilichev, Counselor

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Ms. Zaib Tayyab Abbasi, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- Mr. Salohiddin Ismoilov, Attaché

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:

Mr. Mehmet Zahit Uzun, Counsellor

The Embassy of Turkmenistan:

- Mr. Kemal Atayev, Attaché

The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- Mr. Umid Babaev, Third Secretary

The ECO Secretariat:

- H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri, Secretary General
- Amb. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Jandos Asanov, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Mohsen Esperi, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Salohiddin Kiromov, Head of Coordination and follow up Section
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Muhammad Ahmed Raza, Steno-Secretary
- Mr. Amjad Saeed Abbasi, Steno-Secretary
- Mr. Shahid Hussain, Steno-Secretary
- Ms. Aynur Mammadova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator