

**261st Meeting of the
Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

Report

February 07, 2022
ECO Secretariat

Report

The 261st CPR Meeting was held on 07 February, 2022 under the Chairmanship of the Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Tehran, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to ECO H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullayev after the delivery of a statement by H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov Ambassador of Turkmenistan in Tehran as the previous Chairman of CPR. The Meeting was attended by the Permanent Representatives of Republic of **Azerbaijan**, Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Kazakhstan**, Republic of **Turkey**, **Turkmenistan**, Republic of **Uzbekistan**, as well as Representatives of Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan**, **Kyrgyz Republic**, Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** and Republic of **Tajikistan**. The ECO Secretary General and the relevant staff of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. List of participants is enclosed as **Annexure-I**.

2. In his statement the previous ECO CPR Chair, H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov Ambassador of Turkmenistan extended his earnest felicitations to Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Tehran, H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullayev, upon assuming ECO Chairmanship for 2022. He also acknowledged the kind support and guidance of CPR, during Turkmenistan Chairmanship, to help attain the ECO's developmental goals and achieve some very important tasks and targets of the Organization that prominently included the successful completion of the 15th ECO Summit followed by 25th Council of Ministers (COM). He further informed that according to ECO's rules and procedures Republic of Uzbekistan has assumed ECO Chairmanship from January 2022. Accordingly he invited the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to ECO, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Iran H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullaev to preside over the 261st CPR Meeting as a Chairman of CPR. Copy of his statement is attached as **Annexure-II**.

3. Ambassador Bakhodir Abdullayev, the Chairman, expressed his pleasure to join the Council in his first and inaugural session of CPR, considering this to be a matter of great honour and privilege for him. He also recalled the excellent role and contribution of his predecessor and extended his earnest gratitude to the then Chairman of CPR for his enthusiasm and devoted efforts. He expressed that Chairmanship of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) would be realized under the slogan "**2022 - Year of Strengthening Connectivity**" in line with the "ECO Vision-2025", as well as plans and programs on priority areas of cooperation adopted within the Organization's framework. He added that Chairmanship of Uzbekistan will be focused on implementation of the various strategic objectives with the view of strengthening connectivity. He stressed that Uzbekistan intended to reach the targets of Chairmanship in ECO through close collaboration with Member States and Secretariat of the Organization and counts on their support during its Chairmanship, as well as active participation in the proposed events. He declared that during the Chairmanship, Uzbekistan will host 26th Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in November 2022. Copy of his statement is attached at **Annex-III**

4. ECO Secretary General congratulated the Ambassador Bakhodir Abdullayev upon assuming the ECO Chairmanship for 2022. He considered that his vast experience and knowledge would be important to help enrich and achieve the agenda of the Organization, as well as benefit the proceedings of the CPR. The Secretary General also recalled the excellent role and contribution of the previous Chairman, Ambassador Ahmet Gurbanov, for his excellent chairmanship of Council during 2021.

5. **The Permanent Representatives/Representatives of the Member States** also extended their appreciation to the previous Chairman of CPR for successful completion of his tenure as ECO Chairmanship and congratulated the Ambassador Bakhodir Abdullayev for assumption of his new responsibilities, conveying best wishes for his success to meet the assignments.

6. 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 261st CPR Meeting for deliberation:

- 1) Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 261st CPR Meeting
- 2) Adoption of the Draft Report of the 260th CPR Meeting
- 3) Review and follow-up of the outcomes of the 15th ECO Summit and 25th COM
- 4) Submission of 32nd RPC Meeting Report along with Work Programme 2022 and Calendar of Events 2022 for COM's approval
- 5) Request for allocation of fund for the study project on "Linking the existing regional sea ports in the ECO Region with ECO's landlocked and transit countries' dry ports (ECO Gate)"
- 6) Administrative matters:
 - Recommendations of the Selection Panel
- 7) Any other business
- 8) Date of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of the Draft Report of the 260th CPR Meeting

8. The Draft Report of the 260th CPR Meeting was circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/260th Meeting/2021/1437 dated December 28, 2021.

9. The Council adopted the Reports of 260th CPR Meeting.

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. Continuing discussions in the matter, the **Chair** while referring the 25th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) followed by 15th ECO Summit in Ashgabat requested the Council for review to follow-up the events' outcome and also requested the Secretariat to brief the Council regarding Plan of Work circulated among the Member States on January 16, 2022.

11. The **ECO Deputy Secretary General** (Tourism, Project Management, Judicial and Parliamentary Coordination and EAPA) Ambassador Jandos Asanov informed the Council that the suggestions of Republic of Uzbekistan received during the course of implementation was duly incorporated in the Plan of Work.

12. Keeping in view the Statement of H.E. Dr. Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, the Honorable President of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** at the 15th ECO Summit, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** proposed some amendments in Plan of work. As regards to the Energy, Minerals and Environment Sector, he urged to separate the climate change issue with Water Transfer Projects as both the issues are split in nature. As regards to amendment in HRSD Sector, he explained that Honourable President of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** specifically mentioned three issues in his speech during the Summit; Education, Health/Medical Education and Pharmaceutical Trade. Talking about the Tourism Sector, he emphasised that the Honourable President's prospective of Cultural Cooperation, Inter Universities and Academic Cooperation needs to be incorporated in the Plan of Work. He also pointed out Honourable President's request regarding full fledged agreement and arrangement among all ECO Member States.

13. The **Council** decided to incorporate the amendments in the Plan of Work as suggested by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran and requested the Secretariat to circulate the updated version of Plan of Work with new amendments.

- Issue of Declaring the Year 2022 "the Year of Strengthening Connectivity"

14. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** endorsed the idea of Republic of Uzbekistan for declaring the year 2022 as the Year of Strengthening

connectivity. He further added that brief modalities regulating the procedure for selection of the name in accordance with the priorities and the priorities of the current chair.

15. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** was of the view that the proposal of declaring the Year 2022 “the Year of Strengthening Connectivity by Republic of Uzbekistan was very timely and appropriate. He highlighted that efforts should not only be made to increase connectivity within ECO but with the neighbouring region countries, in order to reach at international markets. He also assured that the Republic of Turkey will be supportive in these efforts.

16. The Representative of **Tajikistan** also supported the proposal of the Republic of Uzbekistan to declare the Year 2022 “the Year of Strengthening Connectivity. He expressed that this initiative is in accordance to the goals and objectives of our organization. He added that it will facilitate the realization of those plans of projects engaged by the Secretariat.

17. The **Council** decided to put this issue into silent procedure for approval by COM.

Agenda Item No.4

Submission of 32nd RPC Meeting Report along with Work Programme 2022 and Calendar of Events 2022 for COM’s approval

18. The 32nd RPC Meeting was held in hybrid format on 17-26 January 2022. The RPC Report, ECO Work Programme 2022 and ECO Calendar of Events 2022 was circulated to the Member States vide Secretariats’ Note Verbale No. CFS/RPC/32nd Meeting/2022/86 dated 31st January 2022.

19. The **ECO Deputy Secretary General** (Tourism, Project Management, Judicial and Parliamentary Coordination and EAPA) briefed the council about the Note Verbale received from the Republic of Azerbaijan on February 6, 2022 regarding incorporation of some amendment in the annual Work Plan. He added that due to time constraint the Secretariat could not circulate it among the Member States and incorporate the same into Work Plan.

20. The Permanent Representative of **Azerbaijan** desired for incorporation of amendment in the Work Programme 2022 in connection to Economic Research Sector and requested for its endorsement in the CPR for onward approval to the COM.

21. The Permanent Representative of **Iran** reminding the importance of Economic and Research Sector stated that that these proposals must have some impacts on this agenda and he mentioned that it would be convenient to include these proposals in the annual work plan. As regard to the endorsement of the Draft Report of 32nd RPC along with Work Programme and Calendar of Events for approval by the COM, he expressed

that the Secretariat may circulate the Work Program and Calendar of Events of 2022 for approval by COM through the adoption of two weeks silence procedure.

22. **DSG (Admin, EME, IR & IT)** informed that the ECO Science Foundation has also requested for amendment in Calendar of Event 2022, relating to 5th meeting of Board of Trustees in the year of 2022 which is going to be hosted by the University of Isfahan, Iran.

23. **Legal Advisor** briefed the Council that as per ECO Rules of Procedure, the meeting of RPC in which the annual calendar and work programme of the following year are considered, held prior to the annual meeting of COM. However, he noted that this had not taken place in recent years; as a result observance of silence procedure might be considered by CPR, for obtaining approval of COM with respect to the said documents. Nevertheless, based on the practice, he underlined that after obtaining approval of CPR as to the said documents it can be implemented by the Secretariat.

24. The **ECO Secretary General** suggested to incorporate the proposed amendments and to endorse the draft report of 32nd RPC along with work programme and calendar of events for approval by the COM.

25. Referring the views of the Secretary General, the Chair noted, if agreed, the Council might consider the adoption of silence procedure to seek COM's approval as regards to the Work Programme and Calendar of Events.

26. After deliberations, the **Council** decided to incorporate the amendments proposed by the Republic of Azerbaijan and ECO Science Foundation and endorsed the Work Program and Calendar of Events of 2022 for further approval by COM through the adoption of two weeks silence procedure.

Agenda Item No.5

Request for allocation of fund for the study project on "Linking the existing regional sea ports in the ECO Region with ECO's landlocked and transit countries' dry ports (ECO Gate)"

27. The Chair informed the Council that the initial concept of "ECO Gate" aiming at "linking the existing regional sea ports in the ECO Region with ECO's landlocked and transit countries' dry ports" was elaborated and endorsed by the 29th Meeting of Regional Planning Council of ECO (17-20 December 2017, Tehran (paragraph-50, Work Programme 2018, "B" Sector). In this context, the 9th ECO Transport Ministers Meeting held on 1-3 May 2018 in Turkmenbashi (Turkmenistan) underscored the significance of initiating the mutually complementary networking ("Turkmenbashi Declaration" (2018), recommendation 10). The 5th Meeting of Heads of Maritime Organizations (HMROs) of ECO Member States considered the project proposal on networking among ECO regional ports and approved it (paragraph 29, Report of 5th HMRO, 6 March 2019, ECO Secretariat).

28. Subsequently, conduction of ECO Gate Study Project was endorsed as part of the work programme of the 30th and 31st Regional Planning Council (RPC) Meetings held on 14-20 January 2020, 12-21 January 2021, (see Sector B of the ECO Work Programmes of 2020 and 2021, para 50 and 57 respectively).

29. Given the estimated project cost of USD 130,000.00, the Secretariat approached the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) seeking the possibility of financing of the project. IsDB accepted to co-finance the project by allocation of 65,000US\$ which is half of the total project cost (Letter Inc. No.1400 Dated 2021/12/15).

30. In view of the above and given the fact that the 24th COM Meeting doubled the ceiling for expenditure from the Feasibility and General Purpose Fund for each project from 50,000.00 US dollars to 100,000.00 US dollars, the Council may authorize allocation of 65,000.00 US dollars by ECO for the implementation of the study project. Considering the existence of surplus amount from the already completed projects of transport section, the proposed amount may not impose any extra burden on the concerned Fund.

31. The **Council** approved the proposal submitted by the ECO Secretariat for allocation of requested fund for the study project on "Linking the existing regional sea ports in the ECO Region with ECO's landlocked and transit countries' dry ports (ECO Gate)" consensually.

Agenda Item No.6

Administrative matters:

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

32. The Selection Panel met on February 07, 2022. The Meeting was coordinated by Ambassador Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, ECO Deputy Secretary General (Administration) and Chaired by the Representative of the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Other participants of the meeting included the Representatives of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Republic of Uzbekistan.

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

Director for Tourism (Category-I, D2)

34. Mr. Rajabov Jasur Turakulovich (**Uzbekistan National**) may be appointed for a full term of three (03) years to be effective from the date of joining at the Secretariat.

Head of Section for Coordination & Follow-up (Category-I, D1)

35. Mr. Mirzoaliev Sukhrob Nuralievich, (**Tajikistan National**) may be appointed for a full term of three (03) to be effective from the date of joining at the Secretariat.

Program Officer for Transport & Communications (T&C) (Category-II, P3)

36. Mr. Uktam Abdujabborovich Shomurotov, (**Uzbekistan National**) may be appointed for a full term of four (04) years to be effective from the date of joining at the Secretariat.

Russian/English Interpreter (Category-II, P3)

37. The term of service of Ms. Aynur Mammadova (**Azerbaijan National**) may be extended till the arrival of her successor at the Secretariat.

38. The Council approved the above recommendations of the Selection panel.

Agenda Item No.7

Any other business

39. Under this agenda item, no issue was discussed.

Agenda Item No.8

Date of the next CPR Meeting

40. The **Council** decided to convene its next (**262nd**) CPR Meeting on 02-03 March 2022 at Bandar Abbas to be graciously hosted by the Hormozgan Province authorities.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr. Abdul Ghani Farahi, Second Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- H.E. Mr. Ali Alizade, Ambassador
- Mr. Ulvi Mammadli, Attaché

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, MFA
- Ms. Shokoofeh Shadi, Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau, MFA

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:

- Mr. Mian Azmat Farooq, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- Mr. Maruf Abdurahmonov, First Secretary
- Mr. Salohiddin Ismoilov, Attaché

The Embassy of the Republic of Turkey:

- H.E. Mr. Derya Ors, Ambassador
- Mr. Derhan Dogan, Counselor

The Embassy of Turkmenistan:

- H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov, Ambassador
- 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
- Amb.. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
- Dr. Sayed Yahya Akhlaqi, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Jandos Asanov, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Mohsen Esper, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Salohiddin Kiromov, Head of CFS
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Shahid Hussain, Steno-Secretary
- Ms. Aynur Mammadova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator
- Ms. Dilbar Muminova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator