

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

**Report**

*May 10, 2022  
Sari, Mazandaran Province, Iran*

## Report

The 264<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) was convened in Sari city of the Mazandaran Province of Iran on May 10, 2022 followed by declaration of Sari as ECO Tourism Capital for 2022. The Meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Bakhodir Abdullaev, Republic of **Uzbekistan**. The meeting was attended by the Permanent Representatives and Representatives of the 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 and the relevant staff of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. List of participants is enclosed as Annex-I.

Sari, the capital city of the Mazandaran Province of the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, was declared by ECO to be its Tourism Capital for 2022. The occasion, organized on May 10, 2022, was graced by the presence of the Governor General of the Mazandaran Province, ambassadors and other diplomats based in Iran, Secretary General of the ECO and his relevant staff as well as the heads of Iranian Tourism Business Associations. During the event, the ways and means to develop and expand the ECO cooperation in tourism industry, especially in the post-COVID scenario, were explored

The **Chairman** of the meeting, the Ambassador of the Republic of **Uzbekistan**, H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullayev extended his warm gratitude to the city's administration for hosting this important ECO meeting. On tourism, he expressed confidence that the Sari event would energize ECO efforts for boosting the organization's activities in sector.

The **ECO Secretary General**, H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri also extended his thanks to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sari authorities for their excellent arrangements and generous hospitality to host the CPR Meeting and organizing this subsequent gathering for declaring Sari as the ECO Tourism Capital for the year 2022.

Following the remarks of the Chairman and ECO Secretary General, the **Governor General** of Mazandran Province made a statement briefing the Council on the province's industrial, transit-transport and tourism capacities. While torching on the vast, charismatic and potential advantages in the Province's tourism side, the Governor General encouraged the ECO Member States to consider such prospects for their mutual gain and interest.

The **Chairman** while welcoming the participants formally initiated the proceedings of the meeting.

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

#### Adoption of the Agenda

2. The **Council** adopted the following Agenda of the 264<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting for deliberation:

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 264<sup>th</sup> CPR Meeting
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 263<sup>rd</sup> CPR Meeting
3. Follow-up of the outcomes of the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit and 25<sup>th</sup> COM (continued)
  - Consideration for establishing the High-Level Expert Group proposed by the Republic of Uzbekistan
4. Approval of ECO Rules for Procurement of Goods and Services
5. Approval of ECO Guidelines for the Selection of Theme for the Specific Years in ECO Calendar
6. Consideration of the proposal regarding abandonment of practice of dividing ECO Member States into “founding and “non-founding”
7. Approval of the list of events to be financed under the Special Support Fund (SSF) in 2022
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 263<sup>rd</sup> CPR Meeting

3. The Draft Report of the 263<sup>rd</sup> CPR Meeting was circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat’s Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/263<sup>rd</sup> Meeting/2022/482 dated April 18, 2022.
4. The **Council** adopted the Draft Report for 263<sup>rd</sup> CPR Meeting.

## **Agenda Item No. 3**

### Follow-up of the outcomes of the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit and 25<sup>th</sup> COM (continued)

- Consideration for establishing the High-Level Expert Group proposed by the Republic of Uzbekistan
5. The Chair briefed the council about this agenda item that the proposal of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** to establish a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) on preparation of specific proposals and recommendations for further improvement of the ECO activities. He added that this proposal is already included in the mentioned Plan of Work and was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFS/15<sup>th</sup> Summit follow up/2022/28 dated January 9, 2022. He further informed that the Plan of Work on the proposals and initiatives of the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit held in Ashgabat on November 28, 2021, as finalized by the 263<sup>rd</sup> CPR Meeting held on April 11, 2022, was also circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. PoW/2022/450 dated April 12, 2022. With regard to HLWG,

6. Talking about the High-Level Working Group (HLWG) on Brain Storming Meeting, the Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of **Iran** raised question on its role, mechanism and procedure. He suggested that the role of HLWG should be incorporated in the agenda of upcoming Brainstorming meeting and discussed the same in a length. He further suggested that it would be more feasible if the HLWG is established after the Brainstorming meeting. He underlined that the mandate, tasks and responsibilities of the HLWG needs to be further clarified prior to any decision on its formation. He considered that these prerequisites might be met through elucidation of the expected outcomes from such a body. He also raised other queries regarding the status of HLWG and its duration and the nature of services that are expected to be rendered. He further opined that without clarifying the aforesaid issues, nomination of the relevant expert could not take place easily.

7. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** supported the idea of the establishment of a HLWG but at the same time he expected that the HLWG should operate on adhoc basis, not permanently, and focus on specifically to the recommendations made during the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit.

8. While recalling the pervious discussion on this particular agenda in the last 263<sup>rd</sup> CPR, the **Secretary General** clarified that High Level Expert Group (HLEG) and Brainstorming Session are two different processes, nevertheless, there might be overlap of functions. With regard to HLWG, he briefed the Council that it was proposed to be established on the proposal of Honourable President of Uzbekistan made during Ashgabat Summit to evaluate the performance of the Organization.

9. As per the deliberation, the general consent of the **Council** was gained on the establishment of HLWG with this understanding that the scope of activities and functions that are expected to be discharged by HLWG should be defined in more comprehensive manner. The Chair informed that the Republic of **Uzbekistan**, Republic of **Kazakhstan** and the Republic of **Azerbaijan** have sent their nominations, in this context. He requested all the remaining Member States to send their nominations at the earliest opportunity.

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

##### Approval of ECO Rules for Procurement of Goods and Services

10. The ECO draft Guidelines for Procurement of Goods and Services, reflecting the codified practices of the Secretariat, were circulated among the Member States in October 2019 for receiving their views vide Note Verbale No: LA. Procurement-Guidelines/2019/841 dated 07.10.2019. Subsequently, the Secretariat was provided with the views from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan which were circulated among the Member States vide Notes Verbale No: LA/Procurement-Guidelines/2020/2, dated 06.01.2020 and No: LA/Procurement-Guidelines/2020/162 dated 27.02.2020. The amended draft Guidelines were circulated among the Member States vide Note Verbale No: LA/Procurement-2020/533 dated 07.10.2020. Adoption of the draft ECO Guidelines for Procurement of Goods and Services was put on the Agenda of the 248<sup>th</sup> Meeting of CPR. As per decision of the CPR, the silence procedure was resorted to obtain approval of the

COM with respect to the draft Guidelines (Note Verbale No: LA/Guidelines-Procurement/2020/770 dated 27.12.2020). The silence procedure was broken by submission of fresh views from the Republic of Turkey (Note Verbale No: LA/Guidelines-Procurement/2021/9 dated 05.01.2021). This was followed by receiving general observation and proposals from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (circulated by Secretariat's Note Verbale No: ADM/PER/2021/282 dated 09.03.2021).

11. The amended draft ECO Rules for Procurement of Goods and Services containing the views of the Member States were circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No.LA/ECO Rules for Procurement/2022/148 dated February 13, 2022. Accordingly, consideration of the amended draft Rules were put on the agenda of 262<sup>nd</sup> CPR. Based on the request of the representative of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, consideration was deferred for the 263<sup>rd</sup> CPR Meeting. At 263<sup>rd</sup> CPR Meeting the same request was made and consideration of the amended draft Rules were postponed.

12. The Representative of Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** enlightened that the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has recently assumed the charge of the office and the proposals are still under-process. Therefore, she requested the Council to kindly defer the issue in question till the next CPR.

13. The Council considered the request of Representative of Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** and requested to finalize the matter as early as possible.

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

#### Approval of ECO Guidelines for the Selection of Theme for the Specific Years in ECO Calendar

14. While recalling the pervious discussions at the 260<sup>th</sup> (*December 21, 2021*) and 261<sup>st</sup> (*February 7, 2022*), Meetings of CPR regarding the issue of Declaration of 2022 as the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity" in ECO Calendar, the **Chair** briefed that the Secretariat drafted the Guidelines to regulate the procedure for the Selection of Theme for the specific years in ECO and circulated the same among the Member States vide its Note Verbale No. LA/Guidelines/2022/316 dated March 9, 2022, requesting the Member States to provide views and proposals on the said Draft. Nevertheless no feedback received from the Member States on the contents of the draft Guidelines.

15. The Chair also informed that the procedure for the selection of theme for specific year in ECO Calendar the draft Guidelines were prepared by the Secretariat as per the request made at CPR Meeting. He noted that this took place after the declaration of 2022 as the "Year of Strengthening Connectivity" initiated by H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the Honourable President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the 15<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit in the ECO Calendar and approved by COM through silence procedure (Secretariat's Note Verbale No.CFS/ECO Years/2022/229 dated February 21, 2022), outlined the great importance of regional connectivity in the ECO region.

16. While discussing on this agenda, the Permanent Representative of Islamic Republic of **Iran** proposed amendments in the first paragraph of page 2, under heading "procedure", of Draft Guidelines. He noted that the selection of theme for the specific year might be considered as a prerogative for the upcoming chair which shall be proposed before assuming the chairmanship for the year in which the chairmanship is taken over by the chair. In this context, he proposed that some amendments could be made to the draft Guidelines, for instance, the paragraph under the Selection of theme in the Draft Guidelines which is suggesting that "the Member States individually or collectively as well as the Secretary General may propose a theme for specific year in ECO Calendar" could be replaced by " the Upcoming ECO Chairmanship in consultation with the Secretary General propose a theme for specific year in ECO Calendar."

17. The Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** also proposed an amendment to the para "Scope of the Theme" to include the words "as well as to the priorities of the upcoming chairmanship" to allow a certain margin of appreciation to the Chairman.

18. The **Secretariat** requested to avoid from any hastily incorporation of amendments to the draft guidelines which might result in inconsistency between the amended parts and other sections requested to be provided with the concrete amendments to the texts from the Member States for finalization of the draft guidelines based on the received amendments.

19. The **Council** requested the Member States to provide the Secretariat with their proposed amendments and deferred consideration of the draft Guidelines to its next meeting(s).

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

#### Consideration of the proposal regarding abandonment of practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding"

20. Abandonment of the practice of dividing the Member States into "founding" and "non-founding" countries has been proposed during the 14<sup>th</sup> ECO Summit Meeting by the Honourable President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. To facilitate the discussion and consideration of the issue the Secretariat prepared a background report on the use of the terms "founding" and "non-founding" and rotation of post of Secretary General and circulated it amongst the Member States through the Note Verbale No.LA/Report/2021/990 dated September 13, 2021.

21. The issue was put on the agenda of 25<sup>th</sup> COM Meeting held in Ashgabat on November 27, 2021 and the Council mulled over the proposal and tasked the CPR together with the ECO Secretariat to work out concrete proposals before the next Meeting of the COM, for addressing the issue regarding practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding".

22. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** was of the view that the use of term “founding and non-founding” is never practiced in any international organization. He discouraged the dividing of ECO Member States into “founding and non-founding”. However, he underscored that since the issue is of extreme sensitive nature, it should not be discussed in hurry. He has requested to put this agenda item in the next CPR or discuss it separately may be in Brainstorming meeting and put the substantive conclusion of the meeting before the CPR for its adoption as per the decision of the 25<sup>th</sup> COM.

23. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** and the Representative of the Republic of **Turkey** endorsed the idea of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** and expressed their readiness to contribute actively to any efforts on working out concrete proposal based on the request made by the Republic of **Kazakhstan**. However, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** proposed to hold informal meeting among the concerned Member States for onward submission of its outcome to the CPR.

24. The **Secretary General** commented that since the 25<sup>th</sup> COM Meeting mandated the CPR together with the ECO Secretariat to work out on concrete proposals before the next Meeting of the COM, for addressing the issue regarding practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding", therefore, he suggested to discuss the issue in more comprehensive manner in order to reach to some concrete proposal.

25. The **Council** requested the concerned Member States for holding informal meeting and submission of the outcome to CPR. Accordingly, consideration of the issue was deferred until the next CPR.

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

##### Approval of the list of events to be financed by the Special Support Fund (SSF) in 2022

26. The list of events to be financed by the Special Support Fund (SSF) in 2022 was circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFS/CoE SSF 2022/2022/544 dated April 26, 2022 for consideration.

27. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** sought clarification whether the SSF fund could be used to finance ministerial meetings and seminars. He further enquired that in some meetings it is mentioned as “Hybrid Mode” and “to be decided (TBD)”. In this case when the meetings mode is not decided yet then how it can be supported from Special Support Fund (SSF).

28. The **Legal Advisor**, in response to the inquiry made on inclusion of seminars in SSF noted that Modalities provides that "to the extent possible workshops, training courses etc., which do not involve decision making will not be included in the list." He added that The Modalities does not consider supporting of ministerial meeting by the use of SSF.

29. Referring to the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance/Economy in Sector Trade and investment, **DSG** (Trade, Investment, Agriculture and Industry) provided clarification that although the title of the meeting is 'ministerial meeting' but the meeting is preceded by a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) meeting which is meant to be financed by SS Fund. He further clarified that "as concerns the text of modalities, "to the extent possible" or preferably the seminars will not be included in SSF but since according to the same reference document, trade is an outstanding preference, the Secretariat has recommended this seminar for consideration and approval of the CPR.

30. The **Council** adopted the list of events suggested to be financed by the Special Support Fund (SSF) in 2022.

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

#### Administrative matters:

#### **- Recommendations of the Selection Panel**

31. The Selection Panel met on May 08, 2022. The Meeting was coordinated by Dr. Seyed Mohsen Esperi, ECO Deputy Secretary General (T&I and A&I) and chaired by Mr. Umit Bobayev, the Representative of the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Other participants of the meeting included the Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Uzbekistan.

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

#### **Chief Accountant (Category-II, P3)**

33. Ms. Zahra Shahrjami (**Iranian National**) may be appointed for a full term of four (04) years to be effective from the date of joining at the Secretariat.

#### **Program Officer for Energy, Minerals & Environment (EME) (Category-II, P3)**

34. Mr. Morteza Khansari Bozorgi (**Iranian National**) may be appointed for a full term of four (04) years to be effective from the date of joining at the Secretariat.

#### **Steno Secretary (Category-II, P2)**

35. Mr. Mehran Malik (**Pakistan National**) may be appointed for a full term of four (04) years to be effective from the date of joining at the Secretariat.

#### **Steno Secretary (Category-II, P2)**

36. The service tenure of Mr. Chaudhry Hadees Muhammad (**Pakistan National**) may be extended till the arrival of his successor at the Secretariat.



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

37. Ms. Neda Moshref Javadi (**Iranian National**) may be appointed for a full term of four (04) years to be effective from the date of joining at the Secretariat.

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

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

#### **Any other business**

39. Under this agenda item, the **Secretary General** recalled the decision of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Regional Planning Council (RPC) held in January, 2022 in ECO Secretariat, Tehran regarding 15th ECO-ASEAN joint Ministerial Meeting on the sidelines of the upcoming 77th session of the UN General Assembly in New York. He informed that the Permanent Representatives and Representatives of ECO Member States on organizing an informal consultative/brainstorming meeting of Ambassadors of ECO and ASEAN before the proposed ECO-ASEAN joint Ministerial Meeting, the Secretariat coordinated with the current Chairman of ASEAN Tehran Committee (ATC), the Ambassador of Kingdom of Thailand in Tehran. He added that last week on 5th May he met with the Ambassador of Thailand H.E. Mr. Worawoot Pongprapapant. In this regard, he shared the main points of the meetings with the Council, which are reproduced as under:

1. In the coming months, meetings with different ASEAN Ambassadors will be arranged to acquire their ideas on enhancement of the ASEAN-ECO Cooperation and enriching the agenda of the next Joint ASEAN-ECO Ministerial Meeting.
2. Simultaneously, the Secretariat would approach the ASEAN Secretariat on the following three points:
  - a) *Finalization of programme for the next Joint ASEAN-ECO Ministerial Meeting aimed at strengthening the ECO's cooperative relations with ASEAN at strategic level;*
  - b) *Organizing Joint events/projects especially holding of ASEAN-ECO Joint Business Forum in 2022;*
  - c) *Formulation of Plan of Action/Work Programme on implementation of the existing MoU as well as seeking prospects of revising the exiting MoU between the two organizations in accordance with the recent global developments and the needs of the two regions.*

### **Agenda Item No. 10**

#### **Date of the next CPR Meeting**

40. The Council may decide to convene its next (265<sup>th</sup>) Meeting **on June 27, 2022** at the ECO Secretariat.

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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

- Mr. Abdul Quyom Soleymani, Acting **Ambassador**

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

- Mr. Subhi Ismayizada, Third Secretary

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

- H.E. Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Behzad Azarsa, Senior Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation
- Ms. Nasrin Esmaeli, ECO Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation
- Ms. Shokoufeh Shadi, ECO Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation
- Mr. Mousa Khosravi Moghadam, ECO Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation

### **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. Akylbek Kylychev, Counselor

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

- Ms. Khirat, First Secretary

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

- Mr. Bahrom Azimov, Second Secretary
- Mr. Salohiddin Ismoilov, Attaché

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

- Mr. Mehmet Zahit Uzun, Counselor

### **The Embassy of Turkmenistan:**

- H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov, **Ambassador**
- Mr. Atamyrat Bayramov, First Secretary
- Mr. Kemal Atayev, Third Secretary

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

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

### **The ECO Secretariat:**

- H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, Secretary General
- Amb. Jandos Asanov, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Mohsen Esperi, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Jasur Rajabov, Director of Directorate of Tourism
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Sukhrob Mirzoaliev, Head of CFS
- Mr. Seyed Mohammad Hadi Ghaderi, Programme Officer
- Mr. Hadees Chaudhary, Steno-Secretary
- Mr. Shahid Hussain, Steno-Secretary
- Ms. Dilbar Muminova, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator
- Ms. Ulker Mehdiyeva, English-Russian Interpreter/Translator