



267th Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Report

August 29, 2022
ECO Secretariat

Report

The 267th CPR Meeting, held on August 29, 2022, was attended by the 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 **Türkiye**, **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**.

In view of the unavailability of Chair, H.E. Ambassador Bakhodir Abdullayev, Republic of **Uzbekistan**, the Secretary General requested the Council to elect an interim chair to preside over the meeting without prejudice to the chairmanship of Uzbekistan. Accordingly, on the proposal of the Permanent Representative of Republic of **Türkiye** the Council unanimously elected H.E. Mr. Sayed J. Alavi, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** as interim Chairman for 267th CPR Meeting.

Before the formal commencement of the Meeting, the Chair and the ECO Secretary General, as well as the Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Kazakhstan** and Republic of **Türkiye** expressed their sincere condolences over the loss of precious human lives and severely damaged physical and non-physical assets caused by devastating floods in several regions of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** and the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan**. They conveyed their deep sympathies with the victim's families and wished for an early post-devastation recovery.

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 267th CPR Meeting for deliberation:

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 267th CPR Meeting
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 266th CPR Meeting
3. Preparation for the 26th COM Meeting (*continued*)
4. Follow-up of the outcomes of the 15th ECO Summit and 25th COM (*continued*)
 - Consideration of the Terms of Reference of the High-Level Committee (HLC)
5. Participation of Turkish Cypriot State as an ECO Observer at the 6th Ministerial Meeting on Finance/Economy to be held on October 12-13, 2022 in Baku
6. Consideration of allocation from the Feasibility and General Purpose Fund 50.000 USD to co-sponsor "Feasibility Study on Setting and Implementing Energy Efficiency Targets in the ECO"

7. Administrative and budgetary matters:

- Reallocation of funds between the Chapters of ECO budget 2022 without creation of increase in the size of budget
- Amendment to the Staff Strength: re-titling of the post of Database Officer (Category II-P3) as Senior Steno-Secretary (Category II-P3)
- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

8. Any other business

9. Date of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of the Draft Report of the 266th CPR Meeting

3. The **Council** adopted the draft report of the 266th CPR Meeting held on July 31, 2022, circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/266th Meeting/2022/1069 dated August 4, 2022.

Agenda Item No.3

Preparation for the 26th COM Meeting

4. The 26th Meeting of Council of Ministers (COM) will be hosted by the Republic of Uzbekistan. To facilitate the required arrangements as to preparation of the draft agenda and other outcomes of the 26th COM meeting as well as exchange of information regarding the logistical and protocol requirements, the 266th CPR Meeting on July 31, 2022 approved the establishment of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom).

5. The Representative of Uzbekistan, as the chairman of PrepCom, briefed the Council on the outcomes of the first meeting of PrepCom held on August 24, 2022. He noted that PrepCom reviewed the first version of the draft agenda of 26th COM meeting proposed by the Secretariat and made some amendments to the items based on the proposals shared during the meeting. He further added that based on the views of the Member States and the Secretariat the draft agenda of 26th COM meeting will be further reviewed at the next PrepCom meeting and the final version will be submitted to CPR for its consideration. He continued that the PrepCom will also initiate consideration of the draft communiqué of 26th COM after its circulation among the Member States. The report of the 1st PrepCom was circulated amongst the Member States vide Note Verbale No. CFS/26th COM/2022/1155 dated August 24, 2022. He further added that the date of next meeting of PrepCom would be decided in consultation with the Member States.

Agenda Item No.4

Follow-up of the outcomes of the 15th ECO Summit and 25th COM (continued)

- Consideration of the Terms of Reference of the High-Level Committee (HLC)

6. While recalling the previous discussion on the issue, the **Chair** briefed the Council that while looking thoroughly into the matter and given the fact that the High

Level Expert Group (HLEG) and Brainstorming Session of the Deputies Foreign Minister, both have been formed in the light of the same purpose of the proposal of the Republic of **Uzbekistan**, the Council in its 266th CPR Meeting held on July 31, 2022, agreed to merge them in one framework to set up a High-Level Committee (HLC) and the Secretariat was tasked to revise and redraft the proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) of HLEG based on the deliberations made and the aforesaid conclusion. The Secretariat via its Note Verbale No. LA/TOR-HLC/2022/1103 dated August 14, 2022 circulated the Draft ToR of High Level Committee creation of which was accepted by merging the HLEG and Sessions of Deputies of Foreign Ministers among the Member States for consideration.

7. The **Legal Advisor** briefed the Council on the main points of the revised version of the Terms of Reference of High Level Committee (HLC). He noted that the HLC might be established as a subsidiary committee by COM as per Rule 2(e) of ECO Rules of Procedure. The purpose for its establishment would be the same as proposed by the Republic of Uzbekistan as brought up at 15th Summit. The Deputies of Foreign Minister in Charge of ECO affairs of the Member States will be members of the HLC. The members of the HLC will be assisted by high level experts who might be the same high level experts that have already been nominated by the Member States as the members of the High Level Experts Group (HLEG). He pointed out that as proposed in ToR presence of at least five Member States at Deputy Ministers level would be required for reaching quorum. He pointed out that the chairman of HLC will report to COM on the consultation made at HLC meeting. It was added that other rules of ECO Rules of Procedure will be observed as to the HLC.

8. While questioning on the composition of HLC in draft ToR, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** expressed his disagreement over the composition of High Level Committee at the level of Deputy Foreign Minister. Referring the existence of SOM forum, he mentioned that Kazakhstan side might not agree on any other regular and institutionalized arrangements/platform.

9. The **Chair** noted that SOM has not been institutionalized as a standing body in ECO structure. The meetings of SOM are held prior to COM meetings to facilitate discussions over the agenda of COM, this is taking place on behalf of COM, he pointed out. He recalled that it was agreed during the 266th CPR held on July 31, 2022, to merge High Level Expert Group and Brainstorming Session at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers in one framework, re-titling the proposed merger as High Level Committee (HLC).

10. Taking Kazakhstan side's position into account, the **Council** agreed to take up the matter again at its next Meeting.

Agenda Item No.5

Participation of Turkish Cypriot State as an ECO Observer at the 6th Ministerial Meeting on Finance/Economy to be held on October 12-13, 2022 in Baku

11. Turkish Cypriot State, as ECO Observer, sent an official request (TRNC/2022/248115 dated August 4, 2022) to participate in the 6th Ministerial Meeting

on Finance/Economy to be preceded by the Senior Officials Meeting (SoM) on October 12-13, 2022 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The received request was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. T&I/2022/1076 dated August 9, 2022.

12. In accordance with ECO Modalities, the **Council** considered the request of Turkish Cypriot State for participation, as an Observer, in the 6th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance/Economy. It further decided that a formal invitation may also be extended to the Turkish Cypriot State in this regard.

Agenda Item No.6

Consideration of allocation from the Feasibility and General Reserve Fund 50.000 USD to co-sponsor "Feasibility Study on Setting and Implementing Energy Efficiency Targets in the ECO"

13. The 7th expected outcome in the Energy Segment of ECO Vision 2025 stipulates that *"To the widest extent possible, relevant energy efficiency goals and objectives will be achieved at the ECO regional level"*. At the same time, ECO Energy Strategy 2030 and its Action Plan specifies that energy inefficiency is one of the major challenges confronted by the ECO Region in the energy sector and must be targeted at production, distribution and consumption stages. With this in mind, the main policies for promoting energy efficiency and energy conservation and carbon finance mechanism need to be adopted. ECO Secretariat pursues to bring viable option to implement this strategic objective of ECO within international partnership and best existing practices. Along with UNIDO, it is proposed to conduct feasibility study and later on deliver for consideration joint regional decision. UNIDO considers allocating contribution value of 40.000 USD for consultancy services and technical assistance throughout the project realization and its further implementation. For the part of ECO, it is required to contribute around 50.000 USD to launch the project. The project proposal has already been introduced to the experts of Member States by the Secretariat during the 4th ECO Experts Group Meeting on Renewable Energy Sources hosted virtually by the Republic of Uzbekistan in April 27, 2022. The report of that meeting has been adopted by Member States and at expert level there were no objection to the project (Secretariat's Note Verbale No. EME/Energy/4th EGRES/2022/611 dated May 12, 2022).

14. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** requested the provision of a brief note/project proposal in this regard. He added that the matter will be taken up with the relevant authorities in **Türkiye** for concurrence, requesting to defer the issue for next Meeting of CPR.

15. The Permanent Representative of **Kazakhstan** inquired about the possibility of implementability of the proposed feasibility study.

16. The **Director (EME)** explained that ECO Energy Strategy 2030 and its Action Plan specifies that energy inefficiency is one of the major challenges confronted by the ECO Region in the energy sector and must be targeted at production, distribution and consumption stages. He further added that ECO Vision 2025 stipulates that relevant energy efficiency goals and objectives shall be achieved at the ECO regional level and overall surveys shows the potential of 30% energy consumption reduction. With regard

to the project implementation phase, he underlined that outcomes of the feasibility study will be expected to comprise of applying viable solutions to the region on energy efficiency targets. In this regard, active participation of Member States within project realization is very important.

17. The **Council** requested the Secretariat to share with the Member States a brief note/project proposal on the required feasibility study, deferring the matter for discussion by next CPR.

Agenda Item No.7

Administrative and budgetary matters:

- Reallocation of funds between the Chapters of ECO budget 2022 without creation of increase in the size of budget

18. Article 9.2 of ECO Financial Regulations provides for the possibility of the transfer of funds between Chapters of the budget up to 10 percent by the Secretary General. As per this limit, the transferable amount should not exceed the 10 percent of the allocated budget under the Chapter to which transfer is going take place.

19. In view of the above, and given the fact that there might be a need for the transfer of funds between Chapters of budget of 2022 exceeding the authorized limit under Article 9.2 of ECO Financial Regulations, the Council may authorize the Secretary General to meet the financial exigencies under the following Chapters, whenever required by transferring the funds between them as described below. Accordingly the Council was requested to authorize the Secretariat for transfer of six percent (6%) of funds from Chapter of Salary and Allowances, approximately equivalent to 200,000.00 USD (two hundred thousand dollars) to the Chapter of Travel and Chapter of Staff Benefits (transfer grant, end of service, leave encashment), 80,000.00 USD and 120,000.00 USD respectively.

20. The **Chair** while referring to provisions of Article 9.2 of Financial Regulations as to the transfer of funds between Chapters noted that the aforesaid authorization was requested to meet the needs created in the Chapter of destination. He then opened the floor for comments.

21. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye**, while conveying his in principle agreement on the issue, requested the Secretariat an explanatory note with regard to the proposed re-appropriation of funds, enabling them to seek formal concurrence from the relevant authorities of the Republic of Türkiye.

22. The **Secretary-General** brought to the attention of the Council that the transfer of funds between the chapters of the budget, up to 10%, may take place as per the authorization given to this end under Article 9.2 of Financial Regulations. However, the needs, under the chapters of destination, may not be met by the transfer of funds within the limits set under this article, he added. Taking this into account, he noted, the Council was requested to consider re-allocation of funds between the chapters which might exceed the ten percent limit of article 9.2 of financial regulations. As for the reasons for the creation of needs under the requested chapters, he pointed out that after

slowing down of pandemic the number of in-person meetings increased. He continued that this along with the increase in the flight prices resulted in severe budget constraints in the chapter of travel, particularly, when from the same Chapter the travel costs of home leave passage of non-resident staffs and their dependents to their home country shall be met . To this, it should be added that due to the lack of direct flight from the headquarters to many destinations the indirect flight costs would be incurred by the Secretariat, he added. it was also noted that the availability of funds under the Chapter of Salary and Allowances is due to vacant positions.

23. The **Council** decided to defer the issue for discussion by next CPR, requesting the Secretariat to share the requested explanatory note with the Member States for consideration.

- Amendment to the Staff Strength: re-titling of the post of Database Officer (Category II-P3) as Senior Steno-Secretary (Category II-P3)

24. To improve further the quality and uniformity of the reports, summations, letters, press releases, speeches and other documents and outcomes of the Organization, the possibility of re-titling the vacant post of *Database Officer (Category II-P3)*, belongs to Pakistan, as *Senior Steno-Secretary (Category II-P3)* was shared with the Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Pakistan. To this end a Note Verbale was sent to the Embassy of the Pakistan in Tehran (No. ADM/2022/840 dated 20 June 2022), which, among other things, clarifying that currently, the services of one IT Expert/Network Administration (Category II-P1) and one IT assistant (Category III-A3) are rendered in IT Section.

25. The affirmative response of Pakistan to the above-mentioned request was sent to the Secretariat by the Note Verbale No. ECO-7/3/2022-A/36 dated 31 July 2022. Taking the consent expressed by Pakistan into account, the aforesaid request and the response of Pakistan was circulated among the Member States by the Note Verbale No. ADM/PER/2022/1066 dated 4 August 2022. Since the re-titling of the posts requires amendment to the ECO Staff Strength the Member States were informed on the consideration of the matter at 267th CPR meeting.

26. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** underlined that the basic documents of the ECO should not be subject to frequent changes and durability requirement of regulations should be respected. In this context he noted that constant changes in the title of created posts might be discouraging.

27. The **Chair** stated that if the services of Database Officer were surplus, the Secretariat may consider the change of nomenclature of the post by proposing creation of a post of Programme Officer under one of the directorate which might be needed. However, given the request of the Secretariat and the consent of Pakistan as set out in the annotation, there might be an interim internal arrangement by the Secretariat for filling the vacant post of Database Officer by the incumbent steno-secretary without affecting the title of the said post in the staff strength. Accordingly, the Chair proposed that the Council might authorize the Secretariat to make some internal/interim arrangement for extension of service tenure of Mr. Muhammad Ahmed Raza as Senior Steno Secretary against the Pakistan's vacant post of Database Officer.

28. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** emphasized that their concurrence for re-designation of the post of Database Officer is based on the proposal of the ECO Secretary General and the Secretariat. She requested that the matter was already discussed, finalized and approved by competent authority in Pakistan. Any internal arrangement/adjustment with regard to the said position of Database Officer, as proposed by the Chair for extension/reappointment of Mr. Muhammad Ahmed Raza, might be considered and made at ECO level, she requested.

29. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** categorically mentioned that since the post of Database Officer belongs to Pakistan, the matter for its re-designation might be finalized by the Secretariat and the Representative of Pakistan. To avoid wastage of time, he discouraged any further discussion in this regard.

30. Taking into consideration the comments of Kazakhstan and Pakistan sides, as well as keeping the proposal of the Chair in view, the **Council** authorized the ECO Secretariat for making internal/interim arrangements to extend tenure of service of the incumbent Steno Secretary, Mr. Muhammad Ahmed Raza as Senior Steno Secretary (Category-II P3) against the vacant post of Database Officer (Category-II P3), for a period of three years to be effective from November 5, 2022.

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

31. The Selection Panel met on August 24, 2022. The Meeting was coordinated by Dr. Seyed Mohsen Esperi, ECO Deputy Secretary General for (T&I and A&I) and chaired by Mr. Umit Bobayev, the Representative of the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan.

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

Program Officer for Trade & Investment (T&I) (Category-II, P3)

33. Mr. Mehmet Cetik (**Turkish National**) may be appointed for a full term of four (04) years to be effective from the date of joining at the Secretariat.

Agenda Item No.8

Any other business

34. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic republic of **Iran** raised following issues under this agenda item:

i. Sought clarification on the ECO Secretariat Note Verbale No. T/Tourism and Transport Task Force /2022 /997 dated 20th July, 2022 regarding meeting on the ECO Tourism and Transport Task Force on August 2022 at 11:00 am in virtual format. Referring to the contents of the aforesaid Note Verbale, he pointed out that in the Note Verbale it is mentioned that six Members States are ready to participate in the meeting but the last day Secretariat postponed the meeting due to lack of quorum.

ii. While referring to Secretariat's another Note Verbale No. T&I/ Visa Procedure/1087 dated August 10, 2022 regarding Agreement on simplification of Visa procedure for Businessmen of the ECO Member States, the Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** was of the view of that the study on this issue would take a lot of time and to expedite the matter the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed that Secretariat may provide Member States with something like a questionnaire to find out probability and impediments. He also proposed a virtual meeting with participation by all stakeholders.

iii. Iran expressed readiness to pay its contribution to ECO Reinsurance Company (ERC) but unfortunately due to sanctions the country is unable to transfer the money. In this regard, he sought assistance from the ECO Secretariat as well as the Member States.

iv. While referring to the First Exhibition of Iranian Culture History on 05-08 September 2022 on the Kish Island, he informed that the host will provide one Air ticket and accommodation and other local hospitality for 2 participants from each Member States including ECO Secretariat. He further explained the host will provide arrangements for total 20 participants. Furthermore, he assured that the host authorities will share further details through Note Verbale at the earliest opportunity of time.

35. The **ECO DSG (A&I/T&I)** briefed the Council on following issues:

i. The Secretariat, as per its mandate for enhancing regional and international connectivity, is collaborating with UNECE to operationalize the Almaty - Istanbul and Trans-Caspian Corridors and in this connection both Organization are co-organizing a Round Table for the Development of the Operational Rail Capacity of the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Istanbul Corridors on 06 September 2022 in Geneva. The en-route Member States including: Republic of **Kazakhstan**, Republic of **Uzbekistan**, **Turkmenistan**, Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Azerbaijan** and Republic of **Türkiye** are also invited (by ECO and UNECE) to participate in the Meeting. He added that a delegation of the Secretariat (TC Director and PO) is also going to participate as the Co-organizer and Co-chair of the Meeting. The travel expenses including tickets, accommodation and DSA of ECO delegation will be covered by the UNECE. He further added that the event has not been included in the CoE 2022. He requested the Council to approve the participation of the ECO Delegation in the aforementioned Meeting.

- Regional Conference on Food Loss and Waste Reduction in Europe and Central Asia, 5-6 October 2022, İstanbul, Türkiye

ii. The **ECO DSG (A&I/T&I)** informed the Council that the Sub-regional Office for Central Asia of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has sent an invitation for Secretary General and Director of Agriculture of ECO for the Regional Conference on Food Loss and Waste Reduction in Europe and Central Asia which will held on 5-6 October 2022 in İstanbul, Türkiye. He explained that the Conference will be organized jointly by FAO and Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Republic of Türkiye and with the support of the Economic Cooperation Organization Regional Coordination Centre for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS), and it is the outcome of the project "Reduction of Food Loss and Waste in Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Central Asia" under the framework of the FAO-Türkiye Partnership Programme on Food and Agriculture (FTPP II). He further informed that the Conference will be at ministerial level and Secretary General is invited to be one of the keynote speakers along with

FAO Director General, and Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Türkiye, H.E. Mr. Vahit Kirişçi. Within the margin of the Conference, 4th Steering Committee Meeting of ECO-RCCFS will also be conducted, which partakes in calendar of events of 2022. Moreover, he pointed that the accommodation and travel costs will be covered by the host organization for both invitees.

- Regional training workshop on strategic planning and policy development in food security 20-21 September 2022, Cairo, Egypt

iii. The ECO DSG (A&I/T&I) briefed the council that the Islamic Organization of Food Security (IOFS) has started to organize a series of training workshops on Food Security Governance. As a part of this, “Regional training workshop on strategic planning and policy development in food security” will be held on 20-21 September 2022, in Cairo Egypt. The key objective of the training is to build the capacity of government officials on basics and practices on strategic planning, policy development, creation of government inter-sectoral mechanisms (high-level council/commission) on food security. The event will be enriched by the experience of ECO in governing food security, the international good practices from Sustainable Food Systems of Ireland and other stakeholders, as well as discussions and group exercises for practicing the gained knowledge/ experience. To this end, within the workshop a special session is dedicated to ECO-Regional Programme for Food Security programmes and activities toward improving food security and nutrition policies in ECO member countries. He informed that the IOFS has invited a representative of ECO Secretariat in order to attend this meeting and share ECO experience on food security issues.

36. The **ECO DSG (A&I/T&I)** further explained that in two events there is no financial implications as the arrangements will be done by the host authorities but in the last event of IOFS Secretariat has to bear the expenses.

37. The **Council** has considered the participation in all three events as proposed by ECO DSG (A&I/T&I).

38. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** stressed on the re-designation of the post of Steno-Secretaries as Desk Officer at the analogue of other international organizations such as SAARC. She was of the view that since there is no legal and financial implication in this regard, therefore the same may be considered.

39. Considering the proposal of Pakistan regarding re-designation of the post of Steno Secretaries as Desk Officers, as well as the Chair’s suggestion, the **Council** deferred the matter for consideration by next Meeting of CPR.

Agenda Item No.9

Date of the next CPR Meeting

40. Next CPR will be held at the ECO Secretariat in September, the exact date will be decided in consultation with the Member States.

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, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Ulvi Mammadli, Third Secretary

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

- H.E. Mr. Seyed Jalaedin Alavi Sabzevari, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Behzad Azarsa, Senior Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation
- Mr. Musa Khosravi Moghadam, ECO Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation

The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- H.E. Mr. Askhat Orazbay, **Permanent Representative**

The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- H.E. Mr. Turdakun Sydykov, **Permanent Representative**

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Ms. Khirat, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- H.E. Mr. Nizomiddin Zohidi, **Permanent Representative**

The Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye:

- H.E. Mr. Derya Ors, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Derhan Dogan, Counselor

The Embassy of Turkmenistan:

- H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Kemal Atayev, Third Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- Mr. Umid Babaev, Third Secretary

The ECO Secretariat:

- H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri, Secretary General
- Amb. Mohsen Esperi, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Jandos Asanov, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser