

**268th Meeting of the
Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

Report

October 2, 2022
ECO Secretariat

Report

The 268th CPR Meeting, held on October 2, 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** 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 ECO 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 the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**, the **Council** unanimously elected H.E. Mr. Sayed J. Alavi, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** as interim Chairman for 268th CPR Meeting.

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 268th CPR Meeting for deliberation:
 1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 268th CPR Meeting;
 2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 267th 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. Consideration of the proposal regarding abandonment of practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding";
 6. Participation of Turkish Cypriot State as an ECO Observer at the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism to be held on October 31 - November 1, 2022 in Samarkand;
 7. Consideration of allocation from Feasibility and General Purpose Fund 50 000 USD to co-sponsor Feasibility Study on Setting and Implementing Energy Efficiency Targets in the ECO;
 8. Administrative and budgetary matters:
 - Reallocation of funds between the Chapters of ECO budget 2022 without creation of increase in the size of budget;
 - Recommendations of the Selection Panel;
 9. Any other business;
 10. Date of the next CPR Meeting.

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of the Draft Report of the 267th CPR Meeting

3. The **Council** adopted the Draft Report of the 267th CPR Meeting held on August 29, 2022, circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/267th Meeting/2022/1224 dated September 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. The 266th CPR Meeting held on July 31, 2022 established a Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) to facilitate the preparation/finalization of required draft agenda and relevant documents as well as other important issues concerning the 26th COM Meeting.

5. The CPR during its 267th Session held on August 29, 2022 was briefed on the matters considered by the first meeting of PrepCom on August 24, 2022. The report of the first PrepCom meeting along with the Draft Agenda of the 26th COM Meeting was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/26th COM/2022/1155 dated August 24, 2022. It was agreed that the date of next meeting of PrepCom would be decided in consultation with the Chairman.

6. The **ECO Secretary General**, while citing the proximity of the 26th COM and noting the fact that the contents of the Draft Tashkent Communiqué are required to be reviewed by the 2nd Meeting of the PrepCom, requested the Republic of **Uzbekistan** to finalize the said document, which the ECO Secretariat informally provided to Uzbekistan side on August 24, 2022.

7. The Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** informed that the 26th Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) is scheduled to be held in Tashkent on November 30 – December 1, 2022. He further informed that the administrative and technical details of the event, including local hospitality, accommodation, travelling etc. would be shared soon. With regard to Draft Tashkent Communiqué, he stated that the document is under consideration of the relevant Uzbekistan authorities, adding that it will shortly be provided to the Secretariat for onward transmission to the Member States as well as review by the PrepCom.

8. The **Council** concluded that the date of 2nd Meeting of PrepCom may be scheduled in consultation with the Chairman upon receipt of Draft Tashkent Communiqué from the Republic of Uzbekistan hosting the 26th COM Meeting.

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)

9. The Plan of Work on the proposals and initiatives of the 15th ECO Summit held in Ashgabat on November 28, 2021, finalized by the 263rd CPR Meeting held on April 11, 2022, was circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. PoW/2022/450 dated April 12, 2022. 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, included in the mentioned Plan of Work, was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFS/15th Summit follow-up/2022/28 dated January 9, 2022.
10. Following the aforesaid development, the nomination of Representatives received from the Republic of **Uzbekistan**, Republic of **Kazakhstan**, Republic of **Azerbaijan**, **Turkmenistan**, as well as from the **Kyrgyz** Republic for the proposed HLEG were circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Notes Verbale No. CFS/15th Summit follow up/2022/176 dated February 15, 2022, No. CFS/15th Summit follow up/2022/431 dated April 7, 2022, No. CFS/15th Summit follow up/2022/574 dated May 5, 2022, and No. CFS/15th Summit follow up/2022/754 dated June 5, 2022.
11. The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** in Tehran vide Note Verbale No. ECO-7/28/2022-(A)/35 dated June 6, 2022 requested for provision of the Terms of Reference (ToR) regarding the High-Level Expert Group and other related details to proceed further in the matter. The same was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFS/15th Summit follow up/2022/823 dated June 15, 2022.
12. The CPR, in its 265th Meeting held on June 27, 2022, deliberated over the matter and tasked the Secretariat to draft the Terms of Reference (ToR) concerning the High-Level Expert Group. The Secretariat prepared and circulated the relevant ToR among the Member States vide Note Verbale No. LA/ToR-HLEG/2022/978 dated July 17, 2022.
13. The Representative of Republic of **Kazakhstan**, while referring previous discussion with regard to the formation of High-Level Committee (HLC) at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers, stated that the issue is still under consideration of their relevant authorities. He further requested the possibility of establishment of the Committee at a lower level than the Deputy Ministers. He also requested for holding on discussion in this regard until the views/comments are received from their Capital.
14. The **Chair** noted that establishment of this Committee at a lower level than Deputy Foreign Minister may not serve the purposes for which its creation was proposed. He underlined that holding of the regular meetings of Deputies of Foreign Minister which has been asserted at their recent session is on the agenda of the Organization. Accordingly, within the format of HLC or otherwise the regular meetings of Deputies of Foreign Ministers will be held. In this context he drew the attention of the Council to the existence of the Council of Deputies of Foreign Ministers in the structure of the Organization in the past. He continued that establishment of HLC at a lower level than Deputy Foreign Minister may not be a suitable approach while the function of CPR is rendered at this lower level. Further involvement of the relevant higher level authorities and their direct contribution to the decision making process is expected to be fulfilled by this initiative.

15. Attaching importance to reaching consensus on the matter the **Chair** while encouraging the Kazakhstan side to expedite the awaited response, proposed that the agenda may be addressed at the next CPR meeting. Thus, the **Council** deferred the matter for discussion during its next Session.

Agenda Item No.5

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

16. Based on the proposal put forward by the honourable President of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** during 14th ECO Summit, the 254th Meeting of CPR tasked the Secretariat to develop Draft Modalities to provide mechanism for implementation of the given proposal. Relevantly, the Secretariat prepared a background report on the use of the terms "founding" and "non-founding" as well as the rotation of post of Secretary General and circulated the same amongst the Member States vide Note Verbale No.LA/Report/2021/990 dated September 13, 2021.

17. Moreover, following a formal request received from the Embassy of **Kazakhstan** in Tehran, the issue regarding division of "founding" and "non-founding" Member States was included in the agenda of 25th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) held in Ashgabat on November 27, 2021. The COM 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.

18. During the 265th Meeting of CPR held on June 27, 2022, the Permanent Representative of Republic of **Kazakhstan** mentioned about three alternative proposals given by them to address the matter, circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFS/25th COM/2022/894 dated June 27, 2022.

19. Given the sensitive nature of the case, the CPR concluded that the matter may first, be informally discussed amongst the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of the relevant Member States before its final consideration by the CPR.

20. During the 267th Meeting of CPR held on August 29, 2022, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, while updating the status of discussions held during their first informal session on August 24, 2022, stated that a few more informal sittings are required for further deliberations to reach a mutual conclusion in the matter.

21. While realizing the need for defining the "founding" and "non-founding" nature of the Member States, the **Chair** referred to the consultations over the issue during the informal meeting and the proposal which was put forward as to utilization of an alternative terminology instead of founding and non-founding Member States. The Chair noted that at the informal meeting the Secretariat was requested to work out proposals regarding the alternative terminology.

22. The **Legal Advisor** pointed out that the total abandonment of the utilization of the terminology of "founding and non-founding Member States" may not be possible to the extent that is related to the historical facts. He added that any alternative

terminology aimed at distinguishing the Member States based on their respective shares of contribution may also end up with the same result. For instance, he noted, the founding Member States are paying the ceiling rate of contribution which is a fact; hence, any alternative terminology that might be coined based on this fact may not be able to address the concern raised over use of the terminology of founding and non-founding. Accordingly, he concluded further consideration of the matter is required.

23. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** emphasized on a productive outcome before the upcoming meeting of the COM, expressing readiness to host another informal session for further deliberation in the matter.

24. The **Council** conducted that the relevant Member States may continue informal discussion to reach a consensus in this regard.

Agenda Item No.6

Participation of Turkish Cypriot State as an ECO Observer at the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism to be held on October 31 – November 1, 2022 in Samarkand

25. In its capacity as an ECO Observer, the Turkish Cypriot State officially conveyed a request vide communication No. TRNC/2022/248115-1 dated August 26, 2022, seeking participation in the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Tourism to be held on November 1, 2022 in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. The same was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. T/2022/1183 dated August 29, 2022.

26. The Permanent Representative of Republic of **Uzbekistan** informed that the matter regarding extension of invitation to Turkish Cypriot State is under consideration of their relevant authorities, stating that their response will be shared in due course.

27. The **Council** concluded that based on the modalities prescribed in respect of the ECO Observers, the request of Turkish Cypriot State for participation in the 4th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism may be considered by agreement ad referendum and subject to the concurrence of the host country.

Agenda Item No.7

Consideration of allocation from Feasibility and General Purpose Fund 50000 USD to co-sponsor Feasibility Study on Setting and Implementing Energy Efficiency Targets in the ECO

28. 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 to allocate 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 on April 27, 2022. The report of that meeting has been adopted by Member States and in expert level there were no objection to the project (Secretariat's Note Verbale No. EME/Energy/4th EGRES/2022/611 dated May 12, 2022).

29. During 267th CPR Meeting held on August 29, 2022, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** requested the provision of a brief note/project proposal in this regard, conveying that the matter would be taken up with the relevant authorities in Türkiye for concurrence. During the same meeting, the Permanent Representative of **Kazakhstan** inquired about the implementation possibility of the proposed feasibility study. In this context, the Council tasked the Secretariat to share with the Member States a brief note/project proposal, deferring the matter for discussion in 268th CPR. The Secretariat via its Note Verbale No. EME/2022/1284 dated September 18, 2022 circulated among the Member States the said project proposal.

30. After expression of agreement by the Representative of **Türkiye** and finding no further objection in the matter, the **Council** considered and approved the allocation of US \$ 50 000/- for the Feasibility Study on Setting and Implementing Energy Efficiency Targets in the ECO.

Agenda Item No.8

Administrative and budgetary matters:

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

31. Article 9.2 of ECO Financial Regulations provides for the possibility of transfer of funds between Chapters of the budget up to 10 percent by the Secretary General. The expenditure under the Chapters of "Travel Expenses and Staff Benefits", "Reception & Diplomatic Obligation" and "Consumable & Other items" created a need for the transfer of funds from the Chapter of Salary and Allowances. Nevertheless, the limit of 10 percent set forth under Article 9.2 does not meet the created needs under the Chapters to which the transfer of fund was requested. Accordingly, the Council was requested to authorize transfer of funds from Chapter of Salary and Allowances, approximately equivalent to 200,000.00 USD (two hundred thousand dollars) to the Chapters of "Travel Expenses", "Staff Benefits" (transfer grant, end of service, leave encashment), "Reception & Diplomatic Obligation" and "Consumable & Other items", 80,000.00 USD, 108,000.00 USD, 6,000.00 USD and 6,000.00 USD respectively. It was also noted that the aforesaid transfer of funds between the Chapters does not create any increase in the size of adopted budget of 2022.

32. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** inquired the following:

- Rationale for additional expenses in the head of “Travel Expenses”;
- Budgetary ratio of ECO and Non-ECO Events;
- Reason for no working group meeting on budgetary issues for 2023 despite the year 2022 is about to end.

33. **The ECO Secretary General** informed that the Secretariat already prepared and circulated the Draft Budget Proposal for 2023 among the Member States vide Note Verbale No./ACC/2022/1276 dated 14/09/2022. He invited the Chief Account for making further explanation in the matter.

34. The **Chief Accountant** explained that travel expenses increased in the post-pandemic period due to the holding of most of ECO events in physical format and the rising inflationary trends particularly in aviation sector. She added that other significant reason for excess in travel expenses is making payments on account of procurement of air tickets for incoming and outgoing staff.

35. Considering the views of Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** and the explanation thereon by the Secretary General and the Chief Account, the **Council** approved the reallocation of funds between the Chapters of ECO budget 2022, and formation of an open-ended working group to facilitate the finalization of Budget Proposals for 2023 before the next meeting of CPR.

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

36. The Selection Panel met on October 2, 2022. The Meeting was coordinated by Amb. Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, ECO Deputy Secretary General for (Admin, EME, IR & IT) 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, Republic of Kazakhstan, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Türkiye and Republic of Uzbekistan.

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

Head of Section for Project Management (Category-I, D1)

38. The **Chair** while referring to the early separation of Ms. Bayan Adilbekova said that she is one of the most qualified staff of the Secretariat. He added that she is known for her vast knowledge of the task entrusted to her as the Head of Project Management Section. Her professionalism, expertise and dedication in the discharge of the functions of this is commendable he underlined.

39. The **Council** agreed on the recommendation of the Selection Panel as follows: Mr. Murat Zhagiparov (Kazakhstan National) may be appointed for a full term of three (03) years to be effective from the date of joining at the Secretariat.

Steno-Secretary (Category-II, P2)

40. Mr. Javed Ali (Pakistan National) may be appointed for a full term of four (04) years to be effective from the date of his joining at the Secretariat.

Steno-Secretary (Category-II, P1)

41. Mr. Muhammad Irfan (Pakistan National) may be appointed for a full term of four (04) years to be effective from the date of his joining at the Secretariat.

42. The **Council** considered and approved the recommendations of the Selection Panel. With regard to budgetary implications due to the appointment of Mr. Murat Zhagiparov (Kazakhstan National), the **Council** tasked the Secretariat to discuss the issue bilaterally with Kazakhstan side and share the outcome in next CPR for consideration.

Agenda Item No.9

Any other business

Re-designation of the posts of Steno-Secretary as Desk Officer

43. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** during 267th CPR Meeting held on August 29, 2022 raised the issue regarding re-designation of the post of Steno-Secretaries as Desk Officer on the pattern of SAARC Secretariat. She mentioned that since the proposal does not entail any financial implications, it may be given due consideration. However, the Council deferred the issue for discussion by next meeting of CPR.

44. The **ECO Deputy Secretary General** pointed out that the proposal required amendment in the Staff Regulations. He proposed that the Secretariat may be mandated to prepare a concise note in the matter for submission to the next meeting of CPR. He added that the issue would be referred for approval of the COM after its endorsement by CPR.

45. The **Chair** suggested that this is the right opportunity to review the re-designation of other posts, if necessary.

46. The **Council** tasked the Secretariat to examine the case and come up with the concrete proposal with regard to the re-designation of Steno-Secretaries as Desk Officers for consideration by next meeting of CPR.

- ECO Special Chronicle

47. The **ECO Secretary General** invited the attention of the Council towards the issue of Special Chronicle to be published to mark the 30th Anniversary of the ECO Enlargement. In this regard, he informed that so far only the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Tajikistan have provided articles of their honourable Foreign Ministers for inclusion in the said publication. He encouraged other Member States to expedite

the provision of articles by their respected Foreign Ministers with a view to ensuring release of the ECO Special Chronicle before next Meeting of the COM.

- Balance of Budgetary Shares

48. The **ECO Secretary General**, while recalling that the year 2022 is about to end, underlined that the current year’s budgetary shares of some Member States, as well as balance of their previous years’ budgetary contribution were awaited. To meet the monetary requirements of the Organization, including the unhindered implementation of ECO projects and smooth functioning of the Secretariat, the timely receipt of contributions is unavoidably necessary, he noted. Relevantly, the ECO Secretary General encouraged the Member States for expediting the payments of their pending contributions.

Agenda Item No.10

Date of the next CPR Meeting

49. The **Council** decided that the 269th meeting of CPR may be convened at the end of October 2022. However, it concluded that the ECO Secretariat may convey exact date of the next CPR to the Member States in consultation with the Chair.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr. Abdul Quyom Suleymani, Acting Ambassador
- Mr. Abdul Ghani Farahi, Second Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- H.E. Mr. Ali Alizade, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Subhi Ismayizada, Third Secretary

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

- H.E. Mr. Seyed Jalaleddin 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:

- Mr. Gamzat Khairov, Counsellor

The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- H.E. Mr. Turdakun Sydykov, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Akylbek Kylychev, Counselor

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- H.E. Mr. Rahim Hayat Qureshi, **Permanent Representative**
- Ms. Khirat, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- Mr. Maruf Abdurahmonov, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye:

- Mr. Mehmet Zahit Uzun, Counselor

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