



ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION

Report of the

First Meeting of Border Commanders of ECO Member States
(Tehran, 19-20 October, 2010)

The ECO Secretariat, Tehran

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1. The First Meeting of Border Commanders of ECO Member States was held in Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran, on 19 – 20 October, 2010 hosted by the Border Police of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The meeting was attended by delegates of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan as well as the ECO Secretary General along with the relevant staff of the Secretariat. The meeting was also attended by the Operative Coordinator for the EU-funded Project titled Fight Against Trafficking from/to Afghanistan with ECO Member States. The list of participants is attached as *Annex-I*.

Inauguration of the Meeting

2. His Excellency Brigadier General Dr. Hossein Zolfaghari, Commander in-Chief of the Border Police of the Islamic Republic of Iran delivered welcoming remarks. General Zolfaghari welcomed the participants in Tehran and expressed the hope that the deliberations and decisions made during the meeting would contribute to enhancing regional border police cooperation among the Member States of the ECO. He mentioned that the ECO Member States are confronted with different types of threats and emphasized the need to identify these threats especially which are related to the security of our countries. A copy of the statement is placed as *Annex II*.

3. His Excellency Mr. Mohammed Yahya Maroofi, the ECO Secretary General also made a statement during the inaugural session. He welcomed the delegates and thanked the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting this important meeting. He noted that the Economic Cooperation Organization is devoted to the cause of regional economic integration which would simultaneously supplement the efforts that guarantee security and stability in our region. He added that practical and informative cooperation among the Border Control Authorities of the Member States in different field especially in connection with recognizing networks of the organized crimes are among the means to enhance security cooperation. For that purpose, the Secretary General emphasized for paving the ground for joint operational strategies enabling the ECO Member States to tackle security problems. A copy of the statement is placed as *Annex III*.

4. His Excellency General Ismail Ahmadi Moghaddam, Commander In-Chief of the Police of the Islamic Republic of Iran inaugurated the meeting. General Moghaddam said that all the Member States of ECO are confronted with global nature menaces like terrorism, drug-trafficking, illegal migration, corruption, money laundering and various types of other crimes and there is a strong need for collective and collaborative measures

to eradicate them. He informed the meeting that during the last month, Iranian Police has seized more than 10 tons of opium and more than 400 kilogram of heroin with the cooperation and exchange of information from the neighbouring countries. He noted that sufficient capacities and capabilities are available in our countries to tackle these menaces individually but if these capacities are shared with other countries it would increase the momentum of security cooperation within the regional context. He emphasized the need for joint operational strategies in which each country could act within its own borders. He reiterated Iran's readiness to cooperate with all the Member States in a constructive manner to fight against these crimes. He observed that such gatherings helped promote sharing of experiences and finding joint solutions to complex issues of regional security.

Agenda Item No. 2

Election of the Chairman

5. The working session was coordinated by Amb. Hassan Taherian, Deputy Secretary General of the ECO. In accordance with the ECO's Rules of Procedure, H.E. General Dr. Hossein Zolfaghari, Commander In-chief of the Border Police of the Islamic Republic of Iran was unanimously elected as the Chairman of the Meeting. In his remarks, Dr. Zolfaghari thanked the participants for reposing confidence in him and expressed the hope that their deliberations would produce useful and beneficial outcomes for the Member States.

Agenda Item No. 3

Adoption of the Agenda

6. The meeting adopted the following agenda for its proceeding:

1. Inaugural Session

- i) Statement by the high dignitary of the Islamic Republic of Iran
- ii) Statement by H.E. Mr. Mohammed Yahya Maroofi, Secretary General of ECO
- iii) Statement by General Dr. Hossein Zolfaghari, Commander in-Chief of the Border Police of the Islamic Republic of Iran

2. Election of the Chairman

3. Adoption of the agenda.

4. Setting up of the Drafting Committee.

5. Statement/Country Report by the Heads of Delegation of the Member States

6. Considering use of Border Controlling Systems such as computer facilities and data banks to identify criminals

7. Fight against illicit drugs and related crimes. (smuggling human, arms, goods and historic and cultural articles within the borders)
8. Establishment of Regional Training Center for Experts and Border Control Forces.
9. Promotion of border facilities for ordinary travelers and travel agencies of member states involved in tourism. (to check illegal crossing)
10. Facilitation of border crossing Transport within the framework of TTFA (Transit Transport Framework Agreement) - Presentation by Directorate of Transport of ECO.
11. Strategies for control of communicable diseases.
12. Adoption of the Tehran Declaration.
13. Any other business.
14. Date and Venue of the next meeting.
15. Adoption of the report.
16. Vote of thanks and Closing of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No. 4

Setting up of the Drafting Committee

7. An open-ended Drafting Committee for preparation of the draft report of the Meeting was established comprising officials of the Secretariat and the Representatives of Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Turkey.

Agenda Item No. 5

Statement/Country Report by the Heads of Delegation of the Member States

8. The Heads of delegation delivered their statements, encompassing different issues of security related problems including, cross-border movement of illegal persons/militants, drug-trafficking, human smuggling, smuggling of goods, arms and historic-cultural articles and other illegal traffics within borders and elaborated the activities of the border control forces in their respective countries. The representatives also expressed their commitment to enhance security cooperation within the regional context. The statements further highlighted that in order to contribute effectively to regional and global efforts for combating these menaces, there was a strong need for exchange of information and sharing best practices among all the stakeholders of the border control forces of the ECO Member States. All Member States agreed that these menaces posed serious challenges to the ECO countries and the regions beyond

9. Mr. Hans Detlef Nollenburg, the Operative Coordinator for the Project titled “Fight Against Trafficking from/to Afghanistan with the ECO Member States” briefed the meeting that ECO and the European Commission signed an MOU on 3rd February, 2009 on implementation of EU-financed project under the Instrument for Stability. Mr. Nollenburg while explaining the four components of the project informed the meeting that under this project, the EC is contributing 9.5 Million Euros to strengthen the stability of the region and the security and health of people living in the countries along the heroin routes by supporting trans-regional cooperation in the fight against trafficking from/to Afghanistan. In the long run this project would enable ECO-DOCCU to fulfill the role of a regional coordination facilitator and technical cooperation platform and forum.

Agenda Item No. 6

Considering use of Border Controlling Systems such as computer facilities and data banks to identify criminals

10. The meeting discussed the matter in detail. The participants agreed that in order to have effective border controlling system there is a need to have expeditious exchange of information among the Border Control Forces of the Member States. Each Member State will strengthen its own data-base system to identify criminals especially on border check-points. The frequency of meetings among the border control forces of the Member States can be increased. The meeting recommended that once the data-bank for identifying criminals by each country is improved at national level and legal formalities are also cleared only then the idea for the establishment of a regional data-bank can be considered. It was, therefore, decided that the idea for the establishment of a regional data-bank may be considered in future meetings of the Border Commanders of ECO Member States.

Agenda Item No. 7

Fight against illicit drugs and related crimes (smuggling human, arms, goods and historic and cultural articles within the borders).

11. The meeting deliberated the issue and there was a total agreement that fight against illicit drug trafficking is the collective responsibility of all the Member States. It was noted that the smugglers are taking the drugs from the resource country which is Afghanistan. The meeting also agreed that incentives should be given to the people of Afghanistan by international donors and especially the neighbouring countries so that its people do not attract towards cultivation and growth of poppy and related precursors. All possible measures should be adopted to eradicate this menace especially on the entry, transit and exit points of Afghanistan’s neighbouring countries. The meeting also recommended for preparation of a legal framework which could be included in the national legal framework of each country so that the people involved in these menaces

could be given exemplary punishment. It was agreed that the border forces of the Member States should play an effective role in stopping this menace otherwise the issue would be worsen and intensified. The border forces, through exchange of information, could contribute to the control of narcotics flow and psychotropic substances.

12. The Officer in-charge of the Drug and Organized Crime Coordination Unit (DOCCU) of the ECO Secretariat informed the meeting that the DOCCU is receiving monthly, quarterly and yearly drug-seizure and analytical reports from the Member States which are circulated for the information of other member states. It was agreed that the border control forces of each country may send yearly report to the Secretariat providing general information about the methods and techniques used by drug-traffickers and smugglers of human, arms, goods and historic and cultural articles within the borders. This could help border control forces of other member states to be more equipped while checking container or luggage of tourists. The Secretariat was, therefore, requested to send a format of sending information by each Member State on this issue in consultation with the Iranian Border Police, for views and comments.

Agenda Item No. 8

Establishment of Regional Training Center for Experts and Border Control Forces.

13. The meeting concluded that instead of establishing a new regional training center for border control forces, it would be appropriate to use the existing training centers established in the ECO Member States. Therefore, the Member countries may send the details of training courses to the Secretariat for onward submission to the Member State. Thereafter related border control officials can be sent to these centers for training. The meeting further agreed that if at a later stage the need for having a regional center is realized, this would be considered in future meetings of the Border Commanders after discussing funding and legal formalities.

Agenda Item No. 9

Promotion of border facilities for ordinary travelers and travel agencies of member states involved in tourism (to check illegal crossing)

14. The meeting agreed that there was a need for providing facilities to the ordinary travelers and travel agencies of Member States involved in tourism. However, it was noted that these agencies should be registered with their respective governments so that if any agency is involved in illegal migration issues, it could be stopped to work and other Member States are also notified. The meeting further agreed that each country, based on the agreed locations of border points, would try to extend maximum facilities.

Agenda Item No. 10

Facilitation of border crossing Transport within the framework of TTFA (Transit Transport Framework Agreement) - Presentation by Directorate of Transport of ECO.

15. Mr. Mohammad Mirzaee Kahagh, Director (Transport and Communications) of the ECO Secretariat briefed the meeting about the facilitation of border crossing transport within the framework of Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA). He stated that TTFA is an important regional agreement which has been signed by all the ECO Member States except Uzbekistan. The TTFA has also been ratified by all Member States except Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. He mentioned that the TTFA has entered into force since 19th May, 2006. A Transit Transport Coordination Council (TTCC) was also set up to coordinate and monitor implementation of the TTFA. He stated that through the TTFA, ECO is trying to facilitate movement of passengers and expansion of trade in the Member States. Referring to some articles of the Agreement, he informed that ECO has designed an ECO Common Visa. According to this mechanism, when a visa is issued by one country it would be deemed valid for all other contracting parties of this agreement. This initiative will not only save time and cost but would also facilitate border crossing. He also explained about some of the on-going projects related to rail and road transport facilities being implemented by ECO.

16. The meeting agreed to facilitate the implementation of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement along respective borders.

Agenda Item No. 11

Strategies for control of communicable diseases.

17. The Meeting agreed that in order to discuss this item, there is a need to prepare a regional strategy for the prevention of communicable diseases along the borders of the ECO Member States. Therefore, this strategy may be discussed and considered in the future meeting of Border Commanders of ECO Member States.

Agenda Item No. 12

Adoption of the Tehran Declaration

18. The meeting unanimously adopted the Tehran Declaration. The declaration illustrates the issues deliberated upon and agreements reached during the meeting. The text of the Declaration is placed at *Annex – IV*.

Agenda Item No. 13

Date and Venue of the next Meeting

19. The meeting requested the Secretariat to consult the ECO Member States, through diplomatic channels, for their offer to host the 2nd Meeting of Border Commanders of ECO Member States.

Agenda Item No. 14

Adoption of the Report

20. The participants unanimously adopted this report.

Agenda Item No. 15

Vote of Thanks

21. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by the participating delegations, expressing deep appreciation for the warm hospitality extended by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the excellent arrangements made for the meeting. They also expressed their warm appreciation to the Chairman, His Excellency Brigadier General Dr. Hossein Zolfaghari, Commander in-Chief of the Border Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran for guiding the deliberations to a successful conclusion.

22. The participants of the meeting also expressed gratitude and appreciation to the ECO Secretary General and other members of the ECO Secretariat for the preparation of the relevant documents and other valuable services to facilitate the work of the meeting.