



Economic Cooperation Organization

ECO

**271st Meeting of the
Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

Report

December 21, 2022
ECO Secretariat

Report

The 271st Meeting of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) 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.

2. Due to the unavailability of H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullaev, the incumbent Chair of CPR, and on the proposal of the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran supported by ECO Secretary General, the **Council** unanimously elected H.E. Mr. Ali Alizada, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan to preside over the 271st Meeting of the Council without prejudice to the Chairmanship of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

3. On his unanimous election as an interim Chair of the meeting, H.E. Mr. Ali Alizada initiated the Session's formal proceedings.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

4. The **Council** adopted the following Agenda of the 271st CPR Meeting for deliberation:

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 271st CPR Meeting
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 270th CPR Meeting
3. Preparation for the 26th COM Meeting (*continued*)
 - Finalization of the Draft Agenda of 26th COM Meeting
 - Report of the Preparatory Committee
 - Participation of ECO Observer - Turkish Cypriot State
4. Preparation for the 33rd RPC Meeting
 - Participation of ECO Observer - Turkish Cypriot State
5. Administrative and budgetary matters:
 - Consideration of the budget of the Organization for the financial year of 2023
 - Recommendations of the Selection Panel
6. Any other business
7. Date of the next CPR Meeting.

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of the Draft Report of the 270th CPR Meeting

5. The **Council** adopted the draft Report of the 270th CPR Meeting circulated to the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/270th Meeting/2022/1611 dated November 24, 2022.

Agenda Item No. 3

Preparation for the 26th COM Meeting (continued)

- Finalization of the Draft Agenda of 26th COM Meeting
- Report of Preparatory Committee
- Participation of ECO Observer – Turkish Cypriot State

6. Looking into the latest position of preparations as to the organization of 26th Meeting of the COM in Tashkent on January 24-25, 2022, the Council opened the floor for further deliberation based on previous developments and the outcomes produced in the matter during 7th Session of the PrepCOM held on December 14, 2022. In this regard, the **Council** took note of the following:

- I. Briefing of the PrepCOM's Chair in regard to the preparation status of next COM's Meeting, including the **(i)** Draft Agenda; **(ii)** Draft Tashkent Communiqué after considering the proposals of Member States; **(iii)** Uzbekistan's concurrence for participation of Turkish Cypriot State as per relevant ECO Modalities and subject to no delivery of statements by ECO Observer (s) during the event, and **(iv)** Uzbekistan's insistence for deletion of "Statements by:" "ECO Observers" from the agenda of COM's Meeting based on the country's already conveyed formal and written position in this regard;
- II. Türkiye's reiteration on Turkish Cypriot State participation in the 26th Meeting of the COM along with the right of making statement in line with the practice existing and applied in such cases during the past ECO events;
- III. Iran's supportive views for statements to be delivered by ECO Observer (s), if invited, and the country's encouraging views to invite all ECO Observers according to the relevant provisions;
- IV. ECO Secretariat's comments regarding; **(i)** participation of ECO Observers in the Preliminary/Closing Sessions of the COM event; **(ii)** statements by ECO Observers as per the practice, and the authorization to this end within the scope of relevant modalities; **(iii)** Council's authorization for inviting all ECO Observers; **(iv)** retention of statements by ECO Observers in the agenda of COM Meeting to be finalized by next session of CPR; **(v)** information about invitations already extended to some ECO partner organizations after host side's concurrence and confirmation received from some of them in this regard; **(vi)** equal permission for statements by all ECO Observers, if invited, to avoid any discriminatory perception and **(vii)** timely issuance of Agenda of the next COM following the existing rules of procedure.

7. Having gone through various aspects of the matter and in view of the proposals/comments of the Member States as well as the ECO Secretariat, the **Council** concluded the following:

- I. Draft Agenda of the 26th COM Meeting may be issued based on the existing Rules of Procedure;
- II. All ECO Observers may be invited to participate in the Preliminary/Closing Sessions of the 26th COM Meeting;
- III. Matter regarding delivery of statements by observers at 26th COM Meeting to be further discussed and finalized by next (272nd) Meeting of the CPR.

8. Regarding the agenda item No. 7 of the draft agenda of 26th COM on the establishment of a High-Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation, the **Council** considered, looked in to Pakistan's query about **(i)** nature of the proposed Forum i.e. Regional Institution or Specialized Agency; **(ii)** status of its existence i.e. Permanent Secretariat or otherwise; **(iii)** funding mechanism and **(iv)** definition of "Board" as reflected in draft Charter of the Platform;

9. Moreover, the **Council** also noted the ECO Secretariat's explanation that following the proposal on the establishment of a Permanent Council on a high level dialogue with participation of foreign scientists, and the discussions by CPR, Uzbekistan side agreed on the establishment of a "**Platform**" instead of a "**Permanent Council**". Accordingly, the proposal for establishment of a High Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation has been included in the agenda of 26th COM meeting with the understanding that the COM may express its consent on the establishment of the Platform and mandate CPR for working out, later on, on the Terms of Reference of the Platform, its organizational structure, governance structure, scope of its activities as well as the funding mechanism. It was noted that elements of the draft Charter of the Permanent Council on high level dialogue prepared by Uzbekistan could also be used for the development of the terms of reference of the Platform.

Agenda Item No.4

Preparation for the 33rd RPC Meeting

- Participation of ECO Observer – Turkish Cypriot State

10. As per conclusion reached at the 32nd Meeting of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC), the **Council** noted that the 33rd Meeting of RPC is scheduled to be organized on January 16-19, 2023. Following salient features of the matter were also taken into account by the **Council**:

- I. ECO Secretariat's explanation regarding the **(i)** paucity of financial resources as to in-person holding of the meeting; **(ii)** suggestion for convening the event in hybrid mode; **(iii)** local hospitality; **(iv)** reimbursement of return airfare

(up to US\$ 900) to maximum 1+1 delegates of each Member State from Feasibility and General Purposed Fund (FGPF);

- II. Iran's query about the **(i)** existing financial status of FGPF and **(ii)** exact amount to be borne to facilitate the Member States' participation in the next RPC Meeting out of FGPF and **(iii)** country's encouragement for the presence of the Heads of Planning Organizations of the Member States in RPC Meeting and recommendation for hospitality to 1+1 delegate;
 - III. ECO Secretariat's update on **(i)** availability of fund in the proposed head of account; **(ii)** approximate US\$ 20,000/- to be spent for making the suggested arrangements of RPC in hybrid mode and **(iii)** exact figure in this regard to be calculated after the event.
 - IV. Participation of the Turkish Cypriot State (TCS) in the 33rd Meeting of RPC based on the TCS's request circulated among Member States on November 27, 2022;
 - V. Türkiye's support and Azerbaijan's concurrence to the TCS's participation in the 33rd Meeting of RPC as an ECO Observer.
11. Keeping the foregoing in view, the **Council** decided the following:
- I. The 33rd Meeting of RPC will be organized on January 16-19, 2023 in hybrid mode and chaired by Azerbaijan as the ECO Chair for 2023;
 - II. Local hospitality, 3 nights hotel accommodation and return airfare up to maximum US\$900 to maximum 1+1 delegates of each Member States, including the high-level leader of delegation (s) preferably the Heads of Representing Organizations;
 - III. Invitation may be extended to the Turkish Cypriot State (TCS) for participation in the 33rd Meeting of RPC as an **"ECO Observer"**;
 - IV. Draft Agenda and Annotated Draft Agenda of the 33rd RPC Meeting may be circulated among the Member States along with the Tentative Programme and necessary Information Note containing the details of hospitality.

Agenda Item No.5

Administrative and budgetary matters:

-Consideration of the Budget of the Organization for the financial year of 2023

12. The **Council** revisited the agenda's proceedings made earlier, as well as considered the conclusion (s) made by the ad-hoc Working Group on draft ECO budget for 2023. The Council took note of the following important features of the matter highlighting during the discussion process:

- I. Utilization of an amount equivalent to US\$ 561,666/- or US\$ 249, 410/- from General Reserve Fund (GRF) to cover part of the contributions of the Member States under the budget of 2023;
 - II. Kazakhstan's reiteration to maintain their budgetary share for 2023 at the level paid in 2022;
 - III. ECO Secretariat's re-emphasis to make minimum or favourably no utilization of GRF for covering the part of the contributions of the Member States and alerting that the continued use of GRF will exhaust the fund soon and negatively impact on other engagements of the Organization, including the smooth implementation of ECO project related activities;
 - IV. Iran's alternative suggestion that **(i)** Kazakhstan side may consider less payment of their assessed contribution for 2023 to be allocated and paid in 2024; **(ii)** if not decided, ECO budget 2023 may be referred to the Senior Officials Meeting (SoM) instead of taking up the issue again by 272nd CPR, and **(iii)** ECO Secretary General may be requested to write a letter to the honourable Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan seeking his kind support to address the matter in consideration of the prevailing financial constraints of the Organization.
13. Keeping the foregoing into account, the **Council** decided the following:
- I. ECO Budget - 2023 may be referred for consideration and finalization by SoM followed by 26th Meeting of the COM;
 - II. ECO Secretary General is requested to formally communicate with the honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan to seek his kind consideration for joining the consensus as to the minimum use of GRF for the coverage of part of contributions of the Member States under the budget of 2023.

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

14. The Selection Panel met on December 21, 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 the Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Uzbekistan.

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

Desk Officer (Category-II, P1)

16. Mr. Muhammad Shafqat Zahoor (**Pakistan National**) may be appointed for a full term of four (04) years to be effective from the date of joining at the Secretariat.

17. The Selection Panel also recommended that Mr. Zeshan Altaf Khan, the incumbent Desk Officer may also be allowed to continue his services till the arrival of his successor for properly handing/taking over the record of the concerned Desk.

18. The **Council** agreed and approved the above recommendations of the Selection Panel.

Agenda Item No.6

Any other Business

19. In his concluding remarks, the Secretary General acknowledged the ECO Chairmanship of Uzbekistan in 2023. While appreciating the country's enhanced role in the Organization, he considered that the ECO picked up a renewed momentum under the Chairmanship of Uzbekistan.

20. The Secretary General also welcomed the Republic of Azerbaijan, believing that the Organization would make further advancements under the chairmanship of Azerbaijan in 2023.

21. The Secretary General also acknowledged the services of Ms. Dilbar Muminova, who was successfully going to complete her assignment at the Secretariat as Russian/English translator. Moreover, the Secretary General noted the shortage of professional staff in the Translation Unit of the Secretariat desiring the issue to be addressed sometimes soon in consultation and cooperation of the Member States.

Agenda Item No.7

Date of the next CPR Meeting

22. It was decided that the next (272th) CPR will be held on January 11, 2023.

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. 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
- 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:

- Mr. Akylbek Kylychev, Counselor

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Mr. Ahmad Shami, Counselor

The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

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

The Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye:

- Mr. Ulvi Darendeli, Counselor

The Embassy of Turkmenistan:

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