

275th Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Report

May 3, 2023
ECO Secretariat

Report

Held on May 3, 2023, the 275th Meeting of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) was attended by Permanent Representatives/Representatives of Republic of **Azerbaijan**, Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Kazakhstan**, 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. The CPR Meeting was organized in Hybrid Mode.
3. The CPR **Chair** and the **ECO Secretary General** as well as the Heads of Delegations of the Member States congratulated the authorities of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the declaration of Ardabil as the ECO Tourism Capital for the year 2023. They also extended warm felicitations to the Ardabil authorities and thanked them for making excellent arrangements on the occasion.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

4. Regarding Agenda Item Nos. 2 & 3 concerning the Adoption of Draft Report of the 273rd and 274th CPR Meetings respectively, the Representative of the Republic of **Azerbaijan** proposed their repositioning.
5. After making necessary adjustments and re-sequencing of the said agenda items agreed by other Member States, the **Council** adopted the following agenda of its 275th Meeting:

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 275th CPR Meeting
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 273rd CPR Meeting
3. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 274th CPR Meeting
4. Preparation for the 16th ECO Summit and 27th Meeting of the COM
5. Consideration of the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) of the High Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation
6. Invitation of the ECO Observers to participate in the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy scheduled for May 19, 2023 in Tashkent and 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Health to be held in second half of May, 2023 in Geneva
7. Consideration of allocation from Feasibility and General Purpose Fund 10 000 USD to finance the project "Kazakhstan's trade and economic potential in the markets of the ECO countries in the new geo-economic realities"
8. Administrative and budgetary matters:
 - 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 273rd CPR Meeting

6. While resuming discussion in the matter, the Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of **Azerbaijan** proposed the adoption of draft report along with the amendments which were earlier proposed by them and the delegation of the Islamic Republic of **Iran**.

7. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** while maintaining his previous position, discouraged the incorporation of any such amendments in the report. To avoid further prolongation of the issue, he indicated concurrence with inclusion of the following additional Paragraph under the said item of the initial draft report circulated vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/273rd Meeting/2023/306 dated March 06, 2023:

"The Council agreed that the text of the statements delivered by the delegations of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran will be available in the Secretariat's record for the reference and can be accessed upon the request from any Member State"

8. The Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of **Azerbaijan** insisted for incorporation of the proposed amendments in the report beside inclusion of the above mentioned new paragraph.

9. However, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** reaffirmed his stance to avoid the inclusion of proposed amendments in the report.

10. Finding no consensus, the **Council** deferred discussion in the matter until its next Session. In the meantime, the Council proposed some bilateral consultation between the concerned Member States so that a way forward may be ascertained to finalize the adoption of the report of its 273rd Meeting.

Agenda Item No.3

Adoption of the Draft Report of the 274th CPR Meeting

11. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of **Azerbaijan** proposed some amendments to the Draft Report of 274th CPR Meeting, circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/274th Meeting/2023/494 dated April 12, 2023.

12. The **Council** adopted the report of its 274th Session along with the amendments proposed by the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Agenda Item No.4

Preparation for the 16th ECO Summit and 27th Meeting of the COM

13. The Council requested the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) to brief on the matters to be considered by the next Session of PrepCom scheduled for May 15, 2023.

14. Referring to the 16th ECO Summit to be held in Uzbekistan, the Representative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of **Azerbaijan** (Chairman of the PrepCom) conveyed the following:

- i. The Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have expressed their concurrence with holding the 16th Summit on November 9-10, 2023 proposed by the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- ii. Iranian side's agreement, expressed during 274th CPR Meeting, with regard to proposed dates of the 16th Summit, as well as their encouragement for feedbacks from other Member States;
- iii. By next Session of PrepCoM, the Azerbaijan side will be in a better position to provide additional information on date of holding of the 27th COM Meeting as well as updates on informal COM Meeting and ECO-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in New York;
- iv. Regarding the renewal of ECO-UN biennial resolution, the Azerbaijani Permanent Mission in New York is in close touch with the concerned UNGA authorities there;
- v. On draft ECO-UN biennial resolution updated by the ECO Secretariat, the Azerbaijan side will share its views/comments at the earliest convenience;
- vi. Result-oriented approach may be adopted with regard to the outcome document (s) of next Meeting of the COM and Summit, which should be policy-guided and concise.

15. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** looked forward to a fixed date of the COM Meeting given the busy schedules of the Honourable Foreign Ministers.

16. With regard to the dates of the 16th ECO Summit, the Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** stated that till now there was no official update from Ankara. Hoping to come up with a concrete response by next Meeting of CPR, he said that there might be some inconvenience on the proposed dates of the event due to the democratic elections to be held in Türkiye during the proposed time.

17. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** requested the Member States to expedite confirmations of their participation in the 16th ECO Summit in order to make facilitative arrangements of the event in Tashkent possible.

Agenda No.5

Consideration of the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) of the High Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation

18. The 26th Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting held on January 24, 2023 in Tashkent tasked the CPR together with the ECO Secretariat to work out necessary Terms of Reference (ToR), organizational and governance structures, nature and scope of activities as well as funding mechanism of the High Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation in the ECO with the participation of international scientists and experts. Accordingly, the Secretariat worked out the required Draft ToR and circulated amongst the Members States vide Note Verbale No. LA/Dialogue Platform-Environment/2023/518 dated April 17, 2023, for consideration.

19. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** stated that since the said draft Terms of Reference (ToR) are under consideration of their relevant authorities, the discussion in the matter may be deferred until the receipt of views/comments from all the Member States in this regard.

20. Underlining the consultative nature of the Forum, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** suggested for streamlining the ToR, avoiding the formation of any committee of focal points as reflected in the draft document. He added that having this Platform in place, there is no need to create another layer of national representatives for the same purpose. He mentioned that the said Platform would be available to listen to the views of other stakeholders within and outside ECO Region. He requested for revision of the document to make it more relevant.

21. The **Council** tasked the Secretariat to come up with a revised draft ToR by next Meeting of the CPR.

Agenda Item No.6

Invitation of the ECO Observers to participate in the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy scheduled for May 19, 2023 in Tashkent and 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Health to be held in second half of May, 2023 in Geneva

22. The 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Energy to be hosted by the Republic of Uzbekistan is scheduled for May 19, 2023 in Tashkent and the 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Health to be hosted by the Republic of Azerbaijan is scheduled on the sidelines of the 76th Meeting of the World Health Assembly in Geneva in the 2nd half of May 2023.

23. The Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of **Azerbaijan** informed that the Azerbaijani Minister for Energy would attend the 5th ECO Ministerial on Energy and while taking this opportunity he referred to the Charter of ECO Clean Energy Center. He stated that once the quorum is complete, the Charter will be opened for signatures by Member States, adding that Azerbaijan has flexible approach regarding deadline for quorum of the event.

24. The ECO Deputy Secretary General (**Admin, EME, IR & IT**) while informing about the quorum of both events, said that Azerbaijan, Iran and Uzbekistan confirmed

their participations. However, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have conveyed unofficial confirmations of their participation in the meetings.

25. The **Legal advisor** clarified that Article 31 of ECO Rules of Procedure clearly mentions that the meetings shall be postponed in case the required quorum is not achieved before two weeks of an event. However, in order to achieve the Organization's goal at maximum level, there has been a practice to wait for completion of the quorum more than the prescribed time period. With regard to invitations to the ECO Observers, he said that the decision rests with the CPR as per relevant ECO Modalities.

26. The **ECO Secretary General** recalled that this agenda is regarding extension of invitations to ECO Observers, clarifying that participation of ECO Observers in such meetings will remain subject to completion of required quorum.

27. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** informed that the decision to invite the ECO Observers in the 5th ECO Ministerial meeting on Energy is pending with the host authorities for consideration. Discussion with regard to their participation may be resumed by next CPR after receiving reply from the host authorities. He added that even the required quorum for holding this Meeting has yet to be achieved.

28. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of the **Iran** emphasized on completion of the quorum for 5th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Health to be hosted by the Republic of Azerbaijan on the sidelines of the 76th Meeting of the World Health Assembly in Geneva. He sought some flexibility in regard to the deadline for confirmations of participation by Member States in the event. Regarding invitations to ECO Observers, he said that pending decision by next CPR will leave no enough time for preparations by ECO Observers to attend the event.

29. The Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** stressed to follow the relevant modalities for ECO Observers, requiring consensus by all Member States. Given the paucity of time and unnecessary delay, he requested the Council's decision in this regard.

30. Taking all aspects of discussion into account, the **Council** tasked the ECO Secretary General to decide the matter for extension of invitations to ECO Observers in coordination with the events' host countries.

Agenda Item No.7

Consideration of allocation from Feasibility and General Purpose Fund 10 000 USD to finance the project "Kazakhstan's trade and economic potential in the markets of the ECO countries in the new geo-economic realities"

31. Briefing the Council on the project proposed by the Economic Research Institute of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the **ECO Deputy Secretary General (Tourism, PM, JPC and EAPA)** informed that the main purpose of

the project is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the trade and economic potential of Kazakhstan within the framework of ECO markets.

32. The Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** pointed out that as per specification of the proposal, this seems to be a small size project. Inquiring about the utilization of feasibility fund to this end, he looked for other partner States involved or to be involved in this project.

33. The Representatives of the Republic of **Türkiye** and the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** requested the Secretariat to update this project proposal with some additional information so that the issue may be deliberated by next meeting of CPR. In General, they agreed with the proposal.

34. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** highlighted that this project proposal was already circulated among the Member States, having no objection from any of them. Referring to the 33rd Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) held on 16-19 January 2023 (*paragraph 8, I-Sector, ECO Work Programme 2023*), he mentioned that Member States welcomed this proposal as a pilot project and to be exemplary for other Member States. He underscored a need for economic research and analysis as well as macroeconomic economic policy support.

35. Deferring discussion in the matter, the **Council** tasked the Secretariat to come up with a revised proposal on this project before next Meeting of CPR.

Agenda Item No.8

Administrative and Budgetary Matters

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

36. No issue was discussed under this sub-agenda item.

Agenda Item No.9

Any other business

37. **The ECO Secretary General** informed the Council about his participation, as an International Observer, in the nation-wide constitutional referendum of the Republic of Uzbekistan held on April 30, 2023. In addition, he updated the Council about the subjects and outcomes of his meetings with the Uzbekistan's Minister of Transport as well as Deputy Minister of Energy which were organized on the sidelines of his visit.

38. Moreover, the **Secretary General recalled the attention of the Council towards** the budgetary issues of the Secretariat due to pending contributions by some Member States. Requesting the Member States to expedite their current and previous obligatory payments of contributions to ECO, he mentioned that working and efficient progress of the Organization is very much linked to smooth monetary support of the Member States.

39. The **ECO Secretary General** also requested the Member States to convey their nominations for ECO Awards as well as the names of their authorized experts as members for the formation of ECO Awards Selection Committee, taking into consideration the relevant modalities.

40. The **ECO Deputy Secretary General (Tourism, PM, JPC and EAPA)** briefed the Council about the ceremony and activities organized on April 27, 2023 in connection with declaring the city of Ardabil as the ECO Tourism Capital for the year 2023, including about a joint meeting held on the sidelines of the event between the tourism stakeholders of the Ardabil province and the representatives of the ECO countries in participation of the ECO Secretary General and the Deputy Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicraft of the Islamic Republic of Iran..

Agenda Item No.10

Date of the next CPR Meeting

41. The Council decided to convene its next (276th) Meeting on June 7, 2023 at the ECO Secretariat, Tehran.

Annexure-I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- H.E. Mr. Ali Alizade, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, Special Envoy, MFA
- Mr. Farid Valiyev, Head of Division, MFA

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:

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**
- Mr. Maruf Abdurahmonov, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye:

- Mr. Emirhan Yorulmazlar, First Counselor
- Mr. Ertan Garip, Counselor
- Okan Ezrak, Third Secretary

The Embassy of Turkmenistan:

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

The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

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

The ECO Secretariat:

- H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri, Secretary General
- Amb. Mohsen Esper, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Jandos Asanov, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Sukhrob Mirzoaliev, Head of CFU
- Mr. Shahid Hussain, Desk Officer