



279th Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Report

August 30, 2023
ECO Secretariat

Report

Held in hybrid mode under the chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the 279th CPR Meeting was attended by the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of 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.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

1. Proposed by ECO Secretariat, the Meeting's Agenda was adopted by the Council as follows:

- Adoption of Draft Agenda of the 279th CPR Meeting
- Adoption of Draft Report of the 278th CPR Meeting
- Preparation for the 16th ECO Summit and 27th Meeting of the COM
- ECO Awards 2023
- Administrative and budgetary matters:
 - Acquisition of 17 computers for the main Conference Hall of the Secretariat
 - Recommendations of the Selection Panel
- Any other business
- Date of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of Draft Report of the 278th CPR Meeting

2. The **Council** considered and adopted the Report of its 278th Meeting circulated vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/278th Meeting/2023/1126 dated August 2, 2023.

Agenda Item No.3

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

3. The **PrepCom's Chair** briefed the Council about the current status of preparations being made to facilitate smooth holding of the 16th ECO Summit, 27th COM, 25th Informal COM and 15th ECO-ASEAN Ministerial Meetings, highlighting the following developments:

- As mandated, ECO Secretariat in consultation with the Chair, proposed a shortened version of the preambular part of the Draft Shusha Declaration, along with making some adjustments to its operative part in order to make the document more concise; Accordingly, a revised/edited version of Draft Shusha Declaration was circulated for consideration of the Member States;

- As scheduled, the 25th Informal Meeting of the COM will be held on September 21, 2023 between 15:00 and 18:00 hours; while the 15th ECO-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting to be held on September 22, 2023 from 15:00-18:00 hours instead of previously set timing i.e. 10:00 to 13:00 hours; Both events will be organized in the Conference Room 9 at UN Headquarters in New York;
- Regarding 16th ECO Summit's Agenda, the matter regarding extension of invitations to ECO Observers is pending for settlement through bilateral consultation by the Host Country i.e. Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Türkiye and will be finally decided by the next CPR.

4. The **ECO Secretary General** informed the Council about consensual adoption of the UN-ECO Cooperation Resolution by UNGA's current session on August 25, 2023. Moreover, he sought Council's consideration on the issue of invitations to ECO Observers for their participation in the 16th Summit and 27th COM Meetings. He also invited attention of the Council towards the freshly received proposal of the Republic of Türkiye for rescheduling the 16th Summit which is scheduled for November 10, 2023, adding that the same was circulated amongst the Member States.

5. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** noted that the dates proposed by Republic of Türkiye for rescheduling the Summit are very much close to the already scheduled dates, opining that the afternoon November 9, 2023 may be considered for organizing the event in Tashkent. Regarding ECO Observers, he emphasized that the purpose of extending observer status to them appears to be of no avail if they are not invited to the ECO events based on the relevant modalities. In addition, he mentioned that the issue of extending invitations to ECO Observers is the prerogative of the whole ECO Membership and should be decided accordingly.

6. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** maintained his country's position for extension of no invitation to ECO Observers. In this regard, he referred the relevant modalities which allow the host country to either invite the ECO Observers or otherwise.

7. Looking into the views and positions expressed by participating delegates, the Council concluded the following:

- i. The Secretariat will extend invitation to ECO Observers for their participation in the 27th Meeting of the COM scheduled to be held on October 9, 2023 in Shusha; Moreover, the Secretariat will also consider extension of invitations to ECO's regional and global partners for participation in the COM Meeting in consultation with the Republic of **Azerbaijan** being the host of the event;
- ii. Matter regarding participation of ECO Observers in 16th Summit may bilaterally be discussed between Uzbekistan and Türkiye and decided latest by next Meeting of CPR;

- iii. ECO Secretariat to seek the views/concurrence of the Member States regarding Türkiye's proposal to reschedule the 16th Summit for November 8-9, 2023 and the proposed date of 9th November to that effect;
- iv. Member States to convey compositions of their delegations for participation in both the 16th Summit and the 27th COM Meetings.

Agenda Item No.4
ECO Awards 2023

8. The **ECO Secretary General** briefed the Council about latest status of nominations for ECO Awards and the Awards Selection Committee. Regarding ECO Awards, he mentioned that all Member States, except Pakistan, have conveyed their nominations; whereas only Türkiye, Tajikistan and Azerbaijan have conveyed the nominations for Awards Selection Committee. He proposed that 1st Meeting of the Awards Selection Committee may be organized to initiate the procedure for finalizing the names of candidates in this regard.

9. The Council mandated the Secretariat to make arrangements for organizing the 1st Meeting of the Selection Committee in hybrid mode, so that the process of evaluating and finalizing the names of most eligible candidates for ECO Awards may be started.

Agenda Item No.5
Administrative and budgetary matters:

- Acquisition of 17 computers for the main Conference Hall of the Secretariat

10. The Council considered and approved the proposal for acquisition of 17 computers for the main Conference Hall of the Secretariat.

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

11. Under this sub agenda item, no issue was discussed.

Agenda Item No.6
Any other business

12. Citing some local regulatory and social security related requirements, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** proposed conversion of the Secretariat's Iranian A-Category staff's salaries from US Dollars to Iranian Riyals. In this regard, he stated that a formula is being worked out in consultation with the ECO Secretariat, adding that the proposal will also provide sufficient savings to the Organization.

13. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** sought clarification about the implicative aspects of the proposal, especially concerning the non-resident A-Category staff of the Secretariat. Quoting some relevant provisions contained in the Iranian Social Security Regulations, she believed that the proposal could bear some future implications and impact on the non-resident A-Category staff.

14. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** clarified that the proposal is to convert the salaries of only Iranian A-Category members of the Secretariat's staff, in order to adjust and fix their emoluments in line with the Iranian rules and regulations.

15. While noting the Iranian side's position regarding urgency of the matter, the Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** inquired that how the issue was dealt with previously as the A-Category staff had been drawing salaries in US dollars for a long time. Yet she indicated her preference for the issue to be dealt with, within the context of Reform Process as concerns the A Category.

16. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** mentioned that the pay package of A-Category Iranian staff remained in question for many years due to its inconsistency with local social security rules and regulations adding that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** will imminently hold an information-sharing meeting providing a full account of the legal, financial & budgetary aspects of the subject matter.

17. The **ECO Secretary General** briefed the Council about the Draft Budget for 2024 that was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale dated August 29, 2023. He further explained that despite the passage of 8 months a large balance of contributions equal to USD 3,264,008.56 has yet to be received. He requested the Member States to kindly expedite transfers of their balance of contributions at an earliest convenience to insure a smooth functioning of the Secretariat and its activities.

18. The **ECO Deputy Secretary General (Administration, Energy, Minerals & Environment, IR and IT)** further informed that in order to improve correspondence with the Member States, IT Section of the ECO Secretariat has launched a new feature in Didgah Software, enabling the Member States to view the letters sent to them by ECO Secretariat through an exclusive username and password.

19. Moreover, **the ECO Deputy Secretary General (Administration, Energy, Minerals & Environment, IR and IT)** informed that the 3rd Meeting of the ECO Heads of Surveying & Mapping Organizations (HSMO) and the 4th Meeting of the ECO Geometrics Committee (GC) are scheduled to be held back-to-back on 18-19 September 2023 in Tehran (in-person). The subject meetings will be hosted and chaired by the National Cartographic Center (NCC) of the Islamic Republic of Iran in pursuance of Para 30, "C" Sector of the ECO Work Program 2023 and Calendar of Events for 2023. He further explained that the ECO Secretariat circulated the information on the aforementioned events along with their draft agenda, programme and concept note among the Member States vide its circular Note Verbale No. EME/Minerals/1179 dated 13 August 2023. He added that to enable participation of the Member States in these

meetings, it is of utmost importance to provide that one relevant representative of each ECO Member State may be reimbursed the cost of return airfare (not exceeding US\$ 900) from the Special Support Fund (SSF), which were regrettably not included earlier this year in the list of events to be sponsored under the SSF. Therefore, he requested the Council to consider and approve the inclusion of these events for sponsoring under SSF.

As regards Non-ECO events with no financial implication for the Organization, the invitation to which does not provide adequate time to be discussed at the upcoming CPR, he asked the Council's authorization to the Secretary General to permit the mission with a view to avail the Organization of the visibility opportunities provided through participation in such events.

20. The **Council** considered and approved the proposal of the Secretariat regarding inclusion of the said events in the list of meeting to be sponsored under SSF and the proposal regarding Non-ECO events provided that the latter does not have any financial implication.

21. The **ECO Secretary General** and the **Permanent Representatives/Representatives** of the Member States joined the Council for expressing their warm and sincere gratitude to H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullaev who was going to successfully complete his tenure as Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Iran and the Country's Permanent Representative to ECO. They acknowledged his valued contribution for supporting and promoting the ECO's mutually developed economic agenda. Moreover, they wished him all the best for his future endeavors, both in professional and personal life.

22. Ambassador Abdullaev reciprocated the gestures kindly expressed by ECO Secretary General and the Permanent Representatives/Representatives. He also thanked all the delegations for their continued support, guidance and constructive approach that helped him meet his task and responsibilities in an effective and fruitful manner.

Agenda Item No.7

Date of the next CPR Meeting

22. The Council decided to hold its next session of CPR (280th) Meeting on September 27, 2023 at ECO Secretariat in Tehran.

Annexure-I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

The Republic of Azerbaijan:

- H.E. Mr. Ali Alizade, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, Special Envoy, MFA
- Mr. Farid Valiyev, Head of Division, MFA
- Mr. Elchin Mirzayev, Attaché, 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
- Ms. Shokoufeh Shadi, ECO Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation

The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- Mr. Kuanish Agaidarov, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- H.E. Mr. Sydykov Turdakun, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Nazim Beishekeev, Attaché

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Ms. Khirat, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- Mr. Muzaffar Muhammadi, Deputy Head of Mission
- Mr. Hukmiddin Rahmonov, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye:

- Mr. Ertan Garip, Counselor

The Embassy of Turkmenistan:

- H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Serdar Kuvatnyazov, Attaché

The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

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

The ECO Secretariat:

- H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri, Secretary General
- Amb. Mohsen Esperi, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Kashif Zaman, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Hojjat Moghavem, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Sukhrob Mirzoaliev, Head of CFU
- Mr. Muhammad Ahmed Raza, Senior Desk Officer
- Mr. Shahid Hussain, Desk Officer