

280th Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Report

October 2, 2023
ECO Secretariat

Report

1. Held in hybrid mode under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the 280th CPR Meeting was attended by the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of the 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.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

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

- Adoption of Draft Agenda of the 280th CPR Meeting
- Adoption of Draft Report of the 279th CPR Meeting
- Preparation for the 16th ECO Summit and 27th Meeting of the COM
- ECO Awards 2023
- UNGA Resolution on UN-ECO Cooperation
- Participation of ECO Observers in Informal COM in New York
- Preparation for the 34th RPC Meeting
- Consideration of the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) of the High Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation
- Invitation by Republic of Azerbaijan to 2nd Baku Forum on Sustainable Development on the theme of Sustainable Finance and Investment
- Seeking Observership in International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Administrative and budgetary matters:
 - Consideration of the Budget of the Organization for the financial year of 2024
 - Audit Report for 2021 and 2022
 - Recommendations of the Selection Panel
- Any other business
- Date of the next CPR Meeting

3. The Council considered the above Draft Agenda for adoption.

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of Draft Report of the 279th CPR Meeting

4. The Draft Report of the 279th CPR Meeting held on August 30, 2023 was circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/279th Meeting/2023/1294 dated August 31, 2023.

5. The **Council** adopted draft Report of the 279th CPR Meeting along with some amendment/deletion at para-14 and 17 of Agenda No. 6 “*Any Other Business*”, as proposed by Islamic Republic of **Iran**.

Agenda Item No.3

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

6. The PrepCom’s **Chair** informed that during their 8th Session, the Member States agreed to refer the Draft Shusha Declaration for further consideration by Senior Officials Meeting (SoM) scheduled for October 9, 2023 in Shusha along with fresh amendments/proposals. Stating that official confirmations from some Member States are still awaited, he said that the required quorum to organize the COM meeting has been achieved.

7. Regarding 16th ECO Summit, the Council noted that based on the ECO Modalities, no specific quorum was required for holding the event. However, the Council desired maximum number of participation in view of the significance and nature of the event which is biennially organized at the highest level of Heads of State/Government.

8. Reviewing overall status of preparations regarding COM and Summit Meetings, and given the views/proposals of the Member States as well as proposal of the **ECO Secretary General** regarding statements of International Partners in the COM Meeting, the **Council** concluded the following:

- i. Member States to expedite official confirmations of their participation in both the 27th COM and 16th Summit Meetings to be hosted by Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan on October 9-10, 2023 and November 8-9, 2023, respectively; in this regard, ECO Secretariat to initiate a Note Verbale seeking immediate response of the Member States;
- ii. Member States to also share with Azerbaijan side the composition of their delegations to COM meeting along with their travel itineraries, enabling the host authorities to make appropriate arrangements for facilitating the participants;
- iii. As desired by Azerbaijan side, delegations of the Member States who plan to travel to Shusha by road, may coordinate with the host authorities well in time;
- iv. As proposed by ECO Secretary General, the statements of International Partners after ECO Observers may be included in the agenda of 27th COM Meeting; moreover, a revised agenda may accordingly be circulated amongst the member countries.

Agenda Item No.4

ECO Awards 2023

9. Considering the briefing given by Chairman of the Award Selection Committee (ASC) in light of the report of their first ASC's meeting held on September 28, 2023, the **Council** took into account various aspects of the matter and decided that:

- I. Based on the 15th Summit format, the names of the ECO Awards will be announced during 16th Summit in Tashkent on November 9, 2023;
- II. Due to ECO budgetary constraints, the esteemed Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan may kindly make necessary arrangements with regard to the handing over of the awards to the winners through authorized representatives of the Member States;
- III. Member States to consider one of their nominees for ECO Awards and expeditiously convey his/her name for selection; After endorsement by COM, the CPR will refer names of the selected candidates to be announced for ECO Awards during 16th Summit.

Agenda Item No.5

UNGA Resolution on UN-ECO Cooperation

10. The Council welcomed and appreciated the biennial resolution on ECO-UN cooperation adopted by the UN General Assembly on August 25, 2023, acknowledging the importance of the document that encouragingly supports further expansion and consolidation of ECO partnership with the United Nations system in multifaceted areas, including an inclusive and accelerated progress towards achieving UN SDGs.

11. Moreover, the **Council** also took note of the proposal given by ECO Secretary General regarding annual celebration of a Special Day on October 13 to mark and remember the day of ECO Observership in the UNGA.

Agenda Item No.6

Participation of ECO Observers in Informal COM in New York

12. The Council was briefed about the participation of ECO Observers in the 25th Informal Meeting of the COM organized on sidelines of the 78th UNGA Session in New York on September 21, 2023.

13. The Council noted that ECO Observers attended the said meeting based on the telephonic consultations between the ECO Secretary General and the distinguished Permanent Representatives.

14. The Council endorsed the participation of ECO Observers in the 25th Informal Meeting of the COM organized on sidelines of the 78th UNGA Session in New York on September 21, 2023. In this regard, the Council clarified that this should not be considered as a precedent or reference to validate any future request of ECO Observers for participation in the Informal COM Meetings.

Agenda Item No.7

Preparation for the 34th RPC Meeting

15. Referring the decision of 278th Meeting of CPR held on July 31, 2023, the ECO Secretariat recalled that the 34th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) is scheduled to be held on December 18 - 21, 2023 in ECO Secretariat in Tehran.

16. Due to the financial constraints of the Organization, the Council was proposed to approve the event's organization in hybrid mode with the following format of hospitality to be extended to only 1+1 delegates of each member country from Feasibility and General Purposed Fund (FGPF):

- A 3-night local hospitality;
- Cost of return airfare up to maximum US\$ 900.

17. The Secretariat further proposed that based on the relevant modalities, the Council also consider the participation of ECO Observers in the 34th Meeting of RPC.

18. The **Council** approved the hybrid format of 34th RPC Meeting, including the proposed hospitality, as well as participation of ECO Observers in the event.

Agenda Item No.8

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

19. As per decision of 26th COM Meeting, the Terms of Reference (ToR) concerning the ECO High Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation in ECO were prepared and circulated amongst the Member States for consideration. Moreover, the views/comments of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** and the Republic of **Uzbekistan** on the document were also circulated amongst the Member States.

20. Considering the comments made by Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** regarding their recently conveyed views on the said ToR, the **Council** tasked the Secretariat to organize a meeting with participation of the Member States to finalize the document before next meeting of the CPR.

Agenda Item No.9

Invitation by Republic of Azerbaijan to 2nd Baku Forum on Sustainable Development on the theme of Sustainable Finance and Investment

21. The Council was briefed about the 2nd Baku Forum on Sustainable Development on the theme of Sustainable Finance and Investment to be hosted by Azerbaijan in Baku on November 15-16, 2023. Supported by UNDP, the event will gather a number of eminent participants from across the world, providing excellent opportunity to the global participants to come across and exchange their ideas, views and exposures on sustainable finance and investment system. Given the fact that sustainability is one of the core ECO objectives in line with Vision 2025 and the UN SDGs, the participation of ECO Secretariat was proposed.

22. Citing the budgetary constraints of the Organization, the **ECO Secretary General** requested Azerbaijan to sponsor the participation of the ECO in this important event.

23. The **Chairman**, in his capacity as the Permanent Representative of **Azerbaijan** to ECO, asked the Secretariat to officially convey the said request for consideration by relevant authorities of Azerbaijan.

Agenda Item No.10

Seeking Observership in International Organization for Migration (IOM)

24. The **ECO Secretary General** informed the Council about the visit of H.E. Ms. Lalini Veerassamy, the Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration. While explaining the details, he informed that proposal of ECO to obtain Observership in IMO was discussed during the meeting. Subsequently, a Draft Concept Note on Obtaining Observer Status was prepared by the Secretariat and circulated among the ECO Member States, for their views and comments, adding that so far Secretariat has received comments from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan only, which are underlined in the Draft Concept Note.

25. The **Council** considered the proposal and tasked the Secretariat to proceed further in the matter.

Agenda Item No.11

Administrative and budgetary matters:

- Consideration of the Budget of the Organization for the financial year of 2024

26. The **ECO Secretary General** briefed the Council about the Draft Budget of the Organization for the financial year of 2024, informing that the First and Second Meeting of Working Group was held on September 11, 2023 and September 26, 2023. However, for additional information, he invited the Chief Accountant to brief the house, in this regard.

27. The **Chief Accountant** informed that the size of the assessed Draft Budget for the year 2024 as prepared by the Secretariat was 4,263,948 USD which in comparison with the financial year of 2023 showed 3% decrease. She also noted that the details were considered during two Working Group Meetings on Budget.

28. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** stated that the Embassy of Pakistan has sent a Note Verbale for additional information on the prescribed format which has not been received so far, adding that the required information would be shared with their capital to seek further guidance regarding adoption of the Draft Budget.

29. Having no consensus on the issue, the **Council** decided to defer the issue for next CPR, however, Council encouraged the Working Group to continue its work for the early finalization of Draft Budget 2024. At the same time, the **Council** also tasked the Secretariat to update the Draft Agenda of the 27th COM, accordingly.

- Audit Report for 2021 and 2022

30. The Council was briefed on the Audit Reports for 2021 and 2022 informing that the Audit Reports along with the ECO Secretariat's comments was circulated amongst the Member States vide Note Verbale No. ACC/Audit Report of ECO 2021 & 2022/2023/1410 dated September 12, 2023 for consideration and recommendation for COM's approval.

31. The **Council** endorsed the Audit Reports and recommended it for COM's approval.

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

32. No issue was discussed under this sub agenda item.

Agenda Item No.12

Any other business

33. In connection of his participation on the sidelines of 78th UNGA Session in New York, the **ECO Secretary General** informed that on September 21, 2023 under the chairmanship of Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Yalchin Rafiyev, the 25th Informal Meeting of the COM was attended by delegations from ECO Member States, representatives of the Turkish Cypriot State and the Organization of Turkic States. He explained that the informally organized ministerial interaction reviewed the overall programs and agenda of the Organization, especially the ECO's sectoral activities prioritized under Azerbaijan's current chairmanship. The meeting expressed satisfaction over the progress of ECO, emphasizing on significance of the Organization's project-oriented approach that appears to substantiate the process of development in various sectors, especially regional trade and connectivity.

34. With regard to 15th ECO-ASEAN Joint Ministerial Meeting, the **ECO Secretary General** briefed the Council that the Meeting, held on September 22, 2023 in New York, reviewed the status of cooperation between ECO and ASEAN in the light of the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the ECO Secretariat and the ASEAN Secretariat, taking into account ongoing developments in both regions as well as the possibility of further enhancing ECO-ASEAN cooperation in the areas of mutual interest, including but not limited to, trade and investment, connectivity and sustainable energy transition, digitalization, agriculture, disaster risk management, drugs and narcotics control, tourism, as well as, people-to-people contacts. He added that the Meeting stressed upon the need to facilitate flow of trade, capital, energy and people, as well as B2B and B2G interaction between ECO and ASEAN for harnessing benefits of larger inter-regional cooperation and synergy. He further added that the Meeting also discussed the way forward for cooperation between ECO and ASEAN and adopted the Framework of Cooperation (FOC) between the two Organizations. The Meeting reaffirmed joint commitment to deepen cooperation between the two Organizations.

35. With regard to his participation at the International Conference on Food Security, the **ECO Secretary General** informed that the International Conference on

Food Security was held on September 7-8, 2023 in Samarkand. He briefed the house that during the conference he emphasized the necessity to achieve food security and improve nutrition while noting the globally escalating food prices with a considerable number countries experiencing double digit inflation. He reaffirmed ECO's commitment to achieving SDG's Goal 2 that envisages Zero Hunger by 2030. He added that ECO Secretariat in collaboration with ECO Regional Coordination Center for Food Security (ECO-RCCFS) and in line with ECO Regional Program for Food Security (ECO-RPFS) is ardently pursuing shared food security targets, along with making rigorous efforts for resilience building to meet any future shocks and food security challenges in the region.

36. The **ECO Deputy Secretary General (T&C and HRSD)** briefed the Council about his participation in the High-Level Euro-Asia Regional Review Meeting of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 held on 22-23 August 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand. He informed that around 80 delegates including representatives from landlocked and transit developing countries, international, regional and sub-regional organizations, development partners, United Nations agencies and private sector participated in the Review Meeting. He further informed that the deliberations, spread over two days, undertook a comprehensive review of the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action in Europe and Asia region, including identification of the achievements, constraints, emerging challenges and opportunities for achieving sustainable development and the SDGs in LLDCs. He also gave presentation in this context. His detailed statement along with presentation is attached as Annex-II.

37. The **ECO Deputy Secretary General (Tourism, PM, JPC and EAPA)** briefed the Council about his participation in 4th Meeting of Attorneys/Prosecutors General of ECO countries. He informed that the meeting was organized in Baku on September 14-16, 2023, was attended by the representatives from Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as ECO delegation. He added that the participants, inter alia, mulled over an early implementation of the decisions previously made by the forum, exploring ways forward for ensuring maximum operational collaboration amongst member countries with a view to intensifying their fight against any unlawful practices, including human and drug trafficking. Reaffirming commitment to boosting their mutual cooperation, they also shared their national anti-corruption policies, measures and achievements against any sorts of corruption and crimes.

Agenda Item No.13

Date of the next CPR Meeting

38. The Council decided to hold its next session of CPR (**281st**) Meeting on October 23, 2023 at ECO Secretariat in Tehran.

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:

- H.E. Mr. Askhat Orazbay, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Kuanish Agaidarov, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- H.E. Mr. Sydykov Turdakun, **Permanent Representative**

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. Hukmiddin Rahmonov, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye:

- Mr. Ertan Garip, Counselor

The Embassy of Turkmenistan:

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 Esper, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Jandos Asanov, 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