

281st Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Report

October 23, 2023
ECO Secretariat

Report

Arranged in hybrid mode under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the 281st Meeting of CPR was held on October 23, 2023. The Meeting was attended by 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**, **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. Initiating the event's formal proceedings, the distinguished members of the Council joined each other and felicitated the Republic of **Azerbaijan** for successfully organizing the 27th Meeting of the ECO Council of Minister (COM) held in Shusha on October 10, 2023.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

3. Proposed by ECO the Secretariat, the Council adopted following agenda of the meeting:

- Adoption of Draft Agenda of the 281st CPR Meeting
- Adoption of Draft Report of the 280th CPR Meeting
- Preparation for the 16th ECO Summit
- ECO Awards 2023
- Consideration of the Draft Terms of Reference (ToR) of the High Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Cooperation
- Administrative and budgetary matters:
 - Consideration of the Budget of the Organization for the financial year of 2024
 - Recommendations of the Selection Panel
- Any other business
- Date of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of Draft Report of the 280th CPR Meeting

4. The Council adopted the Draft Report of the 280th CPR Meeting held on October 2, 2023, circulated amongst the Member States on October 4, 2023, after accommodating some adjustments proposed by ECO Secretary General.

Agenda Item No.3

Preparation for the 16th ECO Summit

5. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** briefed on the latest status of preparations being made to organize the 16th Summit in Tashkent on November 9, 2023. Confirming the hospitality format of 1+5 for each country, he

requested the Member States to expedite conveying the compositions of their delegations on the prescribed proforma which has been circulated earlier.

6. Providing updates on 9th Meeting of PrepCom, the **Committee's Chairman** presented the salient information shared at/recommendations made by the PrepCom about the organization of 16th Summit and 5th Business Forum in Tashkent, including on (i) participation and composition of delegations; (ii) extending invitations to ECO Observers with no right of delivering statements; (iii) provision of details regarding Member States' advance delegations, if any; (iv) authorizing the Secretariat to follow and finalize the list of nominees for ECO Awards and (v) the outcome of the Summit to be shared in the format of "the Chairman Summary".

7. The **ECO Deputy Secretary General (ADMN, EME, IR & IT)** invited attention of the Council towards a formal request of ECO Cultural Institute for participation in the 16th Summit. He mentioned that during the 27th COM Meeting held in Shusha, the ECO Specialized Agencies were not given floor for making statements about their professional activities. In this regard, he requested the Council to consider the participation of all ECO Specialized Agencies in the upcoming summit, giving each of them the right to deliver a 3-minute statement.

8. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** recalled that all ECO Specialized Agencies, being integral organs of the ECO, are automatically invited to such important meetings of the Organization.

9. Moreover, in light of the formal request made by Islamic Republic of **Iran**, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan was encouraged to provide further details of Summit, including about (i) administrative arrangements; (ii) number of participants allowed in the Conference Hall and their sitting plan; (iii) tentative program; (iv) draft outcome document and (v) details of Business Forum.

10. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** stated that the requisite information was already shared with the Secretariat and all Member States. However, additional information in this context will be communicated soon, he said.

11. Regarding the outcome document, the **ECO Secretary General** informed the Council that based on the format of 14th Summit held on March 4, 2021, there will be a conclusion by the Chairman of the Summit, based on the reflections of ECO Heads of State/Government to be expressed in their statements during the Summit.

12. Regarding participation of ECO Observers in the 16th Summit and the issue of their statements, the **Council** looked into every aspect of discussions made by participating delegations, including Uzbekistan (host), Türkiye and Iran as well as the Secretary General's and Legal Adviser's reflections thereon. Initially, the Council noted no consensus with regard to the participation and statements of ECO Observers in the event. However, after a mutual exchange of views and in consideration of the references given from relevant ECO Modalities, the Council concluded the following:

- Based on Uzbekistan's request, sub-item 1 of the Inaugural part of the Summit's Agenda will be amended and read as "*Welcoming Remarks and Statement by Honourable President of the Republic of Uzbekistan as the host of 16th ECO Summit*"
- Item 4 "*Statements by ECO Observers*" and Item No. 6 "*Any other business* " will be deleted from the Agenda of 16th Summit;
- Item 3 of the Summit's Agenda will read as:" *Statements by Heads of State/Government/Heads of Delegation*", *(subject to confirmation by the host side)*; The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** informed his concurrence with the modification in red will be after confirmation of the Capital.
- Invitations to ECO Observers will be extended by Secretariat.

Agenda Item No.4 ECO Awards 2023

13. The 27th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) held in Shusha, Azerbaijan on October 10, 2023 mandated the CPR to finalize the nominees for ECO Awards to be announced during the 16th ECO Summit scheduled for November 9, 2023 in Tashkent. Following the said decision of the COM, the **Council** noted that the names of candidates for ECO Awards were still awaited from some Member States.

14. Given the shortage of time, the **Council** encouraged all the remaining countries to expedite conveying one of their most eligible candidates, enabling the process of completing final list of nominees for ECO Awards.

15. In the given context, the **Council** mandated the Secretariat to complete the list of nominees in consultation and coordination with remaining countries, so that a final list may be presented to the 16th Summit for announcement of ECO Awards.

Agenda Item No.5

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

16. The **Council** reviewed the updated version of ToR concerning the High-Level Dialogue Platform (HLDP) on Environmental Cooperation, noting that the ToR were amended on the proposals of some Member States. In this regard, the Council requested the participating delegates to express further views, if any.

17. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** suggested some minor changes in the amended document. Recalling that the said Platform was established on the proposal of Uzbekistan, he opined that a two-week's silence procedure may be adopted to seek COM's approval on the revised version of ToR before the upcoming Summit.

18. The **Council** tasked the Secretariat to revise the ToR, as agreed during the meeting, and circulate final version of the document along with a two-weeks' silence procedure to seek COM's approval thereon.

Agenda Item No.6

Administrative and budgetary matters:

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

19. In continuation of previous deliberations, the Council opened the floor for resuming discussion in the matter.

20. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** concurred with the draft Budget 2024 subject to necessary amendment in the document in line with Iran's earlier proposal on new salary structure of A-level Iranian Staff of the Secretariat which, he uttered, is based on requirement of national regulations including on local social security.

21. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**, while reiterating her previous position regarding restructuring of salaries of the Secretariat's A-level Iranian Staff, requested to avoid amalgamation of the matter with ECO draft Budget. She proposed that the issue of new salaries of A-level Iranian Staff may be discussed at High-Level Committee on Reforms. She mentioned that Pakistan side had already sent a Note Verbale to the Secretariat, explaining their position to discuss all such reform-related issues in an inclusive manner. She further stated that their approach is to objectively mull over every aspect of the proposal with a view to precluding implicative repercussions of the case, if any. Commenting on the social security issue, she inquired whether it is being applied only to ECO Secretariat Iranian local staff and if also applied to other diplomatic offices based in Tehran and outside Iran. Moreover, she questioned the applicability of such social security regulations in other ECO bodies, including the Specialized Agencies of the Organization in Islamabad, Tehran and Istanbul. Besides, she requested the Council to approve the draft Budget 2024, so that smooth functioning of the Secretariat may not be hampered.

22. The **ECO Secretary General** thanked the Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** on her support for expediting the Budget's approval process. Seconding her views about the avoidance of joint discussion on two different matters, he said that the proposal regarding new salaries of Iranian A-Level Staff may separately be deliberated. Furthermore, he requested the Member States for expediting the payments of their current arrears and balance of contributions, taking into account the financial constraints of the Organization.

23. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** stated that the Member States were requested to attend a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran which was organized to share all requisite information, provide clarifications and mutually discuss the new salaries of A-level Iranian Staff of the Secretariat, conveying that no member country attended the said meeting. He stated that the meeting on the issue may be rescheduled subject to the convenience of the Member States. He clarified

that High-Level Committee is a body with broad and all-inclusive mandate making it eligible to deal with all issues which may be deemed appropriate for its consideration and it is in no way limited to reform related issues. Furthermore, he emphasized that since the A-level Iranian Staff of the Secretariat is covered under social security of Iran, the matter regarding restructuring of their salaries remains the prerogative of Iran being the host and Member of ECO and it does not apply to non- Iranian staff. In this regard, he requested the Council's agreement so that new salaries of A-level Iranian Staff may be finalized to be effective from January 1, 2024.

24. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** insisted that the matter along with other such issues should be discussed at the High-Level Committee which was specially established to facilitate the process of ECO Reforms and the prospects of cooperation in the region. While discouraging the unilateral approaches for reaching a particular target, she noted that every member country is equally privileged with the same right of participation in any issues of the Organization, ensuring a shared decision-making process thereon.

25. The Chairman pointed out that the High-Level Committee is expected to convene in the 2nd quarter of 2024, while approval of the Budget needs to occur by the end of 2023 and may not be delayed till then. He accordingly expressed hope that the consultation meetings to be organized by the Host Country and the Secretariat will facilitate finalization of the issue by the next CPR. the **Council** deferred the draft Budget 2024 for discussion during next Meeting of CPR.

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

26. Based on the recommendations of Selection Panel, the **Council** approved the following:

i. Mr. Mehmed Ersad Haksever (**Türkiye National**) may be appointed against the post of Documentation Officer (**Category-II, P2**) for a full term of four (04) years to be effective from the date of joining at the ECO Secretariat;

ii. Tenure of Service of Ms. Nayereh Sadat Mohseni (Iranian National), the incumbent Program Officer for Agriculture & Industry (Category-II, P2) may be extended till the arrival/joining of her successor.

Agenda Item No.7

Any other business

27. The **Deputy Secretary General (Tourism, PM JPC and EAPA)** briefed the Council about the Seventh Dialogue on the Effective Multilateral Policing Architecture against Global Threat, scheduled for October 25-26, 2023 in Abu Dhabi to be hosted by GCCPOL with the support of the Ministry of Interior of UAE. Considering the event quite important and relevant to the under-process establishment of ECOPOL, he proposed the participation of the ECO delegation in the said Dialogue Forum. He mentioned that the host side would bear the cost of travelling and accommodation.

28. The **Council** considered and approved the participation of ECO Secretariat in the above mentioned event.

29. The **ECO Deputy Secretary General (Admin, EME, IR and IT)** informed that the 21st Session of the Committee for Review of Implementation of the UNCCD Convention (CRIC 21) would be organized in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on November 13-17, 2023. Citing paragraph 52, Sector C of the ECO Work Program for 2023, he stated that the delegation of the ECO Secretariat is invited to attend the event. Within the scope of ECO-UNCCD cooperation, he requested the Council's approval for Secretariat's participation in the said Session, adding that this will augment the ECO's exposures and capacities to meet desertification challenges in the region.

30. The **Council** considered and approved the participation of ECO Secretariat in the said event.

31. The Representative of the Republic of **Azerbaijan** appreciated the Republic of **Türkiye** for signing the Charter of ECO Clean Energy Center (ECEC) during the 27th Meeting of the COM in Shusha. In addition, he encouraged the remaining Member States to also consider the signing of the ECEC's Charter on the sidelines of 16th Summit scheduled for November 9, 2023 in Tashkent.

32. During the meeting, it was recalled that 5th ECO Business Forum would be organized on the sidelines of 16th Summit in Tashkent. It was further recalled that 12th ECO Ministerial Meeting on Transport would also be convened in Tashkent on November 1-2, 2023. Given the significance of trade and connectivity which hold top place on the Organization's agenda, the Secretariat encouraged all Member States to ensure their participation in both the important events.

Agenda Item No.8

Date of the next CPR Meeting

33. The Council agreed to convene 282nd Meeting of CPR on November 27, 2023 at ECO Secretariat, Tehran.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

The Republic of Azerbaijan:

- H.E. Mr. Ali Alizade, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Rovshan Mirzoyev, Deputy Head of Department, 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 Jalaedin 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**

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Ms. Khirat, First Secretary

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:

- H.E. Mr. Ahmet Gurbanov, **Permanent Representative**

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