

38th Meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) of ECOCI

May 29, 2023

Draft Report

The Council of Permanent Representatives of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) convened its 38th meeting at the ECI Headquarters on May 29, 2023. The meeting began under the chairpersonship of Mr. Seyed Jaleedin Alavi Sabzevari, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Ambassadors and representatives of ECI Member States, namely the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Türkiye as well as a delegation of the ECO Cultural Institute headed by ECI President also attended the Meeting. (List of Participants is enclosed as Annex I).

Agenda item 1

Adoption of Agenda

The draft agenda of the Meeting had been circulated among Member States via Note No. ECI/524/174 dated May 11, 2023. The agenda was unanimously adopted. (Annex II)

Agenda item 2

Consideration and adoption of the Draft Reports of the 36th and 37th ECOCI-CPR meetings

The Chairman reminded that during the last ECOCI-CPR meeting, at the request of the delegation of the Republic of Türkiye, the Council deferred the adoption of the report of the 36th meeting.

Accordingly, the CPR adopted the draft reports of the 36th and 37th ECOCI-CPR meetings circulated via Note No. ECI/524/626 dated January 15, 2023 and Note No. ECI/524/140 dated April 27, 2023, respectively.

Agenda item 3

Statement by ECOCI President on the ECOCI activities

Under this item, Mr. Murodjon Buriboev, ECOCI President, made his statement and briefed the Meeting on the activities of the Institute since last CPR meeting. Statement of the ECI President is attached to this report as annex III.

The Chairman thanked ECOCI President for his statement and requested the Institute not to limit its activities only to the host country. The Institute should attend events in all ECO Member States. However, due to financial constraints, it is currently not possible for ECOCI to be present in activities outside Iran.

The ECOCI-CPR requested the member states to invite the Institute to their relevant cultural activities and facilitate its participation.

Agenda item 4

Administrative issues: Latest status of nomination by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the post of President at ECOCI

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan informed that the process of the nomination for the post is almost finalized, and the case has been presented before the honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan for his final approval.

Agenda item 5

Budgetary issues: Latest status of contributions and arrears of the ECOCI member states

ECOCI Accounts Officer clarified that the table of contributions and arrears of the ECOCI member states, provided by the ECOCI, has been adjusted as requested by the Representative of the Republic of Türkiye in the last

meeting. Accordingly, a separate column has been added to indicate the due annual contribution of the member states in 2023.

Representative of the Republic of Türkiye informed that the Embassy had received the call for contribution from the ECOCI and payment procedure is in progress.

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan explained that the member state has sent a Note Verbale to the ECOCI conveying Tajikistan's willingness to raise its annual contribution to the ECI's budget by 10 percent provided that Tajikistan's outstanding arrears would be written off. The Ambassador further clarified that the arrears have been accumulated until the year 2014 and from the year onwards, Tajikistan has been paying its due annual contribution to the ECOCI's budget on a timely basis.

The Chairman in the capacity as the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterated Iran support to the proposal made by Tajikistan. He further reminded that the ECOCI-CPR is not the decision-making body in this regard and it should be submitted to the BoT/ECO Council of Ministers.

The Chairman added that the member states need to come up with a new scale of assessments as of next year, because Türkiye has joined the Institute as a new member and the membership of the Institute may be further expanded by accession of more members.

The ECOCI-CPR concluded with recommendation to the next meeting of the ECOCI's Board of Trustees to decide on the proposal made by the Republic of Tajikistan for writing off its outstanding arrears to the ECOCI's annual budget and increasing its due annual contribution to the Institute by 10 percent each year. The issue may be submitted to the ECO Council of Ministers for final approval, if needed.

Furthermore, the Council decided to establish a committee to formulate the new Scale of Assessments for 2024 and beyond. The Institute may seek advisory opinion from the ECO Secretariat on how to proceed with the issue. The write-off request by Tajikistan may be preliminary discussed in the Committee before submission to decision-making bodies.

Agenda item 6

Preparation for the 7th meeting of the ECOCI Board of Trustees (BoT)

The Chairman briefed the Meeting on the preparation for the BoT meeting. The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance as the host authority intended to organize two separate meetings, Board of Trustees meeting and meeting of ECO Ministers of Culture. He further noted that confirmation from four ECO countries have been received, three at ministerial level.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan informed that the draft agenda of the BoT meeting and the invitation have been forwarded to the Pakistani authorities and the response is awaited.

Representative of the Republic of Türkiye also explained that the relevant documents of the BoT meeting have been conveyed to the Ministry concerned. Definitely a delegation from Türkiye would take part in the High Level Expert Group meeting, but due to the presidential election in Türkiye, the level of participation in the ministerial meeting is not yet known.

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan assured that Tajikistan will certainly take part in the BoT meeting but the level of participation is not decided yet because the member state plans to hold its cultural days in another country which is coincided with the BoT meeting.

ECOCI Executive Director noted that there are issues that need the consideration of the current meeting of ECOCI-CPR even if the BoT is

postponed. The ECOCI-CPR on behalf of the ECI BoT may consider such issues and decide to adopt them under silence procedure.

The Chairman proposed that if the upcoming BoT meeting would be postponed, the concerned issues can be discussed in the next meeting of the ECOCI-CPR for possible approval through silence procedure.

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan sought some clarification on the draft Tehran Framework for ECO Cultural Cooperation, including the funding, composition and leadership of the proposed "Implementation and Cooperation Committee" (ICC). He also proposed a paragraph in the document be devoted to encouraging ECO Member States to join the Institute. He also queried whether the draft documents related to the BoT meeting would be considered only in the upcoming HLEG meeting or they could be reviewed in the ECOCI-CPR as well?

The Chairman elaborated on ICC expressing that because only five out of ten ECO member states are members to the ECOCI, ICC would be established as a mechanism and intergovernmental body to engage all the ECO member states to implement the said framework. The Committee will function under the leadership of the ECOCI and develops annual calendar of events and activities for the ECO. The ECOCI will serve as the Secretariat of the ICC because it is specialized agency for cultural activities across ECO region not only its five member states. The draft Framework would be discussed in the HLEG meeting in order to improve it if required.

Representative of the Republic of Türkiye queried about the deadline for conveying proposals/observation regarding Tehran Declaration. He noted that Türkiye intends to introduce some proposals to be included in the draft Tehran Declaration. He also proposed inclusion of references to accession of the Republic of Türkiye to the ECO Cultural Institute in the Declaration.

The Council agreed that in case of lack of quorum, the BoT may be postponed for maximum 2 or 3 months. The draft outcome documents of the BoT/ECO Ministers of Culture Meeting will be discussed in ECOCI-CPR and HLEG.

Agenda item 7

Finalization of “ECO Youth Award” modality

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan expressed that the Modality was considered in the last ECOCI-CPR meeting and it was expected that the updated version of the Modality would be circulated among the member states.

ECOCI Executive Director clarified that the ECOCI didn't receive any request for updating the Modality. Anyhow, all the observations raised by the member states in the last ECOCI-CPR have been incorporated in the Modality. Nevertheless, no more proposals or observations were received from the member states. Therefore, the latest version of the Modality is ready for distribution. The Note Verbale for inviting sponsors from all the member states for contributing to the Award has been prepared by the ECOCI but was not circulated because the Modality for the Award had not been finalized yet.

The ECOCI-CPR requested the ECOCI to circulate the proposed “ECO Youth Award” modality amongst the member states. In case of postponement of BoT and if no comments/observations received within two weeks, the Modality will be considered as adopted. Otherwise, the Modality will be considered by High Level Expert Group meeting on 14 June for submission to the BoT for adoption.

Agenda item 8

Any other business

ECOCI Accounts Officer briefed the meeting on some debts of the ECOCI remained from the time of the previous Presidents of the Institute. He

explained that an amount of 5,582 USD has been paid and an amount of 13,267 USD is required to be paid for the end of service gratuity of former local employees. Also, an amount of 3,367 USD is required to be paid for settlement of purchase of air tickets for the Friendship Ascent Programme organized by the ECOCI in which female mountaineers of ECO member states climbed Tochal Peak in Iran in March 2022. Overall, the total amount of the Institute's above mentioned debts to individuals and companies equals to 22,216 USD, part of which has been paid and the remaining should be cleared.

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan noted that according to the practice at the ECO Secretariat, the member states should be informed of the Institute's expenditure in advance. Furthermore, it should be clarified why the debts have not been settled during the tenure of the previous presidents of the Institute?

The Chairman supported the observation made by Ambassador of Tajikistan and emphasized that such issues should be conveyed to the member states via circular Note in advance.

The Council authorized the Institute to settle the above mentioned dues.

Agenda item 9

Date and venue of the next meeting

The Chairman proposed that the next meeting may be convened in late June. The exact date of the next meeting would be informed by the ECOCI after consultation with the Chair and the Member States.

Annex-I

**The 38th Meeting of
The ECI Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

List of Participants

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- Mr. Seyed Jalaeddin Alavi Sabzevari, Director General for Multilateral and International Economic Cooperation
- Mr. Khavari, Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Mr. Ahmed Shami, Counsellor

Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- H.E. Dr. Nizomiddin Zohidi, Ambassador
- Mr. Bahrom Azimov, Second Secretary

Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye:

- Mr. Mehmet Zahit Uzun, Counsellor

ECO Cultural Institute:

- Mr. Murodjun Buriboev, President
- Dr. Esmaeili Fard, Executive Director
- Ms. Mirbagheri, External Relations
- Mr. Sayed Javad Mirkazemian, Accounts Officer
- Mr. Shah Mansur Khojeov, Tajikistan's Desk Officer
- Mr. Mehdi Omraninejad, Expert

ECO Secretariat:

- Mr. Amir Mohammad Javaheri, Translator

Annex-II

The 38th Meeting of The ECI Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

Agenda

1. Adoption of the Agenda
2. Consideration and adoption of the draft reports of the 36th and 37th ECOCI-CPR meetings
3. Statement by ECOCI President on the ECOCI activities
4. Administrative issues: Latest status of nomination by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the post of President of ECOCI
5. Budgetary issues: Latest status of contributions and arrears of the ECOCI member states
6. Preparation for the 7th meeting of the ECOCI Board of Trustees (BoT)
7. Finalization of “ECO Youth Award” modality
8. Any other Business
9. Date and venue of the next meeting

Annex-II

Statement by President of ECO Cultural Institute Mr. Murodjon Buriboev

**Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ambassadors and Representatives of the Member States ,
Ladies and Gentlemen ,**

I welcome all Your Excellencies to the 38th meeting of the ECOCI-CPR and take this opportunity to thank you for attendance in this meeting.

I would like to brief the Council on our latest activities since the last meeting of ECOCI-CPR which was held in April.

Excellencies,

As you are well aware, we are fast approaching the meeting of the Institute's Board of Trustees. The whole staff members are working hard on the issue and keep in close contact with the organizing authorities of the host country to make sure that necessary arrangements are being planned and implemented properly. In this respect, a planning committee has been established consistent of delegations from the Iranian Ministry of culture and Islamic Guidance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Culture and Relations Organizations and the ECO Cultural Institute. The Committee has convened several meetings to scrutinize all details. My colleague will further elaborate on the issue under the relevant agenda item. The esteemed member states are requested to kindly convey the confirmation of participation of their honorable minister at the earliest possible to facilitate the planning process and hospitality arrangements. We welcome your comments and recommendations that would contribute to the success of the upcoming BoT meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

ECO Cultural Institute places a high value on close cooperation with media as enshrined in its Charter. To this end, the President of the Institute delivered a speech at a ceremony to mark the 27th establishment anniversary of Farhang Radio of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting which was held on May 1. In his speech, the role of media in raising public awareness of the cultural diversity of nations was highlighted.

Also, the ECOCI has always used its media for covering the cultural news of the ECO region. In this respect, the website of the Institute provides exclusive pages for promotion of culture and tourism of each ECO member state. The esteemed member states are welcome to contribute to the contents of these pages.

Dear Colleagues,

Promotion of tourism and cultural tourism is another significant priority of our Institute. In this respect, the ECOCI took part in an event to mark Ardabil as the ECO tourism capital for the year 2023. The event held in the city of Ardabil on April 27 and graced by the presence of Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Governor General of Ardabil province, ECO Secretary General, ambassadors and diplomats based in Iran including the ECO member states. On the sideline of the event, the ECOCI President met with the Governor General of Ardabil Province. At the meeting, the sides discussed ways and means of promotion of tourist attractions of Ardabil and possibilities of mutual cooperation. As usual, we are planning to allocate one special issue of our journal "ECO HERITAGE" to Ardabil.

Also, following up on cooperation with Isfahan Municipality, the ECOCI President met with a delegation from the Municipality led by Deputy Mayor for Cultural Affairs on April 9, at the Institute's Headquarters to plan joint cultural events for the future.

In addition, the ECOCI President met with the Deputy Head of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organizations on May 9 to expand mutual cooperation for organizing cultural activities.

Excellencies,

The Institute attaches special importance to participation in the events related to culture and literature which are organized by the organization of the host country. In this regard, the Institute took part in a ceremony to commemorate Abul-Qasim Ferdowsi which was held in Tehran on May 13, in the presence of Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili, the Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, and Gholamali Haddad Adel, Head of Academy of Persian Language and Literature. During the ceremony, the national medal of "Ghand Parsi" was unveiled and presented to some ambassadors including Türkiye and Tajikistan who have contributed to the promotion of Persian language.

Also, the ECOCI participated in an event organized by Iran's Society for the Appreciation of Cultural Works and Dignitaries to commemorate a number of luminaries of the region. Furthermore, the Institute's President took part in

another commemoration ceremony for Abul-Qasim Ferdowsi which was held on May 15 on the theme of "Revisiting the role of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh in today's national identity" at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad. The event was attended by the Head of Iran's Society for the Appreciation of Cultural Works and Dignitaries, Director General of Culture and Islamic Guidance of Khorasan Razavi Province and a group of university professors and scholars of Persian literature. At the ceremony, the ECOCI President delivered a speech in which he expressed that message of Shahnameh knows no boundaries and is a common literary heritage of the ECO region.

Above all, the ECOCI organized a webinar on May 15 to pay homage to this renowned Persian poet titled "Life and Works of Ferdowsi and the Role of Shahnameh in Vibrancy and Constancy of Persian Language". At the event, literature scholars from Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan delivered speeches on the theme of the webinar.

Also, the ECOCI took part in commemoration of Khayyam Neishabouri, the renowned Persian poet of the ECO region which was held in his birthplace Neishabour on 17 May and attended by prominent scholars and researches.

ECOCI always contributes to the events which deepen understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity in the region. In this regard, ECOCI took part in a ceremony for promotion of Hazara culture, held in Mashhad on May 15. Hazara people are considered one of the major ethnic groups in Afghanistan. Also, the ECOCI actively participated in a ceremony held in Tehran to observe International Museum Day and various other cultural events.

Furthermore, ECO Cultural Institute actively participated in the 34th Tehran International Book Fair to familiarize the public with its books and publications. During the Fair, the Institute's stall was visited by the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of Iran and the Minister of Culture of Tajikistan.

Dear colleagues,

We hope that today this Council would reach a conclusion regarding the BoT draft documents and other important issues on the Agenda.

Once again, I would like to express my gratitude to you for taking part in this meeting.

Thank you.