

Report of

The 5th ECI Board of Trustees Meeting

(March 14, 2011, Kabul, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan)

The 5th ECI Board of Trustees Meeting was held on March 14, 2011 in Kabul, hosted by the Ministry of Information and Culture of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The BOT Meeting preceded by the 4th HLEG Meeting on March 13, 2011. High level delegations from the four Signatory Member States i.e. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Tajikistan attended the Meeting .. The list of participants is in (*Annex-I*).

Item-1

Inauguration of the Meeting

The meeting was started with the recitation of verses from The Holy Quran and was inaugurated by RE. Dr. Hojjatollah Ayyoobi, President of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI).

Item-2

Election of the Chairman

H.E. Dr. Sayed Makhdoom Raheen, the Honorable Minister of Information and Culture of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, was unanimously elected as the Chairman of the Meeting. He thanked the delegations for electing him as chairman and wished for a successful BOT Meeting. In his brief remarks, he referred to the common destiny of people of ECO countries and stressed the need for reconstruction of historical heritage of the region. He added that preservation of historical city of Ghazni, which has been proclaimed as the cultural capital of Islamic world in 2013, needs special attention of ECI Member States.

Item-3

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda of the Meeting was adopted (*Annex-II*)

Item-4

Appointment of Drafting committee

An open-ended drafting committee was formed to prepare the Report of the Meeting.

Item-5

Report by the President of ECI

President of the Institute, RE. Dr. Hojjatollah Ayyoobi, presented his progress report on the overall activities of the Institute since the 4th BOT Meeting in Mazar-e Sharif. He informed the Meeting that ECI had a very active time in the past year and said that publication of first ECO Tourist Guidebook, the first ECO tourist website, establishment of ECI Coordination Units in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, holding ECO calligraphy festivals in Dushanbe and Kabul, participation of ECO countries in International Fajr Music, Cinema and Theatre Festivals in Tehran, regular publication of ECI's monthly magazine ECO Times, transfer of ECI Headquarters to a new, prestigious building in Tehran, holding the first Meeting of ECO Ministers of Youth Affairs and establishment of Union of National Libraries of ECO Member States are only part of Institute's activities during 2010. He also informed the Meeting that Republic of Turkey and Republic of Kazakhstan have announced their readiness to become full members of ECI, while Republic of Georgia has begun its cooperation with the Institute. Elsewhere in his report, ECI President elaborated the forthcoming projects of the Institute including inauguration of ECO Park in Tehran, Finalization of ECO symphony orchestra and holding the first ECO Sports Cup in 2011. Reminding Member States that without their earnest support ECI will not succeed in reaching its goals, he concluded by emphasizing on the need for further assistance of Member States to ECI programs. The BOT Meeting considered the report of ECI President and appreciated the performance of the Institute under the leadership of its President.

Item-6

Statements by the Minister/ Heads of the Delegations

As the Chairman of the 5th BOT Meeting, His Excellency Dr. Makhdoom Raheen, the Honorable Minister for Information and Culture of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, welcomed the delegates and reiterated his country's continued support for ECO Cultural Institute and emphasized on the need for further strengthening the existing cultural ties among the ECO Member States.

His Excellency Mr. Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of the Islamic Republic of Iran in his statement while appreciating the increased activities of ECI and its achievements, referred to the common cultural values and the existence of prominent cultural figures in the region and said the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran pays special attention to cultural issues. He offered his governments' readiness to host ECO Member States ministers of Culture and ECO region's artists in Iran to attend the 1st ECO Sports Cup, Tehran International Book Fair and in other cultural events.

He mentioned the successful registration of Norooz, in UNESCO by ECO Member States and asked for further cooperation of Member States to register other common cultural heritage of the ECO region in that organization. He expressed the hope that with ECO Member States cooperation to reconstruct Ghazni, the year 2013 will witness a cultural promotion for this historical city.

His Excellency Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, Minister of culture and Islamic Guidance of Islamic Republic of Iran also appreciated the services of His Excellency Dr. Hojatollah Ayoobi President of ECI in furtherance of the objectives of ECO Cultural Institute and his future plans and projects with a view to strengthen and enhance brotherly relations among the Member States and their general public. He said that his presence in the Institute for another term of three years is necessitated for the continuity of his undertakings.

He therefore recommended that representatives of Member States in the BOT Meeting approve the extension of the President in his office on one time basis for another tenure of three years from the date of completion of his current tenure in relaxation of the provisions of Para 2 of Article III of the Charter of ECO Cultural Institute.

All the Representatives of Member States present in the meeting, in recognition of the services of Dr. Ayoobi, unanimously agreed to the proposal of Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance of Iran and approved his extension for other tenure of three years accordingly with the expression that they also had the same proposal in mind due to best services rendered by Mr. Ayoobi H.E. Mr. Mirzoshohruxh Asrory, Minister of Culture of Tajikistan in his statement elaborated on the cultural projects implemented by ECI in his country, notably establishment of the Institute's office in Dushanbe, visit of Iranian scholars to Tajikistan, holding ECO Calligraphy Festival in Dushanbe and participation of Tajikistan symphony orchestra in Norooz Festival in Tehran. He evaluated the work of ECI as positive and said expansion of cooperation with this regional organization is among the priorities of his government. He also supported the proposal on extension of term of ECI President.

RE. Mr. S.M. Tahir, Deputy Minister of Culture of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in his remarks stressed on the importance of proclamation of Ghazni as the cultural capital of the Islamic world in 2013 and asked for financial and technical assistance of member states for reconstruction of this city. He said the establishment of ECI Coordination Units in member states is a positive step and added ECI has managed to implement projects to promote cultural values.

Mr. Fatih Unlu, Deputy Secretary General of ECO was the last speaker who said ECI is successfully conducting the noble task of promoting cultural richness of ECO region. He added that ECI not only serves its member countries which are confined for the time being to 4 members, but also to all ECO countries through its domains in recent years. He asked other ECO Member States not yet joined ECI to become full member of this Institute.

H.E. DR. Makhdoom Raheen, Chairman of the meeting in his concluding remarks expressed his appreciation for ECI's efforts in promoting cultural cooperation among member states and asked for implementation of ECI's cultural programs in other countries as well. The proposal was unanimously endorsed by other participating delegates.

Item-7

Approval of the recommendations of the 4th HLEG Meeting

H.E. Mr. Said Omar Sultan, Deputy Minister of Information and Culture of Afghanistan and chairman of the 4th ECI High Level Experts Group Meeting (HLEG), briefed the meeting about the deliberations and report of the 4th HLEG Meeting. BOT appreciated the work done by 4th HLEG and approved its report. The Meeting also approved the following work program of ECI for 2011-2012:

- 1- Establishment of Association of Luminaries of ECO region
- 2- Cooperation of Member States to register common cultural heritage of region by ECI
- 3- Expansion of ECI's cooperation with UNESCO
- 4- Expansion of cultural cooperation of ECI with non member countries

The Meeting, due to time constraint also decided that any amendments in the ECI Charter should be examined and decided by ECI-CPR on behalf of BOT.

Item-8

Status of signing/ ratification of ECI Charter and Cooperation with other Organizations/ States:

BOT Stressed upon such Member States as signed the Charter of ECI to expedite the process of ratification and requested those ECO Member states who have not yet signed the charter of ECI to sign and ratify it.

Item-9

Review of the Financial and Administrative Issues of ECI:

President of ECI informed the meeting that annual contribution of Member States are mostly spent on salary of Institute staff and cultural projects are mainly financed by Iranian government assistance. He urged Member States for their further assistance including their timely payment of contribution.

Item-III

Any Other Business:

No issue was raised under this item.

Item-LI

Date and Venue of the Next BOT Meeting:

The delegation of Republic of Tajikistan kindly offered to host the 6th BOT Meeting in 2013.

Item-12

Adoption of the Report:

The Report of S^{''} BOT Meeting was adopted unanimously.

Item-13

Vote of Thanks and Closing of the Meeting:

The Fifth Meeting of the Board of Trustees was concluded with votes of thanks by the Heads of Delegations. The BOT expressed its profound gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Sayed Makhdoom Raheen, the Honorable Minister for Information and Culture of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Government of the I.R. Afghanistan for their commendable contribution in successful organization of the Meeting and for excellent arrangements and their warm hospitality.

The 5th ECI Board of Trustees (BOT) Meeting

(March 14,2011 Kabul, Afghanistan)

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- 1- RE. Dr. Sayed Makhdoom Raheen, Minister of Information and Culture
- 2- H.E. Mr. Said Omar Sultan, Deputy Minister of Information and Culture

The Islamic Republic of Iran:

- 1- H.E. Mr. Seyyed Mohammad Hosseini, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance
- 2- H.E. Mr. Mohammad Mehdi Fadakar, Deputy Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance
- 3- H.E. Mr. Seyyed Ali Mohammad Mousavi, Director General of International Economic Corporation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 4- Mr. Ahmad Ali Mohsenzadeh, Director General of Legal, Intellectual Property Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- 1- H.E. Mr. S.M. Tahir, Deputy Minister of Culture

The Republic of Tajikistan:

- 1- RE. Mr. Mirzoshohruxh Asrory, Minister of Culture
- 2- Mr. Jahongir, Sadirov, Director General of International Affairs, Ministry of Culture

ECO Cultural Institute (ECI):

- 1- H.E. Dr. Hojjatollah Ayyoobi, President
- 2- Mr. Hafiz Muhammad Jamil Owaisi, Executive Director
- 3- Dr Seyyed Mostafa Abtahi, Director

ECO Secretariat:

- 1- Mr. Fatih Unlu, Deputy Secretary General

Kabul Declaration

on

Cultural Cooperation of ECO Member States

The 5th Meeting of Board of Trustees (BOT) of fCO Cultural Institute (ECI) was held in Kabul, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan on March 14, 2011. High level delegations from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the , Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Tajikistan as well as delegations from ECI and ECO Secretariat participated in the meeting. Turkmenistan also participated as observer.

The BOT reviewed the overall progress of the Institute made since its last Meeting held on 21th March 2009 in Mazar e sharif, Afghanistan especially from the time H.E. Dr. Hojjatollah Ayyoobi, took office as the new President of ECI in September 2009.

The meeting, expressed its satisfaction at the adoption of the Resolution *AJRES/65/129* in the 65th Session of United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 2010, regarding, " Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization" (Annex III), which inter alia, " appreciated the work being done by the Cultural Institute of the Economic Cooperation Organization to expand and strengthen the cultural ties among the member states of ECO and called on relevant United Nations Institutions especially United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization to extend support to the programs and projects of ECI, aimed at promoting the rich cultural heritage of the region". In the light of this development, BOT requested ECO Member States to fully support the Institute's efforts to obtain observer status with UNESCO. The meeting requested ECI to develop joint programs in consultation with UNESCO.

The meeting reaffirmed its commitment to promote cooperation in the field of culture to contribute to the social-economic development in the region.

The BOT stressed on the urgency of promoting and revival of cultural heritage of Afghanistan by utilizing ECI capacities in order to strengthen cultural values of this country.

Acknowledging the importance of the designation of ancient city of Ghazni as the cultural capital of the Islamic world in 2013 by ISESCO (Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), the meeting requested **LeI** as well as Member States to fully support to restore and preserve historical monuments and participate in cultural programs to be held in Ghazni to mark this unique cultural event.

While recalling its previous decisions, the meeting requested the concerned ECG member states to expedite signing / ratification of the Charter of ECI to become its full member. In this regard, the meeting requested ECI to play an active role in encouraging the relevant Member States to join the ECI.

Taking into consideration the financial constraints being faced by the Institute, the meeting stressed on the need for timely payment of annual contribution to **Eel** budget by the Member States, enabling it to function effectively in order to achieve its goals and objectives laid down in the Charter.

The meeting endorsed the proposed activities/ projects of ECI for the Year 2011, notably holding of the 1st ECG SPOLIS-CUP, inauguration of ECO -Park, new publications, festivals and exhibitions as well as new ECI cultural coordination units. The meeting urged Member States to assist the Institute to implement them.

The meeting acknowledged with thanks the generous initiative of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in providing a large, fully equipped building in one of the most prestigious parts of Tehran for permanent headquarters of the Institute.

, The meeting expressed profound gratitude to the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, in particular, to H.E. Dr. Sayed Makhdoom Raheen, the Honorable Minister of Information and Culture for the excellent arrangements and hospitality extended to the participants and commendable contribution in successful convening of the meeting.