

**Draft Report**  
**of the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the**  
**Council of Permanent Representatives of ECI (ECI-CPR)**  
**(ECI Headquarters, 25<sup>th</sup>August, 2013)**

The Council of Permanent Representatives of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) convened its 12<sup>th</sup> meeting at the ECO Headquarters on 25 June 2013, under the Chairmanship of the distinguished Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Tajikistan as well as delegations of the ECO Secretariat and ECO Cultural Institute. (List of Participants is enclosed as **Annex. I**).

**Agenda item 1**

**Adoption of the Agenda**

The annotated draft agenda of the Meeting which had been circulated among Member States vide Note No. ECI/524/620 dated 12<sup>th</sup> August 2013, was adopted unanimously.

**Agenda item 2**

**Consideration and Adoption of the Draft Report of the Previous ECI-CPR Meetings**

- 11th ECI-CPR Meeting,

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan stated that the previous ECI-CPR Meeting was held on the 3rd June whereas they have received the report of the Meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> July. He requested ECI to expedite provision of the reports of ECI-CPR meetings. He also requested ECI to provide an explanation on the agenda item 4, on page 3 of the draft report of the preceding meeting.

In response, the Executive Director of ECI apprised the meeting that the latter issue refers to the payment of \$15000 for the creation of ECI Branch in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. He clarified that the vouchers have been endorsed by the ECI President at the time and there is no reference to this issue in the audit report for the year 2012 which means that the audit board has adopted the case as settled. He added that as requested by ECI-CPR in its previous meeting, ECI formally requested the legal opinion of ECO Secretariat on the matter, but no response has received yet.

Representative Pakistan asserted that firstly the Audit Report Para is not mentioned and it is difficult to perceive of what is being explained in this Para. Secondly there is no link between this Para and the previous paras. Also the stance of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan before this paragraph has not been mentioned.

Executive Director of ECI informed that the sequence of discussions raised during the meeting is as it has been on record. Before the explanation of ECI representative /Executive Director,

the statement made by the Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan was reflected in previous paragraph in the report. However, we will verify records and make necessary modifications as requested by Pakistan. He declared that any request for changes in the report is welcomed.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran stated that the draft report of the preceding meeting has been received on 10th July, 2023, which is more than one month before the date of the current meeting.

The Council adopted the Report of the 11<sup>th</sup> ECI- CPR meeting.

- 8<sup>th</sup> ECI-CPR Meeting ,

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan referred to an ambiguity in the report of the 8th ECI- CPR, regarding the annual contribution of his country for the years 2013 and 2014 and requested a clarification on the matter.

ECI President clarified that the intervention of then Executive Director, Mr Hafiz Oweisi, had been mistakenly made and it is against the decisions of the previous CPR decisions.

Executive Director also explained that the annual contribution of Pakistan should have been \$171,500 beginning the year 2012. He referred to the report of 147th ECO CPR, dated 21st April 2009, and the report of the 4<sup>th</sup> ECI- CPR meeting dated 16th August 2010, and concluded that due to the devastating floods in Pakistan, it was decided that Pakistan's share for three consecutive years be fixed at for \$120,000 which began from 2009 and lasted by the end of 2012. He added based on the above-mentioned documents it is not clear why the Pakistan's share for the year 2012 was thought to be \$120,000 while it should have been \$171,500. However, in any case, there is no doubt that the Pakistan's share would be \$171,500 beginning the year 2013.

ECO Secretariat Legal Adviser expressed ECO Secretariat dissatisfaction with the statement of the former ECI Executive Director regarding the legal opinion of ECO Secretariat on increase in salaries of the ECI's staff and requested ECI to reflect views and statements of the ECO Secretariat representative in ECI-CPR meetings.

Executive Director gave a clarification on the statement made by the former ECI Executive Director in the report of the 8th ECI- CPR. He expressed that the then Executive Director believed that according to the existing documents, including decisions taken by ECI-CPR, BoT and Audit Reports the positions of the ECI President and ECI Executive Director are at the same level with the ECO Secretary General and the ECO Deputy Secretary Generals.

ECO Secretariat Legal Adviser declared that the statement by ECO Secretariat legal advisor has not been reflected in the report of the 8th ECI- CPR meeting. He added that the legal opinion of the Secretariat was provided on the basis of a tri-party committee consisting of Iran, Pakistan and Turkey and the document has already been conveyed to ECI. But there is no reference in the said report.

Executive Director clarified that the underlined parts in the report of the 8th ECI-CPR meeting are the personal stance of the then ECI Executive Director which has not been raised during the meeting. He further noted that before the final adoption of the report of the 5th ECI-CPR meeting, in 8<sup>th</sup> ECI-CPR meeting, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan sent an official note to ECI and requested that the opinion of the ECO Secretariat legal advisor must be reflected in the report. ECI has conducted accordingly. The then ECI Executive Director intended to clarify the issue by the addition of the underlined part to the report.

The meeting unanimously agreed to remove all the underlined parts from the draft report of the 8th ECI-CPR meeting.

### **Agenda item 3**

#### Report by ECI president on the ECI Activities

Mr. Iftikhar Hussein Arif , the President of ECI briefed the meeting on the activities of the Institute. The report of ECI President is as follows:

*"Mr. Chairman, Distinguished representatives,*

*I am grateful to you for your kind participation in this 12th meeting of ECI-CPR. I would like to thank all of you, distinguished delegates and colleagues, for your cooperation and trust you have in me and my colleagues in ECI Secretariat. I also want to already thank the substantive secretariat for their excellent job in preparing the set of documents we have before us as well as our dear interpreters and conference officers for their support and facilitating holding of this meeting.*

*On program activities,*

*As you know, ECI will organize "ECO Poetry Night" on Wednesday 28 August, 2013. Three prominent poets and litterers from Tajikistan, Pakistan and Afghanistan, several Afghan poets living in Iran as well as Iranian poets and litterers will take part in this important cultural event. Your kind and active participation would be very much appreciated and serves as an encouragement to us to do still better job.*

*This is our third function and cultural program in three month. Now we are working on organizing painting exhibition, ceremony for observation of ECO Day, and also ECO chess cup. We are also working on a comprehensive program for promoting poetry and literature exchanges between and among ECI members. We continue to work on a new quarterly issue of ECO Heritage entitled "Culture and Civilization in ECO Region." Your substantive contribution to ECO Heritage is most welcome and appreciated. We are making all efforts to perform same programs with the financial support of ECI in other ECI member countries and I would like to seek your assistance and support to achieve this objective.*

*On member countries shares*

*The most critical issue at this moment and time which negatively affect the smooth functioning of the ECI secretariat is the budgetary issues. The arrears have amounted to a total of \$US*

762,954 up to the end of 2013, that is \$US 141,914, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; \$US 193,587 Islamic Republic of Iran; US\$ 61,602 Islamic Republic of Pakistan and, US\$ 365,851 Islamic Republic of Tajikistan. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the payment of \$US 114,982 as a part of its share for the year 2013. I appreciate if Pakistan would confirm this payment.

I would also like to remind that after paying seven month of emoluments of all staff receiving their salaries in Iranian Rials and a part of expenditures, the Islamic Republic of Iran stopped its extra budgetary contributions to ECI for the rest of year 2013 and now everything depends on the member countries share.

In this regard, I met with Dr. Salehi, former minister of foreign affairs. During the meeting he called Dr. Hosseini former minister of culture and asked him to return back the building to the ECI. He also wrote a letter to Dr. Ahmadi Nejad, former President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and requested for additional financial support to ECI. I appreciate if Iran's representative could follow up this issue.

I also met several times Dr. Hosseini before the end of his tenure and discussed all issues relating to ECI activities, needs and requirements. I also had meeting with several others Iranian high ranking cultural and political personalities and decision makers with whom I spoke about ECI needs and also the potential areas of cooperation.

I also wrote personal letters to Mr. Janati and Dr. Zarif, Ministers of Culture and Foreign Affairs, respectively. These letters contain a comprehensive report on the activities and financial and logistical situation of ECI.

*On Budgetary Issus,*

I would like to seek the authorization of the ECI-CPR for transfer of credits, resulted from possible savings in each item and Chapter, between items and Chapters of budget of the year 2013 for the purpose of program activities, some emoluments of necessary professional and auxiliary staff and, some of unforeseen expenses.

*On the Staff*

Distinguished Colleague; you are fully aware that according to the Staff Regulations, all professional staff of the ECI must have, I quote: "Good command of English Language." No need to say that for an official of an international organization good command of English language is a prerequisite to make him or her able to do the job assigned to it. Good command of English enables a staff member to contribute to the work of ECI substantively and conceptually. Underutilization of professional staff is the result of lack of professionalism, initiative, basic requirements, articulation, communication, expression and skills which they need to develop. On that basis, While fully respecting nomination of officials by the Member States, I would like to encourage them to look into this issue again and perhaps come up with new proposals."

#### **Agenda item 4**

##### Budgetary matters:

##### Consideration and Adoption of Audit Report 2012.

The Audit Report of the year 2012 including the comments of the Institute had been circulated to Member States vide letter no. ECI/402/508 dated 11 July 2013.

Referring to the page six of the audit for the year 2012, ECO Secretariat Legal Adviser stated that it has been mentioned that two countries Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have ratified the charter, while they have not even signed the Charter.

Executive Director acknowledged these two countries have not signed, nor ratified the charter. Therefore the case in the audit report should be corrected.

Referring to the settlement status of item 4 of the audit report for the year 2012, Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan mentioning his request in 11<sup>th</sup> ECI-CPR Meeting asked whether ECI has received the legal opinion of the ECO Secretariat.

Executive Director stated that as requested by ECI-CPR in its previous meeting, ECI formally requested the legal opinion of ECO Secretariat on the matter, but no response has been received yet.

ECO Secretariat Legal Adviser stated that with respect to recovering money spent for creation of ECI coordination units, the legal opinion of ECO Secretariat is that this is the Audit Board's duty to decide on the matter.

Executive Director of ECI stressed that if so, the matter has already been settled because there is no reference to this issue in the Audit Report for the year of 2012. Therefore we consider the matter settled.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran conveyed his government's strong dissatisfaction with the audit report for the year 2012 due to technical and even political problems in it. For instance, he referred to para 3 of the recommendations in the report which advises ECI to participate in all BoT, COM, RPC meetings to raise the matter of its members' arrears, and asserted the observations are beyond the mandate of the audit board.

ECO Secretariat Legal Adviser briefed the meeting that the matter of audit board has been addressed in the report of the 20th COM meeting, "the Council of Ministers directed the ECO Secretariat to devise a mechanism for implementation of the audit report. Also it has been addressed in the report of the last EPG meeting; the audit reports should be reviewed by an independent international audit agency every 3 year". He declared that the ECO Secretariat is considering the matter.

Executive Director stressed that the Audit Report for the year 2012 contains a lot of general comments and technical mistakes and ECI hopes that its comments submitted to the Member States as well as the ECO Secretariat will be taken into consideration. He also mentioned the

fact that the Auditors devoted only 6 hours for the audit which is in fact the source of shortcomings and mistakes in the report.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan requested the Member States to put on record their proposals regarding the auditing procedure and convey it to the ECI to help promote the procedure in more effective and comprehensive manner.

- Emolument of the staff.

Referring to the request by the President of ECI for the need to transfer of savings from some items of ECI budget to the other items, the representative of Pakistan requested a detailed explanation.

Executive Director of ECI briefed the meeting that the Iranian government has paid the Iranian staff salary and emoluments who receive their salaries in Iranian Rials for 7 months in 2013 and the total amount was equivalent of \$200000 in official exchange rates. He added that almost the same amount of money was contributed by the Islamic Republic of Iran for other expenditures during the aforementioned period of time.

With respect to the transfer of credits from the various parts of the ECI budget, he stated that the Institute requests authorization of the Member States for the ECI President to conduct such transfers. He further noted that the staff regulation and financial regulation of the ECI has already authorized the President in this regard up to 10 percent. He explained that the Institute plans to make savings on some items for instance the official staff's salary and use it for the payment of emoluments of staff who receive their salaries in Iranian Rial since there are no more resources as extra budgetary contribution by Iran. The Executive Director continued with a detailed report on the matter and stressed that we will do our best to take advantage of saving to increase the share of program budget as well. .

Representative Pakistan stated that if the matter is already envisaged in ECI staff regulations, the authorization of CPR is not required. He further requested the Institute to provide an explanation on the amount of annual contribution of the Member States as well as the extra budgetary contribution of the Islamic republic of Iran which is paid for the salary of the Institute's staff.

Executive Director informed that the Institute has 21 staff members whose salaries are paid in Iranian Rials which has been contributed by Iran through the past 17 years. In the current year, the voluntary contribution of Iran was received for seven months but due to the election in Iran and some unexpected problems as well as austerity measures in Iran's national budget, the contribution has recently been discontinued. The Institute is negotiating to encourage the government for continuance of its financial support. He requested the representative of Iran to follow up the matter with Iranian authorities. He also encouraged the other Member States to support ECI through their voluntary contributions.

Representative of the Iran clarified that the delay in receiving extra budgetary contribution from the government should not be considered as a shift in policy of his country toward ECI. Also, he asserted that the extra budgetary contribution is not mandatory for any ECI member. He proposed to increase the share of the Member States in the context of the next year ECI budget on a mandated basis to facilitate the ECI activities.

Representative of Pakistan stated that the ECI Executive Director explained that 21 Staff members receive their salaries on extra budgetary contribution while in the audit reports, it has been mentioned that only 9 officials are working at the Institute.

Executive Director of ECI briefed the meeting that according to the ECI staff regulation, the official members of ECI are those employees who are nominated by member states and introduced to ECI as official staffs. According to the ECI staff regulation, the President has the prerogative to hire staff that the Institute need as professionals and the auxiliary staff, therefore the rest of staff are under this category.

In response the representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan raised the question about the present staff strength of ECI.

Executive Director explained that since the leaving of former ECI president, 12 members of the ECI staff has left the Institute. At the present time, the Institute has 21 professional and auxiliary staff but, the salaries of only 9 officials are covered by ECI official budget.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan questioned that whether the Institute be able to cover the expenses of all authorized staff members by the contribution of all member states.

Executive Director of ECI clarified that if the Institute decides to pay them according to the ECI financial regulations we will need a budget of more than one million US\$..

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan stressed that ECI needs to reduce staff strength otherwise the total amount of contribution by Member States will be spent to cover the emolument of the staff.

Executive Director agreed with the solution proposed by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He also informed the meeting that the total amount which is received by the 21 staff whose salaries is paid in Rials, is less than \$9000 while the total amount which is paid to the other 9 official staff as salary is \$25000. He stressed that the Institute will not be able to conduct its activities without the service of its auxiliary staff. However, the ECI is studying to further cut its staff. He proposed that the member states increase their contributions at least by 20% or 25%. He further noted that the budget of the Institute has remained unchanged for the past 3 years. He averred that the financial status of the Institute is alarming.

Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan supported the idea that the Institute needs more budget for financing its activities and covering the emoluments of its staff. He appreciated President and the Executive Director for their efforts. He also expressed his gratitude for the hospitality provided by the Institute to the poets from the region who were invited to the first ECO Poetry Night.

- Annual Contribution of the Member States

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan informed the meeting that his country has already paid its annual contribution for the year 2012, in May 2013 but has not received an acknowledgement receipt from ECI yet. He also announced that annual contribution of the country for the year 2013 will be paid to ECI as soon as possible.

Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan declared that his country plans to settle its arrears in divided repayments.

**Agenda Item No.5**

Preparation for the upcoming BOT meeting

Executive Director informed that the Institute has already sent a provisional agenda for the upcoming BoT meeting to the Embassies of the Member States and have received some comments about that which have been reflected in the revised version. Any further observation would be welcomed. Other documents will be circulated in due course.

Representative Tajikistan announced that the date of the upcoming BoT meeting in Tajikistan will be communicated at the earliest.

Representative of Iran requested the representative of Tajikistan to expedite conveying the exact date of the meeting in order to be enabling the member countries to prepare based on the ministers' programs.

**Agenda Item No.6**

Participation in International literary events

President of ECI requested the approval of CPR for participation of the President and other members of the staff in the international literary events and other international conferences and events where there are no financial implications for ECI.

The Council agreed on the ECI request in this regard.

**Agenda Item No.7**

Any Other Business

Executive Director of ECI stated that ECI has sent a note dated 19th June, 2013 to the esteemed Member States in which requested the Members to convey their observations on issuing a stamp on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the expansion of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) while the Institute has not received any response from the Member States yet.

Then he pointed to the printed copy of the designed stamp which was made available to the meeting and requested the Member States to convey their observations and comments on the matter to the Institute. (*Annex 2*)

Appreciating the initiative by the meeting, Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan proposed that the matter would be raised in the next ECO-CPR meeting and Representative of

the Islamic Republic of Iran requested the efforts to be taken for issuing and unveiling the stamp till the ECO Day in November 2013 simultaneously.

**Agenda item 7**

Date and Venue of the next Meeting

The council decided the next meeting should be held in the period of two weeks prior to the date of the upcoming BoT meeting preferably.

**Annex-I**

**The 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
ECI Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

**List of Participants**

**Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:**

- H.E. Dr. Naseer Ahmad Noor, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- Mr. Alemi, Councillor
- Mr. Hoshmand, Second Secretary

**Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran:**

- Dr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi, Director, ECO Affairs Bureau, MFA
- Mr. AliReza Ghanavi, Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau, MFA

**Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:**

- Mr. Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed, Counsellor

**Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:**

- Mr. Ekramoldin Nematov, Deputy Ambassador

**ECO Secretariat:**

- Mr. Bahram Heydari, Legal Adviser
- Mr. Jehanzeb Khan, ECO Assistant Director, International Relations

**ECO Cultural Institute:**

- H.E. Mr. Iftikhar Husain Arif, President
- H.E. Ambassador Mohammad Reza Haji Karim Jabbari, Executive Director
- Dr. Seyed Majid Ghafelebashi, External Relations
- Mr. Hossein Ali Samadi, Financial Officer