

**Draft Report**  
**of the 21st Meeting of the**  
**Council of Permanent Representatives of ECI (ECI-CPR)**  
**(ECI Headquarters, February 03, 2016)**

The Council of Permanent Representatives of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) convened its 21st meeting at the ECO Headquarters on February 03, 2016 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Meeting was attended by the Ambassadors of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as delegation of the ECO Secretariat and the ECO Cultural Institute. (List of Participants is enclosed as **Annex. I**).

**Agenda item 1**

**Adoption of the Agenda**

The draft agenda of the meeting which had been circulated among Member States vide Note No. ECI/524/1188 dated 24 January 2016 was unanimously adopted as follows:

1. Adoption of the Agenda,
2. Consideration and adoption of the Draft Report of the 20<sup>th</sup> ECI-CPR meeting,
3. Statement by ECI President,
4. Budgetary and administrative matters:
  - Consideration and Adoption of the ECI's Draft Budget for 2016,
  - Deliberation on end of tenures,
5. Any other Business,
6. Date and Venue of the Next Meeting.

**Agenda item 2**

**Consideration and Adoption of the Draft Report of the 20<sup>th</sup> ECI-CPR meeting**

- The draft report of the 20<sup>th</sup> ECI-CPR meeting which had been circulated among Member States vide Note No. ECI/524/796 dated 7 October 2015 was unanimously adopted.

**Agenda item 3**

**Statement by ECI President**

H.E. Mr. Iftikhar Husain Arif, ECI President made the following statement:

*Mr. Chairman,*

*H. E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan,  
Excellencies, Ambassadors and Representatives of ECI Member States,*

Ladies & Gentlemen,

*I take this opportunity to thank Excellencies, honorable representatives of the ECO Member States, distinguished officers of the ECO Secretariat in this 21st meeting of ECI-CPR chaired by H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, the honorable Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan in Iran.*

*Excellencies,*

*I would also like to brief the forum that during the 26th meeting of Regional Planning Council (RPC) held on 13-17 December 2015 in Tehran, was highly appreciative about the activities of ECI and admired that in spite of financial problem, it has done a great job. With this appreciation, they also agreed with the ECI's submission regarding the resolving of the ECI premises since the beginning of April 2013, i.e. beginning of my tenure as the president of ECI.*

*Since the last ECI-CPR meeting in Lahijan, we have organized many programs including: Modern Calligraphy exhibition, photo and painting exhibition on Ashura in cooperation with Al-Zahra University, Bobo jon Ghaforov, the national hero of Tajikistan commemoration in cooperation with Tajikistan Embassy, Beautiful Afghanistan photo exhibition in cooperation with Afghanistan Embassy, a meeting on Cultural Capacities of ECO Region, Photo Exhibition of Mr. Hamid Hami, renowned Iranian pop singer, the first ever high level regional conference of the Presidents of Art Universities of ECO Countries, held in cooperation with Art University Tehran, participated by delegations from 6 ECO member states, event on Common Features of Islamic Architecture In Iran and Turkey, discourse on Future of Persian Language in ECO region in collaboration with Afghanistan Embassy, an exhibition of Iranian Traditional Textiles in cooperation with Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, Book Launch of "Booy-e- Jooy-e Mooliyan", an anthology of Tajik contemporary poetry, compiled by renowned Tajik poet Rostam Vahhab, and "Shekar-e- Lahze ha" a collection of Ms. Fatemeh Rakei', Head of Iranian Poets Association printed in Cyrillic alphabet, held in cooperation with Tajikistan Embassy, second poetry night to celebrate winter, participated by distinguished poets from Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan and India, held in cooperation with Afghanistan Embassy.*

*During the last ECI-CPR meeting in Lahijan, we wanted to discuss the issue of change of guards in ECI, but on the unanimous decision of the honorable members, it was deferred to the next ECI-CPR meeting, so we will discuss it today later on. I'm sure that with your positive, constructive and judicious deliberations, we would like always resolve all issues amicably in the interest of this important organization.*

*Mr. Chairman,*

*As you are well aware, the expansion of scope and continuation of such programs, next to the necessity of our collective will and cooperation to organize them, is subject to the availability of stable sources of funds.*

*It is my pleasure to herewith inform you that during the past year, most part of the annual contributions of the esteemed member states were realized. I hope that with the continuation of such practice in the coming year, ECI can plan for long term programs in line with the aims and objectives envisaged in its Charter.*

*Moreover, I would like to remind that the subject of increasing the Institute's total annual budget was mentioned at the 6th ECI BOT meeting held in Khujand which was welcomed by all the member states; however, its consideration and approval was postponed to the next year.*

*Now considering the fact that the Institute plans to organize cultural programs, beyond the ones already approved, in each member state, the draft proposed budget for the year 2016 is herewith submitted. This draft has been prepared taking into account not only the foreseen programs to be organized but the inflation rate and the gradual surge that has occurred in the operational expenditures as compared to the previous year.*

*Now that one month has passed since the beginning of the year 2016, I would like to request you, Excellencies, to consider and adopt the proposed budget for the year 2016 at the earliest.*

*Excellencies,*

*My tenure of office will end on 16 April 2016, I'd like to request you to kindly resolve the matter.*

*Thank you.*

Chairman: All the Permanent Representatives appreciated the statement of the ECI President as well as his efforts to promote cultural activities among the member states. Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan underscored that despite financial strains, ECI activities under leadership of H.E. Mr. Arif are notable. The Institute has enhanced profile of the Member States and through ECI's initiatives; profile of the Institute has been raised in its Member States as well.

#### **4. Budgetary and administrative matters:**

- Consideration and Adoption of the ECI's Draft Budget for 2016,

Accounts Officer of ECI: explained that proposed budget for the year 2016 had already been circulated to the Member States vide the Note No. ECI/402/948 dated 19 November 2015 and briefed the forum on the increment proposed in each head of accounts. He mentioned that an increment of 35 percent in annual contribution of the ECI Member States has been proposed.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran: supported the proposal for increment in annual budget of ECI and emphasized that the Institute requires adequate financial resources to organize its programs. He drew a comparison among three specialized agencies of Economic Cooperation Organization, i.e. ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Educational Institute and ECO Science Foundation in terms of organized programs, budget and staff strength and clarified that even if the proposed increment in annual budget of ECI is applied, yet its budget is the least while its programs involve higher expenses. Another point is that only 4 states are the members of the Institute, if its member states are increased, the annual share of the members will be decreased. Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: informed that the proposed budget is under consideration of the relevant authorities in Pakistan. Upon receipt of their instructions, ECI will be informed accordingly.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: welcomed the proposal for increment in annual budget of ECI. He highlighted that the proposed budget of the Institute for the year 2016 had been forwarded to the relevant authorities in Kabul and their comments are awaited. *All the Member States expressed that they will convey their official comments on the proposed budget of ECI for the year 2016 vide a formal note following receipt of observations of the relevant authorities in their respective capitals.*

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran: also elaborated that an amount of \$22,087 is categorized as the outstanding arrears of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Much of the figure (approx. \$20,000) is related to the country's annual contribution for the year 2011 when the

other founding member state of ECI, for some domestic reason, contributed \$150,000 instead of \$171,500 (its regular annual contribution). The difference was not categorized as the outstanding arrears of the member state since the matter had been conveyed to ECI vide a formal note in advance. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran approved to contribute \$150,000 instead of \$171,500(its regular annual contribution) for the same year. Thus, it is requested that the amount be excluded from the outstanding arrears of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He noted that part of the amount of \$200,000 which was contributed by the country as voluntary contribution over the recent years accounts for the figure already mentioned under outstanding arrears. He also informed that the country's contribution for the current year is being followed up and hoped that some portion will be paid in the near future. Chairman: emphasized that while one month of the current year has already passed, the Member States shall expedite the approval procedure of the Institute's proposed budget for the year 2016. *The meeting agreed with a provisional approval of the budget of ECI on the basis of last year's budget to make the Institute to operate until the formal approval of the Member States is conveyed.*

**- Deliberation on end of tenures,**

Chairman: requested ECI to convey the matter to the Member States vide a formal note and requested them to propose their nomination for the post. He elaborated that presidency of the Institute was assumed by the Islamic Republic of Iran until the year 2013, then Islamic Republic of Pakistan took office; as per ECI charter, "*The President of the Institute shall be nominated from amongst eminent dignitaries of the region in the cultural field and appointed by the ECO Council of Ministers on the proposal of the Board of Trustees, for a non-renewable term of three years by rotation and in alphabetical order. (Approved by 10<sup>th</sup> CoM, Tehran, 8 JUNE 2000)*

*The President of the Institute shall be responsible for carrying the general policies and decisions of the Board of Trustees and taking appropriate measures for implementation of the approved programs of the Institute."*

He declared that the president should be nominated by rotation in alphabetic order, therefore, Tajikistan comes after Pakistan. He stressed that the rules and regulations stipulated in the charter of the Institute shall be followed. Although the founding member states of the Institute pay a higher annual contribution, other members' rights should be observed as well. He stated that Tajikistan is ready to propose its nomination for the post.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: explained that the provision of non-renewable term has not been honored for the past presidents of the Institute. We respect the rules, but of course the element of rotation cannot be applied on one post and one country only. There is need to have a balanced approach while finalizing the new President. Pakistan will officially be approaching with Mr. Iftikhar Husain Arif's nomination for continuation for another term.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran: stated that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran will officially convey its decision on this matter following receipt of the Institute related note. He clarified that Mr. Arif is a highly recognized and respected personality in the Islamic republic of Iran. The highest ranking authorities of the host government have been cooperating with him. He also had a private appointment with the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Only the highest level officials of countries get this kind of privilege to meet the Supreme Leader. This proves the significance that the host government attaches to ECI and its President.

With respect to the proposal of the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for extension of the incumbent ECI President's tenure for one more term, the Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasized that it is a legal issue which should be worked out.

Maybe some amendment in ECI Charter is required. The provision of non-renewable has also been observed in the ECO Secretariat. If amendment in ECI Charter had been approved through proper relevant channels, i.e. ECI-CPR, CoM meeting or any other legal procedure, we, as the host government, would welcome the proposal but the current ECI Charter is different and the provision of ECI Charter pertaining to the President's non-renewable term should be observed.

Chairman: referring to the intervention by the distinguished representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, reminded that CPR does not have the mandate and is not responsible to amend the ECI Charter. He added that CoM is the only forum which has such a mandate, but it is a good proposal to extend Mr. Arif's tenure. He declared that the forum is not authorized to approach the issue of extension of the incumbent president of ECI, it can only make a proposal on the matter. According to Charter of the Institute, the incumbent president of the Institute may hold the position until the next president is appointed. We do not have the right to hold the Institute without a president.

Regarding ECI presidency, Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran clarified that for no individual as the then president of the Institute, the 3-year term has been renewed. The Islamic Republic of Iran took ECI Presidency for several terms since it was approved in CoM meetings and there was no proposal from any other Member States. The only ECI President who won the approval to remain in office for a few more months than his legal tenure, was Mr. Arif's predecessor, Mr. Ayoubi. The approval made by the then CoM meeting in Baku. Consequently, the extension of the incumbent ECI President's tenure could be raised at a similar meeting.

President of ECI: informed the meeting that there is a Pakistani President, a representative from Tajikistan and no representative from Afghanistan. He expressed that there should be representatives from all Member States in the Institute.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran: supported the idea proposed by the Chairman and stated that there must be a balance in posts dedicated to representatives of the Member States. He elaborated that salaries of the ECI staff is too low to encourage representative of the Member States to join the Institute. That is why local staff from host country are more than the other Member States. Therefore, the Institute needs to increase its budget to recruit staff from the other Member States with proper salary.

While thanking the Chairman of the meeting for convening the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Institute in Tajikistan in March 2015, he also noted that delay in payment of the outstanding arrears of some Member States cause financial strains for the Institute and requested him to kindly consider the matter.

Chairman: welcomed the idea but clarified that as per ECI Charter, all Member States have the right to nominate for the presidency of the Institute, regardless of their outstanding arrears. However, the charter could be amended through a CoM meeting.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: supported the idea of equal representation for all the Member States in the Institute and proposed that a working group involving representatives of the Member States work on the matter.

## Agenda item 5

### Any other Business

No matter raised under this agenda item.

## Agenda item 6

### Date and Venue of the Next Meeting

The council unanimously agreed that the next meeting of the ECI-CPR to be held on 5 April 2016 in the Institute.

**Annex-I**

**The 21<sup>st</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
- Ms. Bodaghi, Staff Member, ECO Affairs Department

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

- H.E. Ambassador Abolfazl Mohammad Alikhani, Director, ECO Affairs Bureau, MFA
- Mr. Nezafat, Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau, MFA
- Mr. Chenari, Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau, MFA

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

- H. E. Noor Muhammad Jadmani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Mr. Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed, Counsellor

**Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:**

- H. E. Nematullo Emomzoda, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Ms. Farangis Bekzoda, Cultural Attaché

**ECO Secretariat:**

- H.E. Dr. Seyed Jalaleddin Alavi, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Muhammad Muqet Asim Shah, Assistant Director

**ECO Cultural Institute:**

- H.E. Mr. Iftikhar Husain Arif, President
- Mr. Seyed Majid Ghafelebashi, External Relations
- Mr. Seyed Saeed Neghabat, Accounts Officer