

Draft Report
of the 22nd Meeting of the
Council of Permanent Representatives of ECI (ECI-CPR)
(ECI Headquarters, 5 April 2016)

The Council of Permanent Representatives of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) convened its 22nd meeting at the ECO Headquarters on 5 April 2016 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, distinguished Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Meeting was attended by representatives of all the Member States, as well as delegations 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 the Member States vide Note No. ECI/524/1346 dated 10 March 2016 was adopted unanimously as follows:

1. Adoption of the Agenda,
2. Consideration and adoption of the Draft Report of the 21st ECI-CPR meeting,
3. Statement by ECI President,
4. Budgetary and administrative matters:
 - Appointment of New President,
 - Adoption of the ECI's Draft Budget for 2016,
5. Any other Business,
6. Date and Venue of the Next Meeting.

Agenda item 2

Consideration and Adoption of the Draft Report of the 21st ECI-CPR meeting

- The draft report of the 21st ECI-CPR meeting which had been circulated among Member States vide Note No. ECI/524/1246 dated 16 February 2016 was adopted unanimously.

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 would like to avail myself of this opportunity to welcome your Excellencies to the 22nd ECI-CPR meeting and a very happy Nowrouz, to all of you. Best wishes for the people of our countries, to be happy and prosperous with peace and harmony and the world in which we live would be Insha ALLAH, a better place for all of us.

We welcome H.E. Ambassador Majid Bizmark in our meeting. we also welcome H.E. Mr. Abolghasem Tahmasbi, the new representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He had been in the ECO family in the past, as the head of ECO Affairs Bureau in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran and also former ECO Deputy Secretary General. I would like to thank outgoing H.E. Mr. Abolfazl Mohammad Alikhani for his positive contributions in ECI during his tenure. We wish him successful future career in his diplomatic assignments. We also welcome H.E. Haroon Najm in our meeting as the representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to report that since the last ECI-CPR meeting, within a short span of time, we held several programs, i.e. a photo exhibition and a seminar on renowned Turkish architecture, Mimar Sinan in cooperation with Yunus Emre Cultural Institute in Tehran, an exhibition of paintings by a young Afghan artist, exhibition of selected photos of the 2nd ECO Nowrouz Photo Festival on the sidelines of the Iran's National Conference on Nowrouz in cooperation with Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

Also the 1st National Conference on Iranian Economy of Art & Culture, in collaboration with Alzahra University, series of discourses on Persian literature in ECO region, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, participated by eminent Afghan authors and poets, theater performance and reciting Shahnameh, the great Persian epic, by youngsters for students of international schools in Tehran were the other events held at the Institute Headquarters. Furthermore, initiated by the Institute in cooperation with Tehran Municipality, for the first time a special exhibition of handicrafts and photos depicting Nowruz rituals in ECO countries held at Tehran's Milad Tower over Nowrouz holidays. It

will be a touring exhibition to travel to all ECO countries which requires contribution of interested member states. It is worth mention that the exhibited handicrafts were bought and collected by the Institute in cooperation with The Islamic Culture and Relations Organization.

Sixth ECO Heritage, the cultural quarterly, focusing on paintings in ECO region is also published while the past issues covered culture and civilization, architecture, literature, handicrafts and music. Moreover, Persian translation of Allamah Iqbal's "Zarb-i-Kalim", by Mr. Mohammad Afsar Rahbin, Cultural Attaché of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Iran, is scheduled to be published in coming days. The Institute will publish an album of the selected photos of the 2nd ECO Nowrouz Photo Festival held on the theme of "Nowrouz and Family" in the near future.

We have also signed MoUs with Tehran University to organize a meeting on "globalization and its economic and cultural impacts in ECO region", scheduled to be held on April 18, 2016, with Center for International Research and Education, Ministry of Foreign Affair of the Islamic republic of Iran for organizing a one-day seminar on cultural capacities in ECO region, with "The Messengers of Peace and Friendship" theater group to promote rich literature of ECO region, with Yunus Emre Cultural Institute in Tehran and Allameh Tabataba'i University for future collaborations.

Excellencies,

I have repeatedly noted that continuity and expansion of cultural programs in ECI Member States is subject to availability of sufficient funds and timely payments of annual contributions. In the last ECI-CPR meeting, the proposed budget of ECI for the year 2016 was deliberated and the meeting requested the Member States to convey their formal approval or relevant observations to the Institute within the mentioned deadline. The Republic of Tajikistan is the only member state that has conveyed its formal approval to the proposed budget.

The premises issue is still unresolved. These were the days when three years ago, the issue of premises was faced by me. Outgoing President of ECI took over the whole of the ground floor premises and partitioned the building. The Hall and the ECI diplomatic gallery constructed by the ECI funds were took over by an NGO. The diplomatic premises was occupied in a very conspicuous manner during Nowrouz holidays.

Since the beginning, this issue has been brought to the concerned quarters at various levels, from the honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, other senior authorities of the ministry and Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance. ECI was assured that the building issue would be resolved, but nothing happened.

Now the latest is that during these Nowrouz holidays, the ECI's diplomatic gallery has been converted into an office and cubicals are created for the staff of the Madrassa Milli Cinema (the National Academy of Cinema). The Shams Hall is to be converted to a mini cinema.

Now the ECI does not have any premises to hold its events. Another sensitive issue is the existence of cinema for public in the premises of diplomatic immunities and in the area of diplomatic missions of foreign countries which is a matter should not be ignored as well.

Also gallery is not available for displays, exhibitions, seminars and hall is not available for other functions.

Activity report during last three years has been printed and circulated which would confirm that in spite of limitations, financial and functional, ECI has performed very satisfactorily and I am pleased to record that in the BoT and CPR, both forums appreciated the Institute's work.

Thank you

- The Ambassadors of ECI member states unanimously appreciated the performance of the incumbent President Prof. Iftikhar Husain Arif, that in spite of some financial and functional restraints, his performance as President was "Brilliant", "commendable" and "exemplary".

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Ambassador Majid Bizmark): clarified some point mentioned in ECI President's speech. He went on to say that the hall and diplomatic gallery inside ECI's premises were not constructed by the ECI funds, the finances were obtained through the former ECI President's good relationship with other organizations which brought the monetary support. However, the construction of things like a cinema in an international organization is not good at all and the issue of premises would be resolved and a new premises with appropriate facilities would be provided to ECI.

The ECI President: explained that if a head of an organization can attract contributions from any member state or organization, it would be considered as the capacity of his position as the head of that organization not his personal capacity. It has been recorded in the Institute's documents that the former president had declared at the opening ceremony of the gallery that the government of the Islamic republic of Iran has paid a contribution for construction of the gallery, and that is why it has been named ECO Diplomatic Gallery. He declared that ECI is willing to move to a new building which has the same facilities, i.e. a hall and a gallery for arranging functions. He reiterated that a host country agreement should be formalized in this regard.

Cultural Attaché of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: admired ECI performance for its wide range of different cultural programs which actually took place in the aforesaid hall and gallery in ECI premises. He emphasized that these facilities are of great importance for cultural events.

Agenda item 4

Budgetary and administrative matters:

- Adoption of the ECI's Draft Budget for 2016

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran: informed the meeting that the country has conveyed its formal approval to the ECI budget for the year 2016.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan informed that the matter has been referred to their respective governments and the approval for the said budget is awaited which will be conveyed to the Institute soon.

The Republic of Tajikistan had already announced its formal approval with the budget.

The meeting requested the remained Member States to kindly convey their approval for the said budget within one month.

Appointment of New President

Chairman: stated that the tenure of the incumbent President of ECI will end on 17 April 2016. The Member States were informed by the Institute vide the note No. ECI/536-11/1230 dated 3 February 2016 to propose their nomination for the presidency of ECI not later than 4 March 2016. The Islamic Republic of Iran proposed a nomination for the aforementioned position. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan proposed the extension of the incumbent President's tenure. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan did not propose a nomination for the post.

He noted that according to the ECI Charter, Article III, para 2, the tenure of the president is "for a non-renewable term of three years by rotation and in alphabetical order." Therefore, the Republic of Tajikistan will hold the post after end of tenure of the incumbent president. But the Republic of Tajikistan has decided not to nominate for the position while the state requests to hold the post of Executive Director during the tenure of the new president of ECI or it will be recorded in the report of the ongoing meeting that the Republic of Tajikistan will hold the post after end of tenure of the new president of the Institute. If so, the Republic of Tajikistan will support the nomination of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan: there had been one incident that the ECI Charter was not adhered to, when a limited extension was accorded to the former President of ECI, because extension of one day or three years is the same thing. One country, with due respect, has consecutive presidentship and Pakistan as a founding member comes once for a tenure. We would have accommodated it if the element of alphabetical rotation is observed. It was Tajikistan's right which did not avail of that opportunity.

Normally, the President has been from the host country - only one exception- and Executive Director has been from Pakistan in the past. It will not be good for the health of an organization, if two key positions are occupied by one single country and the organization will be headed by one country for one year. We suggest that Mr.

Iftikhar Arif continue holding his position for three years, if not, as we informally agreed, maybe for the period which is in between the Executive Director's end of tenure and the President's end of tenure, and the President hold the post by that time. The Member States may decide on the Executive Director post when it is available.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: expressed his country's interest to be an active member state in all ECO specialized agencies. He clarified that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has conveyed to ECI vide the note No. 2226, dated 14 February 2016 that the country is willing to propose its nomination in due time, which was not circulated. He stressed that all the ECI Member States should be represented in the Institute.

On the proposal of the Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the meeting took a break for informal negotiations on the issue.

Following the formal/informal negotiations of the heads of participating delegations, it was decided that an extraordinary meeting of the Council of Permanent Representatives of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI-CPR) will be held at 10:00 on April 11, 2016 at the ECI Headquarters to finalize the issue of the post of the new President of ECO Cultural Institute.

Agenda item 5

Any other Business

Cultural Attaché of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: appreciated ECI for organizing meetings of Cultural Attachés of the Member States in which many of ECI cultural programs were planned. He made a proposal that the exclusive meeting of the Cultural Attachés of the Member States be held bimonthly.

Agenda item 6

Date and Venue of the Next Meeting

The Council unanimously agreed that the date and venue of the next meeting will be specified following the extraordinary meeting of the Council which will be held on April 11, 2016 at the ECI Headquarters.

**The 22nd Meeting of the
ECI Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

List of Participants

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr. Ahmad Haroon Najmipoor, Minister-Counsellor
- Mr. Mohammad Afsar Rahbin, Cultural Attaché
- Ms. Zahra Bodaghi, Administrative Assistant

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- H.E. Ambassador Majid Bizmark, Director General, International Affairs, Environment & Sustainable Development
- H.E. Mr. Abolghasem Tahmasbi, Head of Bureau of ECO Affairs
- Mr. Chenari, Senior Expert , ECO Affairs Bureau

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- H.E. Noor Muhammad Jandmani, 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:

- Mr. Muhammad Mugheet Assim Shah, Assistant Director (International Relations)

ECO Cultural Institute:

- H.E. Mr. Iftikhar Husain Arif, President
- Mr. Seyed Majid Ghafelebashi, External Relations
- Mr. Seyed Saeed Neghabat, Accounts Officer
- Mr. Shahmansour Khajeov, Cultural Expert
- Mr. Mehdi Omraninejad, Cultural Expert