

Draft Report
of the 26th Meeting of the
Council of Permanent Representatives of ECI (ECI-CPR)
(ECI Headquarters, October 2, 2017)

The Council of Permanent Representatives of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) convened its 26th meeting at the ECI Headquarters on October 2, 2017 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Nematullo Emomzoda, the distinguished Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan. The Meeting was attended by Dr. Mohammad Mahdi Mazaheri, ECI President, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and representative 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/524/740 dated August 30, 2017 was adopted unanimously as follows:

1. Adoption of the Agenda,
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the previous ECI-CPR meeting,
3. Statement by ECI President,
4. Budgetary issues:
 - Status of the payment of the Member States' arrears,
 - Consideration and Adoption of ECI Audit Report for the year 2016,
5. The Next Board of Trustees (BoT) Meeting,
6. Any other Business,
7. Date and Venue of the Next Meeting.

Adoption of the Draft Report of the 25th ECI-CPR meeting

Under this agenda item, the representative of the Republic of Tajikistan noted that the proposals of the delegation at the the 25th ECI-CPR meeting, has not been incorporated into the report of the meeting.

- The draft report of the 25th ECI-CPR meeting which had been circulated among the Member States vide Note No. ECI/524/290 dated May 15, 2017 was adopted subject to inclusion of observations from all the Member States.

Agenda item 3

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

It is a great pleasure to convene the 26^h ECI-CPR meeting in the company of the distinguished delegations of the Member States. I hope that with assistance and support of the esteemed Member States, we would further realize ECI's aims and objectives in the months to come.

Excellencies,

At the outset, I would like to announce that through the efforts made by ECO Cultural Institute, the book titled "Yek Beyt Parnian" which is a collection of articles by Tajik scholars regarding life and works of Abu Abollah Rudaki, has been published. Despite the fact that the book was launched during the tenure of the previous ECI President and sufficient budget had been allocated for this purpose, it was not published in mass numbers. However, we were able to finally publish it.

Moreover, since the last ECI-CR meeting held on April 24, 2017, ECI has successfully organized several programs during the past five months. One of the measures taken in this regard is the expansion of academic cooperation which has always been of paramount importance for ECI. We believe that culture, arts and literature will be ever-lasting provided that they are based on knowledge. In this spirit, we have signed MoUs with top universities such as Allameh Tabatabaee, Shahid Beheshi and Alzahra of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Based on these MoUs, Allameh Tabatabaee University has allocated 40 scholarships for the students of ECO Member States which was communicated to the Member states vide a circular Note. The scholarships shall be provided in Bachelors and Masters programs and in different disciplines, in particular, Central Asian and Caucasian Studies. Furthermore, a series of meetings have been organized in ECI headquarters for the academic figures of different universities of Afghanistan with the cooperation of Allameh Tabatabaee university.

Also, a MoU has been signed with the Secretariat of Science and Technology in Islamic World of Tehran University and different meetings have been held to discuss joint cooperation. The details of the joint ongoing projects will be disseminated soon. Following our MoU with this Secretariat, we have established council for knowledge and culture and it has convened several meetings.

Focusing on supporting the young elites, scholars and researchers of ECO region, ECI has commenced joint cooperation with Iran National Science Foundation to organize joint educational workshops, research projects and festivals of creativity, idea making and inventions

by high-school students from the ECO Member States which would be an unprecedented initiative in ECI's history. This is a very significant project because school students will be future university graduates who build our society.

Moreover, in order to realize the MoU signed with Alzahra University, several joint programs have been organized including the 3rd National & 2nd International Conference on 'Women's Role in Society and Family Health' held in Alzahra University on April 19-20, 2017 with the collaboration of Al-Zahra University and Caucasus Universities Association, Ministry of Health and Medical Education; General Directorate of Women & Family Affairs of the Ministry of Interior; Islamic Culture and Relations Organization; Tehran University of Medical Sciences; and Gaziantep University of Turkey; the 1st International Conference on 'Culture, Psychopathology and Education' held in Alzahra University on May 3-4, 2017 in Tehran with the collaboration of universities of Tehran, Shahid Beheshti & Allameh Tabatabaee. Additionally, with the cooperation of Alzahra University, ECI will soon launch three scholarly journals titled "Criticism of Visual and Applied Arts", "Quarterly Journal of Women's Social & Psychological Studies" and "Biannual Journal of Women & Family Studies". Fortunately, through ECI's efforts, some scholars from ECO Member States have applied for inclusion in the honorary editorial board of these magazines. I would like to invite other Member States to announce their nominations as well. In the same way, ECI is also ready to sign MoUs with other universities in the member states.

Ladies & Gentlemen,

In order to expand the international outreach of ECO Cultural Institute, promote the rich cultural heritage of ECO countries on the international level and elevate ECI's standing globally, many visits have been paid to the top officials of other international organizations and ambassadors of different countries. As per the MoU between the United Nations and the ECO Secretariat, as well as the resolution of the 65th United Nations General Assembly meeting on the subject of cooperation between the United Nations and ECO, negotiations have been made with the head of UNESCO cluster office and UN Resident Coordinator in Iran for collaborating with UNESCO, including obtaining observer status for ECI at UNESCO, as well as registering the cultural commonalities of the region's countries in the UNESCO's World Heritage List under the title "The Common Heritage of ECO Countries".

In order to conduct mutual cooperation in area of culture with ASEAN, ECI has approached some ambassadors of its member countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia. Continuing the foreign visits, meetings have been held with ambassadors of 17 countries including Australia, Mexico, South Korea, China and Vatican, discussing joint cooperation for organizing knowledge-based seminars and conferences in the fields of art, culture and literature, joint research projects to be carried out by scholars from ECO countries and the aforesaid countries as well as holding joint photo, handicrafts and arts exhibitions.

In order to honor the luminaries of the region, ECI, in cooperation with Tajikistan embassy, organized an event to commemorate Mirzo Tursunzoda, Tajikistan national hero. Among other programs was holding an event on the occasion of Persian Literature and Poetry day

participated by Persian speaking poets and authors and also an exhibition of illustrations by Master Germchi in ECI which was attended by ambassadors and representatives of different countries.

Another priority of ECI is the promotion of tourism. In this respect, ECI introduced the tourist attractions of the region through a booth set up at the ceremony to commemorate the World Tourism Day, which was attended by ambassadors and representatives of several countries. Also in collaboration with ‘Ambassadors for Peace and Friendship’ Group, ECI participated in the International Peace Day event, held on September 14-21, 2017 at Sadabad Palace, where ECI President spoke. On the sidelines of the event, exhibitions of costume and photography, a conference on peace as well as Small Narrator's Festival were held along with the painting exhibition of children from different countries.

Excellencies,

I would like to inform the forum that the 5th meeting of ECI Executive Committee (Cultural Attaches/Counselors) meeting was held at ECI specialized library on July 5, 2017 and for the first time in the history of the ECO Cultural Institute, all honorable cultural representatives of the member states took part in the meeting. I would like to express my gratitude for their participation.

Regarding the publication of ECI monthly magazines in the common languages of the region, negotiations have been made with the Department of Urdu Language and Literature of the University of Tehran for publishing ECO Urdu; with Shahid Beheshti University for publishing ECO Times (in English language), and for the Russian-language ECO Novosti, we have contacted the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. ECI welcomes any contribution by the honorable Member States as well as their authors and researchers for the publication of these journals.

Similarly, in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness of its human resources, ECI has organized two workshops in the areas of the impact of countries' national culture on organizational environment as well as the study of the scientific models of prominent scholars active in the field of organizational culture. ECI is ready to hold similar workshops for the esteemed embassies of ECO member countries.

Just like previous years, ECI was active at Tehran International Book Fair during the period of which, an event was organized by ECI on the subject of cultural dialogue in ECO Region. The event was attended by ambassadors and representatives of member countries as well as several cultural figures. In order to promote the rich cultural and literary heritage of the ECO Region, ECI also plans to attend the Frankfurt International Book Fair.

The expansion of cooperation in the field of sports in ECO region is one of the objectives emphasized upon both in ECI Charter and also the previous ECI-CPR meeting by the esteemed Member States. In this respect, ECI organized a table tennis tournament for the staff members of

ECO embassies and participated by sportsmen from Tajikistan and Afghanistan where prizes were also awarded to the winners. We shall definitely continue the tradition and expand it and would like to invite all member countries to contribute.

ECI has always endeavored to preserve the rich art and culture of member states through organizing cultural exhibitions. In this respect, a folk music festival was held with the cooperation of Iran's Ministry of Culture on June 27-29, 2017 in Kerman city.

Esteemed Ambassadors;

Regarding ECI's upcoming programs, it is worth mentioning that in the months to come, the 4th meeting of the heads of ECO national libraries will be held in Tajikistan. Likewise, regarding holding the 2nd meeting of the heads of ECO art universities, initial negotiations have been made with the University of Art of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Besides, in line with the agreement made with the Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia in Iran, the 1st meeting of heads of ECO Encyclopedia centers will also be held in a short time, details of which will be communicated to the member countries through the official Note Verbale.

In order to strengthen the historical, cultural and social bonds existing among the region's countries and confront the growing threats of violence and extremism, ECI will collaborate with the Organization of Islamic Culture and Relations, the Asian Parliamentary Assembly and some of top universities of the Islamic Republic of Iran to organize a seminar titled "Asian Cultural Dialogue" in Tehran on January 13-15, 2018. One of the main themes mentioned in the call for papers is "cultural cooperation in ECO region".

In addition, in line with ECI's objective to attract the maximum participation of the Member States through collective intelligence, the Institute intends to establish councils of art, culture, and literature to utilize of the opinions and expertise of the scholars of the ECO region, who shall be considered ECI's think tank, to increase the Institute's effectiveness.

In this regard, the Council of Knowledge and Culture, consisting of university professors, and the Council of Culture and Research, which is in charge of conducting research projects including ECI's books and magazines, have been organized and are holding regular sessions. In case of provision of sufficient funds, ECI intends to organize video conferences with the luminaries of the region. And in this respect, necessary equipment and facilities are being procured. The esteemed members are invited make necessary measures and arrangements for the participation of the qualified scholars of their respective countries.

Respectable ambassadors;

Regarding the payment of annual contributions for the year 2017, unfortunately, only the Islamic Republic of Iran has paid the amount in full while Tajikistan has made a partial payment and no payment has been received from other member states. In fact, I would like to once again state

that 40% of the annual contributions for the year 2017 has been received while around 60% of ECI's approved calendar of programs for the year 2017 have whether been or are being carried out. In addition, some honorable member states are in arrears from previous years and these two reasons have created difficulties in the way of smooth functioning of the Institute. It would be highly appreciated if the esteemed Member States inform the relevant authorities of their respective countries about the significance and urgency of the matter for the continuation of ECI activities and take appropriate measures for expediting the remittance of the arrears at the earliest.

The distinguished Member States are aware of the fact that considering the surge in ECI's activities, the increasing inflation rate and the comprehensive goals envisaged for the Institute, it would be appropriate if the esteemed Member States reconsider the amount of their annual contributions to ECI budget.

Moreover, ECI is eager to maintain continuous contacts with the Member States; however, there are instances where ECI's Note Verbales have not been responded. Definitely, reply to the communications will expedite arrangements for activities.

In conclusion, we will soon launch a program of Persian language training for the distinguished diplomats from the Member States. I would like to inform that our follow-up for increasing the number of our full members has been fruitful. The Republic of Azerbaijan is going through administrative procedures for accession to ECI. By collaboration and support from the esteemed Member States, based on collective intelligence and utmost participation, we will make all-out efforts for greater activities in the future. I would like to appreciate the worthwhile endeavors undertook by my colleagues, our directors, advisors and experts.

Thanks

Chairman extended his gratitude for the great activities conducted by ECI. The Chairman also appreciated ECI's efforts for publishing the book "Yek Beyt Parnian", which is a collection of articles on the Rudaki (known as Adam of the Persian poets) by prominent Tajik researchers and scholars.

All the Member States extended their gratitude to ECI for its comprehensive variety of great accomplishments.

Agenda item 4

Budgetary issues

- Status of the payment of the Member States' arrears,
- Adoption of ECI's draft budget for the year 2017,

Regarding annual contribution of Pakistan for the year 2017, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, explained that there is a technical hitch that Pakistan's contribution to the ECI budget for the year 2017 was approved in January of the year but the new government budget becomes functional in July. When ECI forwards its proposed annual budget, it would be transferred to the next year for approval. In other words, the annual contribution to ECI for the year 2017 has been approved and would be functional in July. The Ambassador assured that he will make efforts to materialize the contribution.

With regard to the annual contribution of Pakistan for the year 2016, the whole amount has been settled while the Embassy has received the acknowledgement of US \$ 80,000 but the remaining has not been confirmed. He requested the Institute to kindly acknowledge the receipt of the remaining.

Regarding the Audit Report on the accounts of ECI for the year 2016, the Financial Manager of ECI briefed the meeting and assured that ECI will endeavor to amend and maintain its record of accounts upon the recommendations made by the Audit Board. Committing to this end, new appointment in accounting department of ECI has been made. The rise in some expenses for the year 2016 which has led to the difference between the approved amount of ECI budget and its expenditures, is due to unforeseen situations and annual inflation. It is worth mentioning that ECI will make all-out efforts to organize its activities in conformity with its approved budget for the year 2017. Also, ECI in cooperation with the esteemed Member States will endeavor to arrange its programs for the year 2018 with the least spending to the extent possible. He further noted that the major part of the fiscal year 2016 falls in the tenure of the previous president of ECI and the incumbent president had taken office during the ending months of the year. With regards to the fact that the year 2017 will soon come to an end, the annual contribution of some Member States has not been received to date excluding the Islamic Republic of Iran for its full payment and the Republic of Tajikistan for half payment of the contribution.

He declared that the outstanding arrears of the esteemed Member States to date stands at \$ 680,000 which has hindered ECI's activities.

Regarding the Audit Report on the accounts of ECI for the year 2016, he noted the report has not been prepared accurately. Among the errors in the report is the non-payment of annual contribution by the Republic of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyz Republic while none of these countries have neither signed nor ratified ECI's charter.

Concerning the newly joined member of ECI staff from Afghanistan, it should be noted that her salary and allowances amounts to approximately 80 % of the annual contribution of Afghanistan. With respect to the fact that the whole annual contribution of the Member States is not supposed to be spent for salary payment, therefore the annual contributions of the Member States should also be reconsidered.

Regarding the receipt of Pakistan's annual budget for the year 2016, it is worth mentioning that ECI receives annual contributions through the ECO Secretariat, hence, the acknowledgement of the receipt of any amount is forwarded to the Secretariat. However, ECI will also convey the

acknowledgement to the esteemed Embassy of Pakistan in the coming days. But there had been a deficit of \$ 7,014 in Pakistan's annual contribution for the year 2016. The issue has been conveyed to the esteemed Embassy but no clear reply has been received to date. A deficit of \$ 7000-8000 has been recurred in the annual contribution since 2015.

As observed by the Audit Board, since its inception, ECI has not been able to implement a set of comprehensive procurement guideline. But the aforesaid along with collection of guidelines for petty cash, dispatch of staff on mission, loan for staff and so on has been framed and implemented.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran pointed that the scale of the organized programs by ECI reveals that it has been beyond the available liquidity. The activities have been partly financed through cash/non-cash contributions of one Member State. He highlighted that if the Institute decides to arrange programs within its budget ceiling, less activities could be organized. He encouraged the Member States to follow up the settlement of outstanding arrears and consider an increment in their annual contributions.

The other important issue is payment of staff's salary which consists a major portion of the budget. All the Member States should have the opportunity to represent themselves at the Institute. Nomination for the vacant posts available at ECI has been approved by ECO formal meetings, as the extraordinary meeting of CoM on the sidelines of UN General Assembly in 2016 did so. The ECI President rightly referred to the relevant provision of ECI' Charter and the availability of funds. The ECI-CPR council may authorize the Institute to prioritize recruitment of staff from the Member States but the esteemed members may also specify the extent of programs to be organized by ECI based on the remaining budget. Therefore, the esteemed Member States may help ECI in financial management of the ongoing problem. On the one hand, ECI faces the appointment of new staff nominated by the Member States and their salaries to be paid, on the other hand the funds are not available. The annual contribution of all the Member States for the year 2017 has not been received yet and different timing of fiscal year in the Member States and ECI intensifies the problem.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan explained that the balance of Pakistan's contribution for the year 2016 is \$8,011 in deficit while the amount quoted by the ECI's Finance Adviser as \$ 7,014. The discrepancy needs a clarification.

He further noted that the government budget of Pakistan is approved in June for the next fiscal year which starts from July till next June. If the ECI's proposed budget for the year 2018 is forwarded to the capital of Pakistan at the time being, it will be approved in June 2018. This is a technical point which has nothing to do with the Embassy in Tehran. Therefore, Pakistan will be always in arrears for six to seven months in a year. The total deficit in annual contribution of Pakistan is about \$ 15,000 but the country's related records of accounts should be examined so that the exact amount be specified. He assured that Pakistan's contribution will be realized by November or December due to the procedure that should be followed.

Financial Manager of ECI clarified that the annual contribution of Pakistan is \$171, 500. For the year 2016, an amount of 164,486 was received as the contribution which incurred a deficit of \$ 7,014 and also a deficit of \$ 8,011 is in the annual contribution for the year 2015.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan stated that despite Afghanistan is faced with a difficult situation, it has always been a pioneer in payment of annual contribution. Although the bureaucratic red tape has been so much for the current year, payment of Afghanistan's annual contribution is in progress and the country is not in any more arrears. He also said that the Audit Report has been received just a few days prior to this meeting and thus, it has not been examined yet. He assured that the Embassy will review the Report and consequently convey its observations/comments if there is any.

Representative of the Republic of Tajikistan informed that Tajikistan has paid its annual contributions for the years 2015 and 2016. Also half of the contribution for the year 2017 has been paid. While the Embassy has been following up the payment of the remaining amount for the year 2017, the government of Tajikistan has requested a report on the activities of ECI for the Republic of Tajikistan in 2017. She stated that there had been no programs organized except the commemoration of Mirzo Torsonzoda, the Tajik national hero while Tajikistan had proposed 6 programs to be carried out during the year 2017. However, the remaining contribution for the year 2017 will be paid.

Financial Manager of ECI referred to the statement by ECI President and noted that although only 40 percent of the annual contributions has been realized but more than 60 percent of ECI's work program for the year 2017 has been implemented.

With regards to the annual contribution of Tajikistan for the year 2016, there is a deficit of about \$ 3,000 in payment. Also, an amount of \$ 28,583 has been received as part of Tajikistan's annual contribution for the year 2017 while the salary of the Tajik member of ECI staff almost amounts to \$ 30,000. Overall, there are times that payment of salaries exceeds the received contribution from the Member States over a year.

Representative of the republic of Tajikistan: explained that ECI has acknowledged the receipt of the full annual contribution of Tajikistan for the years 2015 and 2016.

The Chairman stated that the discrepancy over the deficit in annual contribution of Tajikistan for the year 2016 should be resolved by cooperation of ECI. He also emphasized that it should be clear that how the annual contributions of the Member States are spent and what programs are organized for the countries. He expressed hope that in partnership with ECI, the Embassy would convince the relevant authorities that the Institute's performance has been fruitful. He requested the Institute to consider Tajikistan's proposals in its future programs. He also encouraged the Member states to consider the financial situation of ECI seriously so that the Institute will be able to further expand its activities.

President of ECI appreciated the observations made by the Member States and declared that ECI's programs are advantageous to all the Member States. The Institute's activities are organized based on collective intelligence. Although, some programs are exclusively held for

one Member State, however, interests and concerns of all the Member States are envisaged in ECI's programs.

Agenda item 5

The Next Board of Trustees (BoT) Meeting.

With respect to hosting the 7th meeting of ECI Board of Trustees, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan briefed the meeting that the Pakistan mission in Tehran is following up the issue. Hopefully the Embassy will convey the consent of the concerned authorities and the meeting would be held in December.

Agenda item 6

Any other Business

Regarding the 4th meeting of Heads of ECO National Libraries, Chairman stated that the important event is scheduled to be held on November 27-29, 2017 in Dushanbe. He encouraged all the Member States to take part in the meeting. Arrangements for the meeting will be made in cooperation with ECI.

Regarding the Executive Director of ECI which was supposed to come from Pakistan, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan informed that a number of nominations has been made and the selection process has been conducted. The previous nomination by the government of Pakistan was challenged, therefore it was withdrawn and nominations was sought from all the relevant eligible officials. More than 600 applications were received, and the applicants were given exams. For the time being, two nominations have been finalized. It is the process that takes place about all the appointments in Pakistan. Although it causes delay but at the same time ensures the eligibility. Hopefully the selected nomination will be conveyed in coming weeks and be a real assistance to ECI. The Ambassador, on behalf of the government of Pakistan, extended unconditional apologies for the unordinary delay.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan referred to the decisions of the extraordinary meeting of ECI-CPR held on 11 April 2016 which was submitted to the CoM and approved by latter council. The decisions were as follows: First, the extension of tenure of the then President of ECI, the nomination of H.E. Dr. Mazaheri as the new President of the Institute, nomination of the ECI Executive Director from Pakistan, Presidency of Tajikistan for the next term and nomination of Afghanistan for the post of Assistant Director. At that time, the Islamic Republic of Iran supported the nomination of Afghanistan for the post which is once again appreciated. Subsequently, the government of Afghanistan has officially introduced, vide a Note Verbale to

ECI, a young educated eligible nomination for the post. Some legal observations were raised by ECI which were replied by the Embassy. Hopefully the decision of the extraordinary ECI-CPR meeting will be put into effect and a positive response is received from ECI.

Regarding appointments for the posts of Executive Director and Assistant Director, Financial Manager of ECI cited the relevant provisions from the ECI Charter as follows:

- 6.3. *Appointment to the posts in categories-I (grade D2 and D1) shall be made by the Board of Trustees at the recommendations of the President.*
- 6.4. *The terms of appointment in category-I (grade D2-D1) shall be 4 years extendable for 1 year on the proposal of the President and approval of the Board of Trustees or ECO Council of Ministers, the number of the officials including the President at D grade shall be up to 5 persons.*

President of ECI emphasized that the provisions of ECI Charter must be observed. He then continued that ECI totally agrees that all the Member States should be represented at ECI but also emphasized that there should also be a balance between payment of salaries and annual contributions. If the Institute recruits two staff members from Afghanistan, it has to borrow funds extra to the annual contribution of the Member State to pay the salary of the said staff members and liquidity problems will arise in organizing cultural programs.

Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran supported the statement by ECI President and endorsed that payments of salaries and lack of budget are not negligible issues but the point is that some decisions of the said extraordinary meeting of ECI-CPR were made on the basis of initial agreement prior to termination of the tenure of the previous president of ECI which led to the approval of Iran's presidency over the Institute while some other Member State was supposed to hold the post.

He further supported the statement of Ambassador of Afghanistan regarding the appointments which has already approved by the CoM as well. Therefore, a nomination from the Member State should hold the post of Assistant Director.

He supported the idea mentioned by ECI President that there should be a balance between payment of salaries and annual contributions but explained that the same situation is faced by the ECO Secretariat and representatives of some Member States receive salaries more than the contribution of their countries. He further noted that reforming is in process at the ECO Secretariat to hold the balance and the same shall apply to ECI as well but till it is fully operationalized, in a spirit of collaboration, the Member States should be evenly represented at the Institute.

He proposed that the required funds for the payment of salary of new staff members could be made available through transfer of credit under different heads of account in ECI budget while not adversely affecting the function of the Institute.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan noted that nowhere in ECI Charter, there could be found a provision to prove any link between annual contribution with appointments. The necessity for increase in the contribution of the Member States is a different issue and should be addressed separately. No new position has been introduced and the post are the same

as ever. It has been an understanding between the highest level authorities of the Member States. Numerous sessions had been held to reach the understanding and lastly, the aforementioned five decisions were approved at the extraordinary meeting of the ECI-CPR. Assuredly, ECI will find a solution to avoid challenging the validity of the decisions of the extraordinary meeting which have been approved by CoM. If it is not realized, all the decisions of the meeting will be questioned.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan agreed with the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan that the due representation is an unwritten understanding between the Member States and as rightly mentioned by the Ambassador, there is no link between annual contribution and representation of any Member State. He further noted that in the spirit of cooperation, participation by all the Member States and in the light of the approval of CoM, we should honor the decisions. The Ambassador requested the President of ECI to clear the position and come to a conclusion and decide on the appointment.

President of ECI reiterated that there is no objection to representation of all the Member States at the Institute but there is a clear provision of the ECI Charter on the issue and it should be observed. The Institute's function could not be limited to the payment of salaries which will make it unable to organize any activity/program. The prerogative of ECI President should be honored. At the same time, ECI observes the approved decisions and is committed to collaboration. If ECI's activities are endorsed by the esteemed Member States, the Institute deserves to receive their support in administration of the office as well. The mere presence of staff members from the Member States at ECI in absence of balance between the budget and activities will impose budget deficit on the Institute. We agree to representation of all the Member States subject to providing required funds by the esteemed Member States.

Representative of ECO Secretariat stated that the ECO Secretariat is always willing to cooperate with the esteemed Member State and the specialized agencies. The decisions of the extraordinary meeting of ECI-CPR were submitted to the CoM for approval through the ECO Secretariat and the latter approved the decisions.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan proposed that the ECO Secretariat may further guide ECI on establishing a special support fund. ECI may draft a proposal on how to raise its financial position, especially for organizing programs. The issue could be discussed at the upcoming meeting of ECI-CPR. He requested ECI and the Member States as well as the ECO Secretariat to think out of a remedy for enhancing the financial position of the Institute. It may help ECI to liberate from the bureaucratic tangles which makes obstacles in carrying out its activities. The ECI President pointed out that only 40 percent of annual contributions has been received, definitely it will have an adverse impact on the Institute's programs. The Member States should timely pay their dues. Regarding the balance between appointments and contributions of the Member States, in the spirit of cooperation, the Member States should work together to overcome this difficulty.

Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan noted that the extraordinary meeting of ECI-CPR meeting held with the objective of more active participation of all the Member States and

their representation in the posts with grade D. Annual contribution is not for payment of salaries only. If so, Afghanistan was not represented at ECI for more than two years while its annual contribution was paid. As rightly mentioned by the ECI President, the Institute will achieve its objectives in light of cooperation and participation from all the Member States. The appointments do not mean to ignore the prerogative of ECI President. The decisions for appointments were made by all the Member States, especially upon the proposals of the former President of ECI and the leading role of the esteemed representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It should be noted that the nomination of the incumbent President of ECI was also approved at the same meeting.

Agenda item 7

Date and Venue of the Next Meeting

Chairman requested that the ECI-CPR meeting would be convened in different cities of Iran so that the Member States will be provided with the opportunity to visit tourist, historic and cultural attractions of Iran. Also, he recommended that the meeting may be held at shorter intervals which will help the smooth functioning of ECI.

The exact date and venue of the next meeting will be communicated to the Member States but it is planned to be held on 15-20 November 2017.

Annex-I

**The 26th 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. Shafiq Sharq, Cultural Attaché
- Ms. Bodaghi, Staff Member, ECO Affairs Department

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- H.E. Abdolfazl Mohammad Alikhani, Deputy Director General, International Environmental and Sustainable Development Affairs General Directorate, MFA
- Mr. Aziz Hosseini Tabar , Senior Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau, MFA

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- H.E. Asif Ali Khan Durrani, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Mr. Ghulam Hussain, Third Secretary

Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

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

ECO Secretariat:

- Mr. Muqet Asim Shah, Assistant Director, International Relations

ECO Cultural Institute:

- H.E. Dr. Mohammad Mahdi Mazaheri, President
- Dr. Ramin Etehad Mozaffar, International Relations Adviser
- Ms. Fatemeh Mirbagheri, External Affairs
- Mr. Shah Mansur Khojeov, Tajikistan's Desk Officer
- Ms. Masouma Nazari, Afghanistan's Desk Officer
- Mr. Mohammad Ali Hejazi, Chief Communications Officer
- Mr. Amin Nazari, Financial Manager
- Mr. Mehdi Omranejad, Cultural Expert
- Ms. Parisa Firouzkouhi, Interpreter