

# **The 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of The Council of Permanent Representatives of ECI (ECI-CPR)**

(ECI Headquarters, 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2011, at 10:00 Hours)

The Council of Permanent Representatives of ECI (ECI-CPR) held its 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting in ECI new Headquarters on May 24, 2011. The meeting was attended by the representatives of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan as well as delegations of the ECO Secretariat and ECO Cultural Institute. ( list of participants at Annex I). The following agenda items were deliberated upon and decisions thereof were taken.

## **Agenda Item 1**

### **Inauguration of the Meeting**

The Meeting was inaugurated by H.E. Dr. Hojjatollah Ayyoobi, ECI President. He congratulated the new ambassadors of Afghanistan and Tajikistan as well as new Head of ECO Bureau of Foreign Ministry of Iran for their new assignments and welcomed the participants to the Meeting. He expressed his regrets that due to the relocation of ECI Headquarters and renovation work in the new building and the absence of ambassadors of Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, the Meeting is being held late. He presented a brief report on ongoing projects of ECI . He specifically mentioned the holding of 5<sup>th</sup> BOT Meeting of ECI in Kabul in March 2011, participation of ECI in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Festival of Norooz, his recent visit to UNESCO Headquarters to finalize the issue of ECI's observer status, the recently concluded meeting of ECO Member State's Ombudsmen in Tehran and exhibition of Georgian paintings in ECI's Art Gallery. He also apprised about ECI's next Calligraphy Festival and 2<sup>nd</sup> Exhibition of works of Afghan artists residing in Iran which are scheduled to be held in Istanbul and Tehran in the near future.

## **Agenda Item 2**

### **Election of the Chairman**

The Meeting unanimously elected H.E. Mr. Obaidullah Obaid, Ambassador of Afghanistan as the Chariman of the Meeting. The elected chairman in his brief remarks, appreciated the recent achievements of ECI and wished success for ECI President and his colleagues.

## **Agenda Item 3**

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

The Meeting unanimously adopted the agenda of the 5<sup>th</sup> ECI-CPR Meeting.

## **Agenda Item 4**

### **Adoption of the Draft Report of the 4<sup>th</sup> ECI-CPR Meeting**

The Meeting unanimously approved the Draft Report of the 4<sup>th</sup> ECI-CPR Meeting already circulated by ECI vide its Note No. ECI/ 524/830, dated August 26, 2010.

## **Agenda Item 5**

### **Approval of ECI's Proposed Budget for the fiscal year 2011**

President of ECI informed that there is no increase in the Institute's budget of 2011 as compared to the budget of 2010, and added that large part of the proposed budget has been allocated to the salary of staff of the Institute. To finance its several cultural projects, ECI is obliged by financial assistance given by different Iranian Governmental bodies.

Representative from Iran referred to the increase of U.S. \$ of 100,000 in 2011 proposed budget and said that, while cultural activities of the Institute has increased, about 80% of the total budget has been allocated for its staff salary. He proposed that a balance need be made to bridge gap between ECI's cultural projects expenditure and its staff salary. He said there exist some discrepancies in some parts of proposed budget. He asked for clarification on the latest situation of ECI Trust Fund as well as General Reserve Fund.

ECI President responded that he appreciates the concern of representative of Iran that large part of the Institute's budget is being spent on its staff salary. He mentioned two existing options to solve this problem i.e ECI either reduce its volume of cultural activities, or ask member states to increase their contribution. The both options may not work under the prevailing circumstances. He hoped that with accession of Kazakhstan and Turkey to ECI, its budget will be increased enabling us to allocate more funds to cultural projects.

He said since establishment of the Institute's Trust Fund, Government of Iran was the only member state who allocated U.S. dollar 200,000 for the fund which is available in ECI's account.

Representative of Pakistan expressed gratitude for Dr. Ayyoobi to have increased cultural activities. He however said that according to ECI Financial Regulations, the proposed budget should be prepared and circulated among member states four months prior to the beginning of 2011.

He also raised the issue of allocation of major part of budget for staff salary and proposed that a working group may review the details of the budget and for that matter a meeting might be convened at the earliest.

Legal advisor of ECO Secretariat stated that under ECI's Financial Regulations, the Institute's budget is to be reviewed by E-CPR for submission to BOT and in the absence of BOT, to COM for approval.

Representative from ECO Secretariat drew the attention of the meeting that, in line with Para 1, Article 3 of Financial Regulations of ECI, the draft budget shall be available for examination by Member Governments not later than four months before the beginning of the financial year.

Executive Director of ECI stated that the proposed budget was circulated among member states vide note No. ECI/524/1350 dated 29 December 2010. No member state had so far sent to ECI any observations, objections or recommendations thereon.

Regarding status of President and that of the Executive Director he informed that Para 4 (a) of Audit report for the year ending on December 31, 2003 provides that " President, ECI's rank/status is equivalent to Ambassador/ Secretary General ECO whereas the Executive Director ECI's rank is equal to DSG/ ECO. He added that the above Para was approved by the following authorities:

1. The then President ECI confirmed and endorsed the above said positions.
2. The 92<sup>nd</sup> CPR Meeting Report ( Tehran- October 11, 2004) under agenda item number 8 which states that " the council approved the ECI's Audit Report for the year 2003 which the ECI circulated to member states and the Secretariat vide note No. ECI/ 83 – 40/ 128 dated 21 April 2004, Annex M&N

### 3. The 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of COM

He said that owing the decision of the following authorities, the salary has been increased:

1. The report of the Board of Trustees (BOT), held in Mazar-e Sharif on March 21, 2009
2. The second meeting of ECI-CPR dated 11/10/2010 which approved the proposals of working group dated 3/12/2009

He requested the participants to approve the budget.

Upon the proposal of ECI representative, the meeting provisionally approved the proposed budget of the Institute for the fiscal year 2011, subject to revisiting the details of the same by a working group the meeting of which would be convened by ECI.

### **Agenda Item 6**

#### **Extension of Contract of ECI staff**

ECI President referred to the termination of contract of Mr. Shah Mansoor Khajaof, ECI's Russian translator and in line with Para 7, Article 6 of ECI Staff Regulations and requested for renewal of the same owing to his satisfactory work. The meeting unanimously approved the proposal.

### **Agenda Item 7**

#### **Any other business**

Under this agenda item, the following issues were raised/discussed:

a. ECI President introduced Mr. Hossein Ali Raees Samadi, new Accounts officer of ECI and proposed that due to his vast experience, his position needs to be upgraded from P2 to P3. Representatives of Iran and Pakistan asked for his C.V. for their consideration. ECO Secretariat Legal Advisor informed the meeting that any change to the Staff Strength Table of ECI should be considered and decided upon by BOT or COM meetings.

b. Representative of Afghanistan stated that a position in ECI occupied by Afghanistan has become vacant and requested to be reallocated on recommendations by Ministry of Culture of Afghanistan. ECI President agreed to consider the nomination as and when received.

### **Agenda Item 8**

#### **Date of 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting of ECI-CPR**

The date of the next meeting of ECI-CPR will be announced to Member States by ECI.

**List of Participants**

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

- H.E. Mr. Obaidullah Obaid, Ambassador
- Miss. Gul Makay Bakhtiari, Cultural Attache

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

- Mr. Seyyed Jalaleddin Alavi Sabzevari, Director, ECO Affairs Bureau
- Mr. Mansoor Nategh, Expert, ECO Affairs Bureau

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

- Mr. Qasim Mohiuddin, Third Secretary

**The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:**

- H.E. Mr. Davlatali Hotamov, Ambassador
- Mr. Farhad Jafarov, Attache

**The ECO Secretariat:**

- Mr. Jawad Ali, Assistant Director.
- Mr. Bahram Heidari, Legal Advisor

**ECO Cultural Institute:**

- H.E. Dr. Hojatollah Ayyoobi, President
- Mr. Hafiz Jamil Owaisi, Executive Director
- Mr. Seyyed Mostafa Abtahi, Director
- Mr. Mohammad Reza Norouzshad, International Relations Officer
- Mr. Hosein Ali Raees Samadi, Accounts Officer.