

Draft Report
of the 9th Meeting of the
Council of Permanent Representatives of ECI (ECI-CPR)

(ECO Headquarters, 3rd April, 2013)

The Council of Permanent Representatives of ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) convened its 9th meeting at the ECO Headquarter on 3 April 2013. As agreed in the previous meeting, it was held back-to-back with the 184th meeting of ECO-CPR. Under the chairmanship of the representative of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the meeting was attended by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Republic of Tajikistan as well as delegations of the ECO Secretariat and ECO Cultural Institute. (List of Participants is attached as **Annex. I**).

Agenda of the Meeting

Agenda of the Meeting, circulated among the Member States vide Urgent Note No.ECI/524/104 dated 31 March 2013, mainly focused on the ECI management problem foreseen as of 5 April 2013 when the incumbent President Dr Ayoubi, would leave the Institute. The problem had already been raised in his letter addressed to the ECO Secretary General and ECI Member States vide Note No. ECI/536-12/1214 dated 12 March 2013.

At the outset, the **Chairman** briefed the member states on the special situation facing the Institute where the President-in-waiting, **Mr. Iftikhar Hussein Arif** from Pakistan would not assume his duties on 5th of April and the newly appointed Executive Director, **Mr. Jabbari** from Iran could not take on his duties pending formal consent by the Government of Pakistan. While emphasizing on the need to convene this urgent meeting to find a solution for the current problem, the Chairman requested ECI-CPR to take an urgent decision to avoid lack of management and to allow continued and smooth functioning of the Institute.

While expressing his optimism about the future status of ECI under the presidency of **Mr. Iftikhar Hussein Arif**, to be assisted by Ambassador **Mohammad Reza H. Jabbari**, the new Executive Director, Dr. Ayoubi referred to his letter of 13 March 2013 and added that based on his recent contact with Mr. Arif, his arrival would be delayed due to some personal engagement in Pakistan. Therefore, as of 4 April, the Institute would be left without management taking into account that the consent of the Government of Pakistan on the assignment of new Executive Director, Mr Jabbari, was still awaited. He requested ECI member states to address this specific situation.

Representative of Pakistan, while conveying that the formal consent of the Government of Pakistan regarding the appointment of Mr Jabbari is still awaited and will be received soon, suggested that in the absence of the President, the Institute may be led by its most senior staff member until the arrival of the new President on 12 April 2013. He also expressed his dissatisfaction over the way that this meeting had been called and noted that the ECI-CPR meeting should have been called through eight-week advance notice, while the respective Note for this meeting was circulated just 3 days before.

ECI President clarified that as agreed at CPR meeting, the ECI-CPR was expected to convene its 9th meeting back-to-back with the 184th ECO CPR meeting. Institute was informed too late about the date of the 184th ECO-CPR Meeting. Moreover, because of the emergency situation prevailing in the Institute, it was necessary to call for this emergency meeting.

The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasized that arrival of the new President and the assignment of the new Executive Director are two different issues. He recalled that the current situation of the Institute had been foreseen in the letter of President circulated on 12 March. The appointment of Mr. Jabbari has been delayed for more than two months since 4 February. The consent of the Government of Pakistan was expected to be received earlier. He further explained that as far as stipulated in the amendment of Article III of the ECI Charter, in the absence of the President, his authority for the conduct and management of the affairs of the Institute shall be delegated to the Executive Director upon the consent of ECI-CPR. Accordingly, there is no

legal basis for the most senior staff to lead the Institute in the absence of the President.

Delegation of Tajikistan shared the views on the urgent nature of the issue and proposed that Dr. Ayoubi could remain in the office until either the arrival of the new President or receiving the consent of Pakistan on the appointment of Mr. Jabbari.

Delegation of Pakistan was of the view that the extension of the tenure of the incumbent President is the prerogative of the Council of Ministers and the ECI-CPR is not competent in this regard. He further emphasized that the Embassy was pursuing the case of Mr. Jabbari from Islamabad and asked for one more day to receive the positive response of the Government of Pakistan.

Permanent Representative of Iran referred to the amendment of Chapter I C/3/H of the ECI Rules of Procedure invoking that ECI-CPR meeting can decide on behalf of the BOT on matters of certain urgency. Given the urgent nature of the current situation, the ECI-CPR can decide on the extension of the President's tenure of office for a short period. On the proposal of Pakistani delegation to postpone any decision for one more day, he underlined that there was no difficulty to wait for 24 hours to receive a response from Pakistan provided that in the case of no response within this period, another ECI-CPR meeting be convened to make a decision. He further asserted that ECI is the most successful and exemplary ECO affiliated body where the Islamic Republic of Iran has been extensively investing during the last 17.

Representative of Tajikistan agreed with one day postponement of the decision. However, he expressed concern regarding the further steps to be taken in case of Pakistan's continued disapproval.

Reflecting on the legal aspects of the issue, the ECO Legal Advisor stated that according to the ECI's Rules and Regulations, ECI-CPR does not have the authority to extend the tenure of the President.

The ECI President expressed his gratitude to the delegations of Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Iran for their proposal and emphasized that although he would spare no effort to help the ECI, it was not his desire to serve longer in the Institute.

The Chairman emphasized that it was not acceptable that ECI, as an outstanding and successful regional organisation, continue to suffer from the current situation and asked the Member States to focus their efforts to ensure continuation of the smooth functioning of the Institute in the future.

In conclusion, the Council agreed with the proposal of Pakistani delegation to delay decision for one more day with a view to receiving the formal consent of Government of Pakistan regarding the appointment of Mr Jabbari, the new ECI Executive Director. In the absence of the formal consent, the ECI-CPR shall meet again to find a solution for the management crisis in the Institute.

Date and Venue of the next Meeting

The Council decided to convene its next meeting on Sunday 7 April 2013 at 10.00 hours at the ECO Secretariat unless the positive response of Pakistan regarding the appointment of Mr Jabbari would be received by Thursday 4 April 2013.

**The 9th Meeting of the
ECI Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

List of Participants

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr Amiri, Cultural Councillor

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- H.E. Ambassador Majid Bizmark, Director General of Multilateral Economic Cooperation, MFA
- Mr Seyed Jalalidin Alavi, Director, ECO Bureau, MFA,
- Mr Hamid Anoushe, Deputy Director, ECO Bureau, MFA
- Mr Javad Heydari, Senior Expert, ECO Bureau, MFA

Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- Mr. Sohail Siddiqui, Charge d' Affaires,
- Mr. Muhammad Zeeshan Ahmed, Counsellor.

e Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- Mr Ekramoldin Nematov, Deputy Ambassador

The ECO Secretariat:

- Mr Bahram Heydari, Legal Adviser
- Mr Jehan Zeb, Assistant Director, External Relations

ECO Cultural Institute:

- H.E. Mr. Hojatollah Ayoubi, President
- Mr Seyed Majid Ghafelebashi, External Relations