

# **Extraordinary Session of ECO Council of Ministers (COM)**

## **Report**

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2015  
UN Headquarters, New York

1. The ECO Council of Ministers convened its Extraordinary Session on 2 October 2015 on the sidelines of the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. H.E. Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the honorable Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran presided over the meeting. It was attended by honorable Ministers and high level officials from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan, as well as Turkish Cypriot State as an Observer. A high level delegation from the ECO Secretariat, headed by the ECO Secretary General H.E. Ambassador Halil Ibrahim Akca, also attended the Event. (List of participants is attached as **Annex I** of this Report)

### **Agenda Item No.1**

Opening Statement by the Chairman of COM

2. In his opening remarks, the COM Chairman, H.E. Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif welcomed the high level participating delegations of the ECO Member States and highlighted the need for enhanced synergy to fulfill regional aspirations and goals of the Organization. His Statement is attached as **Annex II** of this Report.

### **Agenda Item No.2**

Adoption of the Agenda

3. The Extraordinary Session of the ECO Council of Ministers adopted its draft Agenda as had been finalized by the Special Session of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (held on 20 September 2015-Tehran). The Agenda is attached as **Annex III** of this Report)

### **Agenda Item No.3**

Secretary General's Statement

4. Under this item, the ECO Secretary General, Ambassador Halil Ibrahim Akca welcomed the delegations to this important and timely Extraordinary Session of the Council of Ministers. He expressed his gratitude to the Member States for appointing him as the ECO Secretary General. Ambassador Akca also briefed the Ministerial Session about the state of affairs within ECO since last COM meeting in November 2013 in Tehran. He also shared with the Ministers some challenges ECO is currently facing and sought guidelines and support from the Member States. His statement is attached as **Annex IV** of this Report.

**Agenda Item No. 4**

Statements by the Ministers/Heads of Delegation

5. Under this agenda item, the Ministers/Heads of Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Turkey, as well as Turkish Cypriot State as an observer delivered their statements and shared their views on current state of affairs within ECO Region and proposals on expanding existing partnership frameworks for greater synergy and coherence. Statements of the Ministers/Heads of Delegation are attached as **Annex V** of this Report.

**Agenda Item No.5**

Ministerial Approval of:

a. **Reports to be approved by COM (Reports of CPR, RPC and the sectoral ministerial meetings since November 2013)**

(a.i) **Reports of CPR Meetings**

6. The Extraordinary COM Session had before it reports of the 190<sup>th</sup> to 204<sup>th</sup> meetings of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR). The Extraordinary COM Session approved these Reports as listed in **Annex VI** of this Report.

(a.ii) **Reports of RPC Meetings**

7. The Extraordinary COM Session had before it reports of the 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> meetings of the ECO Regional Planning Council (RPC), held on 23-26 February 2014 and 1-5 March 2015 in Tehran, respectively. The Extraordinary COM Session approved Report of the 24<sup>th</sup> meeting of RPC. The COM Session also approved Report of the 25<sup>th</sup> meeting of RPC, as amended by the special CPR meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

(a.iii) **Reports of Sectoral Ministerial Meetings**

8. The Extraordinary COM Session approved Reports/Outcomes of the "4<sup>th</sup> ECO Ministerial Meeting on Finance and Economy", held on 22-23 May 2014 in Astana, Kazakhstan; "ECO Consultative Ministerial Meeting on Environment", held on 25 June 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya; "Fifth ECO Ministerial Meeting on Environment", held on 17 December 2014 in Istanbul, Turkey; "ECO Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change", held on 27 March 2015 in Safranbolu, Turkey; and "2<sup>nd</sup> ECO Health Ministerial Meeting", held on 19 May 2015 on the sidelines of 68<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. Reports/Outcomes are attached as **Annex VII** of this Report.

**b. Approval of Calendar of Events of 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 and Work Programme for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016**

9. Under this agenda item, Extraordinary COM Session approved the ECO Calendar of Events 2014-2015; the ECO Calendar of Events 2015-2016; the ECO Work Programme 2014-2015; and the ECO Work Programme 2015-2016. The approved texts are attached as **Annex VIII** of this Report.

**Agenda Item No. 6**

**Financial and Budgetary Issues:**

(a) **Approval of the Budget of the Year 2015 and Audit Reports 2013 and 2014**

10. Under this agenda item, the Ministerial Session considered the adoption of the Secretariat Budget for the financial year of 2015 (US\$ 3,860,278.00) as forwarded by the 198<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) held on 9 November 2014 and further reviewed the observation made by delegation of Republic of Kazakhstan in CPR meeting that his country had approved the Budget 2015 with the understanding that Kazakhstan's contribution for 2015 will be limited to US\$220,000.

11. The Extraordinary Session of the COM approved the Secretariat's Budget for 2015 as adopted by CPR, with the reservation of Kazakhstan stating that Kazakhstan does not acknowledge any arrears on its part.

12. The Extraordinary Session of the COM also approved the ECO Audit Reports of 2013 and 2014 as already been considered by CPR.

(b) **Status of Contributions by the Member States to the Secretariat's Budget**

13. Under this agenda item, the ECO Secretary General briefed the Ministerial Session on the latest developments as regard the outstanding arrears to the budget of the Organization. He referred to the Report prepared by the Secretariat for the Extraordinary COM Session and informed the Ministers that the total arrears is 4,978,033, mainly attributed to the arrears by Uzbekistan (US\$ **3,584,448**) and Kazakhstan (US\$ **812,968**). The remaining arrears are due to delayed payment of the contributions to the current year budget by some Member States.

14. The Secretary General highlighted the critical situation caused by non-payment of contributions by Uzbekistan in the last 15 years, as well as the unilateral decision by Kazakhstan to drastically reduce its annual contributions to one third which severely

affected ECO activities. He requested the Extraordinary Session of the COM to intervene with a view to handling this critical financial situation encountering the Organization.

15. The Ministers/Heads of Delegations discussed and decided that further consultations may be needed at higher level, possibly during forthcoming ECO Summit in Pakistan in 2016.

16. The Extraordinary COM Session discussed issue extensively and agreed that Secretariat will continue consultations on the issue of arrears with concerned Member States and with participation of finance experts from the capitals.

**(c) Scale of Assessments for 2016-2018**

17. The Secretary General informed the Extraordinary Session of the COM that the Scale of Assessments approved by the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the COM in 2009 will expire in 2015 and there is an urgent need for fixing the new Scale of Assessments to be applied as of 2016. He referred to the history of the issue as reflected in the Report of Special CPR Session submitted to this COM Session. Built on discussions in the last two years, including in the context of the recommendations by the Eminent Persons Group, the Special Session of the CPR on 20 September 2015 decided to submit its Report to the Extraordinary COM Session containing the “table of Scale of Assessments” as proposed by the Secretariat as well as the reservations by some of the Member States.

18. The Ministers/ Heads of Delegation discussed the matter and decided to continue consultations at the level of CPR and with involvement of finance experts from the capitals.

19. The Extraordinary COM Session decided that current Scale of Assessments will be effective till the end of 2016.

**Agenda Item No.7**

Appointments:

**(a) New Secretary General**

20. While welcoming the nomination by Republic of Turkey, the Extraordinary COM Session formally appointed H.E. Ambassador Halil Ibrahim Akca as the ECO Secretary General in accordance with Article IX of the Treaty of Izmir. The Council also assured the new Secretary General of its full support and assistance in fulfilling his duties.

**(b) Appointment of Three Deputy Secretaries Genral**

21. The Extraordinary Session of the Council formally appointed Mr. Seyed Jalaedin Alavi Sabzevari (Iranian national) as ECO Deputy Secretary General (Admin, EME,

HRSD and DOCCU) and Mr. Ahsan Ali Mangi (Pakistani national) as the ECO Deputy Secretary General (TC, PERS & CFU) for a period of three years effective from their joining the ECO Secretariat.

22. The Extraordinary COM Session also considered the two nominations by Afghanistan and Republic of Azerbaijan for the post of Deputy Secretary General responsible for Trade and Investment, Agriculture, Industry, Tourism and International Relations, presently occupied by Mr. Hayri Maraslioglu (Turkish national) which will fall vacant on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2015. The Extraordinary Session of COM agreed that consultations between Azerbaijan and Afghanistan on the issue of appointment of Deputy Secretary General will continue within CPR framework.

### **Agenda Item No.8**

Ministerial Deliberations on ECO Vision 2025

23. Under this agenda item, the ECO Secretary General informed the Ministerial Session about process of preparing the "ECO Vision 2025". He referred to the work done so far to evaluate the implementation of the current ECO Vision 2015, adopted in 2005 in Astana. Secretary General also introduced the first draft of the "ECO Vision 2025", as had already been circulated among the Member States. Referring to the envisaged time-bound roadmap for the finalization of the "ECO Vision 2025", the Secretary General hoped that the next meetings of the ECO COM/Summit in Pakistan can formally adopt the "ECO Vision 2025". He also requested the honorable Ministers to give necessary guidelines to be followed in the ongoing process of drafting the Vision.

24. The Representative of Azerbaijan opined that the new ECO Vision 2025 may also incorporate the new international community sustainable development agenda. The representative of Pakistan was of the view that ECO Vision 2025 should be a practical document and the scope needs to be focused rather than spanning broad, according to him benefiting from its geography, ECO region needs to focus on Energy and transport connectivity leading to inter-region trade facilitation. Representative of Turkey reflected that an effective new ECO Vision requires extensive evaluation of the last one and incorporating lessons learned from it in the ECO Vision 2025.

25. The Extraordinary COM Session discussed optimal ECO Vision for the coming decade and decided that relevant feedbacks from Member States will be compiled by the Secretariat for further submission to forthcoming COM and Summit meetings.

### **Agenda Item No. 9**

Renewal of "Observer Status" of Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States and Turkish Cypriot State

26. Upon formal requests by the Turkish Cypriot State and the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States and following consideration by CPR, the Extraordinary Session

of the COM agreed to extend their “Observer Status” in conformity with the provisions of the ECO Modalities for granting observer status. The meeting took note of reservations by Iran and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan concerning the observer status of Turkish Cypriot State which are attached as **Annex IX** of this Report

**Agenda Item No. 10**

Any other business

27. No issue raised under this Agenda item.

**Agenda Item No. 11**

Adoption of Report

28. Under this agenda item, the Extraordinary Session of the ECO Council of Ministers unanimously adopted its Report.

**Agenda Item No. 12**

Vote of Thanks and Closing of the Meeting

29. The Extraordinary Session of the COM expressed its gratitude to H.E. Mr. Mohammad Javad Zarif, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for conducting the meeting proceedings in an efficient and professional manner and his excellent chairmanship of the meeting, as well as to the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UN for the excellent arrangements.

30. The Council also expressed its gratitude to ECO Secretary General and his team, as well as United Nations staff for organizing this meeting in an efficient and able manner.

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## **List of Participants**

### **Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:**

- Mr. Mahmoud Saikal, Adviser to the Head of Executive of National Unity Government

### **Republic of Azerbaijan:**

- H.E. Mr. Yashar Aliyev, Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations

### **Islamic Republic of Iran:**

- Mr. Javad Momeni, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations

### **Republic of Kazakhstan:**

- Mr. Alibek Bakayev, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

### **Kyrgyz Republic:**

- H.E. Mr. Emil Kainiev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

### **Islamic Republic of Pakistan:**

- H.E. Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs and National Security

### **Republic of Tajikistan:**

- H.E. Ambassador Mahmadaminov Mahmadaminov, Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations

### **Republic of Turkey:**

- H.E. Ambassador Emre Yunt, Director General of Multilateral Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **Turkmenistan:**

- Mr. Ata Eyeberdiyev, Deputy Permanent Representative/Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Turkmenistan to the United Nations.

### **Turkish Cypriot State (Observer)**

- H.E. Ms. Emine Colak, Foreign Minister

### **ECO Secretariat:**

- H.E. Mr. Halil Ibrahim Akça, Secretary General
  - Mr. Orkhan Zeynalov, Director
  - Mr. Gaffar Erbek, Chef de Cabinet
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