



23rd Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM)

Report

*17th April 2018
Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan*

Report of COM

The 23rd Meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) was held in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, on 17th April 2018. The Meeting was attended by the delegations of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan (host), Republic of Turkey, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan. The delegations of the ECO Observers, including Turkish Cypriot State, Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States and Energy Charter Conference also participated in the Meeting.

2. Representatives of International Organizations based in Tajikistan were invited as guests by host. Heads/Representatives of ECO Specialized Agencies, Regional Institutions, and Affiliated Bodies and the ECO Secretariat delegation, headed by the Secretary General also attended the Meeting. *List of participants attached as Annex-I.*

SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING

3. The 23rd COM was preceded by the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on 16 April 2018, which finalized the agenda and documents for the COM.

4. During the Senior Officials Meeting, H.E. Ambassador Halil Ibrahim Akca, ECO Secretary General thanked and deeply appreciated the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for hosting the 23rd COM Meeting preceding SOM Meeting in Dushanbe and making excellent arrangements for these Meetings. While welcoming the distinguished delegates from the Member States, Observers, Guests and ECO Institutions, he gave an overview of preparatory arrangements for 23rd COM Meeting and activities of the Organization undertook since the 22nd COM Meeting (28 February 2017, Islamabad). He expressed his sincere hope that the proceedings of the SOM Meeting would finalize the important agenda items of the 23rd COM, including landmark New ECO scales of assessment, organizational reforms, Dushanbe Communiqué, New ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan (EAPA) and other pertinent issues; which would certainly produce tangible outcomes towards ECO's future roadmap in line with ECO Vision 2025. *Copy of statement attached as Annex-II.*

5. H.E. Mr. Ismatullo Nasredin, Deputy Foreign Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, assuming the Chairmanship of the SOM warmly welcomed the distinguished delegates to the 23rd COM Meeting and wished them a very pleasant and blissful stay in Dushanbe. The Deputy Foreign Minister underscored the need for close regional cooperation among ECO Member States for boosting regional trade activities, economic integration and connectivity, energy security and sustainability, as well as

synergic cooperation in cultural and tourism spheres in the context of ECO Vision 2025, which would lead to economic prosperity, socio-economic and sustainable development in the region.

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING (COM)

Agenda Item No.1

Inauguration

6. His Excellency Mr. Sartaj Aziz, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the outgoing Chairman of ECO Council of Ministers (COM), called the Meeting to order and delivered a brief welcoming statement, congratulating brotherly country Tajikistan, on assuming the Chairmanship of the COM. In his remarks, H.E Mr. Sartaj Aziz touched upon concrete steps taken during Pakistan's Chairmanship in implementing ECO's overall objectives and meeting emerging regional and global agendas in line with ECO Vision 2025, UN 2030 Development Agenda and other global development agendas. While affirming Government of Pakistan's strong support to ECO's overall state of play, he emphasized on boosting intra-regional trade and economic activities through synergic and coherent policies, programmes and activities in various fields of cooperation among the ECO Member States for regional integration and socio-economic development. In this context, he called for an early operationalization of ECOTA and transport corridors; welcomed and supported the New ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan (EAPA) adopted by the Meeting. *Copy of statement attached as Annex-III.*

7. H.E. Mr. Sartaj Aziz invited H.E. Mr. Azim Ibrahim, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, who delivered the inaugural message of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan His Excellency Mr. Emomali Rahmon.

8. In his message, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan warmly welcomed the honourable delegates to Dushanbe for participating in the Meeting and wished the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) successful work in favour of their nations and the ECO Region as a whole. The Deputy Prime Minister underscored the Government of Tajikistan's unremitting support to ECO and underscored the need for collective collaboration among the Member States in overall ECO's agenda, particularly, transport corridors, enhanced trade, energy, tourism, educational linkages, regional integration in order to achieve common objectives of the Organization to bring prosperity, economic development, social welfare of the peoples of the Region, as well as stressed on enhancing cultural linkages among the Member States. He hoped that under the chairmanship of Tajikistan, the Council of Ministers would produce tangible progress in overall ECO agenda in line with the ECO Vision 2025. *Copy of Message from the President of Republic of Tajikistan attached as Annex-IV.*

9. H.E. Mr. Halil Ibrahim Akca, ECO Secretary General in his statement welcomed the distinguished delegates and expressed his profound gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for hosting the momentous Meeting of 23rd Council of Ministers and Senior Officials Meetings in Dushanbe and providing warm hospitality to all delegations. ECO Secretary General congratulated H.E. Mr. Sirodjidin Aslov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, on assuming Chairmanship of ECO Council of Ministers and expressed the hope that under his able Chairmanship, ECO would pursue and achieve pragmatic goals and targets through enhanced regional cooperation in line ECO Vision 2025 and other Frameworks and Programmes of the Organization. Besides, he also expressed his deep gratitude to the outgoing Chairman, H.E. Mr. Sartaj Aziz, for his consistent support and guidance as Chairman of the 22nd COM.

10. Moreover, ECO Secretary General shortly briefed on ECO's overall policies, programmes and activities carried out since the 22nd COM, as well as highlighted the future roadmap to be pursued by the Organization in collaboration with the Member States focused on priority areas of cooperation in line with ECO Vision and global development agendas. He expressed the hope that after adoption of New ECO Advocacy Programme (EAPA) for Afghanistan by the 23rd COM would lead to economic development and reconstruction in Afghanistan through regional projects. He called upon the Member States to accelerate signing, ratification and implementation of the relevant agreements within the ECO's framework, including ECOTA, ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB), ECO Cultural Institute (ECI), ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF), ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI) and other ECO entities as contained in the Secretary General's Report. *Copy of Statement attached as Annex-V.*

Agenda Item No.2

Election of the Chairman

11. As per Rule 23 of the ECO Rules of Procedure, H.E. Mr. Sirodjidin Aslov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan was unanimously elected as new Chairman of ECO Council of Ministers.

12. After playing of national anthem of the Republic of Tajikistan and ECO Documentary, the new Chairman of the COM, thanked the Members of the Council for reposing confidence in him. The Foreign Minister reiterated Tajikistan's consistent support to ECO and hoped that Tajikistan would continue to play its proactive role in actualization and execution of the ECO's overall regional agenda for implementation of ECO Vision 2025 through collective and concerted efforts by the Member States. The ECO Projects will act as catalyst in brining enhanced trade, regional integration through transport corridors, energy, tourism and cultural activities. *Copy of Statement attached as Annex-VI.*

Agenda Item No.3 **Adoption of the Agenda**

13. The Council adopted the following agenda of its meeting, as proposed by the Senior Officials Meeting (*Dushanbe, 16 April 2018*):

AGENDA

1. *Inauguration*
 - *Welcome Statement by the Chairman of the 22nd COM*
 - *Inaugural statement by the high-level dignitary of the Republic of Tajikistan*
 - *Statement by the ECO Secretary General*
2. *Election of the Chairman and Statement by the Chairman*
3. *Adoption of the Agenda*
4. *Statements by:*
 - *Ministers/Heads of Delegation*
 - *ECO Observers*
 - *Heads of Regional/International Organizations*
 - *Heads of ECO Specialized Agencies & Regional Institutions*
 - a. *ECO Cultural Institute (ECO-ECI)*
 - b. *ECO Science Foundation (ECO-SF)*
 - c. *ECO Education Institute (ECO-EI)*
 - d. *ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO-TDB)*
5. *Consideration of the Report of ECO Secretary General*
 - *Follow-up of the decisions of 22nd COM Meeting*
 - *ECO Agreements/Treaties concluded among Member States*
 - *Implementation of ECO Projects/Programmes*
 - *Financial Matters*
 - *ECO Relations with International Agencies*
 - *ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies*
6. *ECO Vision 2025 Implementation: Progress and Assessment*
7. *ECO New Scales of Assessment*
8. *Writing off in full volume of the arrears of the Republic of Uzbekistan and decreasing existing base stake of the Scales of Assessment of Uzbekistan to the ECO Budget*
9. *Proposed ECO Reforms/Amendments in ECO Legal Instruments*
10. *Implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA)*
11. *Adoption of the Protocol amending the Statute of RISCAM*
12. *Review and approval of ECO Activities:*
 - *Reports of ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) Meetings (218 to 228 CPR Reports); Report of the 28th RPC Meeting along with Work Programme 2018 and Annual Calendar of Events 2018; and Reports of sectoral Ministerial Meetings*
 - *The ECO Secretariat's Budget for 2018*
 - *Audit Report 2016*
 - *Appointments of the New Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General etc.*
13. *Annual Reports of ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies:*
 - i) *ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)*
 - ii) *ECO Educational Institute (ECO-EI)*
 - iii) *ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF)*
 - iv) *ECO Trade & Development Bank (ECO-TDB)*

- v) ECO-Consultancy & Engineering Company (ECO-CEC)
 - vi) ECO Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ECO-CCI)
 - vii) ECO College of Insurance (ECO-Col)
 - viii) ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology (ECO-IEST)
 - ix) ECO Postal College
 - x) ECO Regional Center for Risk Management for Natural Disasters (ECORCRM)
 - xi) ECO Regional Coordination Centre for the Implementation of the Regional Program for Food Security (ECO-RCC)
 - xii) ECO Seed Association (ECOSA)
 - xiii) ECO Reinsurance Company
14. ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies under the process of Establishment
- i) ECO Center for Cooperation of Anti-Corruption Agencies and Ombudsmen (RCCACO)
 - ii) ECO Centre for Efficient Utilization of Water for Agriculture
 - iii) ECO Meteorological Calibration Center (ECO-MCC)
 - iv) Parliamentary Assembly of the ECO Countries (PAECO)
 - v) ECO Police (ECOPOL)
 - vi) ECO Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology (RISCAM)
 - vii) ECO Research Centre (ERC)
 - viii) ECO Veterinary Commission (ECO-VECO)
15. Treaty Event
16. New ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan
17. Renewal of "Observer Status" of Turkish Cypriot State and Cooperation Council of the Turkic Speaking States
18. Any other business
19. Date and venue of the next Meeting
20. Adoption of Draft Dushanbe Communiqué
21. Adoption of Report of the 23rd COM Meeting
22. Vote of Thanks and Closing of the Meeting
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Agenda Item No.4

Statements by:

- **Ministers/Heads of Delegation**

14. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs/Heads of Delegation of the ECO Member States delivered their country statements, highlighting policies, action plans/programmes and activities undertaken in their countries for the Organization in enhancing regional cooperation within the frameworks of ECO. *Copies of statements made available to the Secretariat attached as Annex-VII.*

- **Statement by the Observers**

15. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Cypriot State, Deputy Secretary General of the Cooperation Council of the Turkic Speaking States and Representatives of Energy Charter also delivered statements as Observers. *Copies of statements attached as Annex-VIII.*

- Heads of ECO Specialized Agencies and Regional Institutions

16. The Heads of ECO Specialized Agencies and Regional Institutions, including ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) and ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI) delivered brief statements, as well as ECO Cultural Institute (ECI) distributed its Statement, highlighting the overview of their activities undertaken and future plans. *Copies of statements attached as Annex-IX.*

Agenda Item No.5

Consideration of the Report of ECO Secretary General

17. The Council approved with appreciation Report of the Secretary General on activities of ECO carried out since 22nd COM Meeting (28 February 2017, Islamabad) and emphasized on the following:

a. Follow-up on 22nd COM decisions

18. The Council reviewed the progress made since the 22nd COM and urged the Member States to continue to implement the decisions of the 22nd and 23rd COM Meetings, in collaboration with ECO Secretariat and relevant entities of the Member States.

b. ECO Agreements/Treaties concluded among Member States

19. The Council considered the Status Report on implementation of the Agreements concluded by the Member States and called upon the remaining Member States to expedite signing/ratification of those Agreements for prompt and smooth implementation and execution.

c. Implementation of ECO Projects and Programmes

20. The Council reviewed and took into account the ECO projects and programmes included in the Secretary General's Report and urged the Secretariat and Member States to accelerate implementing these projects.

d. Financial Matters

21. The Council deliberated on grim issue of outstanding arrears affecting in running of day-to-day affairs of the Secretariat. In this rationale, the Council urged the concerned Member State(s) to ensure providing budgetary contributions to the Secretariat for Organization's smooth functioning.

22. While noting with concern the delay in remitting budgetary shares to the Secretariat, the Council also asked the Member States to ensure providing their contributions well on time.

e. ECO's relations with Regional and International Agencies

23. The Council while lauding the efforts made by ECO in promoting and enhancing cooperative linkages with regional and international organizations, urged the Secretariat to further reinforce these relations in line with ECO

Vision 2025 and recommendations of the various sectoral Meetings in order to boost the visibility of the Organization.

Agenda Item No.6

ECO Vision 2025 Implementation: Progress and Assessment

24. The Council considered with appreciation the comprehensive Report on “Implementation Progress on ECO Vision 2025”, prepared by the Secretariat and circulated to Member States. The Council urged the Member States to coordinate and extend full support to the Secretariat for pragmatic implementation of the ECO Vision 2025.

25. The Council urged the Secretariat to utilize all available resources and outreach the regional and international financial institutions for obtaining technical and financial support in order to execute programmes and projects in various sectors as enshrined in the ECO Vision 2025.

Agenda Item No.7

New ECO Scales of Assessment

26. The Council urged the Member States to come up with consensus on earliest finalization of ECO New Scales of Assessment so as to keep the Organization financially stable and viable.

27. In this regard, the Council again mandated the CPR to finalize this issue as soon as possible, preferably by 15 September 2018.

Agenda Item No.8

Writing off in full volume of the arrears of Republic of Uzbekistan and decreasing existing base stake of the Scales of Assessment of Uzbekistan to the ECO Budget

28. The Council decided to write-off in full volume of the arrears of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the ECO Budget on the understanding that it will in no way lead to extra financial burden for other Member States.

Agenda Item No.9

Proposed ECO Reforms/Amendments in ECO Legal Instruments

29. The Secretariat circulated a revised proposal containing table on ECO Reforms, reflecting proposed country wise distribution of posts at the ECO Secretariat. However, the Council while taking into account the concerns of the Member States pertaining to time constraints in finalization of this issue, once again strongly directed the CPR to continue discussions on this issue within the framework of same exiting Working Group and finalize it as soon as possible, preferably by 15 September 2018. *Copy of revised chart attached as Annex-X.*

Agenda Item No.10

Implementation of ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA)

30. The Council appreciating the briefing of the Secretariat on the current status of ECOTA, expressed concern on delaying in operationalization of ECOTA due to non-provision of Product Lists (Positive, Sensitive and Negative Lists) by the contracting parties, which have not been provided, and fulfillment of other requisite formalities.

31. The Council reiterated its earlier decision made during the 22nd COM (28 February 2017, Islamabad) and directed: (i) Secretariat through ECOTA Cooperation Council to keep up the efforts for early operationalization of the 'ECOTA'; and (ii) concerned Member States to expedite providing Product Lists and to ratify the annexes of the Agreement, respectively. The Council directed the Contracting Parties to organize a Meeting of ECOTA Cooperation Council at the earliest or to hold at the Secretariat for exploring the ways and means to make a headway/breakthrough in implementation of the ECOTA.

32. Moreover, the Council also urged the remaining Member States to accede to ECOTA which will lead to economic integration and enhanced trade in the ECO Region, as envisaged in the 'Treaty of Izmir' and ECO Vision 2025.

Agenda Item No. 11

Adoption of the Protocol amending the Statute of RISCAM

33. The Council considered and approved adoption of the protocol amending the Statute of Regional Institute for Standardization, Conformity Assessment, Accreditation and Metrology (RISCAM). *Copy of adopted protocol of attached as Annex-XI.*

Agenda Item No.12

Review and Approval of ECO Activities:

- Reports of ECO Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) Meetings

34. The Council adopted the Reports of the Meetings of the Council of Permanent Representatives from 218th to 228th.

- Report of 28th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC) along with (i) Annual Calendar of Events 2018 and (ii) Work Programme 2018

35. Under this agenda, Republic of Tajikistan while taking into account the declared 2018 as the Year of Development of Tourism and Folk Crafts, expressed willingness to hold the 3rd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Tourism in Dushanbe in second half of 2018 under ECO Calendar of Events 2018.

36. Kyrgyz Republic proposed to postpone the date of hosting the 4th ECO Experts Group Meeting on Biodiversity in 2018 which was approved by 28th RPC Meeting in the ECO Calendar of Events 2018.

37. The Council considered and adopted Report of the 28th Meeting of the Regional Planning Council (RPC), held on 11-14 December 2017 in Islamabad (Pakistan), along with ECO Work Programme 2018 and ECO Calendar of Events-2018, as endorsed by the 226th CPR Meeting (10th January 2018) with observations made by Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Tajikistan in the ECO Calendar of Events 2018.

- Reports of the Sectoral Ministerial Meetings

38. The Council considered and approved Report along with Declaration of the 2nd ECO Ministerial Meeting on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), which was held on 4-5 December 2017 in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan and urged the Member States to implement the decisions of the Meeting.

- ECO Secretariat's Budget for the Year 2018

39. The Council considered and approved ECO Secretariat's Budget for the Year 2018 with the extension of the existing ECO Scales of Assessment for the Year 2018, as endorsed by 225th CPR Meeting, held on 7 December 2017. The Council urged the Member States to provide their contributions on time enabling the organization to work in an efficient and effective manner.

- Audit Report 2016

40. The Council considered and approved Audit Report 2016 of the ECO Secretariat, as endorsed by 223rd CPR Meeting held on 13th September 2017.

- Appointments of New ECO Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General etc.

- (i) Appointment of New ECO Secretary General

41. The Council approved appointment of H.E. Dr. Mr. Hadi Soleimanpur (**Iranian National**), as ECO Secretary General for a period of 3 years on assumption of the charge of the post with effect from 13th August 2018.

- (ii) Appointment of New ECO Deputy Secretary General (Admin, EME, HRSD, DOCCU)

42. Under this agenda, the Turkmenistan Delegation made reservation on appointment of H.E. Ambassador Huseyin Avni Bicakli, (**Turkish National**) as ECO Deputy Secretary General (Admin, EME, HRSD, DOCCU), adding that since the nomination was received recently; therefore, Turkmenistan required more time for a decision.

43. The Delegation of the Republic of Turkey clarified that the latter had already communicated the nomination to the Secretariat, which was circulated by the Secretariat to the Member States on 10 April 2018.

44. The Council asked Turkmenistan to provide its position to the Secretariat on the appointment of H.E. Ambassador Huseyin Avni Bicakli as soon as possible.

Agenda Item No.13

Annual Reports of ECO Special Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies

45. The Council considered the annual reports submitted by ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies, including ECO Educational Institute, ECO Cultural Institute, ECO Science Foundation, ECO-Trade and Development Bank, ECO Regional Coordination Centre for the Implementation of the Regional Program for Food Security, ECO Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, ECO Reinsurance Company and ECO Postal Staff College. The Council appreciated activities carried out by these ECO Institutions supporting the process of economic development in the ECO Region. The Council urged the ECO Institutions and Bodies to further enhance their activities for achieving the desired goals and objectives of regional economic cooperation and development in the ECO Region in line with ECO Vision 2025. The ECO Institutions and Bodies also made their statements during the SOM Meeting and raised their issues to the notice of the Council for consideration:

(i) ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)

46. The Council appreciated the expanded activities undertaken by ECO Cultural Institute in the areas of culture, arts and literature in the Region. The Council urged the Member States to actively participate in the cultural programmes/events organized by ECI from time to time enabling ECI to become more dynamic culture promotion organization; as well as asked the signatory Member States to ratify ECI Charter.

(ii) ECO Educational Institute (ECOEI)

47. The Council while appreciating the enhanced activities undertaken by ECO Educational Institute in the Region urged the Member States to participate actively in the activities and programmes being undertaken by the ECO Educational Institute for the ECO Member States. The Council also emphasized the remaining Member States to sign/ratify Charter of the Institute at the earliest.

(iii) ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF)

48. The Council lauded the efforts of the ECO Science Foundation in promoting ECO regional agenda in the science and technology and urged the Member States to provide mandatory financial budgetary support and actively participate in the activities of ECOSF. The Council asked the remaining Member States to expedite ratifying Charter of ECOSF.

(iv) ECO Institute of Environmental Sciences and Technology (ECO-IEST)

49. The Council appreciated ECO-IEST's enhanced efforts and activities in assisting ECO in implementation of regional environmental agenda and asked the Institute to continue its efforts in execution of projects and programmes within the ECO frameworks in order to deal with climate change, global warming, and other trans-boundary environmental issues.

(v) ECO Postal Staff College (PSC)

50. The Council appreciated the activities carried out by ECO Postal Staff College and called upon the Member States to participate in the ECO training courses organized by the PSC for the Member States and asked the Member States to provide financial assistance to undertake the courses planned by the ECO-PSC in 2018.

Agenda Item No.14

ECO Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies under the process of Establishment

51. The Council discussed and took into account the issue relating to Specialized Agencies/Regional Institutions/Affiliated Bodies under the process of establishment and urged the Member States to expedite their internal procedures for ratification of statute of the ECO Bodies to which they are signatory. The Council also asked the non-signatory Member States to accede to the statutes of the ECO bodies.

52. The Council while taking note of the Modalities on establishment of ECO Institutions, prepared by the ECO Secretariat which were circulated to the Member States, mandated the CPR to finalize the modalities as soon as possible.

Agenda Item No.15

Treaty Events

53. Under this agenda item, a Treaty Event took place and Islamic Republic of Pakistan signed the Statute of RISCAM and Protocol Amending Article 5.4.1.10 to this Statute. Besides, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Islamic

Republic of Iran and Republic of Turkey signed the above mentioned Protocol.

Agenda Item No. 16

New ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan

54. The Council adopted the New ECO Advocacy Programme for Afghanistan (EAPA) with appreciation to ECO for preparing a comprehensive document and mandated the CPR to further elaborate and finalize the revision of modalities of the ECO Fund for Reconstruction in Afghanistan.

55. The Council urged the Member States to extend assistance and support in implementation of EAPA Programme, which will pave the way towards reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. *Copy of adopted EAPA Document attached as Annex-XII.*

Agenda Item No. 17

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

56. The Council renewed the Observer Status of (i) Turkish Cypriot State and (ii) Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States, in accordance with the ECO Modalities for granting Observer and/or Dialogue-Partnership Observer Status and the Article XIV (4-5) of the Treaty of Izmir for a further period of three Years, as recommended by the 228th and 229th CPR Meetings, respectively.

57. Under this agenda item, Turkmenistan did not participate in accordance with its neutral status.

Agenda Item No. 18

Any other business

58. No issue was discussed under this agenda item.

Agenda Item No. 19

Date and Venue of the next Meeting

59. The Council asked the Secretariat to coordinate with the interested Member State for convening of the 24th COM Meeting through diplomatic channels.

Agenda Item No. 20

Adoption of Draft Dushanbe Communiqué

60. The Council unanimously adopted the Dushanbe Communiqué. *Text of Communiqué attached as Annex-XIII.*

Agenda Item No. 21

Adoption of Draft Report of the 23rd COM

61. The Council unanimously adopted the Report of the 23rd COM.

Agenda Item No. 22

Vote of Thanks and Closing of the Meeting

62. The Meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to H.E. Mr. Sirodjidin Aslov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan and Chairman of the 23rd COM for conducting the deliberations in an efficient manner. The Meeting also expressed gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for extending warm hospitality to the delegations as well as making excellent arrangements for the 23rd COM Meeting. The Council also appreciated outstanding chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Ismatullo Nasredin, Deputy Foreign Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, during the Senior Officials Meeting.

63. The Council further appreciated the efforts of the ECO Secretary General and the Secretariat staff for preparing comprehensive documents and assisting the host in successfully convening of the 23rd Council of Ministers Meeting.
