

Economic Cooperation Organization

www.themcqtest.com

Introduction

- An intergovernmental regional organization established in 1985 by Iran, Pakistan and Turkey for the purpose of promoting economic, technical and cultural cooperation among the Member States
- ECO is the successor organization of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) which remained in existence from 1964 to 1979
- The Treaty of Izmir signed in 1977 as the legal framework for the RCD and later adopted as the basic Charter of ECO was modified to provide a proper legal basis to ECO's transition from RCD at the Ministerial Meeting held in Islamabad in June 1990

- In 1992, the Organization was expanded to include seven new members, namely: Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan
- 28th November is observed as the ECO Day

- The ECO region is full of bright trading prospects
- The organization faces daunting challenges with respect to realization of its objectives and goals
- The region is lacking in appropriate infrastructure and institutions to make full use of the available resources in the region

- ECO has embarked on several projects in priority sectors of its cooperation including energy, trade, transportation, agriculture and drug control

Organizational Structure

- The Council of Ministers (COM) is the highest policy and decision-making body and is composed of Ministers of Foreign Affairs or such other representatives of the Ministerial rank as may be designated by the Government
- The council of Ministers meets at least once a year by rotation among the Member States

- The Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) consists of the Permanent Representatives/Ambassadors of the Member States accredited to the Islamic Republic of Iran as well as to the ECO and the Director General for ECO Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran

- The Regional Planning Council (RPC) is composed of the Head of the Planning Organization of the Member States or such other representatives of corresponding authorities
- The General Secretariat consists of six Directorates under the supervision of the Secretary General and his Deputies. Three Specialized Agencies and six Regional Institutes are acting under the supervision of the General Secretariat

Regional Institutions

- ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry
-
- ECO Reinsurance Company
-
- ECO College of Insurance
-
- ECO Trade & Development Bank
-
- ECO Consultancy & Engineering Company

Specialized Agencies

- ECO Cultural Institute
-
- ECO Science Foundation
-
- ECO Educational Institute

Council of Ministers (COM)

- Council of Ministers (COM) is the highest policy and decision making body of ECO
- Following responsibilities:
 - a) Approve policies, strategies, and work programmes of the ECO;
 - b) Appoint the Secretary General and his Deputies;
 - c) Review and adopt the reports of the Regional Planning Council, Council of Permanent Representatives and Specialized Agencies;
 - d) Review the reports of the Regional Institutions;
 - e) Establish such subsidiary or ad-hoc Committees as appropriate;
 - f) Approve annual budget and audit reports of the Organization;
 - g) Decide on the scale of assessment of contribution by Member States to the budget of the Organization.
 - h) Prepare the draft agenda and other arrangements for the Summit Meetings;
 - i) Report to the Summit on all matters related to the implementation of ECO programmes and projects;
 - j) Determine and review as and when necessary, rules and regulations regarding all fiscal, administrative and organizational matters, provisions of financial, and staff regulations of the Secretariat.

Regional Planning Council (RPC)

- The Regional Planning Council (RPC) is composed of the Heads of the Planning Organization or the equivalent ministry of the Member States and meets at least once a year prior to the annual meeting of the Council of Ministers under the Chairpersonship of the representative of the Member state holding Chairpersonship of the Council of Ministers

- It shall evolve basic strategies/policies and plans in accordance with the objectives and principles of regional cooperation laid down in the Treaty of Izmir, as well as policy guidelines and directives of the Council of Ministers.

- To accomplish this task, the RPC shall:
- a) Institutionalize itself at the national levels for regular coordination among designated focal points in each area of activity.
- b) Biennially review ECO's priorities laid down in the Economic Cooperation Strategy.
- c) Annually review the progress of implementation of ECO's approved programmes of action and projects.
- d) Critically review and evaluate the economic work of the Secretariat and formulate recommendations to the COM.
- e) Prepare ECO's Annual Calendar of Events for submission to the Council of Ministers.
- f) Propose when necessary, the establishment of ad-hoc technical committees to the Council of Ministers.
- g) Prepare Annual Economic Report of the ECO region.
- h) Submit its annual report to the Council of Ministers through the Secretary General.

Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)

- The Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) is composed of Ambassadors from the Member states, accredited as representatives to the ECO and meets as often as necessary under the chairpersonship of the representative of Member State holding the chairpersonship of the Council of Ministers and carry out the following functions:

- a) It shall be responsible on behalf of and in the name of the Council of Ministers to implement its decisions and carry out its policies;
- b) Report to the Council of Ministers on all policy related issues and matters referred to it by the Council.
- c) Consider the budget and audit reports of the Organization and recommend them to the COM for approval.
- d) Advise/recommend to the Regional Planning Council on the economic functions of the Secretariat and other technical matters referred to it by the RPC.
- e) Review all the reports of the Secretariat.
- f) Prepare the draft agenda and expedite other arrangement for the R PC and COM meetings.
- g) Monitor and follow up action on the decisions of the RPC.

The Secretariat

- In pursuance of Article-IX of the Treaty of Izmir, the Secretariat shall initiate, coordinate and monitor the implementation of ECO activities and service all meetings of the Organization in line with the agreed documents and directives of the governing organs of ECO. Accordingly, the Secretariat shall undertake the following duties:

- I. To prepare plans, programmes and projects envisaged by ECO's decision-making organs;
- II. To serve as the permanent channel of communications and coordination among Member Governments in all areas related to ECO's agreed programmes and activities through all means available to it; in this context also to provide practical information to the Member States on procedural matters and all other fields as may be needed.
- III. To serve as the custodian of all documentation and archives of ECO;
- IV. To assist all permanent and ad-hoc organs of ECO in the performance of their work;
- V. To service technically and administratively all meetings and activities of the organization and help the preparation of reports and documents.
- VI. To act as the information agency for ECO in all related areas within as well as outside the region;
- VII. To communicate, cooperate and interact with relevant regional and international organizations and agencies in agreed areas in accordance with the policy documents and directives of ECO's decision making organs;

- VIII. To engage in activities and contacts in support of the member governments in order to facilitate financing of agreed projects and activities through international financial organizations, investors and donors;
- IX. To monitor the activities and maintain contact with regional institutions and specialized agencies and serve as a bridge between them and the Council of Ministers;
- X. To prepare and submit an Annual Report to the Council of Ministers on the overall predominance and activities of the organization;
- XI. To carry out such other functions and duties as may be assigned to it by the Council of Ministers and the Council of Permanent Representatives;
- XII. To establish and operate a documentation and publication system in line with international standards;
- XIII. To maintain effective communications with the Permanent Missions/Embassies and National Focal Points of the Member States through a modern and speedy network.

Major Activities of ECO

- Activities of ECO are conducted through Directorates under the supervision of Secretary General and his Deputies which considered and evolve projects and programmes of mutual benefit in the fields of:

- Trade and Investment
- Transport and Telecommunications
- Energy, Minerals and Environment
- Agriculture, Industry and Tourism
- Human Resources & Sustainable Development
- Project & Economic Research and Statistics
- International Relations

Objectives

- Sustainable economic development of Member States;
- Progressive removal of trade barriers and promotion of intra- regional trade; Greater role of ECO region in the growth of world trade; Gradual integration of the economies of the Member States with the world economy;
- Development of transport & communications infrastructure linking the Member States with each other and with the outside world;
- Economic liberalization and privatization;
- Mobilization and utilization of ECO region's material resources;

- Effective utilization of the agricultural and industrial potentials of ECO region;
- Regional cooperation for drug abuse control, ecological and environmental protection and strengthening of historical and cultural ties among the peoples of the ECO region; and
- Mutually beneficial cooperation with regional and international organizations.

Principles of Cooperation

- Sovereign equality of the Member States and mutual advantage;
- Linking of national economic, development plans with ECO's immediate and long-term objectives to the extent possible;
- Joint efforts to gain freer access to markets outside the ECO region for the raw materials and finished products of the Member States;
- Effective utilization of ECO institutions, agreements and cooperative arrangements with other regional and international organizations including multilateral financial institutions;
- Common endeavors to develop a harmonized approach for participation in regional and global arrangements;
- Realization of economic cooperation strategy; and Exchanges in educational, scientific, technical and cultural fields.

ECO Steering Committee on Entrepreneurship and SMEs Development met in Tehran

- The Fourth ECO Steering Committee Meeting on Entrepreneurship and SMEs Development was hosted by the Small Industries & Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) of the Islamic Republic of Iran on May 24-25, 2015 in Tehran. Delegations from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Turkey and ECO Secretariat participated in the Meeting.

- The Meeting reviewed progress made in the implementation of the decisions of previous meetings and agreed on new activities for further development of SMEs and entrepreneurship in the Region. Organization of various workshops and exhibitions, collection and exchange of data, exchange of experts and focal points networking were among the decisions of the Meeting.

ECO Senior Energy Experts discussed in Tehran regional synergy and coherence

- The 3rd High Level Experts Group (HLEG) Meeting on Energy, hosted by the Ministry of Petroleum of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was held in Tehran on 25-26 May 2015. The Meeting was attended by senior experts from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran (host), Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan, as well as, representatives from ECO-TDB and ECO-CCI. The ECO Secretariat delegation, led by Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, ECO Deputy Secretary General also attended the Meeting.

ECO Ministers of Health adopted Geneva Declaration on Health Cooperation

- The 2nd ECO Health Ministerial Meeting was held on 19 May 2015 on the sidelines of 68th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland. It was attended by honorable Ministers and high level officials from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey and Turkmenistan. Senior officials from World Health Organization (WHO) also participated in the Meeting. A delegation from the ECO Secretariat headed by Deputy Secretary General also attended the Meeting.

- The Meeting, chaired by Dr. Ghazizadeh Hashemi, the honorable Minister of Health and Medical Education of the Islamic Republic of Iran, reviewed the state of play of health cooperation in the ECO Region and agreed on the outline for an ECO Plan of Action on Health Cooperation in post 2015. The outline, drafted by the ECO High-level Experts Group Meeting, defines priorities for regional actions on health in line with the emerging global health agenda.

Heads of ECO Railways met in Tehran

- The 12th Meeting of Heads of ECO Railway Authorities was held in Tehran on 17-18 May 2015. Delegates from all ECO Member States except Uzbekistan participated in the Meeting.

- The Meeting was inaugurated by His Excellency Dr. Abbas Akhoundi, honourable Minister of Transport and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the inaugural session, the new “Map of the ECO Transit Railways” was unveiled by the honourable Minister of Iran and the Heads of the participating delegations. The Map was further approved by the Meeting.
- During the 2 day Event, the Heads of Delegation of the ECO Member States delivered comprehensive statements/ presentations on the latest developments and projects in their respective railway systems. The Meeting also considered a range of proposals focusing on reduction and unification of tariff rates, utilization of cargos, dates of dispatching of train and infrastructure development along the routes which were proposed by the Member States for smooth functioning of the trains along the ECO Railway Routes. The Meeting agreed on a range of decisions in this regard.
- The Meeting also took note of the status of cooperation with international and regional organizations and recommended the ECO Secretariat to take necessary measures to organize the railway related events at the national and regional levels, in cooperation with these organizations and in line with the existing MoUs.