



Final Report

**TRADE FACILITATION
COMMITTEE MEETING**

ECO CHAMBER of COMMERCE and INDUSTRY

Oct 9,2013
Tehran-I.R Iran



**Final Report of the
Trade Facilitation Committee Meeting of
ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI)
Oct 9, 2013, Tehran-I.R Iran**

1. The Fifth meeting of the Trade Facilitation Committee of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, hosted by Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) was held on Oct 9, 2013 in Tehran-I.R Iran. The representatives of the Trade Facilitation Committee from Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Republic of Turkey, Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Tajikistan (Commercial Attaché), as well as delegates from the ECO Trade and Development Bank , INC of ECO CCI, I.R Iran Ministry of Foreign Affairs and I.R Iran Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) participated in the meeting (list of participants :Annex I).

Agenda Item No – 1: Inauguration of the Meeting

2. The Chairman of the Trade Facilitation Committee delivered his opening statement.

Agenda Item No – 2: Adoption of the Agenda

3. The draft agenda of the meeting was adopted by the Meeting as below:
 - 1- Inauguration of the Meeting
 - 2- Adoption of the Agenda
 - 3- Appointment of the Drafting Committee
 - 4- Statement by the Chairman of Trade Facilitation Committee
 - 5- Activity Report by Secretary General, ECO CCI
 - 6- Remarks by heads of delegations
 - 7- Briefing the Committee by the ECO Secretariat especially on the ECOTA implementation and visa facilitation.
 - 8- Points by delegate(s) from Afghanistan on the implementations made regarding the 4th ECO Business Forum and Buyers-Sellers Meeting previously planned to be held in September 15-16, 2013 in Kabul, Afghanistan.
 - 9- Deliberations on Continuous holding of the ECO Trade Fair
 - 10- Discussions on establishment of a trade banking fund within ECO Trade and Development Bank in order to deliver facilities such as L/C Opening.
 - 11- Discussion on the possibility of expediting the Joint Trade Delegations to the central Asian Member States.
 - 12- Any Other Business
 - 13- Date and Venue of the next Meeting
 - 14- Adoption of the Report
 - 15- Vote of Thanks

Agenda Item No – 3: Appointment of the Drafting Committee

4. An Open Ended Drafting Committee consisting of the Members of the Trade Facilitation Committee was formed to prepare the Draft Report of the Meeting.

Agenda Item No – 4: Statement by the Chairman of Trade Facilitation Committee

5. The Chairman of Trade Facilitation Committee delivered his speech.

Agenda Item No – 5: Activity Report by Secretary General; ECO CCI

6. The ECO CCI Secretary General presented the ECO CCI Activity Report since the 4th Trade Facilitation Committee Meeting (Annex II).

Agenda Item No-6: Remarks by heads of delegations

7. Heads of delegations made their remarks under this agenda item.

- Pakistan delegate H.E Zubair Ahmed Malik underlined the concern of the house over the status of the ECO Business Forum to Afghanistan CCI and ask them to deal with the problem. He further reminded the importance of the consular meeting in Tehran as he also asked other member states to address the issue of ECO Visa Sticker.

FPCCI delegate also said that the indirect L/C operations done through third parties are a major hindrance to the intra ECO transactions and asked the ECO Secretariat to take up the issue with the ECO Bank.

He also said that the implementation of the ECOTA has exceeded its deadline number of times and the ECO Secretariat shall convey to ECO CCI problems in this regard.

- The Turkish delegate underlined the new changes in the global economy such as forming of the world's largest bloc (Trans Atlantic) stressing on the necessity of intra ECO trade and entrepreneurship highlighting the regional agreements such as ECOTA which is not still implemented and also visa hindrances prevailing among member states.

Revitalization of the Silk Road which is a potential of world's largest trade road was also covered by the Turkish delegate.

- Pakistan delegate approved of the points by the Turkish delegate he also stressed the long common border Pakistan has with Iran , He stressed need for opening more border openings, he also pointed out that despite PTA between Pakistan and Iran , Pakistan textiles are subject to very high rate of duties also trade between the two countries should be increased for mutual benefits .

He said that between Pakistan and Iran there is PTA (Preferential Trade Agreement) in which the tariffs cannot exceed a defined level.

- Iranian delegate called for lowering the extra levies and discriminatory tariffs in importations of goods and facilitation of visa issuance among the member states and called for solution to such problems.

Agenda Item No-7: Briefing the Committee by the ECO Secretariat especially on the ECOTA implementation and visa facilitation

8. The ECO Secretariat representative briefed the session on ECOTA implementation and visa facilitation in which he said that not all the ECOTA contracting parties could meet their legal and procedural formalities by the 1st Sep 2013 as decided by the fourth ECOTA Cooperation Council Meeting. He said that Pakistan, Turkey and Afghanistan have conveyed their lists as other signatory member states' list are required.

Also on visa agreement he said that four more countries have to ratify it in order to be implemented / also the problem is that the visa facilitation agreement is only ratified by one member country as other signatory members are invited to do so.

He also said that the Secretariat is working on creating an exporter- importer database as well as 2nd phase of the ECO Study on Trading Patterns in the ECO Region and WTO Accession seminars .

Agenda Item No-8: Points by delegate(s) from Afghanistan on latest status of the ECO Business Forum and Buyers Sellers Meeting to be held in 2013 in Kabul, Afghanistan.

9. The content of this agenda item was covered within Activity Report by Secretary General; ECO CCI briefing the session on the trend of communications and negotiations of the ECO CCI with the Afghanistan CCI due to absence of delegate from Afghanistan.

Also the ECO Secretariat delegate made the clarification in this regard.

- The ECO Secretariat was requested to contact the Afghanistan CCI to seek their views as well as government of Afghanistan about this trend whether they will be hosting or the host should be shifted to another country.
- The ECO Secretariat stated that the matter will be taken to the next RPC Meeting if needed.

Agenda Item No-9: Deliberations on Continuous holding of the ECO Trade Fair :

10. The Secretary General ECO CCI said that after Kazakhstan failing to hold this event , ECO CCI is ready to collaborate on holding this event in Tehran.He said that the Trade Industries and Mines Ministry of I.R Iran is awaited to confirm the dates as the ECO CCI and the private sector have to verify the possibility of hosting this event if there is no intested host for the event as it has not been held for the last four years.

Subsequently the participants discussed the Continuous holding of the ECO Trade Fair and its required circumstances.

- The ECO CCI offered to cooperate with member chambers in case of their request for hosting this event.
- ECO CCI Secretary General asserted measures such as information sharing on intra ECO trade potentials in form of trade directories and free/low fare exhibition space exchange as inductive to the trend of holding efficient trade fairs in the region.

- Turkish delegation suggested that the specialized fair companies of member countries be entrusted to hold this event in a professional manner with each participant company bearing the charges .She also said that the fair should be encouraging and interesting to the business communities of member states.
- The Pakistan delegate proposed the ECO CCI to devise a concept paper on the issue of ECO Trade Exhibition and distribute it among the member chambers in order to collect their feedback and reflect it to the next Executive Committee to communicate it to the next RPC Meeting for its consideration.

Agenda Item No-10: Discussions on establishment of a trade banking fund within ECO Trade and Development Bank in order to deliver facilities such as L/C Opening.

11. Members of the committee discussed this item earlier in the session and it was decided to further negotiate on this at presence of the ECO TDB delegate in the Executive Committee Meeting.

Agenda Item No-11: Discussion on the possibility of expediting the Joint Trade Delegations to the central Asian Member States.

12. Under this agenda item possibility of expediting the Joint Trade Delegations to the central Asian Member States was discussed by member of the committee.

- The ECO CCI Secretary General explained Mr Siddique Shiekh from FPCCI offer to cover the travel expenses of ECO member chamber delegations to Central Asian Countries and recounted the follow up made accordingly by the ECO CCI.
- The Pakistan delegate reinstated that Mr Shiekh's commitment in this respect will be fulfilled duly and the ECO CCI shall communicate with him in this regard.

Agenda Item No- 12: Any Other Business

13. The participants raised no other issues under this item.

Agenda Item No – 13: Date and Venue of the next Meeting

14. The Meeting left the date and venue of the 6th Meeting of Trade Facilitation Committee of ECO CCI to the disposal of the Executive Committee Meeting.

Agenda Item No – 14: Adoption of the Report

15. The Meeting unanimously adopted the Draft Report of 5th Trade Facilitation Committee Meeting of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI) and will decide to present the Report to the 18th Executive Committee of ECO CCI.

Agenda Item No – 15: Vote of Thanks

16. The participating Heads of delegations/members offered their thanks to Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) for the excellent arrangements made to hold this important meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to the participants during their stay in Tehran. The participants also appreciated the contribution of the ECO Secretariat for providing the necessary assistance and support.