

**Brief Report of ECO CCI activities, and the proposals of the  
ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI)**

**TO**

**12<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and 17<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee Meeting of ECO CCI**

**Nov 7,2012**

**Ankara, Turkey**

**In the Name of Allah**

ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry as the economic wing of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) representing the chambers of commerce and private sectors of member countries has embarked on diverse approaches to help implement the ECO CCI 10 Year Plan of Action and contribute to the annual 1% growth in the intra-ECO trade level and mobilize the private sector to give due consultations on how to materialize the non implemented regional agreements of ECO .

Hence, certain steps have been pursued during the one year period from Nov 2011 to Oct 2012 in the scope of tourism, women entrepreneurs, transportation, , industry and investment , trade facilitation and arbitration in which I will give a very brief report .

➤ **Tourism**

- In this context the ECO CCI in collaboration with the ECO Secretariat pursued development of tourism initiatives especially in health tourism in the ECO region which was crystallized in the final report of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Regional Planning Council (RPC) held in July 2012 in Tehran, I R Iran as follows.

*194. Based on the successful organizing the 1st and 2nd Conferences on Health Tourism of Islamic countries in 2010-2011 in Mashhad, Iran, the Council welcomed the proposals of the Islamic countries Health Tourism Association, to cooperate with the ECO Secretariat as well as ECO-CCI for the expansion of Health Tourism activities within ECO region.*

Accordingly, all the chambers of commerce , ministers of tourism and health of member countries have been invited to the **3<sup>rd</sup> Conference on Health Tourism** to be held on Dec 18-19, 2012 in Mashhad, I R Iran as Your Excellency's and your honorable institutions are welcomed to participate at this event for expansion of the intra ECO Medical and Health Tourism collaborations.

- Regarding the information on tourism potentials of the ECO region the member chambers have been requested to provide the ECO CCI with reports on the

capacities, potentials as well as ways and means of investment in tourism of their respective countries.

Hence the feedback in this regard has been collected from I.R Iran and Turkey and the reports have been published on the ECO CCI website and we urge other member chambers to send the ECO CCI their respective reports at the earliest.

- As another initiative, the ECO CCI has been making the necessary arrangements for holding the **First Forum of Hotel Owners and Tour Operators of ECO member countries** in order to boost the convergences of the private sector and joint efforts to bolster these areas in the region .

The pursuance for these event will be continued and it will be held after finalization of the date and other settings.

### **Proposals:**

- Establishment of branches of the Health Tourism association in all ECO member countries .
- Active participation of delegations from member countries at First Forum of Hotel Owners and Tour Operators of ECO member countries

### ➤ **Women Entrepreneurs Council:**

- Communications and collaborations were made with the Tajikistan CCI to hold the 5<sup>th</sup> WEC Meeting in Dushanbe in Aug 2012 but due to certain circumstances the event was called off to a later date for which the pursuance is still underway by the ECO CCI and Tajikistan CCI.
- The ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry has been planning and making due arrangement to hold and host the **Workshop on Empowerment of the Women Entrepreneurs of ECO member countries** in Tehran- I R Iran for which the initial arrangements are underway and the honorable member chambers have been requested to introduce their nominees as well as their top five businesswomen ( except Iran and Turkey) for documentation of the activities of the businesswomen of ECO region during the said event.

➤ **Transportation:**

- In order to devise a comprehensive report on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), the ECO CCI asked the Member Chambers at the 16<sup>th</sup> Executive Meeting for their reports on the bottlenecks and the proposals regarding the transportation in their respective countries, the TOBB and the ICCIMA have provided it and these reports have been presented to the Transit Trade Coordination Committee (TTCC) for their considerations.
- Regarding granting of multiple entry visas valid for all ECO Member States to the track drivers of carriers in ECO Member Countries, communications and consultation has been made with the ECO Secretariat and government officials .

As a result the 22<sup>nd</sup> Regional Planning Council (RPC) in July 2012 in Tehran called on Member Countries to look into facilitating the visa issuance to the Transit Operators of Member Countries.

- In order for cargo provision and marketing activities for the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) train, during the last Executive Committee meeting in Karachi- I.R Pakistan, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed among the Chambers of Commerce of en route countries i.e. Iran, Turkey and Pakistan on transit cooperation with special focus on marketing the ITI cargo train and assignment of marketing companies from signatory countries for which the company from Iran has been assigned and Turkish and Pakistani companies are being awaited to be nominated .
- The ECO CCI actively participated at the Transit Transport Coordination Committee (TTCC) in April 2012 in Islamabad. Pakistan where the action plan for establishment of the Islamabad. Tehran- Istanbul road corridor (ECO ITI Road Corridor) was signed among the participating parties as the ECO CCI has got the responsibility for marketing of this corridor.

➤ **Industry and Investment :**

- As decided by the earlier meeting of the Industry and Investment Committee, the ECO CCI called the member chambers to compile and send a report comprising of the potential areas and projects for industrial joint investments.

Therefore respective reports of Pakistan, Iran and Turkey were received and duly published on to the ECO CCI website for information of prospective investors and decision makers of the ECO member countries.

- Considering the very critical role of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO TDB) as the sole international banking institution available under the aegis of ECO ,the ECO CCI has assumed the task to encourage the bank to support the joint industrial investments in the ECO region and the need for their prioritization by this bank.
- In line with implementation of the Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investment in the ECO region (APPI), the ECO CCI has approached the ECO Secretariat through multiple communications and negotiations in order for fast track approach for implementation of the APPI.

➤ **Trade Facilitation:**

- Regarding **the 4th ECO Business Forum (EBF)** The ECO CCI has made due communications and consultations with the Afghanistan chamber of Commerce and Industry in order to hold the forum in Kabul which was previously planned to be held Sep 30,2012 as the event is planned to be held later this year.

- In line with precipitating the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), the ECO CCI approached the Republic of Tajikistan to ratify the Annexes of the ECOTA which resulted in the decision of the meeting of the Council of Ministers (COM) held on Oct 13-16, 2012 in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan that the ECOTA shall be implemented from January 2013.

- Furthermore due to negotiations of the ECO CCI during the recent meeting of the Council of Ministers in Baku, holding and organizing the ECO Business Forum and ECO Trade Exhibition was assigned to ECO CCI.

- The Visa Sticker Scheme as a proposal of the ECO CCI has been consulted and pursued with the member countries' authorities and will be followed till the Meeting of the ECO Consular Officials which will consider and decide on the issue.
- Considering the very critical role of the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO TDB) as the sole international banking institution available under the aegis of ECO the ECO CCI has assumed the task to encourage the bank to take the following measures:
  - Expansion of the activities of the Bank to trade financing ( i.e. L/C opening operations).
  - Expansion of the portfolio of the bank by granting the permission for private banks of member countries by the authorities of the ECO TDB to have a share in the ECO TDB's capital.
  - Increase of the number of ECO TDB member countries

In this context during the Council of Ministers (COM) Meetings in Baku The Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan officially requested for accession to the ECO TDB.

➤ **Arbitration:**

- With respect to the establishment of ECO CCI Arbitration Center as well as its Internal Regulations of the ECO CCI which was welcome by the 21<sup>st</sup> Regional Planning Council (RPC) on May 2011 in Tehran demanding the ECO CCI member chambers regarding the nature, ways and means of RPC support for establishment of the ECO CCI Arbitration Center , due communications have been made with the member chambers as chambers of commerce of Iran and Turkey have expressed their intended modalities for this purpose.

Therefore the results were reflected to the 22<sup>nd</sup> RPC Meeting on July 9-11,2012 in Tehran .

- Hence the 22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the RPC held on July,2012 in Tehran upon proposals of the ECO CCI requested the member countries to look into improvement and verification of the legal infrastructures to facilitate the execution of arbitration awards.

Furthermore the RPC demanded that those member countries who have not still joined the 1958 New York Convention on Arbitration to sign and ratify the convention to pave the way for the concerted approach of all member countries towards arbitration.

- It is to be mentioned that a workshop on arbitration is planned to be held in Tehran in the near future by the ECO Secretariat in collaboration of the ECO CCI and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) for which member chambers will be informed accordingly.

### **Publication initiatives of the ECO CCI**

ECO CCI Secretariat has embarked on the research-publication approach to disseminate proper information regarding the economic capacities of member countries through extensive field studies and research initiatives by its experts as below are published;

- 1- The booklet on tourism in ECO member countries
- 2- The Booklet on the intra- ECO Trade Potentials
- 3- The Booklet on Bandar Abbas-Almaty Train Report
- 4- The Islamabad-Tehran –Istanbul train Report
- 5- Compiling the booklet containing a comprehensive study on Tourism in the ECO Region
- 6- Compiling the booklet on transit capacities of ECO countries
- 7- The Booklet on the intra-ECO Trade Potentials on Foodstuffs

### **Other initiatives of the ECO CCI**

- The ECO CCI in consultation with chambers of commerce of member countries and Mashhad-International Exhibitions Company has co organized the **ECO Printing and Packaging Exhibition (PECO)** in Mashhad- I R on Feb 8-11, 2012 which was a great success in bringing together the activists of the printing and packaging industries in member countries with the ultimate aim of forming the ECO Printing and Packaging Association.
- The ECO CCI has actively contributed in organizing and participated at the **International Brand Conference** held on Feb 16-17, 2012 in Tehran I R Iran which was attended by a great number of foreign participants.
- As an initiative and proposal of the ECO CCI and in line with efforts to bolster the energy related collaborations among the member countries, the **22<sup>nd</sup> Regional Planning Council (RPC)**

(July 9-12,2012) approved that the ECO energy Charter be established in order to further promote the cooperations of the member countries in this sector.

Also at the 22<sup>nd</sup> RPC based on the initiative of the ECO CCI , the council made a decision in its final report regarding the participation of the private sector in the energy market of the region as follows:

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*129- i :Private sector can play an important role to enhance ECO energy cooperation. In order to expedite the production operations and distribution of crude oil, natural gas, petrochemical products and development of electricity networks, ECO Member States could facilitate participation of private sector in the ECO energy activities, including through establishing consortiums and joint venture for the implementation of regional and international projects. The ECO-CCI may be tasked to present their proposals in this regard.*

- In line with precipitating the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA), the ECO CCI approached the Republic of Tajikistan to ratify the Annexes of the ECOTA at the earliest

Furthermore His Excellency, President ECO CCI attended **the Council of Ministers (COM) held on Oct 13-16, 2012 in Baku** and addressed the meetings with proposals and views of the private sector of ECO represented by the ECO CCI .

As a result fast track implementation of ECO agreements was deliberated and it was approved that the ECOTA shall be implemented from January 2013.

Also at the said meeting holding and organizing the ECO Business Forum and ECO Trade Exhibition was assigned to ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

At the end I would like to express my gratitude towards His Excellency President and the staff of the Union of Turkish Chambers and Commodity Exchanges for the excellent arrangements made for holding these meetings of the ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry in the beautiful city of Ankara.

Thank You