



REPORT

**TRADE FACILITATION
COMMITTEE MEETING**

ECO CHAMBER of COMMERCE and INDUSTRY

Sep 3, 2014
Karachi-I.R Pakistan



**Report of the
Sixth Trade Facilitation Committee Meeting of
ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI)
Sep 3, 2014
Karachi- I.R Pakistan**

The Sixth meeting of the Trade Facilitation Committee of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry, hosted by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) was held on Sep 3, 2014 in Karachi-I.R Pakistan. The representatives of the Trade Facilitation Committee from member Chambers as well as delegates from the ECO Secretariat and the ECO Trade and Development Bank (ECO TDB) participated in the meeting as well as the Commercial Attaches of Iran and Turkey in Iran to Pakistan (list at Annex I).

Agenda Item No – 1: Inauguration of the Meeting

The meeting was inaugurated with recitation of verses from the Holy Quran. The Chairman of the Trade Facilitation Committee Mr Amjad Rafi, delivered his welcome statement in which he gave a record of the establishment of the ECO CCI Trade facilitation Committee (Annex II).

He said that the current status of the trade relations among the ECO member states is not in a satisfactory state given the very vast potentials of the region in the areas of joint ventures and investments mainly due to absence of Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs) and non implementation of the ECO Trade Agreement (ECOTA) .

Mr Rafi called on the Republic of Tajikistan as the only non ratifying signatory states of ECOTA to ratify and expedite the process of its implementation.

- Tajik delegate vowed to take the issue to the Tajikistan Ministry of Economy in order for further proceedings.
- Pakistani delegate stated that he will convey to the Pakistani Ministry of Transportation to join the TIR convention given the significance of the convention in promotion of intra ECO transit and transport .

Agenda Item No – 2: Adoption of the Agenda

The draft agenda of the meeting was adopted by the Meeting as follows :

- 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- Notes on encouragement of the member states through Member Chambers for implementation of the ECOTA and Visa Facilitation agreements and the latest developments by the members of the committee
- 8- Briefing on Negotiations with ETDB for arranging a forum at the end of 2014 comprising of financial institutions (private/public)of the Member States;
- 9- Points by the ECO CCI Secretary General on the status of the 4th ECO Business Forum (rescheduled to be held in R of Azerbaijan in 2015)
- 10- Any Other Business
- 11- Date and Venue of the next Meeting
- 12- Adoption of the Report
- 13- Vote of Thanks

Agenda Item No – 3: Appointment of the Drafting Committee

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

This agenda item was already fulfilled within Item No- 1.

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

Secretary General, ECO CCI delivered an activity report of the ECO CCI in the last three years (Annex III) in which he called for removal of Non Tariff Barriers (NTB's) for promotion of intra ECO Trade and Investment .

Agenda Item No-6: Remarks by heads of delegations,

Heads of delegations made their remarks under this agenda item.

Pakistani delegate called for seriousness of the governments for promotion of the intra ECO trade.He also called for more active participation of member chambers in ECO CCI events.

He requested the Iranian delegation to encourage the government to deliver the concession list of ECOTA for its implementation.

Another Pakistani delegate delivered a presentation on ECO Prospects (Annex IV) to the session.

Iranian delegate said that there should be an outsourced fault finding committee to study the real reasons behind non satisfactory level of intra ECO trade and investments.

He further called for the resolute government will of ECO member states for promotion of intra ECO trade and joint investments and removal of Tariff and Non Tariff Barriers (NTBs) which will be conveyed by the Presidents of ECO member chambers.

Afghanistan delegate stated that his country is of the lowest tariffs in the region which has caused a smuggling trade to be fomented in Afghanistan- Pakistan border for which the Afghan side has been asked to raise the tariffs in order to stop the illegal trade.

The Turkish delegate presented the meeting with an address in which she stressed the issue of reciprocity visa problems , the lack of free trade areas in the ECO region and the lack of transition routes connecting the ECO Countries .

Agenda Item No-7: Notes on encouragement of the member states through Member Chambers for implementation of the ECOTA and Visa Facilitation Agreement and the latest developments by the members of the committee,

The ECO Secretariat briefed the session on the measures taken by the member states for implementation of the ECOTA and Visa Facilitation agreements (Annex V).

He said that the ECO lacks the Preferential Trade Agreements (PTA)s and establishment of a Free Trade Area which will result in a 10% increase in intra ECO trade.

- ECO Secretariat Further mentioned the status of the ECO Trade Agreement country wise calling on Tajikistan to ratify the agreement which was planned to happen by 1st July 2014.
- The ECO Secretariat asked Iran Chamber of Commerce to encourage the government to deliver the ECOTA goods lists in due manner.
- ECO Secretariat delegate said that Visa Facilitation Agreement should be signed and ratified by more member states.

Agenda Item No-8: Briefing on Negotiations with ETDB for arranging a forum at the end of 2014 comprising of financial institutions (private/public)of the Member States;

Under this agenda item the committee was briefed on Negotiations with ETDB for arranging a forum at the end of 2014 comprising of financial institutions (private/public)of the Member States;

Secretary General ECO CCI said that based on the negotiations within the 24th Regional Planning Council (RPC) meeting , in collaboration of ECOTDB,ECO CCI and ECO Secretariat, the said event will be held to devise the new mechanisms for financial support of the ECO region's projects by private /public banks and financial institutions of member states.

- Member chambers were called to encourage their governments to contribute to the holding of the forum whereas the Federation of Pakistani CCIs as the ECO CCI Secretariat will be responsible for due communications and negotiations.

Agenda Item No-9: Points by the ECO CCI Secretary General on the status of the 4th ECO Business Forum (rescheduled to be held in R of Azerbaijan in 2015)

ECO Secretariat presented points on the status of the 4th ECO Business Forum (rescheduled to be held in Republic of Azerbaijan in 2015 as a result of the latest RPC Meeting).

Dr Karbasi said that due to the importance of the forum and necessity for attracting a suitable volume of participation as it was postponed several times , according to the consultation of the Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR), the RPC 24th Regional Planning Council meeting shifted the event from Afghanistan to Republic of Azerbaijan .

- The ECO CCI shall make due arrangements and cooperation with Republic of Azerbaijan chamber of commerce for holding the 4th ECO Business Forum in Azerbaijan in 2015 .

Agenda Item No- 10: Any Other Business

No other issues were raised under this item.

Agenda Item No – 11: Date and Venue of the next Meeting

The Meeting asked for the proposals on date and venue of the 7th Meeting of Trade Facilitation Committee of ECO CCI which was left for approval of the Executive Committee and General Assembly Meetings.

Agenda Item No – 12: Adoption of the Report

The Meeting adopted the Draft Report of 6th Trade Facilitation Committee Meeting of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI) and decided to present the Report to the 19th Executive Committee of ECO CCI for approval .

Agenda Item No – 13: Vote of Thanks

The participating Heads of delegations/members offered their thanks to the Federation of Pakistan CCI's (FPCCI) for the excellent arrangements made to hold this important meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to the participants during their stay in Karachi. The participants also appreciated the contribution of the ECO Secretariat and the ECO TDB for providing the necessary assistance and support.