



DRAFT REPORT

**TOURISM COMMITTEE
MEETING**

ECO CHAMBER of COMMERCE and INDUSTRY

March 3, 2018
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran



**Draft Report of the
Tenth Tourism Committee Meeting of
ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI)
March 3, 2018 Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran**

The Tenth meeting of Specialized Committee of Tourism of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI), hosted by the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) was held on March 3, 2018 in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. The Presidents/Vice Presidents/ Representatives of the member Chambers as well as representatives from ECO Secretariat and ECO TDB participated in the meeting.

Agenda Item No – 1: Inauguration of the Meeting

The Chairperson of the Tourism Committee welcomed the participants of the meeting.

Agenda Item No – 2: Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted by the representatives/participants of Members Countries as follows.

1. Inauguration of the meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Appointment of the Drafting Committee
4. Statement by the Chairperson of the Tourism Committee
5. Activity Report by ECO CCI
6. Remarks by heads of delegations
7. To review and discuss the proposal of TOBB for holding of ECO tourism sharing experience programme by TOBB
8. To discuss and review the progress of 2nd Confobition (Conference + Exhibition) on Health Tourism in ECO member states by ICCIMA and update thereon by ECO Secretariat
9. To discuss and review holding of 11th International Exhibition on Tourism in Iran and update thereon by ECO Secretariat
10. To discuss and review the preparation of the ECO Tourism Strategy
11. To discuss and review the holding of 4th International ECO/Silk Road Festival and update thereon by ECO Secretariat
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

A Drafting Committee consisting of the following members was appointed to prepare the draft Report of the Meeting:

1. Mr. Mahdi Razzaghshoar (Iran)
2. Ms. Shahla Ali Hasan (Turkey)
3. Mr .Aneeq Ali Malik (Pakistan)
4. Ms Amber Fatima (ECO-CCI)

Agenda Item No – 4: Statement by the Chairperson of Tourism Committee

The Chairperson of Tourism Committee while stressing the importance of joint insurance and visa relaxation in health sector ,delivered his speech (Annexed 1) in which he made the below proposals which were taken note of by the house:

1. The prosperity and development of maritime tourism and water sports in the countries of the ECO, and especially in the Caspian littoral countries, will be prioritized in 2018 and will be on the agenda of the Iran CCI and the ECO CCI .
2. Among the issues that persist between the countries of the ECO , the issue of visas and simplification of the procedures for issuing it. The ECO visa sticker is one of the old debates, the main policy of which is the foreign policy of governments, but it has not yet come to an end. The emphasis on this topic will be announced again.
3. Holding tourism and handicraft exhibitions that can be one of the important and influential events in the vicinity of nations and familiar with the traditions, beliefs, traditions and culture of different countries, and thus the desire to travel more. In the same vein, with the expansion of the Internet and mass media, it is possible to think about the creation of an exhibition in cyberspace.
4. Halal tourism logo or brand in ECO countries will be approved and registered by the member states.
5. Common procedures to emphasize the use of health tourism capacities in ECO countries should be addressed by private sector and public sector officials.
6. Due attention to establishment of joint medical and health insurance schemes among the member states should be given by the governments especially in the field of health tourism

Agenda Item No – 5: Activity Report by ECO CCI

The Secretary General ECO CCI presented activity report of specialized Committee (Report Annexed 2).

Secretary General ECO-CCI proposed holding of workshop on Tourism on the sideline of next Specialized Committee Meeting.

Agenda Item No -6 : Remarks by heads of delegations

Afghanistan delegates stated that the intra-city tourism is very high in their country. Due to the instability of security situations in Afghanistan the foreign delegates are reluctant to visit. He hoped and forecasted that the tourism will be enhancing to one million after the improvement of situation.

The Turkish delegate states that over the past year the tourism sector has experienced continued expansion and become one of the largest and fastest growing sector. He stated that while international tourist arrival has increased from 674 million in 2000 to 1,235 billion in 2016 and its representing 7percent of world exports in goods and services. The Turkish delegation stressed upon the fact that ECO region has a significant potential to be one of the major tourist destination in the world and that by 2030 the international tourist arrived worldwide would increase to 1.8 billion. He concluded by stating that ECO need to develop their infrastructure, promote tourism destination of our region to increase our share in tourism revenue.

The Uzbek delegate highlighted the tourism prospects of their country and highlighted important tourist places i.e. Bukhara and Summer Qand which are religious tourism places which have Shrines, tombs, scientist, important universities and others. Turkey is supporting Uzbekistan in promotion of tourism and also the Turkish airline is facilitated in bringing tourist from Malaysia, Japan and other countries. He believed that there is a sheer need to promote tourism among members nations. He also informed that their chamber is facilitating visa arrangements through designed Ambassadors in the respective nations.

Kyrgyz Republic also highlighted the physical features of their country and informed that the contribution of tourism in their economy is developing. she also informed about the tourism events of their country like tribal festival and world nomad games which will be held in 2018 and invited all the nations to participate in these events.

Pakistani delegate stated that 2019 year maybe declared as the year of Tourism by all ten nations and following suggestions should be taken.

1. ECO countries may constitute a committee to develop promotion literature, take advantage of internet and come up with a dynamic website and should run a commercial on air through ECO countries networking.

2. Relax visa issuance and should be granted on arrival and may be E-visa be arranged as like schengen or other visas
3. combine the intelligence agencies to monitor, watch and pro-act against any mishap
4. Sports festivals between ECO countries maybe initiated,
5. Comprehensive exchange program of bringing students with in each countries
6. there is a need to undertake cultural exchange, tourism exhibition, food festivals and ECO film festivals, ECO language centers and members states tourism documentary.
7. Tourism facilitation center and information desk may be established in all countries
8. ECO Ambassadors of Tourism Committee should be designated

The ECO Secretariat shared with the distinguished delegates about the ECO Vision- 2025, approved by the leadership of the region, which includes, among others, tourism as a priority/core sector envisaging active participation of private sector and involvement of local communities for realization of its vast potential in the region. The ECO Secretariat also stated that possible support will be accorded to the ECO-CCI initiatives in this regard.

Agenda Item No-7: To review and discuss the proposal of TOBB for holding of ECO tourism sharing experience programme by TOBB

TOBB informed that their organization has revised the concept paper and shared with the ECO CCI Secretariat.

Agenda Item No -8: To discuss and review the progress of 2nd Confobition (Conference + Exhibition) on Health Tourism in ECO member states by ICCIMA and update thereon by ECO Secretariat

ICCIMA informed that their organization will organize the second ECO Health Tourism confobition in October 2018 in Ardabil province-Iran hosted by Ardabil CCI which is important area for health tourism and the exact date and time will be communicated shortly.

The ECO Secretariat recommended that the national chambers to maximize their participation in second confobition in Iran.

ICCIMA further proposed that simultaneous with the above program, we may hold a meeting of tourist operators and hotel owners with special reference to health. The Iranian delegate further stressed that the hosting of the said events is subject to participation of top experts and officials of tourism of above association in member states as otherwise hosting of such events will not be conducted by Iran.

ECO-CCI appreciated the initiative of ICCIMA and assured maximum participation from member chambers.

Agenda Item No - 9: To discuss and review holding of 11th International Exhibition on Tourism in Iran and update thereon by ECO Secretariat

The representative of ECO Secretariat stated that holding of 11th International Exhibition is indeed welcome which was attended by large number of companies from over 21 countries.

Agenda Item No-10: To discuss and review the preparation of the ECO Tourism Strategy by ECO Secretariat

ECO secretariat informed that ECO tourism strategy will be prepared by the working group for which the secretariat has suggested the member states to volunteer hosting. the Iranian delegate proposed that the representatives of chambers of commerce on behalf of the private sector participate at this working group to have the contributions of this sector duly.

Agenda Item No-11: To discuss and review the holding of 4th International ECO/Silk Road Festival and update thereon by ECO Secretariat

With regard to 4th International Silk Road festival, the ECO secretariat stated that it would be held in May 2018 in Zanjan province of Iran. He called upon the National Chambers to actively participate to make it a successful event.

Agenda Item No-12: Any other Business

With regard to ECO Tourism catalogue, the ECO secretariat requested the members states to provide information at the earliest convenience to the Republic of Turkey as decided in the 28th RPC meeting in Islamabad.

There was no other matter to discuss.

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

The house proposed to leave the date of holding of next Meeting of Tourism Committee of ECO CCI on the approval of the 24th Executive Committee and 16th General Assembly Meeting.

Agenda Item No - 16: Adoption of the Report

The Meeting adopted the Draft Report of Tenth Tourism Committee Meeting of ECO Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ECO CCI) and decided to present the Report to the 24th Executive Committee and 16th General Assembly Meeting of ECO CCI for adoption.

Agenda Item No - 17: Vote of Thanks

The participating Heads of delegations/members offered their thanks to the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, 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, Iran. The participants also appreciated the contribution of the ECO-CCI Secretariat for providing the necessary assistance and support.

**Report by Secretary General of ECO-CCI
On activities of Tourism Committee Meeting
held on March 3, 2018 at Tehran, Iran**

Tourism has become the most developing industry and plays a crucial role in economic development and growth, prosperity, poverty alleviation, sustaining employment and improving balance of payment. As like the other nations, Tourism industry has also received great attention in the ECO region due to its contribution in the development of service industries in member nations; enhancing regional and global understanding and cultural awareness for economic cooperation.

The ECO region is geographically vast, and well endowed; having numerous natural attractions along with historical, cultural and religious places, museums, customs, shrines, unique landscape, moderate climate, architectures, and more than 50,000 years of history which attracts foreigner and domestic tourist to enjoys a convenient opportunities and utilize the occasions. The region indeed has been a bridge between the continents of Asia and Europe. The unique and attractive feature of ECO region offers huge potential of tourism for intra-regional and outside the regional countries, but the overall contribution of tourism industry of ECO region in world tourism is very low. According to the available statistics, around 56 million tourists visited last year in the members ECO region which is just 4.8 percent of world tourist. Out of which 40 million tourists visited only in Turkey; which made Turkey the top tourist destination followed by Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Azerbaijan etc. This also contributes in foreign exchange and as per world bank statistics, Turkey received US\$ 37.4 billion from inbound tourism and spent US\$ 5.4 billion on outbound tourism while Iran received US\$ two billion from inbound and spent US\$ 8.2 billion and Pakistan received US\$ 0.9 billion from inbound tourism and US\$ 2.0 billion spent on outbound tourism. The success factors behind the Turkey are easy visa processing system, strong communication network, branding and infrastructural development. Promotion of tourism in ECO region for member countries tourist is need of time which will help in expanding intra-ECO trade, intra-regional investment, employment opportunities, access of technology of members nations and also improving national income.

In order to promote the tourism activities several projects of ECO-CCI are in pipeline like Tourism Experience Sharing Program, holding conference and exhibition on Health Tourism (Conference + Exhibition) and Forum of Hotel Owner and Tour Operators etc. The printing of 2nd edition of ECO Tourism Guide is also under consideration in ECO Secretariat.

During last meeting of Tourism Committee, the ECO-CCI organized a workshop on tourism at Ankara, Turkey which gave the opportunity to member nations to promote tourism activities. During the last meeting of Regional Planning Council of ECO, it was decided that joint Tourism strategy for promotion of tourism will be formulated. It would be appreciated if ECO Secretariat give update on the formulation of strategy and holding of 11 ECO Tourism exhibition.

In the tourism experience sharing program, the TOBB-Turkey submitted a concept paper of on Tourism circulated many time in 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016 (updated) among the member chambers for their views and comments through email and distributed in meetings as well but regretted to state that none of member chambers has commented over it.