

Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

2018 AFACT Secretariat, Bangladesh

Office Address: Bangladesh Computer Samity (BCS)

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Minutes of AFACT Monthly Conference Call 2017-12-14, 13.30 BST/07.30 UTC

Revised & Final

Participants:

Bangladesh: Mr. Ali Ashfak, Mr. Pabitra Mistry

Japan: Mr. Kanenori Kedoin, Mr. Hisanao Sugamata

Chinese Taipei: Dr. Eva Yi-Yuan Yueh

Iran: Azadeh Bagheri

India: Raj Kumar Arora

Agendas:

1. Approval of minutes of meeting held on 23 Nov. 2017
2. 2018 AFACT StC members Confirmation
3. AFACT Host Country selection for 2019 & 2020
4. 2018 AFACT mid-term meeting organization in Bangladesh
5. 2018 AFACT Secretariat Operation
6. Miscellaneous

Agenda wise discussion & decision:

Agenda-1: Approval of minutes of meeting held on 23 Nov. 2017

Decision:

-All participants unanimously approved the minutes of meeting (held on Dec 14, 2017) presented in the meeting which was sent to all by the 2018 AFACT Secretariat.

Agenda-2: 2018 AFACT StC members Confirmation

Discussion:

-Mr. Ali asked all participants how to finalize the 2018 StC members list and requested all to share opinion of all.

-Dr. Eva suggested that if Thailand becomes the host for 2019, one person will be included in the StC final member list from Thailand as Vice Chair and this position goes to any country who will become the next host.

- Mr. Sugamata suggested that, in March mid-term program we can fix the StC final members list.

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Decision:

-When selecting host country for the year 2019 is solved, we can finalize the StC member list and if it remains pending, finally we can solve this matter in March mid-term program.

Agenda-3: AFACT Host Country selection for 2019 & 2020

Discussion:

-Mr. Ali Ashfak informed that 2018 Bangladesh Secretariat contacted and talked with Mr. Arora for becoming host for 2019 by India, but India informed that, it is very difficult for them to be host for 2019. We sent email to Dr. Urachada (Dao) as per advice by Dr. Eva to take concern of Thailand for becoming host, but we did not get any response from Thailand, so, Thailand's concern could not be known.

-Dr. Eva suggested to take concern of Dr. Urachada Ketprom (Dao) of Thailand regarding Thailand's becoming host for 2019 and she also recommended that, if Thailand fails to take decision to become host for 2019 then again we can re-talk with India to proceed for taking permission for becoming host.

- Mr. Arora said that basically India wanted to be host for 2018 but as Bangladesh became the host for 2018 India did not proceed the matter. For India's internal issues such as General Election in the year 2019, it is very difficult for India to be host for 2019. He suggested to talk with Thailand for becoming host for the year 2019.

-Ms. Azadeh said that, as India cannot proceed for becoming host for 2019, Thailand can be requested to proceed for becoming host and she also said that, she will raise this matter internally to discuss that with Dr. Zargar as the permanent secretariat and seek his readiness and preparatory support to assist with that to see the possibility for Iran.

- Eva suggested that, we should urge Thailand seriously for the hosting issue and if Thailand fails then, Iran as AFACT Secretariat in support of AFACT affairs ought to proceed for becoming the host.

Decision:

-Mr. Ali told that, Bangladesh Secretariat would discuss the matter with all and hope to settle the hosting matter by next concall meeting, but for this need cooperation from all.

Agenda-4: 2018 AFACT mid-term meeting organization in Bangladesh

Discussion:

-Mr. Ali said that, on March 28-30, 2018 Bangladesh can hold AFACT next mid-term program at Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. It is a very beautiful place and located in the coastal region of the country at the lap to Bay of Bengal.

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-Dr. Eva affirmed with the date and schedule mentioned by Mr. Ali.

-Ms. Azadeh expressed her opinion that, the time was ok. But we mentioned that, they need internal permission from Iran Government to attend the program.

-Mr. Sugamata said that, date was ok and no problem for Japan to attend.

-Mr. Ali asked all to know that, whether if any other side events are added with the AFACT prototype regular program, how can it be ad-on and he wanted to know others opinion regarding this. Mr. Ali also wanted to know the cost issue of organizing the AFACT's program.

-Azadeh replied that cost issue depends on the host and how they can design the program.

-Mr. Ali informed that we can design the 4 days program as on 1st Day/27 March, all participants arrive at the venue and attend the dinner program; 2nd Day/28 March Registration, AFACT StC Meeting, Business networking, 3 Committee meetings, Innovation showcase, Country best practices presentation lunch, dinner; 3rd Day/29 March, Seminars, Innovation pitching session and business match-making; 4th Day/30th sight-seeing & farewell. Ali informed all that, 5 innovative showcase/project we can present in the program with 1 hour time slot to them to present their innovation. Besides, Seminar on cross-border topic can be arranged. Mr. Ali informed that, we are trying to involve our government in this program with sponsors and if we become success it can be easier for us to hold this type of mega program and we can get some exclusive facilities from government specially on visa issues and security.

-Dr. Eva suggested that, we can design the program as 1st Day/28 March, for StC meeting, Working Group meeting for half day; 2nd Day/29 March Full day session with seminars, showcasing and 3rd Day/30 March closing day program. She also suggested regarding side events to be as Informal teaching on Digital service to youngsters, Seminar on ICT Innovation, Mobile Services, Cross-border e-commerce single window etc.

-Mr. Kedoin suggested as on 1st Day/28 March & 2nd Day/29 March full day committee and working group meeting, StC meeting can be held on afternoon/29 March; and one and half day will be required for all working group meetings.

-Mr. Sugamata questioned about whether any Seminar can be possible in Cox's Bazar program as it is not viable in that program with tight-schedule time.

-Mr. Ali asked Japan about how many person from Japan may attend the upcoming event in Bangladesh?

-Mr. Kedoin replied that 3 to 4 person can attend the AFACT program in Bangladesh.

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Dr. Eva advised Bangladesh Secretariat to send all the participants, the registration form and formal invitation with program details, that they can take preparation and able to get more participants on cross-border and digital trade subjects.

-Mr. Ali questioned all to share opinion regarding program cost bearing issue of the mid-term.

Mr. Sugamata replied that Transportation, Hotel fare can be shared by each participants.

-Dr. Eva said that we first need to know the cost/budget of the mid-program then we can share this with others to take decision to organize it smoothly.

-Dr. Eva will contact with all BDC, TMC, CSC committee Chairman to prepare for mid-term program and holding internal meetings.

Decision:

- AFACT mid-term program tentative date is fixed on 28-30 March, 2018 which will be held at Royal Tulip Sea Pearl Beach Resort & Spa, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

-It will be a 3 day program with StC and WG Meeting, Seminars, Innovation Showcase, Discussion on digital trade & security, e-commerce, sight-seeing etc.

Agenda-5: 2018 AFACT Secretariat Operation

Discussion:

-Mr. Ali asked Dr. Eva and Ms. Azadeh to suggest regarding how to smoothly operate the Secretariat, its documentation issue, income, expenditure record issue, bank account etc. We want to run our Secretariat smoothly with being transparent to all in our all activities.

-Ms. Azaseh said that, its ok, Bangladesh Secretariat is operating well all activities till date.

-Dr. Eva also said that present Host Secretariat is running all works fine. She mentioned, AFACT's events are organized by the host country with supports from AFACT Permanent Secretariat. AFACT has no bank account yet. AFACT members take turns to host AFACT meetings. The host country bears the cost of organizing 2 times of F2F meetings in a year. AFACT Secretariat is responsible for maintaining AFACT website and bi-annual yearbook as a resources center. All experts from AFACT member countries participate in AFACT activities in a voluntary mode. Mr. Ali mentioned that Mr. Pabitra on behalf of the present Secretariat will take necessary steps consulting with AFACT Secretariat and StC members about creating an 2018 website and formulating mid-term program arrangement details.

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-Mr. Pabitra asked Ms. Azadeh regarding any suggestion to Secretariat operation and others issues. Ms. Azadeh replied that, Mr. Pabitra is doing well and Iran is ready to provide any assistance to Bangladesh Secretariat in daily activities operation and in any other activities.

Decision:

-Mr. Pabitra will prepare all necessary documents regarding mid-term arrangement, Registration Form, Invitation Letter, Hotel Reservation Form, program schedule consulting with all and send that to all expected participants. He also takes initiative to create website for 2018 AFACT Secretariat.

Agenda-6: Miscellaneous

Discussion:

-Mr. Ali said that, we are consulting our government to involve them in arranging our next program to make it a mega program. It's challenging to arrange a big program like this. We hope that our next program would consist of Seminar and besides this, business leaders and renowned speakers may be invited to deliver resourceful speech on selected important topics.

-Dr. Eva said that she would consult with Ms. Lee Tuthill of WTO, Counsellor of Trade in Services and Investment Division, and Professor of School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University. She can be a good speaker in Digital Trade topic in Bangladesh program seminar.

-Mr. Ali said that if any WTO, UN person can be involved in our program it will be great for the event and we can inspire our government to join in the program and provide support.

-Mr. Kedoin said that, we must make our decision first to design any program to incorporate UN, WTO persons in the program, then, we can try to invite them in our next program during Plenary period.

-Mr. Ali asked all about date of next concall meeting and it was set that next concall meeting will be held on January 30, 2018 at 1330 Bangladesh Standard Time(0730 UTC Time)

Decision:

-Next concall meeting will be held on 30 January, 2018 at the same time schedule.

-Details program agenda can be discussed and set in the January/2018 Concall meeting.

-END-

Next ConCall Meeting Date: January 30, 2018 Tuesday at 1330 Bangladesh Standard Time (0730 UTC Time)

Pabitra Mistry, 2018 AFACT Secretariat, Bangladesh