

## **Press release following a meeting of the SCO Heads of State Council**

(Tashkent, 23-24 June 2016)

On 23-24 June 2016, the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Heads of State Council (SCO HSC) took place in the city of Tashkent on the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the SCO.

The SCO HSC meeting was attended by President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of China Xi Jinping, President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev, President of Russia Vladimir Putin, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov.

The meeting was chaired by President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov.

SCO Secretary-General Rashid Alimov took part, as did Director of the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) Yevgeny Sysoyev.

The meeting was attended and addressed by the heads of SCO observer states: President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani, President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, Prime Minister of the Republic of India Narendra Modi, President of Mongolia Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov as a guest of the Council Presidency.

Also in attendance: UN Under-Secretary-General Jeffrey Feltman, Chairman of the Executive Committee – Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States Sergei Lebedev, Collective Security Treaty Organisation Secretary General Nikolai Bordyuzha, Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Le Luong Minh and Executive Director of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Gong Jianwei.

The heads of state, in a friendly and constructive atmosphere, considered the main results of the SCO's 15-year activity and exchanged opinions on a broad range of global and regional issues.

The heads of state noted that the SCO has established itself as a significant and influential player in the international arena. The organisation's priorities, as well as the general approaches adopted by the heads of state toward regional and international issues, are reflected in the Tashkent Declaration on the SCO's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary signed at the summit.

The heads of state reiterated that the SCO is open for accession by interested states that meet the criteria and conditions laid out in the organisation's legal documents. The signing of memoranda of obligations by the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan with regard to SCO membership was an important stage in the SCO expansion process.

The heads of state noted that granting India and Pakistan full SCO membership status will enhance the organisation's potential and contribute to further increasing its role in the international arena as a multilateral mechanism to deal with pressing issues and ensure security, stability and sustained development in the region and the world as a whole.

The heads of state welcomed the signing of memoranda on granting SCO dialogue partner status to Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia and Nepal.

The heads of state reaffirmed that the SCO's activity is not directed against any other states or international organisations. The member states are ready to develop contacts and cooperation with other countries and international and regional organisations sharing the objectives and tasks recorded in the SCO Charter and other foundational documents.

The heads of state welcomed the launch of the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) regarding Iran's nuclear programme. The plan is designed to promote international cooperation for peace, security and stability in the region and beyond it.

The heads of state called for further efforts to improve the mechanism of regular consultations with the observer states and the dialogue partners in order to enhance the practical effect of cooperation in various areas.

The heads of state noted the importance of promoting the SCO's international contacts and cooperation with international and regional organisations, primarily the UN and its agencies. The SCO member states will continue to strengthen the SCO's external ties and will consider the expediency of developing contacts with other concerned multilateral associations.

They pointed out that conditions have been created by this time for the SCO to advance to a higher level of cooperation marked by more effective interaction in politics, security, economy and cultural and humanitarian ties. Of special significance in this context is the adoption of the Action Plan 2016-2020 for the implementation of the SCO Development Strategy towards 2025.

The heads of state noted the need to improve global governance mechanisms based on the goals and principles of the UN Charter and to continue efforts to create a fair and equal world order aimed at strengthening political and economic stability.

The heads of state reaffirmed the SCO member states' commitment to strengthening the central coordinating role of the UN in international relations, which must be based on international law, including the goals and principles of the UN Charter. They called for holding broad consultations as part of the search for a package solution to reforming the UN Security Council in order to enhance its transparency and effectiveness with due regard for the interests of unity among the UN member states but without setting artificial deadlines and without enforcing proposals that did not receive broad support from the UN member states.

The heads of state emphasised that international terrorism and extremism, especially religious and other types of extremism, constitute an equally growing threat to all countries and human civilisation as a whole. They expressed the conviction that resistance to these threats must be based on redoubled joint efforts

of the world community and consolidated approaches towards implementing comprehensive measures to eliminate the root causes of these problems.

The heads of state confirmed that in accordance with the Charter and other SCO documents, developing and implementing measures for the joint fight against all forms of terrorism, separatism and extremism, illegal drug production and trafficking, illegal trafficking in arms, ammunition and explosives, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles will remain a cooperation priority within the SCO.

The heads of state called for the early adoption of the proposed UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and for creating an effective venue of broad cooperation to counter regional security threats and challenges.

The heads of state noted the importance of the agreement on promoting security cooperation reached at the Tashkent Summit.

The heads of state called for strengthening interaction in the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism and the proliferation of extremist views, especially among young people, and for taking measures to prevent ethnic, racial and religious intolerance and xenophobia. In this context, work will continue in accordance with the decision of the SCO Heads of State Council adopted on 10 July 2015 to draft an SCO Convention on Combating Extremism, which will help consolidate the legal framework of cooperation in this sphere alongside the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism and the SCO Programme of Cooperation in the Fight Against Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism for 2016-2018.

The SCO remains focused on fighting cross-border organised crime, countering cyber-crime, enhancing border security, and working together to combat illegal migration and human trafficking, money laundering and economic crime. In this regard, the Council noted the importance of implementing the

Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Crime signed by the SCO member states on 11 June 2010.

The heads of state praised the work by the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) to coordinate activities of the relevant bodies in SCO member states related to implementing agreements on fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism, and also emphasised the need to further develop cooperation in this area.

The heads of state noted the need to redouble joint efforts in creating a peaceful, safe, fair and open information space based on the principles of cooperation, respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries. They stressed the importance of stepping up hands-on cooperation as per the SCO Intergovernmental Agreement on Cooperation with a view to Ensuring International Information Security dated 16 June 2009.

The heads of state took note of the fact that the global economy is still affected by the consequences of the global financial and economic crisis, which resulted in lower aggregate demand, instability on key markets for goods and commodities, slower global economic growth and other negative factors. It was emphasised that in order to counter the persisting threats and challenges, all countries should strive to achieve a profound transformation of the global economy by enacting large-scale structural reforms, diversifying their economies and making them more competitive, and promoting long-term innovative development.

The heads of state noted that since its establishment 15 years ago, the SCO has accumulated substantial potential in terms of trade, economic and investment ties within the Organisation, which provides a foundation for further promoting regional economic cooperation and facilitates efforts to make cooperation mechanisms even more effective. The heads of state believe that harmonious development within the SCO could bring about balanced economic growth across the region. In this regard, coordinated measures will be taken with a view to further expanding mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation within the

Organisation, including by creating conditions conducive to stepping up trade, mutual investment and business-to-business cooperation.

The heads of state reaffirmed the importance of implementing the agreements envisaged in the Statement by the Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on regional economic cooperation, adopted in Zhengzhou, People's Republic of China, on 15 December 2015.

Against this backdrop, SCO member states will seek to coordinate and align their national development strategies and their trade and economic development programmes. The heads of state attach importance to the adoption of measures aimed at ensuring sustainable socioeconomic growth, improving welfare and the standard of living, and further enhancing cooperation in trade, manufacturing, finance, investment, agriculture, customs operations, telecommunications, including by using satellite navigation systems, as well as in other areas of mutual interest. Special attention will be focused on exchanging experience in effectively overcoming the economic slowdown, applying innovative technology, creating a favourable investment and business climate, implementing long-term mutually beneficial projects in priority areas of cooperation and developing infrastructure.

The heads of state reaffirmed their support for the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative of the People's Republic of China. Moving forward, this project will serve as a tool for promoting regional economic cooperation.

The heads of states noted the importance of continuing mutually beneficial and diversified cooperation in energy, including the use of renewable and alternative sources of energy.

The heads of state underscored the need to further advance multi-faceted cooperation in transport and to establish international transport corridors which should link Asia and Europe, to implement joint infrastructure projects making it possible to expand economically sound transport and communication capabilities and to tap the transit potential of the region. In this context, they noted the

importance of enacting and implementing the SCO Agreement on International Road Transportation Facilitation (Dushanbe, 12 September 2014) as soon as possible.

The heads of state advocated the practical implementation of specific projects of mutual interest reflected in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation, and called for drafting a list of measures to further joint work on intra-SCO projects in 2017-2021.

The heads of state called for promoting mutually beneficial cooperation with observer states and dialogue partners to boost the potential of joint intra-SCO activity. In this connection, they consider it important to fully utilise the opportunities afforded by the SCO Business Council and the SCO Interbank Consortium (SCO IBC).

Member states will continue to discuss the establishment of the SCO Development Bank and SCO Development Fund (SCO Special Account) for the purpose of providing financial support to project activity.

The heads of state consider it necessary to focus on development, in the context of bilateral and multilateral cooperation formats, in culture, healthcare, science and technology, education, environmental protection, sport, tourism, and studying and preserving the cultural and natural heritage of the SCO region, including that along the Great Silk Road.

Authorised representatives of member states signed a programme of SCO member states' cooperation in tourism in order to expanding cooperation in tourism, establish a common tourist space and intensify tourist exchanges.

The meeting participants heard and approved reports by the SCO Secretary-General on the Organisation's performance in 2015 and the Council of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) on RATS' performance in 2015.

Since the SCO Heads of State Council Meeting in Ufa on 9-10 July 2015, the parties have held the SCO Heads of Government Council (HGC) Meeting (Zhengzhou, 14-15 December 2015), the Security Councils' Secretaries Meeting (Tashkent, 13-14 April 2016), the Foreign Ministers' Council Meeting (Tashkent, 23-24 May 2016), the SCO Council of National Coordinators' Meeting (Beijing, Tashkent, October 2015-June 2016), the RATS Council Meeting (Tashkent, 18 September 2015 and 8 April 2016), the Justice Ministers' Meeting (Dushanbe, 18 August 2015), the Prosecutors Generals' Meeting (Astana, 27 August 2015), the Supreme Courts Chairpersons' Meeting (Bishkek, 3-6 September 2015), the meeting of ministers in charge of foreign trade and foreign economy (Xi'an, 16 September 2015), the meeting of heads of ministries and departments for the prevention and elimination of emergency situations (Chengdu, 11-12 November 2015), the 11<sup>th</sup> SCO Forum Meeting (Dushanbe, 28-29 April 2016), the meeting of heads of top financial oversight agencies (Astana, 27 May 2016), the Defence Ministers' Meeting (Astana, 8 June 2016), the Culture Ministers' Meeting (Tashkent, 21-22 June 2016), and the SCO Business Council Board Meeting and the SCO Interbank Consortium Council Meeting (Tashkent, 22-23 June 2016).

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Member states praised the Republic of Uzbekistan's SCO Presidency and thanked the Uzbek side for the traditionally warm hospitality they received during the Tashkent Summit.

Astana is to host a regular meeting of the SCO Heads of State Council (HSC) in June 2017. The Republic of Kazakhstan has assumed the SCO Presidency.