

Joint Communiqué

The Fifteenth Meeting of the SCO Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) Council

The fifteenth meeting of the Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) Council of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (hereinafter referred to as the SCO or Organisation) was held on 2-3 November 2016 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. It was attended by Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Bakytzhan Sagintayev, Premier of the State Council of China Li Keqiang, Acting Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Prime Minister of Russia Dmitry Medvedev, Prime Minister of Tajikistan Kohir Rasulzoda and First Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Rustam Azimov.

The meeting was chaired by Acting Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov.

Taking part in the meeting were SCO Secretary-General Rashid Alimov, Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) Yevgeny Sysoyev, Chairman of the SCO Business Council Board Alisher Shaykhov and representative of the Council of the SCO Interbank Consortium (SCO IBC) Saidakhmat Rakhimov.

The meeting was attended by representatives of SCO observer states, including Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Abdullah Abdullah, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus Andrei Kobyakov, Minister of State for External Affairs of the Republic of India Mobashar Jawed Akbar, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asia-Pacific Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ibrahim Rahimpour, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to the Republic of Kyrgyzstan Zhagiryn Suhee, and Adviser to the Pakistani Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, as well as Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) Petko Draganov, Chairman of the Executive Committee and Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States Sergei Lebedev, and Executive Director of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Gong Jianwei.

The heads of delegations exchanged opinions on a broad range of international and regional economic development issues, discussed prospects and measures for deepening cooperation in the interests of further strengthening mutual understanding and friendship among the SCO member states and have agreed on the following:

1. The heads of government pointed out that in the 15 years since its establishment the SCO has accumulated considerable potential of trade, economic

and investment ties, which are boosting the development and improvement of cooperation within the Organisation. They also believe that the expansion and deepening of interaction between the SCO member states meets the interests of sustainable economic growth in the region as a whole.

In light of this, the SCO member states will work actively to implement the results of the SCO Heads of State Council meeting (Tashkent, 24 June 2016) and the provisions of the Statement by the SCO Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) Council on regional economic cooperation (Zhengzhou, 15 December 2015) and will take coordinated measures to strengthen mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation and its mechanisms.

The heads of government stressed that their priority goal is to enhance the prosperity and living standards of their people through the further strengthening of cooperation in trade, production, transport, energy, finance, investment, agriculture, customs, telecommunications and other spheres of mutual interest.

They will focus on exchanging experience in drafting and implementing national development strategies and programmes, stimulating economic growth, implementing innovative technologies, creating a favourable investment and business climate, implementing infrastructure projects and working in other areas of mutual interest.

2. The heads of government agreed that the global economy remains in the risk zone and its recovery has not yet become sustainable and lasting. The elements that have an additional negative impact on the global economic outlook include the risk of terrorism and natural disasters and the increased risk of serious infectious diseases. Countering the existing threats and challenges calls for a deep transformation of the global economy based on production diversification through sweeping structural changes, the enhancement of economic competitiveness and long-term innovative development.

The heads of delegations pointed to the importance of continuing broad international cooperation with a view to stimulating global economic revival, economic and financial stability and sustainable, dynamic and inclusive growth, and expressed the view that all parties to international economic relations must have equal opportunities and take part in global trade and economic activities on an equitable basis.

3. The heads of government noted the SCO member states' initiative to establish favourable conditions for developing regional economic cooperation, including China's Silk Road Economic Belt project (as part of the One Belt, One Road concept). This, they noted, will contribute to forming new models for international cooperation, strengthen partnership ties between countries, increase investment, and create new employment opportunities.

4. The heads of government noted the importance of the sectorial meetings and working groups within the SCO and of the other institutions for trade,

economic and investment cooperation in the SCO region, including initiatives to develop economic cooperation and partnership at the regional level.

They highlighted the considerable potential for continued efforts to expand reciprocal trade and investment working through existing solid partnership ties and close trade and economic ties to create good conditions for trade and investment with the aim of gradually bringing in the free movement of goods, capital, services and technology called for in the SCO Charter.

The heads of government think it important to focus efforts on practical implementation of concrete projects of mutual interest, in accordance with the SCO Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation, particularly with the aim of developing trade and investment cooperation.

The heads of government approved the results of the Council of External Trade and Economy Ministers of the SCO Member States meeting in Bishkek on 12 October 2016, and noted in particular the need for effective implementation of the approved list of measures to continue developing SCO project activities over the 2017-2021 period.

5. The heads of government underscored the importance of continuing mutually advantageous, multifaceted cooperation in the energy sector, including in the use of renewable and alternative energy sources, and support broader use of economically effective and environmentally friendly energy sources with the aim of sustainable development.

In this context, they called for continued efforts to enhance the forms and methods of multilateral cooperation.

The heads of government welcomed the SCO's participation in the upcoming specialised exhibition EXPO-2017, Future Energy, which will take place in Astana from 10 June to 10 September 2017.

6. The heads of government noted the need to promote multilateral cooperation in the transport sector and develop international transport corridors that will become a link between Asia and Europe, and carry out joint projects that will expand economically viable transportation and communications infrastructure and realise the region's transport potential.

The heads of government stressed the need to implement the agreements reached at the 7th SCO Transport Ministers Meeting (Ufa, 15 May 2015), spoke in favour of rapid entry into force and implementation of the agreement between governments of the SCO member states on establishing favourable conditions for international road travel (Dushanbe, 12 September 2014), and activating work on

drafting the SCO road development programme.

7. Seeking to create favourable conditions for the development of trade and investment cooperation, the heads of government proposed deepening macroeconomic and financial cooperation. They consider it vital to make full use of the potential for interbank cooperation and the existing and future financial mechanisms across the SCO.

The heads of government took into consideration the results of the third Meeting of Finance Ministers and Central (National) Bank Governors of the SCO Member States (Bishkek, 29-30 September 2016), who discussed the creation of the SCO Development Bank and the SCO Development Fund (Special Account). They adopted instructions on continuing consultations at the level of experts to coordinate approaches to this issue.

8. The heads of government expressed appreciation of the practical events held within the SCO to deepen regional economic cooperation, including those held by the SCO Business Council and the SCO Interbank Consortium in June 2016 in Tashkent.

9. The heads of government made a note of active efforts to implement the Intergovernmental Agreement Between the SCO Member States on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Affairs (Tashkent, 2 November 2007).

They issued instructions to continue drafting a Protocol on Information Exchange between the SCO member states' customs authorities for determining and monitoring the customs value of goods, as well as other documents aimed at strengthening their customs cooperation.

10. The heads of government spoke up in favour of promoting mutually beneficial cooperation with observer states and dialogue partners to enhance cooperation potential across the SCO. In this context, they highlighted the importance of making full use of the capabilities of the SCO Business Council and the SCO Interbank Consortium.

11. The heads of government placed emphasis on the further development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in culture, education, science and technology, environmental protection, healthcare, sport and tourism, as well as in the study and conservation of cultural and natural heritage across the SCO, including in the area of the Great Silk Road.

12. The heads of government expressed a favourable view of the results of the Meeting of Ministers of Culture of the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 22 June 2016), which stipulate the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement Between the SCO Member States on Cultural Cooperation (Bishkek, 16 August 2007).

The heads of government welcomed the Second World Nomad Games (Issyk-Kul Region, Kyrgyzstan, 3-8 September 2016). They consider it important for the SCO

member states to take part in cultural, humanitarian and other events hosted by them to strengthen the traditional relations of friendship between the nations, as well as to help popularise the historical and cultural values of ethnic sports, traditions and cultures of the SCO member states.

13. The heads of government stressed the importance of the results of the Meeting of Education Ministers of the SCO Member States (Dushanbe, 20 October 2016) aimed at strengthening and expanding mutually beneficial cooperation in education across the SCO.

14. The heads of government, attaching great importance to enhancing science and technology cooperation between the SCO member states, expressed their appreciation for the results of the Meeting of the Heads of Science and Technology Ministries and Agencies of the SCO Member States (Issyk-Kul Region, Kyrgyzstan, 4 September 2016).

Seeking to continue to implement the Intergovernmental Agreement Between the SCO Member States on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (Bishkek, 13 September 2013), they have approved an Action Plan for 2016-2020 and a Concept of Scientific and Technological Partnership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

The heads of government pointed out the importance of ICT cooperation between the concerned agencies, associations and companies of the SCO member states, including the exchange of experience in the introduction and application of e-governance technologies.

15. The heads of government welcomed the signing of the Tourism Cooperation Development Programme of the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 24 June 2016) and called for continued efforts to create a common tourism space across the SCO.

16. The heads of government, recognising the importance of taking joint measures to protect the environment, spoke up for promoting and stimulating environmental protection cooperation across the SCO and for the early coordination of the concept on environmental protection cooperation between the SCO member states.

17. The heads of government, while noting the threat of communicable diseases to the SCO region, highlighted the importance of further cooperation in the prevention and control of and rapid response to infections. In addition, they pointed to the need for experience exchanges under a mechanism of conferences involving the heads of SCO member states sanitary and epidemiological services and agencies as part of the practical implementation of a programme on notification of epidemiological situations caused by communicable diseases on the territory of SCO member states (Tashkent, 29 November 2013).

18. The heads of government pointed to the need to continue the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between the Governments of the SCO Member States

on Providing Assistance During the Elimination of Emergency Situations (Moscow, 26 October 2005) and the appropriate Action Plan for 2016-2017 for joint disaster relief efforts.

19. The heads of government underscored the importance of the results of the Meeting of Chairpersons of the Supreme Courts of the SCO Member States (Dushanbe, 23 September 2016), which made a contribution to further expanding cooperation between judicial agencies of the SCO member states to strengthen law, order and justice across the SCO.

20. The heads of government believe that the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between Justice Ministries of the SCO Member States (Dushanbe, 18 August 2015) helps further strengthen the multifaceted cooperation in the legal sphere, as stipulated by this document.

They approved the results of the Meeting of Justice Ministers of the SCO Member States (Almaty, 28 October 2016), including agreements to further expand cooperation in providing legal assistance in civilian and criminal cases.

21. The heads of government approved the report of the SCO Secretariat on implementing the SCO Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation.

They approved the SCO budget for 2017 and adopted decisions on a number of issues regarding financial and organisational activities of permanent SCO bodies and agencies.

The heads of government noted the excellent organisation of the meeting of the
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and thanked the Kyrgyz side for the warm reception.

In 2017, the Russian Federation will host the next regular meeting of the SCO Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) Council.