

PRESS RELEASE

Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

A regular meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (hereinafter referred to as the SCO or the Organization) was held on May 15, 2009 in Moscow. It was attended by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan M. Tazhin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China Yang Jiechi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic K. Sarbaev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation S. Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Tajikistan H. Zarifi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan V. Norov.

The SCO Secretary-General B. Nurgaliev and Director of the Executive Committee of the Regional Antiterrorist Structure M. Subanov participated in the meeting.

The ministers were received by President D. Medvedev of the Russian Federation.

The meeting of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers was chaired by the Russian side.

In a constructive atmosphere, the meeting discussed a number of relevant issues related to continued strengthening of cooperation within the Organization in view of the need to ensure thorough preparation of the meeting of the Council of Heads of the SCO member states to be held on June 15-16, 2009 in Yekaterinburg. The participants of the meeting exchanged views on major international issues, as well as on the situation in the region.

The ministers noted that over the period since the meeting of the Council of Heads of the SCO Member States held on August 28, 2008 in Dushanbe, a major work had been done to further strengthen the Organization, expand practical cooperation in political, economic and humanitarian fields. The SCO seeks to address socio-economic problems of the region and ensure regional security and stability. This Organization's role needs to be strengthened in view of the far reaching changes taking place in the modern world.

In terms of security matters that remain a key priority, the Organization has been consistently strengthening its anti-terrorism and anti-drug potential. In this regard, the meeting noted the outcome of the special conference on Afghanistan held on March 27, 2009 in Moscow under the SCO auspices, of the joint command and staff antiterrorist exercises "Norak-Antiterror-2009" conducted on April 17-19, 2009 in the Republic of Tajikistan, and of the meeting of defense ministers of the SCO member states held on April 29, 2009 in Moscow, as well as the importance of finalizing the SCO Counter-Terrorism Convention, the Program of Cooperation among SCO Member States in Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism for 2010-2012, and the Agreement on Personnel Training for Anti-terrorist Units of the SCO Member States. Efforts will continue aimed at creating within the Organization an effective mechanism to combat illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors.

It has been stressed that the problems related to combating terrorism, drug trafficking and transnational organized crime and other new challenges and threats can only be resolved through dialogue and close cooperation with other relevant international associations and states with the UN playing a key coordinating role.

The ministers called for continued strengthening of cooperation in international affairs and improvement of mechanisms enabling to expeditiously coordinate positions on issues that directly affect the interests of the Organization as a whole and its individual members. This goal, in particular, will be served by the finalization of the Regulation on Political and Diplomatic

Measures and Mechanisms of SCO Response to Situations Threatening Peace, Security and Stability in the Region.

It has been deemed necessary to intensify, as much as possible, the elaboration within the SCO of an Agreement on cooperation in international information security with a view to complete it by the summit in Yekaterinburg.

The global financial crisis makes particularly urgent the task of minimizing its negative impacts on the countries of the region through comprehensive strengthening and development of economic cooperation in various fields. The Organization will pay more attention to energy and food security and global climate change.

The ministers favored expanded and deepened practical cooperation with the observer states through the active use, to this end, of SCO mechanisms and cooperation programs.

The SCO Secretary-General B. Nurgaliev presented a report on the work of the Secretariat over the past year, which was approved by the ministers.

The foreign ministers adopted a number of decisions on organizational and personnel matters.