

Joint Communiqué
Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of
the SCO Member States

A regular meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was held on October 26 in Moscow. Following the meeting a joint communiqué has been issued that follows below:

The Meeting was attended by Prime Minister D. Ahmetov of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Premier of the State Council Wen Jiabao of the People's Republic of China, Prime Minister F. Kulov of the Kyrgyz Republic, Prime Minister M. Fradkov of the Russian Federation, Prime Minister A. Akilov of the Republic of Tajikistan and Deputy Prime Minister U. Sultanov of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

For the first time, the meeting was attended by the representatives of the states – observers to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of India N. Singh, First Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran P. Davudi, Prime Minister of Ts. Elbegdorj Mongolia and Prime Minister S. Aziz of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

The meeting was also attended by Zhang Deguang, SCO Executive Secretary, and V. Kasymov, Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure.

President V. Putin of the Russian Federation met with the heads of the delegations attending the CHG meeting.

In a constructive and businesslike atmosphere, the meeting has addressed a wide range of issues of further development and deepening of regional cooperation in the field of stability, trade, economic, scientific, technical, cultural, humanitarian and other areas of mutual interest, in accordance with the tasks set by the SCO's Council of Heads of State meeting of July 5, 2005 in Astana.

It has been noted that during the year since the previous meeting, the cooperation within the SCO has become more dynamic, its authority has strengthened internationally, and the world community's interest towards SCO has been on the rise. Specific measures have been outlined in support of the implementation of the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

It has been agreed to intensify efforts to promote cooperation in trade, economic matters and improvement of the investment climate based on the principles of mutual benefit and equality. The implementation mechanism, for the Plan of Actions in support of the implementation of the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the SCO member states approved by the heads of government will become an important part of the implementation of the tasks set in this area. It has been deemed necessary for the relevant ministries and departments of the SCO member states to embark on practical implementation of the Action Plan with due account of the proposals prepared by the heads of ministries responsible for foreign economic and trade activities at the meeting of February 19, 2005 in Bishkek and by relevant working groups, on "pilot" projects in the field of energy, transport, telecommunications, science and technology and agricultural sectors, as well as on further expansion of the legal framework for the cooperation among the SCO member states. The commissions of senior officials of these ministries, jointly with the SCO Secretariat, have been entrusted to coordinate this work and report on the results at the next meeting of the SCO's Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) in 2006.

The heads of government have underlined the importance and urgency of establishing

cooperation in the field of oil and gas exploration and oil and gas pipelines construction, as well as the need for cooperation in the area of high information and telecommunication technologies. The meeting of heads of ministries in charge of foreign economic and trade activities with the involvement of relevant ministries and agencies of the member states and the SCO's Secretariat have been instructed to review the issue of the soonest establishment of *ad hoc* working groups on fuel and energy complex and modern information and telecommunication technologies.

The heads of government have noted the significant progress in customs cooperation. It has been deemed expedient to accelerate the approval and signing by the next CHG meeting of the draft Agreement between the Governments of the SCO Member States on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters.

The heads of government have expressed their satisfaction with the holding of the first meeting of the Board of the SCO Business Council and signing of the Agreement on Interbank Cooperation (Association) in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and noted the need for the SCO business and financial community to take a more active part in the implementation of joint large-scale investment projects in Central Asia region.

Particular attention has been given to the intensification of efforts to create favorable conditions in the area of trade and investment. The heads of government support convening in 2006 the Forum of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs and having a trade and industry exhibition to commemorate the SCO's fifth anniversary.

It has been deemed expedient to speed up agreement on establishment procedure and principles of the SCO Development Fund operation in order to complete this work not later than the first half of 2006.

Also, the heads of government consider timely and useful to convene in November 2005 in Xian (China) the Eurasian Economic Forum organized by the SCO Secretariat, ESCAP and China Development Bank.

The meeting has reaffirmed the importance of continued dialogue on the development of cooperation in the transport sector, enhancing the role and strengthening the effectiveness of the meeting of transport ministers of the SCO member states, developing coordinated transit policies and international transport corridors. The meeting has noted the need to accelerate agreement on the signing of the intergovernmental Agreement on Creating Favorable Conditions for International Road Transport. The ministries and departments involved in the preparation of the draft agreement and the SCO Secretariat have been tasked to intensify the negotiating process for this purpose.

It has been agreed that the coordinating role in identifying specific measures for the implementation of joint investment projects under the Chinese loan will rest with the meeting of the heads of ministries in charge of foreign economic and trade activities and the SCO Secretariat.

The heads of government have expressed confidence that the first ministerial meeting on environmental issues will provide a good basis for cooperation in this vital area.

The heads of government support further strengthening of cooperation among the SCO member states in cultural and humanitarian area. In this regard, they have emphasized the positive role of the culture ministers meeting held in July 2005 in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as of the first cultural festival of the six countries. The decision of the culture ministers to establish an expert working group on cultural cooperation provides a solid foundation for implementing the Plan of Multilateral Cultural Cooperation among the SCO member states for 2005-2006 and engaging in active SCO work regarding the use of the uniquely rich cultural potential of each SCO member state, *inter alia*, in connection with the fifth anniversary of the SCO founding to be marked in 2006.

The heads of government consider it timely to launch cooperation in the field of education and they recognize it expedient to hold, in the first half of 2006, the meeting of the ministers of education of the SCO member states and sign the Agreement between the Governments of the SCO member states on Cooperation in Education.

The heads of government have welcomed signing of the Agreement between the Governments of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on Cooperation in Disaster Relief Assistance, and they have expressed confidence that cooperation in this field, most relevant for the member states and the region, as a whole, will strongly develop.

A number of the Organization's financing issues have been addressed. The SCO budget for 2006 has been approved.

It has been agreed that the next meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the SCO member states will be held in the second half of 2006 in Dushanbe.