

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 (SCO CHG) was held on September 15, 2006 in Dushanbe.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister D. Akhmetov 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, Chairman of the Government M. Fradkov of the Russian Federation, Prime Minister A. Akilov of the Republic of Tajikistan and Deputy Prime Minister R. Azimov of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The meeting was also attended by the representatives of the states - observers to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Minister of State of the Republic of India P. Chavan, Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran A. Saidlu, Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia M. Enkhsaikhan, Prime Minister Sh. Aziz of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and, as guests of the host country, first Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan A. Masood and Secretary General of the Eurasian Economic Community G. Rapota.

The SCO Executive Secretary Zhang Deguang and Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure V. Kasymov participated in the meeting.

President E. Rakhmonov of the Republic of Tajikistan met with the heads of delegations attending the SCO CHG meeting.

Held in a friendly and businesslike atmosphere that meeting has witnessed a profound exchange of views on urgent issues of strengthening stability in the region, and further developing cooperation within the SCO.

Taking into account the decisions of the commemorative meeting of the Council of Heads of the SCO Member States held on June 15, 2006 in Shanghai, the heads of government have reviewed the priorities of economic cooperation among the SCO member states and outlined a number of specific measures in trade, economic, scientific, technical, social, cultural and other fields.

It was noted that in the period since the CHG meeting in Moscow (October 2005) a considerable work had been done to increase trade, economic and humanitarian cooperation of the six countries and the necessary prerequisites had been created for further deepening the SCO cooperation in these areas.

The meetings of ministers responsible for foreign economic and trade activities, meetings of the Commission of Senior Officials (CSO) and *ad hoc* working groups have continued implementing the Plan of Actions in support of the implementation of the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation among the SCO member states, priority areas of cooperation for the next period - energy, transport, telecommunications – have been identified, and the first “pilot” projects agreed.

It has been important that the mechanisms of *ad hoc* working groups on energy and modern information and telecommunication technologies have been established and launched.

The heads of government have noted that the economic cooperation within the SCO has received a new impetus following the establishment of the SCO Business Council and the Interbank Association.

The expansion of business ties will be facilitate by the Protocol on cooperation in the operation and maintenance of the web-site “Regional economic cooperation of the SCO” signed on August

24, 2006 in Tashkent,

The heads of government welcome the start of disbursements under the loan provided by the Chinese side for joint projects and programs in the SCO framework.

The heads of government highly appreciate the importance of major economic fora that contribute to deepened economic cooperation in the region - First Eurasian Economic Forum in Xi'an (November 2005), SCO Trade and Industry Forum in Shanghai (June 2006), forthcoming 4th Baikal economic forum scheduled for September in Irkutsk. The meeting has recognized the usefulness of holding such forums in the future as important platforms for exchanging views between government, business and financial communities of the SCO member states with the participation of business community representatives of other interested countries.

It has been encouraging to witness progress in the development of humanitarian cooperation that contribute to the development of inter-civilization dialogue and communication and enhance mutual understanding and mutual respect within the SCO. The Plan of Multilateral Cultural Cooperation among the SCO member states for 2005-2006 (July 2005, Astana) is being successfully implemented, the Plan of cultural cooperation for 2007-2008 (April 2006, Tashkent) has been approved. Signing, on June 15, 2006, of the Agreement between the Governments of the SCO member states on cooperation in education, created the legal framework for active collaboration in this important and promising area.

The cooperation has been developing with other states in the region and international organizations in sharing experiences, information and implementing joint projects and programs.

While appreciating the overall work done by the SCO in the economic field, the heads of government consider it necessary to make efforts to further strengthen the Organization's activities in this priority area.

It has been deemed expedient for the commission of senior ministry officials in charge of foreign economic and trade activities to continue ensuring effective monitoring of the implementation of the approved SCO economic projects and the preparation of new ones, of the work on expanding and strengthening the regulatory framework of the SCO cooperation.

The meeting has stressed the need to strengthen the coordinating role of the SCO Secretariat and actively tap the potential of the SCO Business Council and the Interbank Association in the interests of further development of economic partnership in the framework of the Organization.

The *ad hoc* Working Group on Energy, in cooperation with the SCO Secretariat, has been mandated in the shortest possible timeframe to explore the possibility of establishing the SCO Energy Club. The Kazakhstan and Russian sides will present to the SCO Secretariat for the review by the Parties, proposals for holding in 2007 the meeting of the heads of ministries and departments of the SCO member states in charge of fuel and energy complex. In order to intensify cooperation in the area of high information and telecommunication technologies, the *ad hoc* Working Group on modern information and telecommunication technologies needs to accelerate the agreement on joint project proposals.

New impetus to the expansion of cooperation in the field of transport will be provided by the implementation of "pilot" projects of improvements in the SCO transport infrastructure selected by the *ad hoc* Working Group on transit potential development.

Of importance has been the conclusion of a Memorandum on accelerating agreement on and signing of the draft intergovernmental Agreement on creating favorable conditions for international road transport. The relevant ministries and agencies and the Secretariat of the SCO need to intensify the negotiating process in order to ensure early agreement on the draft document.

The heads of government consider it necessary to further develop the integration processes

aimed at simplifying and facilitating administrative and customs procedures involved in international transit through the territories of the SCO member states.

Noting the important role of the SCO customs cooperation, the heads of government consider it advisable to accelerate preparations for the signing of an intergovernmental Agreement on cooperation and mutual assistance in customs matters, as well as convene the meeting of the heads of customs services of the SCO member states within the agreed timeline.

In order to further improve the cooperation legal framework and create favorable investment climate within the SCO, it is important to continue elaborating the draft Agreement between the Governments of the SCO member states on promotion and mutual protection of investments, taking into account the existing experience of collaboration in this area at the bilateral and multilateral level.

The heads of government attach great importance to the forthcoming first meeting in Moscow of the ministers in charge of environmental issues, as well as to the finalization of the draft Concept on environmental protection and management.

The SCO Secretariat has been requested to develop a specific program of measures for cooperation with the SCO observer states in economic and humanitarian areas for further review in accordance with the existing SCO regulations.

It has been deemed necessary to intensify cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Community on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding between the SCO Secretariat and the Secretariat of the EurAsEC's Integration Committee. The SCO Secretariat, jointly with the Council of National Coordinators of the SCO member states, needs to prepare proposals and coordinate them with the Secretariat of the EurAsEC.

The SCO Secretariat needs to coordinate with the Secretariat of ASEAN the format of consultations and exchanges of experience in areas of mutual interest, including economic, social, cultural and others.

The SCO welcomes involvement of other interested countries and partners in specific projects and programs developed within the Organization.

The heads of government have set the goal to continue strengthening humanitarian cooperation. Preparation for the first meeting of the education ministers of the SCO member states is underway. The meeting will aim at developing specific steps to implement the Agreement on Cooperation in Education.

Believing that is timely to launch SCO cooperation in healthcare, the heads of government instruct the Secretariat, in collaboration with the Council of National Coordinators, to review the issue of establishing an expert working group for these purposes.

The SCO Secretariat and the Council of National Coordinators have also been recommended to review issues related to the initiation of contacts within the SCO in the area of tourism and youth.

Following the request of the heads of state of the SCO members regarding strengthened role of the Secretariat in the system of the SCO bodies, the heads of government have approved the SCO Secretariat new structure and staffing.

A number of on-going issues related to the Organization's financing have been reviewed. The SCO budget for 2007 has been approved.