

The Tashkent Declaration of the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the outcomes of the meeting of the Council of Heads of State held in Tashkent on June 24, 2016, in connection with the 15th anniversary of establishment of the SCO state the following.

A historic decision made on June 15, 2001 on the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was an important strategic choice of Member States in order to actively promote peace and common development, deepen good-neighborly, friendly and partnership relations and strengthen the climate of mutual respect and trust in the region. During 15 years-long activity, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization secured a commendable place in the rank of authoritative and influential international and regional organizations, becoming an effective factor of maintaining security, stability and sustainable development in the modern system of international relations. The “Shanghai Spirit” while expressing the fundamental principles and ideas of the Organization is a unique source of successful activity of the SCO and serves as an important landmark in the development of interstate relations, countering global challenges and threats, settlement of international disputes.

Member States, being guided by the SCO Charter and the Treaty of Long-term Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation of the Member States, the SCO Development Strategy towards 2025 and other fundamental documents of the Organization, continue a constructive and trusting partnership, steadily adhering to the “Shanghai Spirit” based on mutual trust, equality, consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations and cultures, as well as aspiration for common development. The SCO adheres to the line which excluding the block, ideological and confrontational approaches to resolving urgent international and regional problems.

The institutional framework of the SCO has been established and operating, its structural bodies are effectively functioning, consistent and systemic work is carried out on the accomplishment of goals and objectives envisaged by the SCO Charter in political, economic, cultural and humanitarian spheres, as well as security.

Mechanisms for regular meetings at various levels, as well as considerable legal framework have been established which regulate practical cooperation between the SCO Member States in the fight against new challenges and threats, primarily terrorism, separatism and extremism, trafficking in drugs and weapons, other forms of organized and transnational crime.

Productive cooperation has been established to strengthen economic and humanitarian ties, long-term programs and plans are adopted and being implemented for the development of interaction in trade, investments, project activities, culture, science and technology, emergency response to natural and man-made disasters, as well as in other areas.

Strictly following the principles enshrined in the SCO Charter, including the one that the SCO is not directed against other states and international organizations, Member States are actively developing contacts and cooperation with other countries, international and regional organizations.

Cooperation has been established with the observer states – Afghanistan, Belarus, India, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan, and the SCO dialogue partners – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey and Sri Lanka. Partner relations are established and maintained with the UN and its specialized institutions and cooperation is developing with other international and regional structures as well.

The principle of openness of the SCO is consistently implemented. In the wake of the Dushanbe summit a legal framework was formed for the expansion of the Organization, which regulates the procedure for the accession of new states. In accordance with the decisions of the Ufa summit, the procedure is underway for admission of the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan as full SCO members.

The rapidly changing situation in the world is characterized by ever-increasing geopolitical tension, growing scales of terrorism, separatism and extremism which negatively affect the entire system of international relations.

In these conditions, the United Nations remains the leading universal international organization for the maintenance of global security, the main platform for addressing interstate and international issues. Member States reaffirm their commitment to strengthening the central coordinating role of the UN in international relations.

Member States intend to continue to adhere to universally recognized objectives and principles of the UN Charter and international law, primarily relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, development of cooperation between states, independence, equality, independent choice of social systems and paths of development, mutual respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-use of force or threat of force.

Member States reaffirm their determination to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Treaty of Long-term Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation for the further development of good-neighborliness and friendly relations in areas of mutual interest, including turning of the borders with each into the borders of eternal peace and friendship.

Member States stand for further strengthening the leading role of the UN Security Council in maintaining international peace and security, continuing extensive consultations in search of a “package solution” for its reform in order to improve transparency and effectiveness of this body, guided by the interests of ensuring the unity of the UN Member States, without setting artificial timelines and expediting the options which do not enjoy broad support of the UN Member States.

Member States note that the earliest achievement of peace and stability in Afghanistan is an important factor in maintaining and strengthening security in the region.

Member States support the settlement of intra-Afghan conflict through the promotion of an inclusive process of national reconciliation and proceed from the fact that these efforts should be undertaken under the leadership of the Afghans and by the Afghans. The UN should play a central coordinating role in international cooperation on Afghanistan.

Member States emphasize the need for the earliest stabilization of the situation in the Middle East and North Africa by political settlement of crises in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter and universally recognized norms of international law.

They reaffirm the need to preserve the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability in Syria and that there is no alternative to political solution to the crisis, which will allow the Syrian people to independently determine their own future.

Member States reaffirmed the importance of a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine on the basis of fulfillment in good faith of the Minsk agreement dated February 12, 2015.

Member States reaffirm their commitment to maintaining law and order at sea on the basis of the principles of international law, in particular, those set out in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. All relevant disputes should be resolved peacefully through friendly negotiations and agreements between the parties concerned without their internationalization and external interference. In this context, Member States have called for the full respect of the provisions of the aforementioned Convention, as well as the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and the Guiding principles for its implementation.

Member States shall continue to engage in disarmament and arms control, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy, political and diplomatic addressing of regional challenges to non-proliferation regimes, in accordance with the principles of common, equal and indivisible security for all. They stand for strict adherence to the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, comprehensive and consistent promotion of all purposes and principles reflected in the Treaty.

Member States believe that the earliest entry into force of the Protocol on security assurances to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia for each party will make a significant contribution to strengthening the global regime of nuclear non-proliferation, ensuring regional and international peace and stability.

Member States welcome the beginning of the practical implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue, the successful implementation of which will contribute to the expansion of international cooperation for peace, security and stability in the region and beyond.

Member States reaffirm that unilateral and unlimited build-up of missile defense systems by one state or group of states, without taking into account the interests of other countries, can be harmful to international and regional security and stability. Member States are firmly convinced in inadmissibility of ensuring own security at the cost of the security of others.

Member States stressed the importance of preventing the militarization of outer space to ensure equal and indivisible security for all and to maintain global stability. They expressed support for the

implementation of practical measures for the prevention of arms race in outer space, the main of which is the development of an international agreement on banning deployment of weapons in outer space.

Member States support the efforts and initiatives aimed at strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological and Toxin Weapons through developing a legally binding instrument to it.

Member States, while expressing serious concern about the growing threat of terrorist groups gaining access to weapons of mass destruction, including the terrorist use of chemical and biological materials, support the initiative for an international convention to combat acts of terrorism involving chemical and biological weapons.

Member States call on the international community to develop a peaceful, secure, fair and open information space based on the principles of cooperation and respect for national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Member States support the elaboration within the UN of universal rules, principles and standards of responsible behavior of states in the information space. They shall continue to strengthen cooperation in curbing the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) by terrorist and extremist groups to carry out illegal and subversive activities, enhance cooperation in the joint fight against the use of ICT for criminal purposes, strive to develop a relevant universal legal instrument within the framework of the UN.

Member States shall continue to deepen practical cooperation for the implementation of the Agreement between the governments of SCO Member States on cooperation in the field of international information security.

In this context, Member States intend to increase cooperation in the field of Internet governance and stand for equal rights of all countries to govern this network, primarily to ensure the sovereign rights of states over Internet governance in their national segment.

Member States emphasize that international terrorism and extremism, including their religious and other manifestations, pose equally growing threat to all countries of the world and human civilization as a whole.

Member States are convinced that this evil may be defeated and eliminated only by increasing joint struggle, developing enforcement actions against both the symptoms and roots of the problem and by common consolidated efforts of the international community on the firm basis of international law and common integrated approaches.

In the context of the fight against terrorism, separatism, extremism and other new challenges and threats, the SCO Member States stand for the early adoption of the UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

The importance of developing coherent political approaches in the fight against terrorism, establishment of cooperation with international and regional organizations, observer states and dialogue partners of the SCO, as well as other countries has been underlined in order to create conditions for the expansion of cooperation in the fight against terrorism in the new realities.

Member States express their solidarity with multilateral counter-terrorism efforts and stand for the coordination of joint actions under the aegis of the UN in the fight against terrorist groups.

Member States reaffirm that the struggle against terrorism, separatism and extremism in all their manifestations, illicit drug production and trafficking, illegal smuggling of arms, ammunition and explosives, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery will remain among priorities of cooperation within the framework of the Organization.

Member States note the importance of arrangements achieved on the outcomes of the Tashkent Summit on cooperation in the sphere of security.

Member States stand for further close cooperation in the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism, spread of extremist ideology, primarily among youth, as well as for the prevention of ethnic, racial, religious intolerance and xenophobia. In this connection, Member States, in accordance with the decision of the CHS SCO dated July 10, 2015, shall continue the work on the preparation of the SCO Convention on Combating Extremism, which will contribute to strengthening the legal framework for cooperation in this field, along with the implementation of the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism and the Cooperation Program of SCO Member States in Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism for 2016-2018.

Combating cross-border organized crime, crimes with the use of modern information and communication technologies, strengthening border security, joint fight against illegal migration and human trafficking, money laundering, financing of terrorism and economic crimes remains an urgent item on the agenda of the SCO. The importance of practical implementation of the provisions of the Agreement between the Governments of SCO Member States on Cooperation in Combating Crime dated June 11, 2010 has been noted.

Member States, noting the outcomes of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the world drug problem held in New York, shall continue strengthening practical cooperation in the fight against illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors in the region on the basis of international legal instruments adopted by the SCO.

Member States stand for further development of cooperation within the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Expressing concern about the growing problem of international drug threat, Member States reaffirm strong commitment to the course of preserving and strengthening the existing international drug control system based on the three basic UN conventions. They believe it is important to join efforts under the central coordinating role of the UN on the basis of integrated and balanced approach, as well as the principle of common and shared responsibility of states for eradication of global drug production, elimination of illicit narcotic plantations and their processing facilities, to create an effective system of legal response to the emergence of new synthetic drugs and other psychoactive substances and strengthen cooperation in the fields of drug-addict rehabilitation and effective reduction of demand for drugs.

Member States note that the global economy is still suffering from the effects of the global financial and economic crisis, which led to reduction in aggregate demand, sharp price fluctuations on key commodity and raw material markets, slowdown in economic growth and other negative consequences. In order to counter the continuing threats and challenges, all countries should strive for a profound transformation of the global economy through large-scale, structural changes, diversification and improving the competitiveness of economies and innovative development on a long-term basis.

Member States note that a significant potential for trade and economic relations and investment cooperation within the SCO framework, accumulated during 15 years-long activity of the Organization, provides positive trends in the development of regional economic cooperation and promotes the improvement of cooperation mechanisms. They believe that harmonious development in the SCO area meets the interests of balanced economic growth in the region as a whole. In this regard, the coordinated actions shall be taken for further expansion of mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation within the Organization, including through creation of favorable conditions for trade, mutual investments and cooperation between business communities.

Member States confirm the importance of practical implementation of the agreements set forth in the Statement of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the SCO Member States on Regional Economic Cooperation, adopted in Zhengzhou on December 15, 2015.

In these conditions, Member States shall seek the pairing of national development strategies and strengthen the coordination of their economic and trade programs. They believe it is important to adopt the measures to ensuring sustainable socio-economic growth and improving the welfare and living standards of the population, further strengthening of cooperation in the spheres of trade, industry, finance, investments, agriculture, customs, telecommunications, including the use of satellite navigation systems, and other spheres of mutual interest. Special attention shall be paid to the exchange of experience for effective countering of economic slowdown, introduction of innovative technologies, formation of favorable investment and business climate, implementation of long-term mutually beneficial projects in the priority areas of cooperation and development of infrastructure.

Member States reaffirm the support for the initiative of the People's Republic of China on the creation of the Silk Road Economic Belt. For these purposes, the work shall continue to implement this project as one of the tools of creation of favorable conditions for the development of regional economic cooperation.

Member States noted the importance of continuing the mutually beneficial multifaceted cooperation in the energy sphere, including in the field of renewable and alternative energy sources.

Member States shall promote multilateral cooperation in transport sector and facilitate the formation of international transport corridors, which must become a connecting link between Asia and Europe, implement joint infrastructure projects providing for the expansion of economically justified transport and communication opportunities and fulfill the transit potential of the region. In this context, Member States note the importance of the early entering into force and implementation of the Agreement between the Governments of SCO Member States on Establishing Favorable Conditions for International Road Transport (Dushanbe, 12 September 2014).

Member States shall focus their efforts on practical implementation of specific projects of common interest, as reflected in the Action Plan for implementation of the Program for Multilateral Cooperation in Trade and Economy of the SCO Member States, as well as on the preparation of the List of events for further development of project activities within the SCO framework for 2017- 2021.

Member States stand for the further expansion of mutually beneficial cooperation with the observer countries and dialogue partners in order to increase the capacity of joint activities within the SCO. In this regard, a great importance is attached to comprehensively fulfilling the potential of the SCO Business Council and the SCO Interbank Association.

In order to provide financial support to project activities, Member States shall continue the consideration of the issue of establishment of the SCO Development Bank and the SCO Development Fund (Special Account).

Member States shall pay special attention to the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the spheres of public health, science and technology, education, environment protection, sports, tourism, study and preservation of cultural and natural heritage of the SCO region, including along the «Great Silk Road».

Member States reaffirm that the SCO is open for accession by interested states which meet the criteria and conditions contained in normative legal documents of the Organization. Signing of memoranda on obligations of the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to obtain the SCO member state status upon the outcomes of this summit is a practical step in the process of expanding the SCO.

Member States noted that obtaining the full member status by India and Pakistan shall increase the potential of the Organization and contribute to the further enhancement of its role in the international arena as a multilateral mechanism for addressing the urgent problems of contemporary time, ensuring security, stability and sustainable development in the region.

Member States shall deepen the dialogue and cooperation with international and regional organizations with which the SCO established official relations, as well as encourage external contacts in order to further establish a partner network of multilateral associations in line with the initiative launched by the SCO Heads of State at the Tashkent Summit in 2004.

Member States, while maintaining commitment to peace, common development and equal relations based on the principles of mutual respect, friendship and good neighborliness, shall further continue constructive and trusting dialogue, deepen effective multilateral cooperation, make every effort to strengthen security and stability, and ensure sustainable development in the SCO area.

President

of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Nursultan Nazarbayev

Chairman

of People's Republic of China	Xi Jinping
President	
of the Kyrgyz Republic	Almazbek Atambayev
President	
of the Russian Federation	Vladimir Putin
President	
of the Republic of Tajikistan	Emomali Rahmon
President	
of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Islam Karimov

Tashkent, June 24, 2016

Source: Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Republic of Latvia, <http://uzbekistan.lv/en/the-tashkent-declaration-of-the-fifteenth-anniversary-of-the-shanghai-cooperation-organization/>