

Joint communiqué following the 21st meeting of the SCO Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) Council

The 21st meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (hereinafter SCO or the Organisation) was held via videoconference on 1 November 2022. The participants included Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan Alikhan Smailov, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Li Keqiang, Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic Akylbek Japarov, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Mikhail Mishustin, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan Kokhir Rasulzoda and Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulla Aripov.

The meeting was chaired by Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Li Keqiang.

Attendees at the meeting also included SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming, Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure Ruslan Mirzayev, Chairman of the Board of the SCO Business Council Davron Vakhabov, and Chairman of the Council of the SCO Interbank Consortium Alisher Mirsoatov.

The meeting was attended by high representatives of the SCO observer states, namely, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus Roman Golovchenko, First Vice-President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mohammad Mokhber, Prime Minister of Mongolia Luvsannamsrain Oyun-Erdene, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan Khodjamyrat Geldimyradov as a guest of the presiding side, as well as the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission of the United Nations for Asia and the Pacific Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Chairman

of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission Mikhail Myasnikovich, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organisation Khusrav Noziri, Deputy Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia Chi Fang; Deputy Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States Ilkhomjon Nematov.

The heads of delegations exchanged views on key global and regional development matters and discussed priority steps designed to strengthen trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation within the SCO in a friendly, constructive and businesslike atmosphere.

The heads of delegations praised highly the Republic of Uzbekistan's 2021-2022 SCO chairmanship and called for taking strong action to implement the outcomes of the SCO Heads of State Council meeting held in Samarkand on 16 September 2022.

The heads of delegations expressed support for the Republic of India's SCO chairmanship in 2022-2023.

The heads of delegations stated that the world was entering a new era of rapid growth and large-scale transformations. These fundamental processes go hand in hand with increased interconnectedness and a higher pace of IT development and digitalisation.

In this regard, guided by close or overlapping assessments of the current regional and global agenda, the member states reaffirmed their commitment to forming a more representative, democratic, fair and multipolar international order based on the universally recognised principles of international law, multilateralism, equal, joint, indivisible, comprehensive and sustainable security, cultural and civilisational diversity, mutually beneficial and equal cooperation of states with the central coordinating role of the UN.

The heads of delegations stressed that, in accordance with the SCO Charter principles, the member states adhere to a policy that excludes bloc-, ideology- and confrontation-driven approaches to addressing international and regional development issues and countering traditional and unconventional challenges and

security threats. Taking into consideration the opinions of the member states, they confirmed the relevance of the initiatives to promote interaction in an effort to build a new type of international relations based on mutual respect, justice, equality and mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as the formation of a common vision of the idea of creating a community of common destiny for humankind.

The heads of delegations underscored the fact that the member states would continue to make efforts to fulfil the goals and to adhere to the principles of the SCO Charter, to promote cooperation in the politics and security, infrastructure, trade, the economy, finance and investment, and cultural and humanitarian ties in order to build a peaceful, secure, prosperous and environmentally friendly planet Earth and to achieve harmonious coexistence of humans and nature.

The heads of delegations reiterated that the SCO member states consider it important to further improve the global economic governance architecture and will consistently uphold and strengthen an open, transparent, fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system based on the WTO principles and rules, facilitate the development of open global economy, and oppose protectionist actions and trade restrictions that are inconsistent with the WTO principles and undermine the multilateral trade system and threaten the global economy. They stressed that unilateral economic sanctions, other than the sanctions approved by the UN Security Council, are inconsistent with the principles of international law and adversely affects third countries and international economic relations.

The heads of delegations confirmed that the SCO stands for increasing the effectiveness of the WTO as a key platform for discussing the international trade agenda and adopting the rules of multilateral trade. They stressed the need for an early inclusive reform of the WTO emphasising its development and adaptation to the current economic realities, as well as the effective implementation of the monitoring, negotiation and dispute resolution functions.

The heads of delegations highlighted the position of the SCO member states in favour of promoting multi-format regional economic cooperation and the creation

of favourable trade and investment environment in order to gradually arrive at the free movement of goods, capital, services and technology.

Reaffirming their support for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan noted the ongoing joint activities to implement this project, including the efforts to couple the construction of the Eurasian Economic Union and the BRI.

The heads of delegations consider it important to use the potential of the region's countries, international organisations and multilateral associations in the interest of creating a Eurasian space for a wide, open, mutually beneficial and equal interaction in accordance with the international law and with account taken of the national interests. In this regard, the heads of delegations mentioned the idea of creating a Greater Eurasian Partnership with the participation of the SCO countries, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other stakeholder countries and multilateral associations.

The heads of delegations highlighted the need for consistent implementation of the Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the SCO Member States and the Action Plan for its implementation. They called for expanding and deepening cooperation in the financial, investment, industrial, transport, energy, agricultural and other areas in the interest of sustainable socioeconomic development within the SCO region.

The heads of delegations stressed the need to implement the 2021-2025 Action Plan to implement the SCO Development Strategy to 2025 (Moscow, 10 November 2020). They welcomed the adoption of the 2023-2027 Comprehensive Plan for implementing the provisions of the Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation of the SCO Member States (Samarkand, 16 September 2022).

The heads of delegations noted the Republic of Tajikistan's proposal on developing the Strategy for the Economic Development of the SCO Region to 2030.

The heads of delegations noted the results of the 21st Meeting of the SCO Member States Ministers Responsible for Foreign Economic and Foreign Trade Activities (28 September 2022, via videoconference).

The heads of delegations consider it necessary to ensure the implementation of the Joint Statement of the SCO Heads of State on Trade Facilitation (Qingdao, 10 June 2018), as well as to develop practical steps to build reliable, sustainable and diversified supply chains, to expand trade in services and intra-regional trade in accordance with the SCO Heads of State Council's statements and other documents adopted at the Samarkand summit.

The heads of delegations noted the outcomes of the SCO Economic Forum (Tashkent, 16-17 August 2022) and the meeting of the SCO Consortium of Economic Analytical Centres (22 September 2022, via videoconference). They pressed for continuing these formats in the interest of deepening trade and economic cooperation between the SCO member states, studying the current state of the multilateral cooperation within the Organisation and its prospects.

The heads of delegations noted that the development of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises is essential for promoting economic growth and employment. They spoke in favour of continuing practical cooperation as part of the Memorandum of Understanding to promote cooperation within the SCO in the sphere of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (Qingdao, 10 June 2018).

The heads of delegations spoke in favour of regularly holding, as part of the SCO, a Startup Forum and an Innovation Contest to Promote Micro-, Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses.

The heads of delegations spoke in favour of deepening cooperation in the digital economy and digital technologies in the interest of ensuring inclusive economic growth of the SCO member states in order to achieve the Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Having noted the results of the Meeting of the Heads of Ministries and Departments of the SCO Member States Responsible for the Development of Information Technology (Tashkent, 25 November 2021) they

consider it necessary to ensure the execution of the Action Plan for the implementation of the Concept of Cooperation of the SCO Member States in the Field of Digitalisation and Information and Communication Technology (Bishkek, 14 June 2019).

The heads of delegations noted that the creative economy could become a part of developing the parties' innovative potential. They believe that supporting creative industries will make economies more competitive, give a boost to small- and medium-sized businesses, and expand the SCO member states' job markets.

Having emphasised the importance of relations between the SCO member states' regions, the heads of delegations spoke in favour of consistent implementation of the Programme for the Development of Interregional Cooperation of the SCO Member States (Bishkek, 14 June 2019). They noted the outcomes of a meeting of the Forum of Heads of Regions of the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 3-4 August 2022) and spoke in favour of building up cooperation within this mechanism, as well as at the China-SCO regional trade and economic cooperation's demonstration zone site, and in other formats.

The heads of delegations noted the Republic of Uzbekistan's proposal to create an Alliance of Special Economic Zones of the SCO Member States and to hold a meeting of the heads of administrations of special economic areas in Samarkand in 2023.

The heads of delegations stressed the need to provide financial support for project activities in order to fully unlock the SCO's investment potential and, in this regard, to continue consultations on creating the SCO Development Bank and the SCO Development Fund (Special Account). They noted the adoption by the interested SCO member states of a Roadmap for the Gradual Increase in the Share of National Currencies in Mutual Settlements between the SCO Member States (Samarkand, 16 September 2022) and spoke in favour of expanding this practice.

The heads of delegations gave a positive assessment of the contribution of the SCO Business Council and the SCO Interbank Consortium to the development of

economic cooperation within the Organisation. They took under advisement the results of the meetings of the Interbank Consortium Council (Tashkent, 23 August 2022), and the Business Council Board (Tashkent, 14 September 2022) and advocated the effective implementation of the provisions of the Joint Action Plan of the member banks of the SCO Interbank Consortium for supporting and developing intra-regional economic cooperation within the SCO in the medium term (2022-2027), the List of the SCO Business Council's main areas of activity for 2022-2023, and the framework principles of interaction and cooperation between the SCO Interbank Consortium banks in finance.

The heads of delegations noted the Republic of Uzbekistan's proposal to hold a Big SCO Trade Fair and create a single electronic platform on its basis, and to hold a Business Partnership Week between the regions of the SCO member states in Uzbekistan in 2023.

The heads of delegations, speaking in favour of promoting cooperation in industry and industrial cooperation, noted the results of the Meeting of Ministers of Industry of the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 15 July 2022) and the opening of the Uzbekistan-SCO Industrial Zone. They stressed the need for consistent implementation of the Programme to Stimulate Industrial Cooperation between the SCO Member States' Business Circles (Samarkand, 16 September 2022).

The heads of delegations noted the Republic of Uzbekistan's proposal to launch a broad-based New SCO Economic Dialogue.

The heads of delegations noted the Republic of Tajikistan's proposal to create an investment project data bank in the SCO member states' manufacturing industry.

The heads of delegations noted the Republic of Tajikistan's proposal concerning the development of regulations on organising within the SCO the manufacturing industry-related convention and exhibition events.

Speaking in favour of promoting cooperation between the customs services of the SCO member states, the heads of delegations noted that online sharing of

information on goods and vehicles that cross the customs border, the protection of intellectual property, interaction in developing and managing risk management systems and combatting customs offences are all mandatory for deepening cooperation in the sphere of customs control. In this regard, they believe it is important to continue consultations on creating a mechanism for convening meetings of the SCO member states' heads of customs services.

The heads of delegations noted the results of the Meeting of the Heads of Departments of the SCO Member States Responsible for Plant Quarantine (Tashkent, 17 May 2022) and stressed the importance of practical implementation of the Agreement between the Authorised Bodies of the SCO Member States on Cooperation in the Field of Plant Quarantine (Samarkand, 16 September 2022).

The heads of delegations noted the growing role of digitalisation and innovative technology in promoting the SCO region's economic growth and sustainable development. They emphasised the need to implement the Concept of Cooperation of the SCO Member States in the Field of Digitalisation and Information and Communication Technology (Bishkek, 14 June 2019), the SCO Heads of State Council's Statement on Strengthening Cooperation in the Field of Science, Technology and Innovation (Dushanbe, 17 September, 2021), the Concept for Establishing the SCO Technology Parks Pool (Nur-Sultan, 25 November 2021), and the Cooperation Programme for the SCO Member States' Authorised Bodies for Promoting Digital Literacy (Samarkand, 16 September 2022).

The heads of delegations consider it important to strengthen mutual coordination and cooperation, to use the digital economy and scientific and technological innovations in order to create new impulses for progress in member states, as well as to improve economic competitiveness and the region's development potential. They spoke against discriminatory measures under any pretext that hinder the development of the digital economy and communication technology.

The heads of delegations believe that amid conditions brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, e-commerce is vastly important for improving the economies, increasing

employment, and improving people's well-being in member states. They supported the Special Working Group on Electronic Commerce's activities in a move to raise the level of electronic commerce in the region and to promote economic growth within the SCO.

In this regard, the heads of delegations noted an online presentation of streaming trade of traditional goods in SCO countries (10 January - 7 February 2022, a video conference) and a workshop on e-commerce (20-24 June 2022, a video conference).

The heads of delegations consider it necessary to take measures to implement the SCO member states' agreements regarding the creation of a Special Working Group on Startups and Innovations, an Expert Working Group on Traditional Medicine, and a Special Working Group on Alleviating Poverty (Samarkand, 16 September 2022) and to launch these groups.

Noting that alleviating poverty plays an important role in ensuring prosperity, security, and stability in the region, the heads of delegations noted the results of the meeting of the SCO member states' heads of departments on poverty reduction (Tashkent, 28 January 2022) and the International Forum on Poverty Reduction (Bukhara, 26-27 May 2022).

The heads of delegations confirmed the member states' push to achieve effective use of the SCO's transit potential, the formation of regional transport and transit corridors, and the implementation of major projects that contribute to improving transport connectivity within the Organisation. They consider it important to create new and upgrade existing international routes for road and rail transport, multimodal transport corridors and logistics centres, as well as to introduce digital, innovative, and energy-saving processes, to streamline cross-border procedures in accordance with best international practices, as well as to implement joint infrastructure projects that ensure mutually beneficial use of the SCO member states' transit potential.

The heads of delegations noted the Republic of Uzbekistan's proposal to hold a SCO Transport Forum in Uzbekistan in 2023.

The heads of delegations noted the outcomes of the 9th Meeting of Ministers of Transport of the SCO Member States (Khiva, 12 May 2022). They stressed the importance of the Concept of Cooperation between the SCO Member States for Developing Interconnectivity and Creating Effective Transport Corridors (Samarkand, 16 September 2022), which has been approved by a Head of State Council's decision, and the importance of implementing it.

The heads of delegations pointed out that stakeholder SCO member states' approaches to speed up economic recovery after the pandemic, further broaden regional economic cooperation, and unblock international production and supply chains has been included in the Statement on Ensuring Reliable, Sustainable and Diversified Supply Chains.

They noted the importance of consistent implementation of the Agreement between the Governments of the SCO Member States for Creating Favourable Conditions for International Road Transport (Dushanbe, 12 September 2014) and regular meetings of the Joint Commission on Facilitation of International Road Transport.

The heads of delegations confirmed the SCO member states' push to continue to expand cooperation between railway authorities based on the Concept of Interaction between Railway Authorities (Railways) of the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 2 November 2019). They noted Kyrgyz Republic's proposal to develop an action plan for implementing the above concept.

The heads of delegations reiterated the SCO member states' push to continue to develop modern logistics centres and to take joint measures to coordinate and promote integration of railway infrastructure, to couple policies and regulations, scientific and technological innovation, and to build up capacity, as well as to explore specific measures to increase the number of international intermodal container trains and to further promote safe, stable, and high-quality rail transport.

The heads of delegations noted the Republic of Uzbekistan's proposal to establish, with the support of the UN, an Interregional Centre for Connectivity in Tashkent.

The heads of delegations noted the outcomes of the Meeting of Ministers of Energy of the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 24 June 2022) and stressed the importance of practical implementation of the Concept of Cooperation of the SCO Member States in the Energy Sector (Dushanbe, 12 August 2021) and the corresponding action plan (Tashkent, 24 June 2022), as well as a Statement by the SCO Heads of State Council on Ensuring International Energy Security and the Programme of Cooperation between the Authorised Bodies of the SCO Member States in Using Renewable Energy Sources (Samarkand, 16 September 2022).

The heads of delegations noted the Republic of Kazakhstan's proposal to develop the SCO energy strategy.

The heads of delegations noted the outcomes of the Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture of the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 25 July 2022). They pointed out, given the circumstances, the need for consistent implementation of the Agreement between the Governments of the SCO Member States on Cooperation in Agriculture (Tashkent, 11 June 2010), the Programme of Cooperation of the SCO Member States on Food Security (Dushanbe, 12 October 2018), the Statement by the SCO Heads of State Council on Food Security (Dushanbe, 17 September 2021), the Statement by the SCO Heads of State Council on Ensuring Global Food Security (Samarkand, 16 September 2022) and the Concept of Interaction between the Authorised Bodies of the SCO Member States in the Sphere of "Intellectual" Agriculture and Agro-Innovation (Samarkand, 16 September 2022). They noted the role of the SCO demonstration base for exchanging and training in agricultural technology in promoting agricultural cooperation within the SCO space.

The heads of delegations noted the Republic of Uzbekistan's proposal to hold the SCO International Conference on Food Security in Uzbekistan in 2023.

The heads of delegations emphasised that the COVID-19 pandemic continues exerting a serious negative influence on people's lives, health and wellbeing in all countries. The member states are developing productive cooperation in promoting healthcare and preventing and countering the spread of infectious diseases to remove

the threat of epidemics in the SCO space. They consider it necessary to consistently implement the Declaration on Joint Measures to Counter the Threat of Epidemics in the SCO Space (Qingdao, 10 June 2018), the Comprehensive Plan of Joint Measures to Counter Epidemics in the Region (Moscow, 10 November 2020), the Concept of Cooperation between the Health Ministries of the SCO Member States on Telemedicine and the Roadmap on Cooperation between Medical Institutions of the SCO Member States in the Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases (Samarkand, 16 September 2022).

The heads of delegations noted the results of the Session of Heads of Sanitary and Epidemiological Welfare Services of the SCO Member States (St Petersburg, 19 December 2021), the Meeting of Health Ministers of the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 8 June 2022) and the SCO Forum on Traditional Medicine (Tashkent, 7 June 2022).

The heads of delegations noted the proposal of the Russian Federation to establish an SCO Medical Association.

Emphasising the importance of environmental protection for socio-economic development, the heads of delegations spoke in favour of deepening cooperation in countering climate change, preserving and ensuring sustainable use of biodiversity, protecting and rationally managing water resources, as well as promoting low carbon technology and inclusive approaches to social development of society. They emphasized the importance of implementing the Concept on Cooperation of the SCO Member States on Environmental Protection (Qingdao, 10 June 2018) and the SCO Green Belt Programme (Dushanbe, 17 September 2021).

Speaking about the results of the Meeting of the Heads of Ministries and Departments of the SCO Member States Responsible for Environmental Protection (Tashkent, 27 May 2022), the heads of delegations supported the continuation of preparations of the Programme for the Joint Creation of a Single SCO Platform for the Exchange of Environmental Information. They noted the proposal of the Republic of Kazakhstan to form a Registry of SCO Environmental Problems.

The heads of delegations emphasised that the support granted by the developed countries under Annex II of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change should be commensurate with the actions of the developing nations on countering climate change. Provision and mobilisation of resources on countering climate change are a commitment of the developed countries to the developing nations.

The heads of delegations pointed out that the developed countries have not yet fulfilled their obligations on climate finance, including the \$100 billion per year goal by 2023. They urged the developed countries to fulfil their commitments as soon as possible, prior to COP 27, so as to make an important contribution into establishing a new collective climate finance goal after 2025 and help the developing nations to counter climate change in the context of sustainable development.

The heads of delegations reaffirmed the commitment of the SCO member states to settle the problem of climate change and their willingness to implement the SCO Heads of State Council on Climate Change Response in order to promote cooperation in counter climate change and adapt to it. They noted the importance of cooperation on environmental protection, environmental security, prevention of negative consequences of climate change, preservation and use of biodiversity and the exchange of experience and current information on these issues.

The heads of delegations emphasised that inadequate access to a source of safe drinking water, basic sanitary services and healthy hygiene is creating serious problems. They noted the need to focus on sustainable development and rational use of water resources. The SCO member states are convinced that it is unacceptable to use the climate agenda for introducing restrictions on trade and investment cooperation. They will work towards intensive dialogue with relevant international institutions with a view to attracting investment and funding joint projects and programmes on environmental protection, introducing new eco-friendly technology and increasing the share of the green economy.

The heads of delegations noted the results of the Meeting of the Heads of Ministries and Departments of the SCO Member States Responsible for Environmental

Protection (Tashkent, 27 May 2022), and the Second High-Level Conference on the International Decade Water for Sustainable Development 2018-2028 (Dushanbe, 6-9 June, 2022), as well as the seminar on the SCO Climate Agenda in the Modern Conditions (23 September, 2022, via videoconference).

Supporting the proposal of the Republic of Tajikistan to declare 2025 the International Year for the Protection of Glaciers, the heads of delegations noted the initiative to create an International Fund for the Protection of Glaciers by adopting a UN General Assembly resolution.

The heads of delegations noted the proposal by the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to draft a resolution for the 77th UN General Assembly announcing a Five-Year Period of Action for the Development of Mountainous Regions in 2023-2027.

The heads of delegations noted the proposal of the Republic of Uzbekistan to establish an SCO Climate Council.

The heads of delegations also noted the proposal of the People's Republic of China to create an SCO Database of Innovative Environmental Technology.

The heads of delegations expressed solidarity with the people of Pakistan who sustained damage from the recent unprecedented floods caused by climate change. They praised cooperation between the Government of Pakistan and the UN in overcoming the consequences of this devastating natural disaster.

The heads of delegations supported further coordination of actions by the SCO member states in preventing and eliminating the consequences of large-scale and cross-border emergencies, including regular conduct of international exercises by rescue services of the member states for upgrading skills of experts. They also backed the use of the multilateral system of coordination and exchange of information on emergencies in the SCO to upgrade the monitoring and early warning mechanisms and improve cooperation on enhancing production safety and application of relevant legislative and administrative regulations. They supported the deepening of the SCO's cooperation with the UN and other international agencies in

this area.

Having emphasised the need to further develop cooperation in education and science, the heads of delegations supported consistent implementation of the Agreement on Cooperation in Education between the Governments of SCO Member States (Shanghai, 15 June 2006).

The heads of delegations noted the results of the Meeting of the Ministers of Science and Technology from the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 8 April 2022). They consider important the implementation of the Programme of SCO Cooperation in Artificial Intelligence and the SCO Action Plan on Scientific and Technological Cooperation in Priority Areas for 2022-2025 (Samarkand, 16 September 2022).

The heads of delegations consider it necessary to further deepen practical cooperation between the SCO member states in the cultural and humanitarian fields, in part, by introducing new formats of interaction in education, culture, tourism and sports.

Emphasising the importance of preserving and multiplying the unique cultural heritage of the SCO member states, the heads of delegations highly praised the results of the SCO Year of Culture, during which many concerts, festivals, contests, exhibitions, seminars, meetings and forums took place. They advocated the effective implementation of the Agreement between the Governments of the SCO Member States on Cooperation in Protecting Cultural Landmarks (Dushanbe, 17 September 2021), Regulations on the SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital (Dushanbe, 17 September 2021), the Memorandum on Cooperation between the Secondary and Higher Institutions of Professional Education in Culture and Arts of the SCO Member States (Dushanbe, 17 September 2021), Regulations on the Gala Concert of the Arts Festival of the SCO Member States (Dushanbe, 18 August 2021) and the Memorandum between the Authorised Bodies of the SCO Member States on Cooperation in Museum Affairs (Samarkand, 16 September 2022).

The heads of delegations noted the results of the Meeting of the Culture Ministers of the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 19 May 2022) and the proposals of the SCO

member countries to create an alliance of their museums, an SCO Museum Forum and other cooperation platforms.

The heads of delegations are convinced that people's diplomacy promotes mutual understanding and cultural and humanitarian ties in the SCO. In this context, they pointed to the contribution made into the development of SCO humanitarian cooperation by the SCO People's Diplomacy Forum (Tashkent, 11 May 2022), the institution of the honorary title of the SCO Goodwill Ambassador and the adoption of the relevant Regulations (Samarkand, 16 September 2022). In this context, the heads of delegations also mentioned the activities of the Chinese Committee on Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation, the SCO People's Diplomacy Centre in Tashkent, the SCO Cultural and Integration Centre in Bishkek and the SCO Friendship and Cooperation Centre in Dushanbe.

The heads of delegations consider it necessary to continue the effective implementation of the Agreement between the Authorised Bodies of the SCO Member States on Cooperation in Physical Fitness and Sports (Bishkek, 14 June 2019). They noted the results of the Meeting of the Heads of Departments in Charge of Physical Fitness and Sports in the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 20 May 2022) and a proposal of the Russian Federation to create an SCO Association of Sports Organisations under the SCO auspices and establish a working group on physical fitness and sports in the framework of the said meeting.

The heads of delegations said that the annual SCO Kunming Marathon in the People's Republic of China and the Issyk-Kul Marathon in the Kyrgyz Republic are making a positive contribution to the development of sports cooperation in the SCO.

Emphasising the active role of women in promoting friendship and understanding, the heads of delegations welcomed the results of the SCO Women's Forum and the Meeting of Businesswomen from the SCO Member States (Tashkent, 18-19 August 2022) in the context of the Beijing Declaration and the Action Plan adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995).

The heads of delegations noted the results of the SCO Youth Council (Tashkent, 9-

10 June 2022) as well as the SCO Youth Science, Technology and Innovation Forum and the SCO Youth Camp (Shenzhen, 31 May - 2 June 2022). They stressed the importance of implementing the Cooperation Agreement of the SCO Member States on Working with the Youth (Dushanbe, 17 September 2021).

The heads of delegations agreed to continue promoting their cooperation in tourism. They believe the announcement of the SCO Year of Tourism in 2023 and the city of Varanasi, Republic of India, the SCO's tourist and cultural capital in 2022-2023 will help tap the potential of tourism cooperation in the region.

The heads of delegations noted the results of the Meeting of the Tourism Administrations Heads of SCO Member States and the Tourism Forum (Tashkent, 19-20 May 2022). They emphasised the need to carry out the Agreement between the Governments of the SCO Member States on Tourism Cooperation (Samarkand, 16 September 2022) and the Plan of Joint Actions in the New Conditions on Implementing the Programme of Tourism Cooperation of the SCO Member States in 2022-2023 (Dushanbe, 15 July 2021).

The heads of delegations consider it necessary to develop contacts between the media, press services of government bodies and cooperation in the digital space. They believe this should be done, in part, by implementing the Agreement between the Governments of the SCO Member States on Media Cooperation (Bishkek, 14 June 2019) and the Agreement between the Governments of the SCO Member States on Cooperation in Ensuring International Information Security (Yekaterinburg, 16 June 2009). In their opinion, cooperation of the media in exchanging news and information products, joint broadcasting and technical interaction and training of personnel are facilitating the creation of favourable conditions for broad mutual dissemination of information.

The heads of delegations advocated the deepening of the SCO's cooperation with the UN and its specialised agencies and other international and regional organisations.

The heads of delegations endorsed a report by the SCO Secretariat on events and

meetings conducted under the Programme for Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation between SCO Member States and the SCO budget for 2023. They also adopted decisions on a number of issues related to the financial and institutional activities of the SCO permanent bodies.

The heads of delegations expressed gratitude to China for excellent organisation of the meeting of the SCO Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) Council.

Next session of the SCO Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) Council will take place in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2023.

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