

Press Release on the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

On 20 September 2017, the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (hereinafter referred to as "the SCO" or "the Organization") was held in New York during the 72nd Session of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. Foreign Minister of the Republic of India Sushma Swaraji, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China Wang Yi, Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic Erlan Abdyldayev, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Khanwaja Asif, Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan Sirodjidin Aslov and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov attended the meeting.

Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China Wang Yi chaired the meeting.

SCO Secretary-General Rashid Alimov and Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure Yevgeny Sysoyev also took part in the meeting.

The foreign ministers noted that for the past 16 years since its establishment, the SCO has made a major contribution to regional peace, security and sustainable development, strengthened good neighborliness and partnership among countries, and become a force with significant influence on the international stage. On 9 June 2017, the meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State in Astana decided on the membership of India and Pakistan, which has opened new opportunities and prospects for the Organization's development, and enhanced its international prestige and role.

The foreign ministers exchanged views on the SCO's prospects, pressing international and regional issues, and on how to enhance the SCO's coordination with the UN and other multilateral organizations, and deepen cooperation among the SCO member states under the framework of the UN and other international and regional organizations.

The foreign ministers stressed that it is important to carry forward the "Shanghai Spirit" of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity, and pursuit of common development, and pointed out that the Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Treaty on Long-term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as well as other fundamental legal documents are of great significance.

The foreign ministers supported comprehensive and deeper-level cooperation of the SCO in political, security, economic, people-to-people exchanges, external communication, institutional building and other fields in order for the Organization to achieve new progress.

The foreign ministers pointed out that as the world becomes increasingly multi-polar, the strengthening of new political and economic centers is irreversible. Meanwhile, global uncertainties are on the rise, block thinking and the Cold War mentality are resurging, and principles of international law such as non-interference in internal affairs are undermined. Economic globalization is facing headwinds, global economic growth is not yet steady, and conflicts arising from unbalanced development and unfair distribution have worsened.

The foreign ministers noted that despite increasing uncertainties in the current international situation, peaceful coexistence and sustainable development remains the theme of the times. It is imperative to uphold multilateralism in addressing major issues, and tackle various threats and challenges through by jointly improving the global governance mechanism, and work toward a community with shared future of mankind and a new model of international relations.

The foreign ministers stressed that the UN is the most universal, representative and authoritative international organization. They expressed readiness to firmly uphold the purposes and principles of the

Charter of the United Nations, enhance coordination within the UN framework, and strengthen the UN's central role in international cooperation in such fields as global governance, safeguarding world peace, promoting common development, and combating terrorism, separatism and extremism. They support the SCO in deepening cooperation with the UN and its specialized agencies to safeguard world peace, solve hot issues, and safeguard the security, stability and sustainable development of the SCO region and beyond.

The foreign ministers reiterated their opposition to any "double standards" vis-a-vis terrorists and any attempt to interfere in other countries' internal affairs or to undermine the leading roles of competent departments of the countries in the name of counter-terrorism.

In view of this, the foreign ministers agreed on the need to expeditiously ratify the Anti-extremism Convention of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization signed on 9 June 2017; and they resolved to take further coordination measures to strengthen cooperation in dealing with common security challenges and threats and safeguarding national interests.

The foreign ministers expressed concern over the developments on the Korean Peninsula. They noted that Resolution 2375 adopted by the UN Security Council on 11 September 2017 was a reasonable response to DPRK's nuclear test on 3 September. They called for strict

implementation of the resolution by SCO member states to promote a political and diplomatic settlement of the Korean Peninsula issue. Recognizing the importance of the relevant proposals put forward by China and Russia, the foreign ministers emphasized that the negotiation process must be launched as quickly as possible to ease the situation.

The foreign ministers noted the efforts of the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to achieve peace, stability and prosperity of their country and to get rid of terrorism, extremism and drug-related crimes; and they believed that the UN should play a core role in coordinating international cooperation for promoting stability and development in Afghanistan. The foreign ministers welcomed Afghanistan's participation in regional cooperation processes and stressed the need to implement, as soon as possible, the consensus reached by the heads of SCO member states in respect of the continuous work of the SCO — Afghanistan Liaison Group after the expansion.

In view of the current state of the world economy, the foreign ministers agreed to further develop and expand economic and trade cooperation within the SCO framework, and stressed that the use of unilateral restrictions as a tool for political and economic pressurizing would only set up barriers for economic and investment cooperation between countries and prove to be unconstructive and futile. The foreign ministers expressed their support for the creation of enabling conditions

to gradually realize the free flows of goods, capital, services and technologies as envisioned in the SCO Charter.

In order to effectively implement the priority economic and investment projects within the SCO framework, the foreign ministers expressed their support for active discussions on the establishment of an SCO development bank and an SCO development fund (special account).

The foreign ministers considered the upcoming Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government to be held in the Russian Federation in 2017 as an opportunity to outline the priorities and specific measures for further cooperation in the economic and cultural fields.

The foreign ministers underscored the importance to implement the outcomes of the meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State (9 June 2017, Astana). They welcomed the work plan proposed by the People's Republic of China as the Chair of the SCO for 2017-2018, and reiterated their support.

A number of documents on international cooperation and administrative affairs by the SCO and its standing bodies were signed as an outcome of the meeting.

The foreign ministers spoke highly of China's organization of this extraordinary meeting and thanked the UN Secretariat for its assistance.

The meeting was held in a traditional atmosphere of friendship and mutual understanding among SCO member states.