

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ
Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of
the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

A meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (hereinafter referred to as the SCO or the Organization) was held On September 23, 2003 in Beijing. 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 N. Tanaev of the Kyrgyz Republic, Prime Minister M. Kasyanov of the Russian Federation, Prime Minister A. Akilov of the Republic of Tajikistan, Prime Minister U. Sultanov of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In an atmosphere of friendship, mutual understanding and constructiveness, the heads of government of the six countries have discussed issues of strengthening the SCO mechanisms and intensifying cooperation in trade, economic and other fields and have reached broad mutual understanding.

1. The heads of government have noted with satisfaction that since the SCO establishment a consistent work has been underway on its institutional building and cooperation in all fields has been continuously expanding and deepening. The Organization is gradually becoming an important mechanism for cooperation aimed at ensuring stability and security in Central Asia and collective development of the member states. The SCO is already subject to ever increasing attention of the international community.

The successful Moscow summit of May 2003 was of fundamental importance for the development of the Organization. The agreements and decisions reached at the Moscow summit suggest that the Organization has entered a period of its comprehensive development, and they constitute important benchmarks for all future SCO work.

An appropriate legal framework and multi-disciplinary and multi-level mechanism of meetings has been developed in the SCO framework. A full-scale launch of the two SCO permanent bodies - the Secretariat in Beijing and the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent - not later than January 1, 2004 as decided by the Moscow Summit, will be an important development for the Organization.

2. In order to develop trade and economic cooperation among the SCO member states and improve investment climate on the basis of mutual benefit and equality, the heads of government adopted the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

It has been agreed that, by January 1, 2004, the SCO member states will prepare and submit to the Russian side proposals for the draft Measures in support of the Program implementation.

3. The heads of government adopted a decision “On the SCO Budget for 2004” and “On the Regulation on Salaries, Compensation and Guarantees of Full-time Employees of the SCO Permanent Bodies”.

4. In accordance with the Agreement between the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of June 7, 2002, the heads of government approved the structure and staffing of the Executive Committee of the SCO RATS.

5. The heads of government note that since their meeting in September 2001 and on the basis of the Memorandum between the Governments of the States – Members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the basic goals and directions of regional economic cooperation and launch of the process for creating favorable conditions for trade and investments and other

agreements reached, the relevant ministries and agencies of the six countries have done the necessary work for the establishment of economic cooperation within the SCO framework. The heads of government have expressed confidence that, against the background of economic globalization and regionalization, deepening of multilateral economic cooperation among the SCO member states will enhance their economic potential and the internal consolidation of the Organization.

The heads of government note that at the present stage the main task of regional economic cooperation within the SCO would be to intensify the work on creating favorable conditions for trade and investment. The SCO member states will take steps to stimulate multilateral cooperation in the field of energy, information technology, telecommunications, environmental protection and environmental management, including preparation and implementation of joint projects of common interest in these areas, based on the principles set out in the SCO Charter. At the same time, the SCO member states will be guided by long-term goals of regional economic cooperation as defined in the Program mentioned above.

Support has been expressed to the agreements reached by the second meeting of the SCO member states' ministers responsible for foreign trade and economic activity recently held in Bishkek.

6. The heads of government argue in favor of further strengthening of cooperation between the SCO member states in the field of transportation, improvement of transport infrastructure, coordination of policies in the field of cross-border transportation, establishment of international transport corridors, including elaboration of relevant multilateral instruments. In this regard, they have emphasized the positive role of the second meeting of transport ministers of the six countries held recently in St. Petersburg.

7. The heads of government note the importance of deepened cooperation in the field of mutual disaster relief assistance and prevention of emergencies, including intensified exchange of natural disasters information and technical expertise, as well as collaboration in relevant personnel training. Necessary multilateral documents will be signed for this purpose.

8. The heads of government believe that increased cooperation in the field of culture is of great importance for strengthening friendly relations between the peoples of the Organization's members states. Support has been expressed to the initiative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to hold, before the end of this year, the second meeting of the culture ministers of the SCO member states, as well as prepare the first cultural festival of the six countries.

9. The heads of government have stressed that, at a time when terrorism, separatism and extremism continue to pose a serious threat to security in the region, the SCO member states will make active efforts to implement the provisions of the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism of June 15, 2001, as well as finalize the draft document on the SCO cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking.

10. The heads of government reaffirm that the SCO functioning is guided by the principle of openness and in accordance with its Charter the Organization is open for dialogue and cooperation in the economic area in various formats with other international organizations and states irrespective of their geographical location.

The heads of government have agreed that the next meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the SCO member states will be held in 2004 in Bishkek.

September 23, 2003, Beijing