

Tashkent Declaration

by

Heads of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The heads of the member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (hereinafter referred to as the SCO or the Organization) - the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, having met on June 17, 2004 in Tashkent at a session of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO members, declare the following.

I

The heads of state have stressed that the achievements of the SCO since its establishment and changes in the international situation indicate that the organization's institution and development are relevant to the current trends, to future and fundamental interests of the peoples of the six states, and also that the principles established by the Organization are valid.

Having noted the successful completion of the goals set by the Moscow Summit in May 2003, to complete the institutionalization of the SCO, the heads of state have expressed their appreciation of the work carried out by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Council of National Coordinators.

The Heads of state have expressed satisfaction with the timely launch of the SCO permanent bodies, the Secretariat in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the Regional Antiterrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent, and have noted the major efforts of the Chinese and Uzbek sides to create appropriate conditions for their full operation.

October 2003 saw the beginning of the work of the RATS governing body i.e. the Council. The RATS has elaborated a specific work plan and adopted a number of necessary legal documents. Thus, the necessary prerequisites have been created for the effective functioning of the RATS which is to ensure a coherent and target-oriented interaction within the SCO to implement the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism.

It has been noted that uninterrupted operation of the funding mechanism for the SCO activities was important for proper and effective execution of SCO's functions.

The long-term Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation among the SCO member state approved by the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) in September 2003 in Beijing is of fundamental importance for strengthening the SCO as a whole and its economic component. The document not only recorded common understanding of the benchmarks, objectives and goals of the business-like partnership of six countries up to 2020, but also outlined ways and means of their implementation.

The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs has been actively working. The Protocol on Cooperation and Coordination of Activities between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the six countries is to play an important role in coordinating positions of the six countries on pressing international issues.

The heads of state support the initiative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to hold regular meetings of the Secretaries of the member states' Security Councils the with a view to strengthening cooperation among relevant national authorities in addressing new threats and challenges.

The heads of state stress that in the new environment the Council of National Coordinators, relying on the SCO Secretariat, should focus not only on ensuring a well-coordinated operation

of the Organization, but also on the elaboration of conceptual approaches to the SCO future development..

As early as at the stage of its establishment, the SCO adhering to the principle of transparency, entered international intercourse as a respected and equal party. The SCO will follow this line in the future. The Regulation on the Status of Observer to the SCO which was approved in Tashkent is a new significant step towards establishing and expanding the SCO contacts with other international associations and states regardless of their geographical location. Work will continue on the documents regulating other forms of international cooperation of the Organization, as provided by the SCO Charter.

II

With the completion of the institutionalization period the SCO has entered a stage of a full-scale cooperation between its member states within the Organization. The heads of state stand for a progressive orderly advance in all areas defined in the SCO Charter. This interaction should be based on both long-term objectives and short-term priorities. The aim of the interaction is to jointly identify the interests that unite the six countries on the basis of respect for their identity and sovereign rights.

The Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors signed in Tashkent will be of great importance for the multilateral work within the SCO to address transnational threats and challenges. The heads of state believe that the progress of implementation of this Agreement should be monitored through the mechanism of meetings of the Secretaries of Security Councils which could also arrange for the drafting of an integrated policy document on cooperation within the SCO in addressing new challenges and threats, including illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition, explosive, toxic, poisonous and radioactive substances and mercenarism.

Progressive economic development of the Central Asia Region and the neighboring states and meeting the vital needs of their population is a keystone of their stability and security.

In this respect, the heads of state deem it is necessary by the next meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) to be held in Bishkek in the autumn of 2004, to complete the Action Plan of implementation of the above Program and launch at full capacity the four groups of experts. It is important to foresee such systematic steps, the realization of which would mean the achievement of modern forms of trade and economic cooperation and increased turnover of trade between our states as well as harmonization of the regulatory and legal framework, gradual development of favorable environment for free movement of goods, capitals, services and technologies.

In addition to the measures already taken or scheduled to promote the integration processes within the SCO, the heads of state consider it timely to embark on the establishment of the SCO Business Council and the SCO Development Fund and instruct the SCO Secretariat to ensure preparation of appropriate out documents on realization of these projects as soon as possible.

While giving an overall positive assessment of cooperation in various fields during the period following the Moscow Summit, the heads of state take note of the need to ensure a well-defined and productive interaction through the ministries responsible for foreign economic activity, foreign trade, transport, defense, culture and emergency relief, as well as through other bodies of the SCO Member States. In order to increase the effectiveness of the work of the institution of ministries' and departments' heads meetings the fastest completion of the elaboration and adoption of the interaction juridical standards and timely implementation of the agreements already reached acquire a great importance.

Environmental protection issues, rational and effective utilization of the water resources should

be added to the agenda for cooperation development within the Organization. Relevant ministries and departments as well as scientific institutions could start joint activities already this year to elaborate the SCO strategy in those fields of cooperation.

III

The heads of state are convinced that progressive development and strengthening of the SCO, which is not a block, but is based on principles of equal partnership, mutual respect, mutual trust and openness, are consistent with major trends in international development and will promote expansion of the international dialogue.

The SCO is eager to actively participate in constructive shaping of the structure of a new security architecture capable of consolidating extensive international efforts to counteract new challenges and threats to global and regional stability. To this end, the SCO will cooperate with other international mechanisms and states, primarily with the UN, and make its contribution to security and stability not only within the SCO but also worldwide.

The heads of state express their deep concern over the new outburst of terrorism and extremism. Different countries and regions of the world are becoming the targets for terrorists. Terrorism is flexibly adapting to the current situation, it employs modern technologies and is ready to take advantage of any unsettled conflicts.

Global terrorist threat should be opposed by a global counteraction system centered around the UN and based on regional, sub-regional and national organizations. It is important not only to respond adequately to terrorist acts but to take preventive actions as well.

The SCO member states will strengthen their cooperation in the security sphere in order to increase the effectiveness of the struggle against terrorism, separatism and extremism and of the protection of their common interests. The heads of state note the expediency of carrying out joint antiterrorist exercises with participation of the law enforcement agencies and special services. Those joint antiterrorist exercises are aimed at enhancing the coordination in the struggle against those threats.

The heads of state believe that responses to the complex challenges of our time – be they international terrorism or regional conflicts and crises – can and have to be found on a multilateral and cooperative basis without categorizing States and under the leadership of the UN, while observing its Charter, rules and principles of the international law. Only this approach will ensure international security and stability in a globalizing world. SCO is strongly committed to these principles and expresses its willingness to actively cooperate with all states and multilateral associations within this conceptual framework.

Being interested in the revival of the peaceful, united and prosperous Afghanistan that lives in harmony with its neighbors and other countries in the world, the SCO welcomes the formation of a broad-based government in the country.

The SCO Member States, recognizing the central coordinating role of the UN in the implementation of international programs in Afghanistan, will strive to promote international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, extremism, and drug trafficking with a view to achieve security, peace and order, and create the necessary conditions for peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan.

IV

The heads of state note that constructive cooperation among all regional associations in Asia-Pacific Region is crucial for the maintenance of peace, stability and prosperity which

undoubtedly is the interest of all APR countries.

The heads of the SCO member states address the international organizations and fora active in the APR with a proposal to gradually establish a partnership network of multilateral associations by means of conclusion among them of appropriate agreements, including mutual provision to each other of an observer status.

The heads of state believe that implementation of this initiative would promote the development of a region-wide mutual security and cooperation system in the APR operating within the framework of the UN Charter and the international law and taking into account, on an equal basis, the interests of all its members.

Tashkent, June 17, 2004