

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

The Thirteenth Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The thirteenth session 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) held on December 14 and 15, 2014 in Astana. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister K. Massimov of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Premier of the State Council Li Keqiang of the People's Republic of China, Prime Minister Dzh. Otorbaev of the Kyrgyz Republic, Prime Minister D. Medvedev of the Russian Federation, Prime Minister K. Rasulzada of the Republic of Tajikistan and First Deputy Prime Minister R. Azimov of Uzbekistan.

The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister K. Massimov of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The SCO Secretary General D. Mezentsev, Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure Sinfen Zhang, Chairman of the Board of the SCO Business Council Sh. Said and authorized representative of the Council of the SCO Interbank Association S. Lykov participated in the meeting.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the SCO observer: Chief Executive Officer of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan A. Abdullah, State Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of India V. Kumar Singh, Minister of Agriculture of the Islamic Republic of Iran M. Hojjati Najaf Abadi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to the Republic of Kazakhstan Z. Suhee, advisor to the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on national security and foreign affairs S. Aziz, Chairman of the Executive Committee - Executive Secretary of the Commonwealth of Independent States S. Lebedev, Secretary General of the Eurasian Economic Community T. Mansurov, Executive Director of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building in Asia Gong Jianwei, and Director of the Department of Transportation of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Li Yuwei.

President N. Nazarbayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan received the heads of the SCO member states delegations.

In a friendly, constructive and businesslike atmosphere, the heads of government exchanged views on a wide range of issues of international and regional economic development and guided by the decisions of the Council of Heads of SCO Member States (September 12, 2014, Dushanbe) examined the priority areas for mutually beneficial cooperation.

1. It has been noted that the global financial and economic crisis effects have not been completely mitigated, and many challenges still continue to impact the global economy.

In this context, the meeting reaffirmed the need for taking joint measures aimed at ensuring sustainable socio-economic growth, intensification of trade, economic and investment activity, development of cooperation in high-tech sectors of the economy, modernization of various industries, improvement of transport and logistics, information, communications and other infrastructure, enhanced economic competitiveness and standard and quality of life of the SCO member states' population.

2. The heads of government noted that in order to implement the decisions of the meeting of the Council of Heads of Governments (Prime Ministers) of the SCO member states (November 28-29, 2013 in Tashkent) joint efforts had been taken to strengthen economic and humanitarian cooperation, maintain economic stability, increase investment attractiveness and develop industrial production in the SCO member states.

The meeting underscored the importance of creating favorable conditions for the expansion of practical cooperation in financial, banking, science and technology, innovation, energy (including the use of alternative and renewable energy), and customs areas, as well as in agriculture, transport, telecommunications, in accordance with the Action Plan for the implementation of the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation among the SCO member states and the List of Measures for further development of project activities in the framework of the Organization in 2012-2016.

The heads of government welcome the initiative of the People's Republic of China regarding "Silk Road Economic Belt" and consider important to arrange consultations and cooperation between the SCO member states on this issue.

3. The heads of government noted the productive work done by the meeting of the SCO member states' ministers responsible for external economic and trade relations held on November 19, 2014 in Astana.

In order to implement the instructions given by the Council of Heads of Government (November 28-29, 2013, Tashkent), the ministers of the SCO member states responsible for external economic and trade relations, jointly with the SCO Secretariat, reviewed the activities of the *ad hoc* working groups and took relevant decisions to further improve their efficiency.

The heads of government instructed the ministries and agencies in charge of external economic and trade relations, jointly with the interested ministries and agencies of the SCO member states and with the engagement of the SCO Secretariat, SCO Business Council and SCO Interbank Association, to conduct an inventory of the projects set forth in the Plan of Actions for the implementation of the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation among the SCO member states, and, if necessary, update this document. They also instructed to proceed with the preparation of a draft List of Measures to further develop project activities within the SCO in 2017-2021 aiming to have it subsequently adopted by the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the SCO member states in due course.

4. The heads of government stressed the need for an urgent establishment of mechanisms for the financial support to the project activities within the SCO in order to promote economic growth, expansion of trade and economic relations between the SCO member states.

5. The heads of government spoke in favor of building up cooperation between public authorities and business organizations in the field of investment, and establishing direct relations between the business communities of the SCO member states.

The meeting highlighted the interest in boosting investment cooperation through the implementation of specific projects in high-tech sectors of the economy, transport and logistics, information and communication, and other promising areas. The heads of government welcomed the proposal of the Chinese side regarding the use of funds of the investment organizations created by the People's Republic of China to fund economic projects in the SCO region.

The meeting noted the productive engagement of the SCO member states in international forums, exhibitions, round tables in accordance with the action plan of the Organization and based on common interests.

6. The heads of government commended the work of the transport agencies of the SCO member states that resulted in the signing of the Agreement between the governments of SCO member states on favorable conditions for international road transport (September 12 2014, Dushanbe).

The agreement will enable to efficiently use existing transport infrastructure, improve transit potential and promote the development of trade and economic cooperation among the SCO member states.

In this regard, the meeting stressed the importance of an early effectiveness of the Agreement.

The heads of government noted an active participation of the UN ESCAP and SCO Secretariat in the preparation of the draft Agreement and called for further development of cooperation between the two organizations.

The heads of government stressed the importance of developing cooperation in the field of road, rail and air transport in the SCO region, *inter alia*, through the implementation of projects aimed at modernization and construction of new transport infrastructure.

The meeting emphasized the importance of creating new and effective use of existing regional international multimodal logistics centers.

7. The heads of government expressed their appreciation of the progress in the implementation of the Agreement between the governments of SCO member states on cooperation and mutual assistance in customs matters (November 2, 2007, Tashkent) and interdepartmental documents in the customs area.

The heads of government noted the importance of the signing on December 15, 2014 in Astana of the Memorandum between the customs services of the SCO member states on cooperation in the development and application of risk management systems and the Protocol on cooperation of customs services of the SCO member states in the field of law enforcement, which would contribute to further improvement of contractual and legal framework and enhance the level of cooperation in the customs area.

8. The heads of government stressed the importance of the comprehensive development of cooperation in the agricultural sector on a bilateral and multilateral basis in order to implement the Agreement between the governments of SCO member states on cooperation in agriculture (June 11, 2010, Tashkent). They called for conducting joint fundamental and applied research of the technologies of organic production of food stock and developing high-tech innovative projects in agriculture.

In this regard, the meeting noted the outcome of the third meeting of agriculture ministers of the SCO member states held on October 9, 2014 in Moscow.

9. In order to further curtail or limit harmful emissions into atmosphere, including greenhouse gases, as well as reduce the share of energy consumption, the meeting noted the relevance of developing cooperation in the energy sector, *inter alia*, in the area of alternative and renewable energy.

10. The heads of government noted the contribution made by the SCO Business Council and SCO Interbank Association (hereinafter referred to as the IBA) to the development of economic cooperation within the Organization.

The meeting stressed the need for the practical implementation of the Action Plan to strengthen financial cooperation and promote regional development adopted by the Council of SCO IBA and the agreements reached at the meetings of the Board of the SCO Business Council and SCO Business Forum (September 10-11, 2014, Dushanbe).

The heads of government noted the need for an enhanced meaningful return on the joint activities of the SCO Business Council and SCO IBA aimed at expanding the relations between entrepreneurs and investors of the member states of the Organization, as well as of the observer states and dialogue partners.

11. The heads of government noted the results of the second meeting of ministers of justice of the SCO Member States (September 18-19, 2014, Vladivostok) for further strengthening of the judicial cooperation within the Organization, in particular, for the protection of the legitimate rights and interests of citizens and legal entities.

12. The heads of government expressed their satisfaction with the results of cooperation in cultural and humanitarian field, and spoke in favor of further development of multilateral and bilateral relations in the field of culture, science and technology, education, health, sports, tourism, which contribute to the strengthened mutual understanding between nations, mutual enrichment and rapprochement of cultures, dissemination of knowledge about the traditions and customs of peoples of the SCO region.

13. The heads of government stressed the importance of the results of the meeting of the culture ministers of the SCO member states (June 10, 2014, Dushanbe) for the implementation of the Agreement between the governments of SCO member states on cooperation in culture (August 16, 2007, Bishkek).

14. The heads of government noted the outcomes of the meeting of education ministers of SCO member states (October 8, 2014, Bratislava) aimed at the implementation of the Agreement between the governments of SCO member states on cooperation in education (June 15, 2006, Shanghai).

15. The heads of government stressed the need for an early completion of the procedure for the entry into force of the Agreement between the governments of SCO member states on scientific and technical cooperation (September 13, 2013, Bishkek) and development and adoption of the List of joint scientific and technological projects and the Action Plan for the implementation of this Agreement.

16. In order to preserve the natural resource potential of the SCO member states in the interest of the present and future generations, the heads of government noted the need to pay particular attention to environmental issues and establish practical cooperation in this field.

17. The heads of government instructed to continue practical implementation of the Agreement between the governments of SCO member states on cooperation in health sector (June 15, 2011 Astana).

18. The heads of government noted the importance of strengthened cooperation of the SCO member states in monitoring the communicable diseases that pose a serious threat to the health and development of mankind, and in their prevention.

To this end, the relevant ministries and agencies of the SCO member states were tasked to intensify the joint work on strengthening sanitary control in accordance with the Program of notification of epidemiological situation in the territory of SCO member states caused by communicable diseases (November 29, 2013, Tashkent).

19. The heads of government support further intensification of trade, economic and investment cooperation with the observer states and dialogue partners, as well as with international and regional organizations.

20. The heads of government approved a report of the SCO Secretariat on the implementation progress of the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation among the Organization's member states.

21. The meeting approved the budget of the Organization for 2015 and took decisions on the issues related to financial and organizational activities of the SCO permanent bodies.

The heads of government noted the high organizational level of the meeting of heads of government (Prime Ministers) of the SCO and expressed gratitude to the Kazakh side for its warm hospitality.

The next meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the SCO member states will be held in 2015 in the People's Republic of China.