

The Joint Communiqué of the Moscow Meeting of the Council of Heads Of Government of SCO Member States

The meeting of the Council of heads of government /prime ministers/ of SCO member states was attended by prime minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan D.Akhmetov, premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Wen Jiabao, prime minister of the Kyrgyz Republic F.Kulov, head of the Government of the Russian Federation M.Fradkov, prime minister of the Republic of Tajikistan A.Akilov and vice prime minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan U.Sultanov.

For the first time representatives from observer states in the SCO, including minister of foreign affairs of the Republic of India N.Singh, first vice president of the Islamic Republic of Iran P.Davudi, prime minister of Mongolia T.Elbegdorzh and prime minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan S.Aziz, took part in this kind of event.

SCO secretary-general Zhang Deguang and director of the Executive Committee of SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure V.Kasymov were also present at the meeting.

President of the Russian Federation V.Putin received the heads of delegations, participating in the meeting of the Council of SCO prime ministers.

In a constructive and businesslike atmosphere the Council considered a wide range of issues, surrounding further development and deepening of regional cooperation in the areas of maintaining stability, economy and trade, science and technology, culture and humanitarian affairs, as well as in other spheres, in accordance with the tasks, set by the Council of heads of state of SCO member states at 05 July meeting in Astana.

It was stated that a year on since the previous meeting, interaction in the SCO framework had developed a new dynamics, the SCO's international authority had become much stronger, the international community had been showing much greater interest in the Organisation. Concrete measures had been outlined to help execute the Programme of multilateral trade and economic cooperation between SCO member states.

The Council agreed to step up the development of cooperation on economy and trade, as well as the improvement of investment climate, based upon principles of mutual benefit and equal rights. The Action Plan on execution of the Programme of multilateral trade and economic cooperation between SCO member states, adopted by the heads of government, will become an important part of an effort to fulfill the tasks, set in this field. It was deemed necessary that respective ministries and departments of SCO member states should get down to practical realisation of the Action Plan, taking into consideration the proposals on pilot projects in the areas of energy, transport, telecommunications, science, technology and agriculture, as well as

on further expansion of legal and regulatory framework of cooperation between SCO member states. These proposals were put forward by the heads of ministries, responsible for external trade and economic activity, and respective working groups at this year's 19 February meeting in Bishkek. The Commission of senior officials and SCO Secretariat were charged with coordinating this work and reporting its results during the next meeting of the Council of heads of government /prime ministers/ of SCO member states in 2006.

The heads of government stressed the importance and urgency of establishing cooperation on exploration of oil and gas deposits, construction of oil and gas pipelines, as well as the need to conduct interaction in the field of high information and telecommunication technology. The Council of heads of ministries, responsible for external trade and economic activity, as well as the concerned ministries and departments of the member states and SCO Secretariat were charged with establishing at the earliest possible expert working groups on issues of fuel and energy, modern information and telecommunication technology.

The Council noted the considerable progress being made on customs cooperation. It recognised the expediency of speeding up the process of finalising and signing the draft Agreement between SCO member states on cooperation and mutual assistance in the area of customs by the next meeting.

The heads of government expressed satisfaction with the results of the first meeting of the Board of members of SCO Business Council and the signing of the Agreement on interbank cooperation /association/ in the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, and underlined the need of more active involvement by the business and financial circles of SCO member states in the realisation of large joint investment projects in the Central Asia region.

Special attention was focused on stepping up the activity on the creation of favorable conditions for trade and investment. The heads of government support the idea of holding in 2006 a forum of manufacturers and entrepreneurs, as well as a trade and industry fair on occasion of the SCO's fifth anniversary.

The heads of government recognised the expediency of speeding up the process of agreeing on a formation order and functioning principles of SCO Development Fund for this work to be completed not later than by the first half of 2006.

The Council also considers timely and useful the organisation in Xian /China/, in November 2005 of the Eurasian Economic Forum under the auspices of SCO Secretariat, UNESCAP and China Development Bank.

The heads of government confirmed the importance of continuing the dialogue on developing cooperation in the area of transport, of stepping up the role and increasing the efficiency of the mechanism of meetings of SCO transport ministers, as well as of formulating a coordinated policy on transit transportation and the creation of international transport corridors. They

emphasised the need to accelerate work on the agreeing and signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement on road transportation facilitation. To that end, the ministries and departments, involved in the preparation of the draft Agreement, and SCO Secretariat were charged with intensifying the process of negotiations.

It was agreed that the mechanism of meetings of heads of ministries, responsible for external trade and economic activity, and SCO Secretariat would play a coordinating role in defining concrete measures, aimed at realisation of joint investment projects in the framework of an export credit, offered by China.

The heads of government expressed confidence that the first meeting of ministers, responsible for environmental protection, would lay good foundations for interaction in this area of vital importance.

The heads of government advocate further consolidation of cooperation between SCO member states in cultural and humanitarian areas. In this connection, they stressed the positive meaning of the meeting of SCO culture ministers and the first six-state cultural festival, both held in the Republic of Kazakhstan, in July 2005. The decision by the culture ministers to establish an expert working group on issues of cultural interaction between SCO member states provides a solid foundation for execution of the 2005-06 Plan of multilateral cultural cooperation between SCO member states and for active work within the SCO framework on exploiting each member state's rich and unique cultural potential, particularly, in the light of next year's fifth anniversary, marking the establishment of the SCO.

The Council considers timely the start of interaction in the sphere of education and recognises the expediency of holding in the first half of 2006 a meeting of SCO education ministers, as well as of signing an Agreement between governments of SCO member states on cooperation in the sphere of education.

The heads of government welcomed the signing of the Agreement between the governments of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation member states on interaction in providing mutual assistance in emergency situations, and expressed confidence that interaction in this field, which had the most vital meaning for the member states and the whole region, would be widely implemented.

The Council considered a set of issues, dealing with financial maintenance of the Organisation's activity, and approved its budget for the year 2006.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Council of heads of government /prime ministers/ of SCO member states would take place in Dushanbe in the second half of 2006.