

## **Joint communique on the results of the meeting of the Council of the SCO Heads of Government**

A routine meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (henceforth the Council of the SCO Heads of Government) was held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on October 30, 2008.

The meeting was attended by Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Masimov, Prime Minister of China Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan Igor Chudinov, Prime Minister of Russia Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister of Tajikistan Akil Akilov, and First Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Rustam Azimov.

Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Karim Masimov chaired the meeting.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the observer states, who delivered speeches, including Indian Power Minister Sushilkumar Shinde, First Vice President of Iran Parviz Davoodi, Mongolian Prime Minister Sanjaagiin Bayar, and Pakistani Defense Minister Chaudhry Ahmad Mukhtar. Ahmad Zia Masood, First Vice President of Afghanistan, attended the meeting as a guest.

Other officials attending the meeting were Bolat Nurgaliyev, Secretary General of the SCO, Myrzakan Subanov, Director of the Executive Committee of the SCO Regional Antiterrorist Structure (RATS), Dmitry Mezentsev, Chairman of the Board of the SCO Business Council, and Vladimir Dmitriyev, Chairman of the Council of the SCO Interbank Association (IBA).

Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev had a meeting with the heads of delegations attending the meeting.

1. The heads of government discussed in a friendly and businesslike atmosphere the progress of and prospects for practical interaction in the political, trade, economic, cultural and other spheres.
2. Seeking to encourage consistent and sustainable development of multilateral cooperation within the SCO, the heads of government pledged to work jointly to implement the agreements reached during the Dushanbe 2008 summit. Progress was noted in trade, economic and cultural cooperation attained after the meeting of the Council of the SCO Heads of Government in Tashkent in 2007, as well as high dynamics of the growth of mutual trade.
3. The heads of government spoke for promoting multilateral interaction on the basis of the revised action plan to implement the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation among the SCO Member States approved at the meeting. They agreed that the SCO's Business Council and Interbank Association should be more energetically involved in these efforts.
4. The heads of government deemed it necessary to focus their efforts on cooperation in:

- creating stable and predictable conditions for mutual trade and investment, and in strengthening market mechanisms;
- increasing energy efficiency, promoting environment-friendly energy and technologies, using renewable energy resources, and ensuring energy security;
- introducing innovation technologies;
- facilitating transportation infrastructure projects;
- promoting cooperation in customs control;
- developing cooperation in healthcare, especially in preventing, diagnosing and treating infectious diseases.

5. The heads of government highlighted careful preparations for the next meeting of their transportation ministers aimed at facilitating their cooperation to improve transportation in the SCO countries and consider new routes, including railroads.

They expressed gratitude to the Asian Development Bank and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for their contribution to preparing an agreement between the SCO governments on creating favorable conditions for international commercial truck movement.

6. The heads of government pointed out that rational and effective use of water resources was vital for ensuring sustainable development of Central Asian countries, and highlighted the importance of the upcoming first meeting of the heads of nature protection departments of the SCO member countries.

7. The heads of government confirmed the importance of interaction in preventing natural disasters and subsequent clean-up efforts. They issued instructions to convene a routine conference in the first half of 2009 of the heads of SCO countries' departments responsible for preventing natural disasters and subsequent clean-up efforts, and to more energetically discuss the possibility of establishing a relevant SCO center.

8. The heads of government agreed that the meeting of the SCO agriculture ministers was overdue to work out consolidated approaches to strengthening regional food security and encouraging agricultural production.

9. They pointed to the high probability of implementing pilot projects in modern information technologies, namely a project to organize trans-border cooperation using a digital electronic signature for the SCO member countries, and a project to create a high-speed information channel for the SCO countries.

10. Taking into account the importance of encouraging closer cooperation between the business and banking sectors of the SCO member countries, the SCO Business Council and Interbank Association have been instructed to consider preparing an economic forum of the heads of the leading business structures of the SCO countries to be attended by delegates from the observer and partner countries.

11. The heads of government consider that the attendance by representatives of the observer countries in conferences of SCO ministries and departments will promote their involvement in joint projects implemented within the SCO.

12. The heads of government also approved the SCO budget for 2009 and considered organizational and financial aspects of the operation of the SCO standing bodies. During the meeting, the authorized representatives of the SCO countries' customs agencies signed a protocol between their departments on the exchange of information in control over the shipping of energy resources.

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The heads of government praised the efforts by Kazakhstan to ensure a successful meeting of the Council of the SCO Heads of Government and expressed gratitude to Kazakhstan for its hospitality.

The next meeting of the Council of the SCO Heads of Government will be held in China in 2009.

*Astana, October 30, 2008*