



General Assembly

Distr.: General
27 December 2021

Original: English

Seventy-sixth session

Agenda item 100 (t)

General and complete disarmament: confidence-building measures in the regional and subregional context

Letter dated 8 December 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Referring to resolution [59/48](#) of 2 December 2004, in which the General Assembly granted the Shanghai Cooperation Organization observer status in the General Assembly and the General Assembly resolutions on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, I have the honour to inform you of the following.

The Republic of Tajikistan, as the previous Chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2020–2021, is pleased to share the Dushanbe Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, adopted on 17 September 2021 in Dushanbe (see annex).*

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 100 (t).

(Signed) Jonibek **Hikmat**
Permanent Representative

* Circulated in the languages of submission only.



Annex to the letter dated 8 December 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Chinese, English and Russian]

Dushanbe Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the SCO

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (hereinafter the SCO or the Organisation), the SCO Member States, highly assessing the SCO's positive role in promoting and deepening the relations of good-neighbourliness among the Member States and strengthening security and stability in the region; reviewing the Organisation's achievements attained during its operation and noting a high potential for the further interaction among the Member States; strictly complying with the principles and provisions of the SCO Charter, Treaty on Long-Term Good Neighbourliness, Friendship and Cooperation of the Member States, the SCO Development Strategy towards 2025, the Shanghai Convention on Combating Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism, the Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation, international treaties and the Organisation's regulatory instruments; guided by the Shanghai Spirit, which reflects our mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, mutual consultations, respect for the diversity of our cultures, and the striving for mutual development; resolved to strengthen relations among the Member States so that friendship among them is passed down through generations; respecting the principle of openness to the world and guided by the intention to promote the strengthening of the multipolar world and the development of international relations based on the universally recognised principles of international law, primarily the UN Charter; seeking to turn the SCO space into an area of peace, cooperation, sustainable development, prosperity and harmony; based on the results of the meeting of the SCO Heads of State Council held in Dushanbe on 17 September 2021, hereby state the following:

1. Establishment, development, basic principles

The SCO was established on the basis of agreements on military confidence building and mutual reduction of armed forces in the border regions, signed by the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan in Shanghai and Moscow in 1996 and 1997, respectively.

The importance of working to turn the Shanghai Five into a regional organisation of multilateral cooperation in various spheres was pointed out in the Dushanbe Declaration signed by the heads of state of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan on 4 July 2000.

On 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, the heads of state of 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 adopted the Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

The Organisation was established to strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good neighbourliness among the Member States, promote multifaceted cooperation in maintaining and strengthening peace, security and stability and joint efforts against new threats and challenges, encourage effective and mutually beneficial cooperation in various spheres, and bolster their economic growth as well as social and cultural development.

The SCO is not an alliance directed against other states and regions; it is open to broad-based cooperation with other states and international and regional organisations in accordance with the goals and principles of the UN Charter and norms of international law based on mutual respect for each other's interests and common approaches to regional and global problems.

The SCO Charter provides a solid legal framework for the Organisation's development. During the 20 years since its establishment, the SCO has developed into a generally recognised and respected multilateral association, created a solid legal framework and interaction mechanisms, and established partner relations with states, international organisations and agencies that share the Organisation's principles and values.

The permanent SCO bodies — the SCO Secretariat in Beijing and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent — are working efficiently. The Organisation has an emblem, a flag and an anthem.

The Member States firmly adhere to the goals and objectives of the UN Charter and the SCO Charter, the principles of mutual respect for independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, equality and mutual benefit, a peaceful settlement of possible disputes through dialogue and mutual consultations, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, non-use of military force or threat of force, and no unilateral military superiority in adjacent areas.

The Member States stand for the development of a multipolar world order based on the universally recognised principles of international law, multilateralism, equal, common, indivisible, comprehensive and sustainable security; global and regional security and stability; and renunciation of confrontation and conflicts. Taking into account the views of the Member States, they reaffirm the importance of the

initiatives on promoting cooperation in the development of international relations of a new kind in the spirit of mutual respect, equality and mutually beneficial cooperation, as well as developing a common vision of a community of common destiny for mankind.

The Member States are resolved to continue developing cooperation in politics and security, trade, the economy, finance and investment, culture and humanitarian ties towards building a peaceful, safe and prosperous Earth with a clean environment.

The SCO has entered a critical period in its development. In this context, the Member States point out the necessity of deepening and expanding interaction within the framework of the Organisation, which does not imply the establishment of a military-political alliance or an economic integration alliance with supranational management institutions.

The Member States will respect each other's right to choose a political, economic and cultural form of development based on their historical experience and national features. They will continue facilitating a dialogue among civilisations, universal peace, progress and harmony, as well as an equal partnership of states. They will continue strengthening the SCO to ensure their consistent growth and prosperity, and with this aim in view they will implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Member States are pursuing a policy that rules out bloc, ideologically charged and confrontational approaches to current international and regional development issues, proceeding from the inviolability of the SCO Charter principle of the prevention of any illegitimate acts directed against the SCO interests.

The Member States point out that the Organisation is open for accession by any interested states that meet the criteria and conditions set out in the Organisation's legal documents, and pledge to respect the objectives and principles of the SCO Charter and the provisions of other international treaties and documents adopted in the SCO framework.

2. Political dimension

The Member States note the proximity or convergence of their assessments of the current regional and international situation. They reaffirm their commitment to a more representative, democratic, just and multipolar world order based on universally recognised principles of international law, cultural and civilisational diversity, mutually beneficial and equal cooperation of states under the central coordinating role of the UN.

The high level of mutual trust inherent at regular meetings of the main SCO bodies — the Council of Heads of State, the Council of Heads of Government (prime ministers) and the Council of Foreign Ministers — promotes political

dialogue, adopts coordinated decisions on all aspects of the Organisation's activities and promotes effective interaction among its members.

The Member States consider it important to enhance contacts and cooperation through legislative bodies and to share experience in public administration and development.

They attach great importance to the practice of sending SCO missions to monitor presidential and parliamentary elections and referendums.

The heads of state note that Central Asia is the core of the SCO. They support the efforts of Central Asian states to ensure peace, security and stability in their countries and in the region as a whole, welcome the regular Consultative Meetings of Central Asian Heads of State and advocate an active role for the SCO in further strengthening stability and promoting socioeconomic development in this region.

3. Security

The SCO's priorities in ensuring regional security and stability will include combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, separatism, extremism, illicit trafficking in drugs, weapons, ammunition and explosives, cross-border organised crime, ensuring international information security, strengthening border security, joint efforts to combat illegal migration and human trafficking, money laundering, economic crimes and corruption.

In this context, the SCO Member States have established effective cooperation and appropriate mechanisms for interaction among them. They advocate further practical implementation of the documents adopted in this area and believe it is important to take measures to further improve the SCO's legal and regulatory framework in the field of security.

To improve the mechanisms for countering security challenges and threats, the SCO Member States are considering the following initiatives: the establishment of the SCO Counter-Terrorism Centre in Dushanbe as a separate permanent body (Republic of Tajikistan), the establishment within the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent of the SCO Universal Centre to Counter Challenges and Threats to Security (Russian Federation), the establishment of the SCO Information Security Centre (Republic of Kazakhstan) and the SCO Centre against International Organised Crime in Bishkek (Kyrgyz Republic).

The Member States note that cooperation in countering challenges and threats to security should be carried out consistently, without applying double standards, through strict observance of the international law.

The Member States emphasise the importance of supporting multilateralism and finding ways to ensure security, and advocate political and diplomatic responses to global and regional challenges. They advocate stepping up cooperation in order

to proactively promote disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including efforts within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Member States consider the sustained implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian nuclear programme to be important and, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2231, call upon all participants to scrupulously fulfil all their obligations for the full and effective implementation of the document.

The Member States that are parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons advocate strict compliance with the provisions of the Treaty, comprehensive and balanced advancement of all its objectives and principles, the strengthening of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, and the promotion of equal mutually beneficial cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The Member States believe that an early entry into force of the Protocol on Security Assurances to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia for all the signatory states will make a significant contribution to regional security and the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The Member States emphasise the importance of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and their Destruction (BTWC) as a pillar of the global security architecture. They stress the need for strict compliance with the BTWC, including through the adoption of a protocol to the Convention establishing an effective verification mechanism. They oppose the establishment of any mechanisms duplicating the functions of the BTWC, including relating to the competence of the UN Security Council.

The Member States call for full compliance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC) as an effective disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. They stress the importance of the speedy destruction of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles. The Member States reaffirm their support for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and call for coordinated decisions to overcome the divisions within the Organisation and to ensure its integrity and effective operation in accordance with the Convention.

The Member States are in favour of maintaining outer space free of weapons of any kind and agree that it is important to ensure strict compliance with the existing legal framework ensuring that space be used solely for peaceful purposes. They stress the need to conclude an international legally binding instrument that would strengthen transparency and provide credible assurances against an arms race and the non-deployment of weapons in outer space.

3.1. Afghanistan and regional security

The Member States proceed from the premise that there is no alternative to a political and diplomatic solution to conflict situations in various regions of the world on the basis of strict compliance with generally recognised norms and principles of international law.

The Member States believe that one of the most important factors in preserving and strengthening security and stability in the SCO space is the earliest possible settlement of the situation in Afghanistan. They support the emergence of Afghanistan as an independent, neutral, united, democratic and peaceful state, free of terrorism, war and drugs.

The Member States believe that it is critical to have an inclusive government in Afghanistan, with representatives from all ethnic, religious and political groups of Afghan society.

The SCO Member States, stressing the significance of the many years of hospitality and effective assistance provided by regional and neighbouring countries to Afghan refugees, consider it important for the international community to make active efforts to facilitate their dignified, safe and sustainable return to their homeland.

3.2. Combating terrorism, separatism and extremism

The Member States resolutely condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. They emphasise the key role of the Member States and their relevant authorities in matters related to countering terrorism, separatism and extremism.

The Member States reaffirm the need to step up joint efforts to prevent terrorism and its funding, including by implementing existing global standards on combating the laundering of proceeds from crime and the financing of terrorism, as well as to cut short the spread of the terrorist, separatist and extremist ideology that feeds it. We think it important for the SCO Member States to participate in the Code of Conduct Towards Achieving a World Free of Terrorism.

The Member States note the inadmissibility of interference in the internal affairs of states under the pretext of countering terrorism and extremism, as well as the inadmissibility of using terrorist, extremist and radical groups for mercenary purposes.

The Member States reaffirm the special role played by the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in their joint struggle against terrorism, separatism and extremism aimed at ensuring regional security and will build up the potential of cooperation between their relevant authorities in these areas. They will prioritise

the implementation of the Programme of Cooperation of the SCO Member States in Countering Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism for 2022-2024.

The Member States firmly believe that depriving terrorism of its social basis, including by eliminating poverty, unemployment and illiteracy, should become an important direction in the global fight against terrorism. They will build up their efforts to prevent the preparation and funding of terrorist acts in their territory, deny refuge to terrorists, and intensify interaction in identifying, preventing and cutting short the activities of organisations and individuals involved in terrorism, separatism and extremism.

The Member States think it important to practice a responsible approach to the rehabilitation of their citizens returning from zones of terrorist activities under Resolution 2396 of the UN Security Council and the national laws of each SCO member state.

The Member States will step up efforts to counter the spread of extremist and separatist ideas, primarily among young people, and will work to prevent the emergence of religious intolerance, aggressive nationalism, ethnic and racial discrimination, xenophobia, and the ideas of Nazism and chauvinism. They will continue the consistent realisation of the Programme of Action to implement the provisions of the Joint Address of the Heads of the SCO Member States to Youth.

The Member States stress the need to intensify their common efforts to prevent and cut short the spread of the terrorist, separatist and extremist ideology. They are convinced that the promotion of the extremist, separatist and terrorist ideas, and any type of information support, propaganda and justification of terrorism are creating the conditions for the spread of radical sentiments and recruitment of supporters by terrorist organisations.

The relevant authorities of the SCO Member States will continue to hold joint antiterrorist exercises, including the upcoming Pabbi-Antiterror-2021 exercise. The Member States will focus on cooperation in identifying and curtailing the use of the Internet for terrorist, separatist and extremist purposes, as well as on strengthening the potential of the relevant authorities of the SCO Member States, including by improving personnel training.

To counteract the threat of chemical and biological terrorism, the Member States emphasise the need to launch at the Conference on Disarmament multilateral talks concerning an international convention on preventing acts of chemical and biological terrorism.

The Member States will continue effective cooperation on border issues, including joint border operations, as well as exchange of information on individuals involved in terrorist activities, and will jointly investigate transnational terrorist crimes through effective border control in order to prevent the activities of and border crossing by foreign terrorists and terrorist groups.

3.3. International information security

The Member States emphasise that modern information and communications technologies (ICT) create new advantages and opportunities for the progress of the entire humankind, and oppose discrimination, under any excuse, that prevents the development of the digital economy and communications technologies.

With grave concern, the Member States note the increasing threats to information security that include using ICT to commit transnational and global crimes, and destabilise international peace and security. Joint efforts and extensive international cooperation are crucial to counter these threats.

The Member States strongly condemn militarisation of the ICT industry and believe that it is necessary to ensure that modern technologies are used for peaceful purposes, to create a secure, fair and open information space built on the principles of respect for other countries' sovereignty and non-interference in their domestic affairs.

The SCO Member States will continue to develop practical cooperation and consolidate efforts to enhance international information security in line with the respective 2022-2023 Cooperation Plan and other documents adopted by the Organisation.

The Member States once again emphasise the key role of the United Nations in countering cyber threats. They support the formulation of universal rules, principles and regulations of responsible conduct for countries to follow in this area, and welcome the development of an overarching international convention against employing ICT for criminal purposes, under the auspices of the UN. The Member States will continue to cooperate within specialised negotiation frameworks of the UN and other international platforms.

The Member States support regulating cooperation between their government bodies specialising in digital literacy in order to overcome the digital gap.

They support countries' equal rights to regulate the internet and their sovereign right to regulate the national segments of the internet.

3.4. Counter-narcotics cooperation

The Member States note that illegal drug trafficking and drug use for non-medical purposes poses a threat to international and regional security and stability, sustainable economic development, and public health and welfare as well as to fundamental rights and freedoms. They stress the importance of consolidating forces against drug trafficking and support further active practical cooperation in this field.

The Member States reaffirm their commitment to the existing international system of combating drug trafficking based on the norms and principles of international law as well as UN conventions and SCO documents on this matter. Highlighting the importance of international drug control conventions and other legal instruments regulating this issue, they believe that it is necessary to take action to build an effective system of jointly combating the drug threat, to set up a reliable barrier to the cultivation, production, manufacture and illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors, as well as to counter the spread of drug abuse.

The Member States regard it as necessary to continue taking constructive measures against the drug threats related to the illegal cultivation and distribution of drug crops, the production of opioids and cannabinoids as well as synthetic drugs, including their distribution via the Internet.

The Member States will specifically focus on continuing joint operations to counter the illegal trafficking of drugs and their precursors, including the Web counter-narcotics operation. They will continue to provide training to law enforcement officers, to enhance cooperation on reducing the demand for drugs and to organise research and training events.

The Member States intend to keep working together against attempts to legalise non-medical drug use based on the inadmissibility of the legalization of drugs, which is a grave violation of the three relevant international conventions. They will pay particular attention to disrupting the financial basis of the drug business, including its links to other forms of organized crime and terrorist activities.

The Member States support the continuation of the practice of holding joint high-level events between the SCO and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), with the participation of the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and their Precursors.

3.5. Defence cooperation

The Member States will continue to expand defence cooperation, including personnel training and capacity building of their armed forces in order to strengthen confidence-building measures, maintain peace and regional stability, counter security challenges and threats and create favourable conditions for the sustainable development of the SCO. The Member States support cooperation with the UN in the field of peacekeeping. They will share experience in peacekeeping operations to train service personnel for UN peacekeeping missions.

The Member States underscore the importance of holding the Peace Mission regular joint military counterterrorism command and staff exercises in order to enhance cooperation in combating armed formations of international terrorist organisations and improve counterterrorism methods.

The Member States note the contribution of the Trumpet of Peace military brass band festivals to strengthening cooperation between the SCO countries' defence agencies.

Considering the risk of a re-emergence of pandemics due to an outbreak of various infectious diseases, the Member States noted the need to expand cooperation in the field of military medicine.

3.6. Organised crime and anti-corruption measures

The Member States note that the fight against organised crime and economic crimes is an important task within the SCO framework.

The Member States believe that the development of additional mechanisms for international cooperation in this field should be aimed at expanding and modernising their potential for the effective joint use of emerging opportunities and for countering new challenges and threats.

The Member States are convinced that corruption, in all its manifestations, threatens national and regional security, reduces the efficiency of state administration, has a negative impact on countries' international prestige and their investment climate, and hampers their sustainable socioeconomic development. They stand for further strengthening international anti-corruption cooperation, enhancing the authority of the UN and its role in the global fight against corruption, and support the relevant UN Convention.

3.7. Judicial cooperation

The Member States note that fruitful cooperation between the chairs of supreme courts is a reliable platform for improving joint activities in protecting human rights and freedoms, strengthening justice, law and order. This mechanism helps to align specific approaches in the work of SCO Member States' courts, facilitates more effective cooperation between courts and creates favourable conditions for more profound judicial reforms.

The Member States will expand information sharing and take coordinated steps in the field of forensic investigations, including joint projects and events.

The Member States attach great importance to cooperation between supreme courts in the field of justice as an effective factor in strengthening mutual trust and friendship and expanding neighbourly relations within the SCO.

3.8. Cooperation between prosecutors' offices

The Member States voiced their readiness to expand legal cooperation channels, facilitate more effective cooperation, and expand direct cooperation between prosecutors' offices.

The Member States will strive to create a mechanism for the reliable and rapid exchange of legal information on the legislative, legal and judicial oversight practices in the SCO Member States, as well as matters pertaining to the fight against crime and any other information relevant to countering illegal transnational activities.

The Member States will expand multilateral exchange between prosecutors' offices in the field of research; they will learn from the positive experience in the prosecutors' work and improve personnel training programmes aimed at enhancing the professionalism of prosecutors in the SCO Member States.

3.9. Cooperation in the field of justice

The Member States stressed that the primacy of law, based on the principles of respecting, protecting and upholding human rights in all spheres of public, political, economic and social life, is an important factor of SCO Member States' stability and their sustainable and successful development.

The Member States advocate expanding experience exchanges in the field of law-making activities, legal assistance, and legal literacy, as well as ongoing efforts to create an online platform for exchanging legal information, with due consideration for the provisions of national legislation.

4. Economic cooperation

The Member States believe that their primary goal is to develop trade and economic cooperation, to create favourable conditions for trade and investment based on the principles of equality, fair competition, mutual respect and mutual benefit.

They note that the global economy continues to face multiple challenges that hold back its sustainable and balanced growth. The global economic outlook continues to be affected by the risks stemming from the coronavirus pandemic as well as the growing protectionism, including unilateral restrictions on trade. It is now important to manage financial and economic risks posed by climate change, resource depletion, and environmental degradation, as well as provide resources for sustainable development.

The Member States consider it necessary to consistently unlock the significant economic cooperation potential built during the process of the development of the SCO. It will be of the essence to focus on effective implementation of the adopted long-term programmes and trade and economic plans that promote the socioeconomic development of the SCO Member States and the region as a whole. The Member States will continue to strengthen cooperation in the trade, industrial, transport, energy, financial, investment, agricultural, customs, telecommunications, and innovation fields and others of mutual interest, in particular through the use of advanced resource-saving, energy-efficient, green and low-emission technologies, for the sake of raising people's living standards and welfare and ensuring the sustainable development of the Member States.

The Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, reaffirm their support for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and note the ongoing work on the joint implementation of this project, including efforts to merge the Eurasian Economic Union and BRI projects.

They advocate broad international cooperation to ensure resource provision for human needs without harming the environment or public health, to achieve sustainable and high-quality economic growth based on providing all states with equal and fair access to the benefits of economic globalisation.

The Member States consider it important to use the potentials of the region's countries, international organisations and multilateral associations to develop a space for wide, open, mutually beneficial and equal interaction in Eurasia in accordance with the norms of international law and taking into account their national interests. In this regard, they noted the idea of creating a Greater Eurasian Partnership that would include the SCO countries, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Association of Southeast Asian

Nations, as well as other interested states and multilateral associations.

The Member States underscore the importance of exchanging experience on the development and implementation of national development strategies, plans for the digital economy and the introduction of innovative technologies, including in order to jointly bridge the technological and digital divide between them.

4.1. The novel coronavirus pandemic

The Member States believe that the novel coronavirus infection has triggered some global socioeconomic challenges, has caused significant damage to national economies, made significant adjustments to the dynamics of global economic growth, has become a factor in the sharp rise in unemployment and an obstacle

to trade growth. The consequences of this crisis have not been fully overcome; numerous challenges have remained, adversely affecting the global economy. In this context, the Member States emphasise that the SCO should focus on strengthening the coordination of crisis response and relief efforts, as well as the implementation of joint plans to stabilise critical industries, agriculture, and the service sector to ensure sustainable and balanced growth of national economies.

4.2. Cooperation in banking and finance

The Member States will continue to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation in banking and finance, exchange best practices and information, undertake efforts to create favourable conditions for developing the financial services market and attracting investment, and improve payment and settlement and other financial and economic relations.

They are in favour of strengthening the Organisation's role in addressing the task of ensuring practical interaction in banking and finance in order to bolster interbank relations and ties between the financial markets of the regional countries. The Member States will consider the possibility of using national currencies for mutual settlements between the SCO Member States, promoting the exchange of experience in the sphere of national payment card systems and payment innovations, as well as financial oversight.

They believe that it is important to develop the Organisation's interaction with international financial and development institutions.

4.3. Financial mechanisms

The Member States, seeking to make use of the common understanding reached at the top level and to provide financial support for project activities, will continue to hold consultations on the establishment of the SCO Development Bank and the SCO Development Fund (Special Account).

To ensure financial support for the implementation of joint projects, they will continue cooperation within the framework of multilateral banking and financial establishments active in the region.

4.4. Business Council and Interbank Consortium

The Member States will continue working to unlock the potential of the SCO Business Council and the SCO Interbank Consortium, and to promote their business communities' joint initiatives to strengthen cooperation for implementing projects

in the fields of finance, high technology, transport and communication infrastructure, energy, agriculture and investment projects in the SCO space.

They believe that the SCO Business Council and the SCO Interbank Consortium should contribute to the creation of effective mechanisms of inter-regional economic cooperation and private entrepreneurial initiative.

The Member States believe that it is important to determine the procedure for the activities of the interstate and national development institutions in the implementation of projects of priority significance for all states of the Organisation and projects that are co-financed by the Member States' banking structures during emergencies and pandemics.

4.5. Trade and investment

The Member States reaffirm the importance of the further improvement of the global economic management architecture and will consistently uphold and strengthen the open, transparent, fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system based on the principles and rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), promote the development of an open global economy and oppose unilateral protectionist activities, which are undermining the system of multilateral trade and threatening the global economy.

The Member States call for enhancing the efficiency of the WTO as the main platform for discussing the international trade agenda and adopting the rules of the multilateral trading system. They emphasise the necessity of implementing, as soon as possible, an inclusive reform of the WTO, focusing on its development and adjustment to modern economic realities, as well as the efficient use of its monitoring, negotiating and dispute resolution powers.

The Member States believe that the development of services and trade in services, support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the encouragement of e-commerce within the SCO framework is extremely important for the development of the economy, increasing employment and improving people's wellbeing.

They consider it necessary to coordinate joint actions to support enterprises during the implementation of investment projects and to enhance their export potential.

The Member States, seeking to create a favourable investment climate, will continue drafting a document on the encouragement and mutual protection of investment.

The Member States call for the creation of favourable conditions for the promotion of trade and investment, which is necessary for a gradual transition to the free movement of goods, capital, services and technology, as this is stipulated in the

SCO Charter. They have called for an in-depth study of possible ways to simplify trade procedures in the region.

4.6. Small and medium-sized business

Member States underline the importance of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises in order to stimulate economic growth and increase employment. Accordingly, they are in favour of the establishment and maintenance of direct contacts between business entities and the business community, including through economic and business forums.

Regular startup forums and competitions on innovation and startups are important to encourage entrepreneurship involving young people.

Member States note the significance of cooperation in the field of intellectual property protection, including the exchange of experience in the protection of rights and the development of the intellectual property system.

4.7. Industry

Member States advocate the encouragement of industrial cooperation within the SCO, including by holding fairs and exhibitions.

They note the need to strengthen cooperation in the sphere of high technologies and the use of technological advances in production, as well as in the exchange of experience in the creation of industrial parks and commercial and industrial clusters.

The Member States decided to establish a mechanism for the Conference of Industry Ministers of SCO Member States.

4.8. Agriculture and development of remote areas

The Member States advocate further enhancing the role of the SCO in addressing the issues of food security, consolidating the world food market, and developing the production of organic and environmentally friendly products.

Taking note of the importance of agricultural cooperation, Member States will foster cooperation in areas including agricultural production and trade, veterinary and phytosanitary security, prevention and control of transboundary epizootics, exchange of experience in crop, seed and livestock production, agricultural research, digitalisation of agriculture, smart agriculture and agro-innovation, organic production, and carrying out joint projects in a variety of agricultural areas. They emphasised the need for cooperation between the SCO and the UN World Food Programme and other agriculture-related international organisations.

The Member States acknowledge the importance of tackling the task of reducing the gap in access to economic, social and other benefits between the population in urban centers and that in remote and rural areas of the SCO countries. To meet this challenge, they will foster the development of regions, remote and hard-to-reach areas, and rural areas, using achievements and best practices, including in digital technology and innovative developments. In this connection, the Member States emphasised the importance of the practical implementation of agreements on the development of remote and rural areas in the digital age.

4.9. Cooperation in the field of transport

Member States highlight the need to make effective use of the SCO transport potential, establishing regional transport and transit corridors, implementing major projects to expand transport connectivity in the Organisation's region.

They note the importance of consistent implementation of agreements to generate favourable conditions for international road traffic, including regular meetings of the relevant Joint Commission.

Member States underscore the importance of creating new and modernising current international road and rail routes, multi-mode transport corridors and logistic centres, as well as the need for the introduction of digital, innovative and energy-saving technologies, the improvement of transborder procedures under best international practices and the implementation of joint infrastructure projects for the cost-effective use of the transit potential of the SCO Member States.

In this connection, they note the need to invigorate practical cooperation with international financial institutions and specialised regional organisations in order to attract their financial resources for use in the implementation of joint projects.

Member States welcome the holding of the 2nd UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference in China in 2021, and they hope that it will bring about positive results.

4.10. Energy cooperation

Member States underscore the need to expand mutually beneficial energy cooperation, including the widespread use of renewable and alternative energy sources, and they also support the use of various cost-effective and environmentally friendly technologies making it possible to reduce environmental impact and facilitate environmental safety and a conversion to cleaner and more environmentally friendly energy sources in an energy-efficient economy. They note the importance of jointly studying ways of expanding the regional connectivity of SCO Member States' power grids.

Member States will strive to merge national energy strategies on the basis of mutual respect and to enhance mutual cooperation in order to develop the sustainable energy sector and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Taking account of their national interests, Member States will continue to facilitate the development of a full-scale energy dialogue, along with practical cooperation between producer states, transit states and those using energy carriers.

Member States decided to institute the mechanism of the Conference of Energy Ministers of SCO Member States.

4.11. Cooperation between customs services

Member States consider it important to expand customs cooperation. They note that the protection of intellectual property rights, online information exchanges about transborder movements of goods and vehicles, cooperation in the field of developing and using the risks management system and the fight against customs violations are essential steps for expanded cooperation.

Member States will strive to simplify customs operations, hold joint events as regards the organisation of customs control using a risk management system to ensure international supply chain security, to counter customs violations and to facilitate data exchanges as regards changes in customs legislation and best practices in the field of streamlining of trade and law enforcement proceedings.

4.12. Digitalisation and innovative development

Member States emphasise the importance of innovation as a key factor in medium- and long-term economic growth and sustainable global development.

While noting the need to focus on efforts to overcome the socioeconomic consequences of the digital gap between Member States, they note the importance of deepening mutually beneficial cooperation and sharing experience in the digital economy and the use of digital technologies. Member States oppose discriminatory measures under any pretext that impede the development of the digital economy and communications technologies.

Member States consider it important to continue sharing knowledge and best practices, as well as conducting joint research by scientific and educational institutions and organisations in the field of digitalisation, innovation and information and communications technologies.

5. THE HUMANITARIAN DIMENSION

The Member States are convinced that the progressive development of cultural and humanitarian cooperation within the SCO remains an absolute priority. Over the past period, they have managed to achieve a high level of collaboration in the area of culture, education, science and technology, healthcare, environmental protection, tourism, and sports.

5.1. Culture

The Member States emphasise that cultural cooperation within the SCO has considerable potential as an effective factor in strengthening mutual understanding between peoples. They noted that the SCO has shown the world community an example of a respectful and tolerant attitude towards each other's national traditions and values and of mutual enrichment of cultures via the promotion of ties in this regard.

The SCO Member States will take measures to intensify their collaboration in music, theatre, the visual arts, literature and cinema, as well as in archival, museum and library affairs.

They will continue to develop cooperation in conducting joint archaeological excavations as well as protecting and restoring monuments and cultural heritage sites in the SCO Member States, including with the purpose of jointly submitting and promoting applications for their inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

5.2. Education

The Member States are in favour of deepening cooperation in education and intend to take some extra measures to develop innovative educational technologies and use new information, communications and multimedia means to provide high quality education and attain optimal results in professional training. The Member States emphasise the importance of promoting the SCO University's further work, including by inducing stakeholder states to join its operations.

5.3. Scientific and technological cooperation

The Member States note that cooperation in science and technology is in the interests of all Member States and is of importance for the development of their economies.

They regard it as necessary to define scientific and technological cooperation

priorities in conformity with their national laws, including looking into the possibility of creating a mechanism for funding joint projects in this area.

5.4. Healthcare and sanitary and epidemiological welfare

The Member States emphasise that SCO cooperation in the area of healthcare and sanitary and epidemiological welfare is acquiring special importance amid the proliferation of the novel coronavirus infection.

The Member States express their gratitude to all healthcare professionals, medical specialists, scientists and researchers in their countries, who are working under the difficult and complicated conditions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Member States think it important to continue collaboration aimed at preventing infectious diseases, monitoring epidemics, creating a favourable environment for the prophylaxis of non-infectious chronic ailments, and protecting maternal and children's health. Highlighting the need for the introduction of new remotely controlled technologies, they favour the establishment of cooperation in the telehealth area between the health authorities of the SCO Member States.

The Member States note that the cooperation in fighting infections has made a significant contribution to the region's readiness to respond effectively to large-scale incidences of infectious diseases, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Member States are against stigmatisation in connection with the new coronavirus infection and emphasise the need for the further strengthening of international cooperation in the fight against its diffusion and in overcoming the global political and socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic.

5.5. Environmental protection, climate change

The Member States note the importance of cooperation in the area of environmental protection, environmental security, alleviation of the negative consequences of climate change, conservation and use of biodiversity, as well as the exchange of experience and latest updates on these matters. They are aware that the lack of access to safe fresh water, basic sanitary services and healthy hygiene is a serious problem of the modern epoch and note the importance of paying more attention to sustainable development and integrated management of water resources.

The Member States are convinced of the inadmissibility of using the climatic agenda to introduce measures restricting trade and investment cooperation. Efforts will be undertaken to establish an active dialogue with relevant international institutions with the purpose of attracting investment and funding to finance joint environmental projects and programmes and to introduce new ecologically clean technologies and expand the Green economy.

5.6. Emergencies

The Member States note the need for further cooperation to jointly counter threats from natural and man-made disasters and to respond to them promptly. The Member States highlight the need to continue efforts to reduce the threat of calamities and strengthen emergency response capacity. They intend to enhance collaboration in such areas as exchange of the latest information, personnel training, and joint drills on disaster or accident clean-up operations, as well as to promote cooperation in border area emergency prevention and elimination. The Member States will pursue collaboration with the UN and other international and regional organisations in these sectors.

5.7. Increase women's participation in various roles

The Member States underscore the need to ensure the broad participation of women in politics, the economy, the community, society and other roles. They consider it important to hold regular women's forums, conventions and meetings of women within the SCO framework.

5.8. People's diplomacy

The Member States welcome any efforts made by public diplomacy institutions that contribute to a strengthening of mutual trust and understanding, and to expanding cultural and humanitarian ties within the SCO. They will encourage public diplomacy institutions and cultural centres operating in the SCO Member States to hold joint forums, meetings and other events.

5.9. Human rights

The Member States, committing themselves to act in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter, reaffirm the universality, indivisibility, interdependence and interconnectedness of all human rights, as well as their obligations to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and oppose the use of double standards in human rights matters or interference in other states' internal affairs citing human rights protection. They noted the need to strictly and consistently respect the historical traditions and the sovereign equality of all states.

5.10. Interregional cooperation

The Member States promote cooperation between regions and administrative-territorial units and the development of interaction through the SCO Member States' Heads of Regions Forum.

5.11. Mass Media

The Member States believe that one of the important goals of the SCO concerning information support for its activities will be to foster a positive and truthful view of the SCO in the region and in the world. To this end, they will facilitate contacts and information exchange through the media, regularly provide the media with updated material on the current work of the SCO, and its political, economic, cultural and humanitarian achievements, and they will also promote information about the SCO in the international media.

5.12. Young people

The Member States note the dynamic work of the SCO Youth Council aimed at rallying young people. They advocate the promotion of youth entrepreneurship and the creation of special programmes to help enhance young entrepreneurs' competence when it comes to economic activity in the SCO space.

5.13. Sport

The Member States, acknowledging the role of sport as one of the important instruments for ensuring peace, social inclusion and sustainable development, reaffirm their readiness to enhance cooperation in this field. They emphasise the unacceptability of using athletes or sporting events for political purposes and intend to vigorously contribute to the development of the Olympic and Paralympic movements. The Member States believe that the 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games will foster friendship, understanding and harmony among peoples.

5.14. Tourism

The Member States will strive to foster and expand equal and mutually beneficial cooperation in tourism with the aim of forming a common tourist space on the basis of existing cultural, historical and economic ties to encourage tourist exchanges,

create jobs, increase income, and improve people's living standards and quality of life.

They expressed their readiness to promote direct contacts between companies in the tourism industry and related industries, cooperation between professional tourism education providers for the joint training of qualified personnel, investment in the creation and improvement of the tourism infrastructure of the SCO Member States, and exploration of possibilities for the expansion of Smart Tourism cooperation and interaction between popular tourist destinations.

The Member States support the further promotion of the rich cultural and historical heritage of the SCO peoples and an unlocking of the tourism potential of various cities and regions of the SCO, as well as the creation of additional mechanisms for the development of culture and tourism cooperation, including by introducing the practice of declaring a tourist and cultural capital of the SCO.

5.15. SCO Forum

The Member States place great importance on the further development of the SCO Forum as a multilateral public consultation and expert platform established to promote and provide research support to the SCO activities and to strengthen interaction between research and political science centres in the Member States, observers and SCO dialogue partners.

They note the value of cooperation between research and analytical centres in the Member States on economic matters in order to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the factors affecting economic interaction within the SCO, taking into account global and regional processes.

6. International activities

The Member States are acting on the assumption that openness to cooperation with other states and international and regional organisations is an important principle of the SCO's activities.

6.1. Observer states and dialogue partners

The Member States attach great importance to involving the observer states and dialogue partners in SCO events and projects in the economic and humanitarian spheres. They have spoken out in favour of continuing interaction with observer states and dialogue partners so that their potential can be used for the implementation of joint projects, above all in the fields of high technology,

agriculture, transport and investment cooperation with a view to promoting joint development and prosperity in the region.

6.2. The UN

The heads of state emphasise that one of the SCO's international priorities is the strengthening and further development of ties with the UN and its specialised bodies in combating new challenges and threats to economic, social, humanitarian and cultural development.

They believe that the UN, as a universal organisation with a well-established legitimacy, is playing a central role in maintaining peace and security on the planet, promoting global development, and deepening international cooperation. In this connection, the Member States express their support for reinforcing the authority and enhancing the efficiency of the UN through gradual reform, as well as for consistently increasing its potential for the purpose of an appropriate and prompt response to challenges and threats.

The Member States point out that the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has reaffirmed the high level of dialogue between the two organisations and is proof of international recognition of the SCO's contribution to the implementation of the UN objectives, goals and agenda.

They believe that it is important to implement UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on combatting terrorism and extremism, as well as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, with due regard for national experience and specific features of states. They call for an early adoption, based on consensus, of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

The Member States support the initiatives of the UN Global Compact in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption.

They pointed out the intention of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan to work towards their election as non-permanent members of the UN Security Council in 2027-2028, 2028-2029 and 2039-2040, respectively.

Conclusions

The Member States will continue to strengthen the SCO as a pillar of the more representative and fair world order that is emerging, based on the supremacy of international law, in particular the UN Charter.

Reviewing the experience of the past 20 years and looking into the future, the Member States express their firm conviction that the successful operation of the SCO has helped turn its region into an area of lasting peace and harmony.

The Member States commended the SCO Presidency of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2020-2021 and its results, which helped strengthen mutual trust and understanding, constructive and effective cooperation, good neighbourly relations and friendship among the SCO nations in the year of its 20th anniversary.

By adopting this Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the SCO, we, the heads of the Member States, hereby declare that the Organisation will continue to work efficiently towards the noble goals and objectives which the founding states proclaimed upon its establishment, thereby contributing to peace, cooperation and development.

Prime Minister of the Republic of India

Narendra Modi

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev

President of the People's Republic of China

Xi Jinping

President of the Kyrgyz Republic

Sadyr Japarov

Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Imran Khan

President of the Russian Federation

Vladimir Putin

President of the Republic of Tajikistan

Emomali Rahmon

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Shavkat Mirziyoyev

Dushanbe, 17 September 2021