

## ISRS Director takes part in the 18th meeting of the SCO Expert Forum



On May 22-23, Dushanbe hosted the 18th meeting of the SCO Expert Forum.

In his welcoming remarks at the event, Eldor Aripov, Director of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of Uzbekistan, stressed the importance of the event. The expert noted that since its launch, the SCO Forum had established itself as an influential expert and analytical platform, and the inclusion of representatives of all member and observer states, dialogue partners of the great SCO family into this format has demonstrated the increasing demand for further interaction in this area in the current circumstances.

In particular, the ISRS Director noted that today we are witnessing tremendous shifts and deep fractures in the entire system of international relations. The growth of confrontation and contradictions is leading to open military clashes, provoking the emergence of new dividing lines and limiting the prospects for constructive dialogue.

Climate change, water, and natural resources scarcity, and the growing disruption of energy and food security are alarming.

Under these conditions, as President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted, “There is a growing global demand for mutual trust, justice, and solidarity. The continuation of an open and trustful dialogue is needed more than ever. In this context, the SCO demonstrates to the world that this is possible.

Indeed, the fact that the SCO, despite all the objective challenges and difficulties, remains an effective organization that is open to new members and maintains its non-aligned status confirms its relevance and uniqueness.

ISRS Director Eldor Aripov drew the attention of the participants of the event to the importance of rapid implementation of the initiatives put forward by the President of Uzbekistan at the SCO Summit in Samarkand.

“The Samarkand Solidarity Initiative for Common Security and Prosperity, put forward by the President of

Uzbekistan, deserves special attention”, Eldor Aripov stressed.

A distinctive feature of this initiative is its focus on the fundamental problem of contemporary international relations, the lack of mutual trust.

The Samarkand Initiative is designed to unite the efforts of states to mitigate existing contradictions and disagreements by increasing cultural and civilizational, inter-ethnic, and interreligious interaction.

According to the expert, special attention should be paid to further enhancing mutual trade. “At the summit in Samarkand, the President of Uzbekistan proposed to start the formation of a common space of industrial and technological cooperation based on the New SCO Economic Dialogue”, the ISRS Director noted.

It was emphasized that this mechanism would eliminate trade and customs barriers, develop a stable supply chain, and promote joint localization and import substitution programs.

According to Eldor Aripov, the further development of the transportation and logistics infrastructure is also of the highest importance.

“We expect to discuss all current issues related to the development of transport corridors on the platform of the first SCO Transport Forum in Uzbekistan this year”, the ISRS representative said.

According to Eldor Aripov, food security is essential in the current geopolitical situation.

As the expert noted, the potential of the SCO countries can continuously supply the domestic markets with grain, livestock, fruits and vegetables, and basic foodstuffs.

In this context, the ISRS Director noted that Uzbekistan proposed to develop “Common Principles and Approaches to Food Safety”, a document that would include specific measures for regulatory convergence, joint research, and innovation in this area.

“To broadly discuss these vital issues, the International Conference on Food Safety will be held in Tashkent this year, and we urge everyone to participate in the event actively”, Eldor Aripov concluded.

*The event, organized by the Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, was attended by heads and experts from research centers of SCO member states, representatives of analytical institutions of observer states and SCO dialogue partners, as well as the leadership of the SCO Secretariat and the Executive Committee of the SCO RATS. In all, over 60 people from 12 countries.*

*Following the event, the chairmanship in the SCO Forum passed to the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It is expected that the next 19th meeting will be held in Uzbekistan in 2024.*

## **Source**