

## SCO chairmanship passes to Uzbekistan



On September 17, Tajikistan's city of Dushanbe hosted an anniversary meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The summit, chaired by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, was attended by the leaders of the SCO member states - President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, 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 Zhaparov, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Imran Khan and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin.

The observer states to the Organization were represented by the President of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ebrahim Raisi and President of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh. President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov attended the event as an honorary guest.

The event was also attended by the heads of the executive bodies of the SCO, the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia and the Economic Cooperation Organization.

In accordance with the agenda of the summit, the main results of the SCO's activities over the past 20 years and the priority tasks of multifaceted cooperation facing the Organization were discussed. Views were exchanged on the issues of global and regional politics.

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev in his speech emphasized the growing role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in modern international relations.

“Over the past period, the SCO has become an important subject of world politics, has taken its rightful place among influential international structures. Regional partnership is being strengthened based on the principles of the “Shanghai Spirit”. The joint potential is growing in confronting new challenges and threats, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation is enhancing”, Shavkat Mirziyoyev said.

The President of Uzbekistan also drew attention to the urgent tasks on the SCO agenda and made specific proposals for their solution.

“We are all witnessing growing tensions in the world and the region. The negative effects of the pandemic remain. All this requires from us even greater solidarity and mutual support within the framework of our organization”, the President said.

The Leader of Uzbekistan noted the need for a timely and joint response to common challenges and threats, building up regional economic cooperation, strengthening friendship and deepening cultural and humanitarian interaction in the SCO space.

Concern was expressed about the evolving situation in Afghanistan. Specific principles for the development of a dialogue with the new authorities of the country were proposed, including the achievement of broad political representation of all layers of Afghan society in public administration, as well as the observance of fundamental human rights and freedoms, including women and national minorities.

To consolidate efforts and broadly discuss issues of a political settlement of the situation in Afghanistan, the President of Uzbekistan proposed to regularly hold high-level meetings in the SCO – Afghanistan format, with the involvement of observer states and dialogue partners. Readiness was expressed to organize the first such meeting in Tashkent.

Taking into account the chairmanship in the SCO of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2021-2022, the President of Uzbekistan outlined the main priorities and tasks of the Organization for the coming period.

It was proposed to prepare and adopt a Comprehensive Program for the implementation of the Treaty on long-term good-neighborliness, friendship and cooperation of the SCO member states for 2023-2027 to further build up the multifaceted partnership between the SCO member states.

The President of Uzbekistan came up with an initiative to develop a Joint Action Plan for the Development of Intraregional Trade, which provides for measures to eliminate trade barriers, approximate technical regulations, digitalize customs procedures, as well as implement other measures to facilitate mutual access to markets.

It is planned to hold the Economic Forum and the Industrial Innovation Week of the SCO next year in Uzbekistan for a comprehensive consideration of the issues of stimulating business contacts between representatives of the business community of the countries of the Organization.

The importance of the soonest adoption of the SCO Industrial Cooperation Program and the creation of industrial cooperation centers on the territory of the member states was noted.

The President of Uzbekistan emphasized that the adoption of the SCO Strategy for the Development of Transport Connectivity will make it possible to fully use the transit potential of our countries and increase the efficiency of the East-West and North-South corridors system.

“We come up with an initiative to jointly prepare a long-term Program of Infrastructure Development in the SCO space, which could include cross-border projects in energy, communications, green development”, Shavkat Mirziyoyev said.

Taking into account the relevance of issues of poverty reduction and ensuring food security, the President of Uzbekistan proposed to launch a mechanism of regular ministerial meetings and expert consultations in

this sphere.

The attention of the summit participants was drawn to the importance of resuming meetings of the ministers of internal affairs and public security in the SCO space for intensifying efforts to ensure peace and stability in the region.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev came up with an initiative to establish an expert SCO Forum in information security to adequately respond to modern threats and challenges in cyberspace.

“We appreciate the joint achievements of people’s diplomacy”, the President continued. – We advocate the establishment of the SCO Goodwill Ambassador Institute to activate cultural, scientific, educational, sports ties.

It was also proposed to develop an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation between our countries in tourism.

The Leader of Uzbekistan dwelled on another current issue – cooperation in prevention and treatment of infectious diseases, post-COVID rehabilitation, mutual recognition of vaccination certificates.

In conclusion, the President of Uzbekistan invited the participants of the meeting to the next SCO summit to be held in September 2022 in Uzbekistan.

Following the meeting, the Dushanbe Declaration on the Twentieth Anniversary of the SCO was adopted. 30 documents were signed aimed at further enhancing multifaceted cooperation within the organization.

Zhang Ming was approved for the post of SCO Secretary-General and Ruslan Mirzayev for the post of Director of the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure.







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