
**Statement of
Rashid Alimov, SCO Secretary General
at the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation**

(Vienna, May 10th, 2017)

**Multifaceted interaction within the SCO framework for peace, stability,
and prosperity**

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and gentlemen!

First of all, allow me to express our gratitude to the Russian Side holding chairmanship at this authoritative Forum for Security Cooperation for the invitation to present to its participants the activities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation for peace, stability and prosperity in the vast Eurasian area.

In a month on the 9th of June Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, will host the next summit of the SCO member States. The leaders of the member States will adopt consolidated assessments of the state of international security in the context of situation development in the world and in the region, identify relevant dimensions for further strengthening of multifaceted cooperation in the framework of the Organization. One of major items on the agenda of the upcoming summit is accession of India and Pakistan as full-fledged members of the structure.

With accession of these two respected and authoritative states the SCO will comprise about 44% of the world's population, and its area of responsibility will encompass a vast space from Arctic in the North to Indian Ocean in the South and from China's Lianyungang in the East to Russia's Kaliningrad in the West.

It is deeply symbolic that the new stage of the SCO's development coincides with the 15th anniversary of adoption of the Organisation's Charter, its main ideological and practical reference point in building multifaceted interaction.

Multilateral partnership within the SCO framework is interaction based on joint identification of coinciding interests, equality of individual and collective views, irrespective of political and economic weight of the actors, with full preservation and respect for independence of the Sides of the partnership in their internal and foreign affairs.

Not forced alignment, but understanding, not domination, but equality and coordination could be identified as key elements of SCO partnership. Closer cooperation brings about deeper understanding, rigorously observed equality leads to stronger and more efficient multi-directional partnership.

From its outset the SCO has been avoiding bloc-, ideology-, and confrontation-based approaches to resolving relevant international and regional problems, has been following principles set forth in its Charter, including non-aggression towards other states and international associations. Among the priorities of the Organisation are active development of contacts and cooperation with international and regional organisations, first and foremost the UN and its specialised agencies.

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

The SCO was created for development and prosperity of the peoples living in the space of the Organisation. Yet stable development is impossible without ensuring a necessary level of security. In this regard among key issues addressed by the SCO member States are joint fight against terrorism, separatism, and extremism in all their manifestations, uncompromising combat against illegal drugs and arms trafficking, other types of transnational crime, as well as illegal migration.

At the same time I should underscore the following: the SCO is not a military bloc, yet uncompromising fight against terrorist threat calls for developing and strengthening mechanisms aimed at eradication of terrorist activities. Special role in this is played by regular joint combined anti-terrorist exercises of the SCO member States' armed forces "Peaceful mission". Since 2007 the exercises have been facilitating joint improvement of practical skills for conduction of military operations against terrorist groups in diverse conditions with use of various military equipment.

The work of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure has been smooth and efficient. My distinguished colleague Colonel General Evgeny S. Sysoev, Director of its Executive Council will provide in-depth perspective of its activities.

Comprehensive work on countering the drug trafficking threat is one of many priorities of the SCO. Illegal production and trafficking of narcotics remain one of the gravest threats to security, undermining international peace and stability.

In last five years purposeful efforts of the SCO member States against this evil resulted in removal from circulation of 69 tons of deadly heroin. This volume is about 14% of global numbers. Joint activities of relevant authorities also led to confiscation of over 75 tons of precursors for production of poisonous drugs.

Practical work of the SCO in countering drug trafficking is expressed in this video that I present to your attention.

Please.

A video 5 min 50 sec long.

You could see that joint anti-drug activities of relevant authorities of the SCO member States lead to tangible results. Nevertheless we believe that efficient combat against the drug threat is only possible with further consolidation of efforts of the whole international community. In this regard we attach special importance to continuing and further developing close cooperation between the SCO and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

One of the driving forces of the Organisation is cooperation in the trade and economy domain. Joint development of infrastructure, communications, implementation of numerous multilateral projects to improve prosperity and quality of life of people are a constructive objective for interaction of the member States.

Development of practical issues of economic nature is performed via regular mechanisms of meetings attended by heads of relevant ministries and/or agencies from the member States, formats of cooperation among representatives of business circles and banking communities are also running smoothly. This results in gradual growth accumulated of mutual investments among the SCO member States, which by 2016 exceeded U.S. \$40 billion.

On January 20th this year the agreement of the SCO member States on favourable conditions for road transportation came into force. It established legal basis of parity conditions for road transporters and set forth a single platform for international road transportation from Eastern Europe to Russian Far East and China.

Practical implementation of the agreement is bound to provide additional impetus to growth of trade, to building new and restoring existing roads that are parts of international routes.

The feature of the agreement is that it is open to states that are not members of the SCO, which has already attracted attention of countries adjacent to the SCO space.

The key element in strengthening mutual trust, friendship, and good-neighbourly relations among the SCO member States is interaction in humanitarian domain. Within the framework of the Organisation a stable dialogue of different cultures and civilizations promotes their learning of each other, mutual enrichment and eventually better mutual understanding of peoples. This is the ultimate cultural mission of the SCO. It is successfully implemented through comprehensive approach which is originally aimed at building democratic and fair architecture of international relations. Essentially, within the framework of in many respects unique inter-civilizational organisation we have created conditions for lowering risk of conflict in the SCO area of responsibility.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 15 years the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation has managed to build one of the world's major systems for regional interaction with emphasis on guarantees of political stability, stronger security, broader cooperation in trade and economy for joint development and prosperity of the SCO peoples.

In June the summit of the Organisation in Astana will herald a new age in development of the SCO. The leaders will reaffirm commitment to peace, joint development, relations based on equal rights, focus on stronger cooperation for security, stability, and sustainable development in the SCO space.

Thank you for your attention.