

Statement of the Prime Minister of Pakistan at the SCO Heads of Government Meeting

December 15, 2015

Honorable Premier Li Keqiang,
SCO Secretary General Dimitry Mezentsev,
Heads of Governments of SCO Member and Observer States,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my privilege to participate in the 14th SCO Heads of Government Meeting. I wish to thank Premier Li Keqiang for his invitation and the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fifteen Years ago in Shanghai, the leaders of SCO members decided to lay the foundation of a new model of regional cooperation that stood for a new security concept anchored on mutual trust, disarmament and cooperative security.

It was envisioned as a platform for mutual cooperation and equal standing among its members on the basis of the principles of non-interference and non-alignment.

SCO has come a long way since 2001. Over the course of 15 years, it has promoted mutual trust and cooperation in countering terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime. It has strengthened mutually beneficial partnership in the fields of trade, finance, energy, infrastructure, tourism and environmental protection. The organization has expanded its geographical reach by adding 6 observers and 6 dialogue partners.

Earlier this year, the SCO took another landmark decision in Ufa, to enlarge its membership and accept in principle the membership requests of two new members i.e Pakistan and India. Following this historic decision Pakistan has made considerable progress by completing its internal processes to fulfill its legal obligations and to accede to relevant treaties and protocols of SCO.

Pakistan shares with SCO and its members, deep rooted historical and cultural links and strong economic and strategic complementarities. Our interests and objectives intersect across a wide range of areas and issues.

We reaffirm our commitment to collectively confront the challenges of extremism, separatism, terrorism, human and drug trafficking, organized crime and environmental as well as natural disasters.

The security situation around us remains precarious. We are seeing challenges to state sovereignty and territorial integrity. Armed conflicts continue to rage in several parts of the world unleashing forces, which are beyond the control of anyone.

Militant ideologies need to be countered. Terrorism remains a serious threat and has in fact become even more insidious.

These developments require that we join forces and develop comprehensive strategies. SCO has a special role to play in promoting peace and regional stability.

As members of SCO family and in accordance with the Shanghai spirit, we have to identify common values and build on them. Our diversity can serve as a positive force, to promote harmony and advance avenues of win-win cooperation and shared prosperity.

SCO partnership can extend to infrastructure, energy cooperation, development of natural resources and working together for a more democratic, accountable, transparent and just international order. SCO Development Strategy 2025 envisions these goals.

Pakistan shares the perspective that connectivity and development are critical to progress, prosperity and security in the region. We support the one belt one road initiative of President Xi and remain committed to make China Pakistan Economic Corridor a means for regional progress and prosperity. With its unique geo-strategic location and at the confluence of South, West and Central Asia and having excellent relations with all SCO members, Pakistan is ready to play its role in developing these linkages and looks forward to join the efforts of all member states of SCO.

I thank you all.