(Translation)

**Staying True to Our Founding Mission and**

**Forging Ahead on a New Journey of SCO Cooperation**

Statement by H.E. Xi Jinping

President of the People’s Republic of China

At the 21st Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization

17 September 2021

Your Excellency President Emomali Rahmon,

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to thank you, President Rahmon, and Tajikistan for hosting this meeting under Tajikistan’s Presidency of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). As the SCO marks its 20th anniversary, together with all of you, I look forward to reviewing the proud history of the SCO and charting the course for even broader prospects of its future development.

The past 20 years have seen evolving international developments and profound reshaping of the global governance system. These years have also seen the vigorous growth of the SCO and the fruitful, mutually beneficial cooperation among its member states. Over the past two decades, guided by the Shanghai Spirit of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations and pursuit of common development, the SCO has endeavored to promote world peace, development and human progress, and to explore new ground, both theoretically and with actual steps, with a view to building a new type of international relations and a community with a shared future for mankind.

**― We have jointly promoted political mutual trust.** We have signed the Treaty on Long-Term Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation and created a new model based on partnership and dialogue, rather than alliance or confrontation. We have supported each other on issues which involve our respective core interests and are of major concern to us. And we have provided reliable and strong backing to each other in our pursuit of development.

**― We have jointly ensured security and stability.** We were the first to call for fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism. We have taken tough actions to curb the spread of drug trafficking, cybercrime and transnational organized crime, and jointly held counter-terrorism exercises and border control operations. We call for seeking political settlement of international and regional hotspot issues, and we have erected a strong defense to uphold peace and tranquility in our region.

**― We have jointly pursued prosperity and development.** We have intensified practical cooperation in our region. People-to-people programs such as art festivals, the SCO University and the SCO Forum on Traditional Medicine have been launched. With the “SCO speed” and “SCO efficiency”, as evidenced by the 12 percent annual growth of the total GDP of SCO member states and their trade as well as manifold increase in the number of mutual visits, we have moved faster in delivering decent lives for people in SCO countries.

**― We have jointly upheld international justice.** We advocate multilateralism and the common values of humanity and have spoken out against hegemony and power politics. We have maintained close coordination with SCO observer states and dialogue partners as well as international and regional organizations which share the SCO’s purposes and principles, and we have rallied other members of the international community to work for a shared future.

Colleagues,

The SCO has reached a new historical starting point. We should stay true to the Shanghai Spirit, keep to the right direction, follow the historical trends of promoting democracy in international relations, and pursue our own development as we pursue common development for humanity. Together, we can build a closer SCO community with a shared future and contribute even more to lasting global peace and common prosperity. To this end, I call for taking the following steps:

**First, we need to follow the journey of enhancing solidarity and cooperation.** We should make the most of the meeting mechanisms and platforms at all levels, step up policy dialogue, communication and coordination, respect each other’s legitimate concerns and promptly resolve problems that may arise and affect our cooperation, thus keeping the SCO on a steady course of development. We should maintain firm confidence in our systems, reject condescending lecturing, and firmly support countries in exploring development paths and governance models that are compatible with their national conditions. We should support each other in steadily advancing important political agenda including domestic elections. We must never allow any external interference in the domestic affairs of countries in our region under whatever pretext. In short, we should keep the future of our countries’ development and progress firmly in our own hands.

Fighting COVID-19 remains the most pressing task facing us all. We should follow the principle of putting people and their lives first and promote the spirit of science. We need to deepen international cooperation against the virus, promote fair and equitable distribution of vaccines and firmly oppose any act of politicizing COVID-19 origins tracing. To protect the lives and health of people from around the world, China has provided close to 1.2 billion doses of finished and bulk vaccines to over 100 countries and international organizations, thus becoming the biggest vaccine provider in the world. China will step up efforts to provide a total of two billion doses to other countries in the course of this year. We will deepen anti-COVID cooperation with other developing countries, make good use of China’s US$100 million donation to COVAX, and make our due contribution to humanity’s ultimate victory over the virus.

**Second, we need to follow the journey of upholding our common security.** Faced with complex and fluid security dynamics in the region, we need to pursue common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and take tough actions against terrorism, separatism and extremism, including the East Turkestan Islamic Movement. We need to strengthen cooperation on counter-narcotics, border control and security for major events, and speedily improve the SCO’s security cooperation mechanism. We need to further implement the Convention on Countering Extremism and other legal instruments, and enhance the capacity of competent authorities of SCO countries to maintain stability and respond to emergencies.

Afghanistan has undergone drastic changes. The withdrawal of foreign troops has opened a new page in its history. But Afghanistan still faces many daunting challenges, and it needs the support and assistance of the international community, particularly countries in our region. We SCO member states need to step up coordination, make full use of platforms such as the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group and facilitate a smooth transition in Afghanistan. We need to encourage Afghanistan to put in place a broad-based and inclusive political framework, adopt prudent and moderate domestic and foreign policies, resolutely fight all forms of terrorism, live in amity with its neighbors and truly embark on a path of peace, stability and development.

**Third, we need to follow the journey of promoting openness and integration.** We SCO countries are all at a critical stage of development. Being close to each other and sharing common interests are our unique strengths. We need to give full play to such strengths, stay committed to openness and cooperation, and jointly pursue our shared goal of development and rejuvenation. We need to continue to promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation as well as the secure and orderly flow of people, goods, capital and data. We should create growth drivers of cooperation such as digital economy, green energy and modern agriculture. Belt and Road cooperation offers a major platform of promoting common development for us all. We need to strengthen complementarity between the Belt and Road Initiative and the development strategies of SCO countries and regional cooperation initiatives such as the Eurasian Economic Union. We should keep industrial and supply chains functioning smoothly, promote economic integration and interconnected development of all countries and deliver shared benefits to all.

To facilitate post-COVID economic recovery in SCO countries, China will continue to share its market opportunities, strive to reach US$2.3 trillion in its cumulative trade with other SCO countries in the next five years, and improve its trade structure and balance. China will open a China-SCO Business and Trade Institute to promote business and trade cooperation among SCO countries. As phase one of the RMB30 billion yuan equivalent special lending facility set up by China in 2018 within the SCO framework will soon be completed, China will launch the second phase of this special lending facility to promote Belt and Road cooperation. Such lending will mainly cover projects related to modernization, connectivity, infrastructure, and green, low-carbon and sustainable development.

**Fourth, we need to follow the journey of boosting interactions and mutual learning.** Interactions between civilizations provide the most solid foundation for the SCO’s development, and people-to-people exchanges provide the strongest driving force for our Organization. We need to encourage exchanges, dialogue, harmony and co-existence between civilizations. We should launch more projects that will appeal to our people and benefit them directly in areas including science and technology, education, culture, health and poverty alleviation, fully tap into platforms including the youth exchange camp, the women’s forum, the media forum and the forum on people-to-people friendship, and social organizations such as the Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission. With these efforts, we can build a bridge of mutual understanding and friendship between the people of SCO countries.

In the next three years, China will provide 1,000 training opportunities in poverty alleviation for other SCO countries, open 10 Luban Workshops, and launch 30 cooperation projects in such areas as health, poverty relief, culture and education under the framework of the Silk Road Community Building Initiative. This will help countries in need build capacity and improve the lives of their people. China will host an SCO youth technology and innovation forum next year to unleash the creativity of young people in SCO countries. China proposes to establish an SCO alliance of traditional medicine industries to explore new ways of boosting cooperation on traditional medicine. China welcomes your countries’ participation in the 2022 Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, so that together we can deliver a streamlined, safe and splendid Olympic Games.

**Fifth, we need to follow the journey of upholding equity and justice.** As a Chinese saying goes, “Power may win for the time being, but justice will prevail for the long run.” Acting from a so-called “position of strength” is not the way to handle international affairs, and hegemonic, domineering and bullying acts should be firmly rejected. In addressing international relations, we should observe the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and the principle of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits. We need to practice true multilateralism and oppose actions that use the name of so-called rules to undermine the international order and cause confrontation and division. We need to boost mutually beneficial cooperation, remove trade, investment and technology barriers, and promote inclusive development that delivers benefits to all.

Colleagues,

Today, we will launch procedures to admit Iran as a member state of the SCO and Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Qatar as new dialogue partners. I am confident that the growing SCO family will stride ahead together with all the progressive forces of the world, and be the builders of world peace, contributors to global development and defenders of the international order.

China will support Uzbekistan in its upcoming SCO presidency. I am sure that with the joint efforts of all our member states, the SCO will continue to scale new heights in all areas of cooperation.

Colleagues,

Let us hold high the banner of the Shanghai Spirit, stay true to the SCO’s founding mission, advance in the right direction of building a community with a shared future for mankind, and embark on a new journey for the development of the SCO.

Thank you.