

**The Shanghai Cooperation Organization
Deputy Secretary-General Wang Kaiwen**

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**Remarks at the 6th Ministerial Conference of
the Heart of Asia - Istanbul Process
Amritsar, India, 3-4 December 2016**

[as delivered]

Dear Mr. Chairmen!

Dear heads of delegations!

Dear participants of the Conference!

1. First, on behalf of the Secretary-General I would like to express gratitude to the organizers for invitation to take part in the regular Conference held during the Republic of India successful chairmanship. I'm convinced that the current conference as the previous ones will contribute significantly into strengthening interaction between states and international and regional organization in the framework of the Istanbul Process on Afghanistan.

2. The situation in Afghanistan, which was invited to join the SCO in 2012 as an observer state without obtaining the status of dialogue partner, is always the focus of our Organization. We are interested in Afghanistan being a peaceful and neutral state that respects and protects the rights and fundamental freedoms of its people, as well as maintains friendly relations with all neighboring countries.

3. Early achievement of peace and stability in Afghanistan is an important factor in maintaining and strengthening security in the whole region. The Tashkent 15th Anniversary Declaration adopted on 24 June 2016, reiterated the SCO Member States' interest and support of settling the Afghan conflict through the promotion of an inclusive process of national reconciliation.

4. At the same time, we regret to admit that in spite of diverse efforts by the international community, a national Afghan peaceful dialogue that could stop bloodshed has yet to be achieved. We shall mention that the recent developments are alarming and peace process in Afghanistan requires additional efforts by all stakeholders.

5. The SCO Member States regularly provide multifaceted assistance to Afghanistan in the field of defense and law enforcement strengthening, in economy's recovery, development of transport network and energy, in the fight against illicit drugs and in training national staff either on bilateral or multilateral bases.

6. The SCO proceeds from the assumption that the efforts to settle Afghan conflict should be made with the United Nations playing a central coordinating role. In this respect we support the efforts made by the United Nations and its special agencies. We highly appreciate activity of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan; deepen cooperation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, attaches special attention to interaction with the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee and to development of cooperation with UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and other UN special agencies. New opportunities for interaction are opened with adoption of the Resolution on Cooperation between UN and SCO on 21 November 2016 at the 71st session of the UN General Assembly.

7. The necessity to build-up international community efforts in order to stabilize the situation in Afghanistan is obvious nowadays. The signs of activity of the so-called “Islamic state” fighters in the Afghan territory arouse concerns and predetermine the necessity of additional measures by all the stakeholders in the field of countering terrorism and fighting against adversaries to the launch of peaceful process in Afghanistan.

Dear participants of the Conference!

8. On 24 June 2016 the SCO Heads of State Anniversary Summit was hold in Tashkent. On its eve we completed a comprehensive work on implementation of decisions made in Ufa on the launch of the Organization’s enlargement. The decision on signing the Memorandums of Obligations of India and Pakistan has boosted the SCO development and its further progress. Meanwhile, the SCO objectives are still unchanged, clear and simple – peace, stability and development in the “SCO area”.

9. In conclusion, I’d like to express my confidence that substantial and useful discussion in the framework of the Conference will contribute into maintaining stability and safety in the region and into rehabilitation of peaceful and stable Afghanistan. Once again convey my gratitude to the organizers of the Conference for hospitality and establishing excellent work conditions.

Thank you for your attention!