

Upholding Fairness and Justice and Improving Global Governance

— Achievements, Opportunities, and Prospects for SCO Cooperation

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Introduction

Time never stands still, and the seasons move ever onward. Over the past 25 remarkable years, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has grown steadily in strength and vitality. The "Shanghai Spirit," centered on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for diversity of civilizations, and pursuit of common development, has demonstrated ever greater value in our times, illuminating the path toward building an SCO community with a shared future.

Over the past 25 years, the SCO has grown from a fledgling organization of six founding member states into the world's largest regional international organization in terms of both territory and population. The SCO has increasingly become a constructive force in advancing the reform and development of the global governance system and in steering economic globalization toward a more inclusive and broadly beneficial direction.

From the "dual engines" of security and economic cooperation to the building of "five shared homes" centered on solidarity and mutual trust, peace and tranquility, prosperity and development, good-neighborliness and friendship, and fairness and justice, the SCO has achieved a series of pioneering initiatives and historic accomplishments in institution-building and cooperation. Meanwhile, its international influence and appeal have continued to grow.

Those who plan wisely go far; those who work diligently succeed. The SCO took the lead in establishing confidence-building mechanisms in military affairs in border regions, transforming thousands of kilometers of shared borders into bonds of friendship, mutual trust, and cooperation. It was also the first in the region to conclude a long-term treaty of good-neighborliness, friendship, and cooperation, declaring a commitment to lasting friendship and never becoming adversaries. The SCO was among the earliest regional organizations to launch multilateral actions against the "three forces" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism. It has steadily advanced cooperation in law enforcement and security, properly managed differences and disputes, firmly opposed external interference, and safeguarded regional peace and stability. The SCO has also actively expanded economic and trade cooperation. A large number of landmark projects and "small yet smart" public well-being initiatives have taken root. At the same time, industrial and investment cooperation has continued to advance, providing stronger momentum for regional development and prosperity. Regional connectivity networks have steadily improved, with nearly 14,000 kilometers of international road transport routes opened among member states and more than 130,000 China-Europe Railway Express freight train trips operated cumulatively over the years. The SCO has established and fully utilized mechanisms such as the SCO Committee on Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation to build networks for people-to-people exchanges. Cooperation in areas including local governance, media, think tanks, women's affairs, and youth engagement has continued to expand, fostering closer mutual understanding and

stronger bonds among the peoples of member states.

Seeking harmony without uniformity and valuing the beauty of one's own culture while appreciating the beauty of others. Over the past 25 years, the SCO has expanded cooperation across more than 50 fields. Despite differences in history, culture, and social systems, member states have managed disagreements effectively, steadily deepened mutual trust and coordination, and forged a new path of harmony in diversity, mutual support, and win-win cooperation. In doing so, the SCO has made a strong contribution to regional peace and stability and set a successful example for improving global governance.

In recent years, geopolitical rivalry has intensified, while unilateralism, hegemonism, and interventionism have increasingly eroded the international order established after World War II. Geopolitical conflicts have become more frequent and severe, posing serious challenges to global peace and stability as well as economic and social development. Faced with a complex and rapidly evolving international landscape, the SCO has consistently upheld multilateralism and opposed unilateralism and protectionism. It took the lead in advocating a global governance vision grounded in extensive consultation, joint contributions, and shared benefits, while deepening cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations. The SCO has participated constructively in international and regional affairs, firmly upheld international fairness and justice, promoted inclusiveness and mutual learning among civilizations, and opposed hegemonism and power politics. The achievements of SCO cooperation have benefited not only countries within the region but have also had a positive impact on the broader global landscape, contributing actively to world peace and development. Its guiding principles and successful practices have not only served the countries of the region but also offered clear and steadfast inspiration to a world marked by turbulence and uncertainty.

A new journey begins, carrying a mission of great significance. The year 2026 marks the 25th anniversary of the SCO. We believe and expect that, amid the accelerating transformations unseen in a century, the SCO will play an even greater leading role, serve as a model in advancing the Global Governance Initiative (GGI), and ensure that the achievements in reforming the global governance system and building a community with a shared future for humanity deliver greater benefits to people around the world.

Chapter One:

SCO Cooperation Has Yielded Fruitful Results

Twenty-five years ago, when the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was founded, it established the "Shanghai Spirit," which features mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for the diversity of civilizations, and the pursuit of common development. Over the past 24 years, member states have remained committed to this founding aspiration, shared opportunities, pursued development together, and achieved a series of pioneering results and historic accomplishments in advancing SCO development and co-operation.

— From President Xi's "Speech at the 25th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," September 1, 2025

In June 2001, China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan signed the Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, officially founding the SCO. Over the following 25 years, the SCO further expanded to include India, Pakistan, Iran, and Belarus as member states. At present, the SCO has 10 member states, 2 observer states—Afghanistan and Mongolia—and 15 dialogue partners: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Türkiye, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Bahrain, the Maldives, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Myanmar, and Laos. From August 31 to September 1, 2025, the SCO held its summit in Tianjin, China, where it decided to merge the observer states and dialogue partners categories into a unified "SCO Partners" framework.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is the world's largest comprehensive regional organization in terms of geographical area and population. Its member states display remarkable diversity and distinctive characteristics in political systems, development paths, civilizational traditions, religious beliefs, cultural forms, and geographical conditions. Over the past 25 years, by recognizing differences and respecting diversity,

the SCO has consistently upheld the "Shanghai Spirit," featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for the diversity of civilizations, and the pursuit of common development. The organization has fostered mutual inclusiveness among member states by seeking common ground for cooperation despite differences in social systems, building bridges of understanding amid diverse civilizations, and pooling development strength despite differing interests. In doing so, it has successfully pioneered a new path of cooperation and development for regional organizations. Guided by the wisdom of "seeking common ground while reserving differences," member states have respected one another's differences, maintained strategic communication, built broad consensus, strengthened solidarity and cooperation, and jointly shouldered the responsibility of safeguarding regional peace, stability, development, and prosperity.

1.1 Seeking Common Ground While Reserving Differences and Jointly Shouldering Security Responsibilities

When the SCO was founded, the "three forces" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism posed serious security threats to countries in the region, making the safeguarding of regional security and stability one of the organization's central responsibilities. Over the past 25 years, the SCO has consistently treated security cooperation as a top priority. In 2018, President Xi put forward a series of important proposals for the future development of the SCO, including a call to pursue a "vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security," thereby encouraging member states to strengthen regional security safeguards jointly. In 2025, at the Tianjin Summit of the SCO, President Xi stressed that member states should continue to uphold the principles of non-alliance, non-confrontation and not targeting any third party, join hands in responding to various threats and challenges, build a community of common security in the region, remain a force for stability in this volatile world, and contribute "SCO strength" to world peace and stability.

With security as a cornerstone of cooperation, SCO member states led the establishment of confidence-building mechanisms in military affairs in border areas. They were among the first to launch multilateral actions against the "three forces" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism. They have carried out comprehensive, multi-level practical cooperation across areas including political security, counterterrorism, and border and port security, while continuously improving security cooperation mechanisms and measures. Member states have properly managed differences and disputes, firmly opposed external interference, and worked together to safeguard regional peace and stability.

In July 2024, the joint exercise "Counterterrorism Cooperation-2024," involving the competent authorities of SCO member states, was held in Xinjiang, China. It marked the first live-troop operational drill involving the competent authorities of all SCO member states. Participating parties exchanged practical counterterrorism experience and effectively enhanced their capacity for coordinated operations. In August 2025,

China, serving as the rotating chair of the SCO, organized the joint international anti-drug operation "Spider Web" with member states. During the operation, member states cracked 1,151 drug-related criminal cases and seized nearly 10 tons of narcotics.

In the Tianjin Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of SCO Member States issued in September 2025, member states reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening cooperation in combating terrorism, separatism, and extremism, as well as other forms of transnational organized crime, including the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and their precursors, and arms smuggling. The declaration emphasized that cooperation within the SCO framework would lay the foundation for building an equal and indivisible security architecture across Eurasia.

Today, a new path toward security based on dialogue rather than confrontation, partnership rather than alliance, and win-win cooperation rather than zero-sum rivalry is steadily broadening. Guided by the belief that "true security can be achieved only when all countries are secure," the "SCO family," now comprising more than 20 countries, continues to strengthen regional security safeguards and inject positive momentum into the cause of world and regional peace and stability.

1.2 Pursuing Mutual Benefit and Win–Win Cooperation to Promote Regional Prosperity

The geographic reach of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization spans Asia, Europe, and Africa. Its total population accounts for nearly half of the world's population, and its combined economic output represents about one quarter of the global economy. It is the world's most extensive regional cooperation organization in terms of population and geographic coverage, and one with enormous development potential. Within the SCO framework, countries with different cultural backgrounds and at different stages of development have united in pursuit of common development, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperation.

President Xi pointed out that SCO member states have rich energy resources, big markets, and strong internal driving forces, and are contributing a rising share to world economic growth. He stated that the member states should continue to dismantle walls rather than erect them, pursue integration rather than decoupling, advance high-quality Belt and Road (BRI) cooperation, and promote a universally beneficial and inclusive form of economic globalization, so as to step up to take the responsibility for open cooperation across the globe.^①

In recent years, SCO member states have continued to deepen strategic alignment among their major national economic development plans, thereby promoting higher-quality, more sustainable development. All parties have strengthened coordination between the BRI and national development strategies and initiatives, such as Belarus's Na-

^① "Xinhua News Agency, 'Full Text of Xi Jinping's Speech at the "Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus" Meeting' (September 1, 2025)."

tional Strategy for Sustainable Socioeconomic Development, the Uzbekistan – 2030 Strategy, and Kazakhstan's New Economic Policy "Nurly Zhol," thereby weaving an ever-closer network of cooperation.

1.2.1 Economic and trade exchanges have continued to gain momentum.

China has actively shared the opportunities created by its mega-market. In 2024, trade between China and the other SCO member states reached approximately US \$512.4 billion, up 2.7 percent year on year and accounting for about 8.3 percent of China's total foreign trade volume. Trade and investment facilitation among member states has continued to improve. China signed updated investment protection agreements with Russia and Kazakhstan, respectively, and concluded the Agreement on Trade in Services and Investment with Belarus. By July 2025, China's cumulative investment stock in other SCO member states had exceeded US\$84 billion. A series of investment and industrial cooperation projects has been launched, fostering an extensive, open, mutually beneficial, and equitable space for cooperation within the SCO.

1.2.2 Connectivity networks have become increasingly well-developed.

In recent years, China and the other SCO member states have accelerated efforts to build a multidimensional connectivity network featuring coordinated land-sea links and mutual reinforcement between eastward and westward opening-up. China-Europe Railway Express freight trains passing through multiple SCO member states have become increasingly frequent, while the transport capacity of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Corridor has grown rapidly. Construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway has entered a crucial stage of full-scale implementation. The Tongjiang Railway Bridge and the Heihe Highway Bridge, which connect China and Russia, have been completed and opened to traffic. Air transportation between China and the SCO countries has become more frequent. As infrastructure connectivity continues to improve, member states have steadily enhanced their ability to integrate into the world economy while deepening integration of industrial and supply chains.

1.2.3 Cooperation in the digital economy is advancing through innovation.

As a new round of technological revolution and industrial transformation accelerates worldwide, SCO countries have seized the opportunity to deepen cooperation in fields such as the digital economy and intelligent manufacturing, and to share achievements in cutting-edge technologies. In July 2025, the 2025 SCO Digital Economy Forum was held in Tianjin, where China, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Egypt, and other countries signed 12 digital economy cooperation projects covering such areas as cross-border e-commerce and smart cities. Enterprises and hospitals in China and India have jointly con-

ducted clinical research on robotic minimally invasive surgery. At the same time, unmanned automated guided vehicles have enabled China-Mongolia cross-border freight transport to clear customs in as little as 30 seconds. The implementation of a series of digital applications has effectively accelerated the development of the digital economy in member states and delivered tangible benefits to people across the region.

1.2.4 Cooperation in sustainable development has strengthened endogenous growth momentum.

Most SCO member states are in a stage of rapid economic and social development and face common challenges, including poverty and climate change. China has strengthened cooperation with other countries in areas such as agricultural production and green energy, shifting from "blood transfusion" to "hematopoiesis" by helping build self-sustaining development capacity and enhancing endogenous growth drivers. In Pakistan, new hybrid rapeseed varieties jointly tested and selected by Chinese and Pakistani enterprises have proven easy to cultivate and capable of increasing both yields and farmers' incomes, making them popular among local farmers. In parts of Russia's Primorsky Krai, where some rice-growing areas face shortages in equipment and technology, Chinese enterprises have worked with local logistics companies and ports to establish a complete industrial chain covering seed breeding, crop cultivation, storage and processing, port shipment, and international trade.

1.3 Upholding Openness and Inclusiveness to Promote People-to-People Exchanges

President Xi pointed out that "the most solid foundation for the SCO's development lies in mutual learning between civilizations, and its deepest source of strength lies in the affinity between peoples."^① SCO member states boast long histories and rich cultural heritage and were once linked by the ancient Silk Road, which stretched across the Eurasian continent. Today, people-to-people exchanges and cultural cooperation among member states have become increasingly close, public support has continued to strengthen, and emotional bonds have grown ever deeper, breathing new life into the ancient Silk Road.

Since the adoption of the Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2002, which included cultural cooperation among the SCO's purposes and objectives, member states have steadily advanced the development of mechanisms for people-to-people and cultural cooperation, while continuously expanding the scope of collaboration. Cultural and people-to-people exchanges among member states have produced many highlights, with increasingly active nongovernmental interactions and diverse civili-

^① Xinhua News Agency, "Striking a Harmonious Chord for the SCO—SCO Countries Deepen People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges and Mutual Learning to Jointly Compose a New Chapter in the Development of Civilization" (August 30, 2025).

zations flourishing side by side. Together, the member states have written a splendid chapter of peaceful, amicable, and harmonious coexistence among countries with diverse historical and cultural traditions, social systems, and stages of development, thereby providing an "SCO example" for promoting humanity's common values.

1.3.1 People-to-people cooperation in traditional fields such as culture, health, and education has continued to deepen and yield solid results.

International co-productions, including the China-Russia documentary *This Is China* and the China-Kazakhstan documentary *China: Archaeology*, have transformed art into a language that connects hearts and minds, enabling the "SCO family" to build further consensus through mutual learning among civilizations.

In 2022, China announced it would provide 2,000 free cataract surgeries to residents of SCO member states over the next three years. By April 2025, the China-implemented "SCO Health Express International Brightness Journey" program had completed 2,187 cataract sight-restoration surgeries, exceeding the commitment originally made.^①

As an important educational cooperation platform within the SCO framework, the SCO University program now includes more than 120 higher education institutions from seven countries, namely China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus, and Iran. Focusing on priority areas of cooperation such as regional studies, ecology, energy studies, and information technology, SCO University has created a new platform for international educational cooperation through the sharing of academic resources and joint talent cultivation. In September 2025, the China – Shanghai Cooperation Organization Vocational and Technical Education Cooperation Center was inaugurated in Tianjin. Luban Workshop, a flagship Chinese vocational education program that has expanded overseas, has taken root in SCO member states such as Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Russia, and Pakistan, offering digital technology training courses tailored to local development needs.

1.3.2 Cooperation in emerging fields such as poverty reduction, tourism, and cultural heritage preservation has also produced many notable achievements.

At China's initiative, the SCO Demonstration Base for Agricultural Technology Exchange and Training was established in Yangling, Shaanxi Province, China, in 2019. Drawing on China's extensive experience in agricultural modernization, the base has so far trained more than 2,200 agricultural officials and technical personnel from SCO countries and established 11 agricultural science and technology demonstration parks across SCO member states, helping to promote agricultural transformation and upgrad-

^①China National Radio Online, "The 'SCO Health Express International Brightness Journey' Program Has Successfully Completed 2,187 Cataract Sight-Restoration Surgeries" (April 30, 2025).

ing and increase farmers' incomes in local communities.^①

As visa facilitation measures continue to improve, transportation links become more accessible, and cross-border payment systems increasingly interconnected, exchanges among the peoples of SCO countries have become more frequent, making "spur-of-the-moment travel" no longer a distant dream. Since its launch in 2022, the "SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital" initiative has designated Varanasi in India, Almaty in Kazakhstan, and Qingdao in China as host cities in succession, promoting member states' tourism resources on a broader scale and at a higher level while enhancing the appeal of cross-border tourism.

As cultural relic exchanges within the SCO framework become increasingly institutionalized and normalized, joint archaeological projects and cultural relic exhibitions have brought many treasures embodying the memories of civilizations back into public view. In Uzbekistan, the historic city of Khiva had once fallen into disrepair after years of neglect. Archaeologists from China and Uzbekistan have pioneered a new model of international cooperation featuring "shared technology, integrated concepts, and joint talent cultivation." Through the joint efforts of both sides, the ancient city of Khiva has now regained its former splendor.

1.4 Upholding Fairness and Justice in Pursuit of Equity and Reasonableness

Fairness and justice are fundamental principles that should govern international relations and serve as an important safeguard for the steady, sustained development of regional cooperation. In both its founding declaration and organizational charter, the SCO made clear from the outset its commitment to promoting a more democratic, just, and equitable international political and economic order. Over the past 25 years, amid a turbulent and rapidly changing international landscape, the SCO has consistently upheld equality among states, shared responsibility for security, and mutual benefit and win-win cooperation. It has translated fairness and justice into institutional building, development cooperation, and conflict mediation, becoming an important force for promoting world peace and development and safeguarding international fairness and justice.

The pursuit of equity and reasonableness is first reflected in respect for sovereign equality and for the development paths independently chosen by each country. President Xi pointed out that "countries may differ in size, strength or level of development, but they are all equal members of the international community with equal rights to participate in regional and international affairs."^② Over the past 25 years, the SCO

^① Xinhua News Agency, "Yangling, Shaanxi Has Trained More Than 2,200 Agricultural Personnel from SCO Countries over the Past Five Years" (June 12, 2024); Xinhua News Agency, "The SCO Agricultural Base Has Effectively Promoted Exchanges and Cooperation in Agricultural Science and Technology" (August 30, 2025).

^② Xinhua News Agency, "President Xi Jinping's Keynote Speech at the 2015 Annual Conference of the Boao Forum for Asia" (March 28, 2015).

has upheld equality among all countries, advocated equality among nations regardless of size, respected one another's core interests and independently chosen development paths, accommodated one another's interests and concerns, and adhered to the principle of consensus through consultation. In handling issues, member states engage in extensive consultation and seek solutions through discussion, rather than allowing stronger countries to impose their will on weaker ones.

In the Tianjin Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO Member States, all member states reaffirmed their commitment to promoting a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness and justice, and win-win cooperation, as well as to building a community with a shared future for humanity. Member states also called on the international community to jointly support the SCO Initiative on Solidarity Among Countries to Promote Global Justice, Harmony, and Development. Rashid Alimov, former Secretary-General of the SCO, observed that the organization has demonstrated a distinctly different model of cooperation, one grounded in the principles of consensus, sovereign equality among states, and non-interference in internal affairs. Because the SCO lacks a single dominant center of power and a rigid hierarchical structure, it has been able to coordinate the interests of all parties and promote mutually beneficial cooperation.

The SCO's commitment to fairness and justice is also reflected in its active mediation efforts to resolve international hotspot issues, as well as in its impartial efforts to manage and address differences and disputes. In March 2023, with China's facilitation, Saudi Arabia and Iran issued a joint statement in Beijing announcing the restoration of diplomatic relations. In July 2024, 14 Palestinian factions signed the Beijing Declaration on Ending Division and Strengthening Palestinian National Unity. China has also held multiple trilateral foreign ministers' dialogues with Afghanistan and Pakistan, expressing clear support for Afghanistan's stability and reconstruction, as well as for stronger regional connectivity, while mediating and facilitating dialogue on conflicts between the two countries. As an important member of the SCO, China has consistently stood for international fairness and justice. It has upheld impartiality, promoted peace talks and dialogue, opposed bullying and coercion, and supported relevant countries in independently determining their own future and destiny.

In recent years, tensions in certain hotspot regions have continued to escalate, geopolitical rivalry has intensified, socioeconomic development imbalances have become more pronounced, and artificially created trade barriers and economic protectionism have grown increasingly severe. Unilateral sanctions have violated international law and harmed the interests of developing countries. The SCO has consistently upheld a position of fairness and justice. It has safeguarded the international system, with the United Nations at its core, and supported the multilateral trading system, centered on the World Trade Organization. The organization has consistently called for a new era: solidarity rather than division, cooperation rather than confrontation, and justice rather than hegemony. It has provided support to developing countries subjected to unjust

treatment and promoted the building of a more just and equitable global governance system.

After the United States and Israel launched military strikes against Iran on February 28, 2026, the SCO stated the situation in Iran, stressing that the use of force is unacceptable and that the only viable solution to the current conflict lies in resolving differences through dialogue and consultation based on international law, the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, mutual respect, and consideration for the legitimate interests of all parties. The statement also emphasized the need to ensure Iran's national sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity; supported all parties in exercising restraint and in immediately halting actions that could further escalate tensions; and expressed solidarity with and support for the Iranian government and people.

On September 1, 2025, President Xi pointed out in his speech at the "Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus" Meeting that "we should take SCO actions to uphold international fairness and justice. All member states should uphold the principle of fairness and justice, participate constructively in international and regional affairs, and safeguard the common interests of the Global South. We should continue to firmly oppose hegemonism and power politics, practice true multilateralism, and serve as a mainstay for promoting a multi-polar world and greater democracy in international relations."^①

Looking ahead, China will work together with other SCO member states to shoulder the responsibilities of the times, uphold fairness and justice, and promote the development of global governance in a more just, inclusive, and balanced direction. Together, the member states will build a common home featuring solidarity and mutual trust, peace and tranquility, prosperity and development, and good-neighborliness and friendship, and make new and greater contributions to building a community with a shared future for humanity.

1.5 Pursuing Pragmatism and Efficiency to Build Strong Institutional Support

As the saying goes, "Though the way may be near, without walking it cannot be reached; Though a task may be small, if not done, it will not be accomplished." Pragmatism and efficiency are intrinsic to the "Shanghai Spirit" and are also key to the SCO's enduring vitality and dynamism. In recent years, the SCO has continuously advanced internal reforms, built an efficient institutional framework, and translated the "Shanghai Spirit" from a shared concept into concrete, tangible practice.

1.5.1 Security mechanisms have become more institutionalized.

Security cooperation is the foundation upon which the SCO is built and also an important measure of its pragmatism and efficiency. During the Tianjin Summit, which

^① Xinhua News Agency, "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Speech at the 'Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus' Meeting" (September 1, 2025).

was witnessed by all member states, the SCO Comprehensive Center for Responding to Security Threats and Challenges, the Center for Combating Transnational Organized Crime, the Information Security Center, and the Anti-Drug Center were officially inaugurated. The establishment of these four centers marked a crucial step in the SCO's security cooperation, moving from a "coordination-based" approach toward institutionalized entities. With distinct focuses and coordinated efforts, the four centers together form the core support for the SCO's transformation from a passive response to proactive prevention and from single counterterrorism efforts to comprehensive security governance. They will provide solid institutional guarantees for safeguarding regional security and stability, fully demonstrating the practical logic of "pragmatism and efficiency."

1.5.2 Practical cooperation has become increasingly project-oriented.

The SCO's practical cooperation has always centered on delivering tangible results. Upholding its role as a "man of action," China has worked to translate intentions for cooperation into concrete projects and policy consensus into benefits for people's livelihoods. During its 2024 – 2025 rotating presidency, China emphasized practical implementation. A total of 313 items, including meetings, various activities, outcome documents, and cooperation initiatives, were listed among the achievements.^① First, "small and beautiful" livelihood projects have been implemented. From the China – SCO Cooperation Center for Metabolic Diseases' plan to train 2,000 prevention and control professionals for member states, to the China-Tajikistan digital healthcare platform benefiting residents in remote areas, and from assistance in building rural clinics to projects addressing difficulties in access to clean drinking water, these livelihood initiatives have been precisely aligned with the actual needs of local communities. Second, financial support has been increased. At the SCO Tianjin Summit, China announced that it would provide RMB 2 billion in grant assistance to member states in 2025 and extend an additional RMB 10 billion in loans over the next three years to member banks of the SCO Interbank Consortium. Third, cooperation in emerging fields has continued to expand. From the successful implementation of green projects such as the China-Kazakhstan Zhanatas Wind Farm to the signing of 12 cooperation projects at the 2025 SCO Digital Economy Forum, SCO cooperation has consistently kept pace with the times.

1.5.3 The institutional framework has become increasingly systematic.

Pragmatism and efficiency cannot be achieved without institutional support. In 2025, member states signed and issued the Tianjin Declaration of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO Member States. This programmatic document forged a

^① Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "List of Achievements of China's Work as Rotating Chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for 2024– 2025" (September 2, 2025).

broad consensus on safeguarding regional peace and deepening mutually beneficial cooperation. Member states also formally approved the SCO Development Strategy for the Next Decade (2026 – 2035), outlining a long-term development blueprint centered on the three pillars of security, economy, and people-to-people exchanges. In addition, 24 outcome documents covering counterterrorism cooperation, trade facilitation, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges were reviewed and adopted, establishing a comprehensive, well-coordinated institutional framework that provides clear rules and reliable frameworks for SCO cooperation.

1.5.4 The action-oriented approach has become increasingly distinct.

During its tenure as the rotating chair for 2024 – 2025, China explicitly put forward the slogan "Championing the Shanghai Spirit: SCO on the Move." This slogan not only summarized past achievements but also served as a call to action for future work. The SCO has consistently adhered to an action-oriented approach, striving to ensure that every decision is implemented effectively and avoiding the governance trap of "discussing without deciding and deciding without acting."

From the institutionalization of security mechanisms to the concretization of cooperation projects, and from the improvement of institutional frameworks to the enhancement of implementation effectiveness, the SCO has demonstrated through its pragmatic and efficient practices that a responsible and capable regional organization must possess not only visionary strategic planning but also the practical spirit to honor commitments through concrete action.

Chapter Two: Opportunities and Challenges Facing SCO Co- operation

"At present, changes of historical significance unseen in a century are unfolding across the world at a faster pace. The international landscape is undergoing rapid transformation. A new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is advancing swiftly. As human civilization moves forward in great strides, factors of insecurity, instability, and uncertainty are becoming increasingly prominent. To cope with these profound changes, the key is to have the wisdom to recognize them, the ability to respond to them, and the courage to embrace them. We need to bear in mind that we live in a community with a shared future and always uphold the Shanghai Spirit. We need to stay firmly committed to development paths suited to our respective national conditions and regional realities, and jointly build a more promising home for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, so that our peoples may enjoy peaceful, prosperous, and happy lives."

—Excerpt from President Xi's Speech at the "Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus" Astana Summit, July 4, 2024.

Against the backdrop of accelerating global change and profound transformations in the regional economic and social development landscape, the SCO is facing new and significant development opportunities. At the 2025 Tianjin Summit, member states approved the SCO Development Strategy for the Next Decade (2026 – 2035), which

identified priority tasks and major directions for deepening comprehensive cooperation and outlined clear plans across several key areas. The strategy is expected to mark an important milestone in the SCO's history, driving the organization into a new stage of high-quality development characterized by greater unity, stronger cooperation, increased vitality, and enhanced effectiveness. At the same time, the SCO's development and security continue to face multiple risks and challenges, as instability and uncertainty rise. Strengthening the organization's coordination and implementation capacity, and working jointly among member states to respond to risks and challenges, have become important issues confronting the SCO.

2.1 Strategic Guidance Has Strengthened the Foundation for Consultation and Joint Development

Guided by the "Shanghai Spirit," the SCO has grown into a "SCO family" encompassing more than 20 countries across Asia, Europe, and Africa. The SCO Development Strategy for the Next Decade (2026 – 2035) has set clear directions and mapped out a blueprint for cooperation over the coming decade. In key areas such as development strategies, infrastructure connectivity, green transformation, financial innovation, security guarantees, and people-to-people exchanges, the strategy will open new space for development, inject fresh momentum into cooperation, and create new opportunities for coordinated development among member states.

2.1.1 Greater emphasis has been placed on strategic coordination to forge new synergy for common development.

At present, profound changes unseen in a century are accelerating worldwide, while regional turbulence and conflicts are increasing. Through in-depth strategic communication and stronger coordination in international and regional affairs, SCO countries can work more effectively together to address risks and challenges and jointly promote development and prosperity. By continuing to improve the institutional design of the "SCO Partnership" framework and making better use of the "SCO+" model, the organization will open its doors wider to countries and international organizations that identify with the "Shanghai Spirit." On this basis, the SCO will strengthen dialogue and cooperation with multilateral mechanisms such as the United Nations, encourage all parties to practice true multilateralism, and continue to build up positive momentum for global governance. The 70 initiatives proposed at the Tianjin Summit across various areas of SCO cooperation are now being translated into detailed work plans and implementation pathways, with efforts focused on achieving concrete results.

2.1.2 Strengthening financial support will inject new momentum into cooperation and development.

The establishment of the SCO Development Bank, an important financial coopera-

tion initiative launched at the Tianjin Summit, will further address shortcomings in financial supply, provide a new platform for multilateral cooperation across Eurasia, and strongly promote infrastructure development as well as economic and social progress among member states, carrying both important strategic value and practical significance for the development of member states and the region as a whole. The Development Bank will provide stable, low-cost, long-term financial support for key areas such as transportation connectivity, energy and resource cooperation, digital economy innovation, and green and low-carbon development, thereby improving the quality and efficiency of the provision of regional public goods. Guided by the principle of joint leadership by member states, the bank will establish a fair, inclusive, and risk-controllable financing mechanism, enhance the institutionalization and predictability of economic cooperation within the SCO, and strengthen member states' voice and participation in such areas as fund allocation, project approval, and the formulation of governance rules. Related financial investment will promote industrial integration and coordination across the region, advance regional economic integration, strengthen regional value and supply chains, facilitate trade, and foster coordinated industrial development, thereby contributing to the formation of a closer regional economic community.

2.2 Turning Consensus into Action Has Expanded the Space for Economic and Trade Cooperation

In the Tianjin Declaration, multiple countries reaffirmed their support for China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). They acknowledged the efforts of all parties to advance Belt and Road cooperation and align the BRI with the development of the Eurasian Economic Union. As important participants in the construction of economic corridors such as the China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor, the New Eurasian Land Bridge, and the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, SCO member states stand to benefit greatly from strengthened infrastructure development, which will facilitate deeper regional economic and trade exchanges.

2.2.1 Accelerated infrastructure connectivity is reshaping the regional logistics landscape.

Infrastructure development directly drives regional investment, opens transportation and logistics corridors, and improves the efficiency of modern logistics, thereby laying a solid foundation for smoother regional economic and trade circulation. At the same time, the implementation of major connectivity projects, such as the construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway, is breaking down logistical barriers across the Eurasian continent and restructuring regional logistics networks, bringing member states the dual benefits of enhanced development positioning and expanded development opportunities.

As a landlocked country, Kyrgyzstan is gradually becoming an important hub con-

necting Asia and Europe, driven by regional economic integration within the SCO. Local development vitality continues to be unleashed; and commercial flows from neighboring countries continue to converge there, allowing the benefits of cooperation to reach local communities tangibly.

Since joining the SCO, Pakistan has significantly improved its infrastructure development and continued to benefit from enhanced connectivity. Following the completion and opening to traffic of the Sukkur – Multan section of the Peshawar-Karachi Motorway, local logistics efficiency has increased substantially, and transportation costs have been effectively reduced. The project has not only enabled more goods to enter the Pakistani market smoothly through the Port of Karachi, but also helped the country's agricultural products open up new export channels, promoting smooth two-way regional economic and trade flows.

2.2.2 Pragmatic efforts to advance green transformation are opening up new avenues for industrial cooperation.

The China-SCO Green Industry Cooperation Platform has become an important vehicle for the SCO countries to benefit from China's rapid green industrial development. The platform not only supports member states in promoting clean energy and resource recycling, enhancing climate resilience, and advancing ecological and environmental protection, but also provides new impetus to improve local livelihoods and enhance people's well-being.

2.2.3 The launch of six major action plans has empowered high-quality development across all sectors.

The Tianjin Summit issued five statements respectively on sustainable energy development, green industry, digital economy, artificial intelligence, and cooperation in scientific and technological innovation. Together with the Action Plan for High-Quality Economic and Trade Cooperation Between China and SCO Countries, these initiatives form six major action plans. Combining "new quality productive forces," trade and investment, and industrial chain cooperation, they provide important instruments for strengthening the SCO and empowering the development of member states.^①

2.2.4 Focusing on digital economy empowerment has strengthened the foundation for talent support.

SCO member states differ considerably in the level of digital infrastructure and industrial digitalization, making digital empowerment a necessary condition for upgrading industries toward higher-end and smarter development. With its comprehensive manufacturing system and extensive digital application scenarios, China has provided a broad space for regional cooperation in the digital economy. China has also continued

^① Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Wang Yi Introduces the Eight Major Outcomes of the SCO Tianjin Summit" (September 1, 2025).

to intensify its efforts in cultivating digital talent. As of August 2025, the China-SCO Big Data Cooperation Center has already provided training for more than 830 person-times. It is expected to exceed its phased target of training 1,000 person-times over three years.^① The achievement of this training goal will make an important contribution to consolidating the talent foundation for integrated development in the regional digital sector.

2.3 People-to-People Exchanges Have Created More Diverse Pathways for Mutual Understanding Among Peoples

The SCO attaches great importance to people-to-people exchanges and cultural cooperation. By leveraging education, nongovernmental exchanges, and tourism cooperation as key drivers, it has continuously deepened people-to-people interactions across various fields, thereby strengthening public support and the social foundation for the development of the "SCO family."

2.3.1 Strengthening cooperation in education and talent development will help cultivate highly qualified professionals.

Beginning in 2026, China will double the number of SCO special scholarship quotas and implement an innovative doctoral training program to jointly foster outstanding academic and research talent. From 2026 to 2030, China will also establish 10 Luban Workshops in SCO member states and provide 10,000 training opportunities in human resources development.^② These measures will help enhance young people's professional skills and deepen mutual trust among them.

2.3.2 Deepening diverse nongovernmental exchanges will promote mutual understanding and closer bonds among peoples.

In the future, the SCO will further leverage mechanisms such as the SCO Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission to build networks for friendly people-to-people exchanges, expand cooperation in areas such as local governance, media, think tanks, women, and youth, and strengthen the public support base for bilateral relations.

2.3.3 Advancing integrated cooperation between culture and tourism will expand opportunities for cross-sector collaboration.

SCO countries possess highly complementary tourism resources and markets. In re-

① Xinhua News Agency, "China—Shanghai Cooperation Organization Big Data Cooperation Center Has Trained More Than 830 Digital Technology Professionals" (August 28, 2025).

② Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "List of Achievements of China's Work as Rotating Chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization for 2024–2025" (September 2, 2025).

cent years, all parties have actively promoted tourism cooperation, with cultural and tourism exchanges becoming increasingly frequent and development momentum continuing to strengthen, placing cultural and tourism cooperation on a "fast track." The deepening of such cooperation has not only created new opportunities for countries to develop new tourism markets and products and to allocate tourism resources across borders. Still, it has also promoted deeper integration between the tourism industry and other competitive sectors, helping to build a normalized and attractive regional platform for tourism exchange and cooperation.

2.4 Growing Risks Reinforce the Consensus on Security

At present, conflicts and wars continue to erupt in multiple regions around the world. The Eurasian region, where SCO member states are located, is marked by a relatively high frequency and intensity of conflicts and continues to face multiple risks and challenges as instability and uncertainty increase.

2.4.1 Geopolitical and security challenges continue to intensify, while the risk of conflicts escalating out of control is rising.

Regional conflicts have caused heavy casualties and property losses, exacerbated regional tensions, and produced spillover effects that threaten the security of multiple countries and undermine regional stability, thereby disrupting the sustainable development of the regional economy, society, culture, and other sectors. These conflicts reflect the intensification of geopolitical competition and major-power rivalry in the region. Some Western countries have entered into sharp confrontation with Russia and Iran, affecting relations among SCO member states and partners, with some countries even facing pressure to take sides. Against this backdrop, external interference in regional affairs has increased. Certain Western countries have attempted to interfere in Central Asian affairs through such means as instigating "color revolutions," imposing economic sanctions, and seeking military presence, thereby threatening the sovereignty and independence of SCO countries.

The risks posed by the "three forces" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism continue to warrant a high degree of vigilance. In particular, terrorism and extremism have shown signs of resurgence in recent years, with such organizations as the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), al-Qaeda, and the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) remaining active in Central Asia and surrounding regions. Certain new methods and emerging characteristics associated with these groups deserve close attention, including the growing convergence of terrorism and narcotics trafficking, as well as the use of new technologies such as drones and artificial intelligence by transnational terrorists to carry out attacks.

2.4.2 Challenges related to economic transformation and sustainable development have become increasingly prominent, while regional economic integration faces considerable difficulties.

Some SCO countries possess relatively undiversified economic structures and remain heavily dependent on resource extraction and the export of primary commodities, lacking industrial diversification and high-value-added production capacity. As a result, they face profound challenges in economic transformation and encounter significant obstacles in achieving sustainable development. Owing to weak infrastructure and shortages of technology, capital, and skilled personnel, many countries face constraints in developing clean energy. At the same time, related industrial chains remain underdeveloped, and operational and maintenance capacities are insufficient.

Significant disparities exist among SCO countries in terms of economic and social development. The gap in per capita GDP among member states is considerable, and many countries face severe challenges related to poverty, employment, and food supply. The development of cross-border transportation and energy corridors has lagged behind demand, while some countries' corridor plans overlap with or even compete against one another. Differences in tariffs and customs clearance regulations, evident industrial homogeneity in certain supply chains, and difficulties such as insufficient funding and technological bottlenecks have all adversely affected efforts to promote regional connectivity and economic integration.

SCO countries also face mounting external economic pressures. Hegemonism and unilateralism practiced by certain Western countries, along with trade protectionism, technological barriers, and economic sanctions, have disrupted global supply chains and increased production and trade costs for SCO member states. Fluctuations in international energy and food prices have also affected the energy and food security of some countries. Meanwhile, frequent conflicts have seriously worsened the regional investment and trade environment, thereby slowing the economic development of the countries concerned.

2.4.3 Challenges related to organizational mechanisms and governance coexist, while risks in emerging fields should not be overlooked.

Through multiple rounds of expansion, the SCO has become the world's largest regional cooperation organization. However, significant differences among member states in terms of systems and cultures, as well as historical conflicts, geopolitical competition, and ethnic and religious divisions, pose challenges to the organization's cohesion. Certain external contradictions may be internalized as issues within the organization, while bilateral disputes may undermine multilateral cooperation and erode internal consensus within the SCO.

The ideological infiltration and information warfare conducted by external forces

warrant heightened vigilance. For many years, certain Western countries, under the banner of so-called "democracy, freedom, and human rights," have sought to influence public opinion in SCO countries through such means as infiltrating traditional media, controlling social media platforms, and manipulating nongovernmental organizations. Their real intention is to interfere in the internal affairs of SCO countries, sow discord and conflict among states, and undermine regional peace and stability. How to eliminate such interference, ensure the ideological security of regional countries, and safeguard the atmosphere of friendly cooperation among states has become a major issue jointly faced by the SCO member countries.

Although SCO countries generally attach great importance to the development of the digital economy and high technology, significant imbalances persist in their levels of digital economic development, and the quality of digital infrastructure varies considerably across countries. Differences in digital technology standards and regulations, along with the lack of unified planning and coordination on issues such as cross-border data flows, combating cybercrime, and preventing the misuse of artificial intelligence, have adversely affected the development of the digital economy across member states. In addition, climate change and ecological and environmental problems—including glacier melting, desertification, and disputes over water resources—pose increasingly evident threats to sustainable development in various countries and have also created additional challenges for relations among regional states and for governance coordination within the SCO.

Chapter Three:

Accelerating the Building of an SCO Community with a Shared Future

President Xi stressed that, facing the accelerating changes unseen in a century in the world, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization needs to play a leading role — to contribute SCO strength to safeguarding world peace and stability, to demonstrate SCO commitment to promoting global openness and cooperation, to set an SCO example in championing the common values of humanity, to take SCO actions to uphold international fairness and justice, and to become a pacesetter in implementing the GGI.

—Excerpt from the Xinhua News Agency report "Xi Jinping Chairs the 'Shanghai Cooperation Organization Plus' Meeting and Delivers an Important Speech," September 1, 2025.

The establishment of the SCO opened a new path for cooperation, enabling regional countries to jointly safeguard security, promote development, and share prosperity. Through 25 years of effort, the SCO has become an important constructive force for maintaining regional security, promoting common development, and upholding fairness and justice. Looking ahead, SCO countries should continue to guide themselves by the Global Security Initiative (GSI), practice a common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security concept, work together to address various risks and challenges, and build a regional security community with a shared stake in security. Guided by the Global Development Initiative (GDI), member states should deepen alignment of development strategies, expand practical exchanges and cooperation, and foster an inclusive, universally beneficial regional development community. Guided by the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI), they should strive to break down barriers and prejudices among civilizations, continuously enrich the forms and content of people-to-people exchanges, and build a regional cultural and people-to-people exchange community in which all di-

versified civilizations flourish together. Guided by the GGI, member states should firmly uphold true multilateralism, strive to become builders of a more just and equitable international order and exemplary practitioners of a new type of international relations, promote the development of a more just and equitable global governance system, and jointly advance toward a community with a shared future for humanity.

3.1 Shared Security: Building a Strong Safeguard

Security has always been an important area of SCO cooperation. At present, international turbulence is intensifying, geopolitical conflicts are escalating, multiple global hotspots are emerging simultaneously, and nontraditional security threats, such as ecological crises, are spreading transnationally. Under these new circumstances, the SCO will take the GSI as its guide, uphold the bottomline of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security, advance regional security governance, and strengthen the SCO security community built on a shared stake in security.

3.1.1 The SCO will promote the political settlement of regional contradictions and conflicts.

At present, hotspot issues continue to emerge across the Eurasian region, while the regional geopolitical situation is becoming increasingly complex. The SCO will respect the legitimate security concerns of all member states, continue to voice the "SCO position" on major security incidents in a timely manner, promote consensus among member states, prevent the spillover of conflicts, and provide "SCO solutions" to resolve international hotspot issues. The organization will also improve security cooperation mechanisms and methods, explore establishing a dispute settlement mechanism among member states, and take proactive steps to resolve contradictions, differences, and conflicts among member countries. In addition, the SCO will support the reconstruction and development of post-conflict countries and establish rapid and effective mechanisms for humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

3.1.2 The SCO will coordinate security efforts in both traditional and nontraditional fields.

It will continue to maintain a "zero tolerance" stance toward the "three forces" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism, attach great importance to the security threats posed to the region by the cross-border movement of international terrorism and extremism, strengthen financial regulation and joint law enforcement against emerging terrorist activities such as terrorist financing and cyberterrorism, and jointly carry out counterterrorism technology research, development, and training to build a comprehensive and multi-tiered framework for counterterrorism cooperation. The SCO will also strengthen communication and coordination, enhance intelligence sharing, support the full functioning of the Comprehensive Center for Responding to Security Threats and

Challenges, the Center for Combating Transnational Organized Crime, the Information Security Center, and the Anti-Drug Center, and deepen cooperation with regional security organizations such as ASEAN and the Collective Security Treaty Organization to build a broader security cooperation network. In addition, the SCO will continue to expand the scope of security cooperation by placing greater emphasis on cooperation in such nontraditional security fields as climate change, energy security, food security, cybersecurity, ecological security, digital security, and cultural security.

3.2 Equality and Mutual Benefit: Strengthening the Bonds of Shared Interests

Economic cooperation is an important foundation and major component of the SCO and is regarded as one of its "three pillars." At present, all SCO countries are at a crucial stage of development and revitalization, with economic development serving as a top national priority and with strong willingness among member states to strengthen cooperation. However, the weak recovery of the global economy, together with problems such as inflation and energy shortages, has become increasingly pronounced. Certain countries have pursued "decoupling and supply-chain disruption," as well as sanctions and containment measures, undermining the stability of economic development in member states and, in turn, constraining the pace of regional economic cooperation. Looking ahead, the SCO will continue to take the GDI as its guide, uphold a people-centered development philosophy, carry out more sustainable and livelihood-enhancing cooperation projects, build more platforms for developing new quality productive forces, and deepen cooperation in emerging fields such as green industry, digital economy, and scientific and technological innovation, thereby injecting sustained momentum into the high-quality development of SCO countries.

3.2.1 The SCO will accelerate the green transformation of regional economies.

It will accelerate the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Environmental Protection Cooperation Among SCO Member States, coordinate green development within the strategic framework of national development, establish comprehensive mechanisms for green cooperation and exchanges, and enhance public awareness and understanding of green development issues. The organization will consistently promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation in renewable energy within the SCO framework, revitalize the SCO Energy Club, expand the scale of new energy cooperation, and facilitate the exchange and application of green technologies. It will also strengthen cooperation in climate governance by establishing a regional climate monitoring network, building a climate information platform, and jointly studying measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation. In addition, the SCO will accelerate the development of a big data service platform for ecological and environmental

protection, promote the sharing and exchange of environmental information within the organization, enhance its capacity to respond to environmental and social challenges, and strengthen coordination among member states in addressing regional and global challenges.

3.2.2 The SCO will expand cooperation in the digital economy.

During the Tianjin Summit, the Council of Heads of State of the SCO Member States issued outcome documents, including the Statement on Strengthening the Development of the Digital Economy, which reaffirmed the member states' willingness to strengthen cooperation in this field.^① In the future, the SCO will continue to promote strategic alignment in digital economy development among member states, jointly build and share new digital infrastructure, and advance the implementation of major infrastructure projects, including cross-border optical cables, international data centers, and satellite internet systems. At the same time, it will also support "small yet smart" projects—including agricultural Internet of Things applications and inclusive financial services—that can directly benefit small and medium-sized enterprises and ordinary people, thereby continuously releasing the dividends of regional digital economy development. The SCO will further expand the scope of digital applications by vigorously developing cross-border e-commerce and deepening cooperation in fields such as the creative and gaming industries, animation production and distribution, and cross-border data flows. In addition, the organization will establish network-based digital cooperation platforms and build integrated information-sharing networks in customs, logistics, and finance across the region, accelerating the flow of advantageous resources and comprehensively enhancing the region's level of digitalization, intelligence, and connectivity.

3.2.3 The SCO will improve financial support mechanisms.

For a long time, insufficient funding has been a major obstacle to implementing large multilateral projects under the SCO framework, underscoring the need for a development and stability fund to deepen regional economic cooperation. The SCO will accelerate the establishment of regional financial cooperation mechanisms, promote the early launch and operation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Development Bank, and explore more diversified financing channels to support key projects, such as infrastructure construction and industrial development. The organization will also continue to expand the scale of local currency settlement and further institutionalize settlement procedures, thereby providing strong support for safeguarding the financial security of SCO countries and strengthening the region's institutional resilience against external financial risks.

^① Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Statement of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States on Strengthening the Development of the Digital Economy" (September 2, 2025).

3.2.4 The SCO should encourage subregional and small multi-lateral cooperation models.

The accelerated advancement of small multilateral cooperation frameworks such as China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan and China-Mongolia-Russia is injecting strong momentum into regional economic cooperation within the SCO. The organization can continue to improve multi-tiered cooperation mechanisms and involve additional partners in cooperative initiatives. It should also fully tap the development potential of local cooperation platforms in such fields as connectivity, agricultural science and technology, aerospace, and poverty alleviation, thereby creating new growth drivers for multilateral cooperation.

3.3 Fostering Mutual Understanding and Affinity: Building Bridges Between Peoples

SCO member states belong to different civilizations and possess different political and economic systems. Rather than hindering cooperation among member states, civilizational diversity has become an inexhaustible driving force for the SCO's continued development and progress. From now on, the SCO will continue to cherish and promote the diversity of regional cultures and civilizations, integrate its internal civilizational diversity with the GCI, and foster a harmonious environment of mutual learning among civilizations and closer bonds among peoples. In doing so, it will continue to write a splendid chapter of peaceful, amicable, and harmonious coexistence among countries with different historical and cultural traditions, social systems, and stages of development.

3.3.1 The SCO will build multidimensional and integrated platforms for cultural exchange.

It will actively implement agreements among SCO member states on cooperation in cultural heritage, strengthen collaboration in such areas as cultural heritage protection and preservation, as well as joint applications for World Heritage status, and make use of new media and new technologies to create interactive exhibitions and presentations of the cultural heritage of member states. The organization will continue to hold cultural brand events with SCO characteristics, including film, art, and cultural festivals, while making full use of platforms such as youth, women's, media, and people-to-people friendship forums. It will also give full play to the role of social organizations such as the SCO Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation Commission in building bridges of mutual understanding and affinity among peoples. In addition, the SCO will actively implement plans for the mutual translation of classical works among member states and promote the localized translation and broadcasting of films and television productions from member countries, thereby enhancing cultural identity and a sense of

belonging among their peoples.

3.3.2 The SCO will strengthen educational cooperation and talent cultivation.

It will explore establishing a digital education alliance to advance the digital transformation of education across the region and improve educational quality and efficiency. The organization will accelerate the development of SCO University and the China – SCO School of Economics and Trade, expand academic disciplines and professional programs, strengthen faculty development and the sharing of teaching resources, and enhance both the quality and internationalization of talent cultivation. In addition, the SCO will encourage universities in member states to conduct academic exchanges, student exchange programs, and joint scientific research projects to cultivate professionals with international perspectives and cross-cultural communication skills, thereby providing solid talent support for the SCO's development.

3.3.3 The SCO will fully tap and unleash the potential of tourism cooperation.

It will further explore the region's tourism and cultural resources, intensify the development of innovative tourism products, and create high-quality tourism routes with distinctive regional, ethnic, and local characteristics. The organization will formulate an SCO member states tourism roadmap, actively develop bilateral and multilateral tourism cooperation zones within the region—such as "cross-border tourism cooperation zones" and "border tourism demonstration zones"—and expand the influence of projects including the "SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital," the China-Russia-Mongolia "Tea Road" cross-border route, and the China-Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan "Chang'an – Tianshan Corridor" World Heritage tourism belt. It will also develop distinctive tourism products, such as cross-border railway tours and themed self-driving tour routes. At the same time, the SCO will simplify visa procedures, accelerate negotiations on tourism visa policies—especially group visas—and provide greater convenience for cross-border travel. The organization will also promote the development of transportation infrastructure, expand direct international flight routes between cities, improve service quality across sectors such as catering and hospitality, and facilitate cross-border payment systems.

3.4 Advancing Innovation: Consolidating the Institutional Foundation

The world today has entered a new period of turbulence and transformation, marked by frequent local conflicts and instability, the persistence of hegemonism and power politics, and disorder in global governance, all of which have further elevated the importance of regional organizations. Against this backdrop, the SCO is becoming a

key force in reshaping international norms and order. Going forward, the SCO will continue to take the GGI as its guide, uphold a vision of global governance based on extensive consultation, joint contribution, and shared benefits, practice true multilateralism, advocate the common values of humanity, and steadily advance toward comprehensive cooperation in governance across all sectors, thereby opening a new chapter in building an SCO community with a shared future.

3.4.1 The SCO will strengthen consensus—building and enhance collective identity.

The "Shanghai Spirit" represents the greatest common denominator for forging a development consensus among member states. The SCO will continue to cultivate a shared value system centered on the "Shanghai Spirit" and enhance the appeal of common value norms. Guided by head-of-state diplomacy, the organization will continue to consolidate political mutual trust, steadily strengthen institutional identity, and deepen mutual support among member states in strategic communication and top-level design. By bringing together more shared interests and reinforcing institutional identity, the SCO will strengthen the centripetal force of unity and cooperation and consolidate the political foundation for building an SCO community with a shared future.

3.4.2 The SCO will advance institutional reform and improve institutional safeguards.

Decision-making within the SCO follows the principle of consensus through consultation. However, differences among member states in levels of economic development, social systems, and cultural traditions have, to some extent, increased the difficulty of coordination. In the future, the SCO will continue to promote institutional reform and platform development, draw fully on the experience of other organizations in internal decision-making and consultation, optimize its institutional framework, strengthen overall coordination, and establish closer policy communication mechanisms and more efficient decision-making and implementation mechanisms. At the same time, the organization will continue to uphold the principle of consensus through consultation on major strategic issues involving the political and security interests of member states, as well as on questions concerning the SCO's development direction, while continuously enhancing its operational efficiency and governance capacity.

3.4.3 The SCO will practice multilateralism and advance greater democracy in international relations.

It will continue to firmly safeguard the international system with the United Nations at its core and the international order based on international law, while strengthening dialogue, cooperation, and coordination with the United Nations and its agencies to promote the implementation of the UN agenda and guide the international order toward a more just and equitable direction. The organization will also actively enhance co-

operation and coordination with regional organizations and governance frameworks such as the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, while promoting alignment between the BRI and major regional development initiatives such as the Greater Eurasian Partnership in order to build a broad, open, mutually beneficial, and equal Eurasian cooperation space. Against the backdrop of the SCO's orderly expansion, the organization will continue to advance the "SCO+" model, strengthen its capacity to respond to the risks of the times, attract deeper participation by more countries in cooperation across various fields, continuously consolidate the strength of the Global South, and promote reform of the global governance system.

Conclusion

Profound changes unseen in a century are accelerating worldwide, and humanity once again stands at a historical crossroads. It is vital to the world that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization stands on the right side of history, fairness, and justice.

At a time of global turbulence and transformation, the SCO bears a significant responsibility for safeguarding peace, stability, fairness, and justice. No matter how the international landscape may change, SCO countries have consistently upheld mutual respect and trust, treated one another as equals, emphasized strategic coordination, and continuously strengthened coordination and cooperation in international and regional affairs. United in purpose and standing together through difficulties, member states have worked collectively to address risks and challenges and to promote development and prosperity.

As global and regional problems continue to multiply and their impacts intensify, most of these issues still require solutions grounded in security and development, making the creation of a peaceful and stable regional environment indispensable. The SCO will continue to uphold openness and pragmatism, further improve the institutional design of the "SCO Partnership" framework, make full use of the "SCO+" model, and open its doors wider to countries and international organizations that identify with the "Shanghai Spirit." In doing so, the organization will steadily advance toward comprehensive governance cooperation across all sectors and continue to build positive momentum for global governance.

The SCO will also strengthen dialogue and cooperation with multilateral mechanisms such as the United Nations, jointly safeguard the outcomes of the victory in World War II, uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, oppose unilateral hegemony and protectionism, improve the global governance system, and defend international fairness and justice. Together with all parties, the organization will practice true multilateralism, play a greater role in advancing global governance, and work collectively toward building a community with a shared future for humanity.

Nothing, not even mountains and oceans, can separate people who stand at the forefront of the times and shoulder a common mission. Despite the turbulent international landscape, the SCO, as an important force in the development and reform of the global governance system, has both the conditions and the capacity to take the joint implementation of the GGI as an opportunity to demonstrate further its sense of responsibility and commitment in global affairs, accelerate the enhancement of its cohesion and international influence, and provide new public goods for the international community.

"The journey ahead may be long and arduous, but with sustained actions, we will eventually reach our destination and embrace a brighter future." SCO will surely press ahead steadfastly toward its established strategic goals and write a new chapter amid the sweeping tide of the times.