

December 24, 2015

At the invitation of the President of the Russian Federation H.E. Mr. Vladimir Putin, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi paid an official visit to the Russian Federation on 23-24 December 2015 for the bilateral Annual Summit. The two Leaders held extensive and substantive discussions to review progress in bilateral relations since the last Annual Summit and their meeting on the margins of the BRICS Summit in Ufa in July 2015. The interactions between the two Leaders were marked by deep warmth and mutual trust that characterize the special and privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India.

Reflecting their continued emphasis on further enhancing bilateral economic and commercial relations, President Putin and Prime Minister Modi jointly addressed CEOs of leading Russian and Indian companies. A number of important agreements in diverse fields of bilateral cooperation, including several commercial agreements between Russian and Indian companies, were signed during the visit. Prime Minister Modi also addressed a gathering of Friends of India including members of the Indian community in Russia.

The Leaders expressed satisfaction at continued bilateral exchanges including high-level visits, institutional exchanges and other contacts over the past year that had further strengthened the Russia-India strategic partnership. In particular, the participation of the President of India H.E. Mr. Pranab Mukherjee in the celebrations to mark the 70th Anniversary of Russia's Victory in the Great Patriotic War exemplified the mutual solidarity, empathy and goodwill between the two countries. A contingent of the Indian Armed Forces also attended the commemoration. The Leaders welcomed continued parliamentary exchanges, especially the visit of the Speaker of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Mr. Sergey Naryshkin to India in February 2015 for the Russia-India Inter-Parliamentary Commission.

The Leaders noted the intensive and effective dialogue between their Ministries, Security Councils and other specialized agencies and specifically mentioned visits to India by Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation Dmitry Rogozin (December 2015), Defense Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Shoigu (January 2015), Head of the Federal Customs Service Andrey Beliyaninov (April 2015), Interior Minister of the Russian Federation Vladimir Kolokoltsev (September 2015) as well as visits to Russia by National Security Adviser of the Republic of India Ajit Doval (May 2015), Minister for External Affairs of the Republic of India Sushma Swaraj for the Inter Governmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation (October 2015) and Defence Minister of the Republic of India Manohar Parrikar for the Inter Governmental Commission on Military and Technical Cooperation (November 2015). They also noted with satisfaction bilateral Ministerial discussions on the margins of major international events, including those between the Russian Minister of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov and Minister of State for Commerce and Industry of the Republic of India Nirmala Sitharaman on the margins of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum (June 2015), the Minister of the Russian Federation for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters Vladimir Puchkov and the Home Minister of the Republic of India Rajnath Singh on the margins of the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan (March 2015), Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation Alexander Kononov and Minister for Law and Justice of the Republic of India D.V.Sadananda Gowda on the sidelines of the Fifth Saint Petersburg International Legal Forum (May 2015), and Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation Alexander Novak and Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas of the Republic of India Dharmendra Pradhan on the sidelines of the Sixth OPEC International Seminar in Vienna (June 2015). They further noted with satisfaction the participation of Minister for Science and Technology of the Republic of India, Minister of State for Home Affairs of the Republic of India, Minister of State for Agriculture of the Republic of India and the Chairman of the Standing Committee on External Affairs of the Lok Sabha of the Republic of

India at various BRICS meetings organized by Russia as the Chair of BRICS to strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation in diverse fields.

Trade and Investment Cooperation

The Sides reconfirmed their commitment to realize the target set at the last Annual Summit, to increase annual bilateral trade and investment and emphasized the need for continued facilitation by both the governments based on regular consultations within the framework of institutional mechanisms as well as speedy implementation of decisions and liberalization of relevant rules and regulations. In this context, the Sides welcomed the agreement reached on liberalization of the travel regime for the businessmen of both States and called for its effective implementation. They also instructed relevant agencies to continue the process of modernization of their bilateral investment agreement.

The Sides welcomed the outcomes of the twenty first meeting of the Russian-Indian Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation held in Moscow on October 20, 2015, as well as the decisions of various working groups of the Commission, particularly on trade and economic cooperation, modernization and industrial cooperation. They noted that the joint working group on priority investment projects, which held its third meeting in Moscow in October 2015, had identified several projects and called for early finalization of relevant proposals. Both Sides reiterated their assessment that the "Make in India" initiative provides a new and durable framework for engagement by Russian corporate entities in the fast growing Indian economy as well as noted the efforts made by the Indian Government to improve ease of doing business. In this context the Sides also noted the efforts of the Russian Government in improving business climate in Russia. They welcomed the efforts by companies of both countries to cooperate in this framework in diverse sectors. In this context, the Sides emphasized the role of investment funds to facilitate high-technology investments in Russia and India.

The Sides welcomed recent announcement of several major bilateral investment proposals and called on companies in both countries to finalize new and ambitious investment proposals in promising sectors such as oil and gas, pharmaceuticals, chemical industry, mining, machine building, implementation of infrastructure projects, cooperation in railway sector, fertilizer production, automobiles and aircraft construction as well as collaborative ventures in modernizing each other's industrial facilities.

They welcomed enhanced interactions between representatives of the business community of Russia and India including the CEOs level interaction during the summit as well as during large trade and business events such as the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum and the Eastern Economic Forum. They called for continuation of such interactions and noted that India's participation as a partner country in the International Industrial Exhibition INNOPROM 2016 would emphasize the recognized authority of the event as one of the most representative among international events in the field of industry, scientific and technological innovations. Russia's participation as partner country in India Engineering Sourcing Show 2017 could impart added momentum to bilateral economic relations.

The Sides welcomed the successful launch of the Joint Study Group to consider the feasibility of a free trade agreement between the Republic of India and the Member States of the Eurasian Economic Union and the first meeting of the Study Group in Moscow on 31 July 2015. The Sides supported early finalization of a draft Joint Study Group report.

The Sides attach great importance to exploring new multi-modal connectivity between their economies to facilitate the movement of bulk goods and commodities as well as trade between the two countries. In this context, they welcomed increased emphasis on implementation of the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), and noted that several meetings including the Stakeholders Meeting, INSTC Council, Expert Level meetings and a meeting of customs agencies had been held over the past few months. They stressed that the INSTC can play a key role in promoting economic integration in the

region stretching from the Indian Ocean to the Baltic Sea by creating new centers of growth as well as joint industrial and infrastructure facilities.

The Sides noted that Customs authorities of the two countries had created legal mechanisms for implementing the Green Corridor arrangement and plan to soon launch it in a test mode.

The Sides welcomed initiatives to promote direct trade in diamonds between Russia and India, including the increased number of Indian resident companies signing long-term rough diamonds supply contracts with PJSC ALROSA from 9 in 2014 to 12 in 2015. Both Sides also welcomed the creation of a Special Notified Zone (SNZ) at the Bharat Diamond Bourse and the start of diamond viewing by ALROSA Group on its premises. They agreed to further promote the development of SNZ and its rough diamond auctions mechanism.

The Sides welcomed the positive outcome of engagements between the phytosanitary and veterinary authorities of both the countries to finalize mutual market access for agricultural and processed food products, including dairy products, which were a new and promising area for development and diversification of bilateral trade. They agreed to continue ongoing consultations between their regulatory authorities and introduce measures to widen the range of such products for bilateral trade.

The Sides noted developing cooperation between Russian and Indian commercial banks and an existing scope for its further expansion. Taking into account the important role of banks in settlement of bilateral trade and investment contracts, the Sides express hope for the enhancement by commercial banks of the two countries of their partnership, including establishment of correspondent relations and increasing lending limits. The Sides welcomed the ongoing work, coordinated by the two central banks to promote the use of national currencies in mutual trade and called for continued concerted engagement by relevant regulatory institutions and commercial entities to further facilitate and enhance such trade settlements.

Energy Cooperation

The Sides reaffirmed that their cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is a cornerstone of the Russia-India strategic partnership. They reiterated their commitment to bilateral agreements on developing cooperation in nuclear energy, including the Strategic Vision for Strengthening Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy between the Russian Federation and the Republic of India signed in New Delhi on December 11, 2014. They noted with satisfaction continued senior official level interactions between their atomic energy establishments, including under the framework of the three new Joint Working Groups on Nuclear Fuel, Science and Technology and Nuclear Power set up during the last Summit. They appreciated the progress made in the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project and agreed to expedite the implementation of ongoing and upcoming projects at Kudankulam. The Sides welcomed progress in identifying the second site in India for additional six nuclear reactor units to be set up in cooperation with Russia. They agreed to actively work towards localization of manufacturing in India under the aegis of Make in India and in tandem with the serial construction of nuclear power plants. In this context, they welcomed the finalization of Programme of Action for localization between RosAtom of Russia and the Department of Atomic Energy of India.

The Sides welcomed the first meeting of the Joint Study Group for studying the possibility of hydrocarbon pipeline system connecting Russia and India held in Moscow on November 6, 2015 as part of the Programme on Enhanced Cooperation in the Oil and Gas sphere signed in New Delhi in December 2014.

The Sides noted the interest of JSC Zarubezhneft in cooperating with Indian partners in upstream oil and gas projects in Russia, India and third countries, including implementation of enhanced and improved oil recovery technologies and provision of oil field services for onshore and offshore Indian oilfields. The Sides supported intensification of activity under the Memorandum of Understanding signed by JSC Zarubezhneft and Oil India Limited in December 2014, aiming at signing and joint realization of

particular contracts.

Both Sides acknowledge the significance of supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies from Russia to India. In this regard, the Sides expressed satisfaction at the development of cooperation between Gazprom Group and its Indian partners in LNG trade. The Russian Side welcomes the interest and involvement of Indian partners with regard to cooperation in joint projects stipulating the possibility of LNG supply to India from JSC NOVATEK project Arctic LNG on the resource base of the fields located on the Gydan Peninsula and partly in the Gulf of Ob.

The Sides welcomed the signing of Agreement between Rosneft and ONGC Videsh Limited for acquiring 15% stakes by OVL in Rosneft's Vankorneft Oil fields and discussions for further stakes in future. They noted the continued interest of Indian companies in investing in the hydrocarbon sector in Russia, in particular discussions between Rosneft and Oil India limited on promising investment projects, and called for early finalization of new investment proposals. The Sides welcomed the Key Terms of Oil and Oil Products Supplies signed by Rosneft and Essar group in December 2014 as well as the Contract for oil supplies for the Vadinar refinery (India), which also provides stakes for Rosneft in the refinery, concluded between these businesses on the margins of the BRICS Summit in Ufa on 8 July 2015. Both sides noted with appreciation the offer made by Rosneft of scholarships to Indian students interested in pursuing courses in the field of Oil and Petroleum in Russia.

The Sides noted mutual interest in developing cooperation in joint implementation of electric power projects, including hydro, thermal and solar power plants, as well as supply of Russia's electric power equipment to India. The Sides welcomed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Russian Energy Agency and the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) regarding the construction of solar power plants in the Republic of India.

Cooperation in Education and Science and Technology

The Sides noted positive developments in scientific and technological cooperation. They emphasized the importance of full implementation of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of India on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of 30 June 1994, and the Comprehensive long term programme of cooperation in science, technology and innovations between Russia and India until 2020.

Welcoming the outcomes of the 8th session of the bilateral Working Group on Science and Technology held on 3 September 2015 in Moscow, the Sides expressed confidence that they would facilitate further development of ties in the scientific and technological cooperation. The Sides welcomed the decision to establish a Russian-Indian council for organizations to finance cooperation in science, technology and innovation.

The Sides noted with satisfaction joint research under the programmes of Russian Ministry of Education and Science and the Indian Department of Science and Technology and the Indian Department of Biotechnology as well as the Russian Foundation for Basic Research and the Indian Department of Science and Technology. The Sides welcomed the launching of new calls for scientific research projects in 2016. They also noted the signing of an Agreement in May 2015 between the Russian Science Foundation and the Department of Science and Technology of the Republic of India and the decisions made in September 2015 to provide grants for fundamental and exploratory research in natural and technical sciences. The agreement being finalized between the Federal Association of Scientific Organizations and Department of the Science and Technology of the Republic of India for joint collaborations in international research teams, will impart a further fillip to S&T collaboration.

The Sides pointed out the necessity to further enhance cooperation under the auspices of Russian-Indian research centers and welcomed the Declaration on Association of Russian and Indian Universities signed in Moscow in May 2015, which would promote exchange of students and faculty, development of

curriculum, creation of joint laboratories, organization of scientific conferences and seminars as well as conducting of joint scientific research and collaboration in commercialization of technologies developed in research institutions. As an important measure to boost the effectiveness of cooperation among Russian-Indian research centers, the Sides called for the creation of an Russian-Indian data base of scientific and educational institutions and joint projects proposed by those institutions, as well as the development and maintenance of a catalogue of initiatives through which the Russian-Indian cooperation in science and technology is implemented. The Sides nominated Tomsk State University and the Indian Institute of Technology in Mumbai as coordinators of these initiatives as a "Russia-India Resource Centre".

The Sides welcomed the agreements between Moscow State University and Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore along with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, Pune to launch a Russia-Indian High Performance Computing Initiative, which would promote cooperation in Education Systems and Research Methodologies.

Considering Russia's status as a member of the Arctic Council (AC) and India's observer status at this organization since 2013, the Sides emphasized the importance of joint activities in the framework of the Arctic Council. They acknowledged the potential for the development of joint scientific research in the Arctic region, particularly the Russian Scientific Center on Spitsbergen (Svalbard) archipelago.

The Sides welcomed the decision to establish a joint working group on education and noted the immense potential for expanding student exchanges, cooperation in vocational training and training of engineers, teachers and other specialists. The Indian Side highlighted the programme of Global Initiative for Academics Network (GIAN) in this regard and encouraged faculty from various universities in Russia to avail of the opportunities available. Both sides welcomed progress towards the establishment of an Ayurveda Chair in the People Friendship University in Moscow. They further agreed to work towards early finalization of intergovernmental agreements on the recognition of educational and academic degrees.

The Sides welcomed the successful Round Table on Cooperation in development of e-Government Services and Information and Communication Technologies at the level of Deputy Minister/Secretary of relevant departments held in Moscow on 7 October 2015. Both sides discussed ways and mechanisms for strengthening cooperation in areas such as e-Governance, IT-ITeS trade promotion, joint development of software, High Performance Computing, Telecommunication and information security. The Sides will make efforts in order to reach a mutually acceptable settlement of the situation around the Russian-Indian joint venture Sistema Shyam TeleServices Ltd.

Culture, Tourism and People to People contacts

The Sides called for early conclusion of a Cultural Exchange Programme for the years 2016–2018 between the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of India and confirmed their interest in intensifying cultural cooperation, including between academic and research organizations of the two countries acting in the field of culture and arts. Noting the success of the Festival of Indian Culture in Russia in 2015, it was decided to have the Festival of Russian Culture in India in 2016.

The two Sides noted ongoing interactions between mass media organizations of the two countries and affirmed the need for enhancing cooperation in the information sphere. In this context, they welcomed the MoU between VGTRK and Prasar Bharti for exchange of news and current affairs as well as other content. The two Sides also endorsed the increased interaction between the media companies of the two countries within the multilateral formats under the SCO and BRICS auspices.

The Sides appreciated the agreement reached by the Joint Working Group on culture and tourism in Moscow (August 2015) on developing direct contacts between state institutions of the two countries in tourism promotion.

Reaffirming the enormous goodwill and strong ties between the people of Russia and India, the Sides welcomed the finalized agreement to issue six-month multiple entry tourist visas, based on reciprocity, which would further enhance tourism and people-to-people contacts. The Sides noted that the introduction of e-Tourist visas by the Indian Side had further simplified visa procedures for Russian nationals, which was reflected in the fact that nearly 20000 Russian tourists had already availed of this facility. Russia and India agreed to work towards further simplification and liberalization of visa arrangements, and consider measures such as group visa-free travel, to increase tourist flows between them.

The Sides welcomed the signing of the Protocol for amendment of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and Government of the Republic of India of 3 December 2004 on mutual travel regime for holders of diplomatic and official passports and the Protocol for amendment of the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of India of 21 December 2010 on simplification of requirements for mutual travels of certain categories of citizens of the two countries. The Sides will facilitate movement of crew of scheduled commercial airlines and charter flights of both Sides through appropriate use of General Declaration and issuance of long-term multiple entry gratis visas.

The Sides noted the importance of interaction on issues related to migration and agreed to work towards improving the legal framework of cooperation in the sphere of migration, work permits and temporary residency permit for Indian nationals working in Russia through continued dialogue on these issues. The Sides welcomed the coming into force of the bilateral Treaty on Transfer of Sentenced Persons in March 2015 and agreed to further facilitate mutual assistance in criminal matters. The Indian Side welcomed the proposed visits of an expert level delegation and the Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation to India next year at the invitation of his Indian counterpart on practical aspects of implementation of this Treaty as well as the Treaty on Mutual Assistance in civil and commercial matters signed in the year 2000.

The Sides expressed support for further intensifying cooperation between the states and union territories of the Republic of India and the regions of the Russian Federation in the field of economy and culture. They noted the importance of establishing close contacts between the business representatives at the regional level.

Space cooperation

The Sides expressed mutual commitment to the further development of cooperation in the field of outer space exploration for mutual benefit in such fields as rocket and engine engineering, as well as development of spacecraft, including microsatellites, Earth remote sensing and space meteorology, satellite navigation and related technologies and services, as well as space science. In this regard they commended the MOU between the Indian Space Research Organization and the Federal Space Agency on expanding cooperation in the field of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes signed in June 2015. The MOU was memorable also as it was timed to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the launch of the first Indian satellite using a Soviet carrier launch vehicle.

Both Sides welcomed the tripartite Memorandum of Understanding signed between OJSC "GLONASS", Glonass Union and the Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC) for cooperation in commercial applications through integration of Russian and Indian satellite navigation systems.

Defence and Military-Technical Cooperation

Both Sides reaffirmed that military-technical cooperation remains one of the key elements of the Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between the two countries. In this context, they commended the outcomes of the fourteenth and fifteenth meetings of the Russian-Indian Inter-Governmental Commission

on Military-Technical Cooperation held in New Delhi in January 2015 and in Moscow in November 2015 respectively.

The Sides expressed satisfaction at joint Russian-Indian naval exercises in December 2015 in the Bay of Bengal, as well as INDRA-2015 joint exercises involving ground forces conducted in Rajasthan (India) in November 2015. They welcomed the visit of the Chief of the Army Staff of India to Russia in September 2015 during which useful discussions were held to expand training, joint exercises and institutionalized interactions between the Armed Forces of both countries.

The Sides took note of achievements in the field of joint design, development and production of high-technology military equipment. Both sides reaffirmed their intention to expand the scope of such cooperation and to avail of the opportunities provided by the Make in India initiative in the defence sector and directed the concerned agencies to finalize such projects between relevant entities and enterprises of the two countries at the earliest.

Security and Disaster Management

The Sides emphasized the need for sustained and institutionalized interactions to foster greater security-related cooperation. They noted the successful visit of the Russian Interior Minister to India in September 2015, during which discussions on a new Agreement on Cooperation security matters were initiated. They called for early finalization of the Agreement which would provide an enabling framework to further develop ongoing interactions between their security establishments for exchange of best practices, training and expertise, especially in countering extremism and terrorism. In this context, the Sides welcomed recent intensification of operational level exchanges between the Federal Security Service of Russia and the National Security Guards of India.

The Sides agreed to strengthen linkages between their anti-narcotics agencies. They agreed to work towards early finalization of a Joint Action Plan between the Federal Service for Narcotics Control of Russia and Narcotics Control Bureau of India.

The two Sides reaffirmed their mutual support on disaster risk reduction, rescue and humanitarian relief, as reflected in their cooperation in evacuation of their citizens during the crisis in Yemen in April 2015. They agreed to finalize a Joint Action Plan between the Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters and the Ministry of Home Affairs of India to guide cooperation in this regard.

International and Regional Issues

Both Sides expressed concern at increasing instability and continuing conflict across the world, including in their shared neighbourhood. They underlined the need to work towards an equitable international order based on the principles of equality, mutual respect and non-interference in internal affairs of States.

On the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, the Sides highlighted the Organisation's key role in maintaining international peace and security, promoting sustainable economic and social development and protecting human rights. The Leaders of Russia and India emphasized the need to reform the UN Security Council and make it more representative of contemporary realities and to respond more effectively to emerging challenges and threats. Russia regards India as a deserving and strong candidate that can bring an independent and responsible approach within the UN Security Council and reaffirms its strong support to India's candidature for a permanent seat in a reformed UNSC.

The Sides call for creation of a common space for international economic cooperation, building on market mechanisms and jointly developed rules based on the WTO principles that imply freedom of trade, investment and open competition. Both Sides stressed the need to preserve the integrity and balance of the multilateral trading system, based on universally recognized WTO rules and norms.

The Sides expressed their commitment to the progressive development of cooperation within BRICS and

the strengthening of its global role. The Leaders commended the outcomes of the 7th BRICS summit in Ufa (July 8-9, 2015) and stressed the importance of the documents adopted: the Ufa Declaration, the Ufa Action Plan, and the Strategy for BRICS Economic Partnership. The Sides agreed to ensure, throughout the upcoming Indian presidency, continuity in the implementation of the agreements reached, further coordination of activities in the international arena, and to strengthen the strategic partnership between BRICS countries. The Sides emphasized their mutual commitment to expand intra BRICS cooperation in various fields including industry. In this context, they noted, inter alia, the successful meetings of BRICS Ministers of Industry (October 20, 2015) and Energy Ministers (November 19-20, 2015) in Moscow and welcomed the relevant memoranda of understanding adopted during these meetings. They noted the strong role played by Russia and India in the New Development Bank which will give a new impetus to the financing of major development projects.

The Sides emphasized the intention to deepen their interaction aimed at strengthening the role and authority of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). They agreed to work together to increase the effectiveness of joint efforts in the SCO framework to counter threats and challenges to security, including those emanating from the territory of Afghanistan, and to enhance economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation in the region. The Sides welcomed the decision to commence the procedure for India's membership of the SCO adopted at the Ufa meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO Member States on 10 July 2015. The Indian Side expressed its deep appreciation at the role played by Russia as Chair of the SCO in this regard. The Sides agreed to work together to finalize legal, financial and administrative aspects of India's accession to the Organization.

The Sides expressed satisfaction at the results of the Group of Twenty Summit held in Antalya on 15–16 November, 2015, and emphasized the importance of joint efforts aimed at increasing the role of the G-20 in stimulating global economic growth, ensuring the stability of international finance, improving global economic governance and accelerating structural reforms. The Sides called for measures to create of a more representative and legitimate international financial architecture.

The Sides agreed to work together to promote an open, inclusive and evolutionary regional architecture for security and stability in the Asia Pacific, emphasizing the peaceful settlement of disputes through dialogue, while respecting the diversity of political systems and development choices. They agreed to increase cooperation within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus and contribute to strengthening the leading mechanisms of practical interaction on identifying ways and means to maintain peace and stability in the Asia Pacific.

The Sides expressed satisfaction at the significant progress and achievements of the East Asia Summit (EAS) over the past ten years, and concurred that the EAS should continue to be a Leaders-led forum for dialogue on broad strategic, political and economic issues with the aim of promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity in East Asia. They noted that the inclusion of maritime cooperation as a priority area for cooperation in the EAS merits further consideration. They also agreed to continue joint efforts aimed at developing Nalanda University as an international center of excellence.

They took note of the progress made in the development of the Eurasian Economic Union and negotiations on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and expressed their willingness to work towards strengthening regional and global economic integration, further economic cooperation and equitable economic development in the region.

Russia and India expressed their willingness to closely interact in other multilateral formats, such as the Asia-Europe Meeting, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue. Russia reiterated its support for India's application to join APEC and committed to work closely with India on this issue.

The Sides reiterated the importance of interaction in the Russia-India-China (RIC) format, noting that this mechanism contributes to enhancing mutual trust and to extending coordination on international and

regional issues. The Sides also stressed the role of the RIC countries' high representatives in charge of security issues in developing common approaches to countering challenges and threats to regional stability.

Strongly condemning terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, the Sides noted that it is only possible to effectively fight this global menace through joint efforts of the entire world community without selectivity and double standards, in strict compliance with the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Russia and India are convinced that an important aspect of countering terrorism is its prevention, inter alia, through effective suppression of the spread of terrorist propaganda and extremist ideas. The Sides called for the elimination, once and for all, of all "safe havens" of terrorists. The Sides also called for the early completion of negotiations on the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Noting the growing challenges and threats in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the Sides emphasized the need to develop bilateral cooperation in the field of ICTs. Reaffirming the key role of the UN in addressing the issues related to the security in the use of ICTs, they also agreed to work together for developing universal rules of responsible behaviour of the States in the use of ICTs to address threats to international peace and security. The Sides are particularly concerned with the use of ICTs in violation of the UN Charter as well as for criminal and terrorist purposes, and agreed to cooperate in addressing these issues.

The Sides agreed to hold regular consultations at the level of experts to enable exchange of views on mutual basis on all aspects of security in the use of ICTs which includes practical cooperation between relevant agencies. In this regard, they agreed to work towards concluding a Russian-Indian intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the field of international information security.

The Sides highlighted the importance of respecting the universally recognized principles of international law in the use of ICTs, in particular, the UN Charter, the principle of political independence, territorial integrity and sovereign equality of States, non-interference in internal affairs of other States and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including right to privacy.

Stressing that the exploration and use of outer space should be for peaceful purposes, Russia and India reiterated that they were against the weaponization of outer space. In this connection they called for a speedy launch of negotiations to conclude a relevant legally binding international agreement at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Noting the urgency of preventing the arms race in outer space and ensuring the safety of space operations and long-term sustainability of outer space activities, the Sides affirmed the need to discuss and interact on practical measures conducive to this end in the First Committee, the UN Disarmament Commission, the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and at other relevant platforms.

Russia and India are united by common interests in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their delivery systems and its falling into the hands of terrorists, as well as in strengthening multilateral export control regimes. In this context, Russia welcomes India's early accession to the Missile Technology Control Regime that would increase the effectiveness of this mechanism. Stressing once again that India should fully participate in the development of the norms of international export control regulation, Russia expressed its readiness to support India's aspiration for full membership in the Nuclear Suppliers' Group. Russia also supported India's interest in full membership in the Wassenaar Arrangement.

The Sides emphasized that the approval of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear programme is an important milestone that strengthens international and regional security as well as restores normal economic and political interaction between Iran and the international community. Both Sides expressed serious concern at developments in Syria and Iraq where terrorist groups including Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the al Nusra Front and other similar groups are operating

causing violence. Both sides share the view that presence of terrorist groups in much of Iraq and Syria directly threatens regional and global security. Both sides expressed their support to global efforts to fight terrorism and to enhancing international efforts to counter activities of terrorist groups including "foreign terrorist fighters" pursuant to the relevant UNSC resolutions.

Russia and India voiced their strong support to sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Syria. Both sides expressed a common understanding that the internal armed conflict in Syria cannot be solved by the use of force, but rather through political and diplomatic means – through a substantive intra-Syrian dialogue without preconditions or external interference and based on the Geneva Communiqué of June 30, 2012, the Joint Statement on the outcome of the multilateral talks on Syria in Vienna of October 30, 2015 and the Statement of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG) of November 14, 2015.

Both sides expressed their strong support for the people and the Government of Iraq in their efforts to overcome the existing crisis and to uphold national sovereignty and territorial integrity. They emphasized the importance of national reconciliation and unity in Iraq by creation of an inclusive state system and strengthening of national democratic institutions through capacity building.

Russia and India welcome the progress achieved in the area of security, including the maintenance of the ceasefire regime in south-eastern Ukraine, as well as the signing of the agreement on the withdrawal of military equipment and artillery of the less than 100 millimeter calibre from the line of contact, which creates favourable conditions for moving forward the political settlement that has no alternative.

Reconciliation of the sides is only possible through a direct inclusive dialogue, for which it is necessary to fully comply with all the provisions of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements adopted on 12 February 2015 by the Contact Group on Ukraine with support of the Leaders of Russia, Germany, France and Ukraine, and approved by the UN Security Council resolution 2202.

The Sides expressed concern about the aggravation of the security situation in Afghanistan, including along its borders. The Sides recognized that terrorism and extremism pose the main threat to security and stability of Afghanistan, the region and beyond. In this regard, they emphasized the need for joint and concerted efforts and cooperation among countries in the region to address the challenge of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the dismantling of terrorist sanctuaries and safe havens and disrupting all financial and other support for terrorism.

The Sides supported further promotion of a national reconciliation process led and guided by the Afghans themselves in compliance with established international principles. Russia and India reaffirmed their willingness to continue to provide multi-vector assistance to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in the interest of maintaining stability and independence of Afghanistan, and assisting socio-economic development and connectivity of the country. The Sides agreed to continue their close consultation and cooperation on Afghanistan.

The continuing growth of drug production and drug smuggling from Afghanistan is of particular concern. In this context, the importance of cooperation within the frameworks of the SCO, BRICS and the Paris Pact Initiative to counter the spread of narcotic substances was emphasized. The Sides expressed mutual interest in coordinating Russian and Indian positions during the preparation for and the work of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem in 2016.

Looking Ahead

The Sides reaffirmed the unique character of Russia-India relations, based on time-tested and deep mutual trust and friendship between the two nations. They noted with satisfaction the continued support among the people of both countries to further strengthen and expand the bilateral relationship. They emphasized the remarkable convergence in their foreign policy priorities and underlined the significance of their special and privileged strategic partnership for their respective countries both bilaterally and in addressing regional and global issues in the days ahead.

Joint Statement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of India: Shared Trust, New Horizons (December 24, 2015)

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