

Statement by Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation at the 61st session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Mr. Oleg Syromolotov at the High-Level Side-Event “UN and SCO in the fight

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Dear Mr. Ahmad,
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Dear Mr. Fedotov,

For us, it is encouraging to see that contacts between the SCO and the UNODC are becoming consistent and systematic in character. This is also evidenced by the present meeting that highlights the importance of further developing mutually beneficial interaction. Since our previous talks in Vienna, the SCO has seen qualitative changes in its activities and structure. In particular, India and Pakistan have joined our ranks thus reinforcing the power, authority and capacity of our organization. By virtue of its geography, the SCO has a common border with Afghanistan which highlights the importance of the Organization's counter narcotics mechanism. Given the current alarming drug situation in Afghanistan and the increasing relationship between the revenues generated by drug trafficking in this country and the financing of terrorism, the ability of the SCO to effectively respond to these challenges is a key factor in ensuring peace and stability in Eurasia.

The SCO summit in Qingdao scheduled for June 9 and 10 is expected to adopt the counter-narcotic strategy which we see as a road map for combating heroin expansion from Afghanistan. The SCO-Afghanistan Working Group has resumed its activities. In the framework of this mechanism we try to find effective remedies to the ills that have afflicted Afghanistan. We also support the strengthening of the counter narcotics segment of the Organization, that, over time, could become a full-fledged organizational unit within the SCO Center for New Challenges and Threats.

The SCO is far from being an isolated structure, we seek to develop cooperation with all the mechanisms that defend peace and security. Collaboration is underway between the SCO and the Almaty-based Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for Combating Illicit Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Their Precursors (CARICC). Our agenda includes development and implementation of large-scale joint projects to counter drug trafficking. We hope that collective efforts will help us effectively block the heroin trafficking. Moreover, we expect that the SCO Member States will actively contribute to promoting the Paris Pact initiative, which represents a unique inter-state counter narcotics mechanism.

We stand ready to continue providing training at the Russian educational institutions to counter narcotics personnel of Afghanistan, which is the first line of defense against the heroin aggression. Of course, while preparing for the forthcoming 2019 comprehensive review of the implementation of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action, we intend to build on our experience and existing best practices. Our ultimate goal is to create a society free of drug abuse and we are ready to spare no effort to promptly make this a reality.