AHU Declaration of the "Model Shanghai Cooperation Organization" Heads of State Council

On June 7, 2023, the first "Model SCO" hosted by Anhui University was held in Hefei. The conference was jointly organized by the SCOLAR Network and Anhui University as a simulation session of the SCO Summit of the Council of Heads of States. The conference was attended by representatives of the Republic of India, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the People's Republic of China, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Indian side chaired the meeting. The topic was **"Youth empowerment for the future of science and innovations."**

The meeting was also attended by the Representatives of the Observer States, including the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Belarus, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Mongolia, as well as representatives assuming roles of the "Secretariat of the SCO" and the "Director of the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the SCO."

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a permanent intergovernmental international organization with eight member states, four observer states, and nine dialogue partners. The total area of the SCO member states covers more than 30 million square kilometers, accounting for about three-fifths of the Eurasian continent, with a population of more than three billion, equivalent to 44% of the world's population. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization follows the principles of the "Shanghai Spirit," characterized by *mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, consultation, respect for cultural diversity and pursuit of common development*, aimed at moving toward the establishment of a democratic, fair, and rational new international political and economic order.

Many SCO member states have realized that young people are the most valuable asset in a world of rapid technological shifts and have done much to harness their empowerment. As the chair of the SCO, the Government of India has been active in developing human capital, whether through the Start Up India initiative or the Skill India mission, which aims to enable youth power to realize its true potential. Some member states fully recognize the important role of educational exchanges in achieving mutual benefit in science and technology. Fourteen universities in Kazakhstan are part of the SCO University program. China strongly supports the establishment of mutually beneficial platforms, and Belarus is committed to promoting the cultivation of young scientific and technological talents by enhancing international exchanges in higher education. In recent years, policy support for youth entrepreneurship has been increasingly favored by member countries. In January 2018, the "Youth Empowerment Programme" was introduced by the Government of Pakistan. The Uzbek Government established the Youth Affairs Agency in 2020, which aims at creating conditions for the development of the intellectual potential of youth in different areas.

Although highly praised for these accomplishments, member states are concerned about the common issues confronting most SCO countries. Firstly, it must be acknowledged that the resource gap is still a barrier to cooperation among member states at different levels of economic development, including the gap in financial funds and the gap in the talent pool, which leads to the lack of research equipment, cooperation platforms, training systems, as well

as the acquisition of advanced technologies. Secondly, agriculture is an important economic base for many member states. How to empower agriculture with science and technology to realize its economic potential is a problem faced by many member states. Thirdly, significant gender disparity remains the status quo for careers in the STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering, and math. How to close the gender gap in key areas such as education and technology and truly unleash the power of young women is an issue that member states and countries around the world need to address. Furthermore, as an important driving force leading the new round of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation, AI not only brings convenience but also causes a series of cybersecurity risks. How to guide artificial intelligence to develop in a beneficial direction and help the construction of a digital society is an issue thrown to us by the times.

Based on the current situation of training and scientific and technological innovation in the SCO member states, delegations have proposed following initiatives:

1. **Establish financial support programs**

The program aims to call on the SCO member states to provide initial financing and development plans for the fund. Major funding will come from corporate sponsorship, social financing, and specific national government funding. The use of the fund will be divided into the following aspects.

a. For Talent Cultivation. In order to cultivate more young talents with scientific and technological innovation ability and international vision, the foundation should provide economic support for knowledge cultivation, skill training, and social practice platforms. The years of knowledge training start from children, focusing on cultivating qualified labor force and potential talents. Especially for some countries whose development is mainly based on agriculture, financial support can help them solve the problems of waste of human resources and insufficient talent reserve. But a quota system of allocations is encouraged and monitored by other member states. Consortium as it is a platform for joint financing of development projects by members and other participants of the SCO.

b. For Talent Introduction. The cross-border movement of human resources across the region needs the support of capital. Activities such as youth study abroad programs, academic exchange forums, and international science and technology competitions are equally distributed to everyone to guide the flow of human resources in the region. In particular, academic exchange can be more specific like a scholarship for agriculture students. According to the contribution capacity, each member or observer State may adjust the contribution ratio according to its own economic situation and needs.

c. For Infrastructure Construction. Considering that the development of member states is not in step with each other, the foundation will further provide financial support to countries in need of infrastructure construction, especially digital infrastructure. For areas where traditional infrastructure planning is difficult to reach, such as backward areas and mountainous areas, a special plan should be developed. Increasing access to digital resources and promoting online learning and convenience are also necessary. We all need to narrow the digital gap between countries and regions, strive to make online educational resources benefit more young people, and promote the sharing and integration of resources.

2. Establish educational programs

Changing skill requirements demand more targeted knowledge learning and skills training for young people, and member states should reach a consensus on educational programs.

a. The Establishment of Educational Platform. It is necessary to promote the building of platforms for youth learning, such as the "SCO Youth Science Tank" or the "education incubator", and effective instruction and guidance is provided by qualified and experienced teachers. These platforms can provide young people in different regions with access to the latest scientific and technological innovations, free online courses like cutting-edge STEM courses, targeted skills development guidance, and support them to participate in international exchange programs such as international conferences, summer camps, and other activities. In addition, the establishment of an association dedicated to raising funds for education, and the signing of cooperation agreements with companies that provide sources of funding for our foundation, they can provide us with some jobs suitable for outstanding young people. Finally, we are supposed to expand the website infrastructure for youth to exchange knowledge, providing job opportunities for outstanding young people and attracting them to stay in the SCO countries.

b. The Establishment of Mentorship Program. To ensure the availability of up-to-date and excellent educational resources, member states should reach a consensus on the establishment of a joint mentorship program. It is necessary to overcome the issue of educational differences in different countries, including language and cognition. To avoid a drain of human resources, the courses and training can be provided from the home countries of the experts. On the one hand, we suggest that member states with abundant talent reserves, such as China and Russia, may set up guidance institutions for countries in need to encourage the cross-border flow of human resources. On the other hand, the selected mentors need to attend regular training and accept the supervision of the relevant institutions.

c. Relevant Policy Support. Governments can provide talents with various conveniences and privileges, such as accommodation, transportation, and even settlement, through the "scholar visa" and "SCO Youth Innovation Card." Universities in the SCO region can provide scholarships and other financial support to young people from different countries.

3. Advance the digital transformation of agriculture

Agricultural development accounts for a large proportion of the economic base of our member states. We call on all member states to reach an agreement on promoting the deep integration of technology and agriculture. Meanwhile, pay attention to the sustainability of agricultural digital transformation, including sustainable management of the environment and resources, as well as climate change mitigation. On the one hand, in order to ensure the availability of digital tools in member states, member countries with strong infrastructure construction within the platform can make cross-border investments in digital infrastructure for countries in need, focusing on building digital facilities for industrial and agricultural information. On the other hand, talent exchange, knowledge sharing, and technical guidance in relevant fields are important links to the digital transformation of agriculture, which requires discussions and consensus among member states, like encouraging more young people to go to rural and

pastoral areas to provide scientific and technological training for farmers and herdsmen. Based on the fact that most countries are agricultural countries, it is feasible to provide agricultural scholarships to rural youth, build optimized greenhouses, drip irrigation systems, and upgrade food safety laboratories.

4. Advance the issue of gender equality

As the nature of work changes with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, dedicated policies and programs need to be implemented to reduce existing gender-based biases. Businesses and governments must lower entry barriers for young women through targeted support. Encouraging more regular science forums for women and establishing programme to enable women to gain practical industry skills will help more young women take an active part in scientific and technological innovation. Member states should also update their educational concepts to encourage more women to be aware of the possibilities of female careers in science and technology. Promote inclusive educational practices that encourage girls and young women to explore and excel in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields. Finally, member states propose a specific law or regulation concerned about the problem of gender inequality, later which could be apply to every SCO member states.

5. Promote the positive development of AI

In order to control the risks associated with AI development and promote the orderly progress of digital society, member states should strive to reach a consensus on the following aspects.

a. The Establishment of Data Sharing Framework. Robust digital infrastructure, including computing power, cloud computing, and Internet connectivity, necessitates mutual cooperation among member states. This entails promoting data sharing in the field of artificial intelligence. Considering that the development of AI technology is already mature, member states should enhance cooperation to establish and update regulations related to artificial intelligence, ensuring that they remain synchronized with technological advancements and societal needs to address the security, privacy, and ethical concerns arising from the applications of artificial intelligence. We should also account the risks of national security data breaches, the problem of Autonomous Artificial General Intelligence alignment, and the democratization of the benefits of LLM programs and other advanced AIs. Trust deficit, data privacy and security, the bias problem should be considered.

b. The Establishment of Third-Party Research Groups. Addressing the security, privacy, and ethical concerns raised by AI applications requires the intervention of effective regulatory mechanisms. AI technology itself is constantly evolving and changing, so studying AI is a challenge in itself. To achieve this, it is crucial to establish third-party research groups dedicated to regularly publishing AI safety reports. Additionally, member states need to regularly update AI regulations to keep pace with technological advancements and societal needs.

Representatives highly appreciated the chairmanship of the delegation from India and expressed their gratitude for the fruitful work of all participants in the discussion.

Hefei, China,

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