

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:675
ANSWERED ON:28.07.2010
SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION
Deora Shri Milind Murlu

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India is keen to become a full-fledged member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO);
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the importance of SCO and the role being played by SCO in Central Asia and Afghanistan; and
- (d) the names of the members of the SCO?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a) & (b) India has been an 'observer' at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) since 2005 and has been participating in its activities, within the framework of its Observer status. Hon'ble EAM represented India at the last Annual Summit of the SCO, held in Tashkent on June 10-11, 2010. In his address at the SCO summit, EAM expressed India's readiness to enhance its engagement with the SCO. However, a final view on the matter will be taken after SCO members reach clear internal decisions on the "rules and procedures" for expansion of this body.

(c) Founded formally in 2001, the SCO has grown rapidly in importance and is playing an important role in promoting stability, economic development and in combating terrorism in the Central Asian region as well as Afghanistan. Cooperation among SCO member states is growing on security and military issues as well as on matters of economic development and cultural integration. SCO members generally see stability in Afghanistan as vital for the whole Central Asian region. Afghanistan is also seen as a bridge between Central Asia and South Asia.

(d) The current members of the SCO are China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.