

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3853
ANSWERED ON:06.08.2014
SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION
Kothapalli Smt. Geetha

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the current status of India in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) along with the objectives and functions laid down by SCO;
- (b) the details of member countries along with the support extended for granting permanent membership to India in SCO; and
- (c) the details of benefits likely to accrue to India as a result thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) India has an `observer status in the SCO since 2005.

Article 1 of the 2002 Charter of the SCO has listed the following `Goals and Tasks` for the organisation:

To strengthen mutual trust, friendship and good neighborliness between the member States;

To consolidate multidisciplinary cooperation in the maintenance and strengthening of peace, security and stability in the region and promotion of a new democratic, fair and rational political and economic international order;

To jointly counteract terrorism, separatism and extremism in all their manifestations, to fight against illicit narcotics and arms trafficking and other types of criminal activity of a transnational character, and also illegal migration;

To encourage the efficient regional cooperation in such spheres as politics, trade and economy, defence, law enforcement, environment protection, culture, science and technology, education, energy, transport, credit and finance, and also other spheres of common interest;

3 To facilitate comprehensive and balanced economic growth, social and cultural development in the region through joint action on the basis of equal improvement of living conditions of the peoples of the member States;

To coordinate approaches to integration into the global economy;

To promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with the international obligations of the member States and their national legislation;

To maintain and develop relations with other States and international organisations;

To cooperate in the prevention of international conflicts and in their peaceful settlement;

To jointly search for solutions to the problems that would arise in the 21st Century.

(b) The current members of the SCO are China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The SCO Summit at Astana in 2011 formally opened its doors to new members. India has since been discussing with all the members of the SCO, as also the SCO Secretariat, the modalities of new membership application. India has received positive responses from all members. The SCO members, on various occasions, have appreciated India`s constructive participation- in various activities under the SCO forum and acknowledged India`s readiness to enhance its contribution to the organisation.

(c) The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is an important regional forum focused on promoting multidisciplinary cooperation on security and economic development related issue in the Eurasian region. Full membership of the SCO would provide India an additional multilateral forum to discuss regional economic as well as security matters, particularly related to counter-terrorism and the Afghanistan issue. The forum would also give our leadership an additional platform to interact bilaterally with Central Asian leaders.