

**Video Message by SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming  
for the 80th Session of the UN Economic and Social  
Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

**Theme: “Leveraging Digital Innovation for Sustainable  
Development in Asia and the Pacific”**

**(April 23, 2024)**

**Your Excellency Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana,  
Distinguished Heads of Delegations and Participants,**

**At the outset, I would like to express my  
gratitude to Ms. Armida Alisjahbana for inviting the  
Shanghai Cooperation Organization to the activities  
of the 80th session of the Commission. I sincerely  
congratulate all participants of this anniversary event.**

**We avail this opportunity to thank ESCAP for  
its effective work in strengthening and deepening  
cooperation among the countries and multilateral  
organizations of the Asia-Pacific region in various  
important areas of economic and social interaction.**

**Colleagues,**

**Today, the world has entered an era of rapid  
technological development. Digital technologies and  
innovations give a powerful impetus to global  
development and play a significant role in improving  
the people’s quality of life. In this context, it is**

**important to note that COVID-19 has significantly accelerated the development and transformation of digital ecosystems in almost all socio-economic sectors. This highlights the importance of developing, improving and ensuring the safety and reliability of digital infrastructure and services.**

**Likewise, digital transformation may help achieve the goals in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Digital technologies define new ways of working and thinking, which open up fresh opportunities and drivers of growth. Their effective and secure usage can be a multiplier force in the decades-long global struggle against persistent challenges to the international community.**

**Mutually beneficial cooperation on innovation, digital economy and the application of information and communication technologies also provide an important platform for international cooperation among the SCO Member States.**

**The SCO has adopted and implemented a package of treaties and program documents in these areas. Relevant mechanisms of interaction are functioning effectively. Various thematic events are held, such as the regular Startup Forum and Innovation Competition. These efforts have helped Member States to overcome the socio-economic impact of the digital divide, to create conditions for a favorable business and investment climate, and to implement projects in priority areas of cooperation. They are aimed at ensuring sustainable development**

**of the region and improving the well-being of the peoples of Member States.**

**Colleagues,**

**The Shanghai Cooperation Organization has been promoting its cooperative activities in the Asia-Pacific and beyond, forming an important bridge for global trade and transcontinental connectivity in the Eurasian region and the entire world.**

**Both the SCO and ESCAP were established in the city of Shanghai. The two organizations enjoy 16 years of fruitful cooperation, for which we express our sincere gratitude to the team of the Commission's Secretariat. In the spirit of openness, the SCO stands ready to further cement and expand our cooperation with ESCAP, and to collaborate in a range of sectors with more regional and international organizations. We look forward to even greater achievements in this regard.**

**In closing, I wish the 80th session of ESCAP a full success and all participants good results in your work.**

**Thank you.**