

**Sixth International Day of Yoga – Message of greetings from the
Secretary General of SCO H.E. Mr. Vladimir Norov
21 June 2020**

The SCO countries are very closely connected with each other by the strings of historical cultural and civilizational connection. There is a constant and regular exchange of ideas and cultural influences, which constitute a very important basis of our relations. Various types of tangible and intangible heritage exist in the SCO region. SCO cherishes its rich, diverse and proud cultural heritage, which has no analogues in the world. This includes Yoga as well.

We know that International Day of Yoga is celebrated on 21 June every year since the 69th UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in 2014 (11 December 2014) and the 1st International Day of Yoga was held in 2015. This year in 2020 we are celebrating the 6th International Day of Yoga.

Last year a very successful Yoga event was organized in Xian city with the support of the SCO Secretariat. In his speech the Secretary-General noted that practices such as Yoga, which appeared in the distant past in India, have for thousands of years improved human nature, giving it stability, balance and a charge of optimism.

One of the priority areas of SCO activities in the humanitarian sphere today is working with young people and development of sport on the basis of adopted documents within the SCO. In particular, in the Qingdao Declaration, the Heads of State stressed the importance of sport as an effective factor in promoting dialogue between peoples. They also noted that the annual International Day of Yoga will contribute to further strengthening of friendship, peace, understanding and harmony.

Yoga is an ancient Indian practice that is more than just physical exercise; it also has meditative and spiritual aspects. It is a way to learn a sense of unity with oneself, with the world and nature, and to be in peace and harmony with nature and with oneself with calm mind. India is home to the great heritage of Yoga and has preserved the heritage of this great tradition. Yoga is beautiful because it is ancient but modern, it is constantly evolving, its practice is flexible and not rigid.

It is said that Yoga is about discipline, dedication and can be followed throughout life regardless of age, color, caste, creed, religion, wealth, province or border. Yoga belongs to all and everyone.

Improvements in physical health and many other benefits of Yoga are appreciated everywhere, but the greatest gifts of Yoga are wisdom and spiritual

love is even more important. According to Yoga, perfect wisdom and spiritual love exist in all of us, but this wisdom and love is covered and hibernated. Yoga helps to unlock and realize this potential.

This day has taken on great importance as an important day when people learn about the amazing and natural benefits of Yoga, connect people with nature, Yoga practitioners, draw people's attention to the holistic benefits of Yoga around the world, reduce the rate of diseases around the world. Celebrating this International Day of Yoga brings communities together to spend a day in health from their busy schedules. It also contributes to the growth, development and spread of world peace and helps people in difficult situations to cope with stress themselves through Yoga.

Celebrating International Day of Yoga will also strengthen global coordination, solidarity among people.

Celebrating such a day with enthusiasm will also help to raise awareness of physical and mental problems, their regulation and management through Yoga practices that will protect us from unhealthy practices, and promote and respect healthy practices to make life better.

Yoga is becoming a widespread practice in most SCO member states, which accept it with their variations and styles. It is especially popular among young people. People want to lead healthy, stress-free, disciplined lives that help them on their way to self-realization.

So on the occasion of the 6th International Day of Yoga, I would like to extend my warm greetings to all Yoga practitioners and Yoga followers around the world.
