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Mikhail Kamynin, the Spokesman of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Answers Media Questions Regarding the CIS Council of Foreign Ministers' Session in Moscow

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Question: A regular session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the Commonwealth of Independent States will take place in Moscow on April 21. What does Moscow expect from this event? What questions are expected to be given special attention to within its framework?

Answer: We regard the upcoming session of the CIS CFM as another important step along the road to enhancing the effectiveness of the Commonwealth. We expect that the decisions it adopts will contribute to deepening multilateral cooperation among the CIS nations in various fields on the basis of the principles of good-neighborliness and mutual benefit.

Most important on the agenda of the CFM session will be the set of questions concerning further improvements in the work of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In particular, a discussion is contemplated of the information prepared by the CIS Executive Committee on the course of the implementation of the Decision of the CIS Council of Heads of State (CHS) on Perfecting and Reforming the Bodies of the Commonwealth of Independent States, of August 26, 2006, and of the draft being submitted by the Russian side of a Decision on the Establishment of a High-Level Group on the Issues of Raising the Effectiveness of the Commonwealth of Independent States. This initiative comes in development of the proposal voiced by Chairman of the CIS Council of Heads of State Vladimir Putin at the CHS session in Kazan on August 26, 2005, to create a Panel of Eminent Persons in the context of the tasks of further improving mutually advantageous cooperation within the CIS.

Also suggested for discussion is written information on progress in considering Ukraine's proposals in execution of the CHS Protocol Decision of August 26, 2006 (???) (on

intensifying the cooperation of the CIS member states in the area of readmission; on the juridical formalization of the borders between the CIS member states; on guarantees for the rights of citizens of the CIS member states in the field of pensions; on the creation of transport corridors for the transportation of energy carriers to the states of Central, Southern and Western Europe with a unified tariff policy; and on a free trade zone mechanism within the CIS).

Question: Is the theme of inter-MFA consultations within the Commonwealth expected to be touched on?

Answer: Yes, the meeting participants will consider information on the implementation of the 2005 Plan of Multilevel Inter-MFA Consultations within the CIS and also approve an appropriate Plan for 2006. The consultations held in 2005 concerned a broad spectrum of pressing international issues and various aspects of interaction among the CIS member states.

Question: What is the agenda of the upcoming CFM session?

Answer: Special attention in the agenda will be devoted to humanitarian cooperation themes. In this connection there will be presented for approval by the CFM (with subsequent submission for consideration by the Heads of Government) drafts of an Agreement on the Council for Humanitarian Cooperation among the Member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States and of a Program of Principal Measures of Cooperation Among the CIS Member States in the Field of Culture Till 2010.

Traditionally the agenda of the session includes questions of the strengthening of security and law and order in the Commonwealth area. The ministers will consider a draft of a Concept of Forming National Data Bases and Organizing an Interstate Exchange of Information on the Prevention and Suppression of Intellectual Property Abuses. There is also to be approved the draft to be submitted to the Council of Heads of Government, of a Decision on Making Changes to the Register of Units Assigned by the CIS Member States to the Corps of Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States for Eliminating the Consequences of Emergency Situations of a Natural or Technogenic Character.

Question: What questions are expected to be considered within the framework of the next

Answer: The draft agenda of the next session of the Council of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth of Independent States is being submitted as a separate item of the program of the current session of the CFM. The major part of the questions included in it is directed at developing the CIS member states' interaction in the economic and financial fields and in the areas of humanitarian and military cooperation, physical culture and sport and the fight against crime as well as at perfecting the structure of the CIS bodies.

April 20, 2006