

Excellencies and Eminences,

With special appreciation and respect, my sincere greetings and thanks for your attention that you showed by attending the opening of Development Center of Russian Geographical Society in Serbia. Today's ceremony is a result of our joint long-term thinking and commitment, and certainly of your generous support. Thank you for that.

Long ago we recognized the fact that the intensification of else long and productive cooperation between geographers and geographical societies of Serbia and the Russian Federation would be mutually beneficial for our two countries, science and culture in general. This cooperation represents only a small segment of multi-centurial connections and joint efforts of the two countries and their peoples to preserve and improve their mutual relations and make the world a better place to live for all of us.

During 2014 was signed a framework agreement about business and technical cooperation between our two societies. The agreement on behalf of RGS was signed by the president Sergey Kuzhugetovich Shoygu and on behalf of SGS by executive board member Miroљjub Milinčić who was authorized by Professor Emeritus PhD Stevan Stanković. In the following year, in 2015, SGS launched and justified the initiative for the opening of Development Center of Russian Geographical Society in Serbia.

To our great satisfaction, we received a positive answer and agreement from RGS signed by the Society's President Sergey Shoygu. During the same year, we agreed on a model for future cooperation - through the establishment of Development Center of Russian Geographical Society in Serbia. Development Center in this short period of time, thanks to you as well, showed the readiness to be active and the ability to realize many projects. As a particularly valuable should be noted the organization of participation of students from Serbia in field camps throughout the Russian Federation (Gogland Island in the Gulf of Finland, Ermak and Kyzyl-Kuragino in southern Siberia), as well as the visit of students from the Russian Federation to Serbia in 2016. This marked the beginning of our joint efforts and long-term cooperation, which will further bring together students, professors, businessmen and other people of friendly countries, the Republic of Serbia and the Russian Federation.

We are honored and pleased that we have become a respected part of the family and the history of the glorious Russian Geographical Society, the society with the power of the argument: a tradition of 170 years long, 20,000 members organized in 85 regional departments, the results and the reputation in the Russian Federation and worldwide.

With today's opening ceremony and signing of the agreement between Russian Geographical Society and Development Center of Russian Geographical Society in Serbia, we commit to working harder and more efficiently in a period ahead of us, with the moral obligation to serve the interests of our societies and countries.

Particular attention will be paid to:

- The encouragement of scientific and technical cooperation between the Republic of Serbia and the Russian Federation, through the exchange of students, university teachers and through joint projects;
- The improvement of mutual relations in the interest of both Russian and Serbian Geographical Society;
- The popularization of activities, designations and works of Russian Geographical Society in Serbia and in the surrounding; and
- The cooperation with cultural, economic and other institutions of the Russian Federation in Serbia and of Serbian in the Russian Federation.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am honored to thank the President of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Tomislav Nikolić, Vice President of RGS and President of the International Geographical Union (2012-2016) Mr. Vladimir Kolosov, executive director of RGS Artem Manukyan and Ambassador of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Serbia, H.E. Aleksandr Chepurin for being with us today.

I welcome Rector of the University of Belgrade Professor Vladimir Bumbaširević, Dean of the Faculty of Geography Professor Dejan Filipović, Clergy of Serbian Orthodox Church, distinguished friends of Development Center, colleagues, businessmen, students, and participants of the artistic program.

Thank you to all of you. Your presence in such large number for us is another sign that we are on the right track. Therefore, we believe in our friendship. Cheers.