Statement by Mr. Farid Damirli, Deputy Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)

2026 SPECA Economic Forum
Session I: High-Level Policy Dialogue: Building a Connected SPECA Region

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Mr. Sharp
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor to address the 2026 SPECA Economic Forum. I sincerely thank the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, ESCAP and UNECE for organizing this important gathering and for the opportunity to contribute to today's policy dialogue.

We meet following the Seventh CICA Summit, convened in Baku on 15 October under the Chairmanship of His Excellency President Ilham Aliyev. The Summit adopted the Baku Declaration and the Statement on Cooperation in the Field of Occupational Safety and Health, welcomed the Lao People's Democratic Republic as CICA's twenty-ninth Member State, extended Azerbaijan's Chairmanship for 2026–2028 and appointed Azerbaijani national Ambassador Sultan Hajiyev as Secretary General for 2026–2030.

These outcomes open a new period for CICA and its practical cooperation with partners.

Excellencies,

The Azerbaijani Chairmanship's theme, "Stronger CICA: Connectivity, Digitalization, and Sustainable Growth in Asia," closely aligns with SPECA's priorities.

For landlocked economies, reliable transport corridors and efficient logistics are essential to accessing international markets. Infrastructure investments must be supported by effective border procedures, digital solutions and cooperation among relevant authorities.

The first-ever Conference of Heads of Ports of CICA Member States, convened in Baku on 9–10 September 2026, advanced exchanges on port operations, digitalization, multimodal connectivity and green logistics. It culminated with

Recommendations of the Conference, providing a basis for further cooperation between ports and inland transport networks.

The CICA Conference on Digitalization of Transport Corridors also promoted exchanges on digital solutions for more efficient regional transport.

The inaugural meeting of the CICA Finance Summit in September 2026 opened opportunities for dialogue on investment, development financing and financial technologies relevant to sustainable connectivity.

The CICA Business Council and Business Forum in Baku also promoted SME competitiveness, women's entrepreneurship, digitalization and the green transition.

Excellencies,

The Azerbaijani Chairmanship has prioritized strengthening CICA's cooperation with the United Nations and other international and regional platforms. Closer interaction with SPECA, ESCAP and UNECE through dialogue, exchange of best practices and coordination can strengthen the effectiveness of our efforts and advance shared priorities in connectivity and sustainable development.

I wish the Forum productive deliberations and every success.

Thank you.