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The Eighth Plenary Session of CICA Business Council and the Tenth Business Forum



Kazakhstan grants international civil servant status to CICA personnel and contributes to its budget

Pakistan deposits ratification instrument, marking a milestone in strengthening CICA's legal framework

Bridging cultures, building trust: CICA promotes regional cooperation at Antalya Diplomacy Forum



CICA underscores opportunities for synergy with TURKPA in youth and women empowerment

CICA - SCO Deputy Secretaries General consultations held at SCO headquarters

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Foreword



Dear readers,

With a deep sense of responsibility and privilege, I share this message as the Chairman of the CICA Business Council for the 2024–2026 term, a role that the Republic of Azerbaijan has officially assumed within the broader framework of its Chairmanship of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

Within the chairmanship of Azerbaijan at CICA, the Small and Medium Business Development Agency of Azerbaijan (KOBİA), as Chair of the CICA Business Council, is focused on strengthening economic cooperation among Member States, enhancing regional business communities' connectivity and promoting sustainable growth across the Asian continent.

Together with the CICA Secretariat, we successfully hosted the Eighth Plenary Session of the CICA Business Council and the Tenth CICA Business Forum in Baku this year. These milestone events brought together over 250 distinguished participants – including government representatives, private sector leaders and economic experts – who engaged in constructive dialogue across priority areas such as trade, innovation, digitalization and green growth.

The Forum's panel discussions on "Strengthening SME Competitiveness in the CICA Region" and "Sustainability and Women's Role in SMEs" highlighted the pivotal role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in shaping regional resilience. Speakers from CICA Member States exchanged valuable insights on how to empower SMEs through targeted policy support, cross-border cooperation and inclusive economic strategies – especially those that uplift women entrepreneurs and foster health-sector collaboration.

A significant milestone was the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Azerbaijan Women's Entrepreneurship Development Association and the Kazakhstan Association for Business, Society and Government Relations. This agreement reflects our commitment to strengthening regional linkages between women-led enterprises and advancing inclusive economic integration across the CICA space. Moreover, such actions emphasize the role of the Business Council as a favourable platform for bringing ideas to practical results.

Under KOBİA's efforts, the Business Council has outlined a forward-looking agenda to ensure that SMEs have greater access to markets, innovation ecosystems and sustainable development tools. Our priorities include:

- Launching regional SME support programs tailored to CICA member states;
- Promoting technology exchange and innovation through business incubators;
- Facilitating joint ventures and investment forums;
- Conducting webinars on the green transformation of SMEs;
- Hosting targeted business missions and B2B platforms;
- Advancing e-commerce and digital trade integration across borders.

It is worth to mention that within COP29, KOBİA announced a global initiative – the "Baku Climate Coalition for SMEs Green Transition" – manifested in the form of a joint declaration. This Declaration emphasizes the indispensable role of SMEs in building green economies and developing innovative climate solutions, as well as their potential to lead in green entrepreneurship when properly supported. The Declaration calls on all institutional actors and individuals to join forces in helping SMEs both to cope with the challenges brought by the climate change and their green transformation. Furthermore, it also proposes the establishment of Green SME Resource Centers – institutional platforms that would serve as national focal points in each country to raise awareness and facilitate access to technology, know-how and financing for net-zero goals. Ever since, ten national and nine international organizations, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Climate Foundation, the International Network for Small and Medium Enterprises (INSME) and Belarus', Kazakhstan's, Türkiye's, Viet Nam's, Moldova's national agencies responsible for SMEs have supported the Declaration. We hope that CICA Member States' related institutions will also join our initiative to support the green agenda.

These initiatives will form part of the 2025 CICA Confidence Building Measures Implementation Plan, which includes approximately 20 events proposed by Azerbaijan, aligned with CICA's five core dimensions: economic, environmental, humanitarian, military-political, and new challenges and threats.

By leveraging Azerbaijan's strategic location and its growing reputation as a reliable, business-friendly hub, we aim to transform the CICA Business Council into a dynamic engine of opportunity for SMEs. Our mission is clear: to build a more connected, competitive and inclusive Asian economy through partnership and dialogue.

I am confident that under Azerbaijan's leadership, the CICA Business Council will serve as a powerful platform for sustainable progress, where businesses, governments and communities work together to unlock the full potential of our shared future.

Orkhan Mammadov,

Chairman of the Management Board of KOBİA,
Chairman of the CICA Business Council

The Eighth Plenary Session of CICA Business Council and the Tenth Business Forum



Baku, 20 May 2025 – The Small and Medium Business Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan (KOBİA), in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), hosted the Eighth Plenary Session of the CICA Business Council and the landmark Tenth CICA Business Forum.

The Business Council Plenary convened national coordinators, policymakers, business leaders and SME representatives for substantive dialogue on shared economic priorities, including digitalization, industrial cooperation, women's entrepreneurship, smart city development and green transformation.

In his address to the plenary, CICA Secretary General H.E. Ambassador Kairat Sarybay highlighted the strategic significance of the event, marking it as one of the first key milestones under the Azerbaijani Chairmanship. He commended the Chairmanship for articulating a forward-looking vision under the theme "Stronger CICA: Connectivity, Digitalization and Sustainable Growth in Asia." Ambassador Sarybay emphasized the agenda's relevance in addressing common challenges and steering the organization's transformation into a full-fledged international institution.





Among the notable initiatives CICA Secretary General highlighted were upcoming conferences, seminars, and training programs to support digital transformation; the planned establishment of a CICA Women's Council to promote inclusive economic development; and proposals to strengthen synergy between the CICA Business Council and Youth Council. He also underlined the importance of engaging academic institutions through the Partnership Network of Leading Universities to mobilize young scholars and researchers in advancing SME development.

In his opening address, Mr. Orkhan Mammadov, Chair of the Board of KOBİA and Chair of the CICA Business Council, welcomed participants to the Eighth Plenary Session, underlining the Azerbaijani Chairmanship's focus on continuity and action, building upon the initiatives introduced by the previous Chairmanship of Kazakhstan. In this regard, he commended the SME Guidebook, developed by the CICA Secretariat, as a practical resource for entrepreneurs, providing guidance on business registration, financing and market access.

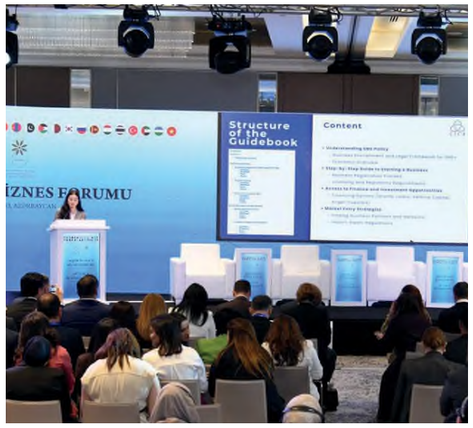
Among the Chairmanship's priorities, Mr. Mammadov highlighted digital transformation, with ongoing efforts to equip SMEs with tools and training in digital marketing, e-commerce and data management. He also emphasized the importance of supporting women-led businesses, announcing plans for mentorship and networking initiatives. In line with the green transition agenda, he drew attention to the Baku Climate Coalition, aimed at promoting sustainable practices and integrating ESG principles into SME operations.

The session was further enriched by contributions from Business Council Board Members from Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Thailand, Türkiye, as well as inputs by representatives of relevant agencies from China, India, Iran, the Kyrgyz Republic, Palestine, and Uzbekistan, who shared concrete national experiences, policy tools and regional cooperation initiatives aimed at strengthening the SME ecosystem and advancing CICA's economic agenda.











The Tenth CICA Business Forum welcomed approximately 220 participants. The Forum opened with a keynote address by CICA Secretary General H.E. Mr. Kairat Sarybay, who introduced the e-book project "SME Landscape in Asia: Interactive Guidebook" to a broad audience of entrepreneurs and business leaders. The guidebook, later presented in detail by a representative of the CICA Secretariat, highlights regional economic trends, investment opportunities, and successful SME case studies from across Member States.

The Forum also featured two thematic panel sessions focused on "Strengthening SME Competitiveness in the CICA Region" and "Sustainability and Women's Role in SMEs," with contributions from eight expert speakers representing Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, and Russia.

The event reaffirmed the unwavering commitment of CICA Member States to advancing inclusive, resilient, and sustainable economic development across Asia, while fostering a dynamic exchange of best practices, policy innovation, and cross-border cooperation in support of the region's SME-driven growth.



April

Pakistan deposits ratification instrument, marking a milestone in strengthening CICA's legal framework



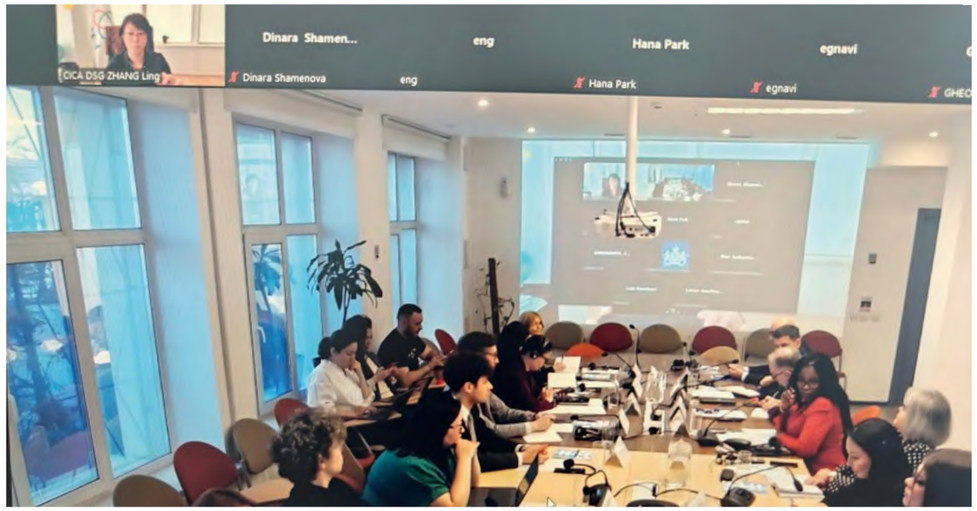
Astana, 8 April 2025 – Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. Nauman Bashir Bhatti, handed over the instrument of ratification of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Secretariat, its Personnel, and Representatives of Members of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) to the Secretary General, H.E. Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, during an official ceremony held at the CICA Secretariat.

This significant act represents a pivotal step toward the Convention's entry into force and reflects Pakistan's steadfast commitment to the advancement of CICA's legal and institutional foundations. The privileges and immunities granted by the Convention are an essential institutional feature, as they facilitate the effective functioning of the Secretariat, ensure the smooth work of its personnel and enable the representatives of Member States to participate freely in CICA meetings.

To date, the total number of Member States that have completed this process has reached thirteen — including Azerbaijan, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Russia and Türkiye — with significant momentum gained over the past two years, as Bangladesh, China, Jordan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and the State of Palestine joined as ratifying parties. These advancements have brought the Convention to the threshold of its entry into force, with just one more ratification needed to activate this vital legal instrument.

Secretary General Sarybay expressed his sincere appreciation to the Government of Pakistan for its continued and constructive engagement with CICA. He emphasized that Pakistan's proactive support serves as a commendable example for other Member States and expressed hope that the remaining ratification would soon be secured, enabling the Convention to enter into force in the near future.

CICA Deputy Secretary General Zhang Ling participates in Gender Theme Group meeting



Astana, 9 April 2025 – The Deputy Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Mrs. Zhang Ling participated in Extended Gender Theme Group meeting organized by the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Kazakhstan.

The meeting presented the results of 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women convened at UN headquarters in March 2025, as well as the six key actions to make faster strides forward to fulfilling the commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action and for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Representatives from UN Women and Kazakhstan's Commission for Women, Family and Demographic Policy, shared updates on the new UN Cooperation Framework and the country's national progress on achieving SDG 5 on gender equality. The meeting participants noted the importance of accelerating implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which remains the most revolutionary plan on gender equality to date, but progress over the past 30 years has been slow.

During the meeting, Ms. Zhang briefed participants on CICA's advancing women agenda, highlighting a major initiative put forward by the Azerbaijani Chairmanship — the establishment of the CICA Women Council. Ms. Zhang noted that the Draft Regulation on the Women Council is currently under active consideration by Member States, with broad support already expressed. Mrs. Zhang stressed that this will be a significant contribution of CICA to the women affairs in the region, given the pan-Asian outreach of Conference, and will enable to unite more women and men to join the common efforts to achieve gender equality goals in broader scales and accelerated steps.

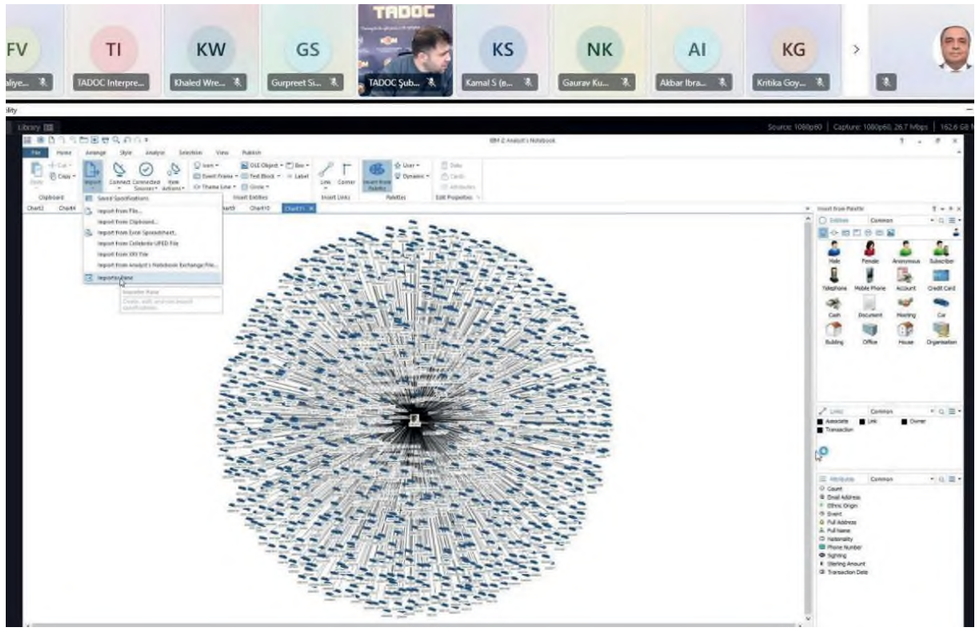
The meeting encouraged all participants to actively engage in advocacy campaigns promoting women's rights and — especially in light of milestone events such as UN80 and Beijing+30.

Türkiye makes another contribution to building capacity of law enforcement agencies in CICA Member States

7-11 April 2025 – an online training programme on crime intelligence analysis was conducted for law enforcement agencies of the Member States of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). The programme was organized by the Turkish International Academy against Drugs and Organized Crime (TADOC) in cooperation with the CICA Secretariat. The training was attended by representatives of CICA Member States – Azerbaijan, India, Kazakhstan, Qatar, Sri Lanka and Tajikistan.

As part of the training programme, participants learned techniques and developed skills for gathering and analyzing operational crime-related information using a range of tools, including modern software solutions. They also acquired practical skills in creating, managing and utilizing databases related to crimes and individuals involved in criminal activities. The training, organized by TADOC, generated strong interest and received positive feedback from participants.

The Republic of Türkiye serves as the coordinator for the priority area "New Challenges and Threats (General)" within the framework of CICA's confidence building measures and brings extensive experience in organizing seminars, training sessions and courses for the Member States in this field. This workshop marked another contribution by Türkiye to building the capacity of law enforcement agencies in the Member States and fostering practical cooperation within the CICA framework.



Bridging cultures, building trust: CICA promotes regional cooperation at Antalya Diplomacy Forum



Antalya, 11-13 April 2025 – The Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, participated the fourth Antalya Diplomacy Forum, convened under the patronage of H.E. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Held under the theme "Reclaiming Diplomacy in a Fragmented World," the Forum united over 4,800 participants from 148 countries to confront today's most pressing global divides through dialogue.

Ambassador Sarybay addressed the panel "The Role of Culture in Today's World: Unifying or Dividing?" where he emphasized CICA's longstanding commitment to fostering intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity as pillars of regional peace and security. Drawing on CICA's three-decade experience as Asia's largest consensus-based intergovernmental forum, he briefed participants on the organization's efforts to foster cooperation in the Human Dimension as a model for building trust through education, cultural exchange and humanitarian cooperation.

On the margins of the Forum, Ambassador Sarybay engaged in high-level consultations with government, international and academia leaders, advancing CICA's institutional transformation and discussing joint approaches to shared challenges — climate change, migration and peacebuilding among them.













In a meeting with Mr. Fuad Hussein, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Ambassador Sarybay expressed appreciation for Iraq's contribution to the CICA Fund and Iraq's support for CICA's transformation into a full-fledged international organization.

With Mr. Md. Touhid Hossain, Foreign Affairs Adviser of Bangladesh, the CICA Secretary General discussed key Azerbaijani Chairmanship priorities, including the establishment of the CICA Women Council, climate action and cooperation on sustainable connectivity.

On the margins of the Forum, Ambassador Sarybay also met with Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Badr Abdelatty, who reaffirmed Egypt's commitment to CICA's goals under Chairmanship priorities and its intention to further engage in the CICA processes.

The COP29 legacy and broader environmental cooperation within CICA were the focus of discussions with Mr. Mukhtar Babayev, Presidential Envoy on Climate Issues of Azerbaijan. Both sides agreed to jointly advance the green agenda of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship at regional and global levels.

In a meeting with UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Ms. Rosemary DiCarlo, Ambassador Sarybay shared updates on CICA's current agenda, including the Women Council initiative and recent CICA Fund projects supporting sustainable development in Afghanistan.

Regional developments amid the evolving geopolitical landscape were discussed during a meeting with Mr. Feridun Sinirlioğlu, Secretary General of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). As CICA and OSCE may serve as complementary platforms for the broader Eurasian region, the two sides exchanged views on possible avenues for future collaboration.



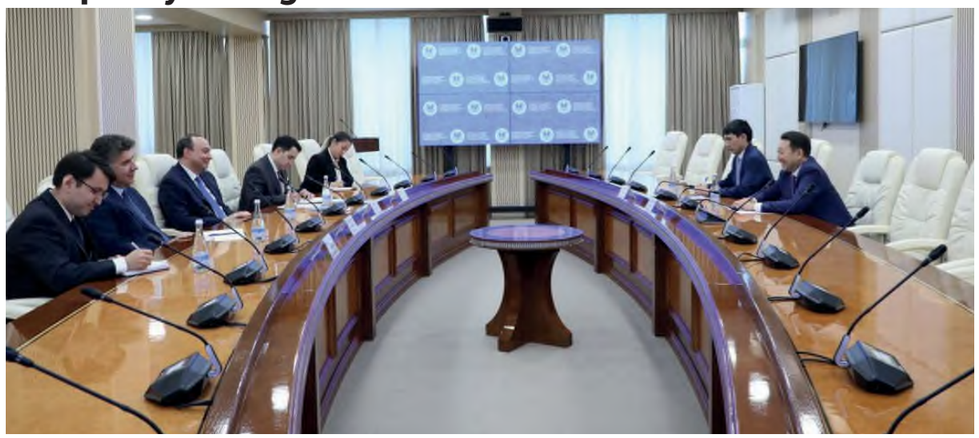
During his meeting with Georgia's Foreign Minister, Ms. Maka Botchorishvili, Ambassador Sarybay presented CICA's mission, unique composition, and evolving external partnerships, with emphasis on sustainable connectivity under the Azerbaijani Chairmanship.

Migration-related challenges and cooperation opportunities were discussed with Mr. Michael Spindelegger, Director General of the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). Both sides agreed to explore joint initiatives through the CICA Think Tank Forum, Youth Council and Business Council to address irregular migration and support legal pathways.

In interviews with TRT Haber and TRT AVAZ, CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay emphasized Türkiye's indispensable role as a founding member and key driver of CICA's institutional development, particularly through its consecutive Chairmanships from 2010 to 2014. Ambassador Sarybay also noted Türkiye's active coordination and co-coordination of several CICA priority areas, as well as its consistent contributions to strengthening regional law enforcement capacities across Member States. He underscored that CICA supports this mission through its comprehensive approach to security — encompassing political, economic, environmental, human, and new challenges and threats dimensions — which serves as a foundation for building trust, stability, and peace throughout Asia.

The Secretary General's visit to Antalya concluded with in-depth talks with Ms. Berris Ekinci, Deputy Foreign Minister of Türkiye, focusing on the advancement of CICA's dynamic agenda under the Azerbaijani Chairmanship. Ambassador Sarybay expressed his deep appreciation for Türkiye's steadfast support and valuable contributions to CICA's transformation. He also commended the outstanding organization of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, which once again proved to be a vital platform for high-level dialogue and multilateral engagement.

Visit of CICA Secretary General to Uzbekistan: promoting youth engagement, business cooperation and policy dialogue



Tashkent, 14-15 April 2025 – Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay held a series of productive meetings as part of his working visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

At the meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mr. Bobur Usmanov, discussions focused on CICA's current agenda, the priorities of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship and the progress in the construction of the organization's headquarters in Astana. In view of Uzbekistan's role as a coordinator of confidence building measures in the human dimension, the parties exchanged opinions on the prospects for enhancing cooperation within the CICA framework, including the Youth and Business Councils. The Deputy Minister expressed support for the activities of the Secretariat, the initiatives of the current Chairmanship and the transformation of CICA into a full-fledged international organization.

During the meeting with Mr. Eldor Aripov, Director of the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the discussion addressed the regional agenda and the need to strengthen sustainable connectivity in Asia. Ambassador Sarybay informed the counterpart about the preparations for the 13th meeting of the CICA Think Tank Forum, scheduled to take place in Baku this September.

The Secretary General visited the Youth Affairs Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, where he was briefed on current projects aimed at supporting and empowering the younger generation. At a meeting with the Agency's First Deputy Director Ms. Dilnozakhan Kattakhanova, discussions centred on the role of youth as a driver of sustainable development and the state's contribution to creating a conducive environment and opportunities for young people. The Secretary General spoke about the upcoming CICA Youth Council meeting scheduled for the second half of 2025, the launch of the Partnership Network of Leading Universities, the initiative to create the CICA Alley in the capitals of the Member States and the planned second edition of the Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders to be held in Baku. Following the meeting, the parties agreed to strengthen cooperation under these initiatives, ensuring the active engagement of Uzbekistan's youth.

During the visit, a meeting was also held with Acting Director of the Investment Promotion Agency under the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mr. Mansurjon Rasulev. Ambassador Sarybay shared details about the forthcoming meetings of the CICA Business Council and Business Forum, scheduled for 20-21 May in Baku, and highlighted the CICA platform's potential in facilitating trade, attracting investment and developing small and medium enterprises in the Member States.

As part of the visit, the Secretary General had a meeting with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Huseyn Rzagulu oglu Guliyev and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Republic of Uzbekistan H.E. Beibut Atamkulov, which focused on pertinent issues on the CICA agenda.





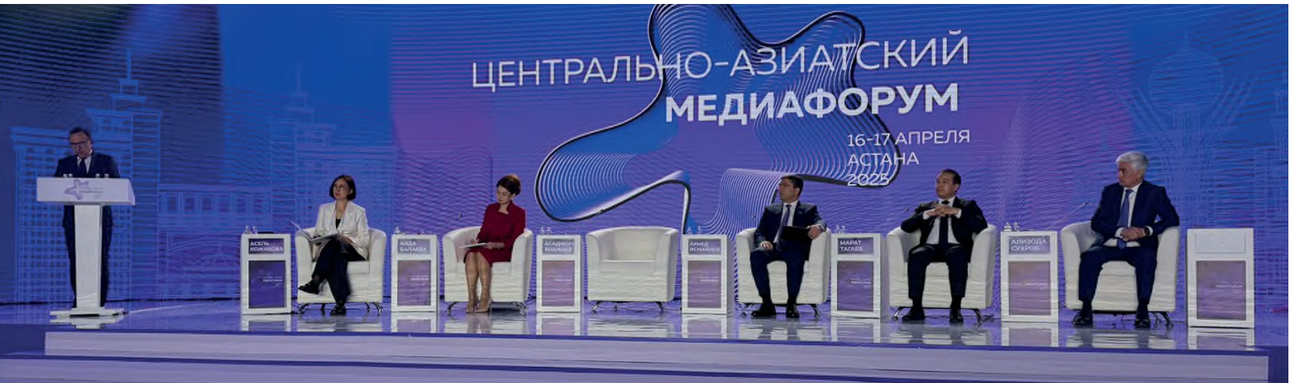
Shaping the information landscape: CICA at the II Central Asian Media

Astana, 16 April 2025 – Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay took part in the plenary session “Global Media: Shaping the Information Landscape of the Future” of the II Central Asian Media Forum held in Astana.

The Forum convened around 700 participants, including over 30 speakers and leading international media experts from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as from Russia, the United Kingdom, China and other countries. During the discussions, the participants explored prospects for cooperation among Central Asian media, the development of the global media environment, the shaping of the future information landscape, the digital transformation of the industry amid rapid technological advances, including artificial intelligence and big data, as well as the role of social media in promoting national image.

In his statement, the Secretary General noted that in the context of geopolitical instability and environmental and technological challenges, the media are becoming not just a channel for transmitting information, but a full-fledged participant in international dialogue and a vital instrument of a new-generation diplomacy. He emphasized the special role of the media in reporting on the activities of international organizations, including the UN and CICA, whose agendas cover the key issues of security, sustainable development and regional interaction. Particular attention was given to the importance of impartial and professional coverage of the work of such organizations, as it serves as a basis for building public trust and raising awareness of the activities of multilateral entities.

Ambassador Sarybay highlighted the consolidation processes in Central Asia and its growing agency in international relations, underlining the region’s key contribution to shaping a collective security system in Asia. He also noted that this process played a significant role in shaping CICA’s development as a unique multilateral platform. “We must be frank: Central Asia was not simply involved in the establishment of the Conference; Central Asia laid its foundation,” he stressed.



Special attention in the Secretary General’s remarks was paid to the cultural component as a factor in strengthening regional identity, sustainable development and connectivity, in particular he highlighted the initiative of President K.K.Tokayev of Kazakhstan to establish the CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity, as well as the environmental agenda and the active participation of the region in climate initiatives. He emphasized the readiness of Azerbaijan, CICA Chair-in-Office, to bring to the organization the best practices developed within its COP29 Presidency in order to intensify the climate action in CICA.

A substantial part of Ambassador Sarybay’s speech was devoted to youth policy and the fight against radicalization. He stressed the importance of developing proactive measures to counter extremism, expanding educational and entrepreneurial opportunities for young people and highlighted the role of the CICA Youth Council and the Partnership Network of Leading Universities as key platforms for engaging the new generation in the sustainable development agenda. He also reminded that Central Asia is a region that has officially declared itself a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Ambassador Sarybay informed the participants about the strategic course of the organization under the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan, expressing confidence that



Baku will make a significant contribution to its further development. The key priorities outlined included the institutional transformation of CICA, the enhancement of confidence building measures and the expansion of cooperation with international partners.

Concluding his speech, the Secretary General called on representatives of regional and global media for closer partnership, stressing that “bringing the international agenda closer to the people is not only a challenge but also a unique opportunity.”





CICA-ESCAP dialogue in focus as Secretary General Joins 81st UN ESCAP Session in Bangkok

Bangkok, 21-23 April 2025 – The Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, undertook a visit to Bangkok to participate in the 81st Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), convened under the theme of strengthening regional cooperation for resilient and sustainable urban development across Asia and the Pacific.



During the High-Level Dialogue with subregional organizations, the Secretary General underscored the importance of strengthening CICA-ESCAP cooperation as part of broader efforts to advance inclusive, sustainable development and fostering transformative regional dialogue across Asia.

Presenting the priorities of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship of CICA (2024-2026), Ambassador Sarybay highlighted its strategic focus on steering CICA's transformation into a full-fledged international organization, reinforcing the implementation of confidence building measures, and enhancing cooperation with regional and multilateral frameworks. He also outlined CICA's expanding cross-sectoral agenda, which encompasses youth and academic exchange, transport connectivity, climate action, agriculture, digitalization, and cybersecurity - all closely aligned with the UN SDGs.

In the context of supporting sustainable urbanization, the Secretary General highlighted CICA's contributions to fostering resilient and inclusive urban development. These include the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises, ensuring food and energy security, advancing digital transformation, improving disaster risk management, and enhancing environmental protection. He also drew attention to several notable initiatives that illustrate CICA's practical and action-oriented approach to cooperation: the inaugural CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues, the CICA Alley urban greenery project, joint programming with ESCAP on digital innovation, and a development assistance initiative for Afghan farmers funded through the CICA Fund.

On the margins of the ESCAP Conference Secretary General held a series of important meetings with the leadership of key regional international organizations, as well as senior officials of Thailand's agencies involved in CICA process.

A key highlight was the meeting between Ambassador Sarybay and ESCAP Executive Secretary Armida Alisjahbana, where the two sides agreed to explore further steps to strengthen partnership between the two organizations and launch added-value joint initiatives to support the SDGs in line with priorities of the current Azerbaijan Chairmanship of CICA.

Further consultations were held with Ms. Michaela Friberg-Storey, UN Resident Coordinator in Thailand, and Mr. Christian Hainzl, UN Volunteers Regional Manager, focusing on joint contributions to the 2026 International Year of Volunteerism for Sustainable Development.









Ambassador Sarybay also met with Vice Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand Mr. Russ Jalichandra to discuss key priorities and objectives of CICA under the Azerbaijan's Chairmanship 2024-2026. The Thai side confirmed its resolve to support further transformation of CICA into a full-fledged international organization, including the elaboration of its Charter, which would significantly contribute to a stronger multilateral architecture in Asia. Discussions also highlighted Thailand's active role in sustainable development, tourism, and the promotion of SMEs, as well as potential complementarities between CICA and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue, currently chaired by Thailand.



At Chulalongkorn University, the Secretary General held talks with Professor Pavika Sriratanaban, Director of the Institute of Asian Studies (IAS) -an active member of the CICA Think Tank Forum. Their discussion centered on academic diplomacy and the role of IAS within the CICA Think Tank Forum in supporting CICA's transformation through track-two diplomacy.



In a meeting with Mr. Anukul Peedkaew, Permanent Secretary of Thailand's Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, opportunities for collaboration on youth engagement, volunteerism, and women empowerment were explored. Ambassador Sarybay emphasized the value of utilizing CICA's platforms, such as the Youth Council, to share Thailand's experience and bolster CICA's human dimension.





The Secretary General conferred with Mr. Bakhyt Sultanov, Board Member of the Eurasian Economic Commission, on strengthening CICA-EAEU cooperation in support of inclusive regional growth and prosperity among CICA Member States.



Additionally, he also met with Mr. Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General of BIMSTEC, to exchange views on regional connectivity, food and energy security, and shared responses to emerging challenges.

CICA experts discuss epidemiological safety, public healthcare and pharmaceutical issues

30 April 2025 – The Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Kazakhstan, with the support of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), held an Online Seminar on Epidemiological Safety, Public Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals. Since 2021, Kazakhstan has been coordinating this area under the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures. The event was attended by experts from Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Palestine, Russia and Uzbekistan.

Welcoming addresses were delivered by Deputy Chair of the Committee of Sanitary and Epidemiological Control of the Ministry of Healthcare of Kazakhstan Roza Kozhapova and Deputy Secretary General of CICA Farid Damirli. The Secretariat representative reminded the participants of the background of this confidence building measure in the CICA Catalogue, the Member States' efforts in this area over the past four years and the plan of thematic activities for 2025.

The seminar featured presentations by experts from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Uzbekistan. The participants discussed a wide range of issues, including ensuring sanitary and epidemiological well-being, implementing the national immunization schedule, developing the Law "On Biological Safety," disease prevention and antibiotic consumption in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan's experience in responding to monkeypox outbreaks and Russia's international cooperation in combating infectious diseases. Experts from Uzbekistan presented the results of a number of clinical trials in the field of cancer prevention and treatment.

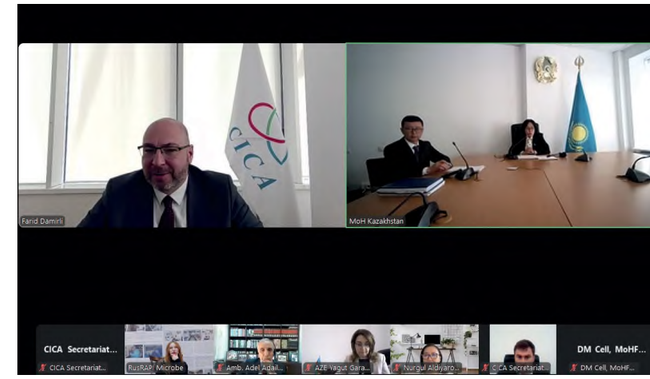


Moreover, it was noted that the creation of sustainable and efficient health systems is seen as an important contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (2030 Agenda), in particular in terms of ensuring the health and well-being of the population.

The Secretariat's expert on new challenges and threats Adel Adaileh made a separate presentation, providing an overview of key health risks in the West Asian region. He noted that the combination of armed conflict, migration, poor infrastructure, climate change and the rise of antimicrobial resistance significantly increases the vulnerability of health systems. At the same time, promising areas of development were outlined: the introduction of digital technologies, the expansion of regional cooperation and the integration of climate adaptation into health policy.

At the end of his speech, Ambassador Adaileh stressed that CICA, recognizing the importance of healthcare as an integral part of regional security, actively promotes the exchange of experience and capacity building of the Member States.

While sharing their views, participants emphasized the significant value of the CICA platform as a venue for meaningful dialogue, information exchange and coordination of measures in the field of epidemiological safety. Such a format of interaction plays an important role in strengthening cohesion among the Member States and developing coordinated approaches to common challenges. The participants also stressed the need to accelerate work on the draft concept paper of cooperation in the area of epidemiological safety, public health and pharmaceuticals to bring interaction to a new level.











CICA – SCO Deputy Secretaries General consultations held at SCO headquarters

Beijing, 29-30 April 2025 – Deputy Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ms. Zhang Ling paid a working visit to the Secretariat of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to hold consultations at the level of Deputy Secretaries General of the two organizations. The visit was conducted in line with the agreements previously reached between the Secretaries General of CICA and the SCO.

At the SCO Secretariat, Ms. Zhang Ling was received by SCO Secretary General Nurlan Yermekbayev, who commended CICA's role in the Asian region and expressed hope for further strengthening of the partnership between the two organizations.

Extensive consultations were held between the delegations of the CICA and SCO Secretariats with the participation of SCO Deputy Secretary General Ahmad Saidmurodzoda. The discussions focused on the implementation of the 2014 Memorandum of Understanding between the two Secretariats and explored prospects for future cooperation. It was considered advisable to continue the practice of mutual participation in events and to hold joint activities on pressing issues on the agendas of CICA and the SCO.

During the substantive discussion, the parties exchanged their experiences of interacting with the United Nations, its specialized agencies, as well as other international organizations active in the region.

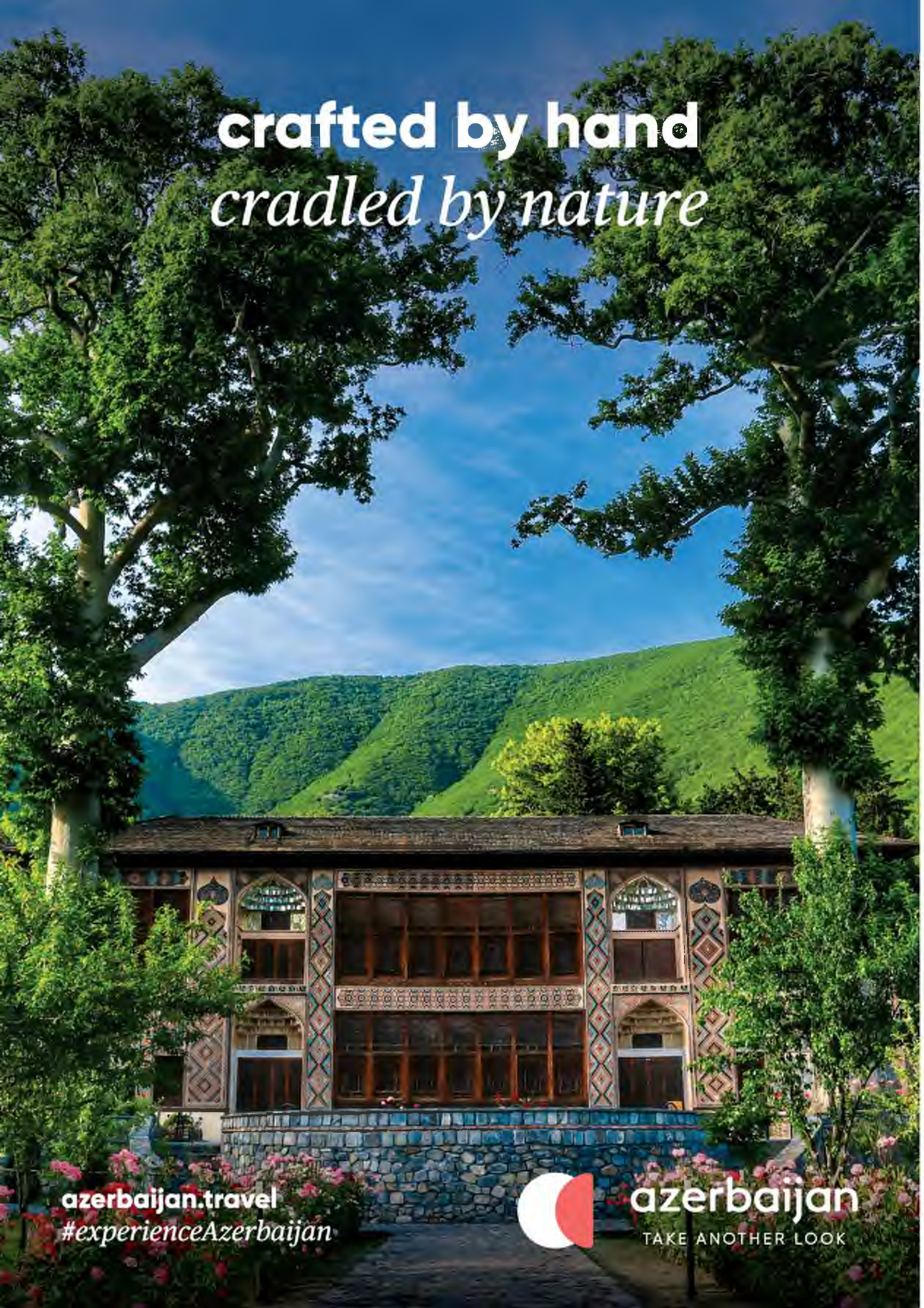
The parties also shared information on topical issues related to the activities of the two organizations, including the institutional transformation of CICA and the reform process within the SCO.

The representatives of the two organizations reaffirmed their interest in continuing to hold regular consultations, both at the level of Deputy Secretaries General and among experts on specific areas of cooperation.

The partnership between CICA and the SCO was established in 2014 with the signing of the relevant memorandum between their Secretariats. Currently, nine of the ten SCO members are also Member States of CICA, while Belarus, which joined the SCO in 2024, holds observer status in CICA.



May



CICA showcases efforts to enhance regional connectivity and cybersecurity at Kazan Forum

Kazan, 14 May 2025 – The Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, participated in the Conference on the Development of the Transport and Logistics Potential of the CICA Member States, focused on intermodal transportation as a driver of economic growth for the CICA region



In his address, Ambassador Sarybay expressed his sincere appreciation to the Russian Federation for hosting this timely and significant event in Kazan—a historic crossroads of trade routes linking Asia and Europe.

The Secretary General emphasized that the development of secure and efficient transport corridor systems remains a key priority within the Economic Dimension of CICA's Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). Member States, under this priority area, are jointly exploring ways to enhance multimodal transport networks and to support the development of safe, sustainable, and efficient transport corridors across Asia.

Ambassador Sarybay highlighted the dynamic efforts under the current Azerbaijani Chairmanship of CICA, which also coordinates this priority area. He informed participants that Azerbaijan has circulated a draft Updated Concept on the Development of Safe and Efficient Transport Corridors for 2025–2027 and expressed confidence that Member States





would actively contribute to this important initiative. Furthermore, he noted that the Azerbaijani Chairmanship plans to host two major events in 2025: a Conference on the Digitalization of Transport Corridors among CICA Member States, and a Conference of Port Authorities of CICA Member States.

Additionally, Ambassador Sarybay informed participants of the proposal by the Republic of Kazakhstan to establish a CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity, first presented by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Astana CICA Summit in October 2022.

The Secretary General also contributed to the panel session "International Information Security: Russia – Islamic World" at Kazan Forum 2025. In his remarks, Ambassador Sarybay outlined the practical steps taken by CICA Member States to enhance cooperation on the security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). He recalled the launch of a dedicated CICA priority area on ICT security in 2021 and underlined the importance of a coordinated approach and multilateral dialogue, as reaffirmed in the CICA Leaders' Statement on Cooperation in the Field of Security of and in the Use of Information and Communication Technologies.

Ambassador Sarybay further acknowledged the contributions of several Member States in organizing experience-sharing activities on digitalization and ICT, and presented the Azerbaijani Chairmanship's planned initiatives for 2025, including seminars and capacity-building programs aimed at enhancing cybersecurity expertise within the framework of this priority area.



Global South and regional integration discussed at Tehran Dialogue Forum



Tehran, 17-19 May 2025 – The Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, undertook a working visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran to participate in the Tehran Dialogue Forum (TDF) 2025 and hold a series of high-level bilateral consultations. This year's edition convened over 200 senior representatives from 50 countries and featured 40 thematic sessions, fostering inclusive and substantive engagement with the international community.

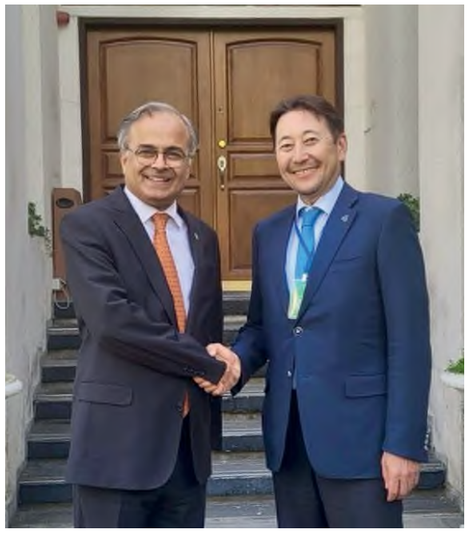
Ambassador Sarybay contributed to the panel session titled "BRICS and SCO: Crafting Hopeful Horizons for the Global South", where he emphasized the rising prominence of the Global South in an increasingly multipolar world. He noted that multilateral platforms such as BRICS, ASEAN, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) have allowed countries of the Global South to bring their specific concerns and priorities into global discourse. Complementing these frameworks, CICA distinguishes itself by providing a uniquely inclusive platform for constructive engagement across a wider range of issues, from climate change and environmental sustainability to youth empowerment and gender equality.

Ambassador Sarybay highlighted CICA's unique value as a platform where even countries lacking formal diplomatic ties can come together to engage in constructive dialogue and confidence-building, thereby contributing to the peaceful resolution of tensions and promotion of mutual understanding.

Over the course of his visit, Ambassador Sarybay held in-depth discussions with the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, H.E. Abbas Araghchi, focusing on the transformation of CICA into a full-fledged international organization. The discussions also covered the institutionalization of new CICA bodies, including the proposed CICA Finance Summit, as well as the Councils on



Ambassador Sarybay also met with Deputy Foreign Minister, President of the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) Saeed Khatibzadeh. The Secretary General expressed his appreciation for the invitation to participate in the Forum and commended its role as a platform for dialogue on regional priorities. Deputy Minister Khatibzadeh, in turn, thanked Ambassador Sarybay for his meaningful contribution to the Forum's deliberations. The Secretary General then provided an update on the activities of the CICA Think Tank Forum (TTF) and shared information on its upcoming meeting in Baku, aimed at strengthening expert-level cooperation within the CICA framework.



Sustainable Connectivity and Women, in line with the strategic priorities of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship. Minister Araghchi reaffirmed Iran's support for the transformation process and expressed readiness to further intensify Iran's engagement in CICA's activities and events. He welcomed CICA's consistent role in fostering security, harmony and confidence among Asian nations, and praised its growing importance as a unifying regional platform.



In a separate engagement at the Secretariat of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Ambassador Sarybay met with ECO Secretary General H.E. Asad M. Khan. The Secretaries General exchanged views on best practices of their institutions in human resources, financial management, and governance structures. They explored opportunities for enhanced cooperation through increased mutual participation in events and working-level exchanges. Both sides emphasized the importance of strengthening synergies among regional multilateral institutions to avoid duplication, ensure more efficient resource utilization, and amplify the impact of joint efforts.



CICA Deputy Secretary General participates in Termez Dialogue on Central and South Asian Connectivity

Termez, 19-20 May 2025 – Deputy Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Mr. Farid Damirli, took part in the inaugural meeting of the Termez Dialogue on Connectivity between Central and South Asia, held under the theme "Building a Common Space of Peace, Friendship and Prosperity."

The event was convened by the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies (ISRS) under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan. It represents a practical implementation of the 2022 United Nations General Assembly resolution initiated by Uzbekistan on strengthening connectivity between the two subregions.

The Forum brought together senior officials from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan along with representatives of chambers of commerce and industry, regional and international organizations and prominent experts from leading research and analytical institutions. The discussions highlighted the importance of regional integration through infrastructure development, simplification of trade procedures and diversification of transport corridors. Particular emphasis was placed on the strategic value of the Trans-Afghan Corridor project, which is expected to offer the shortest route connecting South Asia with Central Asia, the markets of Russia, China and Europe, thereby fostering deeper economic cooperation across the broader region.

In his statement, CICA Deputy Secretary General Farid Damirli outlined the priorities of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship and presented ongoing initiatives within the CICA framework, emphasizing the promotion of dialogue and multilateral cooperation as essential tools for ensuring sustainable development and regional stability. Mr.Damirli provided an overview of CICA's confidence building measures across its five dimensions with a particular focus on the Economic dimension, including the work of the CICA Business Council and Business Forum. He also informed participants about development-oriented projects implemented through the CICA Fund, including assistance initiatives aimed at supporting Afghan farmers.

Deputy Secretary General underscored that the goals of the Termez Dialogue resonate with the principles and objectives of CICA and called on those present to participate in activities under the CICA platform.

As part of the programme, participants were offered a tour of the "Termez Cargo Centre" International Multifunctional Transport and Logistics Hub, which plays a key role in facilitating the delivery of international humanitarian assistance including to Afghanistan and Afghan refugees in neighboring countries.



CICA and ASEAN Secretariats establish ties

Astana, 20 May 2025 – An introductory online meeting was held between representatives of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the Secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Deputy Secretary General of CICA Ms. Zhang Ling and Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN for Political-Security Community Ms. Astanah Abdul Aziz delivered welcoming remarks to the participants.

The meeting participants highlighted the important roles of CICA and ASEAN in ensuring stability and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. They underlined the significance of coordinating and complementing efforts within the multilateral track on a wide range of issues of mutual interest. In addition, the meeting acknowledged the value of regular exchanges of experience and information between the executive bodies of both platforms.

Both sides shared presentations on the background and structure of the two organizations, as well as the specific features of their Secretariats' operation. The CICA Secretariat placed special emphasis on the key outcomes of the Kazakh Chairmanship from 2020 to 2024, including the launch of the CICA transformation process, as well as the priorities of the current Azerbaijani Chairmanship.

The parties agreed to continue exchanging information on issues of interest to them through inter-secretariat interaction. The ASEAN representatives invited the CICA Secretariat to take part in several sectoral activities organized by the Association.

CICA Secretariat holds meeting with China International Communications Group



Astana, 28 May 2025 – The Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met with a Chinese delegation led by President of the China International Communications Group (CICG) Mr. Du Zhanyuan. The parties acknowledged the established permanent contact between the CICG and the CICA Secretariat, aimed at implementing joint projects in the areas of cultural exchange, youth and other fields.

Secretary General Kairat Sarybay thanked the Government of the People's Republic of China for its continuous support to CICA and its significant contribution to the development and strengthening of the organization. He also highlighted the CICG's noble mission to promote friendship, dialogue and cooperation, which corresponds to the philosophy of CICA. K. Sarybay briefed his counterpart on CICA's extensive agenda in the context of the priorities of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship, focusing on preparations for the Seventh Summit in Baku in 2026.

Mr. Du informed about the objectives of the Symposium on Governance and Dialogue on Humanitarian Exchanges between China and Central Asian States, which will be held on 30 May 2025 in Astana, thanking the Secretary General for his intention to attend and address the event.

At the end of the meeting, Mr. Du handed over to the Secretary General a list of books that will be donated to the library at the new CICA headquarters.





CICA Secretary General meets with Head of United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

Astana, 28 May 2025 – Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay held a meeting with Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Ms. Rosa Otunbayeva.

During the informative exchange, the parties discussed the current situation in Afghanistan, including the efforts of the international community to return the country to the international legal framework, as well as issues of humanitarian assistance, the rights of women and girls, inclusive governance and the fight against terrorism. Ms. Otunbayeva provided details on the progress of the Afghanistan negotiation process in Qatar and UNAMA's initiatives, including the establishment of working groups on supporting Afghanistan's private sector and counter-narcotics efforts.

Ambassador Sarybay highlighted the implementation of the project to support Afghan farmers through the CICA Fund, the participation of the Afghan business community in the CICA Business Forum, as well as the potential for further cooperation in the humanitarian and educational areas. The Secretary General informed about the activities of the new CICA mechanisms, including the Partnership Network of Leading Universities and the Think Tank Forum.

Following the meeting, the parties confirmed their interest in continuing the dialogue and increasing practical cooperation, including on training Afghan civil servants and humanitarian demining.

CICA hosts side event on Water Security and Climate Resilience at High-Level Conference on Glaciers' Preservation



Dushanbe, 29 May 2025 – The CICA Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in collaboration with the CICA Secretariat, hosted a side event titled "Water Security and Climate Resilience: Addressing Environmental Challenges in CICA Member States" on the margins of the High-Level International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The hybrid event brought together representatives from CICA Member States, international organizations and leading experts to advance regional cooperation on glacier retreat, water security and climate resilience.



Moderated by the CICA Chairmanship, the side event built on the momentum of the 2024 CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues in Astana, reinforcing CICA's role as a vital platform for environmental diplomacy and collective action, as well as COP29's legacy.

The event opened with remarks by H.E. Alimirzamin Askerov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Tajikistan, outlining Azerbaijan's ambitious CICA Chairmanship vision under the theme "Stronger CICA: Connectivity, Digitalization and Sustainable Growth in Asia." He emphasized the role of confidence building measures in fostering cooperation to address transboundary environmental challenges, drawing on Azerbaijan's COP29 Presidency legacy.

Mr. Isfandiyor Shukurzoda, First Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the



Mrs. Zhang Ling, CICA Deputy Secretary General, emphasized the existential threat posed by glacier loss to water security, biodiversity and disaster resilience across the CICA region. She reaffirmed CICA's commitment to fostering dialogue and implementing joint actions, building on the 2024 CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues outcomes. Mrs. Zhang Ling called for transforming challenges into opportunities to ensure sustainable water governance and equitable access to clean water for future generations.





Government of Tajikistan, welcomed participants and underscored Tajikistan's global leadership in glacier preservation. He underscored the country's initiative to declare 2025 the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, alongside proposals for a World Glacier Day and an International Fund for Glacier Conservation. Mr. Shukurzoda stressed the urgent need for coordinated international support to address glacier melt and its impacts on water security and regional stability.



Keynote speakers provided strategic insights into the region's environmental priorities. Mr. Shahin Shahyarov, Senior Representative of the COP29 Presidency, highlighted the Baku Dialogue on Water for Climate Action, endorsed by 71 countries, including 11 CICA Member States. This initiative promotes inclusive partnerships and transboundary cooperation to address water-related climate risks.

In his presentation, Dr. Ugur Turan, an expert in CICA's environmental dimension, outlined the outcomes of the 2024 CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues High-level Statement, which pledged action on climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, sustainable water



management and pollution control. He underscored that these commitments provide a strong framework for CICA's long-term environmental agenda, fostering permanent cooperation on environmental issues.

The open discussions featured contributions of the Member States including Türkiye, Mongolia, Thailand, Kazakhstan and China. Participants shared national strategies, such as Türkiye's water efficiency campaigns, Mongolia's "One Billion Trees" initiative, Thailand's nature-based solutions, Kazakhstan's new Water Code and China's intelligent water monitoring systems, highlighting innovative approaches to water and climate challenges in the region. CICA Member States expressed common support for utilizing CICA's potential to contribute to regional environmental cooperation, recognizing its growing engagement in this significant area alongside its broader mandate.

International organizations enriched the discussions with global and regional perspectives. Mr. Anshuman Varma from UNESCAP, emphasized their commitment to technical cooperation and knowledge exchange in thematic challenges such as glaciers' preservation. Mr. Margulan Ibraimov from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) underscored shared challenges in the region and affirmed SCO's readiness to deepen collaboration with CICA. Mr. Bakytzhan Arystanbek, from the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), highlighted water's critical role in food security, detailing IOFS's initiatives like water purification in Afghanistan and proposed structured knowledge exchange and joint programming to scale solutions.

The event reinforced CICA's pivotal role in fostering climate diplomacy and trust among its Member States. The event concluded with a renewed commitment to solidarity, innovation and collective action to safeguard water resources and ecosystems for future generations.



CICA joins symposium on governance and humanitarian exchange between China and Central Asia states



Astana, 30 May 2025 – Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay participated in the 2025 Symposium on Governance and Dialogue on Humanitarian Exchanges between China and Central Asian States, organized by the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the China International Communications Group.

In his speech, Deputy Head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee Mr. Hu Heping emphasized the relevance of multilateralism and noted that the path to shared prosperity lies in modernization and regional cooperation. The speaker also stated that for more than 30 years, China and the Central Asian countries have actively engaged within multilateral platforms, highlighting CICA as an important dialogue format. Mr. Hu Heping called for enhanced humanitarian exchanges between peoples, particularly in the areas of education, science, culture, media and youth initiatives.

Secretary General Kairat Sarybay underscored the significance of the region's historical ties and noted the unique opportunity to develop a strategic partnership founded on trust, dialogue and interaction. Particular emphasis was placed on the role of CICA as a platform for strengthening confidence building measures, sharing experiences and promoting joint initiatives, including cultural and youth projects, scientific cooperation, as well as environmental, and transportation and logistics initiatives. As he concluded his remarks, the Secretary General stressed CICA's readiness to support integration processes and serve as a platform for dialogue in the pursuit of peace and sustainable development.

The Symposium was also attended by Vice Minister of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan Yevgeniy Kochetov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Kazakhstan Mr. Han Chunlin, Executive Secretary of the Amanat Party Daulet Karibek, as well as representatives of the diplomatic corps, academic and social circles of Central Asia and China.



CICA Deputy Secretary General attends High-Level International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation in Dushanbe



Dushanbe, 30 May 2025 – A delegation of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), led by Deputy Secretary General Mrs. Zhang Ling, took part in the High-Level International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation, held in Dushanbe from 30 to 31 June 2025.

Convened under the patronage of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, H.E. Emomali Rahmon, the event brought together heads of state, government and representatives of international organizations. Confrence focused on the declaration of the United Nations resolution on the 2025 International Year of Glaciers and on advancing the "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", underscoring the vital role of glaciers in maintaining global environmental balance and addressing water-related challenges. Particular emphasis was placed on the intrinsic link between glacier preservation and sustainable socio-economic development.

In her address to the Plenary Session, CICA Deputy Secretary General Mrs. Zhang Ling emphasized the existential threat posed by glacier loss to water security, biodiversity, and disaster resilience across the CICA region. She



highlighted CICA's efforts in fostering collaboration among Member States to enhance environmental sustainability and promote sustainable water management. Mrs. Zhang Ling underscored the urgent need for collective action and reaffirmed CICA's commitment to fostering dialogue and implementing joint actions, building on the outcomes of the 2024 CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues held in Astana. This conference resulted in a High-level Statement where CICA Member States pledged to enhance collaboration on climate adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable water management.

Concluding her statement, the Deputy Secretary General stressed the importance of transforming challenges into opportunities to ensure sustainable water governance and equitable access to clean water for future generations.

The Conference is expected to contribute to the implementation of UN resolutions on the "International Year of Glaciers' Preservation 2025" and the "Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences, 2025–2034", by mobilizing resources and fostering international cooperation. It seeks to strengthen global partnerships among governments, scientists, civil society, and other stakeholders, with a focus on enhancing transboundary collaboration to preserve glaciers and their socio-economic benefits.





June

Kazakhstan grants international civil servant status to CICA personnel and contributes to its budget



Astana, 4 June 2025 – An official ceremony was held at the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in Astana, highlighting Kazakhstan's continued support for the organization.



During the event, H.E. Mr. Alibek Bakayev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, handed over the instrument of ratification of the Protocol on Amendments to the Host Country Agreement to CICA Secretary General, H.E. Ambassador Kairat Sarybay. A symbolic cheque was also provided to mark Kazakhstan's voluntary contribution to the CICA Secretariat's budget.

The ratification of the Protocol is an important step in bringing the conditions for the work and presence of the Secretariat in Kazakhstan in line with international standards, including those used in the UN system. It provides the CICA staff with the status of international civil servants as part of the Road Map for CICA Transformation, bringing the Conference closer to its goal of becoming a full-fledged international organization.

The Secretary General thanked the leadership of Kazakhstan for their strong and ongoing support. He expressed special gratitude to H.E. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev for his strategic vision, and for his close attention to CICA's development. He also extended thanks to Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Murat Nurtleu and the Ministry's team for their active and professional work.

Kazakhstan's voluntary financial contribution, once again, confirms its status as the most consistent, reliable and generous donor to the CICA budget. The majority of voluntary contributions to CICA are made by Kazakhstan, highlighting its special and in many ways unique role in supporting the organization. The country also leads in the secondment of officers to work at the Secretariat, showing its deep commitment to supporting CICA.

Another important contribution of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the development of CICA is the construction of a separate building for the organization's headquarters in Astana. The Secretary General noted that, following the decision of President Tokayev, construction of the new building is nearing completion. It will become the first permanent home of CICA and a symbol of a new stage in the organization's institutional development.

In turn, Deputy Minister Alibek Bakayev reaffirmed Kazakhstan's strong commitment to CICA as a founding member and host country of its Secretariat. He emphasized that the transformation of CICA into a full-fledged international organization, initiated by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and endorsed at the 6th Summit in Astana, remains a strategic priority. As part of this process, clarifying the legal status of Secretariat personnel through amendments to the Host Country Agreement — outlined in the 2023 Transformation Road Map — was accomplished in a short timeframe through effective cooperation with the Secretariat.

Deputy Minister Bakayev also expressed confidence that the completion of CICA's new headquarters in Astana will further strengthen the Secretariat's institutional foundations. He confirmed Kazakhstan's intention to maintain a high level of voluntary financial contributions, with USD 1.2 million allocated for 2025, underscoring the country's ongoing commitment to the Organization's growth and operational capacity. He concluded by thanking the CICA Secretariat team for their effective work and acknowledged the valuable support of Member States that continue to second experts to the Secretariat.





CICA Secretary General takes part in the Sustainability Dialogue 2025 in Ulaanbaatar

Ulaanbaatar, 5-7 June 2025 – The Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, paid a working visit to Mongolia to participate in the Sustainability Dialogue 2025 titled “Climate Action: Billions of Trees”.

The Sustainability Dialogue was hosted by the Office of the President, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Mongolia and co-organized by the Ban Ki-moon Foundation for a Better Future and Stanford University’s Walter H. Shorenstein Asia-Pacific Research Center. The 2025 Sustainability Dialogue was a follow-up of the Trans-Pacific Sustainability Dialogue initiative launched in 2022 by the latter two structures.

The main event, held on 6 June 2025, was inaugurated by H.E. Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, President of Mongolia, who addressed the audience with an insightful speech. In his remarks, the President explained the essence of his “Billions of Tress” initiative that goes beyond just tree-planting and implies changing the mindset of the people who are encouraged to be a part of the ongoing climate action across the globe. H.E. Ban Ki-moon, the 8th Secretary General of the United Nations, also spoke at the opening session of the Sustainability Dialogue, urging decision-makers throughout the world to demonstrate more leadership and action towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.



Secretary General Sarybay was invited to speak at Panel Session 2, titled “Technical Cooperation, Social Responsibility, and Expertise Sharing.” In his remarks, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay briefed the audience on the priorities of Azerbaijan’s Chairmanship within CICA’s environmental dimension building up on the achievements of Baku’s COP29 presidency and its overall climate diplomacy. The Secretary General emphasized the role of Mongolia as the coordinator of the environment protection priority area, along with CICA Member States like Bangladesh, China, Iran, Kazakhstan and Türkiye, in advancing CICA’s environmental agenda through hosting a number of engaging CBM events.



The need for institutionalizing environmental themes within the CICA platform was underlined as a result of the 2024 CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues in Astana. The Secretary General explained how CICA can contribute to high-profile international events previously hosted and to be hosted by in the future. In this context, Ambassador Sarybay proposed potential synergies between CICA and upcoming international milestones, including the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP17) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), to be held in Mongolia in 2026.

On the sidelines of the Sustainability Dialogue, the CICA Secretary General had a conversation with H.E. Battsetseg Batmunkh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia. Madam Minister was briefed on the major priorities of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship, including the CICA transformation efforts and its new institutional initiatives that are currently under discussion and expected to be adopted at the upcoming informal CICA Ministerial Council meeting in New York in September 2025. The Secretary General reiterated CICA’s readiness to support Mongolia’s preparations for COP17 and to explore joint platforms for advancing climate resilience in the region.





During the visit, the CICA Secretary General conducted comprehensive bilateral consultations with H.E. Mr. Munkhtushig Lkhanaajav, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia. Ambassador Sarybay informed the Mongolian diplomat of the key priorities of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship, covering both existing institutions and the proposed ones currently under discussion of CICA Member States. Special attention was drawn to the process of CICA transformation focusing on efforts to adopt a CICA Charter. The State Secretary committed to revitalize Mongolia's participation in the work of CICA's bodies and its CBM implementation.

Mongolia's role as coordinator of the environment protection priority area was thoroughly explored during the Secretary General's meeting with Mr. Batkhishig Purevdoo, Special Envoy on Climate Change of Mongolia. As part of the "Billions of Trees" initiative of President Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, Ambassador Sarybay proposed to consider opening a CICA Alley in Ulaanbaatar, presenting its background and the existing precedent established in Astana. He also highlighted similar campaigns undertaken by other CICA Member States and recalled previous consultations on this initiative, underscoring its symbolic and unifying potential within the Organization's environmental agenda.









CICA underscores opportunities for synergy with TURKPA in youth and women empowerment



Astana, 12 June 2025 – Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), H.E. Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, took part in the 14th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TURKPA), held under the theme "TURKTIME: The Role of Parliamentary Diplomacy".

This TURKPA meeting, which culminated in the adoption of the Astana Declaration, brought together heads of parliamentary delegations from TURKPA Member States — Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan — alongside representatives of observer states, observer organizations and partner institutions.

The session was opened and chaired by H.E. Mr. Yerlan Koshanov, Chairman of the Mazhilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, during which the Chairmanship of TURKPA was handed over from the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Parliament of Kazakhstan.

In his remarks, Chairman Koshanov highlighted the growing role of parliamentary diplomacy in international relations, noting its importance as a driving force of integration in the Turkic world. He emphasized that TURKPA has fully developed as an institutional platform for legislative harmonization, and that inter-parliamentary cooperation has become a solid foundation for trust and stability.

CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay expressed appreciation to Chairman Koshanov and the Parliament of Kazakhstan for the excellent organization of the event and for the ratification of the amendments to the Host Country Agreement between the Government of Kazakhstan and the CICA Secretariat.



Ambassador Kairat Sarybay cited H.E. President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan stating that “strong parliaments are essential for democratic governance and development”. The CICA Secretary General emphasized the increasing relevance of multilateral diplomacy in an era marked by complex geopolitical challenges and expressed satisfaction that calls for prioritizing dialogue over division and cooperation over confrontation are increasingly being heard from various platforms, including the Astana International Forum championed by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

CICA Secretary General also commended the active contribution of TURKPA Member States, which are also CICA Member States, to the implementation of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship’s priorities. In this context, he outlined opportunities for synergy between the two institutions, including in the areas of women’s empowerment and youth engagement, through such initiatives of the Chairmanship as the proposed CICA Women Council, the recently launched CICA Youth Contests and the upcoming Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders to be held in October 2025 in Baku.

The event was also addressed by H.E. Mr. Maulen Ashimbayev, Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan; H.E. Mrs. Sahiba Gafarova, Chairperson of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan; H.E. Mr. Numan Kurtulmuş, Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye; H.E. Mr. Nurlanbek Turgunbek uulu, Chairman of the Jogorku Kenesh of Kyrgyzstan; and H.E. Mr. Nuriddin Ismoilov, Speaker of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The heads of parliaments and leaders of Turkic cooperation organizations shared their views on the theme of the plenary session, underscoring the growing importance of parliamentary diplomacy in addressing global and regional challenges. The Assembly also adopted the reports and recommendations of its commissions on legal affairs and international relations, education, culture, social and humanitarian issues, economic cooperation, as well as on the environment, natural resources and healthcare.





CICA Secretary General visits Kyrgyz Republic to discuss ongoing cooperation initiatives

Bishkek, 16-17 June 2025 – Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay paid a working visit to Bishkek to hold consultations with the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as members of several CICA institutions.

At the meeting with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic Mr. Meder Abakirov, CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay emphasized the historical significance of the signing of the agreement on the trijunction point of the state borders of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on 31 March 2025 in Khujand resulting from the trilateral meeting of the heads of state. This step was pointed out as a clear example of constructive dialogue, regional cooperation, confidence building and stability enhancement – principles that underpin CICA’s mission across the Asian continent.



The parties discussed key issues on the agenda of the upcoming informal meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council, which is scheduled to be held on 25 September 2025 in New York under the chairmanship of Azerbaijan. Mr. Abakirov confirmed the Kyrgyz Republic’s support for the efforts of the Chairmanship to transform CICA into a full-fledged international organization, including the ongoing work on the draft Charter.

Addressing the priorities of the current Chairmanship, the Secretary General provided an overview of the institutions

under discussion among the Member States as part of the organization's further institutional development. The parties also explored ways to enhance the participation of the Kyrgyz Republic in existing CICA advisory bodies, including the Business Council, the Youth Council, the Think Tank Forum and the Partnership Network of Leading Universities.

In the context of regional security, the Secretary General stressed the importance of increasing joint efforts to promote sustainable development in Afghanistan, including through existing mechanisms such as the CICA Fund.

During his visit to Bishkek, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met with Deputy Minister of Culture, Information and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic Marat Tagaev. The Secretary General informed his counterpart about the upcoming meeting of the CICA Youth Council and a series of related events scheduled to take place in Baku this October. It was emphasized that Member States are showing a growing interest in volunteerism as a new confidence building measure. The potential of the Kyrgyz Republic as co-coordinator of the CICA human dimension was noted.

The development prospects of the CICA Partnership Network of Leading Universities (PNLU) were the central focus of the meeting between the Secretary General and First Vice-Rector of the Jusup Balasagyn Kyrgyz National University Mr. Alaibek Shamshiev, who represents Kyrgyzstan on the PNLU Coordination Council. During the conversation, it was underscored that participation in the Coordination Council offers broad opportunities to enhance international visibility through academic exchanges and joint research within the framework of the PNLU, engage with the CICA Youth Council and take part in initiatives such as the international rally of volunteers, which will take place in Baku on 21 October 2025 under the auspices of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship. Mr. Shamshiev expressed interest in further developing the partnership and confirmed his readiness to provide the facilities of the Kyrgyz National University for hosting a PNLU event as part of the celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of Kyrgyzstan's leading higher education institution.

Furthermore, during his visit, the Secretary General held substantive discussions with Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Kyrgyz Republic Mr. Latif Gandilov and Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Rapil Zhoshybaev. Among the issues discussed was the initiative to establish a CICA Alley in Bishkek, with the participation of the diplomatic corps and volunteers from local youth organizations.





The CICA Secretariat hosts the annual CICA Bicycle Tour 2025



Astana, 3 June 2025 – The Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), in cooperation with the Embassies of Turkmenistan and Tajikistan and the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Kazakhstan, hosted its annual CICA Bicycle Tour in the Astana Green Belt. Covering a distance of 40 kilometers, the event was held to mark World Bicycle Day, announced by the UN General Assembly in order to promote the universality of the bicycle as an affordable, reliable and environmentally friendly mode of transport.

Now in its fourth year, the tour has become a well-established tradition under the CICA flag, reinforcing the Secretariat's continued efforts to promote healthy lifestyles, environmental consciousness, and informal dialogue through inclusive, community-oriented activities.

Participants included the CICA Secretary General, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, the Ambassador of Turkmenistan to the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Batyr Rejepov, the Ambassador of Tajikistan to the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Khayrullo Ibodzoda, and the Head of the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Kazakhstan, Mr. Kurtmolla Abdulganiyev.

The event was also attended by members of the diplomatic corps and the international community in Astana, including the Ambassadors of Brazil, France, Malaysia and Uzbekistan, senior diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, and embassies of Russia, Belarus, Republic of Korea, and the United States, as well as the Head of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Office for Central Asia and representatives of other international organizations.

In his welcoming remarks, Ambassador Sarybay underscored the symbolic importance of holding the tour on World









Bicycle Day and expressed appreciation to Turkmenistan for initiating this meaningful internationally recognized and respected day. He emphasized its continuity as a reflection of unity and shared commitment to sustainable development. The Secretary General recalled that the tour was first launched in 2022 to commemorate the 30th anniversary of CICA and has since evolved into a signature event of the Secretariat, with editions held both in the Astana Green Belt and the scenic Burabay region.

He highlighted the initiative's alignment with the priorities of the current Azerbaijani Chairmanship, particularly in fostering people-to-people connections, strengthening trust and advancing climate diplomacy. Ambassador Sarybay also noted the strategic significance of the venue: the Astana Green Belt is not only a greening initiative but a comprehensive climate resilience project, recently presented by Kazakhstan at the 81st session of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific as a model for sustainable urban development.

H.E. Batyr Rejepov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Kazakhstan, highlighted that World Bicycle Day was established by the UN General Assembly on Turkmenistan's initiative — reflecting the country's active role in promoting global efforts for sustainable development, health and environmental protection. He noted that the Day is celebrated annually in Turkmenistan with mass cycling events, symbolizing the nation's commitment to a clean and healthy lifestyle. Marking the 30th Anniversary of Turkmenistan's Permanent Neutrality, he reaffirmed Turkmenistan's dedication to peace, neighborly relations, and international dialogue. The Ambassador concluded by expressing hope that the event would inspire continued movement toward peace, sustainability and harmony.

Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to Kazakhstan, H.E. Khayrullo Ibodzoda, highlighted the unifying power of sport and Tajikistan's active role in promoting cycling at the international level. He noted the successful hosting of the UCI Mountain Bike Eliminator World Cup in Dushanbe in April 2025, which brought together athletes from 40 countries, as well as earlier events such as the 2022 Asian Cycling Confederation Congress and Asian Championships. Emphasizing sport as a source of health, discipline, and national progress, the Ambassador commended the CICA Bicycle Tour as a meaningful expression of shared values and solidarity through sport.

The event also featured remarks by Mr. Kurtmolla Abdulganiyev, Head of the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Kazakhstan, who highlighted cycling as a unifying force that transcends generations, cultures, and borders. He emphasized its benefits to health, urban sustainability, and emissions reduction — contributions directly tied to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Noting the proximity of World Environment Day, he underlined the broader relevance of the tour and called on the international community to promote the bicycle not only as a mode of transport, but also as a symbol of peace, cooperation, shared purpose, and environmental protection.

Through initiatives like the CICA Bicycle Tour, the Secretariat continues to contribute to public diplomacy, sustainability, and regional cooperation—helping advance the broader goals of confidence building and sustainable development across Asia.

















CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay held a cordial meeting in Astana with H.E. Han Chunlin, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China. He expressed appreciation to the Government of China for its steadfast support of CICA and conveyed gratitude for the invitation to the commemorative events in Beijing marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay took part in the AIF 2025 panel discussion on the role of middle powers in shaping a multipolar world. He highlighted CICA's expanding partnerships with international organizations promoting inclusive multilateralism and emphasized CICA's contribution to regional security through preventive diplomacy and enhanced connectivity.



Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met with Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Director of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, on the sidelines of the Astana International Forum 2025. They exchanged views on multilateralism and preventive diplomacy — key themes of the day's panel on the role of middle powers in a multipolar world.



The CICA Secretary General met with IOM Director General Amy E. Pope on the sidelines of the AIF 2025. They exchanged views on the challenges and opportunities related to migration processes across Asia and discussed prospects for enhancing cooperation between CICA and IOM. Both sides agreed to strengthen the partnership through concrete joint initiatives.

Watch the full interview of CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay for Realnoye Vremya, where he discusses CICA's comprehensive approach to security from transport connectivity to information security, as well as the significance of the KazanForum 2025 in promoting dialogue and strengthening mutual understanding.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay joined Mr. Maulen Ashimbayev, Speaker of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, in a tree-planting eco-action in Astana held under President Tokayev's Taza Qazaqstan initiative. He expressed gratitude to the Speaker for his strong support of the CICA process and the priorities of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship.



Ambassador Kairat Sarybay witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Women's Entrepreneurship Development Association and the Association for Business, Society & Government Relations during the Tenth CICA Business Forum. The event marked an important step toward enhancing cross-border cooperation among women-led businesses within the CICA framework.



Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met with Mr. Kang Young-shin, Director-General at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, at the CICA Secretariat. They discussed the current CICA agenda and the implementation of projects, particularly in the areas of energy security, digitalization and connectivity. Ambassador Sarybay also expressed appreciation for the generous commitment of the Republic of Korea to donate a unique art piece to the new CICA Headquarters



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay met with Mr. Kakha Imnadze, UN Special Representative for Central Asia and Head of UNRCCA. He shared updates on the priorities of Azerbaijan's Chairmanship and the upcoming informal meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council to be held on the sidelines of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, as well as CICA's plans in support of the 2026 International Year of UN Volunteers.

Watch the full interview of CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay to TRT AVAZ (in Turkish) on the importance of platforms like Antalya Diplomacy Forum, CICA's mission to promote peace and security through dialogue and cooperation, CICA's contribution to the panel on culture as a force for unity in a divided world.

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