

## **Welcoming remarks by Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat Ambassador Kairat Sarybay at the Fifth Meeting of the CICA Youth Council**

Chairman of the CICA Youth Council,  
Distinguished participants of the CICA Youth Council meeting,

On behalf of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) I am pleased to welcome all participants of the Fifth Meeting of the CICA Youth Council. This year's meeting of the Youth Council takes place in the CICA 30th anniversary year.

As you know, CICA has gone through a remarkable evolution and currently serves as a relevant platform for interaction among Asian states on a wide range of issues.

A special role in the comprehensive agenda of CICA is assigned to the development of youth cooperation of the Member States within the framework of the human dimension.

It should be noted that the CICA Youth Council was established in 2014 at the initiative of the Republic of Kazakhstan, based on the understanding that youth cooperation is an important factor in ensuring sustainable and comprehensive development of the CICA Member States in socio-economic and humanitarian fields. Within the framework of youth cooperation, the Member States identified eight priority areas of interaction that are designed to improve the quality of life of young people, namely, developing regional cooperation among national youth organizations, encouraging youth participation in the implementation of youth policy; promoting the development of civic culture and gender equality; improving cooperation in the interests of youth; developing projects on the promotion of democratic norms of behavior, cultural exchange, sports and education.

As time shows, in such a short period of time, the CICA Youth Council has become a unique platform for accumulating best ideas of the youth, as well as exchanging experience on youth policy issues among youth associations of CICA Member States.

The importance of the youth agenda was also underlined in the Declaration of the Fifth CICA Summit in 2019, where the Member States agreed to explore the possibilities of holding relevant events for universities and the youth on the platform of the CICA Youth Council in order to expand the scope of people-to-people contacts at various levels.

The topics of today's panel sessions include educational exchange programmes for students, countering radicalization and preventing destructive behavior among young people, issues of youth development at the national and regional levels. This is not a complete list of issues that will be considered today by the delegates of the CICA Youth Council.

Moreover, it should be noted that by the Fifth Meeting of the Youth Council our forum accumulated extensive knowledge and experience on the development of youth cooperation among the CICA Member States.

The Youth Council has held four meetings: in 2015 in China, in 2016 in Kyrgyzstan, in 2018 in Azerbaijan, and in 2021 in Kazakhstan in an online format. In 2021, Uzbekistan, as coordinator in the human dimension and co-chair of the CICA Youth Council, held an international conference on the role of youth in countering radicalism, extremism and terrorism, providing a platform for productive exchange of views on protecting the youth from the influence of destructive factors.

I would especially like to note that CICA fruitfully cooperates with regional organizations on the development of the youth agenda. We gratefully welcome the willingness of TurkPA, the observer organization of CICA, to share with us today the experience of the Parliamentary Group of Young Parliamentarians and its contribution to the development of youth policy in the Turkic-speaking states.

Watching the bright and ambitious young delegates in the hall, the wise words of the great Kazakh poet and educator Akhmet Baitursynov come to mind, “Youth is the nation's hope for a better future.” (Жастар халықтың жақсы болашағының үміті)

The agenda of today's meeting will certainly provide an opportunity to achieve the overarching goal of CICA - promoting a peaceful and prosperous future in Asia.

In conclusion, I would like to wish fruitful work and constructive recommendations to the Fifth Meeting of the CICA Youth Council.

Thank you for your attention.