

**Welcoming remarks by Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat Ambassador
Kairat Sarybay at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Business Council and the
Seventh CICA Business Forum, Nur-Sultan, 27 June 2022**

Excellencies,

Dignitaries on the podium,

Members of the Business Council,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all the members and guests of the Fifth session of CICA Business Council and the participants of the Seventh CICA Business Forum.

At the outset, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Chairman of Kazakh National Chamber of Entrepreneurs Mr. Raimbek Batalov and the Governor of Astana International Financial Centre Mr. Kairat Kelimbetov for co-hosting the events which contribute in advancing CICA process on the sidelines of the prestigious Astana Financial Days.

I am delighted to notice that members of CICA Business Council from so many countries arrived from their capitals to contribute to CICA activities.

Dear delegates,

Today CICA unites 27 Asian States and covers over 90% of Asia, home to more than half of the world's population, producing over 50% of world GDP and accounting for two-thirds of the global economic growth.

In 2020, Kazakhstan assumed the chairmanship in CICA **with the strategic goal of transforming CICA into a full-fledged Organization** which will reflect the Asia's rapidly growing role in global affairs. The Kazakh Chairmanship is holding intensive consultations with all 27 CICA Member States in order to launch the transformation process at the **Sixth CICA Summit** to be held in Nur-Sultan in October 2022.

Let me brief you on the CICA activities in the field of economic cooperation that arouses the greatest interest of the Member States.

In 2021, 44 events have been implemented at the CICA platform, 17 of them belong to the Economic dimension. In 2022 40 events to be held at CICA, 16 of them relate to the Economic dimension.

Most active interaction is seen in the areas of **SME development, Agriculture and Finance**.

Increasing attention is rightly paid to the issues of **digitalization**, the widespread introduction of **information technologies**. And most of the events conducted at the CICA platform are cross-sectoral in nature.

Let me draw your attention to the following positive aspects of the events held in 2021, such as:

- Broad representation and relevance
- Professional and high-quality technical elaboration
- High level of participants
- Active participation of the Member States

This year 16 events of economic nature will be held at CICA platform, including the **Conferences on microfinance for SMEs, cross-border e-commerce and expansion of supply chains for SME products**, the **CICA Finance Summit**.

This highlights deep sense of **ownership**, the **relevance and capacity of CICA** and the interest of Member States in promoting the forum and considering it to pursue national interests and strengthen cooperation and connectivity which will finally contribute to ensure comprehensive security in Asia.

The first review of the implementation of confidence building measures in the Economic dimension which took place at the meeting of the Senior Officials Committee in mid-June this year contributed to building a clear vision on how to increase the effectiveness and practical impact of the CICA activities.

Dear delegates,

During my tenure as CICA Executive Director, I have held dozens of meetings with high-level representatives of the Member States, explaining the priorities of the Chairmanship, and listening carefully to partners' views.

Most counterparts were vocal about the need to focus the CICA activities on a **positive** agenda, to concentrate on the exchange of experience, knowledge and best practices. And today's event is very much in line with expectations of overwhelming majority of CICA Member States.

Themes of digitalization of SME and ensuring food security are topical, taking into account the current economic and geopolitical situation.

I wish the CICA Business Council and Business Forum fruitful discussions and useful deliberations.

Thank you.