



**SECRETARIAT OF THE CONFERENCE ON INTERACTION
AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES IN ASIA**

**СЕКРЕТАРИАТ СОВЕЩАНИЯ ПО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЮ
И МЕРАМ ДОВЕРИЯ В АЗИИ**

№ 17-1/435

The Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) presents its compliments to the CICA Member States and has the honour to forward the minutes of the meeting of the Senior Officials Committee (SOC) of 23 June 2021 reflecting comments of Member States on its draft circulated on 25 June 2021.

*Enclosure:
as stated, on 8 p.*

The Secretariat avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the CICA Member States the assurances of its highest consideration.

Nur-Sultan, 12 July 2021



**MEMBER STATES
OF THE CONFERENCE ON INTERACTION
AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES
IN ASIA**



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*Приложение:
упомянутое,
на 8 л.*

Секретариат Совещания по взаимодействию и мерам доверия в Азии (СВМДА) свидетельствует свое уважение государствам-членам СВМДА и имеет честь препроводить протокол заседания Комитета старших должностных лиц (КСДЛ) 23 июня 2021 года, который отражает замечания государств-членов по проекту протокола, направленного Секретариатом 25 июня 2021 года.

Секретариат пользуется случаем, чтобы возобновить государствам-членам СВМДА уверения в своем весьма высоком уважении.

город Нур-Султан, 12 июля 2021 г.



**ГОСУДАРСТВА-ЧЛЕНЫ
СОВЕЩАНИЯ ПО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЮ И
МЕРАМ ДОВЕРИЯ В АЗИИ**

Қосымша:
аталған 8 п.

Азиядағы өзара іс-қимыл және сенім шаралары кеңесінің (АӨСШК) Хатшылығы АӨСШК мүше мемлекеттеріне өзінің зор ілтипатын білдіре отырып, мүше мемлекеттердің 2021 жылғы 25 маусымда жолданған хаттамаға қатысты ескертпелерін қамтитын 2021 жылғы 23 маусымдағы Аға лауазымды тұлғалар комитеті (АЛТК) отырысының хаттамасын жолдауды өзіне мәртебе санайды.

Хатшылық осы мүмкіндікті пайдалана отырып, АӨСШК мүше мемлекеттеріне өзінің зор ілтипатын тағы да растайды.

Нұр-Сұлтан қаласы, 2021 жылғы 12 шілде

**АЗИЯДАҒЫ ӨЗАРА ІС-ҚИМЫЛ ЖӘНЕ
СЕНІМ ШАРАЛАРЫ КЕҢЕСІНІҢ МҮШЕ
МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕРІ**



Secretariat

**MINUTES
OF THE SENIOR OFFICIALS COMMITTEE MEETING
on 23 June 2021 (online format)**

The meeting of the Senior Officials Committee (SOC) was held in Nur-Sultan in an online format on 23 June 2021. H.E. Mr. Shakhrat Nuryshev, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, chaired the meeting.

The adopted agenda (SOC/2021-I/Agenda/3), decisions taken (SOC/2021-I/DEC/1, SOC/2021-I/DEC/2 and SOC/2021-I/DEC/3) and the list of participants of the meeting were circulated to the Member States on 23 June 2021 through Secretariat Note Verbale №7-1/397.

In accordance with p. 12.4 of the CICA Rules of Procedure, CICA observers attended the SOC meeting during the consideration of agenda items 1-4 at the invitation of the Chairmanship.

1. Opening of the meeting

- Statement by the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Sh.Nuryshev

Mr. Nuryshev updated SOC on implementation of the CICA Plan of Confidence Building Measures for 2021 which consisted over 50 events and thanked all Member States for their contribution to the Plan. Mr. Nuryshev outlined documents planned for adoption by the Sixth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to be held in Nur-Sultan on 11-12 October 2021 - the Ministerial Declaration, updated CICA Catalogue of CBMs and Regulations of the CICA Council of Eminent Persons. He suggested that the Declaration should include such topics as global trends, security issues, sustainable development and connectivity, and should be concise, clearly structured and reflect the main principles of CICA. Mr. Nuryshev noted the significant work made by the CICA Secretariat and thanked Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay for promoting the CICA process and increasing its visibility. He emphasized the recent visit of the Executive Director to the CICA Founder, First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev for consultations and further guidelines.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The SOC adopted its agenda with an amendment in the title of agenda item 4 as proposed by India.

3. Approval of granting the CICA Observer Status to Turkmenistan

- Comments

The Chairperson reported that on 3 March 2021 the Chairmanship received a letter from the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers – Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan His Excellency Mr. Rashid Meredov with the request to grant Observer Status in CICA to Turkmenistan. On 5 March 2021, the Chairmanship has communicated its request to all Member States to approve granting of Observer Status to Turkmenistan through a silence procedure expiring on 20 March 2021, in accordance with Rule 10.2.3 of the CICA Rules of Procedure. There had been no objection received from any Member State and, therefore, consensus was in place on this matter. The Chairperson noted that this matter was put on the agenda at the request of a Member State that it should be discussed and approved at an SOC meeting.

- Decisions

The Senior Officials Committee approved granting of the CICA Observer Status to Turkmenistan.

- Comments

The Chairperson welcomed and congratulated Turkmenistan on becoming the CICA Observer State, and all Member States and Observers of CICA on further expansion and strengthening of the CICA community. Member States welcomed Turkmenistan as a new CICA Observer in their statements under agenda item 4.

H.E. Mr. Vepa Hadzhiev, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan delivered welcome remarks on the occasion of assuming CICA Observer Status and expressed gratitude for unanimously achieved decision. He stated a full commitment to CICA values and objectives and outlined priorities of Turkmenistan related to CICA dimensions.

4. Thematic discussion on the theme “Growing role of Asia in international affairs and related adaptation of CICA”

- Comments

Statements were delivered by India, Cambodia, Bahrain, Iran, Turkey, Russian Federation, Vietnam and China.

India noted that mutual support and interdependence of Asian nations were main strengths and assets of Asia, as demonstrated by cooperation in addressing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. India highlighted the importance of cooperative multilateralism in international relations, accountability of multilateral organizations to States and their adherence to the UN Charter. India stressed the importance of close cooperation within CICA and its strong interest in CICA as an important vehicle towards peace and prosperity in Asia, welcomed the adoption of a new CICA CBM on epidemiology and noted India's engagement as Co-coordinator in the priority area of energy security.

Cambodia stressed that Asia was increasing its influence in the world due to economic growth and strengthening interconnectivity. It noted the institutional increase in regional and sub-regional dialogues, such as APEC, ASEM, EAS, SCO and others, and stressed that CICA was the most dynamic and diverse platform in Asia with many dimensions of cooperation. Cambodia noted CICA's high potential and the need for its further institutional strengthening and enhancing cooperation among its Member States, and with Observers and external partners. Cambodia highlighted focus areas for CICA, including addressing challenges of COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination and healthcare, strengthening connectivity, development of SMEs and market activity, and promoting sustainable development, agriculture, water management, food supply, energy security. Cambodia expressed its commitment to play constructive role to make CICA more effective and vibrant.

Bahrain underscored the importance of multilateralism and inclusiveness and stated that CICA is an opportunity to consolidate collective wisdom of Asian nations in order to enhance peace, security and cooperation. Bahrain expressed support to CICA in achieving its mission and to the priorities of the CICA Chairmanship of Kazakhstan. Bahrain noted the need for enhancing cooperation of CICA with other international organizations and for stronger partnerships within CICA for giving adequate responses to emerging threats and challenges.

Iran noted that Asia is a promising and dynamically rising area in the world, owing to its rich human resources and economic growth. It underlined the importance of getting rid of ethical, cultural and other types of tensions, including border disputes. Iran emphasized the important role of CICA in promoting security and stability in the region, thanks to its focus on communication and consensus. Iran called on Member States to work together to promote peace, trade and economic development, building on their strengths, noted the need for cooperation with other countries in the region and expressed concern about external interference in internal matters of the region. Iran emphasized the importance of CICA in its foreign policy, noted the need for structured transformation of CICA, and that it will welcome any CICA initiatives which promote friendly relations.

Turkey highlighted that CICA has a considerable potential to contribute to intensively growing Asia for the mutual benefit of all Asian peoples. Improving the coordination of national policies on the Asian continent will strengthen the continent's resilience

in face of growing challenges and threats, and promote its sustainable development. Despite the fact of existence of a number of alliances in Asia, unfortunately, coordination between them is very weak. It is necessary to strengthen the sense of ownership of the Member States at the CICA platform. Turkey supports the priorities of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in the CICA and welcomes Turkmenistan as an Observer and notes with satisfaction that entire Central Asia belongs to the CICA area now.

The Russian Federation noted Asia's positive development dynamics and good resilience to external factors, owing to Asian peoples' preservation of roots and heritage. The Russian Federation reminded that the victory in World War II, determined largely by the sacrifice of the peoples of the USSR, laid the foundation for shaping the present-day system of international relations, including the United Nations, paving the way for peaceful and stable development of Eurasia and other continents. The Russian Federation stressed that it is impossible to automatically duplicate in Asia the security system formed in the Euro-Atlantic, warned against NATO's intention to move towards East Asia and use the Alliance as a key platform to contain the Asian competitors of the West, as well as expressed disagreement with the recent tendency to replace the Asia identity with surrogates, which don't foster the truly independent development and leave out the massive integration processes taking place in Asia. The Russian Federation noted that CICA can play a constructive role in consolidating positive processes required in Asia, along with the SCO, the Eurasian Economic Union and ASEAN, and CICA is a logical, truly needed element for constructing Eurasian connectivity. It noted importance of further strengthening the practical, results-oriented cooperation within CICA aimed at ensuring economic growth, developing people-to-people contacts and strengthening regional security.

Vietnam noted the crucial role of Asia in promoting global peace, stability and development and immense influence on shaping international affairs, and that CICA should continue promoting its role as a regional forum for enhancing dialogue and building trust. Vietnam also elaborated on the role and efforts of ASEAN in building regional security together with CICA and other fora, particularly in maintaining peace, stability, maritime security and safety in the South China Sea and in assisting Myanmar to find a peaceful solution; expressed its willingness to work closely with CICA Member States in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic; and highlighted Vietnam's work as non-permanent member of the UNSC to promote regional and international peace and security issues, champion multilateralism and the respect for international law and the UN Charter, and strengthen relations between the UN and regional organizations, including CICA.

China noted that Asia has become an important force in global anti-epidemiological cooperation, restoration of world economy and securing global peace and stability. China said CICA should be up to date and focus on the needs of Member States for cooperation and mutual understanding for the sake of peace, economic prosperity and building a united Asian community. China highlighted the following priorities for CICA: cooperative anti-epidemiological efforts; ensuring regional security and

stability; promotion of openness, innovations and connectivity in economic development; and strong defense of multilateralism with the central role of the UN.

5. Consideration of the draft of the updated CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures

- Comments

The Chairperson, Russian Federation, India, Turkey and Iran made comments on the draft of the updated Catalogue CICA Catalogue of CBMs. Texts of four paragraphs of the draft were discussed and amended at the meeting, related to priority areas “New challenges and threats (general)”, “Security of and in the use of ICTs” and “Energy security” (the latter paragraph was finalized at the meeting), and to the human dimension.

India expressed its interest in becoming a Co-coordinator in the human dimension, and the Chairperson proposed that this matter be discussed by SWG and considered at the next SOC meeting, noting that the List of Coordinating and Co-coordinating countries will be regularly updated by the SOC.

- Decisions

The Senior Officials Committee tasked the Special Working Group (SWG) with finalizing the draft of the updated CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures before the next SOC meeting.

The Senior Officials Committee approved new co-coordinating countries for implementing confidence building measures (CBMs) under priority areas of CICA dimensions:

- China and Jordan in the priority area «Epidemiological safety, public health and pharmaceuticals»,
- China in the priority area «Development of secure and effective systems of transportation corridors»,
- Bangladesh in the priority area «Natural disaster management», and
- China in the human dimension.

The Senior Officials Committee adopted the SOC decision on the List of coordinating and co-coordinating countries for implementing CBMs under priority areas of CICA dimensions (SOC/2021-I/DEC/3).

6. CICA Plan of Action for Implementation of UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy

- **Video address by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism, Head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, Ambassador V.Voronkov**

Mr. Voronkov expressed gratitude to Kazakhstan in its capacity of CICA Chair to promote and implement the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. He briefed on the essence of the six points of the Vision of Combating Terrorism in a Pandemic Environment, set out in the corresponding speech of the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. He called on international organizations to contribute to the UN efforts. Mr. Voronkov informed that the UN Office for Counter-Terrorism delivered over 50 relevant capacity building programmes for developing states.

- **Comments**

The State of Palestine noted that it had always showed its commitment and responsibility. Palestine highly appreciated the important role of CICA and the UN in countering terrorism. It called for not mixing between terror and resistance, as under international law people under occupation have the right to self-defense and resistance. Palestine referred to a dangerous form of terror - a state backed Israeli settler terrorism, in which the Palestinian people are living. Palestine stressed that all CICA and UN member states should respect the UN Charter and implement UN resolutions, concerning Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as well as the Declaration of the 5th CICA Summit. Palestine also stated the crimes that Israel has committed in its last attack on Gaza strip in May 2021 which resulted in the killing of 268 Palestinians including 67 children, 40 women and 17 elders.

- **Decisions**

The Senior Officials Committee tasked the SWG with resuming consideration of the draft CICA Plan of Action for Implementation of UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy before the next SOC meeting.

7. Consideration of the draft Regulations of the CICA Council of Eminent Persons

- **Comments**

The Chairperson reported that consensus was reached within the SWG on the draft Regulation of the Council of Eminent Persons (CEP). He noted that the high level and wide international recognition of the members of the CEP, its reporting to the highest governing bodies of CICA (Summit and Ministerial Meeting) and consideration by the CEP of only key strategic issues will provide a very significant contribution to the further development of CICA and to the strengthening of peace and cooperation in the CICA region.

- **Decisions**

The Senior Officials Committee approved the draft of the Regulations of the Council of Eminent Persons of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building

Measures in Asia (CICA) (MM/2021/DRAFT/1) and recommended its adoption by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the CICA Member States.

8. Consideration of the draft Regulations of the CICA Think Tank Forum

- Comments

The Chairperson reported that the SWG had thoroughly considered the draft Regulations of the CICA Think Tank Forum and the Chairmanship will resume the consultations with a view to reaching consensus by the next SOC meeting.

- Decisions

The Senior Officials Committee tasked the SWG with agreeing on the draft of the Regulations of the CICA Think Tank Forum before the next SOC meeting.

9. Consideration of the draft general guidelines for conducting events on implementation of CICA confidence building measures

- Comments

The Chairperson, Russian Federation and Turkey discussed the draft document, and the Chairperson and the Executive Director provided clarifications. In particular, the appropriateness of participation of non-member States was questioned by the Russian Federation, and clarifications were provided that the document explains how this matter would be handled. Suggestion to adopt the guidelines document as an annex to the CICA Catalogue of CBMs was raised by the Russian Federation, and clarifications on the advantages of separate adoption and handling were provided. The Russian Federation additionally proposed to consider the periods of appointment of Coordinating and Co-coordinating countries for implementing CBMs.

- Decisions

The Senior Officials Committee adopted the SOC decision on General guidelines for conducting events on implementation of CICA confidence building measures (SOC/2021-I/DEC/2).

10. Consideration of the proposal by the Russian Federation to amend the CICA Rules of Procedure in relation to the status of observers

- Comments

The Chairperson noted that the Russian Federation prepared and circulated proposals to amend the CICA Rules of Procedure regarding the status of Observers. The Special Working Group had earlier considered the proposals of the Russian Federation and recommended that the SOC consider and, in absence of objections, approve the proposal.

Comments by the Russian Federation: In the process of preparing amendments to the CICA Rules of Procedure in relation to the status of observers, Russia proceeded from the need to strengthen the CICA's internal institutional trust-based system of coordination among the Member States. In this context, the presence of observers at CICA meetings that provide for the discussion of sensitive issues is unacceptable. The status of a full member should significantly differ from the status of an observer, who can be invited to certain events on the implementation of CBMs in order to get acquainted with the general principles of the platform. Access to the internal specifics of decision-making on the CICA agenda must be altogether denied.

Comments by the Chairperson: The Chairmanship believes that the observers represent an asset for CICA for enhancing its international standing and visibility. Also, the CICA history shows that most of the Observer States are potential full Members of the CICA family. The Chairmanship shares the view that sensitive matters and issues under discussion for possible decision-making should not be considered in presence of observers, and this is stipulated in the current Rules of Procedure. The Chairperson stressed that the proposal of the Russian Federation to admit observers only to certain parts of meetings was being already implemented by the Chairmanship at the current SOC meeting, and never before the current Chairmanship did invite observers to SWG meetings. Furthermore, the consensus-based participation of observers in CICA events on implementation of confidence-building measures was just approved by the SOC at this meeting. So, CICA already has good rules in place. At the same time, restriction of current rights of observers in terms of presence at CICA meetings may provoke indifference and loss of interest to CICA.

The Chairperson expressed readiness to engage in the process of streamlining the CICA Rules of Procedure with regard to the status of observers, taking into account concerns about the presence of observers at meetings during discussion of sensitive matters, if the Member States mandate the Chairmanship. The meeting voiced no objections to the proposal by the Russian Federation. The Chairperson informed about certain editorial amendments by the Chairmanship to the form of the proposal and expressed the intention to submit these to the Member States for consideration.

- **Decisions**

The Senior Officials Committee tasked the SWG with agreeing on amendments to the CICA Rules of Procedure in relation to the status of Observers before the next SOC meeting.

11. Any other business

No issues were raised.