

Concept Paper

CICA Side Event on "Water Security and Climate Resilience: Addressing Environmental Challenges in CICA Member States" on the Margins of the High-Level International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation (29 May 2025, Dushanbe, Tajikistan)

Background

Glaciers are essential to the water cycle, sustaining ecosystems, agriculture, and livelihoods, particularly in the CICA region where vulnerability to environmental issues is high.

The accelerated melting of glaciers due to climate change poses significant risks to sustainable development of the region, water security, biodiversity, and disaster resilience. Many CICA Member States are already experiencing water scarcity, desertification, and extreme weather events, making the preservation of glaciers a common environmental and economic priority.

Recognizing these challenges, the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues (Astana, 2024) emphasized the need for enhanced regional cooperation on climate resilience and water management. The conference's outcome document reaffirmed CICA's commitment to joint action, dialogue, and policy coordination to address these pressing issues. In alignment with the objectives of the High-Level International Conference on Glaciers' Preservation, this side event will serve as a regional dialogue platform to integrate CICA's environmental agenda with broader international efforts.

At COP29, Azerbaijan showcased its strengthened commitments to climate action, including ambitious renewable energy targets and regional initiatives for sustainable water management, offering valuable insights for CICA Member States. Kazakhstan has reaffirmed its goal of carbon neutrality by 2060, while other member states have pledged enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), focusing on renewable energy expansion, afforestation, and climate adaptation measures. These commitments reflect a growing regional momentum toward sustainability and collective climate resilience.

Objective of the Side Event

The event aims to provide a platform for CICA Member States, international organizations, and experts to discuss regional strategies for water security and climate resilience in the context of glacier preservation. Specifically, the session will:

- Highlight water-related environmental challenges in CICA Member States and their correlation with glacier loss.
- Showcase key outcomes of the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues, linking them to broader discussions on climate resilience and water cooperation.
- Explore opportunities for regional cooperation and innovative solutions, including nature-based solutions, transboundary water cooperation, and climate adaptation strategies.

Proposed Program: *(The final speakers' list is included in the programme attached to this concept paper.)*

Sessions	Speakers
Welcoming Remarks	Welcoming remarks: Senior representative of the CICA Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Tajikistan (conference host), and the CICA Secretariat. Moderator: CICA Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Open discussions (The open discussions will convene stakeholders to highlight their ideas and actions on cooperation in the context of the water security, climate resilience	Keynote speakers: The CICA Secretariat and the COP29 Representative of the CICA Chairmanship Azerbaijan. Speakers: -Thailand (coordinator country of the sustainable development priority area) -China and Mongolia (as coordinating countries of environment protection priority area) -Representatives of the CICA Member States (Kazakhstan and Türkiye) -Representatives from UNESCAP, SCO, IOFS

Sessions	Speakers
and sustainable development of the region)	Guiding Questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the main water security challenges currently facing CICA Member States, and how are these linked to the accelerated loss of glaciers? 2. What key achievements and announcements at COP29 can serve as momentum for accelerating regional cooperation on climate diplomacy in the CICA region? 3. What innovative or nature-based solutions are being explored or implemented by CICA Member States to enhance water resources management and climate adaptation? 4. How can CICA facilitate greater transboundary water cooperation in the CICA region? 5. How can regional platforms like CICA promote the alignment of national actions with international climate commitments, including the UNFCCC and SDGs? 6. How can the outcomes of the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues be effectively translated into regional policies or action plans for an environmentally sustainable region? 7. What strategic priorities should CICA consider in shaping its environmental agenda in response to emerging global and regional challenges?
Q&A Session	Moderator-led interactive discussion with audience participation
Closing Remarks	Key take-outs

Expected Outcomes

- Strengthened regional dialogue and cooperation on water security and climate resilience within CICA region.

- Integration of the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues recommendations into regional water cooperation discussions.
- Identification of collaborative opportunities for sustainable water management, climate adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.
- Contribution to global efforts in glacier preservation, aligning with international climate action commitments.

Format and Venue

- **Date:** 29 May 2025
- **Time:** 14:00-15:30 (1.5 hours), Dushanbe time (GMT+5)
- **Venue:** Hilton Hotel Dushanbe / Ayni Hall
- **Format:** Hybrid format
- **Working Languages:** English and Russian with simultaneous interpretation

Organizers of the Side Event

The CICA Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan with the support of the CICA Secretariat.

Target Participants

- Government officials, climate resilience and water security experts, academia, think tanks, and civil society from CICA Member States
- Representatives from the UNESCAP, UNEP, SCO, ECO, IOFS

This side event will reinforce regional cooperation in addressing the pressing environmental and water challenges faced by CICA Member States, contributing to global efforts for glacier preservation and sustainable water resource management.

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