



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

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

**№SOC/832**

*Enclosure:  
as stated,  
on 14 p.*

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 draft minutes of the Senior Officials Committee meeting held on 27 June 2024. Member States are invited to submit their comments by Friday, 2 August 2024.

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

Astana, 12 July 2024



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



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И МЕРАМ ДОВЕРИЯ В АЗИИ**

**№SOC/832**

*Приложение:  
упомянутое,  
на 14 л.*

Секретариат Совещания по взаимодействию и мерам доверия в Азии (СВМДА) свидетельствует свое уважение государствам-членам СВМДА и имеет честь препроводить проект протокола заседания Комитета старших должностных лиц, состоявшегося 27 июня 2024 года. Государствам-членам предлагается представить свои комментарии до пятницы 2 августа 2024 года.

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

город Астана, 12 июля 2024 г.



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

Қосымша:  
аталған,  
14 п.

Азиядағы өзара іс-қимыл және сенім шаралары кеңесінің (Азия Кеңесінің) Хатшылығы Азия Кеңесіне мүше мемлекеттерге өзінің зор ілтипатын білдіре отырып, 2024 жылғы 27 маусымда өткен Аға лауазымды тұлғалар комитеті отырысы хаттамасының жобасын жолдауды өзіне мәртебе санайды. Мүше мемлекеттер түсініктемелерін 2024 жылғы 2 тамыз, жұма күніне дейін ұсына алады.

Хатшылық осы мүмкіндікті пайдалана отырып, Азия Кеңесіне мүше мемлекеттерге өзінің зор ілтипатын тағы да растайды.

Астана қаласы, 2024 жылғы 12 шілде

**АЗИЯДАҒЫ ӨЗАРА ІС-ҚИМЫЛ ЖӘНЕ  
СЕНІМ ШАРАЛАРЫ КЕҢЕСІНЕ  
МҮШЕ МЕМЛЕКЕТТЕР**



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Secretariat

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SENIOR OFFICIALS COMMITTEE MEETING\***  
**Astana, 27 June 2024**

The Senior Officials Committee (SOC) meeting was held on Thursday, 27 June 2024 in Astana in the hybrid format. Mr. Alibek Bakayev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, chaired the meeting.

The initial draft agenda and draft annotated agenda (SOC/2024-II/Agenda/1 of 28 May 2024 and SOC/2024-II/Agenda/2 of 19 June 2024), the decisions taken (SOC/2024-II/DEC/1 and SOC/2024-II/DEC/2 of 27 June 2024) and the list of participants are available on the CICA website (<https://s-cica.org/index.php?view=page&t=soc-meeting-27-june2024>).

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted without changes.

**2. Regular review of implementation of CICA confidence building measures (CBMs) with focus on the human dimension**

The regular review of CBM implementation with focus on the human dimension was conducted by the Chairmanship in accordance with paragraph 1.8 of the CICA Catalogue of CBMs and the SOC decision of 15 June 2022. The modalities for the review and supporting information material were circulated prior to the meeting (SOC/2024-II/CHAIR/1 and SOC/2024-II/SEC/1 of 12 June 2024).

The Chair suggested to share analysis on the concept paper and the events conducted in the dimension in the period from 2021 to 2024, come up with recommendations for updating existing CBMs and on ways to further increase the quality and quantity of events conducted in the human dimension.

The Secretary General informed on the implementation of the initiatives put forward by President of Kazakhstan K.Tokayev at the Sixth CICA Summit in the

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\* *Open for comments of Member States until Friday, 2 August 2024.*

human dimension: on the establishment of the Partnership Network of Leading Universities of the CICA Member States (PNLU) and holding the Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders under the auspices of the Seventh Meeting of the CICA Youth Council. In addition, The Secretary General noted that President of Kazakhstan K.Tokayev and President of Russia V.Putin at the Sixth CICA Summit highlighted the importance of promotion of volunteerism within CICA. Following this, by the initiative of Russia, the CICA Ministerial Council adopted the statement on promoting volunteerism for sustainable development. The Secretary General noted that the number of events conducted in the human dimension is less than in the economic, new challenges and threats and environmental dimensions.

The Chair emphasized the following. First, there is apparently ample room for holding more events in the human dimension. The Chair invited Member States to be more actively engaged in the initiation of CBM events in this dimension, especially in the fields of cultural heritage, science and technology, and human rights. Second, all CBMs of the human dimension are expected to be implemented with a gradual, step-by-step approach in accordance with the national legislation, given the specifics and circumstances of various regions of Asia. Third, the Chair called on the coordinator and co-coordinators to more actively utilize the format of “Expert Meetings” under Article 7 of the CICA Rules of Procedure, to study issues related to the CICA human dimension with other Member States in order to raise effectiveness and practical impact of CBM implementation in this area. Fourth, Member States could consider including new initiatives, CBMs or priority areas in the CICA Catalogue of CBMs within the human dimension.

Russia informed about the plans to hold a number of CBM events in the second half of 2024 and that relevant concept papers would be sent to Member States in due course. The Russian side proposed to consider including volunteerism as one of the elements of the human dimension within the CICA Catalogue of CBMs. Russia thanked the Secretariat for the support of the “WeAreTogether” International Forum. In addition, Russia highlighted the significance of the establishment of the Partnership Network of Leading Universities of the CICA Member States (PNLU). On this occasion, Russia expressed readiness to develop equal and mutually beneficial international cooperation, including on implementation of the major research projects with hope that the PLNU will help CICA Member States to achieve such goals.

China noted that it attached great importance to the human dimension of CICA CBMs as it fosters rapprochement of minds and people and strengthens mutual understanding and trust. China informed that it organized the CICA Youth Development Forum in Beijing in August 2023, which had been attended by representatives of youth, scientists, mass media and ambassadors of 18 CICA

Member States. As the co-coordinator in the human dimension, the Chinese side reiterated that it would continue cooperation with the coordinator to actively hold relevant events and to participate in them and proposed to strengthen the exchange and cooperation on gender equality within CICA.

The Republic of Korea (RoK) highlighted the significance of the review on human dimension as there is an imbalance in quantity of events in comparison with the economic, new challenges and threats and environmental dimensions. RoK noted the relevance of the activities in volunteerism, youth engagement and gender equality and shared ideas on adding new CBM items on religious dialogue and reconciliation as there are many conflicts around the world. RoK noted the significance of the educational cooperation considering the current progress on the PLNU. Additionally, RoK proposed to consider including engagement of elderly people in CBMs in order to balance the youth engagement and gender equality as they have more experience and mature ideas to improve the implementation of CBMs.

India expressed satisfaction with the level of dynamism that CICA demonstrated for the last three decades. India noted that it viewed CICA as an important forum to promote multilateralism in diverse and multipolar Asia. India expressed readiness to contribute to CICA endeavors and full support to the gradual and step by step transformation process of CICA into a regional international organization as envisaged by the Sixth CICA Summit.

India reiterated that it would continue to be closely and constructively engaged in all CICA meetings by participating in activities within the human dimension and CBM events, as it did at the Sixth CICA Youth Council held in 2023, online experts meetings on the concept paper of the Rally of Volunteer Movements Leaders of the CICA Member States and the work on the Memorandum of the PLNU. With regard to the latter, the line agencies of India considered the matter of the nominating a university to join the PNLU. India also mentioned that the CICA Secretary General met with the officers of the youth affairs in the relevant ministry during his visit to Delhi in 2024.

India informed the SOC on progress in completion of one of the largest democratic exercises in the world as there were more than 900 million eligible voters at the recent general elections. India expressed its commitment to delivering development and prosperity to the people through several national initiatives as well as multilateral and plurilateral engagements, which closely align with objectives and priorities with the CICA human dimension. In this context, India noted hosting in 2023 of the G20 Summit as well as two Summits of Voice of Global South Summit, which contributed to the promotion of sustainable development and other initiatives, such as international solar alliance, coalition for disaster resistant infrastructure, where India also

emphasized the importance of women-led development. India as the co-coordinator of the human dimension plans to consider hosting activities for the benefit of all CICA Member States capitalizing on the experiences as well as the discussions happened in this forum.

Azerbaijan as the incoming CICA Chair expressed hope for better implementation of CBMs in order to ensure that they serve the declared purposes of collective ownership as the accountability is very important. Azerbaijan stressed the need for more in-depth and systematic review and analysis of the implementation of CBMs. Azerbaijan noted that it will pay priority attention to the human dimension and stressed the importance of better and closer engagement of CICA advisory bodies, such as the Youth Council, taking into account the cross-cutting nature of the human dimension. In that regard, it stressed the importance of enhancing synergy of human dimension CBMs with other CICA dimensions. Azerbaijan underlined the significance of better coordination between the Chairmanship, the Secretariat and coordinators of the CBM priority areas. Azerbaijan supported the initiative on the establishment of the PLNU and called for more attention to cooperation on science and technology and cultural heritage as CICA has huge potential in these areas of CBMs.

The Secretary General thanked the Senior Officials for their input, informed that draft recommendations of the Seventh Meeting of the CICA Youth Council were under consideration of Member States, and noted the proposal of one Member State to consider the inclusion of volunteerism as a new CBM to the CICA Catalogue of CBMs. The Secretary General took note of the proposal on inclusion of the engagement of elderly people as a new area of cooperation within the human dimension.

The Secretary General referred to agreements reached during his visits to capitals of Member States, including New Delhi and Baku, with relevant governmental stakeholders on the agenda of the human dimension, in particular on cultural heritage, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. The Secretary General highlighted that coordinators and co-coordinators of priority areas can coordinate between themselves to elaborate possible synergies between different CBMs. He noted on of ideas to that end, such as placing special attention on the youth entrepreneurship within the Business Council, which would lead to synergies between the Youth Council and Business Council. The Secretary General expressed appreciation to the Member States for active involvement and encouraged Member States to hold more events within the human dimension.

The Chair noted that Kazakhstan as a co-coordinator of the human dimension held 4 events since 2021 and plans to organize the Rally of Volunteer

Movement Leaders of the CICA Countries under the auspices of the Youth Council meeting at the ministerial level in Astana in October 2024 and has invited all Member States to participate. Kazakhstan also took active part in the update and approval of the Concept Paper on the human dimension agreed in October 2022 and in updating the related Action Plan in April 2023.

The SOC Decision: The SOC has conducted the annual review of the implementation of CICA confidence building measures (CBMs) with focus on the human dimension and encouraged Member States to engage in voluntary implementation of CBM events in this dimension. The SOC noted the possibility of including cooperation on promoting volunteerism and youth engagement in the CICA area into the CICA CBMs.

### **3. Implementation of the Road Map for CICA Transformation (RMT)**

#### **(a) Cluster 1 of the RMT “Elaborating a charter”**

The Chair delivered a presentation on main approaches of the Chairmanship to elaborating a charter and outlined its expected composition. The presentation and remarks are available at: <https://s-cica.org/index.php?view=page&t=statements-27-june-2024> (restricted part)

Azerbaijan as the incoming Chair noted that the most volume of work on a draft charter will be done under its leadership and it will be one of the priorities of Baku, that the zero draft served as a good basis for further deliberations. Azerbaijan stressed that consensus should be a primary principle when elaborating a charter, while the process should be incremental and reflect collective ownership of all Member States. Azerbaijan noted that the incoming Chairmanship was aware of sensitive issues and the need to respect national positions in regard to the future charter.

Türkiye noted that the draft charter was a good basis for future discussions, that the text was short and concise, mainly in line with Türkiye national position. Türkiye reiterated its stance on preserving the existing principles and acquis of CICA.

Iran expressed its readiness to work on the draft charter with current and incoming Chairs and other Member States in order to solidify the foundation of CICA and to cope better with emerging international order. Iran suggested to structure the discussion into three categories – security issues, legal issues and financial issues, that would involve relevant experts with necessary background.



The Republic of Korea noted that the charter was very important, an overarching task of the transformation process. RoK described the draft as well balanced, commended the idea to allow non-Asian states to have a chance to become CICA Member States. It also supported the proposal to establish the Committee of Permanent Representatives which can contribute to consulting and coordination. RoK noted that codification of specialized bodies and meetings was important and could allow for better sectoral dialogue within CICA. RoK noted that mandatory funding based on the capacity to pay would provide better balance to the organization. RoK agreed that the draft should be concise, leaving further details to other CICA documents and allowing for more flexibility.

Russia reiterated that the charter should be the primary task of the transformation. Russia suggested that this process might require revisiting the founding documents of CICA as the charter was expected to be a new founding document of our future organization, while some basic principles will be preserved to build upon. Russia noted that it was important to decide on the directions and area of our future work, while CBMs could become one of the elements of our future cooperation.

India supported the step-by-step approach to the transformation, noted that the draft would require extensive deliberations, also considering its interlinkages with the draft updated Rules of Procedure. India requested the Chair to propose the plan of negotiating the draft charter.

Palestine noted that many elements of the draft charter were in line with their approach, while all aspects should be thoroughly discussed, and promised to actively engage in negotiating.

Bangladesh noted that the ongoing transformation was indeed guided by the Astana Statement on Transformation and relevant Roadmap. Bangladesh suggested that Member States could first agree on a zero draft that would serve as a basis for further work. It suggested that the Chair could propose some sort of matrix of implementation reflecting timelines. Bangladesh also raised an issue of categorizing CICA as international organization, regional organization or international regional organization.

Viet Nam also requested a preliminary schedule of negotiations of the draft charter, noted its cross-cutting nature and many legal aspects involved. Viet Nam supported gradual and inclusive transformation while preserving the core elements of CICA.

Tajikistan expressed its full support to the Chair and the Secretariat and hoped that the draft charter could be adopted at the 7<sup>th</sup> CICA Summit.

Russia supported the idea of structured discussions of the draft charter with possible use of a relevant matrix to monitor changes and progress, suggested to employ SWG or expert meetings.

Cambodia noted that the draft was of a good quality, while expert meetings should be organized to discuss various clusters and categories of the draft charter. Cambodia suggested that special attention should be paid to financial aspects and future areas of cooperation.

The Chair noted that the future charter would strengthen the organization, because it is not being created from scratch.

The Secretary General noted that the Secretariat assisted the Chairmanship by analyzing several charters of existing international organizations. The Secretary General suggested to continue work on the draft within the SWG in a holistic way, especially when discussing different blocks of it, supported the Chair on elaborating modalities of discussion on the draft charter. The Secretary General proposed to set the deadline of the 7<sup>th</sup> CICA Summit in 2026 for the adoption of the Charter. The Secretary General suggested that CBMs should remain an important part of CICA, while the level of cooperation between Member States could be increased at their good will.

#### **(b) Cluster 4 of the RMT “Updating the Rules of Procedure”**

The Chair delivered a presentation on the main elements and composition of the draft updated Rules of Procedure (RoP) and invited Member States to provide their comments and suggestions before 31 July 2024. The presentation and remarks are available at: <https://s-cica.org/index.php?view=page&t=statements-27-june-2024> (restricted part)

The Republic of Korea noted that the updated draft was an improvement comparing to the existing version. RoK noted that updating RoP was closely connected to elaborating a charter as many elements were reflected in both documents, at the same time RoP should be a living document. RoK supported introduction of new elements, such as “Troika”, that would combine wisdom, experience and vision of past, present and incoming chairmanships.

Azerbaijan stressed that all Member States should engage and discuss the draft RoP, agreed that the document was closely interlinked with the draft Charter. Azerbaijan suggested to decide on what should come first and to avoid repetitions. Azerbaijan suggested that criteria for membership could be discussed, as well as the need for the committee of permanent representatives and other subsidiary bodies. Azerbaijan stressed that CICA should retain

intergovernmental nature and should be led by Member States and the Chair. Azerbaijan further proposed to clearly structure the discussion of the draft RoP in clusters within the SWG framework.

Russia noted that the RoP were recently updated in 2021. While the new RoP were an essential part of the transformation process, the charter should be considered as quintessence of the transformation. Russia suggested to work in parallel, and in blocks, but in a comprehensive and holistic way – both for the draft charter and the updated RoP.

The Secretary General noted that the work on the RoP is guided by the Astana Statement on CICA Transformation and aimed at reflecting relevant decisions and current modus operandi. The Secretary General also suggested to aim at the adoption of the updated RoP at the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Council meeting so the ministers could implement the decision of the leaders.

Azerbaijan noted that it was impossible to separate the charter from the RoP, suggested convening an expert meeting to discuss what should be addressed in the Charter and what should be elaborated in the RoP. Azerbaijan noted that the future charter would be a legally binding document, while RoP was of more technical nature and it should be spared from any political issues.

India suggested that the updated RoP should be guided by the future charter, that it should be elaborated prior to the new RoP, or at least Member States could agree on main elements of the zero draft charter and then proceed with the RoP, with certain degree of flexibility.

SOC Decision: The SOC welcomed the presentation by the Chairmanship of the initial drafts of the CICA Charter and updated CICA Rules of Procedure. The SOC agreed to work under Clusters 1 and 4 of the Road Map for CICA Transformation (RMT) on the basis of these drafts.

### **(c) Progress reports on Clusters 2 and 3 of the RMT**

The Chair informed the SOC that Kazakhstan has made a considerable effort in implementation of Cluster 3 of the Transformation Roadmap and concluded internal approval procedures of the draft Protocol on Amendments to the Host Country Agreement (HCA) by relevant government agencies, and it that was ready for endorsement by the Member States. The draft Protocol was circulated on 19 June 2024 in document SOC/2024/CHAIR/3 together with an Explanatory Note. The Chair highlighted the main reasons for updating the HCA.

The Chair noted that following the approval by the CICA Member States, the document will be submitted for formal adoption by a decree of the Government of Kazakhstan. It will thereafter be co-signed by the host country and the CICA Secretary General and submitted for ratification by the Parliament of Kazakhstan.

The Chair called on all Member States' full and expedient support to this initiative of Kazakhstan and kindly invited them to approve the draft Protocol on Amendments to the HCA through the silence procedure with the deadline of Friday, 19 July 2024, 12 noon by the Astana time.

China noted that 19 July might be insufficient deadline and they might request the Secretariat to extend the silence procedure till 31 July.

SOC Decision: The SOC welcomed the progress achieved by the Chairmanship under Cluster 3 of the RMT “Defining the international status of the Secretariat contracted personnel, including amendments to the Host Country Agreement”.

The Chair informed the SOC that there was no progress on Cluster 2 of the Transformation Roadmap “Improving current modalities of implementation of CICA CBMs until completion of the transformation process and exploring focus areas of our cooperation within the future organization”. The Chair reminded that text of the draft Ministerial Council Decision on the Modalities of Implementation of CICA Confidence Building Measures has been finalized by the SOC on 22 August last year, but one Member State has reserved its position on the entire document.

The Chair noted that the adoption of this document by the Ministerial Council would be a significant achievement as it would codify all best practices of CBM implementation accumulated by CICA so far, and create a comprehensive, effective and flexible framework for CICA's core activities. The Chair called for a constructive approach and flexibility on such an important issue concerning all CICA Member States.

Russia supported the call to adopt the document at the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Council meeting as it concerned the implementation of CBMs which was the core element of CICA at present.

The Chair also invited Member States to propose any new focus areas of cooperation within CICA and put forward such proposals in the course of upcoming discussions on the draft CICA Charter.

SOC Decision: The SOC noted the progress made by the Member States under Cluster 2 of the RMT and the importance of achieving consensus on the draft

Ministerial Council decision on modalities of implementation of CICA CBMs (MC/2023/DRAFT/4/Rev.2 of 22 August 2023).

#### **4. Draft outcome document of the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues**

The Chair informed the SOC that the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues will be held as a specialized meeting on 28 August 2024 online. He reported that the experts have finalized the draft High-Level Statement of the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues following a series of their meetings. The SWG considered the draft outcome document at its meeting on 25 June 2024. One Member State, China, proposed an amendment to the text, and another Member State, Israel, requested some time to check with their experts.

Israel notified the SOC that the amendment was acceptable. China noted that they needed more time to complete internal procedures. Russia requested the Chair to issue the updated concept paper on the conference as soon as possible. The Chair promised to issue the concept paper soon and suggested to set two weeks for the silence procedure on the draft outcome document.

SOC Decision: The SOC approved, subject to a silence procedure with the deadline until 11 July 2024, 12 noon by the Astana time, the draft High-Level Statement of the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues, to be held on 28 August 2024, for the adoption at the conference.

#### **5. Draft annual action plan of the CICA Think Tank Forum for 2024**

The Chair reminded that the SOC considered the draft TTF Action Plan for 2024 at its last meeting on 14 March 2024 and concluded that more time was needed for its consideration. Thereafter, following additional comments from Member States, an updated draft was circulated on 13 June 2024 and considered by the SWG on 25 June 2024. The SWG had also listened to a report by Professor Qiang Xiaoyun, Director of the Center for Russian and Central Asian Studies of the SIIS (TTF Chair) on TTF Activities and the draft Action Plan. The SWG had recommended the adoption of the Action Plan by the SOC as amended at the meeting, namely Revision 3 of the draft dated 25 June 2024.

No objections were raised. The Chair informed the SOC that the earlier proposed symposium dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the CICA Declaration of Principles had been cancelled by the Chairmanship due to budgetary constraints. China welcomed the adoption of the Plan and thanked all Member States for support, pledged to continue supporting SIIS in its role as the TTF Chair.

SOC Decision: The SOC adopted the Annual Action Plan of the CICA Think Tank Forum for 2024.

## **6. Concept papers, coordinators and co-coordinators in priority areas of CICA dimensions**

The Chair informed the SOC that the SWG at its meeting on 25 June considered the draft Concept Paper on “Security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs)” for 2024-2025 prepared by the coordinator (Russia) and co-coordinator (China) and recommended to the SOC to approve it. No objections were raised.

Russia thanked all Member States for their support, announced two seminars dedicated to the various aspects of ICT security and invited all Member States to participate and contribute. China expressed readiness to continue working closely with Russia and other Member States in advancing the issues of ICT security within CICA.

SOC Decision: The SOC approved the concept paper in the priority area “Security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs)” for 2024-2025.

The CICA Secretary General briefed the SOC on the current status of concept papers and action plans on the implementation of CBMs under the priority areas of the CICA dimensions. The corresponding matrix is available at: <https://s-cica.org/index.php?view=page&t=general-information-soc-27-june> (restricted part). The Chair also noted that there still was no coordinator in the priority area “Trade and Investment” and encouraged Member States to apply for this vacant position.

The Chair also recalled that there were two pending offers for co-coordinator roles from Iraq and Israel and reiterated that the Chairmanship welcomed both offers and encouraged all Member States to support these proposals. The Chair further called on India and Thailand, as coordinators in respective areas, and other Member States to facilitate dialogue and help to overcome this impasse.

Türkiye informed the SOC that it had prepared an initial draft of the concept paper for the priority area “Trade and Investment” and shared with the other co-coordinator – Kyrgyzstan, and with the Secretariat. Bangladesh updated the SOC that it was planning on organizing two seminars on information technology, also considered events on natural disaster management and environment protection.

## **7. Update on the other 2024 priorities of the Chairmanship**

The Chair updated the SOC on the progress on key initiatives of the Chairmanship, namely those that were put forward by Kazakhstan at the Sixth CICA Summit in October 2022.

The Chair informed the SOC that the Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders of the CICA Countries under the auspices of the CICA Youth Council and the 7th Meeting of the CICA Youth Council at the level of ministers or heads of relevant agencies will be held tentatively on 3-4 October 2024 in Astana. The Chair also reminded that the draft recommendations of the CICA Youth Council were circulated on 10 April 2024 and received general support of Member States.

The Chair updated the SOC on progress in preparing a draft concept paper on institutionalization of the Finance Summit and draft regulations of the CICA Finance Summit that was being done in collaboration with China and with the support of the Secretariat. China noted that it attached great importance to institutionalization of the Finance Summit and was ready to work with other Member States on realizing that goal.

The Chair updated the SOC that Member States were discussing the draft concept for establishing a Council of Sustainable Connectivity. Two expert meetings held on 29 February and 30 May 2024 have gathered representatives from around 20 Member States, demonstrating significant interest within CICA. The Chair acknowledged the cross-sectoral nature of sustainable connectivity, proposed to proceed from simple to complex and continue to work on the draft concept seeking mutually acceptable wordings. Russia noted that it was not ready to work on sustainable connectivity in a cross-cutting manner. The Secretary General proposed to start with simple narrow issues and, if needed, add more components later.

The Chair reminded the SOC that it had been continuously encouraging Member States to propose projects for the CICA Fund and inviting financial contributions to the Fund from the Member States or from their national agencies. The Chair noted that the Secretariat had prepared a project template and shared it with all Member States to facilitate development and identification of projects. The Chair expressed deep appreciation to Iraq for the first financial contribution to the CICA Fund.

The Chair informed that the Secretariat had been exploring avenues for synergy with other international organizations in identifying projects for the benefit of CICA Member States, including discussing potential joint projects with such organizations as UNAMA and IOFS. The Chair also reminded about the call for nomination of representatives to the Project Review Committee. Bangladesh

commended CICA's activities in this sphere, expressed hope that the PRC would be guided by CBMs and interests of all nations in Asia. Bangladesh inquired whether there will be funding ceilings. The Secretary General explained that so far there were no limits for funding, although there were no project proposals either.

## **8. Outcome documents for the Seventh Meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council in Baku on 11 November 2024**

The Chair informed the SOC that the date and venue of the upcoming Seventh CICA Ministerial Council meeting had been determined by the incoming Chairmanship of Azerbaijan – in Baku on 11 November 2024 on the first day of the UN Climate Change Conference COP-29. The Chair informed the SOC about its expectations on possible outcome documents of the MC meeting.

First, the Memorandum of the Establishment of the Partnership Network of Leading Universities of CICA Member States (PNLU). Moreover, it is planned to organize an online inauguration of the PNLU with the participation of the heads of joining universities during the Ministerial Council meeting, after the adoption of the Memorandum and establishment of the PNLU. Relevant “Call for nominations” was issued on 5 June 2024.

Second, the Ministerial Council Decision on the Modalities of Implementation of CICA Confidence Building Measures. The text of the document was finalized by the SOC on 22 August last year, but one Member State has reserved its position on the entire document.

Third, the updated RoP as discussed under agenda item 3.

Fourth, the Chair proposed to adopt a Statement on the 25th Anniversary of the Declaration on the Principles Guiding Relations between the CICA Member States of 1999 – one of the two founding documents of CICA. The draft will be circulated to the Member States soon.

The Chair further invited Member States to indicate any other proposals for possible deliverables of the 7<sup>th</sup> MC meeting. Russia noted that the RoP should be guided by the Charter, otherwise Member States were looking at a good number of deliverables. Russia also suggested to finalize some of the documents related to relations with ESCAP, SCO and EAEU in preparation for the 7<sup>th</sup> MC meeting.



## **9. Relations with other international organizations**

The Chair informed the SOC that draft documents on cooperation with two Partner Organizations - Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) and on establishing relations with two international organizations – the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) were on the agenda, however Member States during the SWG meeting on 25 June indicated that they need more time to consider the documents, while some of them need further conceptual discussion.

Russia noted that all these documents were important and suggested to conduct additional consultations within the SWG or expert format. Azerbaijan noted that the promotion of external relations was important, including in the context of exploring the convening power of CICA as true pan-Asian organization to promote dialogue and partnerships. Azerbaijan called on Member States to be more open-minded and forward looking about external relations.

## **10. Any other business**

The Secretary General updated the SOC on the progress in ratification of the CICA Convention on Privileges and Immunities. The Chair called on all Member States, who have not done so, to sign and ratify the Convention as soon as possible and, in particular, encouraged those Member States which had signed the Convention and had only one step to make, to ratify it without further delay to enable its entry into force as early as possible.

The Secretary General updated the SOC on the situation with voluntary contributions to the Secretariat's budget and seconded personnel. The Chair expressed full support to the call on the Member States to actively provide voluntary contributions and to second professional personnel to the Secretariat. The Chair pledged that Kazakhstan will continue to provide voluntary funding and secondees to the Secretariat. Bangladesh notified the SOC that it was considering seconding a diplomat to the Secretariat and requested coordination from the Secretariat. The Secretary General noted that Member States could also propose their candidates for the positions of experts.

Russia suggested that the effectiveness of CICA transformation should not be measured by the number of mechanisms but rather by the effectiveness of its collective work for the benefit of all Member States. Russia also notified the SOC that it was going to organize an online workshop on transport connectivity in September.