

Opening remarks
by CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay
at the Informal Meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council
New York, 21 September 2023

Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I warmly welcome you at this informal meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council and wish you every success in your deliberations and decision-making, in particular in setting further guidelines for the CICA transformation process.

The Astana Statement on CICA Transformation has given two major tasks for the Secretariat: to submit proposals for amendments to the relevant CICA documents and to assist the Chairmanship in making proposals on a transformation road map. I was entrusted by the Chairmanship with a significant mandate to hold consultations on CICA transformation in capitals of Member States. Since the beginning of the year, I paid visits to and high-level meetings with as broad as possible range of Member States.

These consultations enabled to collect views on the elements of the Road Map for CICA Transformation, which is submitted for your endorsement today. On the basis of Member States' proposals, the Secretariat assisted the Chairmanship in developing a detailed set of ideas and specific measures for future deliberations under each cluster of the transformation road map.

I am therefore pleased to report to you, Excellencies, that both Summit tasks for the Secretariat have been implemented under the guidance of the Chairmanship and in close consultations with Member States. Following your endorsement of the road map, the Secretariat will step up its support to the Member States in their detailed discussion on specific transformation-related measures.

Your Excellencies, I wish to briefly update the Ministerial Council on major issues concerning CICA regular activities, with focus on the activities of current CICA institutions and CBM implementation.

The CICA Business Council has held the meeting of its Board in August in preparation of its annual plenary meeting, to be held in October 2023 in Kazakhstan, traditionally together with the Business Forum. Following up on the theme of its 2022 meeting, focused on digitalization of business processes of small and medium enterprises and food security, the next meeting of the

Business Council will discuss green finance, renewable energy and food security.

The CICA Youth Council also holds its meetings annually. At the initiative of Uzbekistan, its 2023 meeting will be convened in Samarkand this October. The concept of the event was shared with all Member States.

One of priority initiatives of the Kazakh Chairmanship is to hold a CICA Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders in 2024 in Astana under the auspices of the CICA Youth Council. To that end, a preparatory event was held at the International Volunteer Forum in Astana on 20 June 2023 in the form of a dedicated panel session. I believe these activities illustrate well the importance of the strong political impulse from the CICA ministerial statement on promoting volunteerism prepared for your adoption today.

The CICA Think Tank Forum held a successful 11th annual meeting in China at the end of August on the role and mission of CICA. In my statements I proposed to establish synergies between CICA's Business Council and Think Tank Forum and highlighted that the "Track Two" of CICA is an excellent supplement to the political dialogue among CICA Member States on transformation.

Excellencies, the CICA Council of Eminent Persons, established by you at the Sixth Ministerial Meeting in Astana in October 2021, still cannot start its work due to a stalemate on the issue of its composition resulting from the lack of consensus on one of candidates.

This is one of situations when some key decisions or general documents related to the overall functioning of CICA become dependent on issues of bilateral relations. I do hope that the CICA spirit of multilateralism and inclusiveness, based on constructive dialogue, respect for the interests of others and mutual concessions would be upheld in our consensus-based organization.

The CICA Fund, just established in October 2022 by the Sixth CICA Summit also did not yet start its work. This new mechanism of cooperation is designed to be driven by Member States, and the Secretariat stands ready to assist Member States in elaboration of project proposals.

Excellencies, since the update of the CICA Catalogue of CBMs by you in 2021, there has been significant progress achieved in renewing concept papers in the 18 priority areas of CICA CBMs, of which eight are now up to date. I express appreciation to all Member States coordinating and co-coordinating CBMs for keeping these CICA's core activities tuned to current needs and realities.

Since the beginning of 2021 CICA Member States successfully held in total 72 CBM events in all CICA dimensions and 35 meetings of governing, working and advisory bodies. The most active interaction during last three years was in the economic and new threats and challenges dimensions, with total of 25 and 24 events respectively.

In 2023 there were 14 CBM events held in total. I sincerely thank those Member States which actively implement CBMs and look forward to receiving as many as possible inputs to the annual plan of CBM activities for 2024.

I am pleased to report that since 2021 we are witnessing increased interest of Member States to CBM implementation. Currently there are 17 Member States which act as coordinators or co-coordinators in one or more priority areas. The only area without a coordinator is "Trade and investment".

This is generally a positive trend, however today we are experiencing mutual blocking of two initiatives to assume the role of co-coordinator: the offer of one Member State for the priority area "Combating Terrorism" and the offer of another Member State for the priority area "Sustainable Development". In my view, such kind of voluntary initiatives and expression of good will fits the main purpose of CICA - building trust and confidence, and I hope that the CICA spirit would prevail also in this matter.

Excellencies, in accordance with the procedures on the appointment of CICA Deputy Secretary General, I have provided my recommendation to the SOC on the nomination of Ms. Zhang Ling by China. I appreciate efforts of all Member States towards timely decision on this matter to ensure continuity in the Secretariat activities and smooth succession at this high-level position. I thank China for seconding Ms. Chi Fang to CICA and express deep appreciation of her professionalism and personal contribution to CICA.

Distinguished Ministers, I humbly draw your attention to the pending entry into force of the 2010 CICA Convention on the Privileges and Immunities, for which instruments of accession from 7 Member States are still required. I am glad to inform you that Bangladesh has recently signed the Convention and hopefully will submit its instruments of ratification or accession in the near future. I call on concerned Member States to consider prioritizing this matter.

In conclusion, I wish to inform you that the CICA Chairmanship's side event on building partnerships between the UN, CICA and other organizations in support of the SDGs will take place tomorrow, on 22 September 2023, from 15:00 to 16:00 in Conference Room 5 at the UN Headquarters.

I cordially invite members of your delegations to attend this event, which will focus on building synergies between CICA and other organizations in promoting sustainable development and would contribute to visibility of CICA within the UN framework.

I thank you.