



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

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

№SOC/DOC/1558

*Enclosure:
as stated,
on 11 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 honor to convey herewith the draft Minutes of the Senior Officials Committee Meeting held on 14 December 2022 for comments and suggestions from Member States to be received by 30 December 2022.

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

Astana, 21 December 2022



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



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**СЕКРЕТАРИАТ СОВЕЩАНИЯ ПО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЮ
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№SOC/DOC/1558

*Приложение:
упомянутое,
на 11 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 14 декабря 2022 года, для получения комментариев и предложений государств-членов в срок до 30 декабря 2022 года.

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

город Астана, 21 декабря 2022 г.



**ГОСУДАРСТВАМ-ЧЛЕНАМ
СОВЕЩАНИЯ ПО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЮ И
МЕРАМ ДОВЕРИЯ В АЗИИ**

Қосымша:
аталған 11 п.

Азиядағы өзара іс-қимыл және сенім шаралары кеңесінің (Азия Кеңесінің) Хатшылығы Азия Кеңесінің мүше мемлекеттеріне өзінің зор ілтипатын білдіре отырып, 2022 жылғы 30 желтоқсанға дейін мүше мемлекеттердің түсіндірмелері мен ұсыныстарын алу үшін 2022 жылғы 14 желтоқсанда өткен Аға лауазымды тұлғалар комитеті (АЛТК) отырысы хаттамасының жобасын жолдауды өзіне мәртебе санайды.

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

Астана қаласы, 2022 жылғы 21 желтоқсан

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



Secretariat

**MINUTES OF THE SENIOR OFFICIALS COMMITTEE MEETING
14 December 2022 (online format)**

The Senior Officials Committee (SOC) meeting was held on Wednesday, 14 December 2022 in Astana in an online format. H.E. Mr. Adil Tursunov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan chaired the meeting.

The draft agenda, draft annotated agenda, adopted agenda (SOC/2022-IV/Agenda/1 of 1 November 2022, SOC/2022-IV/Agenda/2 of 7 December 2022, SOC/2022-IV/Agenda/3 of 14 December 2022) and the decisions taken (SOC/2022-IV/DEC/1, SOC/2022-IV/DEC/2, SOC/2022-IV/DEC/3, SOC/2022-IV/DEC/4, SOC/2022-IV/DEC/5 of 14 December 2022) are available on the Secretariat's website:

<https://www.s-cica.org/index.php?view=page&t=soc-meeting-14-december-2022>.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda of this SOC meeting was circulated on 1 November 2022, in document SOC/2022-IV/Agenda/1. The draft annotated agenda was issued on 7 December 2022, without any changes to the original draft agenda.

The agenda was adopted without any changes.

2. Outcomes of CICA Chairmanship of Kazakhstan in 2020-2022 and outlook on 2022-2024

The Chairperson referred to the decision of the Sixth CICA Summit on CICA Chairmanship in 2022-2024 and next meetings of the Summit and Ministerial Council and presented a summary of the outcomes of the Conference's work in 2020-2022 and outlined Chair's priorities for 2023-2024, and further called on Member States to share views on the Chair's assessment of results of the past biennium and vision for the following two years.

Two documents were circulated by the Secretariat on 7 December 2022 for perusal and are available on the Secretariat's website:

- CICA achievements under the Chairmanship of Kazakhstan in 2020-2022 (SOC/2022-IV/CHAIR/1);
- Chairmanship's Vision of CICA activities in 2022-2024 (SOC/2022-IV/CHAIR/2).

Russia noted that the Vision outlines a full spectrum of tasks in front of the Conference for the following two-year period, highlighting that many ideas correlate with Russian interests, especially on promoting cooperation of volunteers and related activities. Russia proposed to continue working on thematic CICA statements and elaborate a Ministerial statement on volunteering that could be adopted during the next CICA Informal Ministerial Meeting in September 2023.

Regarding the idea to establish CICA university network Russia voiced its concern that such a mechanism already exists under the framework of Shanghai cooperation organization, thus CICA Member States should carefully consider this proposal to avoid duplication.

On the realization of the CICA Plan of Action on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Russia proposed as an initial step to conduct a review of CICA countries' national strategies and approaches to counter-terrorism, citing as an example the ARF Annual Security Outlook.

Regarding the expansion of CICA external ties Russia proposed to discuss further the added value of establishing ties with the Organization of Turkic States and Islamic Organization for Food Security, noting that CICA is multinational structure.

On the CICA Fund Russia expressed its reservations about the idea to utilize this mechanism to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, noting that the situation on the ground is not stable and it is not clear who should be the Afghani counterpart in this regard.

The Chairperson thanked Russia for its views and promised that they will be accounted for.

3. Annual report of the CICA Secretary General

CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay presented a summary of the Annual report on the Secretariat's activities in 2022. The Report

(document SOC/2022-IV/SEC/1 of 7 December 2022) is available on Secretariat's website.

The Chairperson thanked Secretary General for the report and expressed gratitude to Secretariat for the excellent work done in 2022 and proactive assistance to all Member States and valuable support to the Chairmanship, noting the dedication, enthusiasm and professionalism of the Secretariat's able team.

4. Concept Papers, Coordinators and Co-coordinators in priority areas of CICA dimensions

The Chairperson informed the Meeting that the SWG at its meeting on 12 December 2022 recommended to the SOC to approve two draft concept papers, namely those in the priority areas "Tourism" and "Agriculture".

4(a) Concept Paper in the priority area "Tourism"

The Chairperson referred to Para 1 of the Recommendations of the Special Working Group meeting on 12 December 2022 (document SWG/2022-VI/INF/1 of 12 December 2022) – "The SWG recommended to the Senior Officials Committee (SOC) that it approve the draft Concept Paper on Cooperation among the CICA Member States in the Area of Tourism". The Chairperson reminded that the draft Concept paper was prepared by Tajikistan and Sri Lanka in their capacity as Coordinator and Co-Coordinator of this priority area and expressed Chair's support to the Draft noting the importance of tourism as one of the key drivers of economic development and its high potential for cooperation within CICA. No objections or comments were raised.

SOC decision: The SOC approved the Concept Paper on Cooperation among the CICA Member States in the Area of Tourism.

4(b) Draft Concept Paper in the priority area "Agriculture"

The Chairperson referred to Para 2 of the Recommendations of the Special Working Group meeting on 12 December 2022 (document SWG/2022-VI/INF/1 of 12 December 2022) – "The SWG recommended to the SOC that it approve the draft Concept Paper on Implementation of Confidence Building Measures in the Area of Agriculture as amended at the SWG meeting." The Chairperson reminded that the draft Concept paper was prepared by the People's Republic of China in its capacity as Coordinator of this priority area and expressed Chair's support to the Draft noting the significant importance

of Agriculture to the national economies and prosperity of many CICA Member States. No objections or comments were raised.

SOC decision: The SOC approved the Concept Paper on Implementation of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) in the Area of Agriculture.

5. Draft SOC decision on the Annual Plan of Implementation of CBMs for 2023

The Chairperson informed the Meeting that draft Decision was originally issued as document SOC/2022-IV/DRAFT/1 on 2 December 2022, and Revision 1 of this draft Decision was circulated on 9 December 2022. Revision 2 was circulated on 12 December 2022, incorporating brief concept papers, where available, as well adding the word “CICA” to the titles of the events as proposed by one Member State during the SWG Meeting on 12 December 2022. Revision 3 was circulated on 13 December 2022 (document SOC/2022-IV/DRAFT/1/Rev.3) incorporating additional events proposed by Russia and Thailand and additional brief concept papers to some events. The Chairperson emphasized three points:

- The title of the Plan has been extended in order to make it more consistent with its content, which reflects not only CBM events, but also a provisional calendar of meetings of CICA governing, working and advisory bodies.
- According to the General Guidelines for Conducting Events on Implementation of CICA CBMs, “before the end of the calendar year, the SOC shall approve an Annual Plan of Implementation of CBMs for the following year and will update it as necessary” which is important for proper planning by the Member States, Chairmanship and the Secretariat.
- “Inclusion of an event in the Annual Plan does not mean automatic approval of its concept”. The concept of each CBM event included in the Plan will be considered by all Member States individually in due course, it is not required and it is impossible to approve concepts of events at this point in time.

CICA Secretary General gave brief introductory remarks on the Draft Decision, noting that the draft Plan for 2023 included events proposed by the Chairmanship – Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, China, India, Israel, Thailand, Türkiye and Uzbekistan, events proposed by CICA partners to implement the Memoranda of Understanding with the EAEU and IOM, and possible meetings

to implement decisions of the Sixth Ministerial Meeting and the Sixth CICA Summit. Secretary General emphasized that available brief concept papers contain only preliminary and expected information on the events, therefore the Plan is of indicative nature and not final. Secretary General stressed that the list of participants of a proposed event is not mandatory at this stage. Secretary General further proposed that it would be useful in the future to elaborate a unified template for preliminary brief concepts to help the event organizing Member States to provide such information for the rest of Member States before approval of the annual plans.

The Chairperson referred to the Para 3 of the Recommendations of the Special Working Group meeting on 12 December 2022 (document SWG/2022-VI/INF/1 of 12 December 2022) – “The SWG, taking into consideration the views expressed by Member States regarding the need to study preliminary concepts of events and their titles, recommended to the SOC that it consider approving the decision on the CICA Plan of Implementation of Confidence Building Measures and Provisional Calendar of CICA Governing, Working and Advisory Bodies for 2023 with understanding that the concepts of events in the Plan will be finalized in the course of 2023 in accordance with the General Guidelines for Conducting Events on Implementation of CICA CBMs.” The floor was opened for comments.

Palestine requested a detailed concept paper on the event proposed by Israel “CICA Webinar: Water and Food Security in Arid & Semi-arid Conditions” (item 17 of the Draft Plan), voicing concerns that this activity might be conducted inconsistently with international law and relevant UN Resolutions, especially with regard to the proposed “educational visit” which might include illegally occupied Palestinian territories. Detailed list of expected experts and speakers was also required by Palestine, citing previous cases of representatives from illegally occupied territories participating in CICA events.

Israel informed that the event will be conducted by Mashav – development agency under the MFA of Israel, emphasizing that it will be an online event on an issue topical for many CICA Member States, thus expecting broadest participation and open communication.

The Chairperson called for flexibility from both sides, requested to avoid politicizing the matter, proposed to delete “educational visits” from the current brief concept and emphasized that the detailed concept paper will be circulated at least 60 days prior to the event and should there be no consensus on the concept paper the proposed event will not be held within CICA framework.

Israel agreed that for the sake of consensus and the need to approve the Plan it was possible to exclude “educational visits” from the current concept paper, calling for reasonable compromise, stressing the concept paper will be considered at later stage in accordance with existing Guidelines.

Palestine agreed to approve the draft Plan with a clear guarantee from the Chairmanship that the Webinar will be held only after its concept paper received consensus in accordance with the Guidelines.

Jordan expressed its solidarity with Palestine on the issue.

Russia expressed gratitude to the Secretariat for its tremendous effort to accumulate and circulate all the information available pertaining to the Draft Plan which allowed Member States to carefully study each initiative. Russia explained that the expected list of participants is vital already at this stage, especially for events involving experts from line agencies. Russia further elaborated on proposals by Türkiye (items 9 and 12) asking for guarantees that NATO or OSCE representative will not participate in CICA events, emphasizing that all events included in the draft Plan should involve only CICA Member States without inviting those who can negatively affect their outcomes. Russia also suggested to study the possibility of combining events on Digital Forensics under items 6, 11 and 40. Russia also raised its concern about the term “violent extremism” used in the draft concept paper of Indian CICA Workshop on “Counter Radicalization” (item 4). Russia further asked for clarifications on CICA Specialized Meeting on “The Document examination support center: link between irregular travel statistics and interception at borders” (item 37).

Russia expressed its readiness to adopt the draft Plan with minor adjustments, acknowledged the importance of following the General Guidelines and noted that in the course of transformation the Guidelines might require further changes.

Secretary General explained that the CICA Specialized Meeting on “The Document examination support center: link between irregular travel statistics and interception at borders” was included in the Draft plan by the initiative of International Organization for Migration (IOM) in accordance with Memorandum of Understanding between CICA Secretariat and IOM, underlining that it will be a specialized meeting for CICA MSs representative and not between the Secretariats of the two organizations. Secretary General further noted that the red lines indicated by Member States are clear and visible and it is better to work out all the differences in advance.

India elaborated on its draft Concept paper of the Workshop on “Counter Radicalization” reminding the comments from MSs are expected before 6 January 2022 and will be accounted for in the updated Concept paper.

Türkiye confirmed that all relevant concept papers will be circulated for consideration 60 days before the proposed events. It further expressed its readiness to look at co-hosting with Russia events on Digital forensics.

Egypt requested that in the future the draft annual Plan should be circulated in advance as there is a need to share it with relevant line agencies.

Jordan supported the call by Egypt.

Secretary General supported the early distribution of the Plan, but noted that it depended on MSs activity and intentions, citing that by 1 October 2022 CICA Secretariat had only 3 proposals from MSs. He hoped that all reservations expressed during the Meeting will be taken into account, reflected in the Minutes of the Meeting and looked forward to more CICA events each year.

Russia proposed to reflect in the Decisions or Minutes of the Meeting that Concept papers will be developed in time according to General Guidelines.

SOC decision: The SOC adopted the Decision on the CICA Plan of Implementation of CBMs and Provisional Calendar of CICA Governing Working and Advisory Bodies for 2023 with the understanding that the concepts of events in the Plan will be finalized in accordance with the General Guidelines for Conducting Events on Implementation of CICA CBMs.

6. Draft SOC decision on the Budget of the CICA Secretariat for 2023

The Chairperson informed that the Draft Decision on the Budget of the CICA Secretariat for 2023 was circulated as document SOC/2022-IV/DRAFT/4 on 7 December 2022 and was accompanied by an Explanatory Note of the Secretary General (SOC/2021-IV/INF/2). Due to a typo Corrigendum 1 of the draft Decision was issued on 13 December 2022. The Chairperson further informed that in connection with the end of the first term and start of the new term of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship, as well as very intensive activity of the Secretariat in 2020-2022 related to the 30th Anniversary of CICA and Sixth Summit, it was proposed to conduct an external financial audit covering the period since the last audit held September 2020 until the end of the 2022 financial year.

The Chairperson referred to para 4 and 5 of the Recommendations of the Special Working Group meeting on 12 December 2022 (document SWG/2022-

VI/INF/1 of 12 December 2022) recommending to the SOC to approve decisions on the CICA Secretariat Budget for 2023 and to carry out in 2023 external audit of the financial activities of the Secretariat from September 2020 to 31 December 2022.

Secretary General gave brief introductory remarks on the draft Budget of the CICA Secretariat for 2023 and the external audit of CICA Secretariat financial activities in 2020-2022, including information on various candidates to perform the audit.

SOC decisions:

The SOC adopted the decision on the 2023 Budget of the CICA Secretariat.

The SOC decided to carry out an external audit of the financial activities of the CICA Secretariat in 2023 covering the period from September 2020 to 31 December 2022 and to authorize the Independent Audit Company «Asia Astana Audit» to conduct the audit.

7. Draft SOC decision on the Staff Matrix of the CICA Secretariat

The Chairperson informed that two draft Decisions were circulated on 2 December 2022 as documents SOC/2022-IV/DRAFT/2 (on Deputy Secretary General) and SOC/2022-IV/DRAFT/3 (on Staff Matrix) along with an Explanatory Note by the Secretary General (SOC/2022-IV/INF/1).

The Chairperson referred to para 6 and 7 of the Recommendations of the Special Working Group meeting on 12 December 2022 (document SWG/2022-VI/INF/1 of 12 December 2022) recommending to the SOC to adopt the decisions on the position of Deputy Secretary General of CICA and the Staff Matrix of the CICA Secretariat.

Secretary General gave brief introductory remarks on both draft Decisions, as well as introduced and explained on the first-ever organigram of the Secretariat (as contained in the document SOC/2022-IV/INF/4 dated 12 December 2022), which was not a subject for approval by MSs. He also reiterated that the visualized division of functions and responsibilities within the Secretariat did not mean the changing role of Deputy Secretary General as was erroneously perceived during the SWG Meeting on 12 December 2022, nevertheless the comments by MSs were accounted for in the current version of the organigram.

The Chair supported the proposed amendments, citing the decisions of the Sixth CICA Summit in October 2022. The Chair also supported the idea by the Secretary General to produce the first-ever organigram of the Secretariat

given his capacity as the Chief Executive Officer of CICA and the mandate and confidence given to this role by all MSs, thanking Secretary General for transparency and constructive approach. The floor was opened for comments.

Russia supported the proposed amendments, reminding the Meeting about the initiative to introduce the second position of Deputy Secretary General given the constantly increasing volume of tasks and work, especially during the transformation process.

Jordan seconded the view expressed by Russia, noting that short-staffed Secretariat performs greatly and capable of coping with upcoming tasks related to transformation.

Cambodia joined the voices of support to the Secretariat, agreed that transparency is vital, expressed its full support to the transformation process.

SOC decisions:

The SOC adopted the decision on the position of Deputy Secretary General of CICA.

The SOC adopted the decision on the Staff Matrix of the CICA Secretariat.

8. Any other business

Status of ratification of the Convention on the privileges and immunities of the Secretariat, its personnel and representatives of Members of CICA

The Chairmanship updated the Meeting on the current status of ratification of the 2010 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Secretariat, its Personnel and Representatives of Members of CICA, calling on all Member States, who have not done so, to sign and ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

Secretary General updated the Meeting on the efforts by the Secretariat to expedite the entry into force of the Convention, informing that, in accordance to data available, 8 MSs (Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Iran, Israel, Palestine, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) are actively pursuing the process of ratification of the Convention or have already launched the process.

On further activities to operationalize the CICA Fund

The Chair shared its preliminary vision on further activities to operationalize the CICA Fund following the adoption of its Regulations by the Sixth CICA Summit in October 2022.

Secretary General informed the Meeting on the preliminary views on first practical steps to launch the Fund, naming three main directions of work which could be started simultaneously without delay: (1) collecting project proposals, (2) preparing the first meeting of the Project Review Committee (PRC), and (3) initiation of fund-raising activities.

The floor was open for comments and general discussion.

Palestine citing that 18 December is the World Arabic Language Day proposed to make Arabic as another official language of CICA, especially as number of Arabic-speaking countries in CICA continues to grow.

Jordan seconded the proposal by Palestine, stressing that Arabic is one of the UN languages.

Iraq and Egypt also voiced their support to the idea.

Secretary General welcomed the proposal by Palestine, noting that this could be a part of transformation process. He further stressed that adding another working language of CICA would require substantial financial and professional support to the Secretariat. Secretary General also elaborated that Secretariat will be happy to have more languages and seconded diplomats from various MSs, but at the same time it is reasonable to move towards contractual system of employing the professional personnel. Secretary General also noted that should there be an increase in a number of professional personnel then it might be reasonable to return to the issue of the second Deputy SG.

The Chair took note of the proposal regarding the Arabic language, requested the Secretariat to provide further comments to all MSs.

Palestine and Jordan proposed to reflect this initiative in the Decisions of the Meeting.

Secretary General drew attention to the CICA Rules of Procedure para 2.6 "Languages of Meetings and documents" and para 15, saying the SOC may only recommend to Ministerial Council of Summit to amend the Rules of Procedure.

Palestine suggested to start consultations on adding Arabic language as a CICA working language.

Jordan expressed its confidence that the necessary financial support will be provided.

Israel expressed willingness to work on the issue, but called on MSs not to rush things and use step-by-step conceptual approach.

The SOC agreed on the following: The SOC took note of the proposal of Arab Member States to include the Arabic language as a working language of CICA meetings. Some Member States requested further information from the Secretariat regarding legal, financial and other aspects of this initiative.

Republic of Korea informed that it was in the process of updating the concept papers in the priority areas “Information Technologies” and “Energy Security” in its capacity as Coordinator of these areas, announcing that the first drafts are expected around January-February 2023 and looking forward to constructive approach from other MSs.

Russia congratulated Kuwait on its full accession to CICA following their participation in the Sixth Summit, SWG and SOC meetings, expressed hope for more off-line CICA meetings in the future.

Awarding the CICA Medal to Ms. Chi Fang and Ms. Saule Yermekbayeva

Given the solemn atmosphere of the Meeting the Chairmanship awarded Ms. Chi Fang, Deputy Secretary General of CICA, and Ms. Saule Yermekbayeva, HR Officer of the Secretariat, with the Anniversary Medal “30 Years of CICA”.