

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan
delivered by H.E. Mr. Yalchin Rafiyev,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
at the Informal Meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council**

21 September 2023, New York

**Honorable Chair,
Distinguished Ministers,
Distinguished Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset, let me sincerely thank the Kazakhstani Chairmanship for the organization of this informal meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council.

The CICA Summit held in Astana last year and adoption of Astana Statement was a significant milestone in the process of transformation of CICA into a full-fledged regional international organization.

Over past three decades, CICA has proved itself as a unique platform for dialogue and cooperation among its Member States.

Transformation of the forum into a full-fledged international organization is both timely and necessary. Azerbaijan supports this as an incremental process.

This process needs to be continued through inclusive consultations among all member-states and on the basis of founding principles of CICA such as consensus, transparency, inclusivity and should serve to the enhancement of the visibility of CICA, as well as to the consolidation of the already gained achievements.

Excellences,

Effective and efficient use of trade opportunities, as well as transportation corridors among the CICA Member States is an undeniable necessity of our time, and Azerbaijan continues to attach utmost importance to this matter both nationally and at the international level, including in our capacity as the

coordinator of the confidence-building measure in Development of secure and effective systems of transportation corridors.

Azerbaijan is the main initiator and active participant of trans-regional projects which aims to develop secure and effective multi-modal transport and transit corridors across East-West and North-South directions.

Baku-Tbilisi-Kars Railway and Alat International Sea Port are the two landmark projects in this regard. At the moment the total handling capacity of the Port is 15 million tons annually and this number can be increased to 25 million tons. Moreover, soonest operationalization of the Zangezur corridor to link the mainland Azerbaijan with its Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic as per paragraph 9 of the Trilateral Statement of November 2020 is crucial. This is not only a significant pillar of the post-conflict normalization between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but also an important element in terms of utilizing the full potential of the CICA region. The Zangezur Corridor presents immense potential for boosting inter-regional trade and transport both in the East-West and North-South directions.

Dear Colleagues,

Last but not the least, I would like to reiterate our hope that considerations on Azerbaijan's candidacy for the CICA Chairmanship for the period of 2024-2026 will be finalized in near future so that we have relevant time for the preparation process. With that I would like to conclude and once again express my gratitude to the Kazakhstani Chairmanship for their efforts aimed at strengthening and improving CICA as our common asset, and wish them much of success.

I thank you.