

**Welcoming remarks by the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of  
the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Akan Rakhmetullin at the Opening  
session of the CICA Business Council**

**June 27, 2022**

**Dignitaries on the podium,  
Ambassadors,  
Excellencies,  
Members of the Business Council,  
Dear Friends,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my great pleasure to extend a warm welcome to all the members and guests of the Fifth session of CICA Business Council and the participants of the Seventh CICA Business Forum which are being held back - to back today here in Nur-Sultan.

- At the outset, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Chairman of Kazakh National Chamber of Entrepreneurs "Atameken" Mr. Raimbek Batalov, the Governor of Astana International Financial Centre Mr. Kairat Kelimbetov and CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay for hosting the events which contribute in advancing CICA process under the Kazakh Chairmanship of Kazakhstan.
- Let me also express my appreciation to the Co-Chairmen of the Board of the CICA Business Council from the Russian Federation, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of Turkey; Coordinating and Co-coordinating countries in the priority area of development of small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as to Coordinators and Co-coordinators in the priority areas of Economic dimension who were very supportive in elaborating the agenda, relevant to all CICA Member States.
- I am delighted to notice that members of CICA Business Council from **Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, India, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Palestine, Qatar, Russia and Turkey** arrived from their capitals to contribute to CICA activities.
- A very warm welcome to the Secretary General of **Asia Cooperation Dialogue** His Excellency Mr. Pornchai Danvivat who arrived from Kuwait to support CICA activities.

**Dear delegates,**

- Today CICA unites 27 Asian states and covers over 90% of Asia, home to more than half of the world's population, covering over 50% of world GDP and accounting for two-thirds of the global economic growth.
- After 30 years since launching the CICA process, the international community recognizes the CICA as a pan-Asian platform for dialogue and cooperation, which is of paramount importance for global security.
- The intensity and nature of threats faced by modern Asia makes this platform relevant, as it promotes peaceful coexistence of all States, regardless of their political systems.
- CICA, which has become the largest organization of this kind, is a unique international project with the potential exceeding the capabilities of many existing regional multilateral structures.
- In 2020, Kazakhstan assumed the chairmanship in CICA with the strategic goal **of transforming CICA into a full-fledged Organization** which will reflect the Asia's rapidly growing role in global affairs/
- The Kazakh Chairmanship is holding intensive consultations with all 27 CICA Member States to prepare the launch of transformation process **at the Sixth CICA Summit** to be held in Nur-Sultan in October 2022.
- I also take this opportunity to express our appreciation to all the Member States for being supportive to a number of the initiatives of Kazakh Chairmanship aimed at the advancing and institutionalizing the CICA process, namely - establishment of the **Council of Eminent Persons, CICA Fund, updating the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures and holding a number of events with added value** to increase the cooperation and connectivity at the CICA platform.

- I hope that the new ideas and economic tools proposed at the meetings of the Business Council and the Business Forum will contribute in improving the well-being of people in the CICA space and in understanding the common destiny of Asian peoples united in pan-Asian organization by common values.

**Dear Friends,**

- Today our attention will be focused on the prospects for cooperation in the field of digitalization of business processes in small and medium enterprises and food security within the CICA space. This is very relevant in the context of the current situation, which brought disruptions to the traditional commercial ties of commodity producers despite the considerably growing demand for food production in the CICA space – the most densely populated region of the world.

- I hope your discussion today will result in the emergence of new ideas, strengthen existing economic ties between peoples and entrepreneurs, and create of new enterprises and jobs.

- Cooperation in achieving food security leads to a fewer community burdens, less risks of illegal activities and more mutual benefits. Today's discussion will bring new perspectives towards realizing this goal.

- In this regard, we consider the activities of the Business Council and the Business Forum as CICA's contribution to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals in eradicating poverty, creating new jobs, strengthening partnerships, which directly correlates with the priorities of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the CICA.

- I thank you for providing me the opportunity to welcome you all and look forward to your productive work and engaging discussions today.