



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

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

№ TTF/58

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 herewith the Summary of the Tenth Meeting of the CICA Think Tank Forum (TTF), prepared by the Chair of the TTF – Shanghai Institutes for International Studies.

*Enclosure:
as stated, on 17 p.*

The outcome documents of the Meeting are available in the open part of the CICA Secretariat's website, section "CICA Think Tank Forum".

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

Astana, 19 January 2023



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



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Секретариат Совещания по взаимодействию и мерам доверия в Азии (СВМДА) свидетельствует свое уважение государствам-членам СВМДА и имеет честь направить отчет 10-го заседания Форума аналитических центров СВМДА (ФАЦ), подготовленный председателем Форума – Шанхайским институтом международных исследований.

Итоговые документы заседания также доступны для ознакомления в открытой части веб-сайта Секретариата СВМДА в разделе «Форум аналитических центров СВМДА».

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

город Астана, 19 января 2023 года



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

Азиядағы өзара іс-қимыл және сенім шаралары кеңесінің (Азия Кеңесінің) Хатшылығы Азия Кеңесінің мүше мемлекеттеріне өзінің зор ілтипатын білдіре отырып, Азия Кеңесінің Талдау орталықтары форумының (ТОФ) төрағасы – Шанхай халықаралық зерттеулер институты ұсынған 10-отырыстың қорытынды есебін жіберуді өзіне мәртебе санайды.

*Қосымша:
аталған, 17 п.*

Қорытынды құжаттар Азия Кеңесінің Хатшылығы веб-сайтының ашық бөлімінде «Азия Кеңесінің талдау орталықтарының форумы» тарауында қолжетімді болады.

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

Астана қаласы, 2023 жылғы 19 қаңтар

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

Summary of the Tenth Meeting of the CICA Think Tank Forum

On November 30 and December 1, 2022, Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS) hosted the Tenth Meeting of the CICA Think Tank Forum with the theme “Sustainable Security in Asia in a Period of Turbulence and Transformation: Challenges and Vision” in a hybrid format. The Meeting was participated by scholars from the CICA Secretariat and over 14 countries, including Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, India, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Bahrain, Israel, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Thailand and China. More than 50 representatives from the embassies and think tanks of the CICA Member States also sat in on the Meeting. Participants shared experience in building sustainable security in Asia in a period of turbulence and transformation, and discussed how to ensure the realization of security goals under the principle of mutual trust and mutual development.

I. Participants expressed concerns about the food security in Asia.

Participants expressed concerns about the food security in Asia. They had an in-depth discussion about the possible food shortage and food crisis, and made proposals for Asian countries to address food security issues.

1. Concerns

Scholars expressed their own understanding of the food security that Asia is facing today. For example, Siraj Hussain, Director of Arcus Policy Research and Former Secretary of Agriculture in India, pointed out that the three pillars of food security include that food has to be available in sufficient quantity on regular basis; people have ability to get adequate and nutritious food; and the dietary needs of people should be satisfied without sacrificing cultural preferences. However, food security of nations has acquired a critical dimension in the wake of increasing population, geo political stresses the world is facing and the experience of Covid-19 pandemic. Ambassador Adel Adaileh, New Challenges and Threats Expert at CICA, noted that food security can be defined as “access by all to sufficient food for an active and healthy life”. In today’s globalized world, it is not possible for one country or nation alone to enjoy food security. The UN Sustainable Development Goals also prioritized “eliminating poverty in all its forms everywhere” and “eliminating hunger, providing food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture”. There are three major factors disrupting the ability of people to have access to food, inequitable food distribution, poverty, and political unrest. Food security has become one of the main components of the national security.

Scholars also analyzed the dynamics in their respective regions, and expressed their concerns about the importance and urgency of food security in Asia at the present. Siraj Hussain observed that several Asian countries and members of CICA have seen higher unemployment and lower earnings of most people. This has adversely affected the food security of large population in these countries. Amb. Adel Adaileh pointed out that the West Asia region, and specifically the Arab region, which is already suffering from many challenges and threats, such as geopolitical conflicts, corruption, unemployment, poverty, civil and sectarian wars, then comes the issue of food shortages and high prices, to further complicate the situation, and threaten the stability of the region, if the matter is not addressed by finding appropriate solutions quickly. The consequences of food shortages and high food prices on Arab national security and the stability of the region are great, especially since the region suffers from a low percentage of food self-sufficiency, and this exposes the countries and peoples of the region to social, political, and economic risks.

2. Suggestions

Siraj Hussain maintained that Asian countries will do well to take steps to increase agricultural productivity as land area under cultivation has reached its limit in most countries. While increase in production is

important, challenge of nutrition, especially of children, also demands equal attention.

Adel Adaileh believed that the world should immediately enter the stage of “food diplomacy”, in a real and effective way, without excluding anyone in this world, to find an appropriate solution to the global food crisis, especially after the success of “mask diplomacy” and “vaccine diplomacy” that swept the world in recent years. The impact of food security in international politics has become greater. Responding to global threats and challenges, including the challenge of achieving food security for all, requires four things in his opinion: 1. Resetting our world system, through cooperation and peace, strengthening trust and resolving conflicts through dialogue, without any domination, control, or imposition of specific values on others; 2. Globalization, its interactions and results must be controlled and reset, by reviewing procedures, laws, regulations, and agreements at the local, regional, and international levels; 3. Replacing the concept of partnership and comprehensive sustainable security in international relations instead of destructive military alliances; 4. Refusing to use food as a weapon, the most serious issue in the relationship between security and food is when food is used as a “weapon” or as a tool for political gain, or food becomes the subject of international economic sanctions.

3. CICA's Role in Building Food Security

Siraj Hussain affirmed that CICA is the right forum to exchange ideas for providing long term food security to Asian countries. The members of CICA should explore areas of collaboration with each other in agriculture and food sector so that food does not travel long distances, across oceans. For all the major food crops, existing technology can raise productivity per unit of land and water used and, to some degree, help countries adapt to climate change using conservation agriculture. Water is still used inefficiently in many regions of Asian countries while some countries of Asia are pioneers in use of micro-irrigation technology. There is a need to explore the use of such water saving technology in all the water stressed regions of Asian countries. India has been a major exporter of food items in the last few years and it will continue to play a critical role in providing food security to several member states of CICA. Investment in agriculture and food processing from CICA countries into India can provide a fillip to such potential.

II. Participants expressed concerns about capacity building for sustainable security in Asia.

Scholars generally agreed that security and development are two sides of the same coin, and that achieving sustainable development is the basis for enhancing sustainable security capabilities. CICA should leverage the strengths of its mechanisms and member states to continuously promote capacity building for sustainable security in the region. In this process, it is also necessary to take into account the impact of non-traditional security agendas, including energy, water resources, climate change, and connectivity.

Haila Al-Mekaimi, Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University, studied water security in Central Asia and the Middle East. She believed that water security is becoming increasingly important as the demand for water resources increases due to growing populations and as geopolitical conflicts related to water resources increase. The regional distribution of water resources in the countries of Central Asia and the Middle East can vary depending on the location of the country on the upper, middle and lower reaches of the river, so the regional distribution of water resources is uneven. There is a greater possibility that cooperation can be developed between countries with more similarities, for example, Kazakhstan has many similarities with its neighboring countries in terms of water resources endowment, climate change and living habits. The biggest problem in water security in Central Asia and the Middle East is water management.

The lack of technology and processes for water management is a major shortcoming for Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia and Syria. She called on CICA to promote inter-regional cooperation, work together to develop more water cooperation projects and promote regional water conservation. Given that water resources are also an important factor affecting climate change, Central Asia and the Middle East also hope to better serve climate change governance through rational control of water resources.

Arunabha Ghosh, Chief Executive Officer, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) of India, talked about capacity building for sustainable security in Asia in the face of non-traditional security challenges. He believed that CICA countries are at different stages of development and some of them lack the capacity to cope with risks and are particularly vulnerable to issues such as climate change, food security, energy security, and infrastructure security. In response, it is important to enhance the effectiveness of resource utilization, deepen cooperation, and strengthen the resilience of individual economies through increased connectivity and interdependence. Specifically, this can be done in four ways. First, promote the energy transition. This includes promoting energy infrastructure development, advancing industrial decarbonization, tapping the potential of clean energy, and maintaining a balance between emission

reduction targets and energy security. Second, CICA countries should make good use of other international platforms, so as to jointly promote energy and climate issues. Third, focus on people-centered infrastructure development. Fourth, focus on recyclable industries. When countries transition to clean energy, they need to manage the large amount of waste generated by old industries.

Naghi Ahmadov, Leading Advisor, Center of Analysis of International Relations of Azerbaijan, discussed the new momentum for the Middle Corridor from three perspectives. First, the location advantage. The Middle Corridor runs through the Eurasian continent from China to Europe, with excellent climatic and environmental conditions. It can further expand the transport routes between the East and West, reduce the related transport costs and increase the convenience of Eurasian transportation. Second, anti-risk resilience. Affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the transport routes of the Russian section of Eurasia are paralyzed, and the countries of Eurasia hope to add new transport routes to improve the resilience to risks. In this context, the Middle Corridor can provide a stable and fast new transport route. Third, it is connected with the Belt and Road. The Middle Corridor overlaps with many countries and ports along the Belt and Road, thus connecting the markets of China and Europe, bringing together the infrastructure and economic dynamics along

the route, as well as promoting social and cultural exchanges. The corridor will be a major step forward in the development of social and cultural exchanges.

III. Participants from small and medium-sized countries expressed their perceptions about regional security.

Representatives from small and medium-sized countries expressed their views on regional security, showcased their countries' efforts in promoting the development of the CICA and maintaining security in Asia.

Abu Salah Md. Yousuf, Research Director, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, introduced emerging security concerns in the Bay of Bengal Region. He believed that the most important security concerns in the Bay of Bengal region are maritime security, cross-border crimes, and climate change. Thirty-two million Bangladeshi people live in the coastal areas, and rising sea levels due to climate change will affect production and life of these people, as well as food security. Bangladesh is striving to seize new development opportunities, for example, it has formulated relevant strategies to better connect with China's Belt and Road Initiative; Bangladesh also hopes to seize the favorable factors in India's development strategy and the U.S. security policy for the Bay of Bengal

region to explore development and security cooperation; in addition, Bangladesh also attaches importance to maritime cooperation with Australia and Japan. The main ways in which Bangladesh will address these security concerns include, first, considering development as a top priority. Bangladesh expects all international players in the Bay of Bengal region to work together for development. Second, it attaches importance to strengthening ties and cooperation through multilateral forums and strategic diplomacy. For example, participation in various multilateral international organizations, strengthening cooperation with ASEAN and the Indian Ocean region, etc.

Maruf Abdujaborov, Head of the Department for Analysis and Forecasting of Foreign Policy, Center for Strategic Research under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, addressed challenges posed by terrorism to sustainable security. On the one hand, globalization has opened up opportunities for economic growth, but on the other hand, new threats and challenges have emerged, hindering joint development and prosperity. International and regional security is still threatened by growing terrorism, extremism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and cybercrime. The fight against terrorism and extremism has not brought the world community to such unity of thought and action. The self-centered policy and the policy of double standards of some actors of international relations

in relation to the current threats of the modern world significantly undermine the mutual trust of states on the way to joint action. Problems arising in one part of the Asian continent are mirrored in the other. Economic growth and social stability in one country have a positive impact on the betterment of people in other Asian states. CICA, which unites the Asian countries, is the universal platform which can define the regional agenda and contribute to development and prosperity of our peoples in a stable and harmonious environment.

IV. Achievements, challenges and prospects of CICA

Participants agreed that CICA has become an inclusive and broad-based platform for regional security dialogue and cooperation in the field of Asian security, and also has impacts globally. At present, the global and regional security environment is changing profoundly, and CICA should respond to the challenges from all sides through transformational development.

Bolat Nurgaliev, Chairman of the Board, Foreign Policy Research Institute under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, stressed that Asia is very diverse, with many different perspectives, each country has its own priorities, and common ideas or pressing security

issues across the continent often take a back seat to the domestic issues of each country. As a result, the development of the CICA has not been smooth and has suffered setbacks. It is through the concerted efforts of member states and related institutions to set aside disputes and seek consensus that CICA has moved forward, one step at a time. The development path of CICA is a reference for the future as it continues to build common goals in social, economic and security areas. He fully supported the transformation of CICA into a more solid international organization, especially at a time when many established international organizations are falling apart, and CICA needs to learn from these international organizations. In this process, the CICA Think Tank Forum can play an important role in helping CICA avoid the major risks it may encounter in the transformation into an international organization by consolidating resources to conduct research and provide analysis and recommendations on current and increasingly pressing security issues in Asia.

Ambassador Doulat Kuanyshev, Expert in Military-Political Affairs of CICA, proposed potential modalities of cooperation within TTF. CICA Think Tank Forum is one of the best research platforms in the world and that member states are actively investing a lot of time and energy in research projects to strengthen relations among CICA member states. We

should activate the results of scientific and analytical research between TTF members in order to form a single platform for the exchange of results of scientific and analytical activities. Members of the TTF undertake to appoint, as soon as possible, persons responsible for relations with the TTF from among the research staff. With the provision of scientific and methodological assistance from the TTF members, the Secretariat, together with interested participants, is ready to start collecting a single catalogue of publications of the TTF member institutions. Initially, it is about collecting online links to relevant print and online publications. In the future, the goal of this catalogue is to provide mutual access to the publications of TTF colleagues. One of the forms of this work could be the creation of the TTF library, both online and in the printed version. TTF members regularly discuss topical development problems in the CICA region, the organization itself on the basis of an appropriate plan, with the appointment of a leading organization (moderation) from among the TTF members.

Athar Zafa, Senior Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs, points out that CICA is a multilateral framework for enhancing cooperation towards promoting peace, security and stability in Asia by undertaking confidence building measures. CICA's transformation to an international organisation is in the spirit of CICA's development. India appreciates the

vision presented by the CICA Chair in the 30th year of its formation to give it a shape of an international organization through a gradual, inclusive and transparent process while maintaining its core principles of consensus and voluntary nature of cooperation. CICA has been making effort to bring together countries of Asia to collectively address the common challenges. Currently, CICA region is faced with multiple challenges and it aspires to respond to them. First, it is important that connectivity initiatives are undertaken. Second, CICA follows a zero-tolerance approach towards terror and unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. It is important that CICA countries cooperate sincerely to effectively deal with the menace of terrorism and extremism. Third, it is imperative that CICA members increase their cooperation in post-pandemic recovery by sharing their expertise and experience. Fourth, securing cyber space is a challenge for CICA countries and cooperation in this sphere can be accelerated despite Covid related restrictions on physical movement of people and material.

Alper Aktas, Deputy Director General, Center for Strategic Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Türkiye, commended that CICA Think Tank Forum is one of the most important outcomes of the thirty years of CICA activities. With the contribution of think tanks from all CICA member states, TTF has become a prominent stage to discuss and elaborate the current issues, not only in CICA region but also on a wider content. The

biggest achievement of the CICA is keeping the motto of “inclusiveness” to enhance the understanding and the dialogue in Asia with all dimensions set by members. The main principles of “consensus” and “voluntarism” also remains as the main pillars. In order to keep up with the defining features of CICA, we need to pay attention to successful conclusion of the transformation of CICA into a full-fledged international organization. Türkiye fully supports CICA’s evolution into a cohesive international organization. The contribution of CICA with regards to “the sustainable connectivity” and green transformation in our region will be of utmost important. As security and development are also complementary to each other, green economy and connectivity remained as the main touchstones today. CICA has definitely an important role to play in terms of strengthening the intra-regional connectivity and green transformation for the regional economies. Seminars, workshops and conferences could be organized in order to inform our citizens and other regional and international organizations about CICA. Public awareness and visibility of CICA will be an important aspect in our common efforts during the transformation process of this platform to a full-fledged organization.

In response to their foreign counterparts’ opinions and suggestions on the development of CICA, the Chinese participants also expressed their views on the changes and development of CICA from four aspects.

First, CICA will move from the growth period harboring good expectations to the age of maturity. When looking forward to the next 30 years, we need to keep a steadier hand and be more mature, and make assumptions and plans that are more in line with the objective environment, so that they can more effectively promote the progress of Asia in security, economy, culture, and technology, and better serve the global causes of peace, development, cooperation and win-win prosperity.

Second, CICA will be transformed from an immaterial forum to a real international organization. The upgrade of CICA will have far-reaching impact, but it will be hard to fulfil the task. On the one hand, constant adaptations and integrations need to be made in terms of purposes and principles, rules and standards, consultation and coordination, and effective operation, which obviously cannot be achieved overnight. On the other hand, in the process of transformation, CICA needs to properly handle its relations with the current and future global and regional organizations of the same type. The relationship could be coordinative, differentiated, or successive.

Third, CICA's development should be transformed from being reactive and opportunity-based to being active and innovative. After 30 years of

exploration, CICA should make more and greater efforts to take historical initiative and effective actions. In the current world, there is an obvious tendency of making everything political and overstretching the concept of national security. CICA should focus on the key issues and rise to challenges, taking the initiative to create conditions, resolve conflicts, and play a role matching its missions and scale. For example, CICA should show its presence and have a say on major security issues in Asia.

Fourth, CICA should develop from borrowing external ideas to creating its own ideas and theories. Today's CICA is not the same as it was 30 years ago, but has constantly updated and innovative security concepts, such as the new vision of "common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security" adopted at the fourth summit, and the concept of "building an Asian community with a shared future in security" that is being accepted by more CICA member states. In short, Asia as a whole must have its own new ideas and concepts in the new situations, which should be reflected in the system and organization of CICA, and implemented in practical operation.