

WELCOMING REMARKS
by CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay
at the Reception Dedicated to the 20th Anniversary
of the CICA Secretariat

17 June 2026
CICA Headquarters, Astana

**Your Excellency Ministers, Distinguished guests,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

A very warm welcome to all of you, as we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the CICA Secretariat!

First of all, let me express my traditional gratitude to the initiator state and host country of CICA – Kazakhstan – represented today by a number of high-level officials from Akorda and both the legislative and executive branches of the government: H.E. Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. **Yermek Kosherbayev** and his senior management team, Minister of Science and Higher Education Mr. **Sayasat Nurbek**, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of Mazhilis Ms. **Aigul Kuspan** and other Members of Parliament. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedules to join our commemoration. Most importantly, thanks to the leadership, unwavering and comprehensive support and firm belief in the future of CICA coming from H.E. President **Kassym-Jomart Tokayev** of Kazakhstan, we can afford to celebrate this milestone today. We would not be standing in this brand-new building, if it was not for the forward-looking vision and clear instruction of the President who personally inaugurated the Headquarters last summer.

I am very grateful to the Azerbaijani Chairmanship under the wise leadership of H.E. President **Ilham Aliyev** for their steadfast material and in-kind support to the Secretariat. As we are preparing for the Seventh CICA Summit scheduled for 15 October 2026 in Baku, we are very much inspired by the firm belief and trust bestowed to our professional staff by the Chairmanship.

I am also thankful to the previous CICA Chairmanships – Turkiye, China and Tajikistan – for making their very precious and meaningful contributions to strengthening and enhancing the Secretariat up to its current unprecedented level.

Taking this opportunity, I express my sincere appreciation to CICA Member States who have been donating to our budget and seconding highly qualified personnel over the past two decades. My special thanks also go to those Member States who contributed their art pieces to the interior and exterior of the CICA Headquarters. You are not merely supporters of the Secretariat — you are its co-authors and co-owners.

Excellencies!

Over the past twenty years, the Secretariat has evolved from a modest administrative unit into a dynamic, multi-functional institutional pillar of the CICA process. And you have seen some glimpses of its evolution on the opening video. This evolution is reflected in the concrete achievements of recent years. With the humble assistance of the Secretariat:

- CICA has expanded its geography and the scope of observers and partners;
- CICA has expanded the range of the Member States' cooperation areas in the updated Catalogue of Confidence-Building Measures and adopted the Modalities of their implementation;
- CICA has expanded the framework of its advisory bodies and mechanisms;
- and given all these and many other features, and reflecting the growing role of Asia in global affairs, CICA is steadily progressing towards the status of a full-fledged international organization, which hopefully will be stipulated in the future Charter.

These achievements wouldn't be possible without the precious contributions from former Executive Directors and former and current staff members of the Secretariat.

Distinguished guests!

Earlier today, this Headquarters hosted an informal, but very insightful gathering – the Roundtable of Executive Structures of Regional Organizations based in Asia. Thanks to the meaningful contributions of the heads and representatives of multilateral structures, former Executive Directors of the CICA Secretariat, and other prominent diplomats (most of whom are present here), we managed to conduct a substantive dialogue, allowing to map the existing multilateral fora in Asia, to explore some synergies while avoiding overlaps and duplication in our mandates. This is the essence of CICA’s mission – not to compete with other organizations, but to bridge the efforts of various stakeholders, to bridge the various levels of interaction towards the shared goals of peace, stability and prosperity.

I am also pleased that this anniversary has been commemorated in print. We have compiled a commemorative book reflecting the history and achievements of the Secretariat, as revealed in the messages and articles of current and former Chairmanships, partner organizations, the Secretariat’s former leadership and staff members, as well as experts and scholars. Once again, my deepest gratitude goes out to all the contributors, including our task force, who made this publication a reality. We will donate a few copies of the book to the Kazakh Foreign Ministry as our humble contribution to the CICA host country’s library.

This September, we will continue marking the 20th anniversary with the presentation of the CICA Fund to national and international development and aid agencies. The main purpose of that event is to raise awareness among the stakeholders about the Fund’s mandate, structure, and opportunities and to encourage more project submissions and donations to implement them.

The Secretariat stands ready to play its full role in this process: supporting the Chairmanship and Member States, fostering partnerships, and ensuring that CICA remains a relevant and effective platform for dialogue.

Thank you.