

**STATEMENT**  
**by Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Alibek BAKAYEV**  
**at the working lunch with CICA Ambassadors**  
*(18 September 2024, Astana)*

**Your Excellency Secretary General,**  
**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Chairmanship, let me thank the CICA Secretariat for organizing today's working lunch with the heads of diplomatic missions.

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This is another gathering of the informal “**CICA Ambassadors club**” that has been convened many times in various formats over the recent years.

As we witness the growing role of Asia in global affairs, CICA is becoming ever more relevant, with its extensive geography and institutional capacities. In these circumstances, our informal meetings enable us to “synchronize watches”, exchange views and keep each other updated.

One of the efficient and practical ways to exchange updates and hold consultations between Member States and the Secretariat in the future could be the “**Committee of Permanent Representatives**”, that was proposed by Kazakhstan. Yet, eventually, it is up to us – CICA Member States – to decide which format to use for such interaction.

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**Excellencies!**

Over the two biennial periods of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship, together with all Member States and with the Secretariat's assistance, CICA has gone through an exciting **four-year journey** of multiple achievements in order to intensify the forum's activity and to confirm its relevance as an effective platform for confidence building and cooperation in Asia.

Before discussing the achievements under the current Chair, let me thank our Azerbaijani colleagues for their comprehensive efforts towards obtaining the Chairmanship and wish them every success at the key CICA event of this year - **the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Council meeting in Baku on December 19**. And I

certainly thank all the Member States for their support for the Ministerial decision on the next CICA Chair.

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As you are aware, the Sixth CICA Summit in 2022 adopted the milestone **Astana Statement on Transformation** that formally launched this process. The document is certainly the most important achievement of the past four years. As you know, it was followed up by a significant breakthrough achieved last year at the informal Ministerial Council meeting in New York – adoption of the **Road Map for CICA Transformation**.

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Let me remind Your Excellencies that the need for CICA's "step-by-step, gradual transformation" was stressed by President Tokayev of Kazakhstan at the Fifth CICA Summit in Dushanbe in 2019, whereas at the Sixth Summit in Astana he said: "*We are not creating a new organization, but are moving to a new stage of institutional development*", thereby having clearly explained the underlying idea of transformation.

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In this regard, I am sure that Member States will recommit to the **Almaty Act** and the **Declaration on the Principles Guiding Relations between the Member States**.

The Chairmanship of Kazakhstan hopes that adopting a **dedicated statement marking the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration** at the upcoming Baku Ministerial meeting would be a nice tribute to the history of CICA and a nice beacon for our future generations to be guided by.

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Coming back to the Road Map for CICA Transformation, the Secretary General will update you on the progress in implementing the tasks under specific clusters of the Road Map, in particular – elaborating the **Charter** and updating the **Rules of Procedure**.

For my part, let me mention an important breakthrough in implementing Cluster 3 of the Transformation Road Map that is meant to grant the staff of the

CICA Secretariat the status of “international civil servants” aimed at the Secretariat’s internationalization. We are getting close to a final stage of internal procedures, and soon look forward to signing the corresponding Protocol on Amendments by a Kazakh Government official and the Secretary General.

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Now, let me outline the **major initiatives of Kazakhstan** put forth at the Fifth and Sixth CICA Summits and provide you with key updates and progress.

From the outset of Kazakhstan’s Chairmanship, the CICA Member States have become more interested in implementing specific, tangible **confidence building measures**, thereby intensifying the practical component of cooperation within CICA. These joint efforts culminated in adopting the updated **CICA Catalogue of CBMs** at the **Sixth Meeting of Foreign Ministers in October 2021**, with clear-cut 18 priority areas.

As you remember, during those two years, our thoughts were preoccupied with COVID-19. So, even before updating the CICA Catalogue of CBMs, at the initiative of Kazakhstan, a new confidence building measure, namely “***Epidemiological safety, public health and pharmaceuticals***”, was added. As part of this initiative and under the coordination of our Foreign Ministry, in February 2021, humanitarian aid was sent to a number of CICA Member States to combat the coronavirus infection.

Kazakhstan has initiated substantial reforms of the modus operandi of **CBMs’ practical implementation**.

As the initial step of these reforms, the Chairmanship has supported the Secretariat’s initiative to draft the **General Guidelines for Conducting Events on CBM Implementation** that were adopted by the Senior Officials Committee in June 2021.

The next step was launching annual **Reviews of CBM implementation** under one specific dimension, the first of which was held in June 2022.

As a crucial milestone of this process, the draft document on the **Modalities of CBM implementation** was approved by the SOC just a month ago and is expected to be adopted by the Ministerial Council at its December meeting in Baku.

Thus, over the last four years, we have accomplished a fully updated Catalogue of CBMs that meets current challenges and demands.

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A lot of work has been done towards further institutionalizing our forum. The following **three new permanent CICA institutions** have emerged in four years:

- the Council of Eminent Person (CEP),
- the Think Tank Forum (TTF),
- the Fund.

The **Council of Eminent Persons** was established at the CICA Ministerial meeting in October 2021. Despite the current freeze in determining the membership of the Council and its Advisory Group, many Member States have reiterated the need for this new CICA body. We certainly share that optimistic view and once again express hope that Member States will reconsider the positions they reserved back in 2022 and reach consensus.

Initiated by the People's Republic of China in 2014, the **Think Tank Forum** was transformed into a permanent institution of CICA in 2021 at the initiative of Kazakhstan.

As you know, the initiative to establish a **CICA Fund** was accomplished at the Sixth Summit in Astana by the adoption of the Regulations of the CICA Fund. To put it simply, the Fund is a unique way to achieve practical, tangible results of CICA's activities and to showcase these achievements to the world. And the best way to do that is to implement specific projects for the benefit of Member States.

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Other important outcomes of the Sixth CICA Summit include the adoption of the following documents:

- CICA Plan of Action on the Implementation of the **United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** (the UNGCTS PA), which is a significant achievement in this area (the document was 10 years in the making);
- Joint CICA **Leaders' Statement on Cooperation in the Field of Security of and in the Use of ICTs** (the Russian-Chinese Initiative) aimed at facilitating practical cooperation among the Member States in this priority area;

- Decision on the **Kazakh Chairmanship in 2022-2024**, for which we are sincerely thankful to all Member States, and the dates of next meetings of the Ministerial Council and the Summit.

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That being said, let me switch to the most recent priorities defined for the second biennial period of our Chairmanship - 2022-2024.

- First of all, I sincerely thank all Member States for attending the online **CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues** on August 28.

Despite the lack of opportunity to hold the event offline, I believe the Conference was a success. The 28 Member States adopted a high-level Statement committing to enhanced cooperation, water management, climate action aligned with the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, and improving quality of life through mitigation, conservation, and pollution control.

The Chairmanship expects that this Conference was not a one-off event, but rather a starting point for CICA's systematic and long-term journey on addressing common environmental challenges.

- Next, on 3-4 October 2024, the Kazakh Chairmanship intends to host in Astana the **minister-level meeting of the CICA Youth Council and the Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders** under its auspices.

We expect that this momentous event will be inaugurated by a high-level official from Aq Orda – distinguished State Counsellor Mr. **Yerlan Karin**.

Let me once again remind that the ultimate purpose of the meeting and the Rally is to strengthen youth exchange and cooperation of volunteer organizations where youth play a significant role. The importance of this goal was clearly formulated in the Ministerial **Statement on Promoting Volunteerism for Sustainable Development** adopted in September 2023 in New York.

With this in mind, at the initiative of Kazakhstan, the UN declared 2026 the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development.

- Substantial progress has been made in implementing another initiative of the Head of State – establishing a **Partnership Network of Leading Universities of the CICA Member States (PNLU)**.

In March 2024, the Senior Officials Committee approved the draft Memorandum on establishment of the PNLU for its further adoption by the CICA Ministerial Council. This document, along with inauguration of the Network with the heads of participating universities, have been recommended as outcomes of the upcoming CICA Ministerial meeting in Baku.

In this regard, I once again call upon all Member States to nominate their universities to the PNLU.

As it was noted previously, the network is meant to facilitate academic exchanges, joint research projects and cooperation programs among universities in the vast CICA region and is an excellent practical tool for the Member States to reinforce their scientific and academic capacities.

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- The Kazakh Chairmanship also proposed to transform the **CICA Finance Summit**, initiated and successfully convened by China three times since 2018, into a permanent platform. Just a couple of weeks ago, the Chairmanship used the platform of the Astana Finance Days hosted by AIFC to hold the first round of expert discussions of this initiative among CICA Member States.

We express gratitude to all Member States for their inputs during the event and hope to see even more enhanced deliberations on institutionalizing the Finance Summit, particularly in response to the draft Regulations that had been circulated earlier.

- Last but certainly not least, President Tokayev proposed to establish the **CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity**, taking into account the emerging global economic challenges, such as supply chain disruptions.

This initiative is meant to harness the transit potential of Member States and strengthen cooperation in developing sustainable transportation corridors. And, as far as I understand, this fully echoes with the priorities of the incoming Chairmanship of Azerbaijan, which is the coordinator of the “Development of secure and effective systems of transportation corridors” priority area.

Following the two expert meetings held earlier this year – February and May – the Kazakh Chairmanship is currently drafting the Regulations for this Council and would certainly appreciate any comments and inputs from Member States.

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**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

I would like to point out another significant objective of the Kazakh Chairmanship - facilitating the entry into force of the **CICA Convention on the Privileges and Immunities**, which provides our organization with legal capacity.

Yesterday, we received **great news from Jordan**, who had ratified the Convention. We are sincerely grateful to Jordan for ratifying the Convention and thereby contributing to achieving that ultimate goal. I hope that those Member States, who signed but not ratified the Convention, will follow suit.

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Speaking of Member States, let me note that **expanding the geography and external relations** of CICA has been a priority of the Kazakh Chairmanship across both its biennial terms.

Over the course of our Chairmanship, one Member State (**Kuwait** in 2022) and two Observer States (**Turkmenistan** in 2021, **Saudi Arabi** in 2023) joined our CICA family. One more bid for an Observer Status (**Morocco**) is currently pending, but we hope that Member States will eventually endorse it.

As for international organizations, the **Eurasian Economic Union** has become the 6th Partner Organization of CICA (2022). Moreover, just this year, the CICA Senior Officials Committee approved the establishment of partnership with two more structures of the United Nations – **UNOCT** and **UN ESCAP**. We hope that a Memorandum between the Secretariats of CICA and **ESCAP** will be signed soon, thus making ESCAP our 7<sup>th</sup> Partner organization.

Furthermore, the Chairmanship supports the continuous efforts of the Secretary General to enhance CICA's ties with other international organizations.

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**Your Excellencies, dear colleagues!**

As a gesture of gracious contribution of Kazakhstan as CICA's founding state and host country, President Tokayev instructed to build a new state-of-the-art **headquarters of CICA**, which will appear in Astana next spring.

Building a new CICA Headquarters means way more than just providing favourable conditions for its executive body – the Secretariat. It means maintaining the priceless institutional memory of CICA, providing high-quality infrastructure for the operation of its bodies, and, after all, the new building will embody CICA itself as a full-fledged international organization.

As we face multiple challenges coming from the vast Asian continent, I would like to reiterate our firm belief that CICA is increasingly relevant amidst the growing significance of multilateralism.

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Thank you!