

Statement of Mr. Salih Tuna Sahin, Vice President of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey (KOSGEB)

I would like to express my appreciation for your kind invitation to join the CICA Business Council Board and I would like to thank everybody who took part in this excellent organization.

Let me shortly introduce myself. My name is Tuna Sahin, I am Vice President of KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization of Turkey). We are responsible for supporting SMEs and putting SMEs policies in the country. So I'm from the government politic side, politic is about SMEs for sure, we are putting SMEs policies and implementing support programs for SMEs. Also we have great relations throughout the world and what we have been doing up until now is similar with what CICA is seeking for. For example, throughout CICA we have MOUs with 21 CICA countries and we have MOUs with 31 institutions in the CICA. So we share information and try to develop our capacities in each country. Also we have really good relations with the CICA member countries as well.

We will be happy to share what we are doing with the CICA member countries for both this meeting and the upcoming events. We will be willing to exchange knowledge and experience on SME development, entrepreneurship, and digitalization areas.

It's clear that COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected all our lives, not only business, our lives as well. This brought SMEs into difficulty and unexpected conditions. The results of these adverse and unexpected conditions are mainly losing jobs and closing businesses. At this point, support of governments and public organizations to private-sector is really important. Turkey has put up a big program, covering all aspects of business to recover from COVID-19 issues. We call it *Economic Stability Shield Program*, which used up until now 20 billion US dollars

And if you take into consideration what KOSGEB SME policies are, we are mainly going to look for global value chain. We put our support on not to break global value chain so that from production to consumer we produce lots of support not to cause any break in this global value chain. We mainly insisted on entrepreneurship training programs, because these days we should keep people with entrepreneurial culture as well. People should not only save their lives, but business and money as well. The time after COVID-19 is important. We see a lot of important areas where we can move on after COVID-19 times. We are not going to live with COVID-19 forever, but we have learnt a lot from this issue.

So what we are looking for is mainly digitalization. And digitalization will become an important aspect in our economies in the new upcoming years as well. There are lots of programs, there are lots of measures, but the most important part is keeping up people with their jobs and keeping up people with their business. And maybe we can find a point here as we cannot travel, we can still trade on some e-platforms. In my country, e-platform, e-commerce have become much more important and sales value coming from e-platform and e-commerce get higher. People are becoming more familiar with them and we are trying to compensate with that.

Since the foundation of CICA, Turkey has significantly contributed to the activities of CICA and we have hosted and actively participated in many fruitful events as Coordinator and Co- Coordinator of New Challenges and Threats and SMEs Development Dimensions respectively. Events conducted within the framework of Confidence Building Measures help to develop the spirit of cooperation and collective security, which are among the founding goals of CICA, I think.

KOSGEB gives great importance to the CICA Business Council Board as we are discussing SMEs problems and solutions at this platform. I would like to express that we are glad share our experience and we are ready to benefit from the output of these meetings. As Turkey, we will strongly continue to do its part to enhance CICA activities and I wish this meeting will be beneficial for our SMEs and our countries and I would like to thank you for your valuable participation and contribution on behalf of myself, my organization and my country. I would like to thank also Kazakhstan for taking the Board and the Secretariat for great organization. And I solute you with my kind regards.

Thank you very much.