

VOICE OF ASIA:

CICA Digest

Saudi Arabia becomes CICA Observer State

CICA Senior Officials Committee holds final meeting of 2023

CICA Special Working Group prepares ground for work in 2024

Sixth CICA Youth Council Meeting promotes youth development and regional cooperation

CICA business community discuss food security, renewable energy and green finance

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Foreword



Dear friends,

As we reflect upon the closing chapters of 2023, it is with great honour and appreciation that I extend my warmest greetings to all Member and Observer States of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.

On behalf of Kazakhstan's CICA Chairmanship, I am privileged to pen the foreword for this end-of-year quarterly publication – a testament to our collective efforts to promote dialogue, understanding, and cooperation in the pursuit of regional stability and security.

In the face of common challenges, the principles enshrined in the Almaty Act have continued to be a strong guiding force propelling us forward on the path of confidence-building and collaboration across the unique format and geography of the Conference.

Over the past year, our forum has advanced on the path towards becoming a full-fledged regional international organisation in accordance with the Astana Statement on CICA Transformation, and continued to provide an effective and vital multilateral platform for mutually beneficial interaction in Asia and beyond.

Most recently, the Kazakh Chairmanship presided over the informal Ministerial Council Meeting in New York City in September 2023 that saw the adoption of the landmark Road Map for CICA Transformation, covering the elaboration of a Charter, financial and budgetary reform, improvement of the regulatory framework, and strengthening the human resources capacity of the Secretariat, among other important priorities.

In the coming year, Kazakhstan will advance the implementation of its initiatives in the economic, environmental, and human dimensions, namely the establishment of the Council on Sustainable Connectivity, transformation of the Finance Summit into a permanent platform, and creation of the CICA Partnership Network of Leading Universities.

I am confident that with the constructive support of the CICA Member States, these practical steps will strengthen the fabric of our regional community, laying the foundation for a more resilient and interconnected Eurasia.

We also count on the active participation of all delegations in vibrant exchanges of ideas, experiences, and best practices, including vis-à-vis upcoming events such as the CICA High-Level Environmental Conference and the Meeting of Volunteer Movement Leaders, to be held in Astana in 2024.

The Kazakh Chairmanship remains committed to the principles of openness, transparency, and mutual respect that define the essence of the CICA.

As we turn the page to the New Year, let us carry forward the momentum generated by our collective endeavours, forging ahead with renewed vigour and optimism.

May 2024 bring prosperity, progress, and fruitful collaborations for the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.

Sincerely,

Murat NURTLEU
Deputy Prime Minister –
Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Kazakhstan



October



Kazakhstan Ministry of Ecology & Natural Resources and CICA Secretariat prepare high-level environmental conference

The Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met with the newly appointed Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan, Yerlan Nyssanbayev. The two sides discussed preparation efforts for the Conference of Ministers of CICA Member States on Environmental Issues, an event proposed by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev during the Sixth CICA Summit on 13 October 2022.

Ambassador Sarybay highlighted that the CICA region, covering 90% of Asia, is subject to various climatic phenomena, and stressed the importance of collaboration in the environmental dimension of the CICA agenda. The Secretary General also emphasized that one of the key outcomes of the Conference could be a recommendation on the creation of the CICA Environmental Council.

Ambassador Sarybay also shared information about the functionalities of CICA's permanent consultative and advisory bodies such as the Youth Council, Business Council, and Think Tank Forum.

Minister Nyssanbayev emphasized the relevance of resolving regional environmental issues and expressed his readiness to work closely with CICA to organize the Conference at a high level in August 2024.

The parties noted the progress achieved in developing the draft concept of the event following two online consultations with CICA Member States coordinating activities in the CICA environmental dimension, and agreed to continue working together in this direction.

CICA experts discuss cooperation in digital forensics

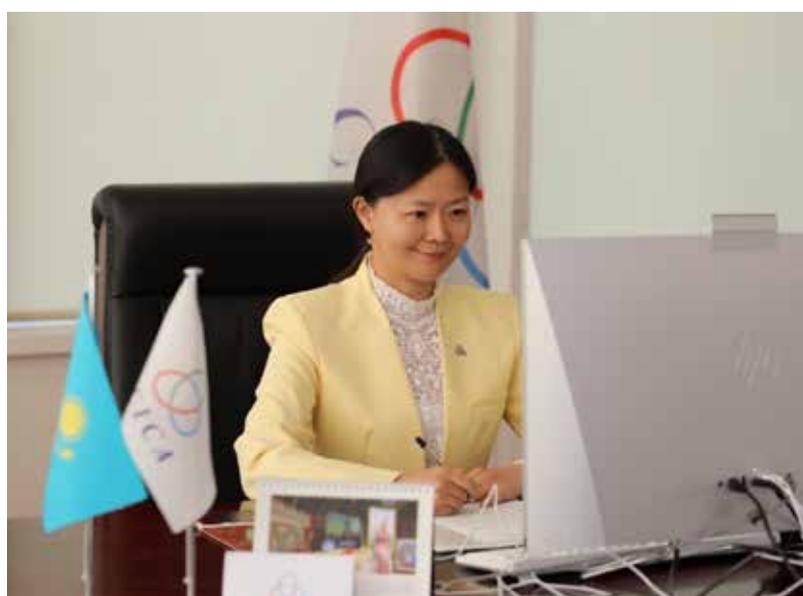
The CICA online seminar on digital forensics was held on 2-3 October 2023. The event was organized by Russia, which coordinates the implementation of confidence building measures in the area of “Security of and in the use of ICTs”. The seminar brought together more than 30 representatives from 17 CICA Member States, experts from the CICA Secretariat and the UNODC.

In her welcoming address, CICA Deputy Secretary General Ms. Chi Fang expressed gratitude to the Russian organizers of the seminar for the consistent implementation of confidence building measures in the area of ICT security in the spirit of the CICA Leaders’ Statement on cooperation in the relevant field of 2022. Ms. Chi Fang also stressed that CICA acts as an appropriate regional platform for the exchange of experience and convergence of approaches to ensuring the security of ICTs based on universally recognized principles of international law, primarily the UN Charter.

The Deputy Secretary General noted with satisfaction that the Russian-Chinese coordination of interaction in the field of ICT security has been extended until 2025. She expressed hope for holding a number of thematic seminars, conferences and trainings in the coming period with the broad participation of CICA Member States.

During the two-day seminar, the participants reviewed the history and prospects of the development of digital forensics, some aspects and problematic issues of international cooperation in this field, and studied the relevant national experience of individual Member States. An important issue on the agenda was data security and protection. Special attention was paid to the problems of electronic and digital evidence in the context of operational, search-related and investigative measures, as well as administrative and criminal records management.

“Security of and in the use of ICTs” was included in the updated CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures in 2021 and remains an important priority area of interaction among the Member States. In August 2022, Russia and China organized an online workshop on sustainable and secure development of the Internet.



The international seminar, organized under the auspices of CICA, became an important contribution to the practical interaction of the Member States within the annual plan of implementation of CICA confidence building measures.

CICA Secretary General addresses VI International Transport and Logistics Business Forum “New Silk Way”

Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), delivered a statement at the VI International Transport and Logistics Business Forum “New Silk Way” held in Astana, Kazakhstan.



In his address, Ambassador Sarybay emphasized the vital role of CICA as a pan-Asian organization comprising 28 Member States, spanning from the Pacific Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea and from the Arctic Ocean to the Indian Ocean.

He highlighted that the development of secure and efficient transport corridor systems, trade, and investment align naturally with the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures as priority areas within the Economic dimension of interaction among Member States. Given the growing importance of Asia in the global market for goods and services, coupled with modern challenges and threats related to epidemiological security, changes in the geopolitical landscape, and heightened competition among the world's leading economies, the significance of these areas is set to escalate.

In this context, CICA SG Kairat Sarybay mentioned that President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev initiated the establishment of the CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity during the Sixth CICA Summit. He noted that Asia boasts numerous concepts and projects related to connectivity, such as Belt and Road Initiative, Middle Corridor, Regional Connectivity of Central and South Asia,

among others. At the opening of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly this September, many visions of Asian route corridors were presented, including by extra-regional players. He underscored the importance of Asia having its own vision for synergizing these connectivity projects and developing the transit, transport, and logistics potential of the region. Ambassador Sarybay further highlighted that the CICA platform is well-suited for developing a consolidated approach among its Member States toward the advancement of transport and logistics connectivity in Asia while strengthening its role in the global economy.

Furthermore, Ambassador Sarybay conveyed that the upcoming seventh plenary meeting of the CICA Business Council, scheduled to be held under the chairmanship of Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs in 2024, will include discussions on various pertinent topics. These include addressing new challenges and threats in logistics and infrastructure management, exploring innovative solutions in this domain, harnessing the power of artificial intelligence for the development of small and medium enterprises, expanding cross-border trade, prioritizing sustainable development in small and medium enterprises, and empowering women in business.

CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay's participation in the VI International Transport and Logistics Business Forum “New Silk Way” serves as a testament to CICA's commitment to fostering cooperation, connectivity, and sustainable development across the Asian continent and beyond.



БИЗНЕСТІҢ СЕНІМДІ СЕРІКТЕСІ





CICA's 31st Anniversary: From idea to pan-Asian organization

The CICA Secretariat hosted a traditional reception to mark the 31st CICA Day on 5 October 2023 in Astana. On this day in 1992 at the 47th Session of the UN General Assembly the First President of Kazakhstan and CICA Founder Nursultan Nazarbayev put forward the initiative to establish a Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.

The event was broadly attended by members of Parliament and high-ranking officials of the President's Office and Government of Kazakhstan, leadership of the Kazakh Foreign Ministry, Ambassadors and representatives of Astana diplomatic corps, as well as members of the academic and business community.

CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay congratulated all attendees and reflected on major achievements throughout the last year. Ambassador Sarybay stated that he was "glad to announce that following some thorough discussions CICA foreign ministers have agreed on a Road Map for CICA Transformation that outlines 8 clusters for raising our platform to the next level of cooperation." He also appreciated the high degree of Member States' interest and involvement in CICA process, especially in the economic, environmental and new threats and

challenges dimensions. The Secretary General also thanked the embassies of China and Tajikistan for their generous contribution to the organization of the event.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Alibek Bakayev expressed congratulations to CICA on behalf of the Kazakhstan Chairmanship. The Deputy Minister highlighted in his welcoming remarks that the Chairmanship was "confident that all CICA Members will help to use their political will to make the 21st century the century of Asia by promoting cooperation rather than competition."

Furthermore, Deputy Minister Bakayev used this solemn moment to award CICA Deputy Secretary General Ms. Chi Fang, a professional diplomat seconded by China, with the "Shapagat" medal. This state award was accorded by the decision of the President of Kazakhstan to appreciate Ms. Chi Fang's achievements throughout her three-year tenure and

her personal contribution to advancing the CICA process.

The Dean of the diplomatic corps, Ambassador of Palestine Dr. Montaser Abu Zeid congratulated the CICA Secretariat for its successes over the past year and thanked Ms. Chi Fang for her outstanding work as CICA Deputy Secretary General, presented her with a gift as a token of appreciation on behalf of the Astana diplomatic missions.

The Deputy Secretary General Ms Chi Fang expressed her gratitude to President of Kazakhstan Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the Chairmanship of CICA, the People's Republic of China and the CICA Secretary General in her award acceptance speech, as well as to colleagues in CICA Member States, Observers, partner organizations and the diplomatic corps.

The event also included the recognition of the participants of the CICA Hiking Tour, who brought the CICA flag to the top of Satpayev Peak of 4317 meters above sea level near Almaty in July 2023. The aspiring mountain climbers received memorable certificates and cut a festive cake.

CICA's 31st anniversary features the practical start of the transformation process which reaffirms CICA Member States' unwavering commitment to fostering regional cooperation in Asia in all five CICA dimensions and to institutional strengthening of the organization.



Sixth CICA Youth Council Meeting promotes youth development and regional cooperation

The Sixth meeting of the Youth Council of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) was held in in the historic city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan on 12 October 2023. The meeting was organized by the Ministry of Youth Policy and Sports of Uzbekistan, the Youth Affairs Agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan with the support of Khokimiyat of the Samarkand region.

The distinguished gathering commenced with opening remarks by the Minister of Youth Policy and Sports of Uzbekistan Mr. Adham Ikramov. He pointed out the importance of CICA as an intergovernmental forum for promoting peace, security and stability in Asia, as well as the significance of CICA Youth Council in formulating a common vision for youth development. Minister Ikramov informed about recent developments in youth policy in Uzbekistan, initiatives like the Youth Parliament and appointing representatives of the Youth Agency in every small village in the country. He also underlined the importance of tackling radicalization of young people to avoid violent extremism.

In his opening statement, CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay underlined the active role and contribution of Uzbekistan to the overall development of regional processes in the CICA area. Ambassador Sarybay reminded participants that at the Sixth CICA Summit held last year in Astana, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev voiced an important call for systematic cooperation in the interests of the youth. To promote mutual understanding between people of different ages and jointly search for solutions to the most pressing problems of the youth, President Mirziyoyev had proposed a new format – “Dialogue of Generations”, which commenced at this Youth Council Meeting and focused on quality education, climate change and creative economy.





The CICA Secretary General highlighted the outcomes of the CICA Ministerial Council meeting held in New York on 21 September 2023, particularly the endorsement of the Road Map for CICA Transformation and the adoption of the Statement on Promoting Volunteerism for Sustainable Development. The Secretary General also introduced new CICA initiatives, including the Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders of the CICA Countries, to be held under the auspices of the Youth Council in Astana in 2024, as well as the creation of a Partnership Network of Leading Universities of the CICA Countries.

«The young generation represents the main driving force for sustainable development and prosperity in Asia,» noted Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, «Let us collectively chart a direction to empower our youth, to build an Asia that is not only prosperous, but also fair and inclusive.»

During the Youth Council meeting participants delivered statements about national youth policies in their respective countries. Additionally, they had an opportunity to discuss the main causes of youth radicalization and how CICA Member States can work together to prevent its growth through mass media and other means.

Moreover, CICA expert in the new challenges and threats dimension Ambassador Adel Aladaileh made a presentation titled “The Role of Media: Is It Countering or Propagating Radicalization.”

The Sixth CICA Youth Council meeting gathered more than 100 participants from Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Palestine, Russia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand, Türkiye, Uzbekistan.





Football tournament unites CICA community in Astana

CICA is proud to announce the successful conclusion of a thrilling football tournament that brought together representatives from the Embassies of six CICA Member States in Kazakhstan, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, and the CICA Secretariat in a celebration of sport and camaraderie. The event was held on 15 October 2023 and witnessed well-organized teamwork and individual skills on the football field.

The annual football tournament dedicated to CICA Day brought together the diplomatic missions in Astana in a friendly setting and aimed at strengthening interaction and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Diplomats and representatives of the Embassies of China, Egypt, Iran, Russia, Türkiye, and Uzbekistan competed in the event.

CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay expressed his delight at the tournament's success. He said, "It is rather comforting to realize that such informal activities have become a regular tradition here in Astana, allowing the CICA family to make new connections, build confidence, and just have fun".

After a thrilling day of matches, the Embassy of Russia took first place, winning in the final match with a score of 3-2 against the Embassy of Türkiye, which secured second place. The Embassy of Uzbekistan won against the Embassy of Egypt, taking third place. CICA Deputy Secretary General Chi Fang and Ambassador Doulat Kuanyshev presented the winning teams with award plates, and gave certificates to all the participants of the tournament.

CICA is already looking ahead to future editions of this event, with the hope of expanding participation in such events.

CICA Secretary General takes part in Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in Beijing

Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay took part in the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, which was held from 17 to 18 October 2023 in Beijing.

Speaking at panel discussion “Deepen International Cooperation on Digital Economy for Shared Benefits of All” within the High-level Forum on Digital Economy, Kairat Sarybay briefed on the events held under the auspices of CICA, in particular at the CICA Business Council, on the digitalization of business processes of SMEs, food security, green finance, renewable energy, the introduction of artificial intelligence, e-commerce development, addressing logistics and infrastructure problems through innovations. Stressing the importance of ensuring a secure digital environment, the Secretary General noted that the area “Security of and in the use of ICTs” was included in the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures and that at the Sixth CICA Summit, the heads of state and government adopted a thematic statement in that area.

Ambassador Kairat Sarybay also elaborated on the work of the CICA Chairmanship and Secretariat on the implementation of the initiative of President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to establish the CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity, which is closely correlated with such connectivity projects as the Belt and Road Initiative, East-West and North-South Corridors, and the Eurasian economic integration processes. Kairat Sarybay underlined CICA’s commitment and openness to enhance international cooperation for economic development.

The Forum brought together representatives of more than 130 countries and 30 international organizations, including the presidents of Viet Nam, the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mongolia, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka and leaders of other countries, as well as UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

The event opened with a keynote address by President of the People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping, who highlighted the progress of the Belt and Road Initiative over the past decade and presented eight new steps to support the further implementation of the initiative.

On the Forum’s sidelines, the CICA Secretary General held discussions with Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Ms Armida Alisjahbana, Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime Ms Ghada Waly, Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission Mr Mikhail Myasnikov, High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations Mr Miguel Moratinos, SCO Secretary-General Mr Zhang Ming and ASEAN Secretary-General Dr Kao Kim Hourn.



Kazakhstan highlights role of CICA as an important partner of the UN in promoting peace and security

On 20 October 2023, the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations Akan Rakhmetullin delivered an address at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) open debate on “Maintenance of international peace and security: Contributions of regional mechanisms for peace and security” in New York.



The Kazakh Permanent Representative emphasized the importance of regional and sub-regional organizations in understanding the root causes of conflict and fostering sustainable peace and security worldwide.

Kazakhstan took the opportunity to highlight the emerging role of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), which it had established in 1992, as an essential partner of the United Nations. The principles enshrined in CICA's founding document, the Almaty Act, were noted to converge with those of the UN Charter, emphasizing respect for sovereign equality, territorial integrity, peaceful conflict resolution, and economic, social, and cultural cooperation.

Furthermore, Akan Rakhmetullin underscored the significance of the Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures within CICA. This document is continually updated to address emerging tensions, encompassing issues like epidemiological security, climate change, information and communication technology, money

laundering, and counterterrorism, among others. This alignment in goals and direction between CICA and the UN was deemed mutually reinforcing.

A distinctive feature of CICA lies in its membership, which unites 28 countries across a vast territory from the Pacific to the Mediterranean and from the Urals to the Indian Ocean. Notably, CICA is the only pan-Asian organization where Israel and Palestine hold full and equal membership, even as it bonds together countries with no diplomatic relations.

The Kazakh Permanent Representative also noted the growing engagement of member states as a positive force in CICA's transformation into a full-fledged international organization capable of contributing to continental mediation and peace-making. The recent endorsement of the Road Map for CICA Transformation with eight areas of reforms at the CICA Ministerial Council meeting in New York on 21 September was seen as a significant step in this direction.

In conclusion, Akan Rakhmetullin stressed the importance of the dynamic synergy between the UN system and regional organizations, particularly with pan-continental organizations like CICA.

CICA Deputy Secretary General Chi Fang took part in 22nd meeting of SCO Council of Heads of Government in Bishkek

On 26 October 2023, the Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) held its 22nd meeting under the chairmanship of the Kyrgyz Republic, where the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) was represented by Deputy Secretary General Chi Fang. CICA took part in the meeting as a SCO partner organization at the invitation of the SCO CHG Chair – Kyrgyz Republic.

In the course of the meeting, the participants discussed the prospects for the development of interaction and cooperation within the SCO and the strengthening of multilateral ties among its member states. The key outcome of the meeting was the documents and decisions aimed at strengthening trade and economic cooperation and the development of the organization.

Special attention was paid to environmental issues. In this context, 2024 was declared the SCO Year of Ecology. It should be noted that this decision blends harmoniously with the initiative of CICA Chairman, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to hold a High-level Environmental Conference under the auspices of CICA in 2024.

High-level SCO meeting was held in person for the first time since 2019 after a break due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The next 23rd SCO CHG meeting is scheduled for 2024 and will be held in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.





November

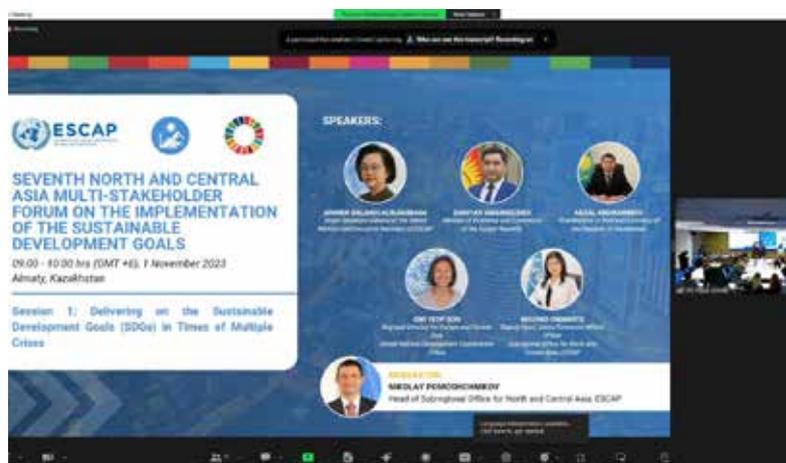
CICA Deputy Secretary General emphasizes CICA's role in sustainable development at the 7th North & Central Asia Multistakeholder Forum on SDGs

CICA Deputy Secretary General Zhang Ling participated in the 7th North & Central Asia Multistakeholder Forum on SDGs, which was organized by the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia (SONCA) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The Forum was designed to enable conversations and deliberations involving senior government officials, UN bodies, various organizations, businesses, civil society, think tanks, academic institutions, and other parties. It offered an exceptional opportunity to exchange information about SDG implementation initiatives and emphasize key priorities and successful approaches within the subregion. 5 SDGs were covered and discussed across 6 sessions of the forum.

CICA Deputy Secretary General Zhang Ling input her remarks during the SDG17 session. In her remarks, she covered CICA's transformation into a regional international organization, launched at the Sixth CICA Summit in 2022. Ms. Zhang Ling underscored the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's innovative initiative to host the CICA High-level Environmental Conference in 2024 in Astana to discuss the region's environmental problems and sustainable development of the region. Further, she stressed the significance of promoting collaboration and partnerships as essential tools for addressing global challenges and regional stability.

Zhang Ling highlighted the SDG-focused event organized by the Kazakh Chairmanship of the CICA in conjunction with the CICA Secretariat earlier this year in the United Nations Headquarters. Additionally, she emphasized CICA's plan to hold a side event on the margins of the Eightieth Commission session of ESCAP in 2024.



INTERNATIONAL
HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE
"EURASIAN SECURITY:
REALITY AND PROSPECTS
IN A TRANSFORMING WORLD"
Minsk, October 26-27, 2023



CICA Secretary General takes part in international conference on Eurasian security in Minsk

Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay participated in the High-level International Conference Eurasian Security: Reality and Prospects in a Transforming World held in Minsk, Republic of Belarus, on 26-27 October 2023. The event was hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus.

In his address to the high-level plenary session, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay focused on the creation of new inter-State associations in Eurasia that consider security in a much broader perspective than the purely military-political dimension. There is a growing realization that there can be no security without economic and social development, the resolution of humanitarian issues, and the search for answers to questions of a civilizational and cultural nature. The Secretary General also highlighted the special role of CICA as a unique multilateral platform for pan-Asian political dialogue based on inclusiveness and confidence building, which is particularly important in the context of the global security crisis.

At the thematic session on 27 October dedicated to the interaction of international and regional organizations in the Eurasian space, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay noted that CICA includes countries that are members of other regional associations, such as the CSTO, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the League of Arab States,

the Organization of Turkic States, ASEAN, NATO and others, which enables extensive networking across Asia. To date, CICA has established cooperation and partnership with eleven international organizations and granted observer status to nine states. The emphasis was placed on the experience of interaction within CICA, which convincingly demonstrates that the security of each and every country or group of countries cannot be effectively built without creating confidence building measures and establishing mutually beneficial cooperation with the countries of its geopolitical environment.

The conference brought together foreign ministers of Belarus, Russia, Hungary and Myanmar, deputy ministers, leaders of international organizations, academics and retired politicians. The event discussed regional and global factors affecting security, economic and energy security, interaction of international and regional organizations in Eurasia, as well as principles and architecture of future Euro-Asian security.

CICA and security architecture in Asia-Pacific: Secretary General at Beijing Xiangshan Forum

Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay participated in the 10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum on 29-31 November 2023.

Addressing the plenary session of the Forum on Asia-Pacific Security Architecture: Present and Future, the Secretary General emphasized that, in the context of geopolitical fracture and new dividing lines, multilateralism and inclusiveness had become the only possible approach to ensuring peace and stability.

“The main objective of the CICA Member States is to build an architecture of security and cooperation in Asia based on the principles of the UN Charter and international law, transparency and mutual trust, with decisions and actions based solely on consensus,” said Ambassador Kairat Sarybay.

He also stressed that CICA upholds the “simple-to-complex” principle – first establishing confidence, then, on this basis, building full cooperation that leads to greater mutual security, which, in turn, is the prerequisite for sustainable development. Kairat Sarybay concluded that only the strengthening of genuine multilateralism based on confidence building measures can provide an adequate response to the challenges of our time and show the transition from competition to cooperation.

The Forum hosted by the China Association for Military Science and the China Institute of International Strategic Studies brought together defence ministers from 19 countries, 99 official delegations representing countries and international organizations, researchers and experts from academic institutions and



think tanks from around the world. The Forum was held under the theme of Common Security, Lasting Peace and focused on building a sustainable security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region.

On the sidelines of the Xiangshan Forum, the CICA Secretary General met with SCO Secretary-General Mr Zhang Ming, ASEAN Secretary-General Dr Kao Kim Hourn, Special Representative of the Chinese Government on Eurasian Affairs Ambassador Li Hui, Deputy Chief of the Joint Staff Department of China's Central Military Commission Mr Jing Jianfeng and President of the Center for Europe and Asia of the China International Communications Group Mr Jiang Yonggang to discuss topical issues of cooperation.

The Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee delegation visits the CICA Secretariat



A delegation from the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, headed by Vice Minister Wang Gang, paid a visit to the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) on 6 November 2023. The sides discussed numerous topics, including possibilities for closer cooperation in the field of communications and cultural exchange.

While extending a warm welcome to the guests, the Secretary General Kairat Sarybay conveyed his appreciation to the People's Republic of China (PRC) for its constant political and material support of CICA and highlighted its significant contribution to the development and strengthening of the organization. He also shared his impressions of recent visits to China, where he participated in the Belt and Road Forum and the Xiangshan Forum. Furthermore, Ambassador Sarybay emphasized the shared objectives of CICA and the PRC in the realms of global security and global sustainable development.

Vice Minister Wang Gang also underscored China's enduring commitment to cooperation with CICA since the founding of the organization and commended CICA's achievements over the years. He highlighted that CICA has the potential to play a larger role in ensuring peace and security in the region given today's complex geopolitical situation. Additionally, he assured that collaboration between CICA and China in the field of cultural exchange will be sure to develop substantially.

Both sides agreed to continue to cooperate more closely to achieve their common goals of sustainable development and security in the region.

The productive discussions between CICA and the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee underline their shared dedication to fostering regional peace, security and development.

CICA Experts discuss draft Concept Paper for Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders of CICA Countries



On 7 November 2023, the Ministry of Culture and Information and the CICA Secretariat hosted an online experts meeting to prepare for the 2024 Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders of CICA countries in Astana. This event, proposed by President Of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Sixth CICA Summit in October 2022, falls under the auspices of the CICA Youth Council.

At the meeting, representatives of CICA Member States discussed the draft Concept Paper and housekeeping issues of the upcoming 2024 Rally. In her opening remarks, CICA Deputy Secretary General Ms. Zhang Ling highlighted the relevance of volunteerism to the CICA agenda, as evidenced by the Statement on Promoting Volunteerism for Sustainable Development adopted at the informal meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council on the sidelines of the High-level Week of the UN General Assembly session in New York on 21 September this year.

During the online consultation, representatives of CICA Member States covered the main areas outlined in the draft Concept Paper and expressed their support for the 2024 Rally.

Remarks of CICA Deputy Secretary General Zhang Ling at the Seventh North and Central Asia Multistakeholder Forum on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

**Distinguished Chair,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to participate in this forum session, addressing such a distinguished audience. I extend my gratitude to the Subregional Office for North and Central Asia (SONCA) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for organizing this event.

I am honored to represent CICA, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia. CICA is a unique consensus-based multilateral platform dedicated to enhancing cooperation for the promotion of peace, security, and stability in Asia. Today, CICA brings together 28 Member States, covering 90% of Asia's territory and half of the world's population.

CICA provides an equal opportunity for all its Members, with diverse political, economic, social, and cultural backgrounds, to exchange ideas, knowledge, and best practices, collaborate on beneficial initiatives, and make decisions based on mutual agreement. By facilitating the voluntary implementation of specific and result-oriented confidence building measures (CBMs), CICA contributes to the achievement of the goals of SDG 17. This is achieved by building trust, strengthening peace and security, and fostering economic growth and sustainable development. CICA's CBMs encompass five dimensions of cooperation: military-political, new threats and challenges, economic, environmental, and human dimensions. In this manner, CICA is interconnected with SDG 17 in their shared mission to promote collaboration and partnerships as essential tools for addressing global challenges and regional stability. As an example, CICA offers an ideal platform for its Member States to collaborate on environmental issues and work towards sustainable solutions within the CICA environmental dimension. Sustainable development, environmental protection, and natural disaster management are the priority areas of this dimension. To combat, prevent, and mitigate climatic challenges, the Member States organize various events such as seminars, workshops, online training, and expert meetings. These events raise awareness among the Member States and provide opportunities to share best practices and improve synergies among each other. For instance, in the CICA workshop on «Ecosystem Restoration in the Context of Climate and other Vulnerability» organized by Bangladesh in July 2023, participating countries shared their best practices and solutions aligned with their sustainable development goals.

Dear participants,

During the Sixth CICA Summit in October 2022 in Astana, our heads of state and government launched the CICA Transformation process into a full-fledged regional international organization. At this Summit, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev proposed strengthening cooperation in the environmental dimension by hosting a High-level Environmental Conference in Astana in 2024. This conference aims to identify environmental issues and develop coordinated solutions under the auspices of CICA.

By organizing such a high-level conference, the CICA platform will underscore its commitment to environmental protection and sustainable development. Asia, as a continent with a large population, robust economic growth, and geographical diversity, faces a significant challenge in incorporating various approaches to address climatic and environmental challenges. Furthermore, during the Sixth CICA Summit, the Kazakh Chairmanship initiated the establishment of the CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity to tackle new challenges in the global economy, including supply chain issues, and address the underdeveloped connectivity among CICA Member States.

Sustainable development is a fundamental concept with the power to shape our future. A correct understanding of sustainability is crucial to achieving sustainable development goals. SDGs remind us that the challenges we face are global in nature, and their achievement requires true cooperation, solidarity, and partnership.

The United Nations Headquarters hosted a significant side event on 22 September 2023, under the title «The United Nations, CICA, and Regional Organizations: Collaborative Support for the SDGs.» This gathering, coordinated by the Kazakh Chairmanship of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia in conjunction with the CICA Secretariat, represented another important achievement in the enduring and diverse partnership between the UN and CICA. Its primary objective was to foster cooperation and coordination between these two organizations in their efforts to advance sustainable development.

Finally, CICA is planning to hold a side event, on the margins of the Eightieth Commission session of ESCAP in 2024, under the theme «Leveraging Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific». This side event represents a significant step forward in fostering dialogue, collaboration, and innovation to address the pressing challenges and opportunities of our time.

I would like to express my gratitude once again to the organizers for this productive forum.

CICA Secretary General discusses current issues with the Chairman of the Majilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan



CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay participated in a meeting with Chairman of the Majilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Yerlan Koshanov on 10 November 2023.

During the meeting, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay shared details about the progress of the CICA transformation process into a full-fledged international organization, and also spoke about current initiatives and projects being implemented within the framework of CICA activities.

Issues of parliamentary interaction were a key area of discussion, and the Secretary General also noted the establishment of relations with the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic-Speaking Countries (TURKPA), which has been an observer organization in CICA from 2012.

Ambassador Kairat Sarybay also expressed gratitude to the Republic of Kazakhstan for its significant contribution to the CICA process and emphasized the importance of support from the Kazakh parliament.

In turn, Chairman of the Majilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan Yerlan Koshanov expressed full support for the process of transforming CICA into an international organization. He emphasized the importance of strengthening cooperation in this context and expressed his readiness to promote the further development of the partnership between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the CICA.



CICA business community discuss food security, renewable energy and green finance

The Sixth Plenary Session of the CICA Business Council and the Eighth CICA Business Forum were held in the Kazakh capital on 13 November 2023 at the Astana International Financial Centre and gathered more than 140 government and business representatives from 20 CICA Member States. The events were hosted by the Atameken National Chamber of Entrepreneurs, the CICA Business Council Chairmanship with the support of the CICA Secretariat.

This year the agenda of the business events was centred on ensuring food security, promoting renewable energy and developing green finance in the CICA area, as well as included a presentation of a number of business and investment projects in these fields.

CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay participated in the opening ceremony of the Business Council. “The CICA economic dimension is of paramount importance, especially in the context of the Asian economy’s growth and its increasing significance at the regional and global levels. It is not to diminish the importance of the other dimensions – environmental, human, new challenges and threats, and military-political – which collectively contribute to peace, security and prosperity in Asia,” noted the Secretary General in his remarks.

Nazira Nurbayeva, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, welcomed the meeting participants, emphasizing that Kazakhstan’s economy was open to interaction with foreign investors.

“As the CICA Chair, Kazakhstan encourages cooperation within the CICA Business Council and Business Forum, as well as proposals and ideas emanating from the Member States on the further strengthening CICA’s economic dimension. I believe that the ideas and proposals for strengthening business activities within CICA will add value to the efforts of a broader internal community to overcome consequences of the geopolitical challenges for future global progress,” said Ms. Nurbayeva.

Raimbek Batalov, Chairman of the CICA Business Council Board, Chairman of the Atameken Presidium, set the stage for the discussions,

“We should think about developing mechanisms and strategies to ensure stable access of our countries to relevant resources in the context of food security, enhance the exchange of expertise and transfer of cutting-edge technologies in agriculture and food industry to improve production efficiency and strengthen food security in the region,” he underlined.

The Business Council meeting was followed by three thematic sessions, which discussed current national approaches to ensuring food security, promoting renewable energy and harnessing the potential of green finance. Special attention was paid to the role and contribution of entrepreneurs and enterprises in the promotion of these industries, as well as the establishment of specialized international cooperation of business circles. Members of the Business Council from Kazakhstan, China, Russia, Thailand, as well as invited experts from UNESCAP, UN Women, the Islamic Organization for Food Security and the Eurasian Development Bank shared their experience and expertise. The event was also attended by representatives of national structures such as the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, the Renewable Energy Industry Club of the Federation of Thai Industries, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Tajikistan, JSC NC “Kazakh Invest” and others, as well as representatives of the private sector.

Concluding the session, the Business Council decided to hold the seventh plenary session in the 3-4 quarter of 2024, which is planned to be devoted to such SME aspects as artificial intelligence, empowerment of women in SMEs in the CICA region, prioritization of sustainable development of SMEs, digital trade, supply chains and logistics. Moreover, the Council approved the initiative of the CICA Secretary General to develop synergy between the two CICA bodies: the Business Council and the Think Tank Forum. It is expected that the Think Tank Forum will conduct research on national approaches and incentives used by CICA members for the development of SMEs, as well as a study on the development of the role of women in SMEs in the CICA region.

The Business Forum enjoyed presentations made on the investment climate and opportunities of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Russia. The audience of the CICA countries was also offered several interesting projects in the fields of agro-industry, green energy and smart farming.



Türkiye makes traditional voluntary contribution to CICA Secretariat budget

The Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) hosted a ceremony on 15 November 2023 where Türkiye made its voluntary contribution to CICA activities.

A symbolic check was handed over to CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Türkiye to the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr Mustafa Kapucu at the office of the CICA Secretariat.

Türkiye is the third-largest voluntary contributor to the CICA Secretariat budget.

Speaking at the ceremony, the CICA Secretary General expressed gratitude to the Government of Türkiye for this significant gesture and highlighted Türkiye's role as a founding member and a steadfast partner. The CICA Member States, under the Chairmanship of Türkiye started negotiations on a draft CICA Plan of Action on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. The Plan was adopted last year at the Sixth CICA Summit in Astana, becoming a historic achievement aimed at implementing this Strategy voluntarily in the CICA region.

During the Turkish Chairmanship, pivotal advisory bodies were established, such as the CICA Business Council. The 2010 CICA Summit in Istanbul was particularly noteworthy as it witnessed the first synergistic gathering of CICA and the OSCE.

Ambassador Kapucu stated, that Türkiye supports the further evolution of CICA into a full-fledged international organization.

Türkiye is very committed to supporting CICA's efforts in maintaining peace, stability and sustainable development in the region. "In our world full of uncertainties, we believe multilateral platforms such as CICA are even more needed. Indeed, Türkiye's Asia Anew Initiative is also in line with CICA's collective vision of ensuring security and sustainable development in Asia," said the Turkish high-rank diplomat.



Ambassador Kapucu emphasized that Türkiye proudly allocates its voluntary contribution to CICA, envisioning a stronger CICA for a more peaceful region. The transformation process is underway, aligned with CICA's confidence building objectives.

The CICA Secretariat looks forward to continued fruitful cooperation with Türkiye in the interest of development and prosperity in Asia.

CICA experts participate in online meeting to discuss Kazakh initiative on Partnership Network of Leading Universities of CICA Member States



The Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, with the support of the CICA Secretariat, held an online experts meeting. The event, held on 17 November 2023, was dedicated to discussing the draft Memorandum on a Partnership Network of Leading Universities of the CICA Member States.

This initiative, proposed by the President of Kazakhstan K.K. Tokayev at the Sixth CICA Summit in October 2022, received the support and attention of the CICA Member States. In her opening remarks, CICA Deputy Secretary General Ms. Zhang Ling noted the importance of cooperation in the field of education and science, emphasizing that the CICA Partnership Network of Leading Universities will serve as the foundation for the exchange of best practices, academic mobility of faculty members and students, as well as for joint research and other activities aimed at the development and prosperity of the region.

During the online consultation, representatives of Member States discussed the draft Memorandum in detail, highlighting the key points of cooperation and interaction, and discussed further steps for the successful implementation of this important initiative. The participants expressed their unity in their desire to promote educational and scientific development in the region, as well as to ensure a sustainable future through the exchange of knowledge and experience.

CICA Expert Doulat Kuanyshev speaks at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Public Policy

Astana, 18 November 2023 — In an engaging and insightful presentation held at Nazarbayev University, Mr Doulat Kuanyshev, a distinguished representative of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and the Organization's expert in its military-political dimension of interaction, shared valuable perspectives on the history, purpose and functions of CICA, highlighting its current goal of institutional transformation.

The presentation and open discussion provided an in-depth exploration of CICA's origins, its primary objectives in promoting peace and stability in Asia, and the practical methodology employed in addressing regional challenges. A significant portion of the presentation was dedicated to highlighting Kazakhstan's contributions and leadership within CICA, showcasing the nation's proactive stance in regional diplomacy.

The event, attended by students from the public policy, international relations and political science departments of the university, delved into the 31-year long history of CICA, emphasizing its relevance in today's global context and its practical applications in the field of public policy and international relations.

Mr Kuanyshev remarked, "The importance of CICA in today's global context cannot be overstated. The pursuit of peace and stability remains a shared responsibility, and organizations like CICA provide a key platform for collaborative efforts."



The presentation concluded with an invitation for further discussions and questions, allowing attendees to engage in a meaningful dialogue on regional diplomacy and the role of CICA. Students also inquired about Mr Kuanyshev's extensive career as a diplomat and within the government of Kazakhstan.

CICA Deputy Secretary General highlights women's empowerment at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) International Conference

Baku, 20-21 November 2023 — Ms. Zhang Ling, Deputy Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), participated in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) International Conference on Advancing the Rights and Empowerment of Women, held in Baku.

In her NAM Conference address, Ms. Zhang Ling emphasized the instrumental role of advancing the rights and empowerment of women in Asia for a collective response to current and future challenges. She highlighted the adoption of gender-responsive policies as a crucial step towards achieving this goal. Ms. Zhang Ling shared that in 2021, the CICA Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs incorporated the empowerment of women and girls into the human dimension of the CICA Member States, as outlined in the 2004 Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures.

CICA pursues women's empowerment through various initiatives, as evidenced by a recent decision during the CICA Business Council's plenary session. A UN Women representative featured as a speaker, and the Think Tank Forum was tasked with conducting research on "Involvement of women in SMEs in the CICA region". The Business Council has also included "Empowering women in small and medium businesses across the CICA region" in its 2024 agenda.

Ms. Zhang Ling underscored the crucial role of women in addressing global challenges, particularly in agriculture, where they constitute almost 43% of the workforce. She emphasized that investing in women directly impacts food security, water conservation and renewable energy—key pillars of sustainability.

Addressing CICA's contribution to gender inclusiveness in education, the Deputy Secretary General noted progress in establishing the Partnership Network of Leading Universities among the CICA Member States. This platform aims to enhance academic collaboration, research projects and student and teaching staff mobility, addressing industry needs and emerging labor trends.



CICA Deputy Secretary General commends TURKPA achievements at 15th anniversary conference

Baku, 21 November 2023 — CICA Deputy Secretary General Ms. Zhang Ling participated in the 15th Anniversary of TURKPA: Experience of the Past, Today's Realities and Future Prospects conference.

On behalf of CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, she extended heartfelt congratulations, highlighting the achievements of TURKPA in developing inter-parliamentary cooperation and dialogue among the TURKPA Member States, which are also CICA Member States.

The strong and fruitful partnership between CICA and TURKPA has evolved over more than a decade. The TURKPA Member States support the ongoing transformation of CICA into a full-fledged international regional organization.



The CICA Deputy Secretary General provided an update on the ongoing activities of the organization. She underlined the progress in establishing the Council on Sustainable Connectivity and the preparations for two significant events scheduled for 2024: the CICA Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders and the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues.

The collaborative endeavors between CICA and TURKPA reflect a commitment to enhancing regional cooperation and addressing pressing issues, ensuring a sustainable and interconnected future for the member states.



CICA Secretary General discusses future cooperation with OSCE Documentation Centre in Prague

Prague, 22 November 2023
- CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay paid a working visit to the Prague-based Documentation Centre of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), a CICA Observer Organization since 1999.

The Secretary General met with Head of the Centre Ambassador Irena Krasnická to discuss archiving and filing of historical records given the Centre's extensive experience in preserving OSCE records since the early 1970s.

Ambassador Kairat Sarybay provided the Head of Centre with a brief overview of CICA activities, the Organization's transformation process and specific steps to strengthen CICA.

Ms. Krasnická, for her part, shared the Centre's history, which began in 1990 with the establishment of the OSCE Secretariat in Prague. In 2015, it transformed into the OSCE Documentation Centre dedicated to managing OSCE's historical records and providing digital access to them, including for scientific and educational purposes.

It should be noted that the experience of the OSCE and other international organizations in this domain is pertinent to the CICA Secretariat in the context of its transformation, as one of its objectives includes managing archives, as well as collecting, processing and distributing CICA documents.

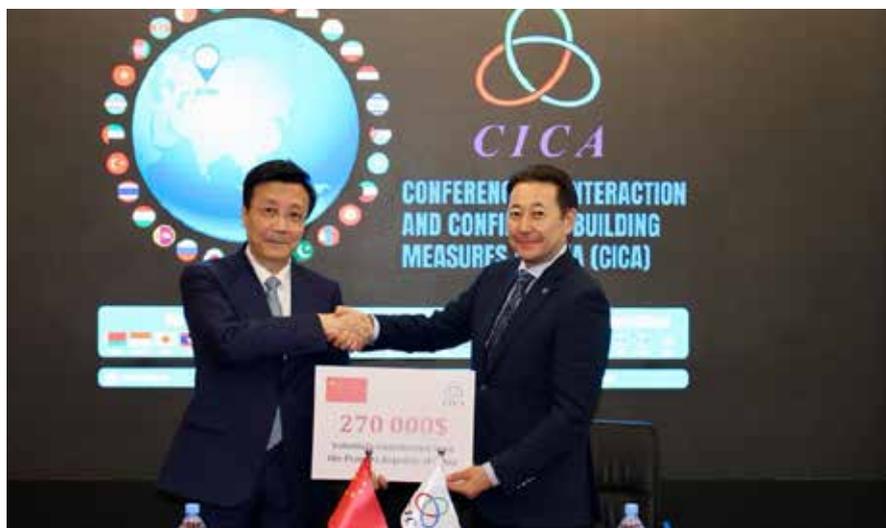




December

The People's Republic of China makes a traditional voluntary contribution to the budget of the CICA Secretariat

The People's Republic of China (PRC) made a voluntary contribution to the budget of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) on 1 December 2023. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Zhang Xiao presented a symbolic check to the CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay at the Secretariat office in Astana.



Ambassador Kairat Sarybay expressed gratitude to the Government of the People's Republic of China for their continuous cooperation and support of CICA initiatives. He noted that the voluntary contribution is perceived not only as financial support, but also as an expression of the political will of the PRC Government to strengthen the capacity of the CICA for the purpose of active interaction to ensure peace and cooperation in Asia.

Ambassador Zhang Xiao emphasized that political and financial support from the PRC have been constant aspects of the Chinese Government's strategy since the establishment of the CICA. The Ambassador also noted that the goals and principles of the CICA correspond to the basic principles of China's foreign policy.

China supports the evolution of CICA into a full-fledged international organization and calls for its further development. China's voluntary contribution is seen as an affirmation of this commitment.

The PRC actively participates in the practical implementation of CICA Confidence Building Measures and is a coordinator in the priority areas of "Finance" and "Agriculture", as well as a co-coordinator in the priority areas of "Security of ICT and their uses", "Epidemiological safety, public health and pharmaceuticals", "Development of secure and effective systems of transportation corridors", «Environment protection», and in the human dimension.

The CICA Secretariat expresses gratitude to the PRC for its support and commitment to continuing cooperation to ensure security and harmony in the region.



CICA Secretariat contributes to Christmas Charity Bazaar in Astana

The Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) proudly participated in the XIV Christmas Charity Bazaar - an esteemed event organized by the Ambassadors Spouses Association of foreign countries accredited in the Kazakh capital. The event took place at Radisson Hotel Astana on 3 December 2023.

Bringing together representatives from the diplomatic corps, international organizations, schools and charitable institutions, the Bazaar provided a chance for participants to showcase the rich culture of their respective countries through a diverse array of national goods, souvenirs, garments, handicrafts and more.

The highlight of the event was the Grand Raffle, a cherished tradition accompanying the bazaar. Participating embassies and sponsors generously contributed items, and attendees had the opportunity to win these prizes.

All proceeds generated from the Christmas Charity Bazaar were directed towards those in need in Kazakhstan. The event serves as a platform for fostering goodwill and strengthening ties between nations, emphasizing the importance of collaboration in addressing social issues.

The CICA Secretariat remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting dialogue and cooperation, not only within the framework of its core mission but also by actively supporting charitable endeavours aligned with its values.

The CICA Secretariat looks forward to continued collaboration with the diplomatic community and charitable organizations to create a lasting and positive impact on the lives of those in need.

CICA Special Working Group prepares ground for work in 2024



On 5 December 2023, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) held a Special Working Group (SWG) meeting under the Chairmanship of Kazakhstan, facilitated by the CICA Secretariat.

Member States discussed and advanced preparations for the final Senior Officials Committee meeting of the year, which is expected to approve the annual plan of confidence building measures (CBMs) and the budget of the CICA Secretariat for 2024.

Besides finalizing these key planning documents of the organization, the SWG also agreed on new concept papers on implementation of CBMs in the priority areas of environment protection and the natural disaster management. Thereby, further significant progress was achieved in keeping CICA core activities up to date with current needs of its Member States.



CICA Deputy Secretary General presents awards to winners of international prize #WEARETOGETHER

Moscow, 4-8 December 2023 — Deputy Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Zhang Ling participated in the International Forum for Civil Participation #WEARETOGETHER as a member of the Directorate of the International Track of International Prize #WeAreTogether.



During the project session titled “The future of the international track of international prize #WEARETOGETHER”, the Deputy Secretary General delivered a welcoming address noting the growing role of volunteering in the CICA agenda. This is highlighted by the adoption of the Statement on Promoting Volunteerism for Sustainable Development by the CICA Ministerial Council during the High-level Week of the UN General Assembly sessions in New York this September, which gives a strong political impetus to a completely new direction of CICA’s activities, aiming to support and encourage civic engagement in volunteering.

The award ceremony was held on 7 December, during which Ms. Zhang Ling presented awards to the winners in the categories of Healthcare and Emergency Response, as well as Equal Opportunities and Social Justice.



In her discussion with the finalists, the Deputy Secretary General also shared that under the Kazakh Chairmanship, CICA is planning to hold the Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders in Astana in 2024, which aims to bring together young leaders and volunteer activists from the Member States to exchange ideas, experiences and best practices in volunteering and civic engagement.

While on her working visit to Moscow, Ms. Zhang Ling also held meetings with Deputy Head of the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh) Mr. Denis Ashirov and Deputy Director of the Department of Asian and Pacific Cooperation of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr. Timur Zevakhin. During these interactions, the participants exchanged views and ideas and deliberated on topical issues of cooperation.

Iran hosts CICA webinar on innovative methods for treating drug use disorders



Specialists from CICA Member States involved in the treatment of addiction to narcotic drugs such as physicians, psychiatrists and psychologists gathered on Monday 11 December 2023 to participate in the Third Online Training Course on the Treatment of Addiction to Drug and Drug Harm Reduction «Psychological Interventions in Drug Use Disorders Treatment», organized by The Drug Control Headquarters of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The event, organized under the priority area of “Combating illicit drugs” within CICA’s New Challenges and Threats Dimension of Interaction, facilitated in-depth discussions on new plans and strategies for treatment of various types of drug addiction. Participants discussed how methods such as motivational interviewing and group therapy can help people with substance use disorders. They also highlighted how cognitive behavioral therapy and conditioning can help prevent relapses in patients.

CICA acknowledges the importance of exchange on measures to curb illicit drug trafficking which is a global challenge and a shared responsibility that requires both joint efforts to reduce production, trafficking and demand for drugs, as well as innovative and effective treatment methods to support people adversely affected by these drugs.

The CICA Senior Officials Committee (SOC) met in Astana on 12 December 2023 to take stock of 2023 achievements of CICA and discuss the path ahead for the organization. High-level representatives of CICA Member States, the Kazakhstan Chairmanship and the CICA Secretariat reviewed major outcomes of this year, approved plans for 2024 and concept papers for cooperation in CICA priority areas, considered an application for Observer State status and discussed future cooperation with some other international organizations.

CICA Senior Officials Committee holds final meeting of 2023



The Chairperson of the SOC meeting, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Alibek Bakayev, briefed the Member States on major achievements of 2023, current CICA activities and the outlook for 2024, including on the implementation of the CICA transformation road map endorsed by the CICA Ministerial Council in September 2023.

The CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay presented an annual report on the activities of the CICA Secretariat in 2023 covering all areas of Secretariat work over the last year, and work plans for 2024.

The SOC adopted the 2024 plan of implementation of confidence building measures(CBMs) and the 2024 Budget of the CICA Secretariat, which are the basic annual planning documents of the organization.

The SOC also considered and approved two concept papers in CICA priority areas “Environment protection” and “Natural disaster management”, prepared by Mongolia and Iran respectively.

Overwhelming support at the SOC meeting was expressed to the application of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to join CICA as an Observer State. The SOC recommended to the CICA Ministerial



Council to grant CICA Observer status to this country. Expansion of CICA is a very welcome development. Saudi Arabia’s entry into the CICA family is important for further expansion of CICA as a pan-Asian organization for dialogue and cooperation.

One of the highlights of the SOC meeting was welcoming the recent breakthrough in the process of entry into force of the CICA Convention on Privileges and Immunities owing to its recent ratification by Bangladesh.

The SOC also discussed the topic of developing closer relations with other international organizations, such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, to create and further develop effective synergies with these structures.



South Korea makes voluntary financial contribution to CICA



CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay received the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Republic of Kazakhstan H.E. Mr. Cho Tae-ick on 20 December 2023. The meeting marked the voluntary financial contribution by the Government of the Republic of Korea to the CICA Secretariat budget.

The Secretary General expressed his sincere gratitude to the Korean side, which has been making regular contributions to the Secretariat's budget since 2006. During the Meeting of CICA Senior Officials Committee on 12 December, Ambassador Cho Tae-ick called on all Member States to increase their ownership of the organization by agreeing on regular mandatory contributions that would reinforce the Secretariat and make its functions more sustainable.

Ambassadors Kairat Sarybay and Cho Tae-ick elaborated on the results and effective work of CICA throughout 2023 aimed at implementation of the Sixth CICA Summit decisions on transformation and further institutionalization of CICA. The timeliness of the transformation process was highlighted amidst the expansion of CICA's role in promoting stability and confidence building in Asia.

The Republic of Korea actively engages in the CICA process in the capacity of coordinator of the priority areas "Energy Security" and "Information Technology" within CICA's Economic Dimension of Interaction. South Korea has also steadfastly supported the Roadmap for CICA Transformation and actively participated in discussions regarding its 8 clusters.

CICA Secretariat and Kazakhstan's Ministry of Culture and Information collaborate on CICA Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders

On 21 December 2023 in Astana, CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay met with the Minister of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan Aida Balayeva. The primary focus of the meeting was the upcoming CICA Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders scheduled to take place under the auspices of CICA Youth Council in May 2024, as well as other key issues.



The Secretary General congratulated the Ministry on the support received for Kazakhstan's initiative, leading to the United Nations General Assembly adopting a resolution proclaiming 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development.

Ambassador Kairat Sarybay informed that the CICA Ministerial Council adopted a Statement on Promoting Volunteering for Sustainable Development on 21 September 2023 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly high-level week in New York. This document gives powerful political impetus to a completely new direction of CICA activities to support and encourage the active involvement of citizens in volunteer activities, which has been a key area of focus of the Secretariat's recent initiatives.

Minister Balayeva assured full support and dedication from the Ministry to conduct the CICA Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders, an event initiated by the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the 6th CICA Summit in October 2022, on the highest level.

Parties discussed conceptual and organizational issues of the Rally and agreed to continue the cooperation between the Secretariat and the Ministry.

The Secretary General also invited representatives of the Ministry to take part in the CICA panel session: "Development of volunteerism in CICA countries" at the World Youth Festival in Russia, Sochi in March 2024 to further promote the Volunteer Rally in Astana.

Saudi Arabia becomes tenth CICA Observer State



Saudi Arabia has joined the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) as an Observer State, marking a significant milestone in further geographic expansion of this pan-continental organization for fostering peace and security in Asia.

Saudi Arabia's application to become an Observer State was pre-approved at the CICA Senior Officials Committee meeting on 12 December 2023 and the decision on granting the nation Observer status was adopted today, on 26 December 2023, by the CICA Ministerial Council.

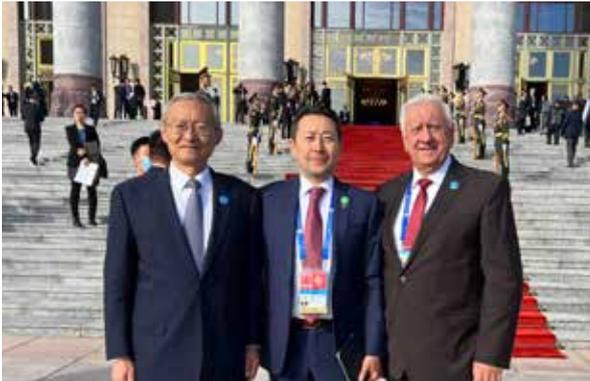
Saudi Arabia is one of the Gulf States, of which CICA already includes Member States such as Bahrain, Kuwait, the UAE and Qatar, which are active participants of the organization. Observer status of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will further increase the representation of this sub-region in CICA and will thereby broaden and enrich cooperation across Asia.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia actively contributes to promoting multilateralism in Asia and in the rest of the world. Saudi Arabia currently participates in various international organizations, including

the League of Arab States (LAS), which is a CICA observer organization, as well as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Saudi Arabia's application to become a CICA Observer State underscores the importance of collective efforts in addressing global and regional challenges and reflects the region's shared aspiration for a more connected international community.

Over the last three years, the CICA family has experienced notable growth, with Kuwait becoming a Member in 2022, Turkmenistan an Observer in 2021, and the Eurasian Economic Union a partner organization in 2022. The organization's expansion is a very welcome development for CICA and is invaluable for its further development as a pan-Asian organization.



CICA SG Kairat Sarybay met with distinguished colleagues Armida Alisjahbana (ESCAP), Ghada Waly (UNODC), Zhang Min (SCO), Mikhail Myasnikovich (EEC), Kao Kim Hourn (ASEAN) on the sidelines of 3rd Belt and Road forum in Beijing.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay participated in a panel session on Global Energy Security at Kazakhstan Energy Week 2023. The Secretary General highlighted CICA's commitment to upholding global energy security, emphasizing the seminars and workshops that it has organized on this topic over recent years. These events provide a platform for Member States, experts, and stakeholders across Asia and beyond to discuss, collaborate and develop strategies for addressing energy issues.



CICA SG Kairat Sarybay met with the Minister of Youth Policy and Sports of Uzbekistan Adham Ikramov to discuss youth development and explore new avenues for cooperation.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay had a great exchange with the President of CIGG Center for Europe and Asia Mr. Jiang Yonggang on the outcomes of the Youth Development Forum and explored projects for further cooperation, including youth ecotourism tours across CICA regions, trans-border and people-to-people connectivity.



CICA Secretary General expressed gratitude toward Lieutenant-General Jing Jianfeng, Department Chief of Staff of the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission of China for strong support of CICA and high assessments of its activities and proposals aimed at fostering cooperation between CICA and the Beijing Xiangshan Forum.



Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr. Kao Kim Hourn met with Secretary General of CICA Kairat Sarybay on the sidelines of the 10th Beijing Xiangshan Forum. They discussed the prospects of ASEAN-CICA cooperation.



CICA SG Kairat Sarybay met with the SG of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Mr. Zhang Ming to discuss pressing issues in light of recent escalations in West Asia. Agreed to continue close cooperation between CICA and SCO Secretariats in specific areas at various levels on a planned basis.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay met with Ambassador. Li Hui, Special Representative on Eurasian Affairs, Government of China, regarding Asia's geopolitical landscape and CICA's institutional development. They discussed topical issues on the current agenda, including the CICA Think Tank Forum.



CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay joined the 27th ECO Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting chaired by Azerbaijan in the historic city of Shusha. Ambassador Sarybay reiterated CICA's commitment to strengthening the long-standing partnership through the exchange of ideas, experiences and meaningful bilateral engagements with ECO.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay spoke with China Xinhua News about CICA's current activities in its Military-Political dimension of interaction, as well as feasible ways to construct a regional security architecture in Asia.



Expert in the CICA Dimension of New Challenges and Threats Ambassador Adel Adaileh participated in the 9th International Scientific-Practical Conference, SCO RATS in Tashkent. The ambassador highlighted the continuous work carried out by CICA over the last three decades to help facilitate international cooperation in combating terrorism and extremism through its New Challenges and Threats Dimension of Interaction.



CICA SG Kairat Sarybay met with Dr. Chen Dongxiao, President of the Institutes for International Studies, the current Chair of the CICA Think Tank Forum, and Mr. Gilles Carbonnier, Vice-President of International Committee of the Red Cross at the Beijing Xiangshan Forum.



Ambassador Mr. Adaileh, an Expert in the CICA Dimension of New Challenges and Threats participated in the UNDOC Programme Steering Committee Meeting in Bishkek. Mr Adaileh spoke about key strategies to prevent radicalization and terrorism in Central Asia 2022-2025. He highlighted CICA Member States' strong measures against new threats.



CICA DSG Ms. Zhang Ling attended the Christmas Charity Basket Event organized by the Ambassadors Spouses Association in Astana and donated a basket with CICA 30th-anniversary souvenirs as well as other gifts for the Grand Raffle winners on behalf of the CICA Secretariat.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay met with H.E. Salman Bal, the new Swiss Ambassador to Kazakhstan and brief him on CICA Transformation, top priorities and activities. Noting that Swiss as a champion of multilateralism, highlighted CICA's contribution to strengthening the security architecture in Asia with its diverse historical and cultural background.



H.E. Ambassador Doulat Kuanyshiev, representing CICA Secretariat, attended the 30th meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Skopje, North Macedonia. CICA underscores the indispensable role of multilateralism in addressing today's global and regional challenges.



Received Simona Halperin Deputy Director General, Head of Euro-Asia and West Balkans Division at Israel MFA. Noted unacceptability of attacks by HAMAS militants killing innocent people and stressed the importance of abiding by humanitarian law to avoid further civilian casualties in the Gaza Strip. Emphasised need for diplomatic ways of resolving long-lasting conflict in West Asia based on the principles and norms of international law and UNSC resolutions. Reminded of CICA's role as a dialogue platform where Israel and Palestine participate at equal footing.



CICA Expert H.E. Amb Doulat Kuanyshiev delivered a guest lecture to students in the International Relations program at Maqsut Narikbayev University. His presentation focused on the role of CICA in upholding global peace and security, offering unique perspectives drawn from his extensive diplomatic experiences.



CICA Expert, H.E. Amb Adaileh shared valuable insights at a roundtable on the role of regional organizations in preventing and combating pandemics. Emphasizing CICA's approach to epidemiological security, healthcare, and pharmaceuticals, he underscored the need to enhance synergy among regional mechanisms and avoid politicization of this matter.



At the instruction of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in its role as the current CICA Chair, Kazakhstan has provided additional humanitarian aid to the people of Palestine.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay engaged in discussions with esteemed academia experts at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty, exploring promising prospects for CICA development. Participants shared assessments, recommendations, and ideas, all contributing to CICA's growth and visibility.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay met with Mr. Yerbolat Dossaev, the Mayor of Almaty, the birthplace of CICA. They discussed the best way to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Declaration on Principles Guiding Relations between CICA Member States in 2024. Trusting in the traditional hospitality of the City of Apples, they explored ideas for commemorating this significant milestone.

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