

VOICE OF ASIA:

CICA Digest

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CICA Secretary General visits Azerbaijan to support the upcoming Chairmanship

CICA Secretary General Participates in 80th ESCAP Session

SOC discusses Transformation Road Map and prepares for Major Events in 2024



Foundation Stone Laid for the New Headquarters of CICA in Astana

Beautification Event Held for the CICA Alley in the Presidential Park of Astana

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Foreword



It is with great pleasure that I present the latest issue of the quarterly digest of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). Over the past months, we have made further progress in our efforts to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation among Member States. Each step reaffirms our common aspiration for peace and stability across the entire CICA region.

I had the great honour of joining CICA as Deputy Secretary General in November 2023. Since my first days in this role, I have been impressed by the dedication, commitment and professionalism of our team. I am proud to say that we have achieved remarkable results and continue to move forward with confidence.

This digest highlights the key events, initiatives and projects implemented in the second quarter of 2024. We remain actively engaged

in addressing critical regional issues, such as environment, economy and humanitarian cooperation. Special attention is given to sustainable development and inclusive growth, which are central to our agenda.

One of the most significant events of this quarter was the CICA Senior Officials Committee (SOC) meeting in June. In addition to discussing various current issues, the SOC initiated structured work on the Road Map for CICA Transformation (RMT), focusing on drafting the organization's Charter and updating its Rules of Procedure. The SOC also conducted its regular annual review of the implementation of CICA confidence building measures with a focus on the human dimension, discussed the implementation of initiatives under the current Kazakh Chairmanship and began substantive preparations for the Seventh CICA Ministerial Council Meeting in Baku at the end of 2024.

Another milestone was the commencement of construction of the new CICA Headquarters building, as instructed by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. During the ground-breaking ceremony, a time capsule with a message for future generations of employees was placed. It symbolizes our aspirations and commitment to long-term development. This new chapter in CICA's history reflects our sincere desire to create a space that fosters stronger ties and deeper dialogue among Member States.

We are actively preparing for Azerbaijan's incoming CICA Chairmanship for the 2024-2026 term. In this context, Secretary General Kairat Sarybay visited Baku on 18 April 2024 for consultations with the country's leadership. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev expressed full support and shared the strategic vision for the forthcoming Chairmanship, instilling confidence in the successful continuation of our common cause.

It is also noteworthy that the Secretary General participated in the 80th session of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. The Secretary General's visit to Cambodia on 26 April 2024, during which he held high-level meetings, marked a significant step in strengthening cooperation between CICA and Cambodia. These meetings laid the groundwork for future joint projects and initiatives, which will undoubtedly yield results in the short term.

Observing one of our traditions, we organized another event to beautify the CICA Alley at Presidential Park in Astana. This event brought together Kazakhstan's Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, the diplomatic corps in Astana, and the Secretariat personnel, supported by local authorities to contribute jointly to improving our environment. Such well-established traditions certainly advance the idea of green development and enhance our friendly and professional connections.

Among the quarter's highlights was the third annual CICA Bicycle Tour, held from 31 May to 2 June 2024, amidst the magnificent landscape of the Burabay National Park. The event not only promoted the World Bicycle Day initiative and a healthy lifestyle but also provided a unique opportunity for informal networking among diplomats. Participants were able to enjoy the beauty of nature while fostering mutual understanding, which is an essential component of our work.

I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone for their dedicated support and engagement in our initiatives and events. Together, we are building a future where peace, harmony and collective prosperity are fundamental values. I hope that this issue of the digest will serve not only as a source of valuable information but also as a source of inspiration for further efforts. New challenges and opportunities lie ahead, and I am certain that together we can achieve our shared goals and adapt with confidence to the new historical realities, while continuing our pursuit of common well-being.

Sincerely,

Zhang Ling
Deputy Secretary General,
CICA Secretariat



President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev receives CICA Secretary General

CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay briefed President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on the progress on implementing Kazakhstan's initiatives and priorities under its current Chairmanship of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia from 2020 to 2024.



Ambassador K. Sarybay informed the President of the activities of the CICA permanent bodies and the ongoing work on the institutional strengthening of the forum. In particular, the Secretary General highlighted the recently agreed draft Memorandum on the Establishment of the Partnership Network of Leading Universities of the CICA Member States for approval by the CICA Ministerial Council. He also noted the progress on such initiatives as convening of the Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders of the CICA Member States under the auspices of the Youth Council, hosting the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues, the institutionalization of the CICA Finance Summit and the establishment of the CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity.

The Secretary General emphasized Kazakhstan's active role in rendering material and personnel support to the CICA Secretariat and the upcoming opening of the organization's new

headquarters in Astana, which will be built using cutting-edge green technologies. The President stated that Kazakhstan would continue to pay particular attention to the activities of the CICA Secretariat and support its work.

The Head of State underscored Kazakhstan's active support for all CICA activities, especially the ongoing process of its transformation into a full-fledged international organization. The Secretary General reported on the development of several documents outlined in the Road Map for Transformation, which was adopted by the Ministerial Council in 2023 on behalf of the Sixth CICA Summit held in Astana in October 2022.

President Tokayev underlined the need for further consistent development of CICA by enhancing the efficiency of its permanent structures, as well as expanding its geography and external relations.



April



Sign of partnership and cooperation: CICA Secretary General receives SCO RATS medal

Director of the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO RATS) Ruslan Mirzaev awarded Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay with a commemorative medal to mark the 20th anniversary of the SCO RATS.

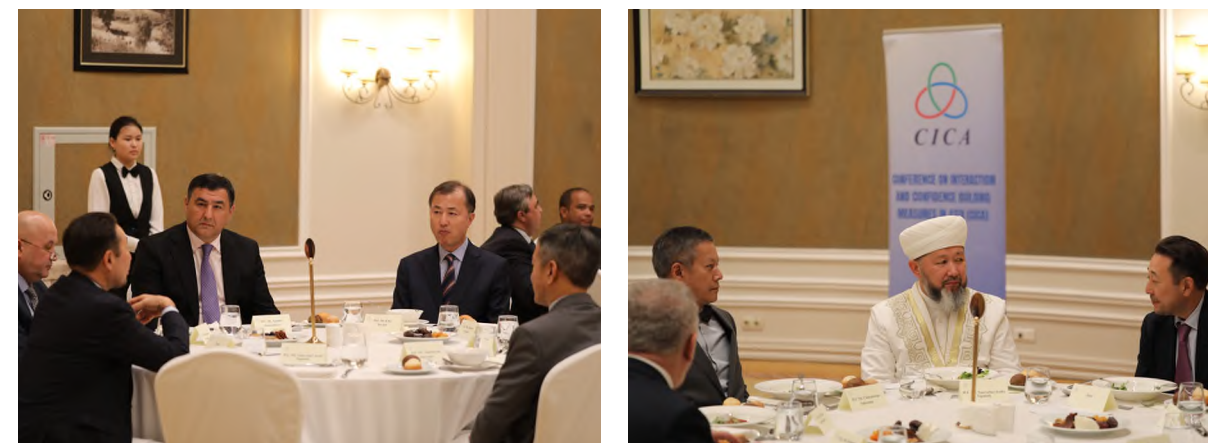
The ceremony took place at the CICA headquarters in Astana. Receiving the award from the head of the SCO RATS, CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay emphasized that he regarded it as a recognition of CICA's contribution to collective efforts in countering terrorism within the region and as a sign of successful partnership in this domain.

CICA and the SCO, including its Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, operate in the same region and have complementary areas of cooperation. All SCO Member States are also CICA Member States.

Combating terrorism is an important element of the Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures, one of the fundamental documents of CICA. The Sixth CICA Summit in Astana held on 12-13 October 2022 adopted the CICA Plan of Action on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

In 2017, the CICA Secretariat and the SCO RATS signed a Protocol of cooperation to join efforts in combating the scourge of terrorism, which transcends national borders. Earlier, in 2014, the CICA and SCO secretariats signed a Memorandum of understanding.

CICA Secretariat hosts traditional iftar dinner on the occasion of Ramadan



The Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) hosted a traditional Ramadan iftar dinner at Rixos President Astana, gathering representatives from CICA Member States, as well as Observer States and Organizations accredited in Astana

In his address, CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay highlighted the universal message of peace and tolerance inherent in Islam and other world religions. He emphasized the imperative of dialogue and mutual understanding in building peace, and expressed deep concern over conflicts escalating worldwide, particularly those rooted in ethnic, cultural, and religious divisions. Ambassador Sarybay advocated for diplomatic efforts, such as the UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in the Gaza Strip during the month of Ramadan.

Talking about the most notable recent developments within CICA, Ambassador Sarybay spotlighted Azerbaijan's appointment as the next CICA Chair for 2024-2026, starting at the CICA Ministerial Council meeting this December.

Ambassador Sarybay also outlined key forthcoming CICA events under the Kazakhstan Chairmanship initiated by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, aimed at strengthening peace, dialogue, and mutual understanding among Member States and their peoples.

These include the Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders under the auspices of the CICA Youth Council, which will bring together leaders of volunteer organizations, active volunteers, and heads of government agencies from Member States to support volunteerism in tackling social, economic, and environmental challenges in the CICA region.

He also spoke about the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues scheduled for late August. This high-level event, for the first time, gathered ministers of environment of CICA Member States to address pressing issues on the global agenda and to consider establishing a framework for collaboration among Member States in this area.

Ambassador Sarybay extended his heartfelt wishes for peace and unity to all guests, calling for even stronger cooperation and dialogue among CICA Member States.

CICA And OSCE Commit to Enhanced Dialogue and Regional Cooperation

CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay hosted the Director of the OSCE Academy, Dr. Kate E. Walker, at the CICA headquarters. The meeting was aimed at exchanging insights on academic and analytical support for regional multilateral mechanisms and exploring avenues for potential collaboration.

Ambassador Kairat Sarybay provided a comprehensive overview of CICA's evolution, tracing its trajectory from inception to its ongoing transformation process. He emphasized the organization's adaptability in tandem with Asia's increasing influence on global affairs. Ambassador Sarybay also underscored the significance Member States attribute to CICA, particularly amidst regional and global peace and security challenges.

Discussions revolved around potential areas of synergy, notably focusing on climate change issues, as well as the growing roles of CICA bodies such as the Youth Council and Think Tank Forum. The conversation also encompassed the human dimension and capacity-building initiatives for both the CICA Secretariat and students of the OSCE Academy in Bishkek.

Both parties expressed mutual commitment to maintaining communication channels to delineate specific areas for future cooperation.

This meeting marks a pivotal step toward fostering enhanced collaboration between the CICA Secretariat and the OSCE, reflecting a shared commitment to bolstering regional stability and prosperity.



CICA Secretary General Meets Kazakhstan's Minister of Culture and Information to Discuss Youth and Volunteering Initiatives

CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay met with Minister of Culture and Information of Kazakhstan Aida Balayeva. The parties discussed preparations for the upcoming seventh meeting of the CICA Youth Council at the ministerial level and the Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders under its auspices. This event to be held in Astana in early October 2024 was initiated by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Sixth CICA Summit.



For the first time, the Youth Council, a CICA advisory body, will be convened at the ministerial level. In order to implement the CICA Ministerial Council Statement on Promoting Volunteerism for Sustainable Development of 21 September 2023, the upcoming meeting will be devoted to the role and development of volunteering in the CICA region. This Ministerial Statement gives a powerful political impetus to the new direction of CICA activities to support and encourage active civic engagement in volunteering.

Furthermore, within the thematic panel sessions, the participants of the Rally will discuss trends and innovations in the volunteer movement, ways to increase the effectiveness of volunteer activities, the contribution of volunteerism to health, social and inclusive volunteerism, volunteerism and biodiversity conservation, and the role of the volunteer community in mitigating emergencies.

Importantly, to improve the competencies and skills of volunteers, the Rally will include training on the development of leadership and communication skills and training on design and project management in the field of volunteering.

The participants of the event will also enjoy a rich programme on the culture and history of Kazakhstan. As part of the Rally, it is planned to award the winners of the essay contest among the youth on the topic "The Future of Asia We Want" held by the CICA Secretariat in 2023.

It is expected that the meeting of the Youth Council will produce recommendations for the further development of volunteer activities in the CICA area.

After careful evaluation of 31 outstanding essays from 8 countries, we are proud to announce the winners of the essay competition held under the theme “The Future of Asia We Want: Ideas for the CICA Region”.



Essay contest among the youth of the CICA Member States on the topic: “The Future of Asia We Want: Ideas for the CICA Region”: Winners Announcement

To ensure a fair and balanced evaluation of the submitted works, the competition jury was comprised of academic and governmental experts from the CICA Secretariat and Member States with experience in international security, multilateral cooperation, and regional development in Asia, including representatives from Bahrain, Bangladesh, China, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Contestants tackled a wide array of themes, including environmental sustainability, economic development, cultural heritage, youth empowerment, technological innovation, and international diplomacy. The diverse perspectives and innovative ideas expressed will undoubtedly help inform future discussions within the CICA Youth Council, helping steer the organization towards a brighter future.

The CICA Secretariat extends its congratulations to the winners and heartfelt thanks to all participants for their valuable contributions to shaping the future of Asia.

LIST OF WINNERS

1st Prize: Mr Mohammed Ahmed Ali Maki (Bahrain)
 2nd Prize: Mr Rubiat Saimum (Bangladesh)
 3rd Prize: Ms Aisulu Almash (Kazakhstan)
 4th Place: Mr Tamirlan Kenzhebayev (Kazakhstan)
 5th Place: Ms Papichaya Leenapaesanan (Thailand)

The winners will receive certificates from the CICA Secretariat. Furthermore, the first, second, and third prize winners will be awarded a financial prize. Additionally, the authors of the top five essays will receive certificates and have the opportunity for a short-term internship at the CICA Secretariat.

We look forward to continuing our efforts in fostering intellectual exchange and providing a platform for the vibrant voices within the CICA region.

New Cooperation Avenues Explored with Sri Lankan Delegation

CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met with the Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka Ms. Aruni Yasodha Wijewardane at the CICA Headquarters.

Your Excellency, Ms. Aruni Wijewardane!
 Welcome to the CICA Headquarters!



The CICA Secretary General informed Secretary Wijewardane about current CICA activities, including key events scheduled for 2024 and the implementation of the Kazakhstan Chairmanship's priorities outlined by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Sixth CICA Summit held in Astana on 12-13 October 2022. The interlocutors also discussed the CICA transformation process, launched by the Summit, in considerable depth.

Ambassador Sarybay emphasized the importance of the recent decision of the CICA Ministerial Council on Azerbaijan's Chairmanship in 2024-2026, following Kazakhstan, the current Chair since 2020. Secretary Wijewardane was briefed on preparations for the upcoming Seventh Meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council to be hosted by Azerbaijan by the end of 2024.

Ambassador Sarybay expressed his sincere appreciation for Colombo's continuous support for the CICA process and thanked the Government of Sri Lanka for hosting his recent visit to Colombo in February 2024, the first-ever visit of a CICA Secretary General since the country became a Member State in 2018.

Ambassador Sarybay briefed Madam Secretary on the history of CICA, its geography and the composition of the CICA Secretariat, as Sri Lanka is looking for ways to further engage in CICA activities.

The Sri Lankan senior diplomat underscored her country's continuous commitment and active role in ensuring peace and security in Asia and, to that end, its great interest in CICA.

Secretary Wijewardane highlighted the strategic importance of President Ranil Wickremesinghe's decision to open a resident Diplomatic Mission in Kazakhstan – first one in Central Asia – which is also meant to facilitate Colombo's interaction with CICA. In this regard, Madam Secretary gave a very high assessment to Kazakhstan's international standing, with its leading role in promoting many issues on the international agenda, including its proactive engagement in multilateral structures.

CICA and Atameken Discuss Preparations for Upcoming Business Council Session and Forum in Bishkek

CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay held a meeting with Mr. Raimbek Batalov, Chairman of the Presidium of Kazakhstan's National Chamber of Entrepreneur "Atameken," current Chairman of the Board of the CICA Business Council.

The discussions centered around preparations for the seventh plenary session of the Business Council and the upcoming ninth Business Forum planned for the 4th quarter of 2024 in Bishkek. Notably, the agenda for the forthcoming plenary session was determined by the members of the CICA Business Council, encompassing themes such as Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for SME Development, Enhancing Cross-border Trade through E-commerce Advancements, Navigating New Challenges in Logistics and Infrastructure, Empowering Women in SMEs across the CICA Region, and Prioritizing Sustainable Development in SMEs.

Ambassador Kairat Sarybay provided Mr. Raimbek Batalov with comprehensive updates on recent developments within CICA, including Azerbaijan's upcoming assumption of the CICA Chairmanship. This transition will extend to Azerbaijan assuming the Chairmanship of all CICA advisory bodies, such as the Business Council, Youth Council, Think Tank Forum, and Council of Eminent Persons.

Furthermore, the Secretary General shared insights gained from discussions on Business Council activities with CICA Member States, which have taken place in various locations since the beginning of the year, including Moscow, New Delhi, Colombo, and on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomatic Forum in early March 2024 with high representatives from Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

Secretary General Kairat Sarybay also highlighted the initiatives of CICA Member States on intersessional activities of the Business Council, such as hosting seminars on SMEs in agriculture in Russia, organizing thematic conferences, and visits of CICA Business Council members to industrial sites, IT parks, etc.

During the meeting, both parties explored the potential organization of a round table of the CICA Business Council under the auspices of the Almaty Investment Forum scheduled for late June 2024. This round table would focus on the pivotal role of SMEs in modern urbanism, the development of «smart cities» and appropriate government incentives for CICA members.



Addressing Asia's Drug Trafficking Challenge: CICA participates at UNAMA Working Group Meeting



As a follow-up to the productive discussions of CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay with the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Roza Otunbayeva at the beginning of 2024, the CICA Secretariat participated online in the meeting of the UNAMA-hosted Working Group on Counter-narcotics in Kabul.

The participation aimed to showcase CICA's efforts in addressing illicit drug trade in its region while also examining the initiatives of UNAMA, states, and other key stakeholders in combating drug trafficking.

Ambassador Adel Adaileh, an expert in the CICA Dimension of New Challenges and Threats, delivered remarks at the meeting.

The CICA expert emphasized the global challenge of drug use, particularly in Asia, drawing from comprehensive UNODC data. Opiate production declined in Southeast Asia in 2022 but surged in other regions, notably accounting for 90% of global output. There has been a concerning rise in methamphetamine manufacturing in Southeast Asia, with trafficking routes extending to Europe. Synthetic drug lab detection is also increasing in various regions.

Ambassador Adel Adaileh highlighted the disproportionate impact of drug use in Asia, where over half of the global opioid user population resides. Methamphetamine poses a significant concern in East and Southeast Asia, while opiates predominate in other areas. Asia also hosts the highest number of people globally who inject drugs, with notable prevalence rates of hepatitis C and HIV.

Combating illicit drug production and trafficking is a priority within CICA's framework, underpinned by the Almaty Act and the updated Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures. CICA Member States are determined to promote efforts to eradicate the root causes and conditions conducive to illicit drug production and trafficking, and other forms of crimes in the region.

CICA's efforts focus on fostering information exchange, sharing information on new technological equipment and modern technologies applied to detect illicit drugs, and increasing capacity-building activities against illicit drug production and trafficking, such as experts' training courses; and public awareness initiatives.



CICA Secretary General visits Baku to support Azerbaijan's incoming CICA Chairmanship

The Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), Kairat Sarybay paid a visit to Baku to hold consultations regarding the incoming Azerbaijan Chairmanship of CICA, scheduled for 2024-2026.

Secretary General Sarybay had the honor of being received by H.E. Ilham Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan, where they engaged in fruitful discussions regarding Azerbaijan's impressive contributions to multilateralism. President Aliyev shared his strategic vision for the incoming Azerbaijan Chairmanship, emphasizing the importance of pan-Asian dialogue within CICA and expressing strong support for its initiatives.

Ambassador Sarybay expressed his gratitude for the recognition of CICA as a mature and relevant organization and appreciated the readiness of President Ilham Aliyev to strengthen it during Azerbaijan's Chairmanship.

Secretary General Sarybay held in-depth talks with the Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Jeyhun Bayramov, who noted that the priorities of the incoming Chairmanship would build upon the achievements and priorities set during the Kazakh Chairmanship. The interlocutors discussed substantive preparations for the CICA Ministerial Council meeting in Baku in autumn 2024, which would set directions for the organization's work in the next biennium until the 2026 CICA Summit, also to be hosted by Azerbaijan.

At a productive meeting with Mr. Hikmet Hajiyev, Assistant to the President of Azerbaijan & Head of the Foreign Policy Department of Presidential Administration, Secretary General Sarybay expressed his appreciation for Azerbaijan's strong commitment to chairing CICA and high hopes for collaboration with Azerbaijan's seasoned team in the biennium 2024-2026.



Additionally, Ambassador Sarybay had engaging discussions with Ms. Indira Hajiyeva and Mr. Farhad Hajiyev, Deputies of the Minister of Youth and Sport, regarding the upcoming Chairmanship of Azerbaijan in the CICA Youth Council. He also met with Mr. Elnur Aliyev, First Deputy Minister of Economy of Azerbaijan, to elaborate on the incoming Chairmanship of Azerbaijan in the CICA Business Council, responsible for promoting cooperation in the field of small and medium enterprises.



Ambassador Sarybay acknowledged the high potential of academia in fostering inter-state dialogue for peace and development in Asia during discussions with Ambassador Dr. Farid Shafiyev, Chairman of the Center for Analyses of International Relations. Both parties agreed to collaborate closely in support of the CICA Think Tank Forum and enriching its intersessional activities, further enhancing the role of CICA as a platform for fostering cooperation and peace in the region.

During his visit, Ambassador Sarybay paid homage to the esteemed President Heydar Aliyev at his resting place in Baku, reflecting on his enduring contributions to the nation and its people. He also visited the Alley of Martyrs memorial to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the independence of Azerbaijan.

The visit of Ambassador Sarybay to Baku was held shortly after the CICA Ministerial Council's decision to entrust the helm of the next CICA Chair to Azerbaijan. It has fully achieved its main goals of setting a stage for smooth succession of the organization's leadership, ensuring continuity of CICA's strategic priorities, and starting to provide support for the future Chair in further advancing the CICA process.



CICA's Role in Digital Innovation and Sustainable Development Showcased at the 80th ESCAP Session with High-Level Discussions in Side Event



CICA Secretary General visited Bangkok to take part in the 80th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) from 22 to 24 April 2024.

Secretary General Sarybay joined the high-level opening session, as well as some other panels and side events, dedicated to “Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”. In particular, he delivered key remarks during the dialogue with subregional organizations. He highlighted efforts in fostering sustainable development across the Asia-Pacific. Emphasizing the role of digital innovation, he underscored collaborative initiatives addressing economic growth, environmental sustainability, and disaster management.

The Secretary General also addressed the SPECA ministerial meeting, underscoring a strategic role of Central Asia for CICA and reaffirming CICA's commitment to regional cooperation and sustainable development initiatives.

Moreover, Secretary General Sarybay held a number of discussions with high-level UN representatives on the sidelines of the 80th Session. Talks with Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary General and Executive Secretary of UNESCAP, centered on accelerating collaboration between CICA Secretariat and UNESCAP, with a commitment to expedite the Memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two organizations.

Additionally, fruitful meetings were held with David McClachlan Carr, Regional Director for Asia-Pacific of UNDCO, focusing on expanding joint capacities to advance Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through

networking and regional collaborations, and with Aliya El-Yassir, Regional Director of UN Women for Asia-Pacific, emphasizing the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment that have cross-cutting nature and correlate with many CICA's priority areas.

Secretary General Sarybay also hosted a landmark side event jointly organized at the UN Conference Centre by CICA and UNESCAP Secretariats under the title “Leveraging Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific – Role of Regional Partnerships”.



The event commenced with remarks from the Secretary General and distinguished guests including ESCAP Executive Secretary; Arman Issetov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Thailand; and Busadee Santipitaks, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

CICA Secretariat's expert in Environmental dimension Dr. Ugur Turan set the tone with his key presentation followed by insightful interventions, featuring experts from various sectors, highlighting the pivotal role of digital technologies in advancing sustainable development goals. Major topics included environmental dimensions, digital economy promotion, emergency situation monitoring, natural disaster management, and fostering regional cooperation.





CICA Secretary General Holds Several Important Bilateral Meetings During 80th ESCAP Session

CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay embarked on a series of pivotal meetings during his visit to Thailand to participate in the 80th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) from 22 to 24 April 2024.

Secretary General Sarybay had the honor of meeting with Saleumxay Kommasith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Laos, discussing the latest developments within CICA and the role of regional partnerships. Secretary General Sarybay extended best wishes for Laos' successful ASEAN 2024 Chairmanship and explored avenues for deeper Laos involvement in CICA.

Ambassador Sarybay also engaged in an insightful dialogue with the Executive Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Ma Zhaoxu on CICA's ongoing organizational transformation, the synergy of CICA goals and China's Global Initiatives, and mediation potential of CICA Member States. The discussion underscored the significance of bolstering cooperation globally and in Asia, with a focus on connectivity, development, and youth empowerment. Ambassador Sarybay also praised China's input to CICA's institutional

development and its continued support for CICA's endeavors through voluntary financial, material contributions, seconding experienced diplomats to the Secretariat, and active leadership in the implementation of Confidence Building Measures in several priority areas.

A fruitful conversation on a wide range of CICA related matters also took place between Secretary General and Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand Sihasak Phuangketkeow, highlighting Thailand's active promotion of sustainable development within CICA. Both parties pledged tangible steps to foster cooperation, particularly in sectors such as tourism and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Secretary General further called on Thailand to complete the ratification of the 2010 CICA Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the Secretariat. The parties touched upon the prospects of CICA-ASEAN engagement as well.

The CICA Secretary General also commended the productive exchange with Deputy Director Wattanawit Kachaseni of Thailand International Cooperation Agency, acknowledging TICA's pivotal role in implementing CICA's Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and sharing knowledge among Member States. The discussion also highlighted the valuable experience of TICA in the expected operationalization of the CICA Fund.

Ambassador Sarybay also had an opportunity to congratulate the Institute of Asian Studies on being nominated to the CICA Think Tank Forum (TTF). In conversation with its Deputy Director Jirayudh Sinthuphan Secretary General highlighted key tasks of the TTF for this year, including its regular Session to be held by the current Chair - Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, as well as organization of smaller thematic analytical seminars and targeted projects.



During his visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, the CICA Secretary General extended his congratulations to a young diplomat Ms Papichaya Leenapaesanan for her outstanding achievement in the CICA essay competition among youth researchers held under the theme "The Future of Asia We Want: Ideas for the CICA Region" and encouraged her to be seconded to the CICA Secretariat.

Secretary General Sarybay also met with BIMSTEC Secretary-General Indra Mani Pandey, emphasizing the importance of regional partnerships in promoting multilateralism and accelerating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Asia. The discussion focused on enhancing connectivity and addressing common challenges in the region.



Southeast Asia Tour Includes Key Visit to Cambodia for Enhanced Cooperation

Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Kairat Sarybay concluded a successful visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia on April 26, 2024. He engaged in a series of high-level meetings aimed at fostering closer cooperation and dialogue between CICA and Cambodia.

The visit commenced with a cordial meeting between Secretary General Sarybay and Sok Soken, Minister of Tourism of Cambodia. Discussions centered around the pivotal role of tourism in promoting people-to-people contacts, particularly among youth, and its significant contribution to economic growth across Asia. The parties agreed to explore possible projects in touristic sphere that would enhance confidence building among CICA countries.

A pivotal meeting took place at the Peace Palace, where Secretary General Sarybay met with Sok Siphana, Senior Minister of the Royal Government of Cambodia and nominee to the CICA Eminent Persons Council. The discussions highlighted the importance of deeper involvement and collaboration between Cambodia and CICA, focusing on concrete Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and the speedy ratification of the 2010 Convention on Privileges and Immunities by the Kingdom. Furthermore, Minister Siphana expressed his support to a greater role of Asian Vision Institute in the intersessional activities of the CICA Think Tank Forum.

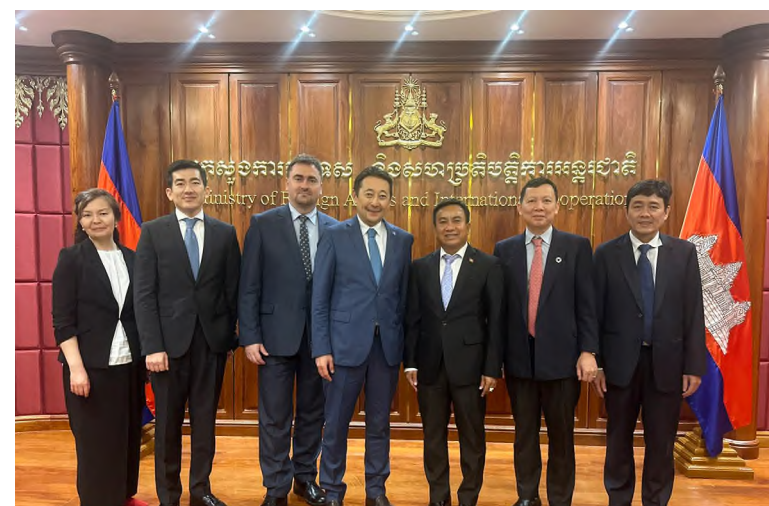
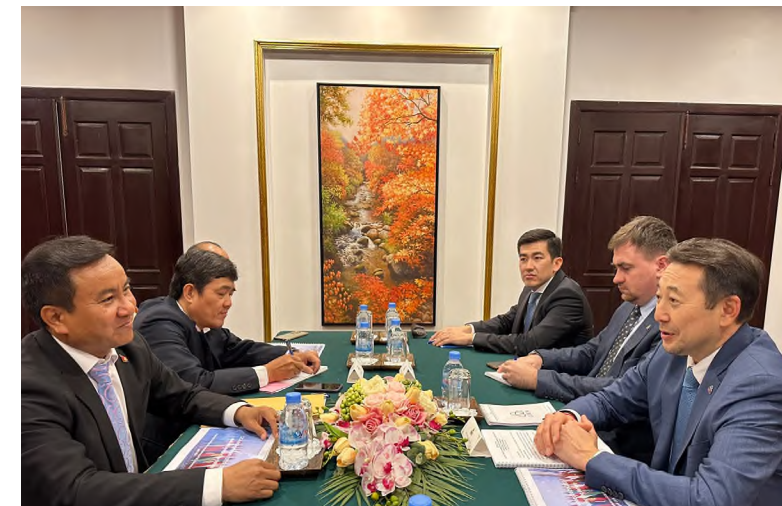
Secretary General Sarybay also held constructive consultations with Khy Sovanratana, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia. The two sides went through a range of topical issues on CICA's agenda and emphasized Cambodia's positive approach towards its transformation and expansion of Kingdom's profile within the Conference

In addition, Secretary General Sarybay engaged in fruitful discussions with Heng Sokkung, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology, and Innovation, exploring how CICA and its Business Council can be employed for collaboration in promoting sustainable economic development of Member States and Asia, with a particular focus on the backbone role of small and medium enterprises, as well as new technologies and digital innovations. Secretary General encouraged Cambodian counterparts to be more engaged in relevant CICA activities.

Moreover, Secretary General Sarybay met with Lim Chek, Under Secretary-General of the National Youth Development Council of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport of Cambodia, to discuss Cambodia's latest projects for youth and volunteers. Secretary General Sarybay expressed interest in Cambodia's initiatives and invited the country to share its best practices with other CICA Member States at the 7th Youth Council Meeting, and the Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders under the auspices of the Council to be held in Astana later this year.

In his interactions with Cambodian officials, Secretary General Sarybay reiterated CICA's commitment to promoting peace, security, and cooperation in the Asian region. He expressed gratitude for Cambodia's positive engagement and affirmed CICA's readiness to support Cambodia in its endeavors towards regional stability and prosperity.

Such visits to the CICA capitals by the Secretary General continue serving the purpose of intensifying countries' involvement in various CICA mechanisms and the implementation of Confidence Building Measures, as well as for better understanding of their approaches toward ongoing CICA transformation.





CICA Alley: Contributing to regional environmental efforts

The Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), with support of local municipal authorities of the city of Astana, held its traditional beautification of the CICA Alley at the Astana Presidential Park.

The event was attended by the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan Yerlan Nyssanbayev, Deputy Mayor of Astana Yersin Otebayev, as well as Ambassadors of CICA Member States and other representatives of diplomatic corps.

This year, the guests of the event planted 35 small-leaved elm trees kindly provided by the Akimat of Astana, adding to the 100 trees of Sakura, Mountain-ash, and Sievers apple already planted at the CICA Alley.

In his speech, Minister Nyssanbayev stated, "These efforts significantly contribute not only to the conservation of Kazakhstan's natural resources, but also lead to an improvement in the quality of life of the local population and the creation of more favorable conditions for future generations." He highlighted that the Ministry is inclined to strengthen cooperation by developing multilateral approaches to respecting the environment, ensuring peace and stability in Asia. Mr. Yersin Otebayev, representing the local authorities of Astana, emphasized the city's commitment to environmental sustainability, highlighting initiatives like the CICA Alley



beautification in enhancing green spaces and fostering cooperation among nations towards environment conservation.

The Secretary General of CICA extended heartfelt thanks to all attendees, including the diplomatic corps, for their active participation, underscoring their dedication to upholding the spirit of CICA through such impactful events.



Ambassador Kairat Sarybay emphasized the growing significance of cooperation within CICA's environmental dimension, citing President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's initiative to convene the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues as a prime example. He noted that the upcoming CICA Ministerial Council meeting, chaired by Azerbaijan, coincided with the commencement of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku in November 2024, further highlighting the relevance and timeliness of collaborative efforts in addressing environmental challenges



Inaugurated on 1 June 2021 in the lead-up to the 30th anniversary of CICA, the Alley aligns with the main objectives of the Organization within its environmental dimension, aiming to contribute to our collective efforts towards fostering the Sustainable Development Goals.





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May

CICA Secretary General's Working Visit to Kyrgyz Republic



Foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan Jeenbek Kulubaev emphasized his country's continued support for the development of CICA as an important intergovernmental association in the pan-Asian security architecture and noted the substantial progress achieved through the initiatives of the Kazakh Chairmanship and the targeted actions of the CICA Secretariat. In turn, the Secretary General informed about the efforts taken to ensure a seamless transition of the CICA Chairmanship from Kazakhstan to Azerbaijan and shared preparations for the Seventh Ministerial Council Meeting scheduled for 11 November 2024 in Baku. Ambassador Sarybay also updated on the CICA transformation and the implementation of the priorities of the current Chairmanship. The Secretary General expressed gratitude to the Kyrgyz side for the initiative to host the Seventh Meeting of the CICA Business Council and the Ninth CICA Business Forum in the 4th quarter of this year in Bishkek. It was emphasized that Kyrgyzstan plays a prominent role as a co-coordinator of the priority area of confidence building measures "Trade and Investment".

Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay paid a working visit to Bishkek, where he held consultations with the leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representatives of various CICA bodies.

During in-depth consultations with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Aibek Moldogaziev, the sides considered expected outcomes of the upcoming November Ministerial. The Deputy Minister reiterated Bishkek's support for the Kazakh Chairmanship's efforts to transform CICA into an international organization, focusing on the key clusters of the Transformation Road Map. Aibek Moldogaziev outlined the priority areas for Kyrgyzstan within CICA, such as economic trade, economic and energy cooperation. Moreover, he emphasized the importance of the CICA advisory bodies, proposing to enhance synergy among the Think Tank Forum (TTF), the Business and Youth Councils. In the context of the priority area "Trade and Investment", the role and functions of the Member States that are coordinators or co-coordinators of certain areas of confidence building measures were considered.

Substantive discussions took place at the National Institute of Strategic Initiatives (NISI) under the President of Kyrgyzstan, a member of the TTF. NISI Director Sanzhar Mukanbetov was provided with detailed information about the history of CICA, its mandate, institutions and unique membership, as well as the evolution of the TTF, its goals, structure and working modalities. A lively exchange of views took place on current processes in the CICA area and its place in the pan-Asian multilateral cooperation framework in the context of the growing role of Asia in global politics and economy. The sides explored ways to use the TTF platform to promote the trade and economic interests of the Member States, including Kyrgyzstan.



The consultations at the National Investment Agency under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic focused on the work of the CICA Business Council and Business Forum. The Secretariat provided an informative overview of the history, composition, structure, status of the Business Council within the CICA organizational framework, as well as insights into its ongoing activities. The parties deliberated on the agenda and considered a diverse range of potential speakers for the upcoming meeting of the Business Council and Business Forum in Bishkek, emphasizing the importance of advance elaboration of all organizational modalities.



Mechanism for regional cooperation on rehabilitation and reintegration of returnees from combat and armed conflict zones created in Central Asia



Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay participated online in the First Meeting of the Central Asia Regional Expert Council on the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Returnees from combat and armed conflict zones. The meeting was held on 14 May 2024 in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) under the auspices of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



In his remarks, Ambassador Sarybay welcomed the initiative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to establish the Regional Expert Council, noting its relevance and timeliness. The CICA Secretary General emphasized that the Member States of Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan – showed their responsible approach, not only by repatriating a significant number of their citizens, primarily children and women, from the conflict zone, but also by making maximum efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate them into society.

Ambassador Sarybay urged to consolidate the efforts of the states of the region, international and regional organizations to exchange information and accumulated best practices on the matter and stated the readiness of the CICA Secretariat for such cooperation.

UN Under-Secretary-General, Head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov inaugurated the Regional Expert Council. It was decided that the second meeting would be held in Astana (Kazakhstan).

Central Asian states have become global leaders in the repatriation and reintegration of their citizens from combat and armed conflict zones, repatriating more than 2,100 citizens through humanitarian operations. The initiative to create the Regional Expert Council under the auspices of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism was put forward by President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev in March 2022 in Tashkent at the High-level International Conference on “Regional cooperation among Central Asian countries within the framework of the Joint Action Plan for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.”



Türkiye Makes Traditional Voluntary Contribution to CICA

The Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) hosted a ceremony on 23 May 2024, where Türkiye made a voluntary contribution to the 2024 budget of the CICA Secretariat.

A symbolic cheque 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.

Türkiye is the third-largest contributor to the CICA budget among 28 Member States, providing voluntary contributions on a regular basis.

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, contributing to the institutionalization of CICA. Türkiye played a crucial role in establishing the CICA Think Tank Forum by convening the inaugural meeting of think tanks from Member States in 2010, and in establishing the CICA Business Council during its Chairmanship in 2010-2014.

Ambassador Sarybay emphasized Türkiye's invaluable contribution to implementing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) within CICA through its annual seminars for law enforcement agencies. “CICA, with its diverse membership, holds significant potential as a unique outreach platform for advancing Türkiye's foreign policy initiative «Asia Anew» – stated the CICA Secretary General.

Ambassador Kapucu noted that the financial contribution is a testament to Türkiye's unwavering commitment to the principles and goals of CICA. He highlighted that by supporting CICA, Türkiye is investing in a more secure and prosperous future for the region. This contribution will help strengthen CICA's initiatives and projects, further promoting CBMs and cooperation among Member States.

Türkiye's «Asia Anew» initiative, launched as a pivotal element of its national foreign policy, underscores the country's dedication to deepening ties with Asian countries across various sectors, including political, economic, cultural, and social domains.

“In line with the «Asia Anew» policy, Türkiye fully supports CICA's transformation into a full-fledged organization. This evolution is believed to enhance CICA's capacity to address regional challenges more effectively and facilitate comprehensive cooperation among its members.” – stated Ambassador Kapucu.



Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of National Economy of Kazakhstan Nurlan Baibazarov and CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay discussed strengthening cooperation within the CICA Business Council

Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met with Deputy Prime Minister – Minister of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nurlan Baibazarov to discuss current issues of the CICA Business Council and the Business Forum.

Ambassador Sarybay briefed the high-ranking official on CICA, its current activities and agenda. The CICA Secretary General highlighted the potential for internationalizing Kazakhstan's businesses through the platform of the Business Council, an advisory body of CICA that brings together representatives of commercial organizations and government authorities from Member States to promote and expand economic cooperation in the field of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

During the meeting, both parties agreed to enhance cooperation within the Business Council framework.

Considering the upcoming handover of the Chairmanship in CICA and its several advisory bodies, including the Business Council, from

Kazakhstan to Azerbaijan, the interlocutors discussed prospects for Kazakhstan's continued presence in this body as co-coordinator of the priority area "Development of Small and Medium Enterprises".

Ambassador Sarybay informed about the efforts of Member States and the CICA Secretariat to develop inter-sessional activities of the Business Council. Deputy Prime Minister – Minister Baibazarov expressed support for these initiatives and intention to assist in preparing an e-book on "National approaches and incentives used by CICA Member States to support SMEs" by the Think Tank Forum, another advisory body of CICA.

The interlocutors also discussed issues related to the upcoming seventh plenary session of the CICA Business Council and the ninth Business Forum, scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2024 in Bishkek.



June

CICA Bicycle Tour 2024: Promoting Dialogue and Healthy Lifestyles



The CICA Bicycle Tour 2024 was held in the picturesque Burabay National Park, Akmola Region from 31 May to 2 June 2024. The third edition of this annual event once again served as an informal networking platform encouraging healthy lifestyles among the diplomatic community in Astana.

The timing of this event traditionally coincides with the World Bicycle Day established by the UN General Assembly to highlight the bicycle as an affordable, reliable, and environmentally friendly mode of transport.

Covering a scenic 38-kilometer route, the CICA Bicycle Tour successfully promoted a healthy lifestyle among the participants, while also providing the CICA family with a unique opportunity to strengthen dialogue and cooperation amidst the natural beauty of Northern Kazakhstan, while reinforcing the importance of environmental stewardship.



The event was organized by the CICA Secretariat with the support of the Embassies of Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the Akimats of the Akmola Region and the Burabay District.

Among the participants were Roman Vassilenko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Kairat Sarybay, Secretary General of CICA; Michaela Friberg-Storey, UN Resident Coordinator in Kazakhstan, other Heads of Missions, and members of the diplomatic corps accredited in Astana, as well as representatives of local authorities.

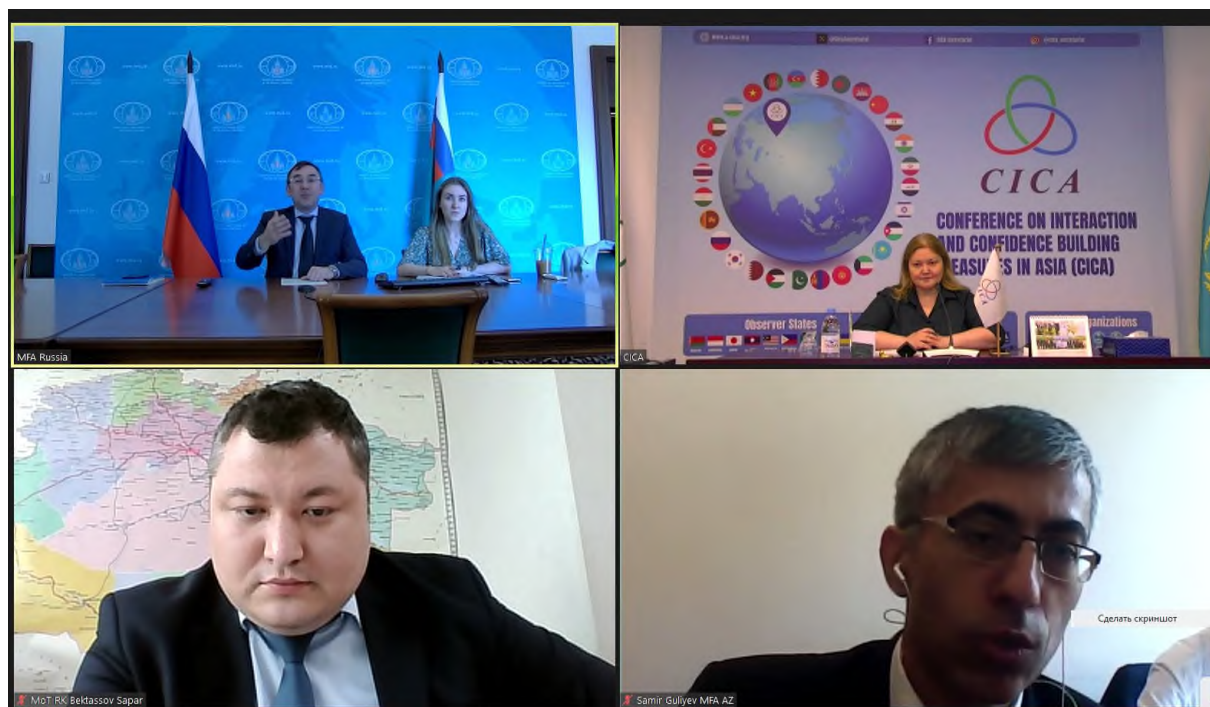


CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay expressed gratitude to all guests for their participation and continued support for the Secretariat's initiatives to hold cultural and sports events and thanked the co-organizers for their assistance. He noted that informal meetings under the CICA flag are becoming an established tradition for the diplomatic corps of Astana and contribute to strengthening confidence and friendly relations.

The CICA Secretariat will continue holding such activities in order to promote, cooperation, and people-to-people contacts, to maintain peace, stability, and security, and achieve the common goals of sustainable development under the environmental and human dimensions.



CICA Experts Discuss Sustainable Connectivity



Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Kazakhstan, with the support of the CICA Secretariat, held an experts meeting on 30 May 2024 to discuss the concept paper for the establishment of the Council on Sustainable Connectivity within the organization.

During the fruitful discussions, participants had a productive exchange of views and made significant progress on the text of the document.

The initiative to establish the Council on Sustainable Connectivity was proposed by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Sixth CICA Summit in October 2022. Institutionalizing dialogue in this area has become one of the priorities of the Kazakh Chairmanship in CICA for 2022–2024.

Online Training Course on Sustainable Tourism Development Launched by CICA in Collaboration with Thailand and Burapha University

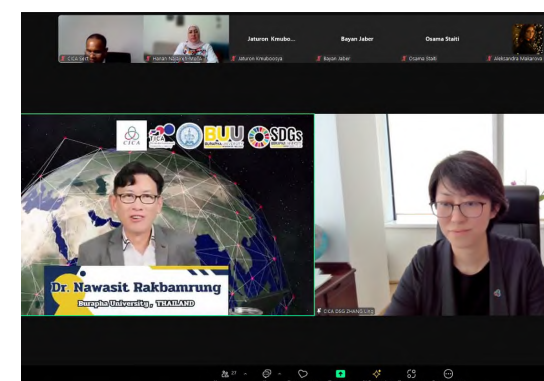
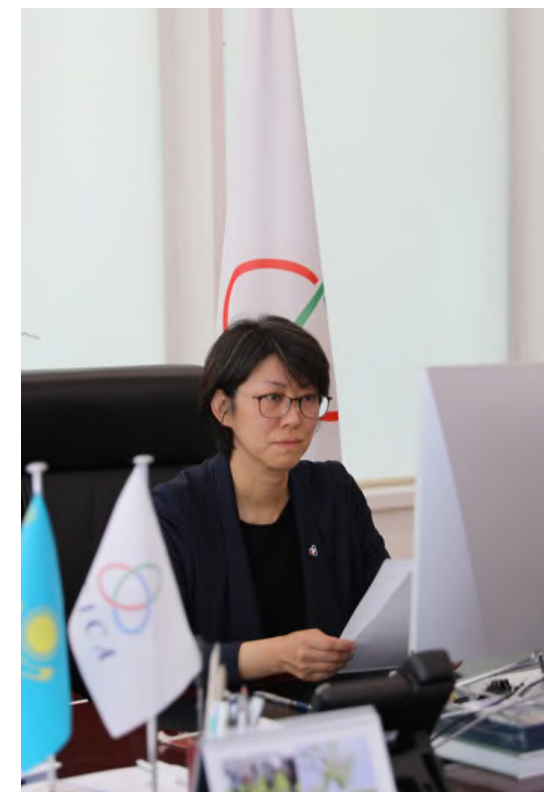
An online training program on “Sustainable Creative & Responsible Tourism Development based on the BCG model for CICA countries” was launched, jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), the CICA Secretariat, and Burapha University. The programme, continuing until 14 June 2024, aims to equip participants with essential knowledge and skills for sustainable tourism practices, emphasizing the positive environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impacts within the tourism sector.

During the opening ceremony, distinguished speakers welcomed participants from CICA Member States to the training programme. Assistant Professor Dr. Punwalia Kewara, Assistant President for International Affairs, extended a warm welcome, underscoring the significance of the programme in fostering sustainable tourism practices.

Lt. Sorawud Preededilok, Minister attached to the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA), emphasized the role of the Bio, Circular, and Green Economy (BCG) model in promoting efficiency and sustainability within the tourism sector, echoing the commitment of organizing bodies towards responsible tourism.

In her remarks, CICA Deputy Secretary General Ms. Zhang Ling expressed gratitude to the Kingdom of Thailand for spearheading the initiative. She emphasized the programme's role as a unique platform for knowledge exchange among tourism professionals from CICA Member States, facilitating the dissemination of best practices and innovative approaches.

The comprehensive training programme delves into various aspects of sustainable tourism, including global social, environmental, and economic impacts, integration of tourism research into development strategies, innovation in product development, sufficiency economy philosophy (SEP) application, community-based tourism, eco-tourism, low-carbon destinations, responsible and inclusive tourism, and the incorporation of digital technology in tourism practices. Throughout the course, experts and practitioners will share practical insights and experiences, enriching participants' understanding and skill sets.



TurkPA Session Attendance and High-Level Meetings during Baku visit

On 5-6 June 2024, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), visited Baku at the invitation of TURKPA Secretary General H.E. Mr. Mehmet Süreyya Er. During the visit, he attended the plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TurkPA), held bilateral consultations at the Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan, and had a fruitful discussion at the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation.



The visit commenced with in-depth and thought-provoking discussions between the CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay and Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Araz Azimov. The high-ranking Azerbaijani diplomat shared insights on Azerbaijan's approach and expectations for its incoming CICA Chairmanship for the 2024-2026 biennium. They discussed the preparation and modalities of the forthcoming 7th CICA Ministerial Council meeting in Baku on 11 November 2024 and its anticipated outcomes, CICA's activities at COP-29, and other outreach initiatives.

The CICA Secretary General attended the 13th plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of Turkic States themed "Green Horizons for the Turkic World: Role of Parliaments in Achieving Green Agenda" and delivered his remarks. Ambassador Kairat Sarybay expressed his gratitude to the host - Chairperson of the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan – for the warm welcome and excellent organization of the plenary session.

Ambassador Kairat Sarybay emphasized Azerbaijan's esteemed role as a multilateralism champion under President Ilham Aliyev's leadership.

Echoing the TURKPA plenary session's theme, the CICA Secretary General briefed participants on implementing the priorities of the Kazakh Chairmanship, as outlined by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Summit in Astana. Implementing one of these priorities, Ambassador Sarybay pointed out the upcoming Ministerial Conference on the Environment, providing Member States with an excellent opportunity to exchange best practices, and address environmental challenges.

Another priority of the Kazakh Chairmanship is President Tokayev's initiative to establish a CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity to address modern global economic challenges, such as supply chain disruptions.

As a member-driven intergovernmental forum, CICA has played a pivotal role in fostering regional cooperation and trust, with environmental issues being a significant part of its comprehensive agenda. To combat, prevent, and mitigate these challenges, Member States organize various events focusing on regional environmental problems, green transformation, circular economy, sustainable development, and disaster risk reduction under CICA's environmental dimension.

In conclusion, Ambassador Sarybay highlighted CICA's unique outreach potential to amplify joint efforts and achieve a greater impact towards sustainable development and dialogue in Asia and beyond.

CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay also had a productive meeting with the President of the Turkic Culture and Heritage Foundation Aktoty Raimkulova. They explored avenues for synergizing efforts to promote intercultural dialogue during Azerbaijan's tenure as the CICA Chair for the 2024-2026 biennium.





CICA progress in human and environmental dimensions presented at international human rights forum in Samarkand



CICA Deputy Secretary General Ms. Zhang Ling took part in the 4th Samarkand Forum on Human Rights "Environmental Challenges: The Future of Human Rights in a Changing World, Finding Sustainable Solutions."

In her welcoming address to the forum, Ms. Zhang Ling emphasized the key values and main activities of CICA in terms of strengthening stability, peace and security in Asia, including through the implementation of the Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures. The forum participants were also informed about the upcoming Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues, which will be held in August 2024 in Astana, at the initiative of President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev put forward by at the Sixth CICA Summit in 2022.

The deputy head of the CICA Secretariat also noted that the CICA countries have a common interest in finding joint solutions to problems of protecting the environment and fundamental human rights. In this regard, the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures, consisting of 18 priority areas and covering 5 dimensions, is unique in terms of providing a wide choice for the Member States to interact, cooperate and promote common goals based on the principles of consensus and voluntariness.

Ms. Zhang Ling informed the participants about the progress, achievements and measures taken by the CICA Member States in the human and environmental dimensions. She emphasized the important role played by Uzbekistan as the coordinator of confidence building measures in the human dimension.

The international forum in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, was attended by more than 100 participants, including heads of international organizations, government agencies, human rights ombudsmen and environmental experts from more than 20 countries and 10 international organizations.

Expert Meeting on Environmental Issues Prepares for CICA Ministerial Conference



The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Kazakhstan, with support from the CICA Secretariat, hosted an expert meeting in Astana to prepare for the upcoming CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues on 28 August 2024 in Astana.

Delegates reviewed and finalized the draft outcome document of the conference, achieving consensus among CICA Member States. The meeting highlighted the cooperative, multilateral spirit of CICA and fostered constructive dialogue.

Initiated by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Sixth CICA Summit in October 2022, the Ministerial Conference will mark a significant step in regional environmental collaboration.

CICA Secretary General Attends High-Level Water Sustainability Conference in Dushanbe

13 June 2024 — Dushanbe, Tajikistan — CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay participated in the Third High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028 from 10-13 June 2024. This event, attended by Heads of State and Government, and hosted by President of Tajikistan H.E. Emomali Rahmon, focused on water sustainability and advancing SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework through initiatives like the “Dushanbe Water Process”.



In his address to the conference, Ambassador Sarybay emphasized CICA's commitment to addressing water challenges and promoting sustainable development. He highlighted CICA's efforts in fostering collaboration among Member States to enhance environmental sustainability and announced upcoming CICA events, including the Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues in Astana on 28 August 2024, as well as a CICA event at COP29 in Baku in November 2024. He concluded by stressing the importance of joint efforts in addressing water challenges and aligning with SDG 6 to ensure that water remains a source of life and prosperity.

Dr. Ugur Turan, CICA's environmental dimension expert, participated in interactive dialogue on topics such as water-energy-food nexus, transboundary and international water cooperation, and accelerating the objectives of the Water Action Decade. Dr. Turan also engaged in bilateral discussions with various stakeholders, presenting CICA's role in the environmental arena in Asia.

CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay held bilateral meetings with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhriddin. The parties discussed security concerns in Asia, including Afghanistan's position in the international community. Ambassador Sarybay informed the Minister about the current CICA agenda and expressed appreciation for Tajikistan's continued support to CICA. He requested to facilitate the ratification of the CICA Convention on Privileges and Immunities, which was already signed by the Republic of Tajikistan.

During a meeting with Ismatullo Nasredin, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, Ambassador

Sarybay discussed preparations for the CICA Ministerial Council meeting in Baku in November 2024, the implementation of the Road Map for CICA Transformation, and other current and future CICA activities.

Ambassador Sarybay also spoke with Dr. Khairidin Usmonzoda, Director of the Centre for Strategic Studies under the President of Tajikistan, about the potential of the CICA Think Tank Forum as a uniting platform for regional strategic and research institutions.

Kairat Sarybay briefed Akhliddin Nuriddinzoda, Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Tajikistan, on CICA's agenda in the economic dimension, including the activities of the CICA Business Council and Business Forum. He highlighted the advantages which CICA could bring to small and medium enterprises in the region and spoke about the initiative to establish the CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity.

In his discussion with Chorshanbezoda Surach, Deputy Chairman of the Youth and Sports Committee of Tajikistan, Ambassador Sarybay spoke about the CICA Youth Council and elaborated on the role of youth in achieving SDGs as well as the importance of CICA's support for volunteerism. Additionally, they discussed the potential opening of a CICA Alley in Dushanbe.

In the Parliament of Tajikistan, the Secretary General had a meeting with Dr. Faizullo Barotzoda, candidate to the CICA Council of Eminent Persons and informed him about CICA advisory bodies and the current status of the Council of Eminent Persons.

Ambassador Sarybay also held a bilateral meeting with the UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Mr. Li Junhua. He reflected on CICA's recent cooperation with the UN, particularly at the side event during the High-Level Week of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York in September 2023, and the side event at 80th ESCAP Session in Bangkok in April 2024. Parties agreed to continue deliberations on the margins of the upcoming UN High-level Political Forum in New York in July 2024.



Delegation from China visits CICA Secretariat

CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met with a delegation from China led by Mr. Yu Yunquan, Vice President of the China International Communications Group. The parties discussed ways to expand cooperation in communications and cultural exchange.



Secretary General Kairat Sarybay emphasized China's significant contribution to the development and strengthening of CICA, expressing gratitude for the continued support of the organization. He also shared his impressions of visit to China in March 2024 to take part in the Boao Forum for Asia, noting the goals of CICA and China in the field of international security and global sustainable development.

For his part, Mr. Yu Yunquan confirmed China's continued commitment to cooperation with CICA since its establishment and highly

appreciated the achievements of CICA over the past years. He emphasized that CICA has the potential to play an important role in Asia and expressed the readiness of his agency to assist in promoting and spreading the idea and principles of CICA among the general public.

Particular attention was paid to discussing possible joint projects and other practical aspects of cooperation in the field of communications and cultural exchange, particularly in order to increase the visibility of CICA among the large Chinese-speaking audience.

БИЗНЕСТІҢ СЕНІМДІ СЕРІКТЕСІ



During Tehran Visit, CICA Secretary General Ambassador Kairat Sarybay Discusses CICA-ACD Synergy

25 June 2024 – Tehran, Iran – Secretary General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay paid a working visit to Tehran on 23-24 June to attend the 19th meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and hold consultations with Iranian government officials. Several bilateral meetings with CICA Member State representatives also took place on the margins of this event.

In his remarks during the forum, the CICA Secretary General noted the importance of strengthening multilateralism, having recalled the legacy of the late President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi and the late Minister Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian. Amid the increasingly vital role of Asia in global affairs, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay highlighted some prospects for synergy between CICA and ACD as integral parts of the pan-Asian diplomatic system. The Secretary General briefed the audience about CICA's mission, core values and joint approaches of its Member States, explaining the essence of the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs). Ambassador Kairat Sarybay concluded his remarks by expressing hope that the prospects for CICA-ACD synergy may help to foster a safer, more prosperous and interconnected world through collective action and dialogue.

Fruitful consultations took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran with Deputy Minister Reza Najafi. The high-ranking Iranian diplomat confirmed his country's strong commitment and support for CICA, including its ongoing transformation and other priorities of the current Chairmanship outlined at the Sixth CICA Summit in Astana. The Secretary General briefed Mr. Reza Najafi about the preparation for the 7th CICA Ministerial Council meeting in Baku on 11 November 2024 and the Secretariat's efforts to ensure smooth transition of the CICA Chairmanship. Ambassador Kairat Sarybay commended the Iranian side for its substantial contribution to the CBM implementation as the coordinator of two priority areas of the CICA Catalogue of CBMs – "Combating illicit drugs" and "Natural disaster management".

Secretary General Sarybay also held a bilateral meeting with the new Deputy Foreign



Minister of Türkiye, Mr. Burhanettin Duran. The Secretary General thanked him for Türkiye's continuous support and engagement in the CICA process on all levels. The high-ranking Turkish colleague was briefed on CICA's achievements under Kazakhstan's Chairmanship and the implementation of the Chairmanship's priorities. Ambassador Kairat Sarybay also informed the Deputy Minister of the ongoing preparation for the upcoming CICA Ministerial Council meeting.

Ambassador Sarybay also met with Ambassador Fatima Abdulla Fares Aldhaen, Director General of International Cooperation at Bahrain's Foreign Ministry. The two diplomats discussed preparations for the Baku Ministerial Council meeting and other key events on the 2024 CICA calendar. The Secretary General updated the Bahraini diplomat on progress in implementing the Road Map for CICA Transformation. While exchanging views on the role of West Asia in building a more secure and prosperous CICA region, Ambassador Aldhaen was briefed on the CICA Secretariat's efforts to promote multilingualism.



CICA Special Working Group considers key issues and documents on CICA agenda

25 June 2024 – Astana, Kazakhstan – On 25 June 2024, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) held an online Special Working Group (SWG) meeting under the Chairmanship of Kazakhstan, facilitated by the CICA Secretariat.

Member States discussed and advanced preparations for the upcoming Senior Officials Committee meeting on 27 June 2024. Substantive preparations to the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues, work plan of the CICA Think

Tank Forum, confidence building measures in the area of ICT security, and enhancing cooperation with several international organization were considered by representatives of the 28 Member States of CICA.





Foundation Stone Laid for the New Headquarters of CICA in Astana

26 June 2024 – Astana, Kazakhstan - In accordance with the instruction of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the construction of a dedicated building for the new CICA headquarters has officially commenced. To commemorate this significant milestone in the organization's history, a foundation stone laying ceremony was held at the construction site, featuring a time capsule with a message for future CICA Secretariat staff being put into the foundation stone.

Guest speakers included the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Alibek Bakayev; the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Ismatullo Nasredin, and the Director of the Department of Regional Security, Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry Azer Musayev.

The event was also attended by the Chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security of Mazhilis of Parliament of Kazakhstan Aigul Kuspan, heads of diplomatic missions accredited in Astana, and representatives of international organizations.

CICA Secretary General Sarybay emphasized the unique role of CICA as a multilateral platform in his speech. He highlighted the ongoing evolution of CICA, already containing well-structured governing and advisory bodies, into a full-fledged international organization.

Secretary General Sarybay underscored the importance of the new headquarters, not just as a functional space for the Secretariat, but as a symbol of CICA's permanent commitment to cooperation and dialogue among Asian nations.

K. Sarybay also mentioned plans for the building to incorporate cutting-edge green technologies and a park to promote sustainability, and invited Member States to contribute to the new headquarters' interior design to reflect the cultural diversity of the CICA region.

Participants then laid a time capsule within the foundation stone of the building, containing a message for future colleagues of the CICA Secretariat. The capsule is intended to be opened in 2049, marking the 50th anniversary of CICA's founding document.



Senior officials from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan, representing the incoming, current, and preceding CICA Chairmanships respectively, along with the CICA Secretary General, held the first-ever consultations under paragraph 14.3.8 of the CICA Rules of Procedure on the eve of the Senior Officials Committee meeting in Astana on 27 June 2024.

The consultations focused on current issues on the CICA agenda, ensuring the continuity of CICA activities, and preparing for a smooth handover of the Chairmanship from Kazakhstan to Azerbaijan at the CICA Ministerial Council meeting on 11 November 2024 in Baku.

One of the outcomes of this meeting is the recommendation to continue meetings of the current, previous, and incoming Chairmanships at various levels.



CICA Senior Officials Committee discuss transformation roadmap and prepare for major ministerial meetings in 2024

The CICA Senior Officials Committee (SOC) met in Astana on 27 June 2024 to discuss the organization's ongoing work, progress in implementation of the Road Map for CICA Transformation (RMT), initiatives of the Kazakh Chairmanship, and preparations for the Seventh Ministerial Council Meeting in Baku on 11 November 2024. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Alibek Bakayev. High-level representatives of CICA Member States also discussed preparations for the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues on 28 August 2024, CICA Think Tank Forum activities, as well as relations with other international organizations.

The SOC conducted its annual review of the implementation of CICA confidence building measures (CBMs) in the human dimension. Senior Officials encouraged Member States to engage in voluntary implementation of CBM events in this dimension and noted the possibility of including cooperation on promoting volunteerism and youth engagement within the CICA region into CICA CBMs.

With regard to CICA transformation into a full-fledged international organization, Senior Officials welcomed the presentation by the Chairmanship on the initial drafts of the CICA Charter and updated CICA Rules of Procedure, and agreed to work under Clusters 1 and 4 of the RMT on the basis of these drafts.

On Clusters 3 and 2 of the Transformation Road Map, the SOC welcomed progress achieved by the Kazakh Chairmanship on defining international status of the CICA Secretariat personnel and amending the CICA Host Country Agreement accordingly, and noted the importance of achieving consensus on the draft decision on modalities of implementation of CBMs until the Baku Ministerial.

Senior Officials approved, subject to a 2 week-long silence procedure, the draft outcome document of the first ever CICA environmental conference at the ministerial level, for adoption



at the conference. The SOC also adopted the Annual Action Plan of the CICA Think Tank Forum for 2024, and approved the concept paper in the CBM priority area "Security of and in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs)" for 2024-2025.

The Member States' representatives also discussed proposals by the Kazakh Chairmanship on expected outcome documents to be prepared for the Baku Ministerial Council meeting, as well as strengthening cooperation with such international organizations as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).



CICA expert Ambassador Adel Adaleh participated and delivered remarks at the XII International Meeting of High-Ranking Officials Responsible for Security Matters in St. Petersburg on 24-25 April 2024, representing the CICA Secretariat.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay met with Dr. Nguyen Thanh Hung, Chair of Viet Nam's SOVICO Group.

Parties discussed how Viet Nam could actively promote economic cooperation across CICA region through engagement with CICA Business Council and other advisory bodies.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay welcomed the SCO Secretary General, Mr. Zhang Ming, to the CICA Headquarters.

Sides exchanged congratulations on occasion of the 10th anniversary of Memorandum of Partnership between CICA and SCO and had in-depth discussion regarding broad agenda of cooperation.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay expressed gratitude to H.E. Amb. Chatchawan Sakornsin of Thailand for voluntary contribution to CICA Secretariat's 2024 budget.



CICA Secretary General Kairat Sarybay met with the H.E. Defence Minister of Kazakhstan Ruslan Zhaksylykov to discuss implementation of CBMs within the Military Political Dimension of CICA, in which Kazakhstan is Coordinator, as well as prospects for new initiatives.

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