



Secretariat

STATEMENT BY THE CICA SECRETARY GENERAL
under Agenda item 3 “Report by the CICA Secretary General”
of the Seventh CICA Ministerial Council Meeting
online, 17 December 2024

Thank you, Chair!

Your Excellencies, dear colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to address the Seventh CICA Ministerial Council Meeting and report to the distinguished Ministers on the activities of the CICA Secretariat during the second term of the Kazakhstan Chairmanship in 2022-2024.

First of all, I want to congratulate Azerbaijan with assuming the CICA Chairmanship and assure Minister Jeyhun Bayramov that the Secretariat is willing to provide all necessary assistance. Furthermore, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the outgoing Kazakhstan Chairmanship and all Member States for their guidance and results-based management, as well as for their human and financial resources enabling the CICA Secretariat to deliver on its mandate.

Since the historic 6th CICA Summit in October 2022, the Secretariat’s efforts were focused on fulfilling the strategic tasks set forth by the leaders, with special focus on the Astana Statement on CICA Transformation. The Secretariat provided substantial assistance in elaborating the Road Map for CICA Transformation endorsed by the Ministerial Council in September 2023 and then in its gradual implementation throughout 2024. I am glad and inspired that today the Ministerial Council will adopt decisions on Modalities of Confidence building measures (CBMs) implementation and on updated Catalogue of CBMs, thus Cluster 2 of the Roadmap will be mostly implemented.

Significant analytical and expert work was performed by the Secretariat in assisting the previous Chairmanship in producing zero-draft CICA Charter and updated Rules of Procedure and commencing several rounds of comprehensive thematic discussions on these core documents. I am confident that the new Chairmanship will continue this important process and will steer CICA transformation towards new landmark decisions in time for the Seventh Summit in 2026.

I am especially delighted that the Secretariat effectively facilitated implementation of most of the Kazakhstan Chairmanship's priorities, including preparation and organization of the CICA Ministerial Conference on Environmental Issues, the First Rally of Volunteer Movement leaders and the launch of the Partnership Network of Leading Universities, which will be established today by your wise decision.

Significant progress has been achieved in institutionalizing the CICA Finance Summit and initial steps were taken to conceptualize the idea of CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity.

The Secretariat provided substantive, administrative and technical support to the meetings of governing and working bodies of CICA. Not counting today's gathering, throughout the two years we had one informal Ministerial meeting in New York, 7 Senior Officials Committee meetings, 14 Special Working Group meetings, 13 expert meetings, and one specialized meeting on ministerial level. We have also contributed to the long-awaited operationalization of the CICA Fund, created in 2022. This August the first meeting of the Project Review Committee was held to discuss few pilot projects. I kindly encourage distinguished Member States to submit relevant project proposals and contribute to the Fund financially.

The Secretariat paid special attention to sustaining the regular work of the CICA advisory bodies, namely Business and Youth Councils and Think Tank Forum, which organized their annual plenary sessions both in 2023 and 2024. I believe that these mechanisms provide necessary opportunities for the Member States to develop mutually beneficial result-oriented cooperation. I am sure that this momentum will be preserved under Azerbaijani leadership. I further call on Member States to give impetus to the intersessional activities of these mechanism and explore potential synergies among them.

The Council of Eminent Persons still cannot start its work due to the lack of consensus on the composition of the Council. The Secretariat looks forward to the earliest resolution of this matter and stands ready to provide its support.

Naturally, great amount of Secretariat's efforts was channeled towards assisting the Member States in the implementation of Confidence building measures. In total 28 CBM events were organized almost across all 18 priority areas of our interaction. I am also looking forward to operationalization of the new Modalities that will be adopted today, determining the Secretariat's role in implementation of CBMs, including the task to provide substantive, analytical and expert advice to Member States at their request.

To support the Chairmanship and provide better coordination among Member States I undertook a series of working visits and bilateral consultations. In 2023-2024 I have conducted 45 business trips and more than 200 meetings with Heads of State or Government, foreign ministers, senior officials, heads of international organizations, diplomatic missions and think tanks of CICA Member States, Observers and partner organizations.

Another Secretariat's priority has been enhancing CICA's partnerships, visibility and global profile. Collaboration with the UN and specifically with IOM, UNODC, ESCAP, UNOCT and ESCWA has increased significantly in the last two years. The Secretariat has been looking into expanding its practical cooperation with counterparts from Economic Cooperation Organization, SCO, Eurasian Economic Union, TURKPA, ASEAN and others. Me and my colleagues have attended more than 50 major international conferences and events.

Furthermore, the Secretariat has been continuously increasing interaction with mass media, social networks, launching several PR-projects, constantly maintaining and updating the CICA website, organizing cultural and sport activities.

Gatherings of the informal CICA Ambassadors Club in Astana were also introduced during this period.

The Secretariat itself has been raising its professional capacity to meet the increasing workload and complexity of tasks set forth by the Chair and the Member States. Secretariat's lean post table of contracted staff is almost fully

manned. Some of the best UN practices of human resources management have been incorporated in our work in the last two years. I am grateful to Kazakhstan for granting the international civil servant status to the Secretariat personnel through amending the Host Country Agreement. This will improve the conditions of service and make the Secretariat a more attractive employer for citizens of all CICA Member States.

My special appreciation goes to the Member States regularly providing financial contributions to the Secretariat's budget and seconding high-quality human resources. Though, the collection rate in the last two years was rather low – 60% in 2023 and 37% in 2024 to date. At the same time, in the last 4 years four Member States have contributed to the Secretariat's budget for the very first time, thus bringing the total number of Member States who have do so up to 18. In 2022-2024 only 4 Member States seconded their diplomats to the Secretariat. I kindly call on distinguished Ministers to consider supporting the work of the Secretariat financially and in kind, thus increasing your ownership of our organization.

Finally, I am delighted to express special thanks to the President K.Tokayev of Kazakhstan and report that the construction of CICA Headquarters is proceeding as scheduled. We expect to inaugurate our new building next summer. The new, state-of-the-art Headquarters is being designed to represent the diverse cultures of our vast continent, to display the Asian spirit. In this regard, I would like to encourage Member States to enrich the new building with works of their national art or handicrafts.

Once again, my deep appreciation goes to Minister Murat Nurtleu for his commitment to support CICA process and I wish Azerbaijan Chairmanship every success and count on its profound wisdom to further advance the CICA process for the benefit of Asia. The Secretariat is ready to work side-by-side with you, dear Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and your able Task force, and certainly all the Member States.

Thank you!