

STATEMENT BY THE CICA SECRETARY GENERAL
under Agenda item 3 “Report by the CICA Secretary General”
at the Informal Meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council
New York, 25 September 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairman!
Your Excellencies, dear colleagues!

It is my honor to update the Ministerial Council on CICA's key achievements and the activities of the Secretariat since last MC meeting in December 2024. A detailed report was circulated to CICA Member States on 19 September 2025 and is available on your tables.

I wish to highlight five major areas of success in the reporting period.

FIRST. Transformation of CICA.

The Azerbaijani Chairmanship, building on the work started by the Kazakh Chairmanship, has achieved significant progress in elaborating a CICA Charter, completing the first full round of reading and steering a good dialogue among Member States. The Secretariat continued its substantive assistance to the Chairmanship in facilitating these deliberations. I am confident that the Chairmanship will successfully conclude this process in time for the Seventh Summit in 2026.

The adoption of the Ministerial Council document on modalities of CBM implementation under Cluster 2 of the Transformation Road Map has laid a solid ground for more systematic and effective cooperation among Member States in this core area of our work. The Secretariat stands ready to further step up its support to CBM implementation. This year, the Secretariat facilitated the annual review of CBM implementation focusing on the environmental dimension.

At the same time, Member States expanded their cooperation to brand new areas, such as volunteerism, financial cooperation and women empowerment. The Secretariat provided extensive support to the preceding and current Chairmanships in developing the Draft Regulations of the CICA Finance Summit and the Women Council, which will be adopted by Your Excellencies today.

Cluster 3 of the Road Map for CICA Transformation has been fully completed this year in May with Kazakhstan's ratification of the Protocol on amendments to the Host Country Agreement. I sincerely thank the Host Country for this historic achievement, which grants CICA and its staff a full-fledged international status on the territory of Kazakhstan.

In this context, let me reiterate my profound gratitude to H.E. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan for providing us with the brand new CICA Headquarters building. My thanks also go to Azerbaijan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Palestine, Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan for donating their national artworks and architectural elements.

SECOND. CICA advisory bodies.

The Partnership Network of Leading Universities was established by the Ministerial Council last December, and the Secretariat supported the first meeting of the PNLU's Coordination Council in February 2025 under the Chairmanship of ADA University. This new platform has significant potential, and the Secretariat is ready to support Member States in making best use of it.

An important milestone occurred in Baku a couple of weeks ago when, for the first time in history, the Head of State hosting the forum, H.E. President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan, addressed the CICA Think Tank Forum. I am grateful to both the outgoing and incoming Chairs of the TTF - China's Shanghai Institute of International Studies and the Indian Council of World Affairs for maintaining TTF's institutional memory and ensuring its continuity.

The Baku plenary session of the CICA Business Council and the Business Forum held this May was a success. It brought about tangible achievements in supporting SMEs and promoting women entrepreneurship. The Secretariat also coordinated the compilation of the first e-book titled "SME Landscape in Asia: Interactive Guidebook". I encourage Member States to join this project to promote economic connectivity across the region.

Progress has also been achieved within the CICA Fund. In March 2025, the Project Review Committee has approved the first ever project dedicated to support Afghan farmers with seeds and fertilizers, co-sponsored by Kazakhstan, Türkiye, the IOFS, as well as Iraq through the CICA Fund.

No substantial progress can be reported on the Council of Eminent Persons, although it was established almost four years ago. Only four countries responded to the Chairmanship's call to confirm their candidates and/or nominate new ones. The Secretariat stands ready to provide necessary assistance to the resolution of the issue.

The next CICA Youth Council meeting will be held in Baku this November, with a series of events under its auspices, including the Chairmanship's CICA youth contests.

THIRD. CICA Convention.

Steady progress has been achieved towards bringing the Convention on Privileges and Immunities into force. Of the 14 ratifications required, 13 are already in place, keeping us in just one ratification away from our goal. I urge the Member States to sign and ratify the Convention.

FOURTH. Our resources.

I extend my special thanks to the Member States that regularly provide financial support and second high-quality human resources to the Secretariat. As of now, four Member States – Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kuwait and China – have contributed to the 2025 budget, leaving us at roughly 27% of the approved level. I urge all Member States to consider contributing financially and in kind to the Secretariat, thereby strengthening your ownership over our organization. I thank Kazakhstan, China, India, Russia and Azerbaijan for their excellent secondees to the Secretariat. Last but not least, Excellencies, I thank for your timely decision to establish the second position of Deputy Secretary General.

The Secretariat continues to be underpaid and understaffed. I therefore have submitted a modest proposal to the Senior Officials Committee this June to revise our outdated Staff Matrix of 2014, and I sincerely count on your support, Excellencies.

FIFTH. External relations and visibility.

The Secretariat continued to enhance CICA's international visibility in line with the Chairmanship's priorities. A separate report on CICA's external relations was circulated to the Member States on 15 September 2025 and is available on your tables. Furthermore, the Secretariat has continuously increased its interaction with mass media and social networks.

As part of its efforts to enhance the CICA visibility, the Secretariat published a special anniversary book titled *In Pursuit of Peace*. Another visibility project aimed at promoting multilingualism in CICA is the publication *Tales of Asia*, translated into Arabic and Kazakh. Both editions are available for you in this meeting room.

Before I conclude, let me express my deep appreciation to the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan for its professional guidance and careful oversight of our collaborative work. As always, the Secretariat is ready to work side-by-side with you, dear Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and your able Task Force, and indeed, with all the Member States.

I thank you!