



Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building
Measures in Asia (CICA)

Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan

2024-2026



REPORT on the activities of the CICA Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the period of 2024-2026 under the theme of

“STRONGER CICA: CONNECTIVITY, DIGITALIZATION, AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN ASIA”

Summary

*This report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Chairmanship of the Republic of Azerbaijan of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) for the period of 2024–2026. It highlights the major achievements and key initiatives advanced in line with the Chairmanship’s overarching priority theme, “**Stronger CICA: Connectivity, Digitalization, and Sustainable Growth in Asia**,” as well as its three declared priority areas, namely: 1) institutional development of CICA and its transformation into a full-fledged international organization; 2) promotion of sectoral interaction through the effective and efficient implementation of existing confidence-building measures, while exploring new ones; and 3) increasing the international visibility and influence of CICA through enhanced synergy and interaction with other international and regional platforms.*

The tangible results presented in this report reflect the significant contribution of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship to the advancement of CICA’s work and objectives. The report emphasizes the legacy of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship and its long-term impact on CICA’s institutional development, implementation of confidence-building measures, sectoral cooperation, and engagement with other organizations, inter alia,

- ***Initiation of the landmark initiative to establish the CICA Women Council and hosting of its inaugural meeting;***
- ***Leading the establishment of the CICA Finance Summit and co-chairing its inaugural meeting;***
- ***Operationalization of the CICA Partnership Network of Leading Universities and hosting of its first-ever conference;***
- ***Establishment of a second position of Deputy Secretary General;***
- ***The donation of a visitor room decorated with examples of Azerbaijani cultural heritage and the installation of a statue of the Garabagh Horse in front of CICA Headquarters;***
- ***Promotion of a result-oriented, impact-driven, and assessment-based approach to the implementation of CBMs, including the organization of 25 CBM events;***
- ***Organization of the first-ever Conference of Heads of Ports of CICA Member States, strengthening practical cooperation in the field of transport and connectivity;***
- ***Exemplary leadership in the work of CICA’s advisory bodies, including the CICA Business Council and CICA Youth Council;***
- ***Hosting of the CICA Think Tank Forum in the Chairing country for the first time;***
- ***Organization of the first-ever CICA Media Forum, contributing to public outreach of CICA’s activities;***
- ***Strengthening cooperation between CICA and the United Nations, including through concrete proposals and active participation in relevant UN events and most importantly,***
- ***Organization of VII Summit and consensus adoption of Baku Declaration, which recognizes accomplishments of the past two years as a joint achievement of Member States.***

These major highlights demonstrate the Azerbaijani Chairmanship’s contribution to shaping CICA’s agenda and are intended to generate lasting value and impact beyond the 2024–2026 period.

Introduction

The Republic of Azerbaijan undertook the Chairmanship of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building in Asia (CICA) at a pivotal moment when Asia's role in global affairs is gaining unprecedented prominence, the region is emerging as a central force in shaping both regional and global dynamics.

In this context, CICA plays an important role as a platform for dialogue, confidence-building, and multilateral cooperation to address shared challenges and promote peace, security, stability, and prosperity across the region.

Azerbaijan assumed the Chairmanship with a firm commitment to advancing peace, stability, and sustainable development, guided by the vision of a **“Stronger CICA: Connectivity, Digitalization, and Sustainable Growth in Asia”**, and grounded in its extensive experience in leading prominent global platforms and longstanding role as a bridge-builder on the international stage.

Building upon the progress achieved by previous Chairmanships and the legacy of 30 years of positive engagement within CICA and with its individual Member States, Azerbaijan sought to further advance this unique multilateral platform by enriching its activities with innovative approaches and enhancing its effectiveness and value as the most inclusive Asian international institution.

The Chairmanship aimed to enhance CICA's relevance for its Member States, the region, and multilateral system by focusing on issues of cross-cutting importance for stability, security, and sustainable development at the regional level. Against this backdrop, the Chairmanship agenda of the Republic of Azerbaijan focused on the following three overarching priorities:

- **Institutional development of the CICA and transformation into a full-fledged international organization;**
- **Promotion of sectoral interaction through effective and efficient implementation of existing confidence-building measures, while exploring new ones;**
- **Increasing the international visibility and influence of CICA through building synergy and interaction with other international and regional platforms.**

I. Institutional development of the CICA and transformation into a full-fledged international organization

Under the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan, CICA has taken important steps towards its institutional development. It has advanced its institutional framework while further strengthening confidence-building among Member States.

In this regard, a notable achievement was the establishment of the **CICA Women Council**, a landmark initiative of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship that has received the unanimous support of Member States. As part of its commitment to advancing the institutional development, the Chairmanship initiated the process of establishing the Council, and successfully finalized the draft Regulations, which adopted at the ministerial level in 2025. Furthermore, the Chairmanship successfully convened the first meeting of the Council, in cooperation with the State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on 14 April

2026 in Baku, Azerbaijan, contributing to its operationalization and objectives by promoting greater participation and cooperation in this important area.

Another significant institutional development under the Azerbaijani CICA Chairmanship was the establishment of the **CICA Finance Summit**. Underscoring that building trust, fostering dialogue and partnerships in the area of finance is of key importance for stimulating sustainable, innovative and inclusive development within CICA, the Chairmanship has successfully finalized the draft Regulations governing the Summit, marking another important step towards strengthening CICA's engagement in the financial and economic sphere. The advisory body held its inaugural meeting on 8 September 2026, in Astana, Kazakhstan, co-chaired by the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and marked an important milestone in translating financial dialogue among Member States into practical cooperation and joint initiatives.

These two new advisory bodies represent concrete outcomes of our collective efforts and contribute to further advancing CICA's goals, enhancing cooperation among Member States, and strengthening the institutional foundations of the Conference.

The process of transformation of CICA has been placed high on agenda of the Chairmanship with the ambition of finalization a Charter that would codify transformation of the CICA into a full-fledged international organization, based on the decision of the Sixth CICA Summit held in Astana in 2022 and work commenced under Kazakhstan's Chairmanship.

Azerbaijani Chairmanship has taken over this task agreed at the Summit level and strived for advancing the implementation of this agenda being common endeavour of all Member States. Building upon the progress achieved so far and respecting the diversity of views among all CICA Member States, the Chairmanship continued the transformation process as an incremental, member-driven, member-owned, and consensus-based process. Following series of intensive deliberations in respective formats and through bilateral consultations, the draft Charter was elaborated that enjoy support of the majority of Member States, while certain elements of the draft Charter remain to be subject of diverging views.

Another important step in institution-building was the operationalization of **CICA Partnership Network of Leading Universities (PNLU)** and its Coordination Council, which established at the ministerial level in 2024. This innovative body has been established to foster academic excellence, facilitate academic exchanges and research collaboration, and promote the sharing of knowledge and experience reflecting the diversity of the CICA region. To drive the Network forward, Azerbaijani Chairmanship continuously worked, under the guidance of the Coordination Council, chaired by the ADA University, and organized two events in Baku.

Recognizing the indispensability of the **CICA Secretariat's role** in facilitating interaction within CICA, the Chairmanship emphasized the importance of Member States' voluntary financial and in-kind contributions, on which the Secretariat's functions depend. Azerbaijan's full-fledged support to the Secretariat is also aimed at reinforcing institutional capacity of CICA. Moreover, upon the initiative of Azerbaijan **the second position of Deputy Secretary General was established**. The Chairmanship has seconded DSG and another staff member in line with its commitment to strengthen the Secretariat's structure and staff composition.

The Chairmanship contributed to the inauguration of new premises of CICA Secretariat in Astana, Kazakhstan. **A visitor room decorated with examples of Azerbaijani cultural heritage was donated and a statue of Garabagh Horse was installed in front the CICA Headquarters.**

The **adoption of Staff Matrix of the CICA Secretariat** marks a significant milestone in institutional development of the CICA.

Azerbaijani Chairmanship also coincided with the **20th Anniversary of the CICA Secretariat**. In this context, it has supported the Secretariat in undertaking a comprehensive review of its activities and achievements over the past two centuries. This important work has contributed to the compilation of a commemorative publication that documents the Organization's legacy and preserves its rich history for future generations.

Azerbaijan also continued to promote the continued advancing entry into force **of the CICA Convention on Privileges and Immunities of 2010**, which establishes CICA's legal capacity and grants immunities and privileges to the Secretariat, its personnel and representatives of Member States. During Azerbaijani CICA Chairmanship Palestine, Tajikistan and Cambodia ratified the Convention. **With the fourteenth ratification by Cambodia, the requirements for the entry into force of the CICA Convention on Privileges and Immunities have finally been fulfilled, marking the achievement of this long-awaited event.** The Convention's entry into force represents an important step towards strengthening the legal foundations of CICA and further enhancing the prospects for its transformation process.

As a continuation of the work undertaken on the proposal to establish **the CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity**, put forward by the CICA Chairmanship of Kazakhstan in October 2022, discussions on the initiative continued during the Azerbaijani Chairmanship in the relevant formats. The Chairmanship facilitated consultations among Member States, with the involvement of the CICA Secretariat. Consensus on the establishment of CICA Council on Sustainable Connectivity was not reached, and the initiative remains to be subject for further dialogue and consultation.

II. Promotion of sectoral interaction through effective and efficient implementation of existing confidence-building measures, while exploring new ones

Considering that building confidence among Member States lies at the heart of CICA's objectives, the Azerbaijani Chairmanship prioritized enhancing the effective implementation of existing **Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs)** and exploring new measures across the five dimensions of CICA.

Recognizing that peace, security and development are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, the Chairmanship facilitated the implementation of CBMs in the military-political, new challenges and threats, economic, environmental, and human dimensions, as reflected in the CICA Catalogue of Confidence-Building Measures (2024), with the support of the CICA Secretariat.

Building on the positive legacy of voluntarily implemented CBMs, the Chairmanship placed particular emphasis to move beyond the implementation of CBMs as individual activities and **promote their result-oriented, impact-driven**

and assessment-based implementation, with a view to making them more effective and relevant to the needs and priorities of Member States. Particular attention was given to strengthening the capacities of Member States to address common risks and emerging challenges through practical cooperation and the exchange of experience and best practices.

The Chairmanship also prioritized exploring new approaches to deepen cooperation among Member States. In this regard, efforts were undertaken to enhance coordination among Member States, as well as **the coordinators and co-coordinators of CBMs priority areas**, with a view to promoting greater complementarity and practical impact across the different dimensions of CICA cooperation. In this context, with the support of the Chairmanship, considerable progress made in the preparation and updating concept papers and action plans for CBM priority areas, to providing a clear framework for their implementation.

Within the framework of CICA, relevant national authorities of Azerbaijan undertook the necessary coordination and organizational work to facilitate the implementation of CBMs. As part of these efforts, **over 25 events and a range of activities were organized by the Chairmanship in cooperation with relevant line ministries and state institutions of the Republic of Azerbaijan** in both online and offline formats, while Chairmanship facilitated organization of overall up to 60 confidence-building measures in various priority areas since assumption of Chairmanship. The Azerbaijani side also ensured the participation of relevant national institutions in events organized by Member States under various CBM areas and carried out the necessary coordination to facilitate their effective engagement.

In line with the vision of the Chairmanship, particular attention was given to the economic dimension.

- Bringing together representatives of business organizations and public authorities from CICA Member States, **the CICA Business Council** promoted economic cooperation and diversification, with a particular focus on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). 8th CICA Business Council and 10th Business Forum are co-organized by the Chairmanship and Small and Medium Business Development Agency (KOBIA) of Azerbaijan, back-to-back on 20 May 2025, in Baku succeeded in bringing businesses together and foster direct public-private dialogue and strengthen regional collaboration. The Council offered opportunity to promote collaboration among entrepreneurs, build transboundary partnerships and further sustainable, innovative and inclusive economic growth in the region.

- Efforts to enhance **SMEs competitiveness, women's entrepreneurship, and fostering digitalization and green transition** in the CICA region continued also through organization of thematic seminars and workshops, emphasizing the critical role of SMEs as engines of economic growth, as well as social development, employment generation, poverty reduction, and stimulation of entrepreneurship and innovation.

- Recognizing the importance of regional connectivity, especially integrated and competitive transport and logistics systems, and digitalization of transportation for achieving more efficient use of trade opportunities among the

Member States, the Chairmanship, also as the coordinator of CICA CBM focused on the development of secure and effective transport corridors, organized **the first ever Conference of Heads of Ports of CICA Member States**, in Baku on 9-10 September 2026, which concluded by adoption of the concrete recommendations.

- The Chairmanship also gave high attention to the role of tourism as a driver for economic, social, cultural and educational development, as well as for fostering international understanding, peace, and prosperity and successfully conducted the project on “**Circular Green Tourism in the CICA Countries**” for the years of 2025-2026, by the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

- The Chairmanship also organized an online **CICA conference on Agricultural Sector Insights**, jointly with the Agricultural Research Center under the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, on 30 October 2025, bringing together policymakers, agricultural economists, and researchers from CICA Member States to exchange knowledge, foster collaboration, and advance the use of general and partial equilibrium models in the agricultural sector.

In the human dimension the priority was given to meaningful engagement of all segments of society to foster inclusive, resilient, and sustainable long-term growth.

- As an advisory body responsible for supporting and coordinating the activities of youth organizations, associations, and movements from CICA Member States, **the CICA Youth Council** promoted comprehensive cooperation among young people across the region, contributing to stronger interaction, mutual understanding, peace, and friendship in Asia. The Chairmanship with the leading role of the Ministry of Youth and Sport of Azerbaijan Republic, held the 8th and 9th sessions of the CICA Youth Council held in Baku on 12 November 2025 and 26 June 2026, respectively, concluded with a concrete set of recommendations to enhance youth engagement within CICA, as a key element in strengthening people-to-people contacts and deepening of mutual understanding. Alongside the Youth Council meetings, a series of initiatives, including **AI Art, Youth Robotics, Youth Speech and Debate Competitions, the Second Rally of Volunteer Movement Leaders, contest on "Youth as Catalysts for Peace, Cooperation, and Sustainable Development in the CICA Region"** were organized to further encourage youth interaction and to discuss how youth can contribute to fostering confidence-building, innovation, and collaborative solutions to regional challenges such as climate change, energy security, and economic development.

- The establishment of the **Women's Council** enabled the Chairmanship to facilitate broader discussions on the role of women. In line with this objective, international conference was convened on “*Amplifying women's voices across CICA for Sustainable Growth*”, in Baku, on 14 April 2026, along with the inaugural meeting of the Council. This conference, which was attended by Ms. Leyla Aliyeva, Vice-President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Ministers and other senior

government officials of CICA Member States responsible for women affairs provided an important opportunity for the related high-level representatives to discuss coordination and experience sharing among Member States in the importance of enhancing women's roles and participation in social, economic and cultural life. As a sign for alignment of mandate of the CICA Women Council with the objectives of the UN Women and a potential for greater interaction for better serving to common purposes of women empowerment, the Conference was also received **an address from the UN Under-Secretary-General, Executive Director of the UN Women, Ms. Sima Sami Bahous**, marking an important milestone in promoting CICA's international standing and visibility.

- Equally, the establishment of **the Partnership Network of Leading Universities** and its operationalization provided a unique opportunity to explore the possibilities of increased interaction within CICA in the fields of education and science, areas that have thus far been untapped. The Chairmanship worked to instrumentalize this platform to galvanize collaboration in these highly demanding and promising sectors. The conference on "The Role of Universities in Green Energy and Sustainability", held on 2-3 December 2025 in Baku, with leadership of the Chair of Coordination Council, ADA University and brought together universities, academics and experts to exchange ideas and experiences on renewable energy. The **"Digitalization and Research Capacity Building Training for Researchers and Early-Career Policy Professionals"**, held from 29 September to 3 October 2026 in Baku, enabled to strengthen the digital and research capacities of researchers, while promoting knowledge-sharing in these areas.

- For the first time, the Chairmanship organized **the CICA Media Forum**, on 1 October 2026 in Baku, under the theme "Building Trust through Media in a Polarized World". The Forum provided an opportunity to strengthen collaboration among national media agencies and foster a shared commitment to promoting CICA's vision, while recognizing the important role of responsible media in building trust and confidence in the digital age.

- Recognizing **the CICA Think Tank Forum's**, advisory body comprising leading think tanks or research institutions of the Member States, continued role in fostering collaboration and interaction among think tanks and research institutions of the Member States, Azerbaijan successfully hosted the 13th Think Tank Forum in Baku, first time ever in country chairing CICA. Jointly organized by the Center of Analysis of International Relations of Azerbaijan and the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, it focused on regional cooperation and governance, and gathered leading experts for productive discussions on global and regional issues relevant to advancing the CICA agenda. The Forum was held under the theme "Resonance of Development and Security: Regional Cooperation and Governance in the Institutional Transformation of CICA and **honoured to have an address from President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev.**

Committed to dedicate efforts toward enhancing activities across all dimensions, the Chairmanship continued its efforts in all three remaining dimensions, also:

- In the **environmental dimension**, under the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan the review of the implementation of CBMs on the environmental dimension has been held in July 2025, where Member States were encouraged to more actively engage in implementation of CBM events in this dimension and enhancing collaboration and dialogue on these issues

As a continuation of CICA's engagement with global environmental agenda, the Chairmanship, in collaboration with the CICA Secretariat, hosted a side event on water security and climate resilience, in the framework of the High-Level International Conference on Glaciers Preservation in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in May 2025. The Chairmanship also continued the practice of engaging within global and regional environmental forums bringing CICA perspective to those gatherings.

To further CICA's activities in the environmental dimension and in line with its priority of strengthening CICA's international standing the Chairmanship put forward the initiative to appeal for observer status for CICA at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This initiative was not materialized due to objection by one Member State.

- In the **military-political dimension** the Chairmanship has contributed to the organization of events, mainly by coordinators and co-coordinators, including with a providing its experts as speakers. Under the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan, the review of the implementation of CBMs took place in April 2026, and encouraged Member States to more actively engage in the implementation of CBM events in this dimension and noted interest for further strengthening military dialogue and cooperation within the CICA framework.

- In the **new challenges and threats dimension** the focus placed on strengthening capacity building and promoting the exchange of best practices in cybersecurity and personal data protection. This included online event, with particular emphasis on harmonizing data protection practices among CICA Member States, addressing cross-border data flow challenges, and fostering a global culture of data privacy.

III. Increasing the international visibility and influence of CICA through building synergy and interaction with other international and regional platforms

With its broad membership, comprehensive approach, and flexible mechanisms for interaction, CICA possesses significant comparative advantages, as an inclusive regional platform for dialogue and cooperation in Asia. At the same time, stronger engagement with international and regional organizations and other multilateral platforms, through dialogue, exchange of best practices and coordination, can generate valuable synergies, reduce duplication and enhance the effectiveness and visibility of CICA.

Proceeding from this understanding, the Azerbaijani Chairmanship placed particular emphasis on raising the international visibility of CICA and strengthening its engagement with the broader multilateral community. The Chairmanship further expanded CICA's international partnerships by strengthening existing relationships and establishing new ones, thereby promoting greater awareness of CICA.

Particular importance was attached to further **strengthening cooperation between CICA and the United Nations**, where the CICA has been granted observer status through General Assembly resolution 62/77 of 6 December 2007, recognizing its role as a regional multilateral forum dedicated to promoting peace, stability, and security in Asia.

This intention for enhancing the cooperation was confirmed at the **"CICA Ministerial Council Statement on the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations"** adopted at the New York Ministerial Meeting of 2025. This ministerial statement also underscored the CICA's commitment to trust and confidence building, and reaffirmed Member States' strong support for multilateralism, with the United Nations at its center, at the time of increased global challenges and threats. The efforts of Azerbaijan's CICA Chairmanship was commended in the Ministerial Council Statement. This statement, along with the statement commemorating the 80th anniversaries of the end of World War II have been circulated as a document of the General Assembly, and of the Security Council, contained in document **A/80/428 - S/2025/630**.

Following the adoption of the statement and in light of growing recognition of the need for strengthened partnerships between the UN and regional organizations, the Republic of Azerbaijan has prepared and proposed to submit **a draft resolution entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia"**, under the relevant agenda item of the 80th session of UN General Assembly. The text of the resolution was not contested by any Member State, while one Member State expressed opposition only on general grounds.

The Chairmanship also showcased CICA's experiences through various formats of events organized on the margins of the UN high-level events, including the "Women's Empowerment across CICA Countries," organized on 13 March 2026 on the margins of the **70th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women**; the thematic discussion entitled "The Role of Regional Mechanisms in the Implementation of the Right to Development," held on 22 April 2026 during the **13th session of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development**; and "Best Practices in Volunteerism in CICA Member States," held on 14 July 2026 on the margins of the **UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**. The Chairmanship also contributed to **the photo exhibition at the UN Headquarters**, during 13-17 July 2026, showcasing its volunteer initiatives implemented during the international events.

Building on the work initiated within the Secretariat, the Chairmanship continued the necessary coordination and follow-up to advance the preparation and review of the **Memorandum of Understanding documents** with other organizations, with a view to establishing a general framework for cooperation and setting out shared objectives.

In line with the mandate entrusted by the CICA Senior Officials Committee to establish a **partnership between the CICA Secretariat and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)**, the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan has made extensive efforts to facilitate the finalization of the draft Memorandum of Understanding. Several rounds of consultations were conducted to bridge the remaining differences among Member States. Through this balanced, inclusive, and practical approach, the text of MoU is concluded, subject to final confirmation by Member States.

The Chairmanship of Azerbaijan has actively explored ways to strengthen CICA's interaction with other international and regional organizations in addressing common challenges. In this context, the Azerbaijani Chairmanship, in cooperation with the Secretariat, **co-organized a working luncheon in Vienna, on 18 November 2025, for Permanent Representatives of CICA Member and Observer States, as well as senior officials from the OSCE Secretariat and UNODC**. The meeting provided an important platform for presenting the Chairmanship's priorities and exploring opportunities for enhanced institutional interaction.

The Chairmanship also made effective use of its hosting and chairing of various international and regional formats to promote CICA, its work and priorities, as a relevant and inclusive platform for addressing common challenges, such as **17th ECO Summit held in Khankendi on 3-4 July 2025, 13th World Urban Forum, and 4th International Mine Action Conference held in Baku, on 17 - 22 May 2026 and 2-3 September 2026**, respectively.

VII CICA Summit

The Chairmanship of Azerbaijan in 2024-2026 culminated with the organization of **the Baku Summit on 15 October 2026**, which represented a logical and meaningful continuation of our collective efforts and a tangible outcome of the sustained work undertaken throughout our tenure. The Summit provided an important opportunity to consolidate the progress achieved under our Chairmanship and to further advance our shared objective of enhancing the efficiency, relevance, and visibility of CICA.

The Summit has reaffirmed CICA Member States' shared commitment to strengthening dialogue, building confidence and promoting cooperation across Asia. Bringing together Member States despite existing differences on many issues, the Summit testified to importance of CICA as a platform for fostering dialogue and addressing shared challenges.

Reflecting on the tangible initiatives undertaken and the significant contributions made under the leadership of Azerbaijan's CICA Chairmanship, the Summit underscored their lasting impact on the advancement of CICA's mandate and objectives.

The adoption of the Baku Declaration, recognizing and acknowledging accomplishments of the past two years as a joint achievement of Member States, formalized sustained efforts, as well as collective commitment to furthering CICA's principles and objectives.

In the same respect, the adoption of **the Statement on Cooperation in the Field of Occupational Safety and Health**, showcased shared willingness to work together on the issues of practical importance.

The Summit was particularly marked by two milestone events for the CICA's institutional development. Firstly, **the accession of the Lao People's Democratic Republic as the 29th Member State of CICA** will further strengthen the inclusiveness and regional representation of CICA. At the same time, the admission of a new member to CICA reflects its continued relevance, credibility, and growing recognition among its partners and stakeholders.

Secondly, with the fourteenth ratification by Cambodia, **the requirements for the entry into force of the CICA Convention on Privileges and Immunities have finally been fulfilled**, marking the achievement of this long-awaited event. The Convention's entry into force represents an important step towards strengthening the legal foundations of CICA and further enhancing the prospects for its transformation process.

The unanimous support for extension of Azerbaijan's Chairmanship demonstrated the trust and confidence have placed in us by all Member States. Furthermore, the **appointment of Ambassador Sultan Hajiyeve of Azerbaijan, as the next Secretary General of CICA** for four-year term, reinforced this trust.

The 7th CICA Summit held in the end of two-year Chairmanship of Azerbaijan marked with significant achievements in CICA's institutional development, its increased effectiveness in implementation of confidence-building measures and fostering synergy with international and regional platforms sharing the same objectives.

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Throughout its CICA Chairmanship, the Republic of Azerbaijan has sought to strengthen dialogue, consultation, and coordination among the Member States, with the conviction that a more effective and responsive CICA can only be built through an inclusive and consensus-oriented process.

In this regard, our Chairmanship has convened **VII CICA Summit, two meetings of the Council of Ministers - 17 December 2024, in online format and 25 September 2025, in New-York. Almost 30 meetings of Special Working Group (SWG) and Senior Officials Committee (SOC)** organized under the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan to deliberate on CICA decisions and documents and review of implementation of confidence-building measures. These meetings have provided a valuable platform for Member States to thoroughly consider, negotiate, and address the broad range of issues on the CICA's agenda.

The Chairmanship maintained close and regular engagement with the CICA Secretariat and Secretary General, with a view to providing strategic guidance and facilitating the effective implementation of CICA activities in pursuit of our shared objectives. In this context, the Secretary General undertook several visits to Baku and received by H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and held a series of high-level meetings with relevant officials, further contributing to sustained coordination and cooperation within the CICA framework.

The Chairmanship of Azerbaijan has been guided by the principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness, and constructive engagement. This process has not only enabled the Member States to address substantive issues on the agenda and have **legacy achievements, such as establishment of two new advisory bodies- the Women Council and the Finance Summit and full operationalization**

of the CICA Partnership Network of Leading Universities, but has also contributed to strengthening mutual understanding, trust, and a sense of common purpose among Member States.

The Chairmanship remains confident that the momentum generated during Azerbaijani CICA Chairmanship in 2024-2026 and Baku Summit will contribute to further strengthening the CICA as a more effective, visible, united, and forward-looking platform, fully grounded in the principles of cooperation, and consensus among its Member States.

The Republic of Azerbaijan will continue to act as a bridge builder and advance the CICA process through building consensus and confidence, **in its next term of the Chairmanship for 2026-2028**.
