

Statement of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan H.E. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the meeting with Heads of delegations attending the Sixth Meeting of CICA Ministers of Foreign Affairs

Distinguished Ministers and Heads of Delegation,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you all to the capital of Kazakhstan for the Sixth CICA Ministerial Meeting.

A brainchild of Kazakhstan at the dawn of its Independence, the Conference has now turned into a continental platform with the broad geographical reach and comprehensive agenda.

The CICA's "simple-to-complex" working mode, based on dozens of confidence-building measures in five dimensions, has proved its relevance.

Today, our Conference has the relevant potential to consolidate collective will and

wisdom of Asian nations in the interests of peace, cooperation and development.

In this endeavor, CICA does not compete with any other fora. It acts on the understanding that there is no alternative to building a truly multilateral and inclusive international system.

Dear friends,

My country feels a special pride and responsibility to lead CICA at such a challenging time.

The Covid-19 pandemic, geopolitical divide, climate change and dramatic developments in Afghanistan shape our common agenda today.

Here, I commend all Member States and the Secretariat for their dedicated and fruitful interaction with the Kazakh Chairmanship.

As you know, we have set forth a cluster of ambitious priorities underpinned by the strategic goal of transforming the CICA into a full-fledged international organization.

CICA already possesses all the essential features of an international organization,

including foundational documents, decision-making and working bodies, operational budget and a permanent Secretariat.

The proposed transformation will highlight the new role of Asia in global affairs.

This move will also affirm the Member States' commitment to creating a genuinely common, indivisible and comprehensive security architecture in the largest continent.

The latest discussions show that there is a broad support for the transformation. Definitely, this process should be smooth and gradual, and based on the CICA's cornerstone principles.

To facilitate this vision, the Kazakh Chair has put forward a number of priorities based on the proposals I made during the Fifth CICA Summit in Dushanbe.

They include the updating of the CICA Catalogue of CBMs and establishment of two standing advisory bodies – Council of Eminent Persons and Think Tank Forum.

At the same time, the Covid-related disruption has significantly limited the Kazakh Chair's capacity.

With this in view, we look forward to the Member States' support for the following two proposals.

First, I feel privileged to nominate the CICA Founder, First President of Kazakhstan Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev to lead the Council of Eminent Persons.

Second, I announce Kazakhstan's bid for another term-in-office at the helm of CICA for 2022-2024. If granted, we pledge to use a renewed mandate to reinforce collective efforts in fulfilling the CICA's noble mission.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On the verge of its 30th Anniversary, our Conference must not stop integrating in to the new realities.

The growing geopolitical fracture reinforces multiple threats to the global security, aggravating the danger of "sleepwalking" into catastrophe.

In the changing strategic environment, Asia is increasingly turning into the main geopolitical battleground.

Calamitous escalation may become more likely if the Asian governments fail to revitalize trust, deliver higher living standards and satisfy growing demand for democracy.

I am convinced that the twenty-first century will really belong to Asia provided that we develop a truly unified and constructive approach, assume greater responsibilities and obligations.

In this regard, like never before, we need to invest our hope in CICA as the only forum capable of shaping a new configuration of Asian security, cooperation and shared prosperity.

The next year will be crucial as Kazakhstan will host the Sixth Summit to celebrate the 30th anniversary of CICA.

It is our moral duty to demonstrate a clear commitment to the spirit and letter of the Declaration on the Principles Guiding Relations between the CICA Member States and the Almaty Act.

Distinguished Heads of Delegation,

Now, I would like to touch upon some topical issues which, in my view, should be in our focus in the years ahead.

First, confidence building and conflict prevention remain the backbone of CICA.

It is gratifying to note that the Member States have done a great job in developing an updated Catalogue of CBMs.

It has embraced new priority areas for cooperation, such as Epidemiological Safety, Public Health and Pharmaceuticals; Information Technology; and Combating Terrorism.

Second, today we will obviously talk at length on current developments in and around Afghanistan.

I am convinced that we must not abandon the Afghan people at this crucial juncture. We urge all stakeholders, including CICA, to assume responsibility and work together with other partners in good faith.

In general, we see the future of Afghanistan as a united, inclusive and self-sufficient nation living at peace with itself and its neighbours.

A secure and stable country will upgrade the Asian dynamics and open up new prospects for increased connectivity, trade and development. Five Central Asian states have a special interest in Afghanistan's back to track. Kazakhstan's message is very simple and clear – we strive for not Great Game but Great Gain in the Heart of Asia.

Third, the pandemic has not receded yet. People continue to die from its consequences. It causes significant damage to the health of citizens, disrupts their usual way of life.

In these circumstances, ensuring broad access to vaccines remains a major challenge.

Recently, at the Global COVID-19 Summit, I announced the firm intention of Kazakhstan to make feasible contribution to strengthening the universal healthcare system through the QazVac vaccine.

I call on the CICA Member States to increase collective efforts within the framework of the new confidence building measure on epidemiological safety.

Fourth, while the coronavirus pandemic brought great upheaval, it could also be a watershed moment that will open up new opportunities to strengthen Asia's role in the world.

Our region is already a global center of gravity. It is home to 60% of the world's population and about 40% of world GDP at purchasing power parity.

Such powerful economic entities as the Eurasian Economic Union, ASEAN, APEC and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership operate on the continent. In order to increase the sustainability of our economies, CICA, in my opinion, will have to pay special attention to cooperation with these organizations

I note with satisfaction that the Conference is constantly working to strengthen its economic dimension.

In particular, new measures are being taken to ensure the security of financial transactions, pipelines and logistics routes.

Here, I would like to emphasize the importance of further development of transport corridors in the CICA area.

In this regard, long-term investments in continental infrastructure projects open up wide opportunities. According to the estimates of international financial institutions, it is necessary to invest \$1.7 trillion annually in this area by 2030.

Fifth, in the context of global climate changes, the ideas of sustainable development should find real reflection in the policies of our states.

Nowadays, the Asia-Pacific is increasingly susceptible to various natural disasters.

It accounts for more than 40% of the world's natural disasters and 84% of the affected population.

These issues are of particular importance on the eve of the COP26 Summit, which is the most important climate forum after the Paris Conference.

The high standard implementation of the agreements in Glasgow is of great importance for preventing further human casualties and lowering the standard of living.

In this context, financing of green technologies, their widespread implementation will become increasingly relevant.

We hope for the assistance of your countries in promoting these pressing issues.

In addition, the rise in extreme weather events is damaging food and water security in Central Asia, the Middle East and other regions of Asia.

Kazakhstan, as an active participant in global food supply chains, as well as the initiator of the creation of the Islamic Organization for Food Security, believes that these issues should be at the top of the CICA agenda.

It is important to support our inclusive growth and social well-being, especially in the post-Covid period

Sixth, as I noted at the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, against the background of the escalation of geopolitical tensions, the “technological iron curtain” is becoming increasingly real.

In this regard, Kazakhstan is interested in deepening technological partnership with your countries to mitigate new risks.

This is also in our interests in the conditions of ubiquitous digital solutions.

Therefore, we welcome the inclusion of cooperation in the area of IT as a new

confidence building measure in the CICA Catalogue.

Seventh, great prospects are opened by deepening cooperation in the field of finance.

In this context, we welcome the outcomes of the CICA Finance Summit.

Today, Kazakhstan is becoming one of the important players of the financial market in Eurasia.

Here, I would like to note the Astana International Financial Centre. Today, it is a dynamic financial platform combining the best experience of world institutions and using the latest tools based on English law.

I invite CICA partners to use the AIFC's capabilities more actively.

Dear colleagues,

All the proposals I have voiced are aimed at achieving our common goal of building a safer, more sustainable and prosperous Asia.

As you know, next year Kazakhstan will host the 6th CICA Summit with the aim to determine the course of “New Asia in the New World”.

I attach exceptional importance to this event and invite the leadership of your countries to take an active part in it.

Taking this opportunity, I convey warm greetings and best wishes to your heads of state and government.

I wish you fruitful work and continued success in your professional activities.

Thank you for your attention.