

VOICE OF ASIA:

CICA digest

SOC discussed
transformation of CICA

CICA Secretariat signs the third
Roadmap

CICA participates in the second Antalya
Diplomacy Forum

Consultations in the capitals of
CICA Member States

CICA continues to strengthen its
capacity in countering terrorism



30 YEARS


Conference on Interaction and
Confidence Building Measures
in Asia [CICA]



In this issue:

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Interaction and Confidence Building
Measures in Asia**

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A way forward: transforming the CICA



It is a great honour for me to present another edition of “CICA Digest: Voice of Asia”, which gives an overview of activities of CICA and its Secretariat in the first quarter of 2022 towards strengthening cooperation throughout the CICA space.

The ongoing unprecedented developments in the global security system have once again demonstrated that the principles of multilateralism are indispensable for maintaining international peace and security. In this context, CICA, as the largest multilateral platform for dialogue on security issues in Asia with the most comprehensive agenda, becomes as relevant as never before.

On 30 March 2022 the Senior Officials Committee (SOC) discussed the concept of transformation of CICA into an international organization for regional security and cooperation in Asia, one of strategic goals of the Kazakh Chairmanship. The Member States unanimously expressed their general support to the Chairmanship’s proposals on transformation and to the launch of the gradual transformation process at the forthcoming Sixth CICA Summit.

The Secretariat continued to provide substantive and administrative support to the CICA Chairmanship of Kazakhstan and all Member States in implementation of CICA confidence building measures, decisions taken by the Member States, including on its further institutionalization, as well as Chairmanship priorities and regular activities.

Following the adoption of the updated CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures by the Sixth CICA Ministerial Meeting in October 2021, the Secretariat stepped up its facilitating role in support of Member States’ work to-

wards updating concepts of confidence building measures implementation in priority areas of CICA dimensions of cooperation. The Secretariat continued its assistance to the Chairmanship in launching the work of two new CICA institutions – Council of Eminent Persons and Think Tank Forum.

On behalf of the Chairmanship, the Executive Director held bilateral consultations in capitals of a broad range of Member States as part of preparatory work for the milestone Sixth CICA Summit, to take place in Nur-Sultan on 12-13 October 2022.

In the first quarter of 2022 the Secretariat continued its efforts in expanding cooperation with other regional and international organizations, including through participation in high-level meetings of the United Nations on counter-terrorism and sustainable development goals, as well as in establishing relations with certain regional organizations as determined by the SOC in December 2021.

I would like to thank the Kazakh Chairmanship and the Member States for their continued support to the Secretariat in its work towards achievement and promotion of CICA objectives and values, and in facilitating dialogue and cooperation among CICA Member States for the sake of strengthening peace, security, stability and prosperity in Asia.

In closing, I would like to express appreciation to the Member States for their valuable contribution into implementation of projects to mark the 30th anniversary of CICA.

Kairat Sarybay
CICA Executive Director



January

Statement of CICA Executive Director on current situation in Kazakhstan



I thank Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tileuberdi for the invitation to this briefing and detailed information about the events of early January and the relevant measures taken by the Government of Kazakhstan.

At the outset, I express deep condolences to the families and friends of all the victims of terrorist attacks in Kazakhstan.

I reaffirm my full support for the measures taken by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and the Government of Kazakhstan to counter terrorist activities, de-escalate the situation and ensure public security and social stability in the country.

I express my gratitude to the citizens of Kazakhstan, who showed civic responsibility and remained calm during the "hot phase" of the crisis. I turned out to be an eyewitness of the events in Almaty and state with responsibility that the actions of law enforcement agencies were balanced, strictly in accordance with the law and commensurate to the evolving situation. I also confirm that the police acted adequately on peaceful protests, however, extremist and rogue elements took advantage of the protests, what led to surge of violence in the city against law enforcement forces, citizens and their property.

The speech of President Tokayev in the Majilis of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan presented a deep analysis of root causes of the emerged crisis, as well as measures to overcome it.

I confirm that the CICA Member States are sincerely interested in the early normalization of the situation in Kazakhstan, as evidenced by my contacts with representatives of individual Member States.

The assistance of Kazakhstan's partners in the CSTO has confirmed in

practice the demand for multilateral formats of cooperation in Asia and the importance of multilateralism in countering modern security challenges.

Given the multifaceted nature of these challenges, especially their root causes, cooperation within the framework of CICA, which is a "soft security" forum, has great potential to assist international measures to prevent events like the Almaty tragedy.

In particular, as part of the comprehensive mandate of CICA that includes all five dimensions of interaction, CICA Member States can expand cooperation and exchange best practices in the following areas:

- fight against organized crime and international terrorism;
- addressing the issue of foreign fighters;
- cooperation in the field of combating the financing of terrorism;
- uncompromising fight against corruption in the international format;
- eradication of poverty and ensuring sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
- cooperation in the area of interethnic and interreligious relations;
- development of civil society institutions and human rights education.

These are just some preliminary proposals on areas of work that can be significantly expanded by the Member States and the CICA Chairmanship.

In conclusion, I would like to once again express my deep gratitude to Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Foreign Affairs Mukhtar Tileuberdi for our meeting and the opportunity to express my support to the Government of Kazakhstan. I am confident that these temporary difficulties will be overcome by the steadfast and courageous people of Kazakhstan with honor and dignity.



CICA Business Council Board's session

In his address to the Board's session participants, Executive Director of CICA Ambassador K.Sarybay noted that 18 out of 38 events, held in the framework of CICA in 2021, relate to the Economic Dimension of CICA; this fact reflects an increasing demand for economic cooperation in times of the pandemic.

The point was made that the Business Council's plenary session would be held back-to-back with the CICA Business Forum, as it was in 2021.

The BC Board members' attention was drawn to the requirements for hosting of the Business Council's and Business Forum's sessions, and financial/organizational aspects of the event; the request was made to come up with proposals on the venue of the Business Council's and Business Forum's sessions.

During the period from 2020-2022, the Business Council is chaired by the leadership of Kazakh-

The CICA Business Council Board's session, held on 21 January 2022, adopted a decision to hold the next plenary session of the Business Council in June 2022. It was also agreed that the plenary session would be devoted to the discussion of the growing need for digitalization of business processes in the SME sector and in the context of a pandemic in particular.

stan's business community; the co-chairs from the Russian Federation, Thailand and Turkey provide their support in enhancing cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises in the CICA region.

The session of the Business Council Board was attended by Acting Chairman of the Chamber of International Commerce of Kazakhstan Mr. R.Tazhenov; Deputy Chair of the BC Board from Turkey, Vice President of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization Mr. S.T.Sahin; Deputy Chair of the BC Board from Thailand, Member of the Board of the Federation of Thai Industries Mr. Yu.Silpsarnvitch; Acting Deputy Chair of the BC Board from the Russian Federation, representative from the Russian Corporation «SMEs» Ms. Y.Yegorova.



"Central Asia - China Summit"

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, speaking on January 25, 2022, at the «Central Asia-China Summit», dedicated to the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries of Central Asia and China, noted the traditionally friendly relations between the states of Central Asia and China.

The Head of State of Kazakhstan also emphasized the significant capacities of CICA in strengthening regional security.

"I would like to note the significant capacities of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia. As the acting Chairman of this Forum, Kazakhstan is taking systematic steps to increase the effectiveness of CICA. Transformation of the Conference into an organiza-

tion for security and development in Asia would bring our collective efforts on countering current challenges and threats to essentially new level", - stated Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

The President of Kazakhstan also invited Chinese President Xi Jinping, President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat

Mirziyoyev to participate in the CICA Summit, which will be held this autumn in Nur-Sultan.

China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are Member States of CICA, and Turkmenistan enjoys an observer status in CICA since 2021.

Source: Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

CICA Executive Director meets with Ambassador of Kuwait



On January 26 at the CICA Headquarters Executive Director of CICA Ambassador Kairat Sarybay received the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of Kazakhstan Tareq Abdullah Al-Faraj.



At the meeting, the sides discussed prospects for Kuwait's accession to CICA as a full-fledged member. Ambassador Sarybay informed the head of the Kuwaiti diplomatic mission about the procedure for agreeing and accepting new members to the CICA family, and expressed his readiness to provide the necessary advisory support.

Ambassador Al-Faraj stressed that Kuwait considered joining CICA as one of the key foreign policy objectives for 2022 and hoped for a positive solution to that issue in the near future.

In 2022, CICA celebrates its 30th Anniversary. In autumn, the Sixth CICA Summit will be held in Nur-Sultan. If Kuwait joins the Conference, it will become the 28th CICA Member State.

"Central Asia - India Summit"

Participants of the Central Asia – India Summit, held in an online format on 27 January 2022, expressed their commitment to work together on the transformation of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) into an international organization aimed at enhancing dialogue, peace and cooperation in Asia.



"Recent developments in the world have demonstrated that terrorism, extremism and transnational crime remain pressing challenges we face today", stated in his address President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

"In this context, CICA becomes even more relevant. Kazakhstan, as the current chair of the Forum will take every effort to enhance security and cooperation in the CICA region. We believe that the further institutional development of the Forum, its transformation into an international organization will provide a new impetus to our common work", noted the President of Kazakhstan.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev reiterated that CICA's anniversary

summit will be held this year, and pointed out that its agenda covering all important items of today's reality will also include the Afghan problem:

"Despite our political views and personal beliefs, we nevertheless must not abandon Afghanistan and its people during such unprecedented times and the existing humanitarian crisis. Kazakhstan, on its part, continues its practical interaction with Afghanistan at regular intervals by providing it with necessary assistance in the form of food, essential goods and medical supplies. I strongly believe that a secure and stable Afghanistan will open up new horizons to expand its trade and economic relations and will contribute to sustainable development in Asia".

In the outcome declaration of the Central Asia – India Summit, it was noted that the leaders of the Central Asian states and India expressed their full support to Kazakhstan in its capacity as the current Chair in CICA, and its initiative to hold the Sixth CICA Summit in 2022 that will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Forum.

India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan are members to CICA; Turkmenistan gained CICA observer status in 2021.

Source: official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan



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CICA Executive Director meets with Ambassador of Turkey



CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Turkey to Kazakhstan Ufuk Ekici discussed activities on further institutionalization of CICA at the meeting held on 28 January 2022 at the CICA Headquarters.

The sides noted that the year of CICA's 30th anniversary would culminate in the Sixth CICA Summit, scheduled for autumn 2022 in the capital of Kazakhstan. It is expected that a key item on the agenda of the Summit will be a decision to launch transformation of the Forum into a full-fledged organization for security in Asia.

The CICA Executive Director emphasized with satisfaction Turkey's active participation in CICA activities, its significant contribution to the implementation of confidence building mea-

sures, in particular under the Plan for the Implementation of Confidence Building Measures for 2021. Turkey, as the Coordinator of confidence building measures in the priority area "New Challenges and Threats", held 5 events, including 3 virtual seminars and 2 offline training courses for law enforcement officers of CICA Member States specializing in countering drug trafficking and organized crime. He also expressed his gratitude for the candidacy to the Council of Eminent Persons – the recently established advisory body of CICA.

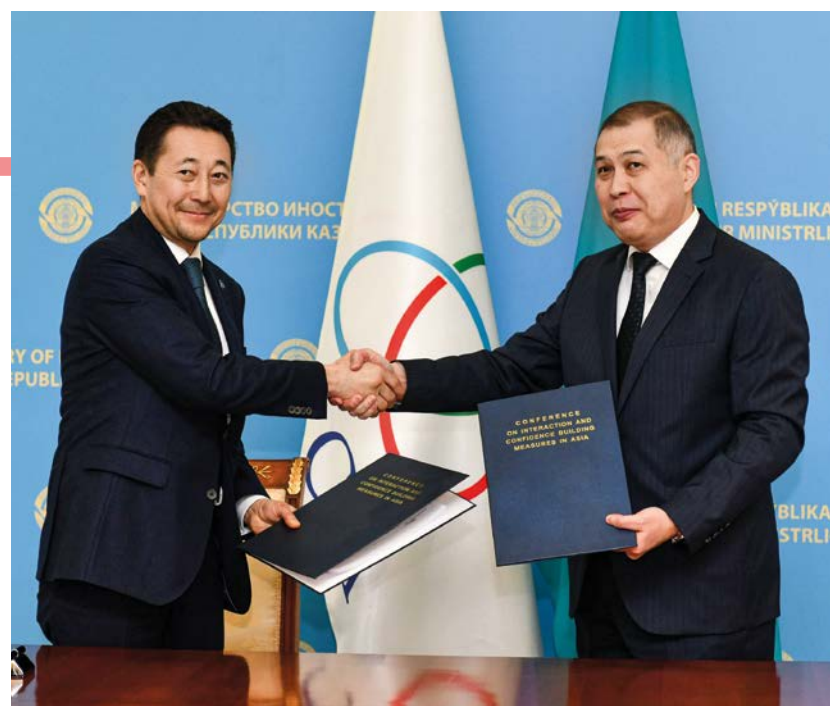
The Executive Director confirmed his intention to take part in the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, which is an effective platform for constructive dialogue about the evolution of international relations in Asia, the growing role of the region in the international arena, and proposed to dedicate part of the discussions to the potential of CICA as a reliable mechanism for regional cooperation in the field of security and development in Asia.



February

Signing ceremony of the CICA Secretariat's Roadmap

First Deputy Foreign Minister Shakhmat Nuryshev and Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat Ambassador Kairat Sarybay participated in the signing ceremony of the CICA Secretariat's Roadmap on 4 February 2022 in Nur-Sultan. The Roadmap of the CICA Secretariat is a regularly updated Action Plan for the Implementation of the CICA Chairmanship's Priorities of Kazakhstan. This is the third Roadmap and it is expected to be updated in mid-2022.



The Roadmap includes such measures as preparation and organization of the Sixth CICA Summit, institutional development, expansion of partnership with international and regional organizations, strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat, as well as enriching the activities of the CICA advisory bodies – the Business and Youth Councils, the Council of Eminent Persons, the Think Tank Forum. As part of the implementation of the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures, it is planned to carry out activities in all five CICA dimensions: military-political, economic, environmental, human and new challenges and threats. In general, the Roadmap is aimed at achieving the strategic goal of the Chairmanship – transformation of CICA into an international organization.

In his speech at the ceremony First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Shakhmat Nuryshev noted that much work needed to be done to prepare and hold the Sixth CICA Summit in autumn 2022. The upcoming Summit is of great political importance, as it will provide an opportunity to take stock of the 30-year development of CICA and launch the process of transforming the Conference into an international organization.



"The Kazakh Chairmanship has set a large-scale task in this significant year to enrich the content of the CICA process, to make every effort to further strengthen the Conference and its consistent development as a full-fledged mechanism for cooperation on security and development in Asia," said Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat Ambassador Kairat Sarybay in his speech. In addition, the Head of the CICA Secretariat expressed the hope that new Member States would join the ranks of CICA, indicating the increasing importance of the Conference's activities.

The Executive Director also expressed gratitude to the Kazakh Chairmanship, represented by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, for the constant support and consistent steps taken to improve the effectiveness of CICA.

It is also planned to hold a number of events this year dedicated to the celebration of the 30th anniversary of CICA.

First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Shakhmat Nuryshev commended the activities of the Secretariat, noting its important role in the incremental development of CICA and enhancing the stature of the Conference as an effective platform for multilateral cooperation in Asia.

At the Sixth CICA Ministerial Meeting, Kazakhstan announced its bid for a new term of CICA Chairmanship for 2022-2024, which was recommended by the CICA Senior Officials Committee for approval at the upcoming Summit.



CICA Executive Director meets the EU Special Representative for Central Asia

At the headquarters of the CICA Secretariat, the Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met with the Special Representative of the European Union for Central Asia Terhi Hakala, who is on a trip to the region, on 4 February 2022.



During the meeting, a wide-ranging exchange of views took place on the role of Asia in the contemporary architecture of international relations. The strategic importance of Central Asia, which is a key region for CICA, was especially noted. It was emphasized that CICA platform provides excellent opportunities for a wide range of countries to discuss and build practical steps for the implementation

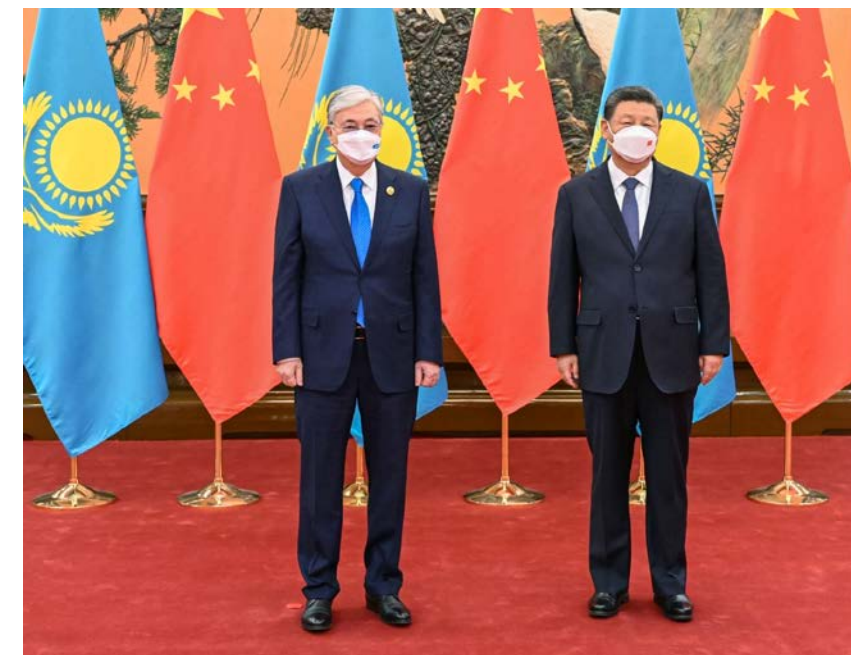
of long-term projects, primarily by enhancing connectivity of the region.

Kairat Sarybay outlined the current tasks before CICA and plans for the Anniversary year. The main event of the 30th Anniversary of the Conference will be the 6th CICA Summit, which will be held in October 2022 in Nur-Sultan.



CICA Chairmanship: President of Kazakhstan visits Beijing

During the meeting of Chairman of the PRC Xi Jinping with President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, held in Beijing on 5 February 2022, the PRC leader commended the activities of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, and the initiatives of the Kazakh Chairmanship aimed at ensuring regional security. Xi Jinping emphasized that the PRC would continue to support Kazakhstan, the current Chairman of CICA, in implementing its priorities. The PRC Chairman also accepted an invitation of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to pay a state visit to Kazakhstan in the autumn.



The People's Republic of China takes an active part in the work of the Conference and has made a valuable contribution to the institutionalization of CICA. During its Chairmanship in CICA from 2014-2018, the PRC initiated the establishment of the Think Tank Forum, that was later transformed into an institute of CICA, and the Forum of Non-Governmental Organizations.

The PRC provides a significant impetus to the development of economic and financial interaction as the coordinator of confidence building measures in such priority areas of CICA as "Agriculture" and "Finance". The CICA Finance Summit, chaired by the PRC, is held on a regular basis. In addition, China is a co-coordinator in five priority areas - "Epidemiological safety, public health and pharmaceuticals", "Development of secure and effective systems of transportation corridors", "Environment protection", "Security and in the use of informa-

tion and communication technologies (ICTs)", and in Human dimension.

The PRC has significantly enhanced the CICA Secretariat's staff capacity by seconding a career diplomat for the post of Deputy Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat.

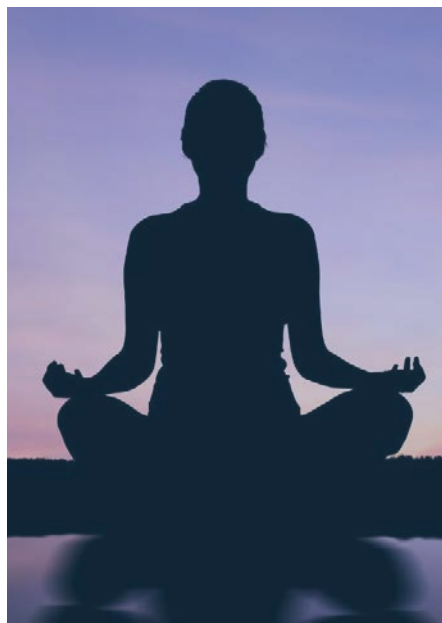
In December 2021, during the Ninth Session of the CICA Think Tank Forum, chaired by the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies, the expert community of the CICA area held a substantive discussion on the prospects of transformation of CICA into a fully-fledged international organization.

The PRC intends to hold five events in the priority areas it coordinates as part of the CICA Plan on Implementation of Confidence Building Measures for 2022.

Source: official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

CICA webinar on traditional and complimentary medicine

The role of Ayurveda, Yoga and other systems of traditional medicine in the fight against COVID-19 was discussed by experts, healthcare representatives of CICA Member States at an online webinar on 8 February 2022. The event was organized by the Republic of India within the framework of CICA and attended by around 50 experts in the field of traditional medicine from India, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Pakistan, Turkey and Thailand.



At the webinar, the Republic of India presented in detail the role of the AYUSH system in public health, introducing such systems as Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Naturopathy and Homeopathy. It was noted that the Government of India had integrated Ayurveda, Yoga and other elements of wellness in its public health system.

According to Special Secretary of the Ministry of AYUSH Mr. Shri P. K. Pathak, in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, AYUSH systems played an important role in the mitigation and treatment of COVID-19 given that Ayurveda and Siddha products had demonstrated their efficacy in the management of disease. Ayurveda medicines were integrated in the National Protocol of India for COVID-19 management. In addition, the role of traditional medicine in achieving health-related Sustainable Development Goals was also highlighted.

In her speech, Deputy Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat Ms. Chi Fang noted that the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic showed the urgent need to ensure coordinated efforts at the regional and global level to contain the spread of coronavirus infection, as well as the need for an integrated approach to ensuring public health and well-being. In 2021, the updated CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures included a new priority area "Epidemiological Safety, Public Health and Pharmaceuticals", which foresees interaction of the Member States in countering new challenges and threats of an epidemiological character.

The participants of the event exchanged experience on current activities in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 and potential cooperation in the field of Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine, discussed ways and opportunities for the development of traditional medicine of CICA Member States.

Statement of CICA Executive Director on voluntary contribution by the State of Qatar

On behalf of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, I express sincere gratitude to the Government of the State of Qatar for the voluntary contribution. It will enable the CICA Secretariat to develop and implement very important projects in the framework of celebration of CICA's 30th Anniversary.



We recognize the support offered by the State of Qatar and appreciate its continuous and consistent efforts to strengthen multilateral cooperation by augmenting the capacity of CICA.

The State of Qatar is a reliable partner in our shared initiative towards peace and security in Asia. We sincerely hope that Qatar, being an active participant of the CICA process, will further contribute to the activities of CICA by supporting projects or/and holding events aimed at strengthening confidence building measures in priority areas of interaction.

This is the first event of such kind and I hope that other CICA Member States will follow the good example of Qa-

tar providing voluntary contributions to the CICA as it is quite important in the year of our 30th Anniversary.

Voluntary contributions demonstrate the effectiveness of CICA in promoting ideas of comprehensive, common, cooperative, and sustainable security architecture in Asia and its activities are of keen interest among the Member States.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to express, once again, our gratitude to Member States for their continued support to the Secretariat for the implementation of useful and constructive activities under the CICA framework.

Meeting of CICA Executive Director with Ambassador of Israel



CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met with Ambassador of the State of Israel to Kazakhstan Edwin Yabo Glusman at CICA headquarters on 11 February 2022.

Ambassador Sarybay briefed the counterpart about the priorities of the current Kazakh Chairmanship and the increasing scope of interaction among the Member States.

The Executive Director presented the conceptual approaches to the transformation of CICA into an international organization for regional security, one of the strategic goals of the Kazakh Chairmanship. It was emphasized that the proposed transformation will be carried out on an incremental and step by step basis, considering the views of all Member States. The unique qual-

ities of the forum - the principle of consensus in decision-making and the principle of voluntary participation in the implementation of confidence building measures - will remain unchanged.

The interlocutors exchanged views on the situation in the Middle East. The Israeli diplomat noted that the CICA serves as an effective platform for dialogue and practical interaction on a wide range of security issues. Edwin Yabo Glusman said that Israel will continue close cooperation within the framework of CICA.



Prime Minister of Kazakhstan receives CICA Executive Director

Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan Alikhan Smailov received CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, who informed the Prime Minister on implementation of the priorities of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in CICA on 15 February 2022.



At the meeting, special attention was paid to the preparation and holding of the Sixth CICA Summit, which is scheduled for 12-13 October 2022 in Nur-Sultan. The meeting of the heads of state is particularly important since it will take place in the anniversary year of CICA and will take stock of the 30 years of its development. In addition, it is expected to launch the process of gradual transformation of the Conference into an international organization for regional security and cooperation in Asia.

Kairat Sarybay also drew attention to the increasing dynamics of interaction among the Member States in the economic dimension. The CICA Business Council was also noted, as it served as an important platform for interaction of the CICA business communities and events to bolster cooperation in the development of small and medium-sized businesses, digitalization of economies and promotion of

economic connectivity in the region. Another CICA mechanism, the Business Forum, also serves to increase economic cooperation. This year, the meetings of the CICA Business Council and Business Forum will be held on 27-29 June within the framework of the international conference "Astana Financial Days" under the auspices of the Astana International Financial Centre.

In addition, the Head of the CICA Secretariat shared plans for holding the Fifth Meeting of the CICA Youth Council. The Youth Council is an advisory body responsible for coordinating the activities of its member youth organizations and associations of the CICA Member States. The agenda of the Fifth Meeting of the Youth Council is expected to focus on the development and promotion of the institution of volunteering, the development of the institution of young parliamentarians, as well as the exchange of in-

formation and experience on student scholarship programs in the CICA Member States.

In addition, this year the Secretariat plans to implement a number of activities dedicated to the celebration of CICA's 30th anniversary.

Prime Minister Alikhan Smailov noted that the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan would provide full support to initiatives implemented within Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in CICA and the activities of its institutions, such as the Business Council, the Business Forum and the Youth Council.

In conclusion, the Head of the CICA Secretariat thanked the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the constant and comprehensive support to the activities of the CICA Secretariat as Chairman-in-Office.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan visits the CICA headquarters



Learning about activities of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and discussing joint actions on the implementation of projects dedicated to the 30th anniversary of CICA became the main purpose of the visit of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Roman Vassilenko to the CICA headquarters on 16 February 2022.

The staff members of the CICA Secretariat headed by Executive Director Kairat Sarybay informed the distinguished guest about the projects dedicated to the celebration of the anniversary date.



In particular, they focused on the commemorative book, which is designed to comprehensively reflect the evolution of the Forum and the interaction of Member States in the implementation of confidence building measures; on the collection of fairy tales of Asian nations from the CICA region, aimed at presenting the national heritage of peoples and respect for cultural values, and at stimulating tolerance and trust among young readers; as well as on the tourist guide to ecodestinations of the CICA region, designed to develop ecotourism.



In addition, it is planned to release a documentary about CICA, which will provide the viewer with the history of the Forum, the important stages of its development and the work done by the Conference in strengthening peace and security. A CICA photo exhibition will also be organized to show historical photographs and documents covering key moments of the 30-year track of evolution.

In order to raise visibility of CICA, there are plans to organize a bike ride and a football tournament, as well as to produce an anniversary medal, commemorative coins and postage stamps.

The parties agreed to continue working in the information field for broad coverage of CICA activities in the year of the 30th anniversary of the Forum.

Consultations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel



At the consultations, held in the Headquarters of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the framework of the visit of CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay on 21 February 2022, Israel was broadly briefed on the concept of the transformation of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) into a full-fledged international organization.

Alternate Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel Yair Lapid expressed commitment to further active participation of Israel in CICA process and stressed the “need for keeping CICA professional and effective” at the meeting with CICA Executive Director. Ambassador Sarybay expressed appreciation for Israel’s constant support and proactive role in implementation of CICA confidence building measures.

Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel Ambassador Alon Ushpiz stressed the unique nature of CICA based on its inclusiveness and expressed Israel’s readiness to contribute to enhancing practical cooperation within the Forum. While briefing on the concept of transformation CICA Executive Director noted that idea to upgrade CICA into full-fledged organization was put forward by the Founder of CICA, First President Nursultan Nazarbayev at the commemorative 20th anniversary in 2012. Executive Director outlined that consistent promotion of the initiative to transform the CICA is important for ensuring regional peace and security and shall strengthen the role of Asian states in the global security architecture. Today CICA already possesses all the essential features of international organization, including foundational documents, decision making and working bodies, operational budget and permanent Secretariat. Interlocutors agreed that cornerstone principles of CICA – consensus based decision-making and voluntary participation – should be preserved.

Minister of Tourism of Israel Yoel Razvozov discussed the role of people-to-people contacts in strengthening confidence and economic cooperation among Member States, including the development of ecological tourism destinations of CICA region.



At the meetings with Senior Foreign Policy Advisor of the President of Israel Ambassador Zvi Vapni and Deputy Head of Israel National Security Council for Foreign Policy Avivit Bar-Ilan Ambassador Sarybay elaborated on what is CICA today, its related evolution with growing role of Asia

in international affairs. Interlocutors shared views on the role of Israel in CICA and further institutionalization of the Forum.

Kazakhstan was elected as the Chairman of the CICA in 2020. One of the strategic goals of Kazakhstan’s Chairmanship is transformation of the forum into a fully-fledged international organization for regional security and cooperation in Asia. The visit of the Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay is taking place within the framework of the discussions, initiated by the Chairmanship, on the concept paper of transformation of CICA.

Visit of CICA Executive Director to Palestine

Kazakhstan Chairmanship priorities and the main topics on the agenda of upcoming milestone Sixth CICA Summit were discussed in Ramallah during the visit of the Executive Director of Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Ambassador Kairat Sarybay to Palestine on 22 February 2022.



CICA Executive Director thoroughly briefed Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Palestine Dr. Riad Malki on the concept of transformation of CICA – main priority of Kazakhstan Chairmanship. Referring to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Ambassador Sarybay noted that transformation process should be based on a gradual, consistent and incremental approach with preserving CICA’s cornerstone principles.

Minister Riad Malki expressed readiness to endorse and contribute to increase the effectiveness and international competitiveness of the forum and underlined that “CICA is matured enough to take up new challenges”. Minister stressed that international community has to think wisely and move forward to ensure peace, security and stability in the world. Excellency Malki informed that Palestine will consider thoroughly the nomination of Palestinian candidate to the CICA Council of Eminent Persons.

Outlining that Asia is becoming one of the main driving forces in global development of the 21st century, interlocutors agreed that Asia needs serious look into security issues and has to create a common and indivisible security space, anchored by a reliable system of multilateral cooperation institutions, one of which is CICA.

Ambassador Sarybay informed about the preparations to the Sixth CICA Summit, which will be held on 12-13 October 2022, and expressed Chairmanship’s desire to welcome Palestinian delegation at the highest level in Nur-Sultan.

During the visit CICA delegation laid wreath of flowers at the shrine of the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and toured to the Museum of “Yasser Arafat”.

Kazakhstan was elected as the Chairman of the CICA in 2020. One of the strategic goals of Kazakhstan’s Chairmanship is transformation of the forum into a fully-fledged international organization for regional security and cooperation in Asia. The visit of the Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay is taking place within the framework of preparations to the Sixth CICA Summit.





CICA Executive Director's visit to Amman

Updating Jordanian authorities on strategic goals of the forthcoming Sixth CICA Summit of Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) was the main aim of CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay's visit to Amman on 23 February 2022.

During the visit Mr. Kairat Sarybay had a meeting with H.E. Mr. Ayman Hussein Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, where interlocutors discussed main features of outcome documents of the upcoming Sixth CICA Summit. Jordanian Foreign Minister reiterated the full support for furthering the CICA process which is contributing for peace and stability in the region and noted that

Jordan will reflect this position in tangible and practical ways of cooperation.

CICA Executive Director expressed appreciation to Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan for strong commitment to CICA goals and objectives as well as for its invaluable support to Kazakhstan's Chairmanship priorities.

The Executive Director of CICA also met with Ambassador Adly Al-Khalidi,

Director of Asia and Oceania Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, where he elaborated on main aspects of the concept of transformation of CICA into international organization. Ambassador Kairat Sarybay outlined that today CICA has acquired all necessary features of the international organization, including foundational documents, decision-making and working bodies, operational budget and a per-

manent Secretariat. The proposed transformation will highlight the new role of Asia in global affairs. The parties agreed that this process should be smooth and gradual, and based on the CICA's cornerstone principles.

Adly Al-Khalidi stressed that Jordan supports further institutionalization of CICA and is ready to contribute to this way forward.

Dean of the Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II of the School of International Studies Professor Faisal Odeh Al-Rfouh underlined the role of CICA as a promising forum. Professor Al-Rfouh expressed readiness to promote the idea of CICA and suggested developing cooperation in the field of education through organizing conferences or undertaking joint research on regional security topics. Interlocutors agreed to consider organizing youth exchange programs as well.

Executive Director noted that newly established CICA Think Tanks Forum can be a good ground for analytical and research cooperation, and also shared his views on possible interaction within the frameworks of CICA NGO Forum and the CICA Youth Council. The head of the CICA Secretariat also shared plans for holding the Fifth Meeting of the CICA Youth Council, the agenda of which is expected to focus on the development and promotion of the institution of volunteering, the development of the institution of young parliamentarians, as well as the exchange of information and experience on student scholarship programs in the CICA Member States.

Kazakhstan was elected as the Chairman of the CICA in 2020. The transformation of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia into the full-fledged international organisation for security and cooperation in Asia is the strategic goal of the Kazakhstan's Chairmanship. The visit of CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay is taking place within the framework of preparations to the Sixth CICA Summit.



Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and Turkey



In the Joint Statement of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Republic of Turkey signed on 24 February 2022 at the Seventh Meeting of the Joint Strategic Planning Group, the parties highlighted the importance of deepening cooperation within international and regional organizations, including within CICA.

The sides noted that over the 30-year period of its history of development the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia had contributed to strengthening security and cooperation in Asia and expressed their support for the transformation of CICA into a full-fledged international organization.

On behalf of Kazakhstan, the Statement was signed by Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Foreign Affairs Mukhtar Tileuberdi, on behalf of Turkey – Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu.

Source: Official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan



March

CICA Chairmanship - Kazakhstan marks its 30th Anniversary of membership in the United Nations

The Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) participated in the event, dedicated to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of Kazakhstan's membership in the United Nations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the current Kazakh CICA Chairmanship, on 2 March 2022.



Addressing the diplomatic corps and distinguished guests of the event, CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay noted: "It is symbolic that one of the main foreign policy initiatives of the Republic of Kazakhstan, aimed at ensuring peace and security, has its origin in the United Nations. On 5 October 1992 the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in his very first statement from the rostrum of 47th session of the United Nations General Assembly put forward an initiative for convening the CICA".

It was expressed that CICA fully aligns and supports the call of the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to enhance partnerships across all levels for ensuring peace and security in a complex and rapidly changing world, which requires deeper cooperation with regional organizations.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator for Kazakhstan Michaela Friberg-Storey underscored the multilateral initiatives of the Republic of Kazakhstan based on a pragmatic and pro-active foreign policy and its contribution in securing global and regional peace and stability. She also outlined the importance of CICA and its relevance as an effective multilateral mechanism for security and development in Asia.

All distinguished speakers of the event agreed that current challenges in the world has to be addressed through building dialogue and mutual trust, closer partnership and uniting the synergy of efforts of the international community.



The Fifth Plenary Session of the CICA Business Council and the Seventh CICA Business Forum will be held on 27 June 2022 at the Astana International Financial Centre, located in the EXPO complex in the capital of Kazakhstan.

This proposal of Kazakhstan in capacity of the CICA Chairman was unanimously approved by the Deputy Chairmen of the Board of the Business Council from Thailand, Turkey and Russia.

CICA Executive Director meets with the newly appointed Chairman of the Board of the CICA Business Council

Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat Ambassador Kairat Sarybay communicated this decision to the newly appointed Chairman of the Board of the CICA Business Council – Chairman of the Presidium of the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan "Atameken" Raimbek Batalov at a meeting held on 10 March 2022.

It was decided that the Plenary Session of the Business Council, to be held in the morning, would discuss the issues of digitalization of business processes. It was noted that digitalization was an effective way to continue business in the pandemic and for unshadowing small and medium-sized enterprises, which contributes to sustainable economic growth. In the afternoon, the CICA Business Forum will continue to discuss this topical issue and consider successful start-up projects, implemented in CICA Member States, as well as provide a platform for presentations on food security in a pandemic.

Organizational support for the CICA events would be provided by the Astana International Financial Centre, the Ministry of Digital Development, Innovations and Aerospace Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other state bodies of Kazakhstan.

The CICA Business Council, established at the initiative of Russia, is an advisory body of CICA, to which each of the 27 Member States delegates three representatives, two of whom represent small and medium-sized enterprises, and the third – a public authority that regulates the activities of SMEs. Previous Business Council sessions were held in China, Kazakhstan and Russia.

The CICA Business Forum, established at the initiative of Thailand, is a platform for discussing topical issues of the CICA business community. Previously, Business Forums were held in Thailand, Turkey, Russia, China and Kazakhstan.

CICA attends the International Conference for the Implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

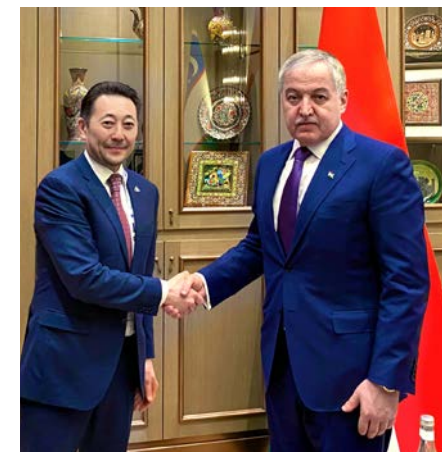
The delegation of the CICA Secretariat, headed by the Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, participated in the High-Level International Conference titled “Regional cooperation of Central Asian countries within the framework of the Joint Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy”, held in Tashkent on 3-4 March 2022.



The officers and experts of the Secretariat had a good opportunity to scrutinize the experience of strengthening the collective regional capacity in the field of preventing and combating terrorism under the leadership of the UN and its Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UN GCTS). The relevant practices of the Central Asian countries will certainly be in demand within the broader framework of CICA.

In this context, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay held quite productive meetings with Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism Vladimir Voronkov and United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime Regional Representative to Central Asia Ashita Mittal. Agreements were reached on certain directions and specific areas of further interaction between CICA and these UN structures, whose expertise can be used in the course of implementation of the relevant confidence building measures and, more importantly, in the development of its own CICA Action Plan for the Implementation of the UN GCTS.

The presentation of the Secretariat's Expert on New Challenges and Threats Ambassador Adel Adaileh during one of the thematic sessions of the Conference received good feedback. Ambassador Adel Adaileh emphasized the strong commitment of the CICA Member States to preventing and combating terrorism, which was reflected in the updated Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures of 2021. He also briefed the panel participants on some projects in this direction, implemented recently within the framework of CICA.



On the sidelines of the Conference, Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay held detailed negotiations with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhridin, as well as with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan Azizbek Madmarov and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Vepa Hajiev. Representatives of the Central Asian countries expressed their full support for further strengthening of CICA and transformation of the forum into a full-fledged international organization, as well as noted the key importance of the upcoming Sixth CICA Summit, to be held on 12-13 October 2022 in Nur-Sultan.



CICA participation in the Second Antalya Diplomacy Forum



At the invitation of Foreign Minister of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay attended the Second Antalya Diplomacy Forum on 11-13 March 2022 in Antalya. The event under the theme of “Recoding Diplomacy” brought together political leaders, diplomats, opinion makers to facilitate debates on global and regional issues, including the growing role of Asia and its driving force in the global affairs.

Addressing the “Asia anew: For a sustainable regional growth”, along with high-ranking politicians and prominent experts, CICA Executive Director stressed that “one of the reasons for the unfolding geopolitical situation lies in the rejection of multilateralism as a fundamental concept of international relations. Recipe for healing international relations lies in return to multilateralism pursuing the goal of balanced solutions acceptable to all concerned parties which will finally contribute to sustainable peace and security.”

Ambassador Sarybay underscored that cultivating connectivity through promotion of investment into transport corridors, international trade, conducive measures aiming at free flow of capital, labor and technologies seems as an effective approaches to contribute to strengthen sustainable economic growth in Asia and globally.

On the margins of the ADF CICA Executive Director had bilateral meetings with Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Abdul Momen and Deputy Prime-Minister-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq Fuad Hussein and the host - Foreign Minister of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. CICA Member States’ ministers were briefed on main aspects of the concept of transformation of CICA into a full-fledged international organization and preparations to the milestone Sixth CICA Summit to be held on 12-13 October 2022. Ambassador Sarybay expressed appreciation for strong commitment to CICA goals and objectives as well as for invaluable support to Kazakhstan’s Chairmanship priorities.



CICA Executive Director had an in-depth conversation with the Secretary General of Economic Cooperation Organisation Khusrav Noziri on strengthening partnership between ECO and CICA, specially on connectivity, and presented the invitation of Kazakh Chairmanship to the Sixth CICA Summit.

Also at outreach meeting the head of the Secretariat introduced CICA, its activities, main principles and future plans to Foreign Minister of Nepal Narayan Khadka and discussed potential interaction opportunities for mutual benefits of two organisations with Secretary General of Asia Cooperation Dialogue, Pornchai Danvivathana.

Second year in a row CICA actively participates in Antalya Diplomacy Forum and promotes ideas of peace, security and stability in Asia and beyond.



Consultations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow

While visiting Moscow, CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay had an extensive meeting with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Igor Morgulov and thoroughly discussed the relevant issues of the CICA agenda with Director of the Asian and Pacific Cooperation Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry Alexey Ovchinnikov.



The Executive Director provided detailed information on advancing CICA priorities, including the concept of transforming CICA into an international organization and substantive preparations for the Sixth CICA Summit to be held in Nur-Sultan on 12-13 October 2022.

Ambassador Sarybay stated that the strategic goal of the Kazakh Chairmanship was to strengthen CICA in the context of Asia's growing global role and transition to new levels of cooperation among the Member States. The CICA Executive Director highlighted key principles of the proposed transformation based on gradual and consistent approach, and preservation of the goals and fundamental agreements within CICA. The Sixth CICA Summit to be held in the year that marks the initiative's 30th anniversary is expected to implement the political will of the heads of state and government and launch a historical transformation.

The CICA Executive Director emphasized the relevance and the universal nature of the fundamental principles guiding the relations among the CICA Member States and reflecting the principles of the UN Charter. He underlined that CICA's commitment to these principles and its broad geography made it an even more needed platform for the Member States today.

Deputy Minister Morgulov stressed that the world has entered a new era and all global processes have undergone tectonic shifts. In this regard, the Russian side is currently analyzing ways to transform CICA into an international organization that would meet the interests of its Member States under new circumstances. The meeting participants expressed the importance of strengthening the or-

ganization's capacity to promote sustainable connectivity between Europe and Asia and to focus on consensus areas of practical interest.

During the consultations with Director of the APCD of the Russian Foreign Ministry Ovchinnikov, Ambassador Sarybay informed about the preparation for the meeting of the Senior Officials Committee that will take place on 30 March 2022, the work of the Chairmanship and the Secretariat on other documents, including the draft Regulations of the CICA Fund, the CICA Plan of Action for Implementation of UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy, as well as the CICA institutions: the Business Council, Youth Council, Think Tank Forum, and the status of the formation of the newly established Council of Eminent Persons.

The meetings emphasized that the new geopolitical reality would have a serious impact on international and regional structures, including those in Asia. In this context, the participants noted the importance of maintaining multilateralism to ensure dialogue and cooperation not only in the CICA area, but also in Greater Eurasia, the demand for CICA's comparative advantages in the current international environment, and its expedient transformation in the new reality.

During his visit, the CICA Executive Director met with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Mikhail Bogdanov and discussed the current situation in Southwest Asia, as well as highlighted CICA's potential to implement a number of peace initiatives aimed at enhancing regional security and stability.

CICA Executive Director meets Ambassador of Egypt



The CICA Executive Director Ambassador Kairat Sarybay received the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mrs Manal Yehia El Shinnawi, at the Secretariat, on 18 March 2022.

During the meeting, Ambassador Sarybay highlighted on various aspects of activities, that CICA Secretariat has been undertaking according to the updated CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures. He elaborated the process of transformation of CICA into a full-fledged international organization. He also underscored the need for setting up of CICA Fund for the benefit of CICA Member States. Ambassador Sarybay briefed about the activities planned for the celebration of 30th Anniversary year of the CICA. He informed the Egyptian Ambassador about the upcoming meeting of the Senior Officials Committee and Sixth CICA Summit. Both also discussed the preparatory activities to be organized on the eve of Sixth CICA Summit.

Egyptian Ambassador appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat and assured full support for the strengthening of the CICA.

Both recognized the close cooperation between CICA and the Arab Republic of Egypt and agreed to further enhance the cooperation, particularly in the areas of connectivity and tourism.

CICA Executive Director meets with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand

Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat Kairat Sarybay visited Bangkok on March 28 and met with Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand Vijavat Isarabhakdi.

At the meeting the CICA Executive Director handed over the invitation of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev addressed to Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand Prayut Chan-o-cha for the Sixth CICA Summit to be held on October 12-13 in Nur-Sultan.

Ambassador Sarybay expressed gratitude to Thailand for its active participation in the Conference. In 2022, Thailand plans to hold workshops for experts from CICA countries on sufficiency economy in microfinance for SMEs development, as well as on sustainable waste management in a circular economy.

The Executive Director gave Vice Minister Isarabhakdi a detailed account of the current CICA objectives and the priorities of the Kazakh Chairmanship, focusing separately on the transformation of the Conference into a full-fledged international organization. The officials agreed that CICA, over 30 years of its development, has become mature and efficient enough to launch this process.

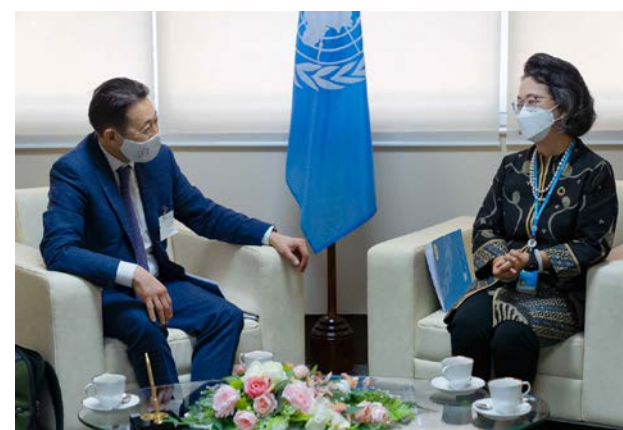
The Vice-Minister welcomed Nur-Sultan's constructive role in advancing CICA processes and consolidating the efforts of its Member States. He confirmed Bangkok's willingness to continue to oversee the implementation of confidence-building measures in the areas of sustainable development and small and medium enterprises, as well as to increase the practical interaction in other priority areas of cooperation.



During the visit of Executive Director of the CICA Secretariat Kairat Sarybay to Thailand on March 28, he participated in the Ninth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development hosted by ESCAP in Bangkok and addressed the Conference participants, as well as had a meeting with ESCAP Executive Secretary Armida Alisjahbana.



CICA attends the ninth session of Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development



In his address to the Forum, Ambassador Sarybay highlighted comparative advantages of CICA as an effective mechanism for comprehensive regional cooperation and consolidation of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement the 2030 Agenda in Asia.

Delegations from a number of CICA Member Countries made strong statements calling for more collective work to narrow development gaps, ensure energy and food se-

curity, protect the environment, promote digitalization and sustainable funding. Ambassador Sarybay noted as well that CICA has all the necessary tools to add value to meet the set objectives.

The meeting with the ESCAP Executive Secretary was very useful and meaningful. Ambassador Sarybay briefed Ms. Alisjahbana at length about the current processes and objectives of CICA, the prospects of its transformation into an international organization, and proposed to consider joint projects with ESCAP and mutual expert support. She welcomed the commitment of the CICA Member States to implement the 2030 Agenda and noted the potential of the Conference in building confidence among its participants.

Moreover, the Executive Director was informed about the activity of the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of the ESCAP Secretariat. Its Director Rupa Chanda presented a number of the Commission's projects for Central Asia, a key region in the CICA space. Agreements were reached to explore opportunities for mutual cooperation on trade, connectivity, and digitalization, including in the context of the upcoming CICA Business Council and Business Forum meetings on June 27.

Senior Officials Committee Meeting

At the initiative of the Kazakh Chairmanship, the meeting of the Senior Officials Committee (SOC) of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) was held in a hybrid format on 30 March 2022 in Nur-Sultan. The meeting was chaired by the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Shakhmat Nuryshev.

The SOC held a thematic discussion on the concept of transformation of CICA into an international organization for regional security and cooperation in Asia. The initiative to transform the CICA forum, currently uniting 27 Asian nations, into a full-fledged international organization is the strategic goal of the Kazakh Chairmanship. It is aimed at strengthening the global role of Asia and raising cooperation among CICA Member States to a new level through further institutionalization of the CICA platform. In 2021 the Chairmanship developed initial conceptual approaches to transformation reflecting its vision of the reasons, goals and objectives of the proposed transformation process, which were discussed and broadly supported by CICA Member States.

On this basis, the Chairmanship has produced a comprehensive and action-oriented concept of transformation, which was the main subject of discussion at this SOC meeting. The concept envisages the launch of the transformation process at the Sixth CICA Summit to be held in Nur-Sultan

in 2022 – the 30th anniversary year of CICA. Presenting the Chairmanship's concept, the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Shakhmat Nuryshev emphasized that ongoing unprecedented developments in the global security system yet again demonstrate that the principle of multilateralism is indispensable for maintaining international peace and security. And in that context, the CICA forum becomes as relevant as never before.

Mr. Nuryshev underlined comparative advantages of CICA, such as its broad membership and comprehensive agenda. Another important added value of CICA is its capacity to promote connectivity across the Asian continent, including through strengthening economic, technological, human, cultural and other links between Asian nations and beyond. "The main objective of CICA is building consensus-based multilateral approaches to peace and security", - stressed Mr. Nuryshev and stated that: "CICA provides a unique multilateral platform for pan-Asian dialogue".



In view of the Kazakh CICA Chairmanship, expression of the political will at the level of Heads of State or Government to start gradual transformation of the forum would give new impetus to the CICA process. The proposed transformation process would be based on gradual and consistent approach, while preserving all earlier agreed fundamental principles and objectives of CICA.

During the in-depth and lively discussion at the SOC, general support was expressed to proposals of the Chairmanship on transformation and to the launch of the gradual transformation process at the forthcoming Sixth CICA Summit on 12-13 October 2022. The participants exchanged views and ideas and made valuable proposals on further institutional development of CICA. The most broadly shared opinion was that transformation of CICA into a full-fledged organization is needed for enhancing the efficiency of the forum. It was also noted at the SOC that CICA has already acquired all the necessary attributes of an international organization, de-facto functions as such, and is therefore ready for smooth upgrade. The SOC will continue discussing transformation.

The SOC was informed by the Chair about current preparations to the upcoming Summit and other issues on CICA agenda, such as ongoing work on establishing a CICA Fund - an additional voluntary funding mechanism to support implementation of CICA activities. An Experts Meeting will be convened in April 2022 to develop regulations of the Fund and discuss issues related to its functions, powers, financial resources, organization and operations.

The SOC Chair also updated the meeting on the ongoing process of forming the CICA Council of Eminent Persons. This new CICA institution was established by the Sixth CICA Ministerial Meeting in October 2021. Thereafter, the candidature of the Founder of CICA - First President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev was approved by all Member States as Head of the Council.

The CICA Executive Director, Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, briefed the SOC on current CICA activities, including on the status of developing and updating concept papers on implementation of CICA confidence building measures (CBMs) and related action plans. In light of the latest update of

the CICA Catalogue of CBMs by the Ministerial Meeting in October 2021 and addition of new areas of cooperation, the Head of the Secretariat underscored the importance of practical implementation of CBMs - CICA's core activity, in accordance with most up to date concepts and action plans.

Ambassador Kairat Sarybay also briefed about a wide range of Secretariat activities and events to mark the 30th anniversary of CICA in 2022, and presented the annual financial report for 2021.

The Senior Officials Committee is the basic decision-making body of CICA for implementation of agreements and decisions of the Summit and the Ministerial Meeting. It consists of representatives of Member States and regularly holds its meetings. Its main responsibilities include taking decisions on key issues concerning development of interaction within CICA, as well as administrative and financial issues of the Secretariat's activities and all issues submitted to it by the Special Working Group.

Interview of CICA Executive Director to the "The Korea Herald" newspaper

The head of a pan-Asian peace and security organization expressed its support for cooperation with Korea in key areas and asked it to send diplomats to help with regional efforts for peace and stability.

The Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures (CICA) is committed to supporting Korea in priority areas of energy security and information technology, CICA Executive Director Kairat Sarybay told The Korea Herald Thursday.

In an online interview Sarybay referred to online seminar on "cooperation in the area of hydrogen energy" hosted by Korea in 2021.

CICA is an intergovernmental forum on maintaining peace, security and stability in Asia based on consensus. It has 27 Member States and 9 Observer States stretching from the Pacific to the Mediterranean, and from the Urals to the Indian Ocean, creating the vast geographical area.

The initiative was put forward by the First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, at the 47th session of the United Nations General Assembly on Oct. 5, 1992.

CICA Member States affirm commitment to the UN Charter and believe that peace and security in Asia can be achieved through dialogue and cooperation leading to a common indivisible area of security in Asia where all states co-exist peacefully and their peoples live in peace, freedom and prosperity.

The Executive Director introduced Kazakhstan's facilitation of the new premises of the CICA Secretariat in a modern building called Expo to increase international staff capacity. He also invited Korea, an active member of CICA and coordinator, along with other member states to second diplomats for fair and balanced representation at the CICA Headquarters.

"At present, we have diplomats seconded by China, India, Kazakhstan and the Russia who are working for the Secretariat," he said.

CICA's new office was inaugurated in October in Nur-Sultan within the framework of the Sixth Ministerial Meeting.

Sarybay applauded the Korean government for systemic financial contributions made to the budget of the CICA Secretariat, highlighting that Kazakhstan plans to transform CICA, strengthen its capacity, employ more experts and consultants and offer necessary training to the CICA Secretariat.

He hoped that the main part of CICA's budget, currently supported through Kazakhstan and voluntary contributions from Member States would be increased.



According to Sarybay, CICA's agenda is based on confidence-building measures in military-political, economic, environmental, human dimensions observing new challenges and threats, and The Council of Eminent Persons and the Think Tank Forum adopted during Ministerial Meeting would offer analytical support in new priority areas of epidemiological safety, public health, pharmaceuticals, and the security and use of information and communication technologies.

Sarybay stressed that Kazakhstan, as chair of CICA is to transform CICA into a full-fledged international organization acknowledging CICA's increasing relevance and strategic importance due to Asia's geopolitics.

"Kazakhstan adhered to multilateral diplomacy and proposed a number of international initiatives aimed at ensuring peace and stability in Asia and in the world," he said, citing CICA, the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, the continued absence of nuclear weapons in the Central Asian region and closure of the nuclear test site in Semipalatinsk and the Iran Nuclear Talks hosted by Kazakhstan.

Discussing CICA Senior Officials Committee meeting in Dec. 2021, Sarybay underlined Kazakhstan's intention to transform CICA into an international organization through consultations and negotiations with member states under bilateral and multilateral frameworks.

However, Sarybay held the decision would depend upon the political will of Member States hoping due consideration in due course.

Recalling Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's transformation proposal of developing CICA into a fully-fledged security system capable of carrying out international mediation and the course of "a New Asia in a New World" at the Sixth Meeting of CICA Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Sarybay affirmed that proposed transformation would reflect the Member States' commitment to creating a genuinely common, indivisible and comprehensive security area in the largest continent, once proclaimed by all Member States in the Almaty Act of 2002.

The most important fundamental document of the CICA, the Almaty

Act, was adopted at the first Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the CICA in 2002. That document now acts as the Charter of the forum.

Mentioning the challenges faced by CICA, the Executive Director stated that CICA unites diverse regions of Asia with different resonance and repercussion compared to other Member States having diverging interests.

"The principle of consensus is a very important value of CICA which provides equality of Member States in decision-making," he said, underlining CICA's role as a dialogue platform for the adoption of decisions on security issues based on consensus.

CICA will mark its 30th anniversary in 2022. The 6th CICA Summit on Oct. 12-13 is the main event scheduled, but CICA will also organize a Financial Summit in China, working sessions of the Business Council and Youth Council, two interactive forums on human rights in Uzbekistan, the first session of the Think Tank Forum, expert meetings and training courses, Sarybay said.

By Sanjay Kumar

NUR-SULTAN

VISIT
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HEART OF THE GREAT STEPPE

CONTACTS

INVESTMENTS

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