



**SECRETARIAT OF THE CONFERENCE ON INTERACTION
AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES IN ASIA**

**СЕКРЕТАРИАТ СОВЕЩАНИЯ ПО ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЮ
И МЕРАМ ДОВЕРИЯ В АЗИИ**

SECRETARY GENERAL

No. OBSER/77

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Excellency,

With reference to your letter of 20 December 2022, below is the contribution of the Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) to potential recommendations for a “New Agenda for Peace”.

The 1992 “Agenda for Peace” report of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping provided comprehensive analysis and recommendations on strengthening and improving the United Nations responses to post-Cold War challenges. No doubt, this report made significant contribution to the understanding of peace at the time.

Today, the world requires immediate collective action to strengthen multilateralism and adapt it to the new challenges of the twenty-first century. As a result, I wholeheartedly support the initiative of UN Secretary-General António Guterres to develop a “New Agenda for Peace”, which could be an opportunity to rebalance global approaches to conflict prevention and resolution.

The goal of CICA, currently comprising of 28 Member States, is to provide an effective pan-Asian platform for multilateral cooperation, preventive diplomacy and peaceful settlement of disputes. We achieve this by expanding the common ground between our Member States for intra-regional interaction within a comprehensive agenda aimed at promoting peace, security and

prosperity. This interaction helps to foster trust, and trust is the most important factor in facilitating cooperation.

Based on CICA's thirty years-long experience here are some ideas for the "New Agenda for Peace", that we at the CICA Secretariat believe should be prioritized - this is indeed a non-exhaustive list of potential issues to focus on.

1) Comprehensive and holistic approach to security is key, both in terms of geography and nature of security issues: the world should recognize that our security is common, comprehensive, cooperative, sustainable, indivisible and equal¹. Security challenges are complex, multidimensional and interrelated, and therefore require coordinated responses from all States at the global and regional levels.

2) As the world's largest region, Asia is rapidly becoming the main global platform for international relations of the 21st century, in terms of both economic capacity and its influence on world politics. With its vast human, industrial and natural resources, as well as its rich cultural diversity and heritage, Asia is becoming the centre of global processes. At this end, the role of Asia in contributing to global peace and security should be well reflected in the "New Agenda for Peace";

3) Regional organizations are key players in implementing global goals, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and promoting peace, justice and economic growth, as they have ample expertise on various specific issues. This requires synergy between the regional and international organizations in making the best use of these experiences and potential. It is important to foster closer cooperation and knowledge-sharing among regional organizations, which can render a great service to modern peacekeeping diplomacy;

We need to further strengthen regional multilateral platforms which demonstrated their relevance in establishing security architecture, and support their incremental development. CICA is one of those. Predominantly created to building confidence and trust across the Asian continent, today CICA has evolved into a mature multilateral structure aimed at ensuring peace, security

¹ Taking full account of varying views on and understanding of these features of security.

and stability in the region. CICA Member States has recently started a journey towards transforming CICA into a full-fledged regional international organization. This is an effort to further consolidate their cooperation and strengthen CICA's contribution to global peace and security. This endeavour deserves strong support and encouragement within the Asian continent, at the global level and by the UN family.

4) CICA is open for accession of other Asian nations. Enhancing the geographical scope of this largest pan-Asian organization would further strengthen and multiply contribution of its individual Members not only to regional peace but to the global agenda. In practical terms, more Asian countries could and are welcome to join CICA Members in voluntary implementation of CICA confidence building measures. Their participation in CICA mechanisms of cooperation, such as the CICA Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures with five broad dimensions (military-political, new challenges and threats, economic, environmental and human dimension) would significantly contribute to the promotion of their national, regional and global priorities aimed at peace and security.

5) It is essential to recognize the strategic importance of connectivity for trade and development, especially for land-locked countries. CICA pays particular attention to further development of transport corridors, including multimodal ones, and logistics centres, and promoting digitalization of transportation for full utilization of their potential. This is particularly important and timely in light of the current geopolitical situation and the appearance of new gaps and dividing lines across the globe;

6) Promoting the development and expansion of economic cooperation in the Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) sphere, as well as establishing direct ties and initiating dialogue between representatives of the private sector and state bodies, is critical for all-around beneficial economic cooperation. The active participation of CICA Member States in the priority area of SMEs development identified the importance of this issue and encouraged the CICA Business Council and Business Forum to focus on it in 2022. This platform allowed CICA Member States to share their experiences in order to promote the development of economic cooperation in the field of SME in mutually beneficial areas, as well as the creation of a favorable environment.

7) Being a strong supporter of anti-terrorism efforts, CICA at its Sixth Summit on 12-13 October 2022 in Astana adopted the CICA Plan of Action on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which has become a historic achievement and is aimed at implementing the UN Strategy on a voluntary basis in the CICA region. In this context, we can unite our efforts to ensure practical implementation of this global instrument in the region and beyond;

8) Leaders of the CICA Member States at the Sixth CICA Summit recognized the unprecedented progress in the development and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their increasing influence on everyday life and on the political, economic, humanitarian and other components of national and international security and stability. New conflict domains and tools are emerging, international information space, including social media, is increasingly being weaponized, and we lack strong sets of rules and procedures to govern them. Moreover, there is a need to assist developing countries in building capacity in the area of information security and bridging the “digital divide” in order to ensure security and sustainability of the global information space;

9) COVID-19 pandemic exposed highly interconnected societies’ most vulnerable aspects. The pandemic demonstrated that biological threats have no borders, nations and rules. Addressing such complex global challenges requires collective efforts from stakeholders across different sectors, supported by science, technology, and innovation from multiple disciplines. In January 2021, CICA made its own contribution and added a new priority area of epidemiological safety, public health and pharmaceuticals to its Catalogue of Confidence Building Measures. Member States have already exchanged best practices in this sphere and provided assistance to the countries in need;

10) The international community needs to step up its collective efforts in the field of environmental protection, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change, emergency management, sustainable energy transitions, sustainable water management, biodiversity conservation and fostering harmonious common life of humans and nature. Climate change is causing natural disasters that have become increasingly unpredictable and catastrophic. The climate crisis could lead to military conflicts and become a catalyst for huge and

uncontrollable migration flows. Therefore, CICA is considering holding a high-level conference in 2024 in Astana on environmental issues;

11) It is of paramount importance to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, as these matters directly affect peace and security. Any multilateral efforts safeguard respect for human rights should be conducted in conformity with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and international law. Underscoring the importance of confidence building measures within the human dimension, CICA promotes cooperation, including through exchange of information and best practice and project activities, in the field of human rights, in particular human rights education, with a view of strengthening democracy, rule of law, civil society, human rights institutions, as well as empowering of women and girls.

In particular, the young generation should be able to shape their future by being given all opportunities to contribute. In this regard, the CICA Youth Council is successfully promoting comprehensive cooperation among the youth organizations of CICA Member States towards strengthening interaction, friendship and peace in Asia;

12) CICA is committed to upholding and defending the principles of the UN Charter and international law, as well as the means envisaged in the UN Charter for peaceful settlement of disputes. Asia, just as the rest of the world, still faces unresolved intra-regional issues of peace and security. Peace-making efforts in the Middle East, South and South-East Asia require relevant support. Therefore, it is essential to engage in regional and sub-regional dialogue, strengthen multilateral cooperation and take appropriate measures to promote sustainable development, economic cooperation and the well-being of people.

Restoration of peace and economic development in Afghanistan based on an inclusive negotiated political settlement is key for security and stability in the CICA region and the whole world. While emphasizing the right of all Afghan people to live in safety, security and with dignity, the international community should assist the people of Afghanistan. Underscoring that Afghanistan should not become a safe haven for terrorist groups, the global community must assist the Afghan people to build a peaceful, secure and prosperous state;

Overall, the UN “New Agenda for Peace” in our opinion, has to identify the priorities that equally relevant to and would mobilize input of all components of the international community. To that end, the huge potential of multilateral diplomacy and regional organizations should be utilized for more networked, inclusive and effective multilateral approach to identifying and addressing issues on the global agenda for peace. In this regard, CICA can and is willing to provide its tools and assistance in implementing the “New Agenda for Peace”.



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Her Excellency
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