

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen! Colleagues!

Let me on behalf of the organizers begin by warmly welcoming you and expressing my sincere gratitude to each of you for accepting our invitation and participating in our today's online conference focused at security issues in the Asian continent.

The conference is held within the framework of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the Conference on interaction and confidence building measures in Asia (CICA).

The idea of convening CICA proposed back in 1992 at the 47-th session of the United Nations General Assembly by the first President of Kazakhstan, was conditioned by epic geopolitical changes of that period, appearance of new states on the world map and the need to form a system of new relationships that could ensure comprehensive security.

Given high instability in the world as a whole, and on the Asian continent in particular, global threats and security challenges, protracted conflicts within and between a number of states in the region, creation of a new platform for dialogue and cooperation nearly 30 years ago opened a new milestone in the history of our continent and became a tangible fact of ensuring security in Asia. In the following years, CICA platform has developed as an effective mechanism for preventive diplomacy and collective search for solutions to strengthen regional security.

Nevertheless, has the world become safer?

Unfortunately, the international situation is still seriously complicated. The surge of conflicts and the erosion of security mechanisms, trade and sanctions wars, strengthening of international terrorism and extremism, illegal drug and human trafficking, illegal migration and proliferation of WMD - this is a current geopolitical reality. Security threats, ideological and ethno-religious intolerance and contradictions continue to be of concern in the Asian region. Moreover, threats of environmental degradation and global warming began to occupy a significant place. New challenges are also emerging, such as those associated with the use of cutting-edge technologies that require cybersecurity.

The situation in recent years has been aggravated by the fact that, on top of the aforementioned challenges and threats of security, the world has faced the COVID-19 pandemic that has negatively impacted the socio-economic development of the world majority and the world situation itself.

In this context, we need systematic, comprehensive approaches to solving security problems on our continent, to counter traditional and new threats. I am confident that CICA meets these requirements and tasks in order to ensure sustainable development of states and develop a policy and strategy for jointly countering emerging security threats.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kazakhstan has achieved significant success in its development over the years of its independence. Peacekeeping activities and global initiatives to strengthen regional security have been a priority of our foreign policy since the first years of independence. Our state implements a multi-vector, pragmatic and proactive foreign policy, makes a significant contribution to the formation and implementation of the global and regional agenda in the field of security, cooperation and development. Thanks to this, the country has gained significant political weight and international prestige.

Let me name just some of them, not to mention CICA.

In August 2021, it will be 30 years since the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was closed. The first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – Elbasy made a decision on the voluntary renunciation of nuclear weapons. Kazakhstan had a powerful nuclear heritage. With this decision, Elbasy closed the fourth largest nuclear complex in the world. Since then, Kazakhstan has consistently promoted the ideas of the destruction and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world.

Kazakhstan is one of the main initiators and promoters (along with other Central Asian countries) of the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In 2006, a corresponding agreement was signed in Semipalatinsk.

The country's role in non-proliferation has also increased with the creation of a Low-Enriched Uranium Bank under the auspices of the IAEA, designed to facilitate access to peaceful nuclear energy and prevent countries from developing their own enrichment programs.

In 2017-18, Kazakhstan as the non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, used this platform to promote measures to strengthen global and regional security. Peacekeeping initiatives were among the key ones on the agenda of our country.

Kazakhstan provided an Astana platform for negotiations on the cessation of hostilities between the warring parties in Syria. Thus, by conducting the Astana process to resolve the civil conflict in Syria Kazakhstan plays a significant role in promoting peace negotiations, including in the Middle East. In total, more than 12 meetings were held until 2019.

Another initiative aimed at achieving and strengthening tolerance and mutual understanding between representatives of various faiths, cultures and civilizations is the regular convening of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Kazakhstan became the first country in the post-Soviet space where the idea of a "green economy" began to be implemented. It should be noted that in fact, the "green economy" is a way to solve global environmental problems on a mutually beneficial and self-sustaining basis, where production should be evaluated from the point of view of environmental and economic efficiency, that is, taking into account its impact on the environment, as well as commercial benefits for both developers and industrial companies themselves.

The breakthrough idea of President Nazarbayev to create an International Center for "Green" Technologies and Investment Projects, announced in 2015 at the 70th session of the UN General Assembly in New York, has become a real tool for promoting the "green economy" not only in the Central Asian region, but also in the world and in my opinion deserves special attention of the CICA member states.

We are actively cooperating with the countries in the region to overcome humanitarian problems, including those caused by the pandemic. To provide assistance to States in need Kazakhstan has established KazAid agency.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I do not want to abuse your attention any more. Let me wish you a fruitful discussion, exchange of experience and new ideas aimed at ensuring security of our peoples.

Thank you for your kind attention!