

# ISRS Delegation Participates in the 13th Meeting of the CICA Think Tanks Forum



On 9-10 September, the 13th session of the Forum of Think Tanks of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) was held in Baku.

A delegation from the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ISRS), led by Deputy Director Bakhtiyor Mustafayev, took part in the event. The session was held under the theme “Resonance of Development and Security: Regional Cooperation and Governance in the Institutional Transformation of CICA.”

The forum was organized by the Center for Analysis of International Relations of Azerbaijan and the Shanghai Institute of International Studies and brought together over 50 experts from CICA member states, including leaders and representatives of leading analytical and research centers from Türkiye, Bangladesh, Thailand, India, China, Iran, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. The CICA Secretary-General also attended.

During the meeting, participants exchanged views on strengthening strategic dialogue in politics and security, expanding economic and investment ties, enhancing industrial cooperation, implementing joint transport connectivity projects, promoting cooperation in green economy and digitalization, and broadening cultural and humanitarian engagement.

Deputy Director Bakhtiyor Mustafayev delivered a report during the session titled “CICA as an International Organization – Transformation and Capacity Building.”

He outlined priority areas for cooperation in the context of CICA’s transformation. Firstly, he emphasized the importance of upholding CICA’s fundamental principles, including mutual trust, equality, respect for cultural diversity, commitment to joint development, and the consensus principle in decision-making.

Mustafayev noted that Uzbekistan’s regional policy, based on equality, mutual consideration of interests, and reasonable compromise, has fostered a new political climate in Central Asia in a short historical period. Consequently, the region has become a space of good-neighborliness, mutually beneficial cooperation, and sustainable development.

Secondly, he stressed the need to deepen political dialogue and strengthen trust, noting that modern challenges and threats can only be overcome through dialogue, consideration of each other’s interests, and adherence to widely recognized international norms. He cited President Mirziyoyev’s statement at the

last CICA summit in Astana on the critical deficit of dialogue and trust, which undermines multilateral cooperation, provokes conflicts, and leads to systemic disruptions in the global economy.

Thirdly, Mustafayev highlighted the need for CICA member economies to adapt to the growing negative impacts of the global crisis. He pointed out that CICA countries are “engines of the world economy,” with eight of them in the G20, covering 90% of Asia’s territory, 40% of global GDP, and 60% of the population. He advocated enhancing regional connectivity through production and logistics chains and transport corridors linking Central Asia with South, East Asia, and the Middle East.

Fourthly, he stressed the importance of cooperation in food security. As producers of 60% of the world’s agricultural output, CICA countries face significant consequences of the food crisis. Mustafayev referenced the UN’s assessment that half of the global population suffering from hunger resides in Asia. He highlighted Uzbekistan’s initiative to establish sustainable production schemes, optimize food supply chains, harmonize technical regulations to boost intraregional trade, and create a comprehensive monitoring system for food security in Asia.

Finally, he emphasized strengthening cultural and humanitarian ties. Mustafayev proposed promoting “people-to-people diplomacy” through joint Arts and Film Days, collaboration among museum networks, and preparation and publication of anthologies featuring the best literary works from CICA member countries.