Statement of Mr. Dharmendra Singh, Representative of Executive Director of CICA Secretariat,
At the Forum of National and Cultural Centers of the Member States of Member States of the (CICA)

“Civil Society in the CICA Region: present status and development perspectives”
(November 5th, 2019, Nur-Sultan)

Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen!

At the very outset, on behalf of the CICA Secretariat, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan for organizing this very important forum “Civil Society in the CICA Region: present status and development perspectives”.

Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) has emerged as an effective platform of intergovernmental dialogues and cooperation in wide range issues in the Asian continent and beyond. CICA also provides platform for non state actors and civil societies to promote people to people exchange through various mechanisms organized under the human dimension of CICA cooperation.

Distinguished Colleagues,

CICA has 27 member states from Eurasian region, Central Asia, South Asia, South-East Asia, Gulf Region and Middle-East, which covers 90 % area and population of Asian continent. CICA region is very diverse in terms of national characteristics, traditions, cultures and values. This diversity of the Asian States is not a divisive, but a valuable mutually enriching factor of their relations.
Civil society today is recognized as a diverse and ever-wider ecosystem of individuals, communities and organizations. In last two decades, Information and communication technologies have opened up a huge space for non-state actors, leading to a significant growth of networks of civil societies across the globe irrespective of geographical, social and physical divides. These networks allow greater numbers of people to aggregate and collectively address societal challenges.

CICA also understands the importance of civil society and encourages the efforts of participation of all sectors of society in the cooperation process, within the agreed CICA principles. Recognizing the role of people-to-people exchanges, CICA has put in place the mechanisms e.g. Business Council, Youth Council, Non-Governmental Forums, business forums and Think Tank Forums. This has increased CICA’s potential and boosted the public awareness of its activities. These efforts are towards building a more inclusive and peaceful society.

Civil society in CICA region can play an important role in implementation of Confidence Building Measures in human dimension of CICA. Member States have specified the following priorities for cooperation in this dimension:-

1. Promotion of dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions; while taking into consideration the views and recommendations stated in the report of the UN High Level Group of “Alliance of Civilizations”.

2. Encouragement of national information agencies and mass-media for the promotion of CBMs in all agreed dimensions of CICA.

3. Promoting cultural exchange and cooperation through cultural activities, and promotion of awareness and dissemination of information on people and different cultures in the CICA region, with a view to encourage tolerance and understanding.
4. Promoting people-to-people contacts including exchanges among scientific, educational and sports institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations; and developing relevant joint projects.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

CICA leaders at several occasions have called upon the states to encourage the civil society, private sector and mass media to be involved in efforts to counter the social and security challenges e.g. illegal drug trafficking, human trafficking, degradation of environment, spread of extremist ideology, radicalization and terrorism.

Presently, Republic of Kazakhstan is coordinating country in implementation of CBMs in Human dimension of CICA. In this role Kazakhstan regularity organizes relevant activities and events. Recently; Republic of Uzbekistan has expressed its interest to take this role, and has planned to organize two events in Uzbekistan next year, with titles ‘**International Conference for CICA Member States on Countering the Radicalization of Youth**’ and a Round table "**The practice of socialization of youth previously involved in terrorist and extremist organizations**"

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan and Embassies of the member states for their support, cooperation and coordination in implementation of CICA work plan in all dimensions. I am confident that the continuous support and cooperation will take the CICA process to the new heights.

I wish a successful forum.

Thank you very much for your kind attention!