Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development

13th meeting

Thematic discussions

"The role of regional mechanisms in realizing the right to development"

Remarks by the CICA Chairmanship of Azerbaijan

Thank you very much.

At the outset, let me express our gratitude to the UN Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development for the invitation extended to the Azerbaijani Chairmanship of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, also known as CICA.

We are delighted to be a part of this distinct panel where high-level panellists have shared valuable insights and thoughts on the theme which in our view is indeed central to the realization of the right to development.

Numerous resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly and Human Rights Council recognized the importance of regional cooperative mechanisms and instruments for the implementation of the right to development, while a number of reports underline contribution of regional collaboration to the development policies. Regional mechanisms serve to implementation of universal norms with the regional peculiarities taken into account and thus contributes to global cooperation and development with regional perspectives.

Cooperation and development – these are two imperatives that drive CICA forward.

With its broad and diverse membership of 28 Member States, CICA is Asia's most inclusive platform for dialogue on enhancing collaboration towards development. It is uniquely positioned to foster cooperation as well as help addressing developmental challenges in its wider region through confidence building measures across all of its dimensions. At its core, CICA is built on consensus – every decision, big or small, requires unanimous agreement from all 28 Member States. Starting from 2024, the Republic of Azerbaijan chairs the Conference and our Chairmanship is grounded on overarching goal of "*Stronger CICA, Connectivity, Digitalization, and Sustainable Growth in Asia*".

All cooperation dimensions of CICA, in particular its economic, environmental and human dimensions play crucial role in enhancing collaboration and strengthening confidence building, and thereby serving to the regional development.

Through human dimension CICA Member States prioritized developing mutual trust by way of promoting dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts as well as promotion of respect for fundamental rights and freedoms.

In economic dimension CICA countries are actively involved in the development of secure and effective systems of transportation corridors, widening of cooperation among financial sectors, promoting business opportunities for SMEs, encouraging cooperation in ICT and other fields.

Environmental dimension, on the other hand, provides opportunities for closer interaction in the priority areas of sustainable development, protection of environment, and natural disaster management.

Along with practical cooperation within these dimensions, CICA is going through institution-building process ensuring continuity of collaboration. The newly established CICA Women Council and Finance Summit, together with Business and Youth Councils, as well as Partnership Network of Leading Universities are tasked with providing support to ongoing cooperation in their respective fields through institutional dialogue, experience sharing and capacity building. Moreover, CICA is now undergoing the process of transformation into a full-fledged regional international organization which we hope will convert the existing forum into a more effective platform fully equipped to respond to the demands of a rapidly changing world. All this evolution will ultimately build stronger CICA for regional development.

Together with this ongoing progress, CICA is also prepared to further enhance its partnerships and cooperation with regional and global institutions enabling it to act as a driving force for positive change across Asia, as well as to promote intraregional dialogue. Preserving the core value of confidence building, CICA will pursue greater cross-sectoral cooperation, from youth and academic engagement to transport connectivity, digitalization, climate, agriculture, and cyber-security issues. These dimensions align with various aspects of sustainable development goals, underscoring our commitment to stability and regional prosperity which in turn forms the basis for the realization of the right to development at the regional level.

In the framework of these actions and in line with the CICA Chairmanship's priority of increasing synergy between CICA and other organizations, we are keen to enhancing our cooperation with UN institutions and mechanisms, as well as other international bodies. And our presence here and contribution to today's discussions is also a testament to this commitment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

International cooperation is essential to realize the right to development, so is regional cooperation.

In this context, one should also note the duty to cooperate in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to it, recognized under the Declaration on the Right to Development. Strengthening this duty is necessary for mobilizing resources and full potential of different world regions serving to realization of the right to development. We share this approach and this is why the CICA Chairmanship of Azerbaijan together with its Member States and with the support of the CICA Secretariat continues its actions aiming to develop and further enhance cooperation in CICA and beyond.

These thematic discussions and its distinguished speakers attest to the fact that activities of regional mechanisms as well as synergy among them are necessary for reinvigorating the right to development. With its vast geographical reach, broad agenda and diverse toolkit, CICA remains committed to this goal and will continue its actions strengthening our collective commitment to sustainable development.

I would like to once again thank the organizers for the invitation extended to the CICA Chairmanship of Azerbaijan and I will be happy to answer questions and further contribute to our deliberations.