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## **Astana Offers ‘Green Bridge’ for Common Solutions to Ecological Problems**

UN ESCAP Ministerial conference takes place in Kazakhstan’s capital

## **Latin American Week in Kazakhstan Helps Upgrade Cooperation Prospects**

The festival of the Western Hemisphere’s economy, culture held in Astana, Almaty

## **Roundtable on Torture Prevention Discusses Criminal Justice in Kazakhstan**

UN Special Rapporteur oversees progress in implementing his recommendations

## **Variety Magazine Says Kazakh Movie Industry Thriving**

Leading global cinematographic edition says Kazakh cinema is on the upswing

## **Astana Offers ‘Green Bridge’ for Common Solutions to Ecological Problems**

The Green Growth approach, a policy emphasising environmentally sustainable economic progress to foster low-carbon, socially inclusive development, was complemented by a Green Bridge concept, stimulating wider cooperation between Asia-Pacific and Europe in environmentally-friendly social and economic progress at the 6<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific.

The event took place in Astana from September 27 to October 2, 2010, and was hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan, with the support of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). About a thousand delegates from 62 countries of ESCAP and representatives of the ESCAP Secretariat attended the conference.

The Green Growth policy was launched by the previous Ministerial conference in Seoul in 2005.

“No country can now move along the path of development meaning “development now and clean up later.” I urge you to set an example to developing countries around the world in terms of movement towards Green Growth and entering a new era of sustainable development,” the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon’s address to the Conference participants stated as it was read by Noeleen Heyzer, Under Secretary-General of the UN and Executive Secretary of ESCAP at the event’s opening ceremony.

The Astana Ministerial is of critical importance for the implementation of Green Growth concept, Heyzer said in her own statement.

“It is the only inter-governmental gathering where ministers of environment and of development collectively address sustainable development issues. Other stakeholders, in particular the civil society, private businesses, and academics have also contributed by sharing their perspectives at the other stakeholder forums,” she explained.

Heyzer put emphasis on the environmental and social components of economic growth. She urged the governments to commit themselves to the development of inclusive policies and institutional



We should boost our joint efforts to solve global environmental problems today.

frameworks that will attract businesses and the private sector to the Green Growth, and will enable people to lead a lifestyle that is associated with the lowest costs to them.

Kazakhstan's stance on the Green Growth was formulated by Prime Minister Karim Massimov.

"In all countries of the region there is a need for economic growth and simultaneously, a need for safety of the environment. That is the challenge to which we must find answers", he said addressing the meeting. "This challenge requires a new focus on green economy and for environmentally sustainable development".

During the Ministerial Kazakhstan put forward the so-called Astana initiative, also known as the Green Bridge concept. The idea is that Asia and Pacific has many issues in its economic development and environmental protection that are interconnected to similar ones in Europe. Establishing a mutually-advantageous collaboration in solving common problems and share the best practices and clean technologies would be very helpful for the implementation of Green Growth in Asia and the Pacific.

"In our decision to propose the Astana initiative, we are guided by the conviction that cooperation between the countries of Europe, Asia and the Pacific will only add value to the existing regional programmes. Exchange of best practices, experiences, creation of mechanisms for the transfer of clean technologies, joint investments, and projects for the transition to a green economy and maintenance of shared ecosystems – these are but a few examples of the

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**The Astana ‘Green Bridge’ Initiative is the first-ever international agreement between two of the world’s largest regions – Europe and Asia and the Pacific - for environmental cooperation.**

possibilities such cooperation promises," he said.

Under this initiative, Astana could host the first interregional and inter-sectoral "Green Bridge" office through which it would ensure technical and information support for the development and implementation of the Eurasian cooperation. In addition to the programme of Eurasian cooperation, Kazakhstan is going to undertake information, methodological, and communications support for the two relatively new themes in the Asia-Pacific region that are of particular interest - protection of trans-border ecosystems and adaptation to climate change.

Massimov said droughts, forest fires, and floods, such as those that happened this summer, do not recognise borders, and show that the countries of the region face the same problems.

"We are convinced that positive results in resolving the existing environmental issues can be achieved through collaborative efforts only," he concluded.

Hosting such a high-level conference demonstrated the attention given by the Kazakh leadership to the domestic work on the environment problems and development. Thus, on September 10, 2010, the Government of Kazakhstan approved a national programme "Zhassyl damu" (Green Development) for 2010-2014. The programme envisions implementation of a number of important tasks, such as development of a green economy, reduction of anthropogenic impact on the components of the environment and health, conserving and restoring natural ecosystems, and others, that will strengthen Kazakhstan's commitment to the Green Growth approach.

Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific is held every five years starting from 1985. It creates a unique chance to comprehensively examine the accumulated environmental problems in many countries. Organized by the ESCAP, the conference is recognized internationally as a unique forum for exchanging views and experiences between policy makers, academic and business communities, and civil societies across the region.

## **Latin American Week in Kazakhstan Helps Upgrade Cooperation Prospects**

Kazakhstan is playing a leading role in Central Asia in developing versatile relations with new partners on the more distant continents. This was demonstrated by the first ever Latin American Week in Astana and Almaty, which took place from September 27 to October 1. The US-Asian Association of Business Cooperation and the Honorary Consulate of the Republic of Chile acted as main organisers of the event, which sought to develop stronger political, economic, cultural and scientific ties between Kazakhstan and the Latin American nations.

The first event held in Astana within the scope of this forum was a meeting of politicians, businessmen and scientists of both countries which examined various directions of mutually beneficial cooperation between two countries.



For one week Latin America has opened its inner world so people of Kazakhstan could explore it.

The discussion of the prospects of cooperation in the fields of mining industry, oil sector, medicine, food, education, sports, tourism and mass media continued during a conference, “Latin America - Kazakhstan: the feasibility of cooperation” which gathered prominent representatives of state and public organizations, and scholars from both sides.

Speaking of cooperation between Kazakhstan and the Latin American nations, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Chile in Kazakhstan Leonid Scheingesicht noted: “Close cooperation is being developed in the social sphere as Kazakhstan’s pension reform was carried out on the Chilean model. The other promising sphere of collaboration is public health service and our aim is to make this cooperation more substantive.”

The event list also included a food exhibition, “Latin America: achievements and prospects” in the Palace of Peace and Reconciliation in Astana. This exhibition, presenting the Latin American food products, such as seafood, fruits, cheeses, and wines of the finest wineries of the Western Hemisphere, is the first step towards greater trade between Kazakhstan and the continent.

By the end of the week, forum organizers arranged a master class of head chefs, as well as the retrospective screening of Latin American films, music and dance in “Latino” style, and lectures on the life and work of Pablo Neruda, the great Chilean poet and leftist politician and the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature of 1971.

This first large-scale event presenting Latin America to the Kazakh public has contributed notably to strengthening ties between Kazakhstan and a number of friendly nations.

Kazakhstan’s “breakthrough” in Latin America took place in 2007 when President Nursultan Nazarbayev paid the first state visit to Brazil, which was also the first visit to Latin America by a Central Asian leader. Two years later, President Lula da Silva made a return visit to Kazakhstan which was the first Central Asian visit by a leader of the largest of Latin American states. It demonstrated the interest and willingness of Brazil to develop comprehensive relations with Kazakhstan.

In recognition of Kazakhstan’s position as a regional leader, and an economic powerhouse in Central Asia, Brazil opened its first regional Embassy in Kazakhstan in 2007. Both countries view each other as promising partners, as their relations are developing dynamically on bilateral and multilateral levels. The trade turnover between them amounted to US\$ 280 million in 2008. Kazakhstan is interested in establishing joint ventures, particularly for producing bio-ethanol and other agriculture-related products, but also in oil processing, mechanical engineering, IT and space industry.

The first Latin American nation to open a diplomatic mission in Kazakhstan (back in 1993), however, was Cuba. In 1999, it was also among the earliest re-settlers to Astana.

The main fields of Kazakh-Cuban cooperation include science, culture, education, tourism, sports, and especially healthcare, as Cuba is known as a leading nation in the Western Hemisphere in providing high-quality medical services. In 2003, in Astana the «Cubanacan Turismo y Salud» (Cuban Tourism and Health) company and the National Clinical Hospital of Kazakhstan signed agreement on cooperation in the sphere of new treatments for skin diseases, as well as cardiovascular and cosmetic surgery, and treatment of drug addiction and alcoholism.

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**The first event held in Astana examined more directions of mutually beneficial cooperation between Kazakhstan and Latin America region.**

As for political contacts between the governments, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba Eumelio Caballero in December 2007 visited Kazakhstan and held talks in Astana with the high-level officials in the Parliament, the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, and the Ministry of Tourism and Sports, which demonstrated a high level of mutual understanding and concurrence of the parties’ viewpoints on major issues of bilateral cooperation.

The latest Latin American week in Almaty and Astana wouldn't have taken place without an enthusiastic arrangement from the Honorary Consul of Chile in Kazakhstan. The country Mr Scheingesicht represents in the Kazakh capital, strives to introduce the Latin American continent as a new tourist destination, and potential economic and political partner for Kazakhstan. The government and people in Astana view relations with Chile as a good opportunity to learn from the friendly nation's experience of economic and social welfare reforms, as well development of mining industry and agriculture.

Kazakhstan is also interested in developing cooperation with Mexico, Latin America's second most populous country. In 2006, a Kazakh delegation led by Arman Dunayev, Chairman of the Agency for Regulation and Supervision of Financial Markets and Financial Institutions at that time, paid a visit to Mexico to study the experience of reforming the financial and oil sectors of the economy. As part of the visit, the Kazakhs held a series of meetings with the heads of the Mexican Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Energy, Finance, the Central Bank, the Mexican financial exchanges, and national commissions for the banks and the stock market, pension savings, and a number of other public and private institutions.

Kazakhstan's trade turnover with Mexico for January-July 2010 constituted US\$ 61.8 million, and has an obvious potential for growth. Kazakhstan is particularly interested in developing closer ties with Mexico in petrochemical, engineering, mining, metallurgy, chemical, textile, and food industries.

Kazakhstan and Argentina share a number of similar characteristics: climate and landscape, large territories, and a relatively low density of population, as well as special roles cattle-breeding and wheat-growing play in their economies.

As part of the political contacts between Astana and Buenos Aires, the two country's foreign ministers held a consultative meeting at the 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly in 2006. Later, in June 2009, an authorized representative of the Argentine Ministry of International Trade and Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Eduardo Sadous paid a working visit to Kazakhstan. During his visit, the Argentine diplomat held meetings with the representatives of the Kazakh ministries of foreign affairs, industry and trade, agriculture, and health.

In general, with the organization of the recent forum, which is primarily intended to provide information about Latin America itself, one can see a steadily growing interest of the distant continent towards Kazakhstan and the beginning of mutually beneficial cooperation between two large regions.

## **Roundtable on Torture Prevention Discusses Criminal Justice in Kazakhstan**

A round table on "Implementation of the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture following his mission to Kazakhstan on 5-13 May 2009 and the recommendations of the UN Committee against Torture" took place on October 1, 2010 in Astana.

The participants of the round table gathered to discuss pressing issues related to eradication of torture in Kazakhstan and review international standards on investigation and prosecution of torture practices. Invitees to the round table included representatives of the state bodies, civil society, the legal profession, academia, and independent national and international experts.

Speaking at the round table, Kazakhstan's Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Umarov emphasized the nation would further intensify efforts to fully implement recommendations of the UN member states, NGOs and the Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights Council.

"Since its independence, Kazakhstan has made a series of systematic steps to fight torture and other cruel treatment or punishment. Among recent important measures in this area, including the reform of the state-legal system in compliance with the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, are those reflected in such programme documents as



U.N. Special Rapporteur on Torture  
Manfred Nowak

the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2009-2012 and the 2020 Conception of the Judicial Policy of Kazakhstan,” Umarov said.

He also added that pursuant to the presidential decree of August 17, 2010, “On Measures to be taken to improve the efficiency of the law enforcement and judicial systems in the Republic of Kazakhstan,” the Government will develop bills aimed at liberalising the justice system and decriminalising offences that do not pose public threat and at harmonising national legislation with the requirements of the UN Convention against Torture.

According to Marat Beketayev, Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Kazakhstan has developed draft laws aimed at humanisation of criminal and procedural criminal laws, and reformation of the work of law-enforcement authorities. He stressed the special role of the introduction of an independent mechanism of combating torture in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture, ratified by Kazakhstan, that envisions the “Ombudsman Plus” model.

“**Kazakhstan continues to take steps towards the liquidation of torture in the criminal justice system.**”

Commenting on the process of implementation of his earlier recommendations, Manfred Nowak, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, who visited Kazakhstan at the invitation of the Government in May 2009 to assess the situation in the country’s prisons, said Kazakhstan has travelled a long way since 1991 to build a society where human rights and democracy are to rule supreme. Nowak acknowledged that the country has made considerable efforts in recent years to improve the conditions in its prisons, including bringing physical conditions and food supply in line with international standards. The expert also conceded that the criminal justice system in Kazakhstan still remains punitive.

Askar Sekishev, Kazakhstan’s Deputy Prosecutor General, spoke about the adopted Conception of Judicial Policy that forms foundation for modernising Kazakhstan’s legislation to fully protect rights and freedoms of its citizens, the interests of the state and the society. He believes the Conception will promote further modernisation of the country’s criminal justice system.

Sekishev also informed his audience that “Kazakhstan has taken a series of additional important measures in the field of eradication of torture and other cruel inhuman treatment after Mr Nowak’s visit last year”. He told the round table participants that Kazakhstan is considering bringing in 2011 the status of the Ombudsman in Kazakhstan in compliance with the UN Principles relating to the Status of National Institutions (The Paris Principles).

## Variety Magazine Says Kazakh Movie Industry Thriving



The Variety Magazine logo

As the pace and quality of moviemaking in Kazakhstan improve, the country’s motion picture industry is attracting increasing attention abroad. Illustrating this, an extensive review article “Kazakh biz is in the pink: Central Asia state pumps money into pics, facilities” was published on September 25 by Nick Holdsworth of the *Variety*, a prominent American weekly entertainment-trade magazine from New York City.

In it, Holdsworth reviews the current state of Kazakhstan’s film industry, paying particular attention to the country’s biggest government-owned film production facility, the Kazakhfilm national movie company. He believes a new wave of local films and co-productions is set to put Kazakhstan on the international movie map.

“The oil- and gas-rich Central Asia state - politically stable with good relations with Russia and Western powers - regards film as a tool of national unity and international prestige, and is pumping money into movies and facilities,” he wrote.

Today, the government-owned Kazakhfilm, the country’s biggest production facility, has 76 projects, including eight features in the works and a three-year budget of US\$ 70 million.

According to Holdsworth, an extensive modernisation programme, launched two years ago, means the studios - situated on the outskirts of Almaty, the country’s biggest city, - already has the best-equipped sound, digital transfer, colour correction and other post-production facilities in the region. A revamp of the studio’s two soundstages is under way.

Didar Amantai, Kazakhfilm's head of script development, says the appointment of new management two years ago had given the studios a new lease on life.

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**Kazakh film industry is attracting increasing attention abroad.**

In his words, the studios now perform a much wider role than in the past. “We have a centre for project development, liaise with producers, and support the regional and international distribution of Kazakh films,” Amantai noted.

In Kazakhstan, as many as 90% of films are made with state money, including this summer's cult hit “A Tale of the Pink Bunny”, a Russian-language story about the edgy world of Almaty's gilded youth, from 27-year-old director Farkhat Sharipov. (See [the Astana Calling article on September 17](#)).

Nick Holdsworth says although the country is a market, in which a 30-35 print release WHAT? is considered big, the potential for funding, as well as increasingly modern facilities, are attracting outside interest. For instance, he says, Gerard Depardieu stars in Sabit Kurmanbekov's Kazakh-language new release “Unexpected Love” about a trio of older men friends seeking love and companionship.

“The studio is also reviving its strong Soviet-era tradition of cartooning. The government is backing “Kazakh People,” a 50-seg series of five-minute films about the development of the Kazakh nation currently in development. Feature length cartoon “Yer Tostyk” about a national hero, is also being prepped.

With the funding, facilities and international interest, it looks like Kazakhfilm is moving into focus, Holdsworth concludes.

For the full text of the article please go to:

<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118024628.html?categoryid=19&cs=1>

### **Also in the News:**

- The World Bank granted a US\$ 13.4 million loan to the Government of Kazakhstan toward commercialisation of technology. The project's overall cost makes US\$ 75 million, and the Government will finance the remaining US\$61.6 million. The project consists of two components: strengthening the national academic communities' R&D capacities and establishing the Office on Commercialisation of Technologies, which would work on the development of commercialisation strategy, licensing and training the staff.
- Kyrgyzstan's Minister of Emergency Situations Duyshenkul Chotonov sent a letter to the Government of Kazakhstan expressing profound gratitude for the humanitarian help delivered to his country. Chotonov added further productive cooperation between the neighbouring states is welcome and proposed to discuss a joint project on establishing the Central Asian Centre for Reacting to Natural Disasters and Reducing Risks.
- “The estimated amount of oil production in Kazakhstan in 2010 will be around 81 million tonnes, of which 68 million is net export. And we should keep in mind that Kazakhstan is one of the few countries, where the peak of extraction is still ahead,” the nation's Minister of Oil and Gas Sauat Mynbayev said at the Fifth Eurasian Energy Forum on 5 October in Astana. “Kazakhstan has got more than five billion tonnes of oil reserves. The forecast of the extraction for 2020 makes 130 million tonnes. This means that the export capacities of Kazakhstan within the next 40-50 years will make no less than 80-100 million tonnes every year,” the Minister added.
- The gross external debt of Kazakhstan for the first half of the current year has increased by 1.2 percent to reach US\$ 114.633 billion. Slightly less than a half (48.2) was constituted by inter-firm debt relations between a number of Kazakh companies and their foreign parent companies. The external obligations of banks for the first half of the year has decreased from US\$ 30.088 billion to US\$ 25.080 billion, the National Bank stated on Monday.
- Pure international reserves of the National Bank of Kazakhstan have increased by 3.4 percent, which is US\$ 27.3 billion, in September 2010. In addition, the gold reserves of the country have increased by 20.5 percent since the beginning of this year.

- Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendia, Apostolic Nuncio to Kazakhstan, and Bishop Tomasz Peta of Astana opened a monument of Pope John Paul II in Astana on Sunday. This is the first monument in Central Asia dedicated to the great person. It stands in front of the Kazakh capital's Roman Catholic Cathedral, one that was visited by the late Pope in September 2001.
- Kazakhstan's Andrei Golubev, #41 in the current ranking of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP), failed to grab the second ATP title in his career as he lost the final of the Malaysian Open men's singles to Mikhail Youzhny of Russia (ATP #8) 7-6 (7), 2-6, 6-7 (3) in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday. On the way to the final, Golubev saw off two other players from the top of the international ranking, namely Robin Soderling of Sweden (#5) and David Ferrer of Spain (#10).
- The traditional competition "Baspaldak" (Stairway) took place on October 3 in Almaty's Medeu sports facility for the 22<sup>nd</sup> time. Several thousand volunteers have attended the event trying to conquer the 841 steps ladder leading to the top of the anti-avalanche dike next to the world-famous skating rink. The entertaining event is hugely popular with Kazakhstan's amateur and professional athletes

### **Things to Watch:**

- A Kazakh parliamentary delegation led by Vice-Speaker of the Senate Alexander Sudyin is visiting the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in Strasbourg on October 4-8 to witness the discussions at the gathering and meet their colleague parliamentarians and the Assembly's President, Mevlut Cavusoglu
- President Boris Tadic of Serbia will be in Astana on October 6-7 for what will be the first ever state visit in the history of bilateral relations. He is scheduled to meet Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Prime Minister Karim Massimov and the Chairman of Majjilis (Parliament's lower house), Ural Muhamedzhanov. The visit is to provide strong impetus to the strengthening of political dialogue, economic and cultural cooperation between the two nations
- Invited by Kazakhstan's Parliament, Chairman of the Iranian Parliament Ali Larijani will visit Astana on October 11-12. He will have a few meetings with the political leadership of Kazakhstan, including heads of both chambers of Parliament, as the sides seek to discuss political and trade and economic cooperation between the two nations
- OSCE's Expert Conference on Successful Strategies, Effective Policies and Best Practices to Prevent Terrorism will take place in Astana on October 14-15. The two day event will consist of several sessions including the development of strategies and policies to prevent and combat transnational threats, the adherence to and implementation of international legal framework, the national capacity institution building, contribution of regional organisations, effective policies and good practices to counter violent extremism and radicalisation that lead to terrorism. The sessions will be carried out with the participation of the high-level diplomats and representatives of the international counterterrorism organisations
- On Friday, September 8, Kazakhstan hosts Belgium in another qualification match for the Euro 2012 Football Championships. The match kicks off at the Astana Arena Stadium at 10 PM local time

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