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CIS Reviews Two Decades of Activities, Plans for Future

President Nazarbayev attends the jubilee summit in Tajik capital Dushanbe

Central Asian States Should Enhance Cooperation within UNESCO Projects

Regional conference of national commissions on UNESCO affairs held in Astana

Stronger Cooperation within OIC Critical for Tackling Urgent Problems

Kazakhstan Donates US\$ 500,000 to OIC Assistance Fund for Somalia

Two More Kazakhs Complete Conquest of All Eight-Thousanders

Kazakhstan becomes fifth nation to have three climbers on prestigious list

Also in the News

Things to Watch

CIS Reviews Two Decades of Activities, Plans for Future



Family photo of the leaders of CIS

The leaders of Commonwealth of Independent States gathered for the alliance's 20th jubilee summit in Tajik capital Dushanbe on September 3, during which President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev along with his counterparts reviewed the results of the group's activities in the past 20 years and outlined a blueprint for the Organisation's future.

This year is an exceptional one for the CIS as it marks its two full decades since its creation. The summit gathered leaders from Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Russia,

Turkmenistan and Ukraine, while Azerbaijan, Belarus and Uzbekistan were represented by the heads of government.

Speaking at the extended meeting President Nazarbayev noted that in the years of its existence the CIS accomplished its important task – new relations based on the principles of international law and sovereign equality were established.

“The CIS countries have managed to find ways of cooperation that are acceptable to each of the parties and effective enough in the new geopolitical conditions”, the Kazakh leader said.

Nazarbayev was quite explicit about the organization’s shortcomings but fair enough on pointing out positive shift in collaboration between the countries.

“We are providing full implementation of the Concept of the CIS development and the CIS economic development strategy until 2020. Owing to timely steps we succeeded in minimising the consequences of the global economic crisis. And now we almost have the draft of the Free Trade Zone Treaty which undergoes its final stage”.

Speaking of today’s threats and challenges the CIS is facing, President Nazarbayev made a point of cooperating in countering them.

“I believe that only a continuous interchange of views and coordinated decisions on the Organisation’s burning issues are the most effective way to achieve common goals. Of particular importance becomes the interaction in enhancing stability and security”.

The summit of the post-Soviet alliance resulted in a series of agreements including a programme of the CIS countries cooperation in illegal immigration counteraction designed for three years. The group also vowed to continue working together against the drugs trade, terrorism and extremism.

The summit participants also signed an agreement on duty officers’ actions in case of a reported plane hijacking.

The other document adopted during the meeting was aimed at commemorating the heroism of citizens of the CIS nations during the Second World War.

Nazarbayev: CIS countries have managed to find ways of cooperation that are acceptable to each of the parties and effective enough in the new geopolitical conditions.

Summing up the CIS’ activity during the 20 years, many political analysts and experts came to a common ground that it was Nursultan Nazarbayev who initiated the foundation of the CIS as it is today. In their opinion the Kazakh leader is rightfully considered as the “father of integration”.

On the sidelines President Nazarbayev also met with acting president of Moldova Marian Lupu. The parties discussed the summit’s agenda as well as a wide range of bilateral issues.

Ahead of the CIS Summit the Kazakh delegation led by Yerzhan Kazykhanov took part in the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the CIS countries. Addressing his colleagues, the diplomat reminded that Astana attaches a great importance to cooperation within the CIS and is committed to increasing of the Organisation’s efficiency and capacity building. That is why Kazakhstan is proactive in implementing various initiatives within the Commonwealth.

The participants of CFM reviewed draft agreements on cooperation in tackling illegal migration, drug traffic, and coordinated socio-demographic policies, as well as exchanged views on the current issues in international relations and approaches to solving regional problems. The CIS remains the largest intergovernmental organisation in the post-Soviet space.

[Back to Contents](#)

Central Asian States Should Enhance Cooperation within UNESCO Projects

Five post-Soviet nations that form the Central Asian cluster in UNESCO should better coordinate their activities and promote cross-border projects in order to raise representation and visibility of the region's cultural heritage and natural treasures in the global palette. This was a major conclusion drawn by participants from the regional conference of national commissions on UNESCO affairs hosted by Astana on September 5-6.

Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov, Chairman of Kazakhstan's National Commission on UNESCO affairs and Mayor of Astana Imangali Tasmagambetov, and the country's permanent representative at the Organization's headquarters in Paris Olzhas Suleimenov were keynote speakers and highlighted the relevance of constructive discussion at the conference and enhanced regional coordination in the future.

According to Minister Kazykhanov, the past two decades for Central Asian states were marked by efforts not only to strengthen their sovereignty but also to maintain the peoples' cultural values and traditions. In this connection, developing collaboration in the Central Asian region within UNESCO plays a key role in building sovereign states and modernising the societies. The organization becomes an important means of promoting regional initiatives – from cross-border nominations to the World Heritage List to enhancing the activity of communities and National commissions that work within UNESCO programs, said the Minister.

He also stated that one of the core issues of domestic and foreign policies of Kazakhstan is the provision of an open intercultural dialogue, and participation in the worldwide struggle against national, cultural and religious intolerance, including extremism. A modern dialogue must be based on the principles of tolerance and respect for diversity. And collaboration within UNESCO is one of the ways of meeting these goals.

Kazykhanov highlighted that Kazakhstan is committed to the values of the United Nations (UN) and contributes to their promotion with the help of its global initiatives. In the year of 2010, the International Year for Rapprochement of Cultures, Kazakhstan and other UN member states made a great contribution to approaching to the main purpose of the program: eliminating ignorance, prejudice and social isolation that cause insecurity, conflicts and violence. The Minister expressed his will to carry over the momentum of that Year to the further stages of work within the Organization.

In the context of enhancing intercultural and interreligious understanding, the foreign Minister highlighted President Nazarbayev's initiative of convening congresses of leaders of world and traditional religions – a permanently operating forum that was established in Astana in 2003.

The issues of peace and collaboration were also reflected in the resulting documents of the conferences and summits that took place during the chairmanship of Kazakhstan in the OSCE and OIC.

As a conclusion, the foreign Minister stated that the range of issues being handled by Kazakhstan's National Commission had been widened. And all these issues are viewed as a basis for co-operation with Central Asian countries. He voiced his confidence that the meeting would become a generator of new innovative ideas that aim to promote the high purposes of UNESCO in the region.



Participants of the regional conference

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[Back to Contents](#)

Stronger Cooperation within OIC Critical for Tackling Urgent Problems



Somalia is a member of the OIC

Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has begun this summer with the urgent task of stemming starvation in Somalia.

The OIC's Ministerial Executive Committee held an emergency meeting in Istanbul on August 17 to come up with ways for the other 56 nations in the organization to render food and financial assistance to one of the poorest countries of the Muslim world.

Kazakhstan Foreign Minister Yerzhan Kazykhanov chaired the meeting, whose participants included Somali President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, OIC Secretary General Ekhmeleddin Ihsanoglu and officials of 36 OIC countries.

Participants adopted an Istanbul Declaration on humanitarian and financial assistance to East Africa and on providing \$350 million in aid to Somalia.

The participants agreed that the OIC, which plays an important role in responding to humanitarian crises in the Muslim world, is the only international organisation capable of delivering food and medicine to the entire population of Somalia.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev proposed an OIC food security system at a meeting of the organization's foreign ministers in Astana in June – a prelude to Kazakhstan assuming the OIC chairmanship.

His proposal has assumed greater urgency as the world's television viewers have seen photos of thousands of adults and children in Somalia dying for lack of food and water.

The OIC's decision to establish a relief fund for Somalia offers hope that the country will be able to meet four mid-term goals that the organization established: food security, access to drinking water, improvement in health care and economic reconstruction.

Somalia has been reeling not only from drought, but from a long-running civil war.

As OIC chair, Kazakhstan is committed to seeing Somalia obtain the short-term relief it needs and begin moving toward a longer-term solution to its problems.

"We need to consider how the OIC can play a more active role in addressing the underlining vulnerabilities that have caused this human tragedy", Kazykhanov said at the meeting on August 17. "It is worth recalling that in the Astana Declaration (in June), OIC member States called for efforts to strengthen and enhance the role of the OIC in conflict prevention and resolution. Somalia would be a good place to start. This is a test of how the OIC can respond to a crisis, and how we can promote peace, cooperation and development in one of the poorest and most unstable Muslim countries in the world."

A week later, on August 26, Kazykhanov invited diplomats of OIC member states in Astana to an evening meal to break the fast Muslims had been observing during the month of Ramadan.

"It is with great concern that we are witnessing the spread of violence and tragic losses of life in different parts of the Ummah (the Muslim world) during the holy days of Ramadan," he said. "Regrettably, at the very same time, our brothers and sisters in Somalia are experiencing a disastrous humanitarian crisis, with more than four million Somalis facing the risk of dying from hunger.

"I am proud that our organization (the OIC) responded promptly," underscoring the viability of Islamic cooperation, he continued.

Kazykhanov said bank accounts opened in Kazakhstan "for individual donations to Somalia will allow us to increase the amount of the OIC member states' donations, hopefully up to half a billion dollars."

He said the OIC also agreed to establish an ad-hoc group to address the current emergency in Somalia "and to hold an expert meeting to create a food security mechanism as a long-term way of preventing famines in the OIC area."

OIC foreign ministers will be meeting on the sidelines of the 66th United Nations General Assembly in New York in mid-September to discuss a number of pressing issues besides Somalia.

Topics at the group's Annual Coordination Meeting will include the Israel-Palestine question, the Arab Spring uprisings, a number of countries' effort to establish a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the Middle East and combating Islamophobia.

Meanwhile, Kazakhstan is preparing to host the 3rd conference of OIC health ministers in Astana in October.

The purpose of the event is to strengthen healthcare cooperation among Muslim nations and implement the blueprint for improvement that health ministers adopted at their first conference in Tehran in March 2009.

The more than 400 participants at the conference also will discuss the draft of an OIC Strategic Healthcare Plan for 2012 to 2022.

In addition, there will be discussions of how OIC members can work together to achieve the United Nations' healthcare-related Millennium Development Goals. Two key millennium goals are ensuring the health of mothers who give birth and reducing child mortality.

Other discussion topics at the gathering in October will include eradicating polio, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, and producing medicines, including vaccines.

In mid-July of this year, at a meeting in Astana, an OIC advisory panel agreed on the draft of a water-resources programme that member countries will consider adopting.

It lists ways to develop and preserve the resource and calls on OIC members to expand cooperative scientific programmes and projects.

The OIC water programme is designed to expand and complement existing bilateral and multilateral efforts for managing water. Water-resource officials in OIC member countries will be reviewing the draft in the next few months. The OIC's Conference of Ministers of Water Resources is expected to adopt a water programme at a meeting in Turkey in January of 2012.

With an array of diverse activities focusing on the most pressing and relevant issues, Kazakhstan's one-year chairmanship of the OIC Foreign Ministers Council has gone off to a very active start. Continued focus and the cooperation of its partners within the Ummah will be critical for achieving the success in that mission that the OIC expects and deserves.

This article was first published in The Astana Times newspaper on 2 September 2011.

“Kazykhanov: We need to consider how the OIC can play a more active role in addressing the underlining vulnerabilities that have caused this human tragedy.”

[Back to Contents](#)

Two More Kazakhs Complete Conquest of All Eight-Thousanders



Himalayan duet Maksut Zhumayev - Vasily Pivtsov

On August 23 Kazakhstan's mountaineers Maksut Zhumayev and Vasily Pivtsov have reached K2, arguably the most challenging eight-thousander and the second highest peak on Earth. Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Massimov congratulated the climbers on their success. The climbers said they dedicated their mission to the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan's Independence.

A feature of their success is that they've done their ascents following complicated routes in a sport style, without oxygen equipment.

Two Kazakhs were in the international expedition to K-2, split into two rope-links: Maksut Zhumayev - Vasily Pivtsov and Dariusz Zaluski (Poland) - Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner (Austria). One

should mention that this climbing made Gerlinde only the third woman in the world to have reached all the eight-thousanders and the first one to do so without using bottled oxygen.

“We were lucky it was not raining and it was not so windy. Our team worked like an ideal mechanism, like a clock, everyone knew precisely his part and duties,” Maksut Zhumayev said. “The biggest obstacle in the final part of climbing was loose snow. Less than 200 meters before reaching the summit we came against a very difficult obstacle – a section at 45 degrees angle with snow depth of 1.5 meters that we had to plow through for a few hours, cautiously, not to trigger an avalanche”.

It was the Kazakh team’s fifth attempt to reach the K2 summit. The long-awaited ascension took place on a late night of August 22. Zhumayev, Pivtsov and Kaltenbrunner were walking a path to the mountain summit, with Dariusz Zaluski- technical operator belaying them. The mountaineers say it was dark when they reached the peak, that’s why they didn’t stay long there. Because of their fatigue and all the hazards they decided to stay overnight at the camp base before the descent, which went on smoothly.

This is how the Kazakh athletes completed their mission in conquering all the 14 eight-thousanders of the world and joined their compatriot Denis Urubko in the prestigious list. With three of its citizens having accomplished this, Kazakhstan is now tied with Italy, Poland, Spain, and South Korea, in the ranking of countries with the highest number of climbers that have climbed all fourteen eight-thousanders.

In line with the programme “Kazakhs on the highest mountain peaks of the world” the mountaineers Maksut Zhumayev and Vasily Pivtsov have conquered 14 highest mountain peaks in the world, including the following:

Hidden (8068 m) through the Japanese Couloir, 2001;
Gasherbrum II (8035 m) via the normal route from the southwest 5B, 2001;
Kanchenjunga (8586 m), south-west 6A, 2002;
Shisha Pangma (8046 m), north 5A, 2002;
Nanga Parbat (8126 m), on Diamir Wall, /Kinshofer route 6A in 2003;
Broad (8048 m), north 5 B, 2003;
Makalu (8481 m) along the western edge of the route Parago, 2004;
Cho Oyu (8201 m), from north-west, 2005;
Dhaulagiri (8167 m) from the northeast, 2006;
Annapurna (8091 m) from the north, 2006;
Everest (8,848 m), north, 2007;
Manaslu (8156 m) from the west, 2008;
Lhotse (8546 m) from the south, 2010;
K2 (8611 meters), north, 2011.

Kazakhstan is now tied with Italy, Poland, Spain, and South Korea, in the ranking of countries with the highest number of climbers that have climbed all fourteen eight-thousanders.

[Back to Contents](#)

Also in the News:

- Kazakhstan has recognised the National Transitional Council (NTC) of Libya as the acting authority in the North African country. Kazakhstan’s Deputy Foreign Minister Kairat Sarybay announced the decision to Libuya’s Charge d’Affaires during a meeting on September 5. The Kazakh side hopes that the NTC will take urgent measures to ensure safety of civilians and restoration of stability. In turn, as the country chairing the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Kazakhstan is ready to mobilise the group’s resources to provide assistance in stabilising the situation and alleviating humanitarian crisis in Libya.
- Kazakhstan’s Defence Minister Adilbek Dzhakysbekov paid an official visit to Azerbaijan on September 6, where he held a meeting with his counterpart -- Azerbaijan’s Defence Minister Colonel General Safar Abiyev. The sides noted that the countries have effective cooperation

between the naval forces in hydrography, navigation, and the personnel training. Dzhaksybekov also met with Azerbaijan's Minister of Defence Industry Yaver Jamalov and visited enterprises of the defence-industrial complex to explore possibilities of cooperation in the military and technical field.

- The first day of work of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation under the chairmanship of Kazakhstan, which runs from September till the end of 2011, opened with a photo exhibition dedicated to the 20th anniversary of shutting down the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site, entitled "Twenty years from Epicentre of Nuclear Tests towards the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian Security Community." The pictures depicted tragic statistics about nuclear tests and their consequences, [Caspionet](#) wrote on September 6.
- International seminar on nuclear energy called "Innovative Project on the Establishment of the Kazakhstan Thermonuclear Material Testing Reactor Tokamak KTM" was held in Astana, [Caspionet](#) informed on September 6. Prominent nuclear physicists from Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Italy, South Korea, the United States, and Germany attended the meeting that, among other things, highlighted that Kazakhstan may become one of the world's largest exporters of nuclear energy generated in domestic nuclear plants in the future.
- Advisory council on the improvement of civil service was established in Kazakhstan on September 1, the Agency for Civil Service Affairs announced. The Council was created to provide scientific and analytical support for the Agency and the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan. The new body will be composed of representatives of government bodies, experts of research and other organizations that conduct studies in the field of civil service.
- Director General of JSC Astanatelecom (the capital-city branch of JSC Kazakhtelecom) Yermek Kuanyshbek said that more than 300 Wi-Fi access points to the Internet would be created in socially significant places in Astana, answering questions during an online conference on free Wi-Fi on September 6. Currently, free access is available at the Astana international airport, on the Nur Zhol Boulevard from the Khan Shatyr entertainment centre to the House of Ministries. Free wireless connection was launched on 4 July 2011, within the framework of implementing the "Smart Astana" project supervised by Astana's Akimat (Mayor's office).

Things to watch:

- On September 7 Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani is scheduled to meet Kazakhstan's President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Prime Minister Karim Massimov as part of his two-day visit to Astana (began today)
- Minister of Foreign Affairs Yerzhan Kazykhanov will pay an official visit to China during September 7-9. The programme of the visit will include talks with the Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, a meeting with the leadership of China, as well as other events
- Within Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Third Session of the Ministers of Health of the OIC is scheduled to take place in Astana from September 29 till October 1. During the conference, review of the draft of the Strategic Action Programme in the sphere of healthcare of the OIC for 2012-22 is expected to take place. In addition, the parties will also discuss cross-border cooperation within the framework of the OIC in achieving the Millennium Development Goals aimed at reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, as well as talks on global polio eradication, self-sufficiency, and production of drugs, including vaccines against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, are expected to be held.

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