

## CONCEPT

### **International Conference on Security and Sustainable Development in Central Asia under the Auspices of the United Nations «Central Asia: Shared Past and Common Future, Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Mutual Prosperity»**

*(Samarkand, November 10-11, 2017)*

I. The Central Asian States have tremendous potential for cooperation and development, they share a common spiritual and cultural-historical heritage, and they are brought together by unity of faith, closeness of the language and mentality of people. The countries of the region also share common water arteries and transport-communication networks as well as complementary economies. Being located in the heart of the Eurasian continent, Central Asia may once again become the centre of geopolitics, the hub of main inter-regional transport-transit corridors.

At the same time, the states of the region face common development challenges – the consequences of the ecological catastrophe of the Aral Sea; the lack of direct access to sea ports; the negative impact of the global financial and economic crisis; unfavourable trends in the global commodity market; low level of regional cooperation both in the economic and political spheres, that diminishes investment attractiveness of the region and impedes implementation of major regional projects.

The situation is aggravated by existing problems in interstate relations, related to transboundary water management, and the delimitation and demarcation of borders. The situation in Central Asia is seriously affected by instability in neighbouring Afghanistan, increasing challenges and threats of international terrorism and violent extremism, drug trafficking and organized crime.

In these challenging conditions strengthening of good-neighbourly and friendly ties, expanding and enhancing of political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation between Central Asian states is an objective necessity for reducing tension, preserving peace and stability in the region, and ensuring its sustainable development.

The Central Asian states have a firm understanding that the solution of all these vital issues faced by the region will only be possible by developing coordinated approaches.

The experience of regional cooperation, built up over 25 years since Central Asian states have gained independence, also demonstrates a need for the United Nations mechanisms in creating favourable conditions to strengthen stability and ensure lasting peace. The initiative of Central Asian countries to establish the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia

(UNRCCA) in 2007 has proved its efficiency and demonstrated the key role of the UN in providing assistance to the countries of the region in the settlement of disputed matters that cause tension.

The high-level International Conference on security and sustainable development in Central Asia, to be held in autumn in Samarkand under the auspices of the United Nations, will enable us to open exchange of views on current security and sustainable development problems in the region, to develop effective ways to address them, to identify specific promising areas for strengthening cooperation among Central Asian states, as well as to attract support of international donors and investors for regional development projects. The forum's slogan «Central Asia: Shared Past and Common Future, Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Mutual Prosperity» today reflects a broad public appeal in all Central Asian countries.

It is suggested that the following issues to be discussed in the event:

1) consolidating regional cooperation in combating terrorism, radicalization and the creeping expansion of extremism, illicit drug and weapon trafficking, transnational organized crime;

2) the evolving situation in Afghanistan, as well as the proposals and initiatives of Central Asian countries aimed at promoting stability and achieving peace in Afghanistan;

3) promising aspects of regional cooperation in political, trade-economic, transport-communication development and cultural-humanitarian spheres, aimed at solving pressing socio-economic problems of Central Asian population;

4) strengthening regional and international cooperation for mitigating the consequences of the Aral Sea ecological catastrophe, and modernizing the international legal basis of the use of Amudarya and Syrdarya water resources;

5) promoting the assistance of the international community to Central Asian countries in countering contemporary security challenges and ensuring sustainable development.

## **II. Key goals and objectives of the Conference:**

- strengthening the regional consultation mechanism (at the level of Foreign Ministers) to discuss Central Asian pressing issues and develop mutually acceptable solutions;

- initiating the adoption of the UN General Assembly Resolution On «Strengthening Regional and International Cooperation to Ensure Peace, Security and Sustainable Socio-Economic Development in the Central Asian Region»;

- promoting interstate dialogue on the use of transboundary waters in Central Asia on the basis of a common regional approach and international law;

- attracting the attention of the international community and donors to the problems related to the desiccation of the Aral Sea.

**III. The conference format** foresees the participation of approximately 200-250 people, including:

- from foreign states and international organizations: leadership of the UN, EU, OSCE, SCO, CIS, OIC, UNRCCA and others; Foreign Ministers of the Central Asian states, officials and experts from the USA, Russia, China, EU, Japan, South Korea, Turkey and other countries; representatives of foreign mass media (approximately 100 people);

- representatives of diplomatic corps in Tashkent, including UNDP, UNODC, UNESCO, USAID, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the Konrad Adenauer foundation, NGO «Regional Dialogue», ICRC and others (approximately 40-50 people);

- from Uzbekistan: representatives of the President's Office, Parliament, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Emergency Situations, National Security Service, State Committee for Investments, State Committee for Development of Tourism, Committee for International Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries, experts of scientific-research and analytical institutions.