**Factsheet on the Astana International Forum**

**Overview**

On 29–30 May 2025, Kazakhstan is hosting the Astana International Forum (AIF) under the theme *“Connecting Minds, Shaping the Future.”* The Forum serves as a global platform for dialogue and cooperation on today’s most pressing challenges.

The plenary session on 29 May featured keynote addresses by **President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Rwanda Paul Kagame, President of North Macedonia Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova, Secretary General of the Council of Europe Alain Berset, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (now President and Chair of the Global Green Growth Institute), and Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**. Other distinguished participants from around the world also took part.

This factsheet provides key points from President Tokayev’s speech as well as a summary of key messages from other speakers at the Forum.

**Key Points from President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev’s Speech**

**On Global Peace and Security**

* **Wars are outdated in the AI era**: Tokayev called modern conflicts “bizarre” in light of transformative technologies like artificial intelligence, which are reshaping humanity’s future. He urged societies to prioritize progress and enlightenment over violence and historical grievances.
* **Nuclear threats are growing**: With nine nuclear-armed states holding over 13,000 weapons, Tokayev warned of the rising risk of nuclear catastrophe, whether by miscalculation or escalation. He highlighted Kazakhstan’s moral authority as a nation that renounced nuclear weapons and continues to champion non-proliferation.
* **Violence is destabilizing the global economy**: The global cost of conflict reached $19 trillion—13.5% of world GDP. Tokayev noted the increasing complexity and longevity of wars, driven by multiple actors and deep-rooted grievances.

**On Global Governance and Multilateralism**

* **The global order is fragmenting**: Tokayev described the current state of international affairs as one of “profound uncertainty,” marked by the erosion of multilateralism, the rise of protectionism, and geopolitical fragmentation.
* **Kazakhstan promotes dialogue over division**: He reaffirmed Kazakhstan’s foreign policy as one of constructive engagement, respect for sovereign rights, and the protection of cultural and linguistic diversity under the motto “Unity in Diversity.”
* **Call to revive cooperation**: In a world where global cooperation is breaking down, Tokayev urged leaders to preserve existing partnerships and rebuild trust where it has eroded.

**On UN Reform and Multilateralism**

* **Global challenges, fragmented responses**: Tokayev stressed the disconnection between transnational threats and national-level responses, calling for reinvigorated global cooperation.
* **Middle powers must rise**: He urged middle powers, including Kazakhstan to shoulder more multilateral responsibility, contributing to an equitable and inclusive world order.
* **UN Security Council needs reform**: Kazakhstan supports expanding the Security Council to improve regional representation, reflecting today’s global complexity rather than the world of 1945.
* **UN must reflect today’s world**: The institutional disconnect weakens the UN’s credibility. Tokayev called for reforms to restore trust and enhance the organization’s relevance and effectiveness.
* **Defend territorial integrity and UN Charter**: He emphasized that big powers must uphold peace and territorial integrity, rejecting selective interpretations of the UN Charter to restore international trust.

**On Dialogue, Diplomacy, and the Role of the Astana International Forum**

* **The Astana Forum as a bridge**: The Forum exists to promote inclusive dialogue, mutual respect, and intellectual diversity, essential in today’s fragmented world.
* **Diplomacy must evolve**: Tokayev called for diplomacy that goes beyond protocol to build human-to-human trust, civic collaboration, and knowledge-sharing.
* **“Connecting Minds, Shaping the Future”**: This year’s theme is both a mission and a belief that progress relies on cooperation, not isolation.
* **Kazakhstan as a global convener**: The country seeks to act as a consensus-builder and trusted partner, connecting regions, cultures, and ideas to shape a more cooperative international future.

**On Kazakhstan’s Political and Institutional Reforms**

* **From super-presidentialism to checks and balances**: Kazakhstan has transitioned to a more balanced presidential system with stronger parliamentary oversight and institutional accountability.
* **Single presidential term for stability**: Tokayev enacted a one-term, seven-year presidency to reduce political risk and promote a more civilized and predictable governance model.
* **Inclusive political representation**: The new parliamentary system has expanded participation from civil society, women, youth, and vulnerable groups, reflecting a commitment to democratic pluralism.
* **Rule of law as reform foundation**: He emphasized that sustainable development depends on a functioning system of human rights protection under the principle of “Law and Order.”

**On Economic Transformation and Innovation**

* **Economic growth despite global turbulence**: In 2024, Kazakhstan achieved 5.1% GDP growth, record FDI levels, and a 62% surge in freight along the Trans-Caspian route.
* **A new social contract for shared prosperity**: Reforms aim to create an inclusive economy by investing in human capital, reducing regional disparities, and expanding opportunities for youth.
* **Tech and AI as growth engines**: Kazakhstan is advancing its digital transformation, with aspirations to become a leading IT and AI hub in Eurasia, including through partnerships with foreign universities and R&D centers.
* **Nuclear energy and crypto innovation**: Kazakhstan is planning to create CryptoCity, a pioneering pilot zone for cryptocurrency use, and is prioritizing nuclear energy—backed by its status as the source of 40% of the world’s uranium.

**On Climate and Regional Sustainability**

* **Central Asia is a climate hotspot**: Tokayev highlighted that the region is warming twice as fast as the global average, making climate resilience an urgent priority for sustainable development.
* **Kazakhstan leads regional climate cooperation**: The country is spearheading a pragmatic and coordinated climate agenda in Central Asia, including through international partnerships and institutional engagement.
* **UN-backed ecological summit in 2026**: Kazakhstan will host a Regional Ecological Summit with the United Nations to align Central Asian climate strategies with global goals, showcasing regional leadership on climate issues.
* **Sustainable Central Asia is a strategic goal**: Tokayev reiterated Kazakhstan’s commitment to building a stable, integrated, and future-oriented region, emphasizing mutual respect and solidarity as the basis for cooperation.

**On SDGs and Development Cooperation**

* **Kazakhstan is a regional hub for SDGs**: The establishment of the UN Regional Centre for the SDGs in Almaty marks a milestone in multilateral development, focusing on Central Asia and Afghanistan.
* **The Centre boosts regional capacity**: It will support joint projects, provide technical expertise, and coordinate international efforts to achieve sustainable development in the region.

**Key Points from Other Speakers**

**President Paul Kagame of Rwanda**

* **South-South cooperation is vital**: Emphasized the growing momentum in partnerships between Africa and Central Asia, framing them as a complement to global engagement, not an alternative.
* **Stronger collective voice**: South-South ties help countries in the Global South to assert shared interests more effectively on the global stage.

**President Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova of North Macedonia**

* **Feminization is humanization**: Called for greater female participation in international politics, emphasizing the importance of providing women with equal opportunities. She voiced her hope that the next UN Secretary General will be a woman.
* **Middle powers are key to multilateralism**: Highlighted the important role of smaller and mid-sized nations in upholding global cooperation.
* **UN Security Council must be reformed**: Called for the Council to be “expanded, democratized, and made more accountable”, aligning it with contemporary realities.

**Qu Dongyu, Director-General of the FAO**

* **Central Asia is at a strategic turning point**: Noted the region’s geographic, economic, and climate crossroads, which offer both challenges and opportunities.
* **Agro-food system as a driver of transformation**: Central Asia’s land, biodiversity, and location can be harnessed to build a resilient and sustainable food system.

**Alain Berset, Secretary General of the Council of Europe**

* **Democracy under threat**: Warned that democracy fails when votes are weaponized, accountability is ignored, and disinformation thrives.
* **Call for democratic integrity**: Urged leaders to defend truth, transparency, and institutional accountability in the face of rising political cynicism.

**Ban Ki-moon, President of the Global Green Growth Institute and 8th UN Secretary-General**

* **Kazakhstan’s collaborative leadership praised**: Commended the country for embracing a forward-looking and responsible approach to global dialogue.
* **Forum theme reflects global needs**: Noted that *“Connecting Minds, Shaping the Future”* captures the essence of inclusive, shared leadership required in today’s world.

**About the Astana International Forum**

The Astana International Forum (AIF) is a major global platform for dialogue, cooperation, and action. Established to address the world’s most pressing challenges through inclusive and constructive engagement, the Forum brings together leaders from government, international organizations, business, and academia.

Held under the theme *“Connecting Minds, Shaping the Future,”* this year’s Forum aims to fosters transformative discussions and practical solutions across a wide spectrum of global issues, including climate change, energy security, conflict prevention, and sustainable growth and development.

This year’s Forum features a high-level plenary session opened by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, with contributions from global dignitaries, as well as a two-day program including panels and one-on-one discussions.

Over 5,000 international participants are attending the Forum, including heads of delegations, corporate executives, and more than 100 foreign journalists.

AIF continues to position Kazakhstan as a bridge between regions and ideas, and as a trusted convener in an era of global uncertainty and opportunity.