

**The United
Nations
Regional Centre
for Preventive
Diplomacy
for Central Asia:
FIVE YEARS**



BACKGROUND

The United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) is a Special Political Mission of the United Nations established at the initiative of the Governments of the five Central Asian countries. It is a unique political structure that acts as a platform for dialogue and the exchange of opinions among the States of Central Asia, with a view to supporting them as they seek and develop mutually acceptable solutions to issues facing the region.

The inauguration of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy took place on 10 December 2007 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. While initiating this proposal, the Governments of the region took into consideration the multiple threats that face Central Asia, including international terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, organized crime and environmental degradation.

UNRCCA MISSION STATEMENT

The goal of the Centre is to assist and support the Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in building their conflict prevention capacities through enhanced dialogue, confidence building measures and establishing genuine partnership in order to respond to existing threats and emerging challenges in the Central Asian region.



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “NEUTRALITY AND PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY: BASES FOR PEACE AND SECURITY”

An International Conference entitled “*Neutrality and Preventive Diplomacy: Bases for Peace and Security*” was held in Ashgabat on 11 December 2012. The conference was co-organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA) to mark the fifth anniversary of the Centre’s establishment. This important event also took place on the eve of the celebration of Turkmenistan’s Neutrality. The General Assembly of the United Nations adopted a resolution recognizing the Permanent Neutrality of Turkmenistan on 12 December 1995.





PLENARY SESSION AT RUHYET PALACE

The conference was opened by His Excellency Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, President of Turkmenistan, at Ruhyyet Palace in Ashgabat. In his opening remarks, the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov said that *“the Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy, based in the capital of Neutral Turkmenistan, Ashgabat, has significantly contributed to strengthening peace and stability in the region, fostering good neighborly relations and cooperation”*.

The presidium of the conference also included Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, representing UN SG Ban Ki-moon, OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier, CIS Executive Committee President Sergey Lebedev, ECO Secretary General Shamil Aleskerov, SCO Secretary General Muratbek Imanaliev and SRSO and Head of UNRCCA Miroslav Jenča.

To mark UNRCCA's fifth anniversary the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message delivered by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Jeffrey Feltman, emphasized that prevention is *"one of the priorities of five-year action agenda"* and added that early warning and early action – focus areas of UNRCCA's work – *"can advance security and stability, save lives and promote sustainable development."*

In his welcoming speech, SRSO Jenča stressed that *"the Center has become a recognized partner in the region and beyond, and works to help the countries of Central Asia identify and develop mutually acceptable solutions to existing and emerging problems"*.





PARTICIPANTS

The conference gathered a dedicated group of high-ranking officials and knowledgeable experts from the region and beyond. In addition to those on the presidium, participants included Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov, Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Kairat Umarov, Deputy Foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan Samargul Adamkulova, First Deputy Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Makhmudzhon Sobirov, Deputy Foreign Minister of People's Republic of China Chen Guoping, Deputy Foreign Minister of Turkey Naci Koru, SRSG and Head of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Ján Kubiš, SRSG and Director of the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) Said Djinnit, SRSG and Head of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) Abou Moussa, Executive Director for Secretariat of the UN Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (UNRoD) Vladimir Goryayev, EU Special Representative for Central Asia Patricia Flor, Chairman of the Executive Committee of IFAS Saghit Ibatullin, Deputy Executive Director of CICA Kanat Tumysh, Director General of the UN Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan Ayoob Muhammad Erfani, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Turkmenistan Javkhar Izamov, Ambassador of the United States to Turkmenistan Robert Patterson, Ambassador of Russia to Turkmenistan Alexander Blokhin, Deputy Director of the Third Department for the CIS of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Vladimir Kandin, as well as UNHCR Regional Representative and Regional Coordinator for Central Asia Saber Azam, Director of the Office and UNESCO Representative to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan Sergey Lazarev, Regional Director of UN Women Damira Sartbaeva, Regional Advisor on Economic Coop-

eration and Integration for UNECE Marton Krasznai, Representative of UN Women in Kyrgyzstan Sabine Machl and Representative in Kazakhstan of the Department of Public Information of the UN Secretariat Vlastimil Samek. Other participants included international academics and the diplomatic corps in Turkmenistan and Turkmen ambassadors abroad.

GOAL OF THE CONFERENCE

The goal of the conference was to showcase preventive diplomacy as a constructive tool to prevent conflicts and escalation of tensions, including by highlighting vivid examples of its practical application on the ground.

Participants discussed lessons learnt, best practices, prospects and challenges in the field. They emphasized the importance of early warning, mediation and various forms of dialogue facilitation, but also stressed the challenge of timely and unified diplomatic action.



CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

The participants expressed appreciation for the role of regional structures such as UNRCCA, UNOCA and UNOWA in addressing existing and emerging threats to peace and stability in their respective regions, together with regional and sub-regional actors. Taking note of the vast experience and positive role of these regional structures, the participants expressed the conviction that their establishment brought new dynamics to attempts to deal with regional challenges and facilitated speedy action to address potential trans-border threats. The participants emphasized that such regional structures could also be valuable in other parts of the world as tools for preventive diplomacy and broader conflict prevention.

"I encourage the countries of Central Asia to continue to deepen cooperation to address the region's challenges and to seize the many opportunities for shared progress", - Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General, United Nations.



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