

2018 Astana Civil Service Hub Annual Conference
Opening remarks by Alikhan Baimenov
8 June 2018

Good morning, dear excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, friends!

Welcome to Astana!

According to the annual tradition, the representatives over 40 countries have gathered today to share the best practices in advancing public service.

Over the past years our ranks have expanded, and the quality of partnerships has enhanced to a new level. We call the Hub Regional, but, in fact, it has grown over its boundaries and became a global platform. This has become possible thanks to our joint efforts.

These achievements, as well as the relevance of the Astana Hub's activity, determine future opportunities for fruitful collaboration.

I believe that today's exchange of ideas will give a new impulse to our joint endeavor.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen!

Five years ago, the Founding Conference outlined the Hub's priorities and modality. The time has shown that the **initially chosen approach** of the minimized red-tape and demand-driven flexibility does pay off.

This is evidenced not only in the increased number of the participating countries from 25 to 40, but in the ever-growing interest to the Hub's initiatives.

Looking back at five-year history, I would like to share key lessons learned.

First, from the very beginning it was crucial to outline **the right expectations**. At the Founding Conference we agreed instead of the term “a member” to **use the term “a participating country”**, which corresponds to the Hub's flexibility approach.

Second, the Hub's agenda and activities are **flexible and demand-driven**. We understand that each country implements reforms at different pace and change priorities accordingly. Therefore, we try to adjust to such changes and periodically conduct **needs assessment studies**.

Third, we do not develop direct recommendations to the governments, but serve as a knowledge platform on modern trends, innovations and best practices. The governments of the participating countries themselves decide which solutions **fit best to their unique cultural, political and social contexts**.

Next, we try to **minimize the red-tape procedures** in the daily operations of the Hub's Secretariat, Steering Committee and Advisory Board.

Over the past 5 years, we have built strong partnerships. We highly value our collaboration with our key partners - the **civil**

service agencies of the participating countries. Jointly with the participating countries we have conducted **70 capacity building activities** for almost **2,000 civil servants from 100 countries**.

To close the evidence-based research and knowledge gaps in the region, the Hub cooperates with the **leading universities and research centers**. Jointly we have produced over 40 knowledge products, including our flagship publication ***Global and Regional Trends in Civil Service Development***.

Partnership with the **OECD Directorate for Public Governance** is crucial for the Hub. Their rich expertise in civil service development is highly demanded. We are proud that OECD recognized the Astana Hub as a platform to disseminate its public governance **standards and principles**.

We also highly value our cooperation with professional networks and associations, especially the **American Society and Asian Association of Public Administration**, who provide the best international expertise in public service.

We do appreciate the all-round support of **the Diplomatic Corps** in Astana, who are always open to our initiatives and proposals. Their support in **expanding the geography of our activities** and connecting us to the key public institutions around the world is much appreciated.

We greatly value the collaboration established with the **UN structures**, particularly with the **UN Women, the UN Office**

for South-South Cooperation, UNDESA, ECOSOS and the UNPAN.

Dear guests,

The President of Kazakhstan in his address to the participants of the Hub's Founding Conference endorsed the Hub's inception. This ensured institutional and financial support to the Hub, implemented through the agreement between Kazakhstan Government and UNDP. We appreciate its extension for another 3-year period.

I am honored **to note the key role** of the UNDP in the Hub's development from its very first days. We have been successfully partnering with the **UNDP Headquarters, Istanbul Regional Hub and Global Centre for Public Service Excellence in Singapore.**

Special thanks go to the whole team of **UNDP Country Office in Kazakhstan** and personally to Mr. Norimasa Shimomura for being flexible, open and supportive to the unique nature of the Hub.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen!

The whole world has accepted **Sustainable Development Goals** enthusiastically and are working towards their achievement.

The Hub's activity is an example of a broad partnership between governments and the UN to achieve the SDGs.

Considering the importance of SDGs, we devoted this year's Annual Conference to Public Service in SDGs era. Furthermore, SDG-related activities will be one of the Hub's priorities for the upcoming years.

Dear colleagues,

All our efforts are oriented to the sustainable development and prosperity of our countries.

I wish a success in your endeavors and hope that the Conference will give a fresh impetus to our work.

May all your hopes come true **in this holy month of Ramadan!**

Thank you.