

# Dynamic bilateral relationship

By **KAIRAT ABDRAKHMANOV**

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H.E. KAIRAT ABDRAKHMANOV was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs in 2016 having previously been Permanent Representative to the United Nations since 2013. He has also served twice as deputy Foreign Minister as well as Permanent Representative to the OSCE and Ambassador to Israel and Austria. He holds a degree from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in History and was Lecturer in History at Kazakh National Technical University before he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On January 10th in New York, Kazakhstan participated in a UNSC Open Debate on Conflict Prevention and Sustaining Peace, as a non-permanent Member of the UN Security Council

From our earliest days as a modern, independent nation, Kazakhstan has attached considerable importance to international relations with the United Kingdom. This year Kazakhstan and the UK celebrate 25 years of bilateral relations. Kazakh-British relations are characterised by high levels of activity, with our strategic partnership operating not only at the highest level, but also between businesses, within academic circles and between governmental bodies of our two countries. I look forward to building further on Kazakhstan's relationship with the UK as we open new doors and build a prosperous future together.

Kazakhstan remains committed to developing this dynamic bilateral relationship, which has already achieved a great deal. This is the case particularly in terms of education as British universities have taken a leading role in training the students of the "Bolashak" scholarship programme. According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan, some 2,000 students are now studying in the UK.

A great symbol of the strength of the Kazakhstan-UK

bilateral relationship was Britain's readiness to participate at a high level in the EXPO 2017 exhibition, which took place in Astana earlier this year. President Nazarbayev has set our country a goal of meeting half our domestic power needs from renewable resources by 2050 and because of our deep commitment to sustainable development, we chose *Future Energy* as the theme for the EXPO 2017. This international exhibition encouraged countries to share knowledge and technology to tackle climate change. Hosting this prestigious event for the first time in Central Asia was a milestone not just for our country but the entire region. It was also an excellent opportunity for London to show the world its latest technological and innovative developments in the field of energy.

EXPO 2017 has also provided a major boost to our country's tourist industry. Indeed, Kazakhstan is regularly listed high in the must-visit destinations for 2017. Our country has breath-taking natural scenery, a fascinating culture and history, and, as visitors to Astana are already finding, very welcoming citizens. Kazakhstan has gained from the high-profile which EXPO 2017 has created.



This is an important year for our country. Our commitment to peace and dialogue has seen us become the first country from Central Asia to sit on the United Nations Security Council. This is both an honour and a significant responsibility which allows Kazakhstan to bring our unique geographical, historical and cultural perspective to tackle the most serious security issues facing the world.

Over the years, Kazakhstan has preserved peace and harmony in our multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, while also creating an efficient economic model – our economy has grown 20-fold and major international corporations have established and strengthened their presence in Kazakhstan by investing more than US\$ 265 billion. This year, Kazakhstan achieved 32nd position in the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking – a remarkable rise of 15 places, and 35th ranking in the Ease of Doing Business Index, going 16 places higher. Looking forward, Kazakhstan has a clear vision for its future development. By 2050, we aim to become one of the top thirty most competitive economies in the world, meeting the most advanced global standards in terms of economic performance and transparent governance, amongst those of the OECD.

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division, on cooperation rather than rivalry.

President Nazarbayev has set our country a goal of becoming one of the top thirty global economies by 2050. We are determined to draw on ideas and expertise from across the world to help achieve this. We all share this planet and it is vital that global economic growth does not take place at the expense of our environment and future generations. We believe strongly, in Kazakhstan, that we must all prosper together. Our intention is to support least developed countries, least developed landlocked countries, and small island developing states.

With a purpose to build a more efficient, sustainable, modern system of governance, this year, President Nazarbayev initiated constitutional reform in Kazakhstan. This reform, now well under way, sets the goal of considerably redistributing powers between its three branches and further democratising the political system as a whole. The key step is the transfer of some presidential powers to the Parliament and the Government and strengthening the genuine system of checks and balances. These processes of economic and political modernisation will be accompanied by our quest for a modernisation of Kazakhstan's national identity and its own cultural code to create conditions for a new generation of competitive and pragmatic citizens and leaders with a thirst for knowledge, progressive consciousness, and an open attitude. **F**



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Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, Mr Kairat Abdrakhmanov meets with UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson