



Kazakhstan Canada
Business Council

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**Kazakhstan Canada Business Council 4th Meeting
Report of the Working Group for Healthcare & Education
November 19th, 2020**

BACKGROUND:

1. CO-CHAIRS:

(i) Kazakhstan: Vice-Minister of Healthcare of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr. Yerlan Kiyasov

- Vice-Minister Kiyasov opened his remarks by saying that there was already good cooperation between Kazakhstan and Canada, and that there was great potential for cooperation. He stated that in 2020 no one had forecast, nor was ready for, the pandemic. He underlined that this meeting was important for identifying new areas of potential partnerships – that Canada had much experience and a good reputation in both education and healthcare sectors

(ii) Canada: Margaret Skok, former Ambassador, Carleton University

- M. Skok thanked Cameco and Kazatomprom, the Ambassadors for Canada and Kazakhstan, and the CERBA team. She introduced the 5 Working Groups, underlined that this was a new WG, established during a challenging time and with some hesitation. Special thank you was extended to the Speakers who - during their extremely critical work schedules - took the time to address the KCBC sessions.

Moderator: Taskyn Koshman, KCBC Coordinator, CERBA Regional Director

Ms. Koshman provided background on KCBC and its objectives, noted that the media transcript would be made available to participants; and introduced presenters.

135 participants



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2. SPEAKERS (Bios Attached)

(i) Session on HEALTHCARE

- **Danay Smagulov**, Director of the Investment Policy Department of the Ministry of the Health of the R o K, PPP projects in the healthcare sector of Kazakhstan
- **Talgat Tursynbayev**, Vice-President PPP (Public-Private Partnership) Center in Kazakhstan
- **Damir Kobzhasarov**, Director of the National Center for Public Health
- **Gulnaz Tanatarova**, Director for Science and Human Resources Department, Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- **Nurlan Dauletbayev**, Adjunct Professor, McGill University, Visiting Professor, al-Farabi Kazakh National University
- **Eva Slaweki**, Executive Director of the Canadian Society for International Health
- **Hafid Soualhine**, PhD, Chief of the National Reference Centre for Mycobacteriology, National Microbiology Laboratory, Public Health Agency of Canada
- **Vern Biccum**, President of the IRIDIA Medical - Running a Healthy Business in the face of COVID-19 - A Canadian Perspective
- **Tanya Cederholm**, Director/Owner of the Infinity Medical Services



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2. SPEAKERS (Bios Attached)

(ii) Session on EDUCATION:

- **Yerkebulan Buranbayev** (replacing Vice Minister Bigari,) Director for International Cooperation/Ministry of Education and Science:
- **Ainur Karbozova**, President, JSC Centre for International Programmers
- **Dr. Loretta O'Donnell**, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs of Nazarbayev University
- **Jennifer Daubeny**, Executive Director of the International Education Division, Global Affairs Canada
- **Dr. Randall Martin**, British Columbia Council for International Education
- **Dr. Teddy Y. Samy**, Director, The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA), Carleton University, Ottawa



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3. REPORT

3.1 Healthcare:

M. Skok introduced the session, noting that Canada's Epidemiological data is updated daily. She noted that currently Canada was experiencing a "second wave" and Epi data indicated that the COVID-19 transmission cases are seriously on the rise. As of November 17, 2020 there were over 310,000 confirmed cases, 11,176 deaths, and 247, 976 recovered (pop 37.7 mln). She mentioned that Canada's border to USA, except for essential travel, would now remain closed until December 21, 2020. As of November 18th, several provinces and territories are implementing new measures, including partial lockdowns, full lockdowns in certain regions, and some interprovincial travel restrictions. Noted was that there were almost daily PM and Premier briefings, together with the Medical Officers for federal, provincial and territorial governments.

- **D. Smagulov:** There are several medical centre projects already underway with various partners. Additionally, there is funding for 4 important initiatives, through a competitive process, to be launched throughout 2021. The requirement is for the building of 4 hospitals, over different time periods. Some of the funding is private; other sources include EBRD, Eurasian Bank, ADB: a teaching hospital in Almaty, a university hospital in Karaganda, as well as hospitals in Ust- Kamenogorsk and Kyzylorda. Timeframe is 5 – 35 years.
- **T. Tursynbayev:** There are 815 projects at a cost of 2 - 3 trillion tenge, a combination of private and public funding - PPP model , addressing training and improving competencies. Kazakhstan has been working with InterHealth Canada since 2016. Currently legislation is being reviewed aimed at the protection of foreign investors. Canadian partners would have quasi agreements with the government of Kazakhstan. Looking for Canadian experience to enhance Kazakhstan's level and quality of services.



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- **D. Kobzhasarov:** After the first outbreak in China, like everyone – Kazakhstan started implementing measures, particularly given the large border shared with PRC. First case was confirmed March 13, 2020. A pan-government commission was established to establish policy and approaches for every aspect of control: border measures, isolation/quarantine, hygiene protocols and guidelines. First wave saw 120,000 cases, 1900 deaths, and a 60% recovery rate. Second wave - 40,000 infected, 420 deaths; and given new measures, recovery rate is now 90%. 4mln tests have been administered. Registration of cases, full monitoring of cases, and contact tracing all implemented. All statistics are presented to the Government and President on a daily basis, in the event that measures need to be increased and/or modified.
- **G. Tanatarova** - deal with people resources, education and training. There was much need and much material to absorb, but there is not enough time. We have government programs, legislation and regulations. Given COVID, however, colossal changes have been required in medical education and training. Strategic partnerships are required. We have several options...visiting professors, increased capacity for training managers. Clinical work possibly needs to be integrated into faculties. We studied international efforts re staff, research, therapy, medicines. Planned: improve qualifications of professional standards, broaden support.



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- **N. Dauletbayev:** knowledge transfer is part of the essential development. Would like to see more students in Canada. March 2019 an MOU was signed between McGill University and Al-Farabi. Focus: neuro rehab, physical rehab and rehab for children. A visit by McGill to Almaty post- COVID related to rehab, indicated interest in learning from Canada's experience. Evidence based practices urgently needed, as well as courses in medical English-language. Main objective is to enhance evidence -based clinical practice, as well as digital medicine. Broader collaboration needed between McGill and Al- Farabi, as well as agreement with Ministry of Health. Need healthcare policies, distance learning.
- **E. Slaweki :** has over 20 years of experience carrying out reform projects in former Eastern Europe and Kazakhstan. CSIH is an NGO, and work to convene partners, carry out projects with capacity building, sustainable health systems. To date, 15 CSIH WHO- funded project focused on 4 main areas - medical education, international accreditation for health facilities, governance and management capability. The approach is based on evidence-based practices in order to improve patient care. Expertise includes clinical guidelines addressing chronic health care (strokes, heart, diabetes, etc.) .



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- **H. Soualhine:** As with all transmissible diseases, epidemics and pandemics, the Microbiology Lab, immediately implements guidance looking at prevention measures (quarantine, distancing, masks, hand hygiene). Public Health Authorities work across all governments in Canada, and are mandated to assess risk, risk mitigation, and address steps required, including establishing a Mitigation Framework. Efforts are also focused on the issue of community spread, with emphasis on congregate living, business, schools & day cares, social gatherings, transportation. Risk assessments, prevention, and mitigation measures carried out, working with local public health officials. Information is shared with all public health authorities, and laboratories re quality control. Process is dynamic – that is, it adapts to every-changing conditions and developments. Canada also has had success stories re the repatriation of Canadians after the first COVID wave, work with First Nations, Inuit & Metis regarding remote COVID testing.
- **V. Biccum** – At the outset, business did not know how to react. They needed a strategy, and a concrete framework in order to continue the business but offer a safe workplace. Measures included identifying and screening staff in advance, overall testing within an organization, and addressing issues of asymptomatic people. Also had to look at a new business environment - remote work, split shifts, and learning to look at a business from a completely different perspective. Extreme issues are within the service industry such as high touch points, cleaning schedules, and the need to engage staff in learning and practical process.
- **T. Cederholm** - Industrial work sites - the challenge is how do you keep workers on site, and keep a safe work site operating. An additional economic and employment challenge. "Safe work practices" ie not sharing pens, tools, teamed up with Labs to do remote testing in work spaces. Testing pods...keep health workers separate from those being tested. Support for mobile pods for remote healthcare.



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- ❖ **Closing Remarks by M. Skok**: Summarized some of the opportunities, which appear at the end of the WG Report.
- ❖ **Closing Remarks by Vice Minister Kiyasov**: Stated that he hoped that these exchanges would lead to positive outcomes. He thanked the Canadian side and partners for excellent organization. He expressed his wish that future collaborative work between Kazakhstan and Canada be sustainable. He thanks all speakers and KCBC for an excellent event, which were thoughtful and knowledgeable.



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3.2 EDUCATION

M. Skok : introduced the session by noting that Statistics Canada forecast that Canadian universities could lose as much as \$3.4 billion this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic impact. Stats Canada projected that this loss, in large part, was due to a decrease in the number of foreign students. There is also an impact for Canadian students, some of whom are not returning after this school year. Tuition fees in Canada represent almost 30% of school funding. However, Universities and Technical Colleges are adapting, and this is where we also find opportunities.

Y. Buranbayev (replacing Vice Minister Bigari,) Director for International Cooperation/Ministry of Education and Science: Kazakhstan knows that Canadian universities are amongst the best in the world. He noted that there are 6 international agreements each between Canadian and Kazakh universities. The need would be to continue cooperation in post graduate studies, as well as in the sciences. There were two aspects of the cooperation – international student accreditation and mobility opportunities, in both directions. The aim is to achieve a competitive level of results and integrate education into practice. “We would invite Canadian universities to open campuses in Kazakhstan. “



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- **A. Karbazova:** COVID has caused inconveniences in the education sector. Kazakhstan would like to continue to expand the relationships with countries for our students via Boloshaq. The President's initiative, launched in 1993, 27 years ago, to date has supported 13, 000 scholarships, 11000 graduates...contributing to Kazakhstan's economy and country. There was a historical decision to provide 3000 annual scholarships under Ministry of Education and Science, with the potential for intergovernmental exchanges and scholarships, attracting foreign teachers and students to Kazakhstan. The internationalization of higher education is a goal, opening international campuses and offices. Pres Tokayev announced 500 internships for scientists. Sectors of placement included public administration, engineering, petroleum engineering, economics, architecture...so more potential for Canadian students. 537 universities were identified as partners, including in Canada.
- **Dr O'Donnell:** Interested in working with Canadian universities in research, grounded in a Eurasian studies program. "We would welcome Canadian students". PhD programs in mining, engineering, public health. Nazarbayev University has 550 profs from around the world, 12 of whom are Canadian, from NFLD and Nova Scotia. Need to explore opportunities with Canada. Full research university - internships, virtual internships and *in situ*.



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- **J Daubeny:** Education in Canada is within provincial and territorial jurisdiction. At Global Affairs Canada, the responsibility for bilateral and multilateral policy, to support education development initiatives, and promote education as a priority export sector. At the end of 2019, there were 650, 000 international students. High quality of education, including research, innovation student- centred approach makes Canadian studies attractive. In spite of COVID, the government remains committed to its international strategy. With \$148 mln over 5 years - trying to recruit more international students, as well - would wish to support Canadian students going abroad to study. A flexible approach is supported to facilitate work and study permits. French and English language education is also offered, as Canada is officially a bilingual country. In 2019, there were 1195 Kazakh students in Canada. Study in Canada Program, in which Kazakhstan has participated previously is in place and Canada's Senior Trade Commissioner at the Embassy would be pleased to communicate opportunities to clients and address range of opportunities.
- **Dr Randall Martin:** There are scholarships in Canada involved in new market entry, inbound and outbound students, from Kindergarten level to PhD. The British Columbia Council for International Education works closely with both the provincial and federal governments. Importance of international education is highlighted; it is seen as a driver of innovation and intercultural diversification. BC's education system is strong K-12 to Univ. In spite of a decrease in revenues, there is now more scope for access and equity inclusion in education. Steady growth of student permits and growth in the number of students from Kazakhstan is significant. An area of potential interest would be BC's offshore school program, whereby students who are registered in the BC Global Education Program K-12 at an offshore school, receive instruction in English by B.C. certified teachers.



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- **Dr Samy** : Carleton is a mid-sized university, mostly undergraduate programs, 75 years old, 5000 international students. A premium aspect is its location in Ottawa – the capital and connected to Ottawa's policy centre. The other university, University of Ottawa and Carleton - complement each other. Many visiting scholars. There is excellence in public administration, engineering, science, architecture and journalism. There is a new BA program - international studies and business. NPSIA offers graduate and MBA programs. Visiting scholars and researchers are welcomed each year. Key contacts for international cooperation are provided on our website. “It is a challenging environment for everyone. Hard to know what the long-term impact will be. Bigger question, how long this will go on. “

Closing Remarks, Vice Minister Kiyasov:

We wish to believe that this meeting will bring fruitful cooperation, where the opportunities are identified. We thought that the meeting was most informative. We shall be looking at the contacts provided. The healthcare presentations were most useful. I view the follow up potential in both sessions - as significant and positive.



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4.1 OPPORTUNITIES

- Design & Construction of 4 hospitals
- Partnership with InterHealth Canada for training re level and quality of service
- Epidemiological monitoring , prevention measures and remote testing
- Qualifications of professional standards, partner on training
- Capacity building, international standards accreditation
- Microbiology Laboratory: Collaborate on private research, and exchange material.
- Models for ensuring safe business environments through pandemics
- Opportunities for increasing BoloshaQ scholarship students in Canada, increasing the number of participating Canadian universities and student and prof mobility, plus internships
- innovative approach to studies supporting industry sectors (sciences), as well as invitation to locate Canadian campuses in Kazakhstan
- Nazarbayev University – interested in Eurasian studies program, profs and students , as well as internships
- Study in Canada Program for Kazakh students
- BC Offshore Schools, Pre-Certification Agreements - open
- Carleton University: BA in International Affairs program, and Eurasian studies program, Science, Engineering, Architecture & Journalism
- Cooperation with Canada in higher education sphere and science.
- Higher educational institutions and research organizations of Kazakhstan are interested in cooperation with leading universities of Canada in next 2 areas:
 - International student mobility and academic exchanges.
 - Cooperation in the field of research activities by signing of contracts, agreements and protocols with Canadian universities in the research area.
- Opening of Canadian universities' branches in Kazakhstan. Canadian Universities may consider Kazakhstan for opening their branches.



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Road Map: Next steps and Time Frame

(to be identified by potential partners and government)



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THANK YOU