

RESULTS

Governing Transitions Forum:
Climate, AI and Sustainable Future
for Kazakhstan and Central Asia

7 November 2025
Nazarbayev University, Astana



About the Forum

105

Participants
registered

11

Male

21

Speakers

10

Female

8

Countries
represented by
speakers

5

Sessions

The **Governing Transitions Forum** was held on **7 November 2025** at **Nazarbayev University**, Astana, under the theme “Climate, AI, and a Sustainable Future for Kazakhstan and Central Asia”.

The Forum was organized within the framework of the **annual Chapter Zero Forum**, with **Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Business** serving as the main co-organizer.

The event brought together **105 registered participants** representing **10 sectors**, including representatives of international organizations, diplomatic missions, leading oil, gas, and energy companies, and the academic community.

The Forum was supported by a broad range of partners, including INSEAD, the European Union, the Embassy of the United Kingdom, Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Public Policy, KazMunayGas NC JSC, the Central Asian Association of Corporate Secretaries, the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and Westminster International University, among others.



The **Governing Transitions Forum** programme focused on key issues at the intersection of **governance, artificial intelligence, and climate transition**. The agenda was structured around five thematic sessions, addressing the most relevant regional priorities.

Discussions covered topics such as **climate risks, Kazakhstan's role in the global energy and climate agenda, board-level leadership, and economic governance** amid technological and energy transformation.

The programme reflected the sustainability priorities outlined by **President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev**, particularly the balance between energy security and Kazakhstan's commitment to **carbon neutrality by 2060**. A total of **21 speakers** examined how Kazakhstan and Central Asia are navigating overlapping global transitions—climate change, energy transformation, and the rise of artificial intelligence—with far-reaching implications for governance, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability.



Main Sessions and Key Speakers

Opening Remarks



Dr. Tom Vinaimont, Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs, Nazarbayev University

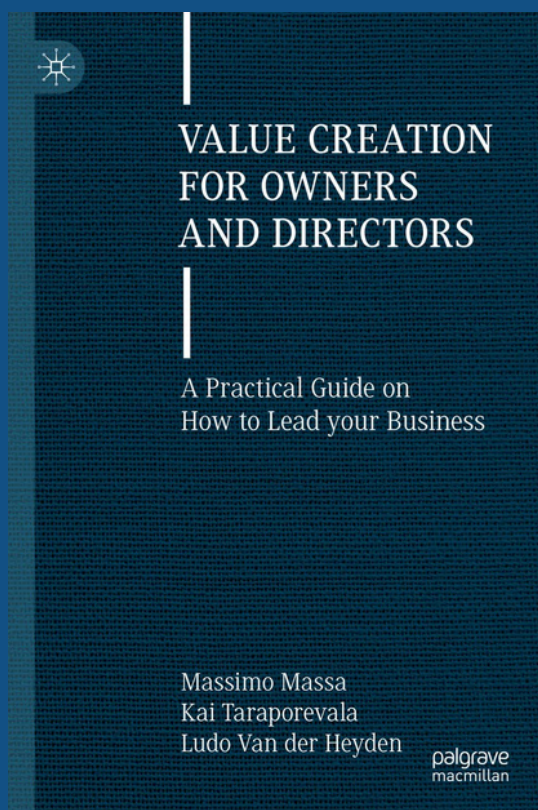


Gulzada Shakulikova, Co-chair of the Board of Directors, Chapter Zero Kazakhstan



Olga Bulavkina, Member of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Book Presentation



Daniyar Salimbayev, Government Relations & Corporate Affairs Director, TotalEnergies Kazakhstan, added:

"The book "Value Creation for Owners and Directors" is rich with real-world case studies and insights — an essential guide for decision-makers. We are proud to sponsor its Russian translation, making this valuable knowledge accessible to future leaders and entrepreneurs in Kazakhstan and Central Asia".

TotalEnergies has proudly supported the dissemination of the landmark book "Value Creation for Owners and Directors" by Prof. Ludo Van der Heyden, Chaired Professor Emeritus in Corporate Governance & IMD Distinguished Scholar, INSEAD, and Member of the Board of Directors, Chapter Zero Kazakhstan. The presentation was during the opening, setting the floor for meaningful discussion.

Keynote Address: The Role of Corporate Governance in a New World Order

In a rapidly changing world shaped by **climate risks, artificial intelligence, and geopolitical shifts**, corporate governance plays a defining role in how organizations create trust, resilience, and long-term value.

Addressing these challenges, **Prof. Ludo Van der Heyden**, Chaired Professor Emeritus in Corporate Governance & IMD Distinguished Scholar, INSEAD, and Member of the Board of Directors, Chapter Zero Kazakhstan, delivered a keynote on **how boards and leaders** can navigate this **new world order** through principles, ethics, and continuous learning.

In his speech he noted that:

"Best practice is a dangerous notion in corporate governance as every corporation, every board, and every country is unique. The first task is to **distinguish good from bad governance**. The second task is to continuously improve corporate governance practice as contexts change and the world continues to transform itself".

Prof. Van der Heyden's message served as a powerful reminder that **governance is not static** — it is a living system of accountability, culture, and purpose that must evolve as the world evolves.

Prof. Van der Heyden has also shared his **thoughts on the book** "Value Creation for Owners and Directors":

"I am honored by Chapter Zero Kazakhstan's initiative and grateful to **TotalEnergies Kazakhstan** for supporting the translation of Value Creation for Owners and Directors. This effort will help Kazakh and Central Asian leaders apply universal principles of good governance".



Prof. Ludo Van der Heyden, Chaired Professor Emeritus in Corporate Governance & IMD Distinguished Scholar INSEAD, Member of the Board of Directors, Chapter Zero Kazakhstan

Plenary Session I: Governing Fragmentation, Climate Risks & Resilience



Aleška Simkić
Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Kazakhstan



Sally Axworthy
Ambassador of the United Kingdom to Kazakhstan



Prof. Scott Valentine
Graduate School of Public Policy, Nazarbayev University



Rassul Rysmambetov
Chairman of National analytical center (NU)



Zhardem Kurmangazyev
Executive Director, Central Asian Association of Corporate Secretaries



Moderator: Dr. David De Remer
Assistant Professor and Director of Societal Impact, Nazarbayev University

We operate where strategy meets execution — the **boardroom**. For us, fragmentation isn't a theory; it's a governance challenge that determines cost of capital, market access, and decision speed. Kazakhstan operates in a multipolar, protectionist, and standards-divergent world — creating pricing, legal, and reputational uncertainty for exporters and capital-seekers. Add climate volatility, and boards must ensure their decisions survive shifts in corridors, standards, FX, and weather extremes.

As global power structures shift, Kazakhstan and Central Asia must navigate geopolitical fragmentation while maintaining **credibility** and **competitiveness**. This session covered strategies for governing **systemic climate risks** in **energy, water, and agriculture**, fostering institutional resilience, and future-proofing economic models amid global uncertainty.



"Fragmentation" spans six vectors boards must govern: trade and standards divergence; finance and payments risk; data and technology sovereignty; energy security; logistics corridors; and climate and water pressures. In this environment, fiduciary duty means governing uncertainty through process and portfolio discipline.

Session outcome: a one-page Fragmentation Operating Picture 2026 — outlining eight critical uncertainties for Kazakhstan's boards and the indicators to watch.

Plenary Session II: Kazakhstan's Global Role in AI Governance, digital sovereignty



Prof. Theos Evgeniou
Professor INSEAD,
Co-Founder Tremau,
Co-Founder
NoeSysAI



Zhanat Zhakhmetova
Director of the Digital
Development
Department of
KazMunayGas NC
JSC



Dinara Shcheglova
Vice Minister of
Science and Higher
Education of the
Republic of
Kazakhstan



Prof. Thomas Kruessmann
Westminster
International
University,
Uzbekistan



**Moderator:
Prof. Jiyang Dong**
Assistant Professor of Strategy
and Entrepreneurship at the
Graduate School of Business of
Nazarbayev University

This session is not a corporate “how-to” — it’s about giving Kazakhstan a clear, credible operating model for AI that attracts investment, protects people, and accelerates innovation. Digital sovereignty here means reliable access to data, compute, and standards — not isolation — enabling startups, SOEs, and ministries to innovate confidently and interoperate globally.



Forum outcome: a shared “North Star” – the five pillars:

- **National principles** for trustworthy, pro-innovation AI
- **Governance architecture:** a map assigning policy leads
- **Risk-tiering:** clear low/medium/high impact categories with matching controls
- **Data & compute access:** priority datasets, secure data sharing
- **Public trust & redress:** transparency on AI use, incident reporting

AI is moving faster than institutions. Without a national frame, agencies duplicate work, companies face shifting rules, and citizens lose trust.



Plenary Session III: Rethinking economic governance in an era of transitions: from sustainability to AI



Prof. Ludo Van der Heyden

Chaired Professor
Emeritus in Corporate
Governance & IMD
Distinguished Scholar
INSEAD



Prof. Scott Valentine

Graduate School of
Public Policy,
Nazarbayev University



Prof. Venkat Subramanian

Associate Dean and
Professor of Strategy at
Nazarbayev University
Graduate School of
Business



Prof. Thomas Kruessmann

Westminster
International
University, Uzbekistan



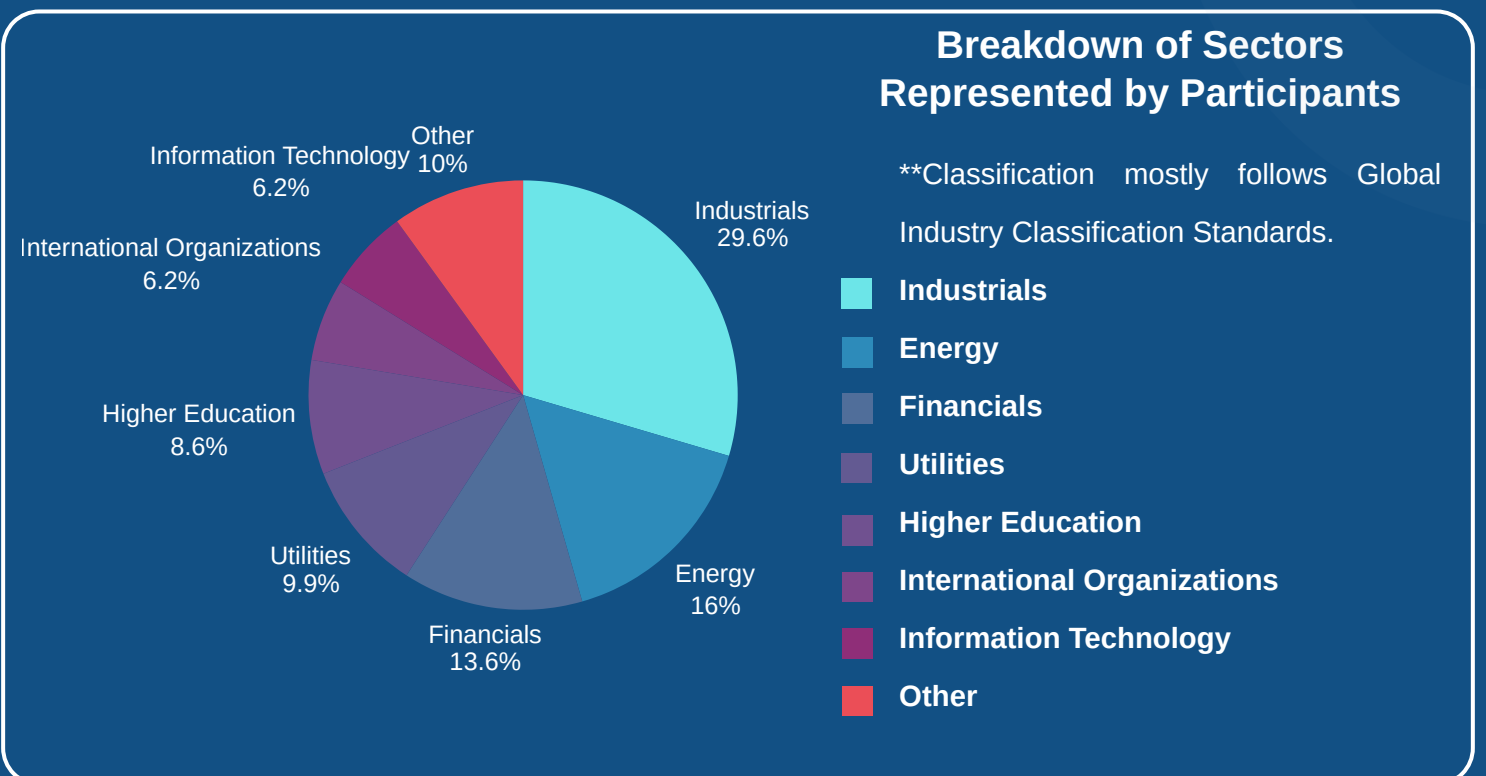
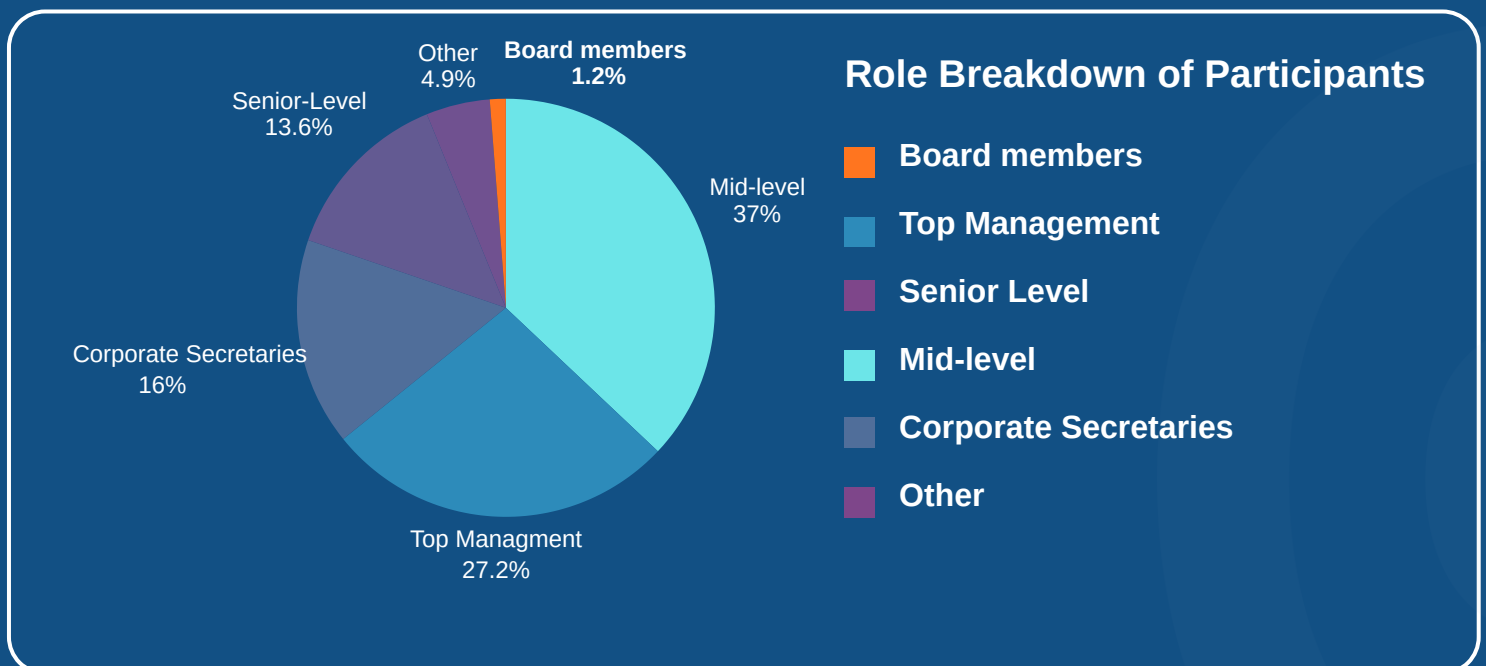
Moderator: Prof. Roza Nurgozhayeva

Assistant Professor of Business
Law at Nazarbayev University
Graduate School of Business

This session brought together leading scholars to discuss **how corporate governance systems** in Kazakhstan and Central Asia can **adapt** to the challenges of decarbonizing the economy, AI-driven digital transformation, and changing investor expectations. Participants discussed how these processes are reshaping corporate purpose, the responsibilities of boards of directors, and institutional legitimacy, and identified practical lessons for boards and top management: from integrating sustainability into core strategy to establishing effective oversight of the ethical use of AI and data management.



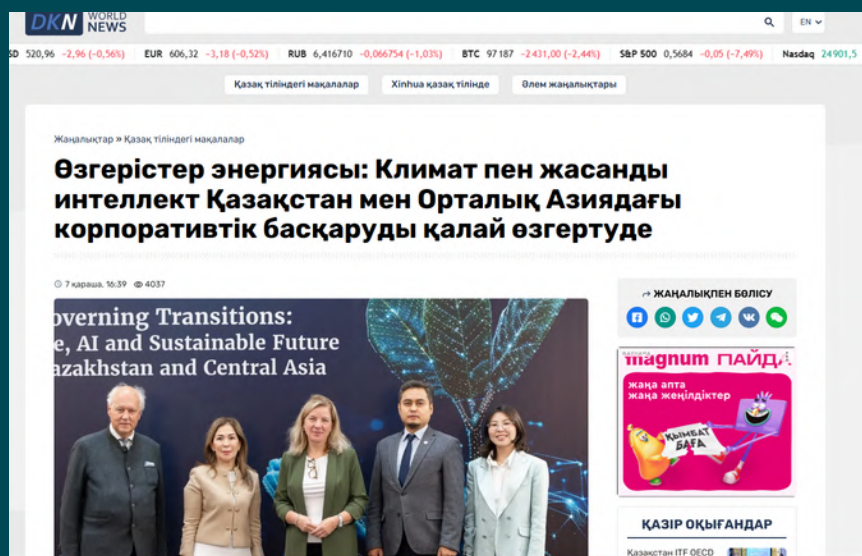
Participants in Numbers



Media about Governing Transitions Forum



astanatimes.com



dknews.kz

6

NU Articles
published

5

Media Articles
published

18

Social Media
Posts & Mentions

Энергия перемен: как климат и ИИ меняют корпоративное управление в Казахстане и Центральной Азии



фото: Nazarbayev University

На площадке Nazarbayev University (NU) состоялась конференция «Управление переходами: климат, искусственный

aleminform.kz

Partners



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