



## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

### CAREC PARTNERSHIP FORUM

#### I. Background

1. The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program is a partnership of eight participating countries and six participating multilateral institutions (MIs)<sup>1</sup> with a shared objective of development through cooperation, leading to accelerated economic growth and poverty reduction. The CAREC Program is focused on supporting practical, project-based regional cooperation in the priority areas of transport, trade facilitation, trade policy, and energy. CAREC recognizes the importance of strengthening communication and improving coordination with other organizations and agencies supporting work in these areas.<sup>2</sup>

2. The Summary of Proceedings from the CAREC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) on 24-25 April 2008 included the following statement:

"The SOM heard a presentation on possible approaches to establishing more substantial and consistent interaction between the CAREC Program and a broader array of development partners. The SOM agreed that greater interaction with a range of development partners active in the CAREC region will be beneficial in establishing a coordinated approach to development activities, improving access for CAREC countries to international experience and best practice in CAREC priority areas. The SOM endorsed an action-oriented sector approach to interaction with development partners focused on CAREC priority areas and with National Focal Points as key participants."

3. The Secretariat presented the proposal on a CAREC Partnership Forum, for consideration by the SOM on 25-26 September 2008. The SOM welcomed and endorsed the proposal, with a number of delegations highlighting the importance of broad participation by development partners.

#### II. Plan for the CAREC Partnership Forum

4. The CAREC Partnership Forum (CPF) will be an annual event held in conjunction with the first Senior Officials' Meeting of each year. The first CPF will be held in 2009.

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<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China (PRC), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan; and Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund, Islamic Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and World Bank.

<sup>2</sup> The CAREC Comprehensive Action Plan and a number of official CAREC meetings have discussed the importance of improving communication and coordination with other organizations and agencies. See: Urumqi Declaration: <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2006/Fifth-Ministerial-Conference/urumqi-declaration.pdf> Summary of Proceedings, SOM 24-25 April 2008 <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2008/CAREC-Senior-Officials-Meeting/Summary-Proceedings.pdf>

### **A. Purpose**

5. The CPF will serve to:
- brief development partners on recent Program developments and the outcomes of CAREC Ministerial Conferences
  - enable development partners to exchange views and explore opportunities for cooperation and coordination of activities at a practical level in identified sectors of work
  - improve information flow regarding key investments and policy reforms of regional significance supported by various participants
  - enable CAREC to feature special projects or initiatives that require broader donor support or financing

### **B. Focus in 2009**

6. The CPF will be an action-oriented meeting and take a sector approach to interaction with development partners focused on CAREC priority areas. The 2009 CPF will focus on the transport and trade facilitation sectors.

### **C. Format**

7. The CAREC Secretariat will act as event coordinator and co-chair with the host country.
8. The CPF will prioritize active discussion by all parties focused on the materials prepared and distributed prior to the meeting (see para. 13 below).
9. Each CPF will include a presentation on major CAREC developments in the past year, including decisions from the preceding Ministerial Conference. This would be followed by a session on a sector or issue of current interest or significance.
10. To avoid having each participating organization or agency present its program of assistance, this information would be gathered and disseminated well in advance of the meeting through the development of a sector foundation study (see para. 13).

### **D. Participation**

11. As noted in the Summary of Proceedings of the April 2008 SOM, it is anticipated that CAREC participating countries will be represented by their CAREC National Focal Point, or representative, as well as relevant senior sector officials. It is anticipated CAREC's partner multilateral institutions would be represented by the head of their delegation to the SOM and relevant sector officials.
12. For the initial CPF in 2009, invitations will be sent to two groups of external parties:
- (i) organizations and agencies that participate as observers at the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference; and

- (ii) organizations and agencies identified in the foundation studies (see para. 13 below) as significant actors in the relevant sector areas.

### CPF Anticipated Participation

CAREC participating countries	- National Focal Points, or representative - Relevant senior sector officials
CAREC multilateral institution partners	- Heads of SOM delegation - Relevant senior sector officials
Other multilateral and bilateral organizations and agencies	- Senior representative - Relevant senior sector officials

#### E. Foundation Study

13. In preparation for the 2009 CPF, a consultant will be engaged to prepare a "foundation study" for the (i) transport and (ii) trade facilitation sectors in the CAREC countries. The study will seek to provide an overview of investments and activities (ongoing and planned) with regard to development of each sector (including the ongoing and proposed contributions of development partners), and to identify gaps and overlaps in development plans, especially with regard to Implementation Action Plan for the Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy. The study is intended to provide the starting point for forward-focused discussion at the CPF.

#### III. Next Steps

14. The CAREC Secretariat requests the CAREC multilateral institution partners and other multilateral and bilateral organizations and agencies to provide information on their investments and activities (ongoing and planned) in the attached format (Attachment 1) by **10 December 2008**.

15. The consultant will contact all parties to follow up on initial inputs and arrange and conduct consultative missions as needed to prepare the foundation study.

16. The consultant will begin work in December. Target completion date for the foundation study is end-February 2009.