



The Dushanbe Declaration
16th Ministerial Conference
Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation
Dushanbe, Tajikistan. 27 October 2017.

CAREC 2030: Connecting the Region for Shared and Sustainable Development

We, the Ministers representing the Governments of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, adopt the following declaration after the 16th Ministerial Conference on Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on 27 October 2017.

Regional Cooperation Has Become Even More Critical to Meet National and Global Goals

1. The economies of our region have demonstrated huge resilience when confronted with the impact of global economic and financial crisis of 2007-2008 and a subsequent slump in commodity prices that began in 2014. The outlook for the region has since brightened, but growth rates need to rise to create jobs and economic opportunities. Regional cooperation has become even more critical to meet our development goals in these circumstances.
2. The CAREC program, since its inception in 2001, has promoted economic growth in the region by investing in national and cross-border infrastructure and by promoting an enabling environment for trade and investment. The unanimous adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by all countries and the commitments to

the COP21 Paris Agreement have further enhanced the relevance of regional actions to complement national endeavors to achieve these goals.

3. CAREC, with its reputable convening power, presents us with a meaningful channel for dialogue and economic and social cooperation to achieve the common goals set out in the national and global development agendas. We take pride in the growth of CAREC, which started as an initial group of four countries, and is now a constellation of eleven member countries, working together to develop our region. We commend the more than \$30 billion of CAREC investments in our region that have helped establish multimodal transportation networks; increased energy trade and security; broken down trade barriers; facilitated free movement of people and freight; and laid the groundwork for development of economic corridors.
4. We celebrated our CAREC Institute obtaining its legal status in September, and expect it to emerge as an internationally recognized and respected leader in research, knowledge, and capacity development in the region. We appreciate PRC's strong support for the Institute and for hosting it in Urumqi. We also commend ADB's financial and technical assistance in supporting the operational activities of the Institute.
5. We resolve to continue the pursuit of regional cooperation, recognizing that our collective strength lies in our diversity on the one hand and in our oneness on the other. We have learned to celebrate our commonalities and complementarities, rather than dwell on our differences and divisions. We stand together in solidarity to synergize and find common ground to respond to our challenges of today and tomorrow.

Toward 2030: A New CAREC for a New Era

6. We unanimously endorsed our new long-term strategy that will take the CAREC program to its third decade of operations. *CAREC 2030* is anchored on a broader mission to connect people, policies and projects for shared and sustainable development, serving as the premier economic and social cooperation platform for the region.
7. Under *CAREC 2030*, we will pursue a dual-track approach of deepening traditional regional cooperation areas, while expanding into new areas and technologies to boost shared and sustainable development. With respect to new areas, we will support regional initiatives in promoting urban-, eco- and community-based tourism; supporting regional food safety and agricultural value chains; improving management of river flows to mitigate flood risks and supporting transboundary water resource management; tackling pandemic risks and control of communicable diseases; and fostering regional collaboration in training and education services and in developing a regional labor market information system. Support in these areas will further strengthen CAREC's capacity to support growth and the achievement of the international development goals in member countries.
8. In addition, we recognize the need and significance of macroeconomic policy dialogue among member countries and development partners to promote economic and financial stability in the region. CAREC, with its standing and credibility, will assist with this policy dialogue to help design and implement coordinated countercyclical responses in periods of economic downturns. The Ministerial Conference will lead this policy dialogue. By setting up a financial regulators' forum, CAREC will support banking and capital market regulators' needs to exchange data and develop common practices to meet international banking standards, avoid contagion effects, and address impediments to cross-border transactions.
9. We are also determined to enhance people-to-people contacts through tourism promotion, student and faculty exchanges, and

development of border communities to promote deeper intra-regional social and cultural understanding and knowledge sharing. Business-to-business contacts are vital to spur private sector development and create jobs in our region. To these ends, we place people-centered regional cooperation at the heart of the CAREC agenda leading to 2030.

Fostering an Open and Inclusive Partnership

10. We stand at the threshold of a new era that calls for cooperation not confrontation, for openness not closure, for inclusiveness not exclusivity. We resolve to transform CAREC into an open and inclusive platform to motivate participation of the private sector, civil society, development partners and other stakeholders; strengthen linkages and synergy with other international and regional cooperation mechanisms active in the region including Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and Economic Cooperation Organization, among others; and promote inter-regional cooperation with other parts of Asia, Europe and the rest of the world.
11. We appreciate the role and contribution of multilateral and bilateral development partners and we look forward to their enhanced support to the CAREC program. We welcome the new partnership of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank with the CAREC program. We are confident that as good neighbors and good partners, and with good prospects, we can together secure the future of the CAREC region.

We express our gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for chairing and hosting our 16th Ministerial Conference. We thank each of our member countries, all our institutional and development partners and the CAREC Secretariat for their invaluable support. We look forward to our 17th Ministerial Conference to be held in 2018 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.