



**GOVERNMENT OF ISLAMIC  
REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN  
19th MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE**

**CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL ECONOMIC  
COOPERATION (CAREC)**

**Talking Points BY H.E. Ashraf Ghani President of Islamic  
Republic of Afghanistan**

*Your Excellency Co-Chair Vice President Chen, Ministers,  
and Heads of Delegations, Excellency Mr. Asakawa, President  
of the Asian Development Bank, esteemed representatives of  
development partner organizations, distinguished colleagues  
from CAREC member countries.*

I am delighted to be here at the important events to bring the regional key players together for regional Connectivity. Regional Connectivity is one of the top priorities of our economic development agenda. The CAREC platform can help us fully integrate the infrastructure, systems, and programs and share our common cultural values.

We were excited to host the Ministerial Conference in Kabul and wanted to see you all and have an opportunity to share our ideas, plans, and programs in detail with each other. But the Covid-19 pandemic didn't give us a chance to sit together,

and the only option we had to make it online. I hope that soon after the pandemic will have an opportunity to see each other.

I also would like to thank ADB for their generous support that helped us through a \$40 million grant to fight covid-19 and additional budget support of \$ 100 million to overcome the pandemic's social and economic impact.

The CAREC program is a proactive facilitator of practical, results-based regional projects and policy initiatives critical to sustainable economic growth and shared prosperity in the region. Since its beginning in 2001 up to November 2020, CAREC has mobilized \$39.2 billion in investments that have helped establish multimodal transportation networks, increased energy trade, and security, facilitated free movement of people and freight, and laid the groundwork for economic corridor development among the member countries.

Afghanistan is one of the key active members in the CAREC, since its joining in 2005, around \$4.5 billion had been invested in the CAREC projects that resulted in bringing electricity from three neighboring countries (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan). In addition, Afghanistan was connected through railway with Uzbekistan in Hairatan, with Turkmenistan in Aqina and Torghondi through the technical support of the CAREC and Financial Support of ADB.

**Furthermore,** CAREC has completed the Aviation Sector study a few years back which has an excellent recommendation that how the CAREC member countries can be connected with each other through different open sky approaches that how the CAREC member countries can travel directly to each other without using Airports out of the region.

Afghanistan can play a central role in connecting Central Asia with South Asia that the surplus energy of central Asia can be transferred to south Asia where there is a dire need for energy. So, I would like to call on ADB to mobilize additional financial and technical resources to the CAREC Secretariate and also to the CAREC institute to connect the member countries through Transport infrastructures such as Road, Railway, and Energy and also facilitate trade among the member countries through the installation of synchronized systems and equipment to reduce the delays in Customs and Borders.

In addition, CAREC can also work to connect the people of the member countries through a cultural initiative that they can work on the Visa-Free Movement,

Organizing Joint Cultural Programs, Joint language and also a CAREC university that the students of member countries can study together to share their thoughts, ideas, and culture with each other. These kinds of programs will bring common understanding among the people and it will reduce the misunderstanding and hate in the region which will create a win-win situation for all.

So, the CAREC 2030 Strategy provides the new long-term strategic framework for the program leading to the future. It is anchored on a broader mission to connect people, policies, and programs for shared and sustainable development, serving as the premier economic and social cooperation platform for the region.

The Ministerial Conference functions as a **high-level strategy-setting and policy body**. It provides overall strategic guidance and serves as a platform to discuss and debate important policy and strategic issues of regional relevance. The Ministerial Conference exercises overall accountability over the results of the CAREC Program.

The Ministerial Conference is held on an annual basis and is attended by Ministers of state agencies **in charge of overall planning and empowered with full decision-making rights**, such as the ministries of finance, economic development, or the office of the president. CAREC development partners also participate in the meeting. Observers may be invited to the Ministerial Conference, subject to agreement by the participants.

The End.

## **General Information of CAREC to H.E the President of Afghanistan**

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program is a partnership of 11 countries and development partners working together to promote development through cooperation, leading to accelerated economic growth and poverty reduction. It is guided by the overarching vision of "Good Neighbors, Good Partners, and Good Prospects."

**CAREC program helps Central Asian countries to realize their potentials** by promoting regional Connectivity and regional cooperation with the focus on the following four priority sectors:

- 1) Energy,
- 2) Trade Policy,
- 3) Transport,
- 4) Trade Facilitation

**The member countries are** Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Magnolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Georgia.

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