



## Joint Statement of CAREC Customs Cooperation Committee on its 20th Year 14 October 2022

1. The Customs Cooperation Committee (CCC) was established in January 2002 to promote cooperation by the customs administrations of member states of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program in modernizing customs and facilitating trade. The CCC consists of the heads of customs organizations of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, the People's Republic of China, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan and works in close coordination with the CAREC program's development partners.

2. The CCC members have made significant strides in customs modernization and facilitating trade under the committee's Common Action Plan of August 2002. CAREC member state customs laws and regulations have been reformed and aligned with international agreements, including those of the Revised Kyoto Convention and the World Trade Organization. Customs systems and processes have been simplified, and information and communications technology has been adopted to automate customs services. The CAREC countries have introduced risk management to customs administration, improved border infrastructure and customs facilities, expanded the capacity of their customs institutions and staff, and piloted projects for more robust integrated border management and customs cooperation.

3. The CCC adapted to the evolving global trade landscape in 2018 by refining its role and setting priorities for customs modernization and trade facilitation within three main areas of focus:

**Customs development.** The CCC supports implementation by CAREC members of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation, promotes the customs–business partnership, and pursues further development of the necessary institutional and human resource capacity.

**Customs technology.** The CCC will support cooperation in digital transformation and greater interoperability of CAREC member customs systems, the enhancement of risk management and authorized economic operator programs, and the promotion of regional transit to facilitate trade.

**Customs services.** The CCC will support CAREC country planning and action to undertake coordinated border management, implement single windows or other procedural innovations, and continue to simplify and harmonize customs procedures by adopting international standards.

4. The CCC is committed to achieving a balance between customs control and trade facilitation in the CAREC region. The CCC agrees to sustain its digitalization efforts to improve efficiency and transparency in customs procedures and combat illicit and illegal trade. The CCC also recognizes its important role in ensuring the security and sustainability of supply chains, in supporting participation by small and medium-sized enterprises and small traders in global trade, and in protecting the environment and people's health through green customs initiatives in the region.

5. Through these actions to further enhance the contribution modernized national and regional customs processes and cooperation can make to the region's economies, the CCC remains committed to the successful implementation of the CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda 2030, and to helping CAREC program members better integrate into the global economy and realize their growth potential in a sustainable manner.