

Statement by Mr. Ayumi Konishi
Senior Advisor to the Chief Executive Officer, Multilateral Cooperation Development Fund
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Thank you, Vice President Yang Yingming,

On behalf of the Multilateral Cooperation Center for Development Finance, or MCDF for short, I first would like to thank the Government of Kazakhstan for its hospitality as host, and the Asian Development Bank for inviting MCDF to this important meeting. MCDF is a young international mechanism that supports sustainable, high-quality connectivity infrastructure investment in developing countries through grant funding for project preparation, capacity building, and information sharing, as well as through knowledge-sharing programs to promote International Financial Institution (IFI) standards and good practices. We are financed by 7 donor countries and work closely with 12 IFIs, some of which are active in the CAREC region, including ADB, AIIB, EBRD, EIB, IFAD, IsDB, and the World Bank.

As a former staff of ADB, I was directly involved in the preparation of CAREC 2030 and witnessed its approval at the 16th Ministerial Conference in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. When I think about the Midterm Review of CAREC 2030, I appreciate that so many things have changed over the past 7 years. We never imagined the emergence of COVID-19, or the aggravation of geopolitical tensions. On the positive side, back in 2017, we did not anticipate such rapid progress in digital technology, particularly artificial intelligence. I therefore fully appreciate that to achieve CAREC 2030's vision for connecting the region for shared and sustainable development, adjustments are necessary in the activities that need to be planned and implemented.

Although there are emerging challenges, there are also new opportunities that became available with innovation. Creative financing schemes are being introduced to address climate change. There are also innovative arrangements to work with the private sector in infrastructure investment and operation. The emergence of new and sometimes overlapping initiatives poses a challenge, but it also means there are greater resources for CAREC countries to tap, if we coordinate carefully to make them complement each other avoiding inefficiency and waste.

MCDF welcomes the recommendation of CAREC 2030 MTR for CAREC to evolve in the changing context. We also fully support the CAREC Climate Change Action Plan 2025-2027. It is great to note that ADB organized CAREC Gender and Climate Change Capacity Building Training in conjunction with this Ministerial Conference to look into the climate-gender nexus.

I would like to share that, in collaboration with CAREC Institute, MCDF is conducting a 4-day capacity development program for CAREC countries later this month in Urumqi, China on sustainable debt management. MCDF and CAREC Institute fully appreciate that, as a result of COVID-19, many CAREC countries are facing fiscal difficulties with limited borrowing headroom and would like to improve their capacity in sustainable debt management. Earlier this year, in

collaboration with ADB and the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, African Development Bank, Public-Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility, World Bank, and World Association of PPP Units and Professionals, MCDF organized a seminar series on PPP “Hot Topics”, which convened a good number of participants from CAREC countries as more CAREC countries are wishing to mobilize private sector resources for infrastructure investment, including connectivity infrastructure.

Apart from such knowledge-based support, MCDF’s business model is to channel grant assistance through IFIs that became MCDF Implementing Partners. Currently, such IFIs with active operations in CAREC countries include AIIB, IFAD and IsDB. MCDF and our partner IFIs look forward to working closely with CAREC and other initiatives in the region to step up our grant funding for project preparation, capacity development, and information sharing in CAREC countries. It is our sincere hope to contribute to CAREC countries’ vision for connecting the region for shared and sustainable development.

Thank you.