

CAREC 21st Ministerial Conference (MC)

24th November 2022 | Virtual

CAREC Institute's Statement

As an integral component of the CAREC Program and CAREC Strategy 2030, the CAREC Institute (CI) continues to deliver on its mandate and play a crucial role in fulfilling the substantially growing knowledge needs and expectations of member countries. CI performs its knowledge generator and connector role by undertaking cutting-edge research, designing capacity-building services, disseminating knowledge, sharing best practices, and forging knowledge partnerships and alliances anchored to the CAREC Program's strategic priorities.

CI has built upon the momentum gained in the preceding years despite the continued impact of the pandemic in 2022. Overcoming the limitations of virtual events, physical dialogues and exchanges have been facilitated, reinvigorating on-field learning experiences. CI has successfully organized its first post-pandemic physical events in Baku, Tbilisi, and Ulaanbaatar – the 6th CAREC Think Tank Development Forum, Road Asset Management Workshop, and Forum on Developing Sustainable Economic Zones.

CI has continued its engagement and support to effectively carry out knowledge activities to meet the CAREC Strategy 2030 objectives. CI led the background work for one of the main deliverables of this year's Ministerial Conference: ***"CAREC Post-Pandemic Framework for Green, Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery."*** The preparation went through an intensive process of stakeholder consultation at all levels – CAREC National Focal Points and government counterparts, CI Advisory Council, and regional think tanks. Moreover, CI management and staff regularly participate in high-profile research conferences and webinars organized by partners that have significantly enhanced CI's regional and global visibility.

This year the MC discusses and endorses Climate Change Scoping Study and CAREC Framework for Agricultural Development and Food Security in the CAREC Region. In this regard, the CI will continue escalating efforts to hold a series of climate change dialogues and undertake policy-oriented research projects on climate change, agriculture, water, food security, and climate financing. In addition, CI will enhance its knowledge output in emerging areas, aligned with CAREC sectoral strategies, by leveraging growing partnerships with renowned regional and international organizations, revamping visiting fellowship program and expanding think tank grants program.

Financial sustainability is critical to accomplishing CI's mission and objectives underlined in the IGA and Strategy. The Financial Sustainability Working Group, formed by CAREC

governments, convened for the second time in July 2022 to discuss and approve a resource mobilization strategy to systematically approach resource diversification for the CI. To effectively contribute as a knowledge arm of the CAREC Program, we inform this august forum that CI's financial sustainability needs to be ensured through the financial contribution of member countries. Thus far, the CI heavily relies on a generous donation from the PRC, contribution from Pakistan, and continuous ADB TA support. Further, the CI also receives project-based financial support from other international organizations such as IsDB, UNICEF, etc. However, the existing financial structure of the CI is not conducive to delivering on its expanding operational footprints. In this regard, member countries' financial and in-kind contribution will go a long way in sustaining and expanding CI's operations.

CI stands committed to closely working with the CAREC Program and member countries to align its operational program with CAREC strategies.