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Statement for the 21st CAREC Ministerial Conference, November 24, 2022

Dear Honorable Minister Kun, Deputy Minister Xia, representatives of the CAREC member government, colleagues from ADB!

Thank you for hosting this important event and providing an opportunity to present the World views on the meeting's subject. I am pleased to confirm the World Bank commitment to both key topics of the conference, namely regional cooperation, and green, sustainable, and inclusive recovery. Our current portfolio in Central Asia consists of 80 projects worth over 11 bln. US dollars and 44% of those are projects generating climate co-benefits. The Bank fully supports the key CAREC initiatives, namely:

1. The CAREC Post-Pandemic Framework for Green, Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery;
2. Cooperation Framework for Agricultural Development and Food Security in the CAREC Region;
3. The CAREC Green Energy Alliance.

In fact, in two countries, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan we are already implementing the Resilient Landscapes Restoration Project, which is an example of regional initiative directly supporting green and sustainable development. In 2023 Kyrgyzstan is expected to join the program. The plans for the future are even more ambitious since closer regional cooperation is critical for economic recovery and sustainable growth, especially in current geopolitical environment. In the coming year the efforts of the Bank would be concentrated on two key regional priorities: OneHealth initiative and promotion of greater regional energy connectivity.

OneHealth is a joint initiative of the World Bank and quadripartite of international organizations (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)) intended to strengthen cooperation to sustainably balance and optimize the health of humans, animals, plants and the environment. During the recent High-level meeting in Almaty representatives of 15 agencies from all 5 Central Asian countries signed the joint communique with the agreement to develop regional OneHealth Framework for Action. We expect the operational activities to start in 2023.

Sustainable economic growth in the region and ambitious decarbonization plans could not be achieved without significant increase of renewable energy production. The vast potential for development of solar, wind and hydropower infrastructure in the region is an opportunity to meet the increasing energy demand and achieve climate goals in an affordable way. However, better regional connectivity is an essential prerequisite for efficiency of investment and the Bank is initiating a regional project on Central Asia Regional Electricity Interconnectivity.

Let me once again congratulate CAREC on great achievements in 2022 and wish success in implementation of highly needed CAREC 2030 program.