

**Statement by Mr. TAKEDA Yoshinori,
Director of Central Asia and Caucasus Division,
European Affairs Bureau,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the 21st CAREC Ministerial Conference
(November 24, 2022)**

Distinguished participants,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my gratitude to the Asian Development Bank for providing us the opportunity to make a statement at the 21st CAREC Ministerial Conference.

This year, 2022, saw 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Central Asian countries and their partners, including Japan, and we witnessed diplomacy around Central Asia revitalized almost like pre-COVID period. Japan's Foreign Minister visited Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in April, and we will host "Central Asia plus Japan" dialogue foreign ministers' meeting hopefully by the end of this year in Tokyo. Japan is the pioneer of "C5+1" format meeting, and has been always the strong supporter of regional cooperation in Central Asia.

Through dialogues with Central Asian colleagues, we are fully aware of their determination in seeking sustainable development together with international partners. For more than two decades Japan has been promoting various projects, which contribute to Central Asian countries' efforts in achieving sustainable development goals. One unique example was the Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) on the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) in Uzbekistan signed in this October. The MOC enables both countries to utilize leading decarbonizing technologies and infrastructure, thus to promote greenhouse gas emission reductions.

In this regard, Japan supports this year's theme "Revitalizing Regional Cooperation for a Green, Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery". Regional cooperation is obviously a key to address such tough challenges in Central Asia as climate change. We resonate with CAREC's approach.

In closing my statement, I reiterate that Japan will continue to cooperate with free and open Central Asia aiming for sustainable development.

I thank you for your attention.