



**Statement by Mr. Samad Bashirli  
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Republic of Azerbaijan  
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Thank you, Mr. Morris.

Honourable Mr. Davitashvili and Mr. Asakawa, distinguished delegates of CAREC member countries and representatives of development partners, ladies and gentlemen,

I extend a warm greeting to all of you. It is a pleasure for me to be here today at the 22nd CAREC Ministerial Conference. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to the Government of Georgia, Asian Development Bank and the CAREC Secretariat for their exceptional hospitality and excellent organization of this significant event.

We are pleased with the highly effective activities carried out in all five operational clusters of CAREC over the past year. Azerbaijan actively participated in all directions of the program. I would like to mention, that on October 3, 2023, in Baku with the support of ADB a “Memorandum of Understanding on Implementing Testing Phase of the CAREC Advanced Transit System and Information Common Exchange” was signed with participation of delegations from Georgia and Uzbekistan. Concurrently, in the framework of CAREC the support will be provided to Azerbaijan for the analysis of existing and future processes, as well as organization of relevant measures for implementation of electronic phytosanitary certification system during export and import operations. Today, we are confronted with and must adapt to the challenges caused by the global processes, which definitely have a significant impact on the economies of the CAREC region. Whereas many countries are aiming to accelerate growth in such circumstances with escalated geopolitical pressures, development and expansion of regional cooperation and integration remain as main factors of global economy rising. Global economic realities in regard to the goals set for a new stage of development, require definitions of the CAREC region countries' development strategies corresponding to global priorities.

Azerbaijan is entering to the strategic phase in his new post-conflict era. In the context of acknowledging global trends and challenges the Government of Azerbaijan sets the country's long- term development vector and pathways to socio-economic and environmental development. We are engaging in discussions on timely and essential aspects such as the CAREC Climate Change Vision and Climate and Sustainability Project Preparatory Fund. Vision, goals, principles and objectives of both above-mentioned deliverables are aligned with the relevant parts of “Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development” and "Socio-Economic Development Strategy for 2022- 2026 of the Republic of Azerbaijan", both approved by the Presidential Orders in 2021 and 2022 respectively. One of the five national priorities of our country is “a clean environment and country of green growth”, comprising two goals: a high-quality ecological environment and spaces for green energy.

Besides the traditional fields in the energy sector, Azerbaijan also has huge wind and solar power energy potential in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea. Azerbaijan has the plan for implementation of “Green Energy Corridor” project that will expand regional cooperation by strengthening the energy security of our partner countries.

The Garadagh Solar Power Plant, operational since October 2023, is the largest solar power plant in the Caspian and Caucasus regions. In addition, it is planned to build two more Solar Power Plants in Neftchala and Bilasuvar districts and Onshore Wind Power Plant in Absheron-Garadagh region. At the same time, construction of Khizi-Absheron Onshore Wind Power Plant is also underway.

Azerbaijan has set a conditional target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent and aims to make liberated territories a “net zero emission” zone by 2050. Also, it is planned to increase the percentage of renewable energy sources in the overall capacity of the country’s energy system from 17% to 30% by 2030. Switching to low-emission transport and applying low-carbon clean technologies in industrial sector, expanding forests and green areas and other important mitigation activities will be intensified in the coming years.

Our country is in the process of joining to the regional knowledge and support technical assistance on “Supporting Regional Actions to Address Climate Change under the CAREC Program”. By all these, Azerbaijan can be considered as a country of "green growth" and supplier of green energy. Moreover, Azerbaijan has been chosen as a host country for the Economic Cooperation Organization Clean Energy Centre.

Generally, inclusion climate change as a cross-cutting priority in the “CAREC 2030 Strategy” will definitely create conditions for making CAREC region more sustainable and climate resilient. In addition, we hope that CAREC 2030 will support institutional framework that promotes countries’ and development partners’ active and sustained participation at both policy and project levels, as well as greater engagement with wide range of stakeholders. It is worth highlighting that as a part of 5 operational clusters new projects in the fields of agriculture and water have to be developed within CAREC 2030.

It is quite efficient, that CAREC Climate and Sustainability Project Preparatory Fund will support member countries in the development of regional projects and sustainable development strategies in the field of climate, and they will be prepared in accordance with the countries’ sustainable development goals.

The CAREC Program has played a significant role in contributing to the enhancement of environmental sustainability in the CAREC region. However, there is still much work to be undertaken. I believe we should prepare the CAREC region for a carbon-constrained world where economic growth and tackling environmental challenges are compatible.

Resuming the above-mentioned, I would like to extend my gratitude to all those who prepared and presented CAREC deliverables. We support and have no objection to endorsement of all these years’ deliverables. It is really significant that the CAREC countries in the frame of CAREC Program adapt relevant activities in regard of new global challenges. In our fast-changing world, the role of these deliverables will continually increase, and they will support process of relevant transformation of region’s economies, as well as undoubtedly will serve as efficient tools for further enhancement of regional cooperation and integration.

Thank you for your attention.