



Joint Ministerial Statement

9th Ministerial Conference on Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation

**Cebu, Philippines
2 November 2010**

'Toward CAREC 2020'

Representing the Governments of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, Ministers adopted the following statement at the conclusion of the 9th Ministerial Conference on Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) in Cebu, Philippines, on 2 November 2010.

Introduction

1. We are pleased to meet in Cebu, Philippines, to review the progress of the CAREC Program, and to commence the process of laying the groundwork for the Program's future directions. As we move closer toward marking the first decade of CAREC's institutional arrangements in 2011, we are presented with an excellent opportunity to celebrate achievements of the past decade, and to chart the Program's strategic direction for the next ten years.

Progress since the Eighth CAREC Ministerial Conference

2. During the past year, significant progress was made in implementing priority projects in line with CAREC sector strategies and action plans. Indeed, CAREC has gone beyond the planning and strategy formulation toward full implementation. This is confirmed in the attached Report of the Senior Officials' Meeting, which summarizes the progress made and key issues in the sectors of cooperation.

3. We are pleased to note that an estimated \$2 billion of investments in priority CAREC-related projects were planned to be approved by our six multilateral institution partners in 2010. These investments provide a major boost to strengthening regional infrastructure connectivity, which is vital for expanding the potential of economic growth in the CAREC region.

4. Our efforts to share knowledge and build capacity on trade and other regional cooperation issues are noteworthy, and we acknowledge the important role of the CAREC Institute and the sector coordinating committees in this regard. The CAREC Business Development Forum was also successfully convened in Urumqi, PRC, in July 2010, and helped

strengthen the awareness of the private sector on investment opportunities in the CAREC region.

Follow-up Actions

5. We support key follow-up actions to accelerate progress in CAREC's priority sectors. In transport and trade facilitation, we will ensure the effective implementation of investment projects under the action plan, which will improve infrastructure and help remove barriers to the smooth cross-border movement of goods and people along CAREC corridors. We will also ensure effective coordination among transport and trade facilitation bodies, and, with the assistance of our multilateral institution (MI) partners, strengthen their capacities. In energy, we will look closely at the results of the ongoing and follow-up diagnostic and planning studies to further explore possibilities for power trade. Meanwhile, we continue to encourage the implementation of infrastructure projects essential for regional cooperation in the energy sector. In trade policy, we enjoin our officials to fully participate in capacity building and monitoring activities in line with the trade policy strategic action plan.

6. We noted the findings of the CAREC Institute Performance Assessment Review (CIPAR), which provides a basis to formulate proposals on capacity building and knowledge products for 2012-2014. We support the Review's recommendations, and concur that future CAREC Institute activities should focus more on priority sectors, themes, and projects to enhance their relevance and effectiveness.

7. We noted the findings of the report entitled "Introduction to the CAREC Development Effectiveness Review (DEfR): Building a Baseline 2009", which assesses in broad terms achievements and issues of the program during 2009. We welcome the proposed actions to strengthen the ongoing results-orientation of CAREC.

New CAREC Members

8. We welcome Turkmenistan and Pakistan as new CAREC members. We are confident that their participation in the CAREC Program would result in strong synergies between their respective development plans and CAREC's strategies. Recognizing that the implementation of sector strategies and action plans is already under way, we instruct our senior officials and sector focal points, with the assistance of the CAREC Secretariat, to formulate an action plan for the phased integration of Turkmenistan and Pakistan into the CAREC Program. The participation of the new members will increase the volume of investment for CAREC members individually.

10-year Commemorative Study

9. In 2011, we will celebrate 10 years of cooperation under CAREC. We appreciate the stock-take of CAREC achievements, and the highly participatory process for its preparation. It gives us valuable lessons on what CAREC has done well, and what it could have done better. These lessons help us determine where our countries are in our cooperation program, and will guide us on where CAREC may wish to be in the coming decade.

10. We look forward to the completion of the 10-year CAREC commemorative study, which will serve as a blueprint for the period 2011-2020. The CIPAR and the benchmarks set in the 2009 DEfR will provide essential building blocks of the blueprint. We will use this blueprint in

discussing with our multilateral institution partners and other development partners—including the private sector—on how to most effectively mobilize financial, technical, and knowledge support to the CAREC Program. In this regard, we agreed to convene the first development partners' meeting as part of our 10-year commemorative activities in 2011.

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

11. CAREC continues to foster regional connectivity and instill a stronger regional mindset to look beyond national interests. It has proven that regional cooperation is an important means to address shared development concerns, and promote sustainable economic growth. As we progress to our second decade of fruitful cooperation, we will build on our achievements, and accelerate our projects-driven and results-based cooperation, which has so far yielded investments worth more than \$13 billion.

12. We thank the Government of Afghanistan for chairing our 9th Ministerial Conference, and the Asian Development Bank for the excellent arrangements made. We are grateful to our MI partners for their untiring and invaluable support to our countries and to the CAREC Program.
