

Address by H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the participants of the 20th Ministerial Conference of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program

**Dear President of the Asian Development Bank,
Distinguished Ministers and delegates,**

I warmly greet participants of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program's 20th Ministerial Conference.

During 20 years of activity with the support of the Asian Development Bank and other international organizations, the CAREC Program has made an important contribution to the development of regional cooperation and strengthening the economic potential of member countries in crucial areas such as economic and financial stability, infrastructure, trade and trade facilitation, tourism, energy, agriculture and water, sanitary and phytosanitary measures and human development.

Pursuant to the 44-day Patriotic War that put an end to the occupation of Azerbaijan's internationally recognized territories by Armenia, a new reality and favorable ground have emerged for the lasting peace, economic revival and cooperation in the region.

Restoration and development works are currently underway across the liberated territories of Azerbaijan. The establishment of necessary infrastructure, enabling incentives for business development, and implementation of new transport and economic corridors, especially the Zangazur corridor, are among the priorities on our economic agenda for years to come. The Zangazur corridor linking mainland Azerbaijan with its inseparable part - Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and Turkey will certainly enhance regional cooperation.

Azerbaijan is confident that the endorsement of the CAREC Digital and Health Strategies 2030 will serve as the beginning of a new stage of development in the CAREC region. To achieve our common goals, Azerbaijan will continue participating in the implementation of various projects on the CAREC program's priority areas.

I believe that consultations to be held in the framework of the 20th Ministerial Conference of the CAREC and the documents approved therein will positively contribute to create deepening regional economic cooperation among the CAREC Member States.

In conclusion, I wish you a very successful meeting and fruitful deliberations.

**H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev
President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
Baku, 17 November 2021**