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Talking Points

- **I am delighted to join CAREC’s Ministerial Conference again, and also on behalf of my colleague, Anna Bjerde, VP for Europe and Central Asia Region at WB.**
- **WB is committed to regional cooperation and integration for a sustainable, resilient and inclusive COVID recovery, and ensuring investments benefit women and the vulnerable.**
- **Our approach to regional integration focuses on boosting economic connectivity, reducing climate vulnerabilities and building resilience, and developing human capital.**
 - Here we are fully aligned with ADB and CAREC’s regional agenda.
- **Today, CAREC is considering Health and Digital strategies. We applaud these regional efforts and stand ready to support these agendas.**
 - The pandemic has demonstrated the crucial role of regional and global collaboration in health including regional disease surveillance, data sharing, and vaccine production and distribution.
 - The expansion of digital solutions is also key to recovery with coordination on policy, governance, infrastructure and service delivery.
 - Potential for growth in the digital space and services sector is enormous with consumers moving online; our latest *South Asia Economic Focus* addresses this.
- **Regional collaboration is essential to addressing climate risks and supporting adaptation and mitigation efforts.**
 - WBG has a new Climate Change Action Plan.
 - We are committed to supporting national, regional and global action.
- **Regional cooperation can play a critical role in stabilizing domestic fragility.**
 - WB is deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan. An economic slowdown is impacting livelihoods and food security, and women and girls are disproportionately affected.
 - As things become clearer, we will assess next steps in coordination with DPs.
 - We hope key investments in connectivity such as CASA 1000—facilitating surplus hydropower exports from Central to South Asia— and trade flows will continue.
 - As neighbors, countries here have an essential role to play in supporting Afghanistan.
- **Finally, the WB, together with IMF, fully supports knowledge and institution building aspects of CAREC, particularly through CAREC’s Economic and Financial Stability Series—hosting an event on November 22.**

I congratulate ADB on an excellent conference and look forward to building on our strong partnership and supporting regional cooperation in CAREC.