

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

For Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) countries to Establish
International Food Safety Standards

18 May 2016

1. The 14th Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (CAREC) Ministerial Conference¹ was held on 23–25 September 2015 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.² A joint ministerial statement was issued endorsing an agenda to adopt Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO) for food safety, animal and plant health. This is in reaffirmation of the important role of regional cooperation in promoting trade in agriculture with its neighbors and beyond. The Central and West Regional Department of the Asian Development Bank will provide technical assistance to facilitate in institutionalizing the international food safety standards in the CAREC countries.

2. The Ministers (or CAREC National Focal Points), hereinafter collectively referred to as the Parties, hereby sign this Memorandum of Understanding as follows:

I. SUBJECT OF MEMORANDUM

3. The subject of this Memorandum is to combine efforts of the Parties for efficient cooperation to promote inclusive trade in agriculture to diversify the economic base and promote growth in the region. Each of the Parties declares that interaction and cooperation between them shall be on voluntary and transparent basis.

II. OBJECTIVES ACCOMPLISHED UNDER THIS MEMORANDUM

4. To fast track adoption of the international standards on food safety for public health in the country and the region, the Parties hereby agree to pursue jointly the following objectives:

- (i) promote policies and procedures to facilitate agriculture trade in the region;
- (ii) facilitate reviews of national regulations governing food safety standards in the context of alignment with international standards;
- (iii) coordinate to rationalize networks of laboratories including border control points for safe food along food value chains for domestic (i.e., from import and domestic produce) and export markets;
- (iv) nominate suitable officials for capacity development for operations of laboratories and management of food safety systems;
- (v) facilitate the creation of an enabling environment to develop private sector for quality control roles;
- (vi) provide a platform for the coordinated planning of strategies, sharing information, experiences, and ideas for mutual benefit to CAREC countries; and
- (vii) create conditions to improve investment climate in upgrading of procedures and infrastructure to align with the international food safety standards.

¹ The Government of Georgia participated in the CAREC Program as an observer.

² The conference was represented by the Governments of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

III. OUTCOMES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEMORANDUM

5. Implementation of this Memorandum shall:

- (i) develop strategies on food safety for CAREC countries if not aligned to the international food standards;
- (ii) identify laboratory rationalization plan and infrastructure requirements for implementation of effective food safety measures;
- (iii) establish national working group on food safety in agro-food value chains to address domestic and regional food safety issues; and
- (iv) develop regional capacity for effective implementation of the international food quality.

6. The Memorandum shall become effective upon signature by the Parties. The Memorandum may be amended, upon consultation between the Parties, by signing of relevant protocols, which shall be an integral part thereof and become effective upon signature.

Signed in Islamabad, Pakistan on _____