



**CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION PROGRAM
NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS' MEETING
12th October 2021**

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

I. Introduction

1. A Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Meeting with National Focal Points (NFPs) was held virtually on 12th October 2021. Delegations from CAREC member countries participated along with representatives of CAREC development partners (DPs) and the CAREC Institute (CI). Mr. Elnur Aliyev, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy of Azerbaijan, chaired the meeting. Mr. Yevgeniy Zhukov, Director General, Central and West Asia Department (CWRD), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Ms. Teresa Kho, Director General, East Asia Department (EARD), ADB co-chaired the meeting.

2. The objectives of the meeting were to: (i) Review the progress made in formulating the CAREC Health Cooperation Strategy 2030, CAREC Digital Strategy 2030, CAREC Development Effectiveness Review, CAREC Regional Infrastructure Projects Enabling Facility, and in development of the CAREC Water Pillar; (ii) Review the progress of the CAREC Institute; and (iii) Deliberate on the proposed theme and major deliverables for the 20th CAREC Ministerial Conference (MC) to be held virtually in November 2021. The chair and co-chairs emphasized that the need for regional cooperation became more apparent than ever in enabling a sustainable and inclusive recovery while strengthening resilience in CAREC countries as the COVID-19 pandemic persists, governments continue to enact necessary mitigation and containment measures. It was noted that the CAREC made considerable progress under CAREC 2030's five priority clusters, despite the challenges created by the pandemic, including the development of the CAREC Health Strategy 2030 and the CAREC Digital Strategy 2030. These two strategies will provide innovative integrated solutions and have practical value in post-pandemic environment to support achieving program's objectives. The agenda and list of participants are attached as Appendix 1.

II. Meeting Highlights

3. The meeting discussed key issues about five initiatives presented during the session.

a. **CAREC Health Cooperation Strategy 2030:** The meeting took note of the progress made in preparation of the CAREC Health Cooperation Strategy 2030. Member countries expressed their commitment to regional cooperation and integration in the health sector. Member countries, while offering some comments and suggestions, generally agreed to the submission of the draft strategy to the MC for its endorsement, taking into account the People's Republic of China's comments. It was suggested that the strategy consider addressing issues related to acceptance of COVID-19 test and vaccination certificates for travelers among member countries. Second, it was

recommended that the CAREC strategy focus on economic and/or financial aspects of the health sector, where ADB has a comparative advantage. A member country requested that comments from its other government departments and agencies would be sought, taking into account its one health approach. It was proposed to consider collective research activities in a few important areas of combating COVID-19. Support from the CAREC program was also requested to explore the establishment of international and regional instruments, including a Central Asian Regional Center for Epidemiology, Virology and Bacteriology.

b. **CAREC Digital Strategy 2030:** The meeting noted that the CAREC Digital Strategy 2030 will be an important instrument to prepare the region's digital foundations and lead to improved digital connectivity. The strategy would also contribute to creating the necessary digital infrastructure and building a favorable environment for businesses, such as e-commerce, through harmonization of relevant legislations. The member countries reaffirmed their commitment to the finalization and submission of the CAREC Digital Strategy 2030 to the MC, in principle, while providing their guidance for incorporation in the final draft. Kazakhstan proposed that CAREC hosts the first CAREC Digital Strategy 2030 Steering Committee meeting at the Digital Almaty Forum, an annual international forum, planned for February 2022. It was also suggested that the strategy should consider increasing its focus on building an enabling environment for digital economy; prioritizing key implementation areas in line with CAREC's strengths; leveraging existing resources for development and private sector partners to fund selected pilot projects; and advancing data sharing in a gradual manner. Lastly, queries and requests for revisions on details of the strategy were received, e.g. to replace the "CAREC Job Opportunities and Mobility Platform" with the "CAREC Employment Service Platform" and reconsider the feasibility of integrating the social protection services platform into the proposed one-stop shop.

c. **CAREC 2030 Development Effectiveness Review:** The meeting was informed of progress made for the preparation of the first Development Effectiveness Review (DEfR) under the CAREC 2030 Strategy. The Review found that implementation of the 2030 Strategy and progress made under various clusters are on track to achieve strategy objectives, despite challenges faced during the review period such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The report also addressed challenges and opportunities and offered recommendations for going forward. Member countries acknowledged that the DEfR report provided a comprehensive assessment based on the agreed methods, assessment criteria, and approach. The Secretariat noted that further feedback from member countries could be provided by the following week to finalize the report.

d. **CAREC Regional Infrastructure Projects Enabling Facility:** Most member countries acknowledged the need for reducing infrastructure gaps in the region and affirmed their support for the establishment of CAREC Regional Infrastructure Projects Enabling Facility (RIPEF). Some recommendations were provided by member countries. Ideas about possible projects such as upgrading border services and streamlining visa processes were proposed. One member country recommended to further assess the necessity and feasibility of RIPEF to avoid any potential duplication with other DPs; mobilize and leverage resources from DPs including ADB; continue to engage member countries for consultation and incorporate their views; and carry out relevant work on a consensus basis. Turkmenistan suggested considering public-private partnership mechanisms for establishing the facility.

- e. **Development of CAREC Water Pillar:** The meeting endorsed the development of the CAREC Water Pillar, noting its high level of relevance and significance given the water needs, geography and climatic features of the CAREC region. Member countries appreciated that the scoping study addressed relevant water-related challenges in the region, such as Aral sea issues. For the finalization of the scoping study, member countries encouraged focusing on fair and reasonable use of water resources and the formation of a coordinated regional policy, considering social, economic and environmental interests of countries in Central Asia region.
4. CAREC Secretariat thanked NFPs and country delegates for their support and thoughtful feedback on the new initiatives. The Secretariat also noted observations and suggestions on the draft CAREC Health Strategy 2030 and the CAREC Digital Strategy 2030. The Secretariat committed to consider the advice and revert for any clarifications before their finalization and submission to the CAREC MC. Also, it was reiterated that the member countries could share their comments on DEFIR by the following week.
5. The CAREC Institute (CI) apprised the meeting of the progress made in its research and capacity building programs. CI completed 12 research projects and 11 capacity building activities, which shifted to a virtual e-learning platform in line with the needs of the time. CI's Strategy 2021-2025 was deliberated at the 11th Governing Council meeting held in July 2021. The meeting noted, with appreciation, CI's increased contribution to knowledge and research in the region despite the pandemic through improved quality of knowledge work, increased use of the CAREC Regional Integration Index, and expanded partnerships. It was suggested that CI sustain its efforts in enhancing quality of its knowledge products and increasing their visibility; continue to improve its institutional capacities and explore innovative solutions for financial sustainability; and consider conducting comparative analysis on CAREC Advanced Transit System and the International Road Transports Convention regime. In addition, all CAREC members were encouraged to actively participate in the ADB-CAREC Institute Visiting Fellow Program, CAREC Think Tank Network Forum and other exchanges activities.
6. The CAREC Secretariat informed the meeting that the 20th Ministerial Conference (MC) is planned to be held virtually on 17th November 2021, with the theme **“Connectivity, Cooperation, and Resilience in a Digital Era”**. The MC will deliberate on the ways to enhance regional cooperation in the post-pandemic period by adopting a digital transformation agenda, considering the cooperation needed in the health sector to build resilient societies, and discussing measures to improve physical and digital connectivity that will help poverty reduction and improve the economic prospects of the region. The MC will consider the endorsement of the CAREC Health Strategy 2030 and the CAREC Digital Strategy 2030, and the adoption of a joint Ministerial Statement. The draft statement will be shared with member countries for feedback and confirmation prior to the MC. Finally, support from NFPs was requested to ensure the participation of their respective Ministers. The meeting appreciated the preparatory work conducted thus far in preparation of strategies, other key initiatives to finalize the deliverables and arrangements for the 20th MC.
7. The meeting expressed its appreciation to the Government of Azerbaijan, particularly the Ministry of Economy, for chairing the meeting. The meeting also expressed its gratitude to ADB and the CAREC Secretariat for helping organize and conducting the meeting, and extended thanks to CAREC's DPs present in the meeting for their support.



VIRTUAL CAREC NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS' MEETING
12th October 2021 (1400-1600, Manila time)

AGENDA

12th October 2021 (Tuesday)

1330–1400 Registration

1400–1600 CAREC National Focal Points' (NFP) Meeting

Chair:

Mr. Elnur Aliyev
 Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy, Azerbaijan

To be assisted by the CAREC Secretariat:

Mr. Yevgeniy Zhukov
 Director General, Central and West Asia Department (CWRD), ADB

Ms. M. Teresa Kho
 Director General, East Asia Regional Department (EARD), ADB

Participants: CAREC country delegations, Development Partners

1400–1405 Opening Remarks (5 mins)

Mr. Elnur Aliyev
 Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy, Azerbaijan

1405–1410 Welcome Remarks and Introduction to the Agenda (5 mins)

Mr. Yevgeniy Zhukov
 Director General, CWRD, ADB

1410–1500 Session 1: Consideration of CAREC Deliverables for 2021 (50 mins)

CAREC Documents for Endorsement

- CAREC Health Strategy 2030
- CAREC Digital Strategy 2030

CAREC Deliverables

- CAREC 2030 Development Effectiveness Report
- CAREC Regional Infrastructure Projects Enabling Facility Concept
- CAREC Water Pillar Scoping Study

Open Discussion (25 mins)

1500–1525

Country delegates will be invited to share their feedback and insights on the session. This will be facilitated by Mr. Yevgeniy Zhukov, Director General, CWRD, ADB

Session 2: CAREC Institute Update (10 mins)

1525–1535

The CAREC Institute will provide an update on their work plan and key highlights including publications, research, and capacity building activities

Open Discussion (10 mins)

1535–1545

Country delegates will be invited to share their feedback and insights on the CI report. This will be facilitated by Ms. M. Teresa Kho, Director General, EARD, ADB

Session 3. Theme and Structure of the 20th CAREC Ministerial Conference (10 mins)

1545–1555

The CAREC Secretariat will present the theme and structure of the 20th CAREC Ministerial Conference, including expected deliverables. The AZE delegation will provide remarks on the preparations for the 20th CAREC Virtual Ministerial Conference.

1555–1600

Wrap up and Closing Remarks (5 mins)

Ms. M. Teresa Kho
Director General, EARD



VIRTUAL CAREC NATIONAL FOCAL POINTS' MEETING
12th October 2021 (1400-1600, Manila time)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

I. CAREC COUNTRIES

A. Azerbaijan

1. Mr. Elnur Aliyev, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy

B. People's Republic of China

2. Jin Lu, Deputy Director General, Department of International Economic and Financial Cooperation (DIEFC), Ministry of Finance (MOF)/ CAREC National Focal Point
3. Shu Zhan, Division Head, DIEFC, MOF
4. Lijuan Chen, Deputy Director, DIEFC, MOF
5. Yufei Zhao, Principal Staff Member, DIEFC, MOF
6. Yongchun Wang, First Secretary, Department of European-Central Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
7. Jun Gao, staff member, Department of European-Central Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
8. Kejia Liu, Deputy Director, Department of Regional Openness, National Development and Reform Commission
9. Qing Zhu, Director, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology
10. Zhi Li, Principal Staff Member, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology
11. Min Liu, Principal Staff Member, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Human and Resources and Social Security
12. Jie Fu, Deputy Director, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment
13. Zeyu Zhou, Associate researcher, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Ecology and Environment
14. Xiaomin Wang, Principal Staff Member, Department of International Cooperation, Science & Technology, Ministry of Water Resources
15. Jiwei Chen, Chief engineer, International Economic and Technical Cooperation Research Center, Ministry of Water Resources
16. Mingliang Li, Deputy Director, China Renewable Energy Engineering Institute, Ministry of Water Resources
17. Ying Tian, Senior Engineer, China Renewable Energy Engineering Institute, Ministry of Water Resources
18. Yan Yan, Deputy Director, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Transport
19. Penglin Li, Deputy Director/ Senior Engineer, Transport planning and Research Institute Ministry of Transport
20. Xiaoqing Dai, Engineer, Transport planning and Research Institute Ministry of Transport

21. Lijun Zhao, Director, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
22. Xiaoyu Liu, Officer, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs
23. Yupin Liu, Deputy Director, Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM)
24. Minghua Ren, Deputy Director, MOFCOM
25. Chen Gao, Deputy Director, International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of culture and tourism
26. Meng Shao, Director, International Cooperation Department, National Health Commission
27. Zhiwen She, Deputy Director, International Cooperation Department, National Health Commission
28. Lu Zhang, Deputy Director, International Department, China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission
29. Fagen Zhu, Deputy Director, International Department, China Securities Regulatory Commission
30. Xue Feng, Officer, International Department, China Securities Regulatory Commission
31. Junxia Li, Director, International Cooperation Department, National Energy Administration
32. Cong Ren, Officer, International Cooperation Department, National Energy Administration
33. Jun Wang, Director, National Energy Research and Planning Center, National Energy Administration
34. Wenchang Cai, Officer, National Energy Research and Planning Center, National Energy Administration
35. Bing Wu, Deputy Director, Finance Department, Inner Mongolia
36. Ni Fu, Principal Staff Member, Finance Department, Inner Mongolia
37. Nian Zhu, Deputy Director, Finance Department, Xinjiang
38. Xiaoqian Jia, Principal Staff Member, Foreign Financial Cooperation Office Finance Department, Xinjiang
39. Yang Wei, Deputy Director, International Cooperation Department, National Health Commission
40. Yiyu Tang, Officer, International Cooperation Department, National Health Commission

C. Georgia

41. Ms. Mariam Gabunia, Head, Foreign Trade Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development

D. Kazakhstan

42. Mr. Alibek Kuantyrov, Vice-Minister of National Economy/ CAREC National Focal Point
43. Mr. Yerzhan Nessibkulov, Director, Department of International Economic Cooperation, Ministry of National Economy
44. Ms. Bibigul Masserbayeva, Deputy Director, Department of International Economic Cooperation, Ministry of National Economy

E. Kyrgyz Republic

45. Mr. Tilek Bayanbek, Head of Aid and Technical Assistance Department, Ministry of Economy and Finance

F. Mongolia

46. Mr. Bathkuu Idesh, Director General, Development Financing Department, Ministry of Finance/CAREC National Focal Point

G. Pakistan

47. Mr. Muhammad Zubair Asghar Qureshi, Additional Secretary-I, Economic Affairs Division/ CAREC National Focal Point
48. Mr. Habib Ahmad, Director (Customs), Directorate General of Transit Trade/ CAREC Sector Focal Person for Trade Facilitation

H. Tajikistan

49. Mr. Nematullo Hikmatullozoda, Assistant to the President of Tajikistan on Economic Issues, Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan/ CAREC National Focal Point
50. Mr. Gafur Hojamurodzoda, First Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health and Social Protection
51. Mr. Abdulvoris Vafo, Head of Sector, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade/ TAJ Focal Point on CAREC Digital Strategy 2030 preparation

I. Turkmenistan

52. Mr. Muhammetgeldi Serdarov, Minister, Ministry of Finance and Economy / CAREC National Focal Point
53. Ms. Galina Romanova, Head, Public Finance and Economic Policy Department, Ministry of Finance and Economy
54. Mr. Maksat Kutlymyradov, Head of International Division, Public Finance and Economic Policy Department, Ministry of Finance and Economy
55. Mr. Ata Chapayev, Senior Specialist, International Division, Public Finance and Economic Policy Department, Ministry of Finance and Economy
56. Mr. Nurmyrat Rejepov, Deputy Chairman, Turkmenaragatnashyk Agency
57. Mr. Pena Sukhanberdiyev, Head, Division for Development of Digital Economy, “Turkmenaragatnashyk” Agency
58. Ms. Altyn Atayeva, Deputy Medical Director of the Hospital with Research and Clinical Center of Cardiology, Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry
59. Mr. Muhammet Muhammedov, Deputy Director for Organizational and Methodological Work, Infectious Disease Centers Administration, Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan
60. Mr. Hojanazar Orazdurdyev, Deputy Head of State Sanitary Epidemiological Service, Ministry of Healthcare and Medical Industry
61. Mr. Jumamuhamet Geldiyev, Engineer-in-chief, “Turkmensuwlymytaslama” Institute, State Committee for Water Management
62. Mr. Georgiy Kurtovezov, Head, Laboratory for Water Supply Engineering, “Turkmensuwlymytaslama” Institute, State Committee for Water Management

J. Uzbekistan

63. Mr. Oybek Shagzatov, Head, Department for Cooperation with IFIs, Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade
64. Mr. Nodirbek Rakhimjanov, Deputy Director, Center for the Implementation of Foreign Investment Projects in Water Management, Ministry of Water Resources

65. Ms. Dilnoza Bakaeva, Leading Specialist, Department for Cooperation with IFIs, Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade
66. Mr. Bakhtiyor Uglamov, Director, Center for Digital Economy Studies, Ministry for the Development of Information Technologies and Communications

II. DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

A. Asian Development Bank

67. Mr. Yevgeniy Zhukov, Director General, Central and West Asia Department (CWRD)
68. Ms. M. Teresa Kho, Director General, EARD
69. Mr. Nianshan Zhang, Deputy Director General, CWRD
70. Mr. Safdar Parvez, Advisor, EARD
71. Mr. Hideaki Iwasaki, Director, Transport Division (CWTC), CWRD
72. Ms. Yasmin Siddiqi, Director, Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Division (CWER), CWRD
73. Ms. Emma Fan, Director, Public Management, Financial Sector, & Regional Cooperation Division (EAPF), EARD
74. Mr. Chang Ching Yu, Country Director, Turkmenistan Resident Mission
75. Mr. Alain Borghijs, Officer in Charge, Regional Cooperation and Operations Coordination Division (CWRC), CWRD
76. Mr. Saad Paracha, Unit Head, CAREC/ Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC
77. Ms. Zulfia Karimova, Principal Regional Cooperation Specialist, EAPF
78. Ms. Dorothea Lazaro, Regional Cooperation Specialist, EAPF
79. Mr. Seung Min Lee, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC
80. Ms. Carmen Garcia Perez, Regional Cooperation Specialist, CWRC
81. Ms. Kirthi Ramesh, Social Sector Specialist, CWSS
82. Mr. Jurgen Sluijter, Senior Transport Specialist, CWTC
83. Mr. Oleg Samukhin, Senior Transport Specialist, CWTC
84. Mr. Thomas Herz, Senior Transport Specialist, CWTC
85. Ms. Ritu Mishra, Young Professional, CWTC
86. Ms. Sarin Abado, Energy Specialist, CWEN
87. Mr. Kazuhiro Yoshida, Senior Water Resources Specialist, CWER
88. Mr. Giap Minh Bui, Principal Natural Resources and Agriculture Economist, CWER
89. Ms. Irene de Roma, Programs Officer, CWRC
90. Ms. Mary Ann Magadia, Programs Analyst, CWRC
91. Ms. Licel Calderon-Tanquintic, Senior Operations Assistant, CWRC
92. Mr. Vishal Potluri, Young Professional, CWRC

III. CAREC INSTITUTE

93. Mr. Syed Shakeel Shah, Director
94. Dr. Ziqian Liang (Deputy Director 1)
95. Mr. Iskandar Abdullaev, Deputy Director 2
96. Mr. Hans Holzhacker, Chief Economist
97. Mr. Khalid Umar, Chief of Strategy Planning Division
98. Mr. Eisa Khan Ayoob Ayoobi, Chief of Capacity Building
99. Mr. Qaisar Abbas, Chief of Research Division
100. Ms. Tamar, Knowledge Management
101. Dr. Ghulam Samad, Research

IV. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

102. Ms. Svenja Hermann

V. ADB/CAREC CONSULTANTS

- 103. Mr. Ashraf Kuliyeu, Advisor to the CAREC NFP, Azerbaijan
- 104. Ms. Ekaterine Koroshinadze, Regional Cooperation Coordinator, Georgia
- 105. Mr. Laifei Xiong, Regional Cooperation Coordinator, PRC
- 106. Mr. Diyar Tassym, Advisor to the CAREC NFP, Kazakhstan
- 107. Ms. Guldana Sadykova, Senior Regional Cooperation Coordinator, Kazakhstan
- 108. Mr. Meder Turgunbekov, Advisor to the CAREC NFP, Kyrgyz Republic
- 109. Ms. Aidana Berdybekova, Regional Cooperation Coordinator, Kyrgyz Republic
- 110. Ms. Bujin Erdenebaatar, Regional Cooperation Coordinator, Mongolia
- 111. Mr. Muhammad Ali, Regional Cooperation Coordinator, Pakistan
- 112. Mr. Rustam Aminjanov, Advisor the CAREC NFP, Tajikistan
- 113. Ms. Aziza Tukhtabaeva, Regional Cooperation Coordinator, Tajikistan
- 114. Mr. Durdy Ilamanov, Advisor to the CAREC NFP, Turkmenistan
- 115. Mr. Nadir Safaev, Senior Advisor to the CAREC NFP, Uzbekistan
- 116. Mr. Rovshan Mamurov, Regional Cooperation Coordinator, Uzbekistan
- 117. Ms. Jennifer Lapis, Regional Cooperation Coordinator, ADB HQ
- 118. Mr. Alzeus Alzate, Administration Assistant, ADB HQ
- 119. Ms. Jinha Kim, Consultant, CWRC
- 120. Mr. Shahab Mirza, Web Developer and Admin, CWRC
- 121. Mr. Muhammad Muddassir Naveed, TA Coordinator, CWRC
- 122. Ms. Loreli De Dios, Consultant, EAPF
- 123. Ms. Aiken Tafgar, Consultant, EAPF
- 124. Mr. Julius Santos, Consultant, EAPF
- 125. Ms. Camille Isles, Consultant, EAPF
- 126. Ms. Karmina Ong-Pantig, Consultant, EAPF
- 127. Ms. Pilar Sahilan, Consultant, CWTC
- 128. Mr. Chirag Gupta, Consultant, CWEN

VI. INTERPRETERS

- 129. Mr. Zhenya Sinelschikov
- 130. Mr. Rustam Sataev
- 131. Ms. Luna Zhang
- 132. Ms. Lacy Lan