

**Fourth Ministerial Conference
on Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic
5-6 November 2005**

**Opening speech (Session 1)
by the head of the Kyrgyz Republic delegation
Mr. Akylbek Japarov, Minister of Economy and Finance**

Dear participants of the Conference.

Let me on behalf of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to confirm the actuality and priority of activities included in the Program of Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation.

First of all I would like to note that for all countries of the region in order to create viable transportation system it is extremely desirable to implement the planned regional infrastructure investment projects in the quickest possible way, particularly the Southern Kyrgyz corridor on the route Osh-Irkeshtam. At the same time ongoing coordination and monitoring of implementation are needed which are mentioned in the Road Map of the Transport Sector. Only through practical implementation of harmonization of the transport legislation and other activities we can actually revive our Great Silk Road.

The highest priority for our Republic is issues of the energy sector. In the epoch of search for new sources of energy for the republic with significant hydro energy capacity it is extremely important to resolve the issues of water-energy exchange.

Also the Kyrgyz Republic as a WTO member supports the wish of CAREC member countries to accede this world trade organization. Creation of free trade area, reduction of customs and trade constraints should create all necessary preconditions for further promotion of economic growth in the whole region. Therefore I would like to point out the need in intensification and promotion of structural reforms in the whole economic bloc of Central Asian countries.

We support the initiative to reduce duplication and overlap of the regional cooperation initiatives. Therefore the decision on the role of the CAREC Program as a mechanism of practical support of SCO, EEC, CACO and other regional initiatives is well-timed and actual.

In light of high risk of natural disasters in the region and considering the earthquakes and floods having occurred in the world and caused casualties, I would like to use the opportunity to express condolences to our friendly people of Pakistan. We support the initiative mentioned in the UNDP report on Human Development in Central Asia, to strengthen focus on preparedness for disasters and ability to respond to them in the whole region of Central Asia. As recent natural disasters showed even economically developed countries are not always able to prevent and provide adequate recovery activities after natural disasters. Also we cannot deny our concern of such global issues as epidemics and diseases, like AIDS and bird flu. In this respect we are grateful to our donors for cooperation in prevention of prevalence of such threats in our region.

We also give priority to the ecological balance in the region which has high regional impact on processes of human safety. In particular, this includes issues of control of glaciers in highland areas, as well as safety of hydropower stations and uranium tailings in the region.

We agree that strengthening regional cooperation should be closely related to implementation of the comprehensive action plan of the CAREC Program. This should facilitate prioritization and consistency of regional initiatives necessary to reach direct and final results. Thus the CAREC Program will be mainly based on the results of the work.

It is necessary to note the role of bigger engagement of private sector to our regional cooperation. In modern economy it is the private sector that should become a powerful promoter of the economic growth. In future we should provide all necessary preconditions for this process, particularly through harmonization of the legislative framework, decrease of impact of the state interference into private sector, raising awareness of civil society on integration processes taking place in our region.

Finally I would like to point out significance of understanding, that only hand in hand as good neighbors through coordination of our programs we will be able to effectively resolve a complex set of problems of regional cooperation.