

Statement by H.E. Mr. TOKUDA Shuichi,
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Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan
at the 20th Ministerial Conference on CAREC
(Teleconference, November 17, 2021)

Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my congratulations on holding today's meeting to the Government of Azerbaijan and the Asian Development Bank as the CAREC Secretariat. Japan highly appreciates CAREC as an active promoter of connectivity and cooperation in Central Asia and with the adjacent countries.

Firstly, I would like to extend my heartiest congratulations to countries marking 30th year anniversaries since independence this year. Next year in 2022, we are celebrating 30th year anniversaries of establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Central Asian and Caucasus countries. Japan hopes that, in this memorable year, our friendly relations will be elevated to the next level through various events and frameworks such as the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue.

The current situation in Afghanistan has proved that the resiliency of the Central Asian countries and intra-regional cooperation are essential for the continued stability and security of the international order.

In this regard, Japan has decided to extend Emergency Grant Aid of 65 million US dollars to Afghanistan and neighboring countries. This includes humanitarian assistance to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan through UNICEF and UNHCR.

Moreover, Japan has supported achieving connectivity and development by assisting improvement of border-control capacities and rehabilitation of infrastructure such as roads and power plants.

Japan has been working to achieve universal health coverage (UHC). As a response to the COVID-19, Japan has offered grant aid for health and medical equipment to Central Asian and surrounding countries, including Azerbaijan, as countermeasures against infectious diseases and to strengthen the healthcare system.

Japan will continue to stand closely and cooperate with Central Asia aiming for free, open and sustainable development, while maintaining and solidifying the rule-based international order. Japan welcomes the contributions by CAREC member countries, ADB and other international financial institutions.

I thank you for your attention.