

**Statement for CAREC Ministerial Conference  
24 Oct. 2013, 2:15 – 3.45 pm**

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Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to address you today on the theme of this Ministerial Conference, which is “Integrated Transport and Trade”.

As we have heard today, the refined Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy proposes a more integrated approach encompassing transport, logistics, and trade and transport facilitation.

UNDP commends this initiative, as development programming is most effective when it connects the dots between related activities that, for various reasons, are otherwise managed separately by governments and their international partners.

By the same token, we would encourage movement towards considering CAREC’s Trade Policy Sector within the same integrated framework.

UNDP is active in these areas in the CAREC Region. For example, we are in the process of scaling up our regional Aid for Trade programme as of next year in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, with support from the Government of Finland.

The project, which has a time-frame of four years and a budget of 11.5 million US dollars, will contribute to inclusive growth in these countries through the promotion of trade and enhancement of competitiveness.

It will work on trade policy issues, while at the same time building capacities of trade support institutions and private sector representatives to better formulate and implement trade-related policies.

The project will also scale up successful initiatives to increase productivity, enabling farmers and other producers to directly benefit from trade opportunities.

These activities will promote the cross-border exchange of knowledge and experience, and support cooperation between the countries and joint actions at the regional level.

For example, Aid for Trade projects have provided small farmers with access to modern food processing equipment and market information. This has made possible significant increases in processed food exports, across Central Asian borders and to Russia and other countries, such as Afghanistan

The Tajikistan – Afghanistan Poverty Reduction Initiative is promoting trade links between communities on both sides of the border. We have been working with the Governments of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on establishing an agro-food processing consortium between the three countries.

UNDP is also partnering with the Russian Federation to provide technical assistance to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to improve sanitary, phytosanitary, and veterinary standards, allowing for better access to the markets of the Customs Union.

On trade policy, UNDP is providing advice, as are others, on Uzbekistan's WTO accession, and is helping the Government of Tajikistan to make the most of its recent entry to WTO. In Kyrgyzstan, we are supporting the Government's negotiations to accede to the Eurasian Economic Community's Custom Union.

We are also working on a series of Central Asia "trade and human development" papers, which we hope will help policy makers to more fully appreciate the social and environmental implications of regional economic cooperation.

UNDP has been advocating for turning "economic corridors into corridors for sustainable development" by ensuring that the transport corridors now being

constructed, expanded, or modernized bring benefits to the communities situated along them.

For this we will have our Aid for Trade Programme work closely with some of our local development programmes (for example in Batken in the Kyrgyz Republic) as well as the Border Management in Central Asia programme and the Poverty & Environment Initiative.

In this respect, we have noted that Economic Corridor Development, prominently mentioned in the CAREC 2020 Strategy, seems to have moved somewhat to the background.

We believe that the Refined Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy, with its emphasis on developing multimodal corridor networks and improving border crossing services, will be a key element in building sustainable development corridors.

There is already good collaboration between the Border Management in Central Asia programme and CAREC's Regional Improvement of Border Services project. I will encourage our Regional Aid for Trade Programme to also work closely with the Transport and Trade Facilitation Coordinating Committees.

I would like to conclude by saying that UNDP is looking forward to cooperating in another exciting year of CAREC

Thank you for your attention.