



11th Ministerial Conference on Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation

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UNDP Statement for CAREC Ministerial Conference

Cihan Sultanoglu, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to have the opportunity to address you today. This is my first engagement with CAREC since my appointment as Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS. I would like to take this occasion to thank the organizers and the Government of [the People's Republic of] China for their generous hospitality.

I would like to briefly share with you UNDP's views on implementing CAREC 2020 and how it could best support these efforts over the next years.

It is very encouraging to see the progress that has been made in all components over the last year under CAREC 2020, which shows that the strategic framework endorsed at last year's Ministerial Conference ambitiously, yet logically and realistically, builds on past achievements. The rich discussions over the past two days have convinced us that CAREC 2020 could and should play an important role in shaping the post-2015 development agenda in the region, building on the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) and looking towards the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).

At UNDP, we are particularly interested in the draft CAREC Corridor Development Study that was presented to the Senior Officials' Meeting yesterday, as this provides openings for the type of integrated and comprehensive sustainable human development solutions that UNDP strongly advocates for. Economic Corridor Development, by its very nature, can build bridges between countries and people that can further strengthen peace and stability in the region.

Apart from spurring further economic growth and regional integration and cooperation, the potential for increased opportunities for communities living along or close to these corridors to trade, export, and generate income is vast, resulting in a more inclusive and equitable, thus sustainable, growth.

But this will require focusing on the needs of people as the ultimate shapers and beneficiaries of the corridors and how we can best support them to realize their own potential, and by extension, that of the corridors.

UNDP stands ready to continue its support to the Study by sharing the experiences of our Aid for Trade, Integrated Border Management and Local Development Programmes in the CAREC countries, like we did with the consultant team that visited Tajikistan for the Study. We already have concrete ideas on how to support the pilot corridor, for example through establishing small intermediate logistics and service hubs and promoting small businesses, which we are happy to share. We see great value in joining efforts and taking advantage of

what each of our organizations can bring to the table to make CAREC 2020 a success for the region.

In this respect, I am also pleased to see that the EU's Border Management in Central Asia programme, which is implemented by UNDP, is now working closely with the RIBS project under CARECs Trade Facilitation Programme.

For the next phase of our Integrated Border Management programmes, which also include Caucasus and Western CIS countries, we are looking at how to make these programmes more relevant for trade facilitation and development of border areas.

It is also encouraging that the plans for the CAREC Institute are now getting very concrete, recognizing the need for ongoing capacity building of the institutions in the region. The CAREC Institute will need to part of a network that would include the World Bank Institute, ADB Institute, UNDP's Regional Service Centers in Europe and Asia, and other relevant knowledge hubs in order to maximize our research and capacity development resources for the benefit of CAREC 2020 and its member countries.

Not being a financial institution, UNDP has limited monetary resources, but we do have a wealth of technical capacities and global knowledge to provide. For example, these include local development, border management, energy efficiency and conservation, disaster risk management, and climate change adaptation, all topics that are included in the CAREC Institute's indicative work plan.

The SG's Sustainable Energy for All initiative, in which Tajikistan is a pilot, provides us with another opportunity to identify and implement options for energy access, efficiency and sustainability, which could become a model for others in the region. As the World Bank representative has already mentioned, we are committed to work together on this front.

UNDP is therefore looking forward to cooperating in another exciting year of CAREC 2020 implementation and I am happy to renew our commitment.

Thank you for your attention.