

**Department for International Development (DFID) Statement  
at the CAREC Ministerial Conference  
Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic  
6 November 2014**

First, I would like to thank the Asian Development Bank for inviting bilateral partners to the 13th CAREC Ministerial Conference here in Bishkek. I would also like to thank the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic for being such a warm and hospitable host, as well as their excellent organisation of this event, together with the CAREC Secretariat.

The UK government welcomes another highly successful CAREC meeting. CAREC is an important forum for mobilising political will and accelerating process on regional economic cooperation. Turning CAREC's vision into action will help create a more interconnected, stable and prosperous region that delivers tangible results for its people. It is encouraging to see the multilateral institutions gathered here, working even more closely together, to help take CAREC's agenda forward.

Historically, trading routes crossed Central and South Asia and interactions between its people were common place. Re-energising these trading patterns and relationships is central to bringing lasting stability and prosperity to the region. By building common interests across borders, enhanced regional economic cooperation will reduce poverty and share growth more equitably, as well as strengthen security and mitigate conflict. This is particularly important now with security transition nearing completion in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan's stability and long term economic prospects are critically dependent on its neighbours. This is why improving regional economic cooperation will be a key theme of the London Conference on Afghanistan later this year, which the UK will be co-chairing with the Government of Afghanistan. This conference is an opportunity for the international community and Afghanistan's neighbours in particular, to come together and show solidarity during a time of political and security transition.

Encouraging good neighbourly relations and collaboration is ever more important as we support Afghanistan to move forward into a new era. With this in mind, the UK will facilitate a Ministerial dinner focused on regional economic cooperation in the margins of the London Conference. This will be a key opportunity for the new Afghan President and other regional leaders to showcase their vision for an integrated Central and South Asia and to demonstrate their political commitment to this agenda. We hope that the regional countries present here today will attend this event.

The UK Government looks forward to our continued cooperation on this vitally important agenda.

Thank you.