

12th CAREC Ministerial Conference
Senior Officials Meeting
23 October 2013
Astana, Kazakhstan

Welcome Statement by Government of Kazakhstan

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Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to Astana to the 12th CAREC Ministerial Conference, starting with our Senior Officials Meeting today. The theme of the Ministerial Conference is Integrated Transport and Trade, which is of course high priority for all our countries. Our meeting today is important since it marks the final step in preparations for the Ministerial Meeting tomorrow. Towards that objective, we will need to carefully review the deliverables for Ministerial Meeting, before recommending them to our ministers for endorsement tomorrow. We will also review the Joint Statement and finalize our SOM report to the Ministers.

Dear friends and colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

This has been a busy year for our regional cooperation under the CAREC program. There have been strategic realignments in three sectors, namely, transport, trade facilitation and trade policy.

Over 2013 we conducted a considerable review and refinement of the CAREC Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy (TTFS). The Refined Strategy has been extended until 2020 to be synchronized with the CAREC 2020 Strategy, endorsed in 2011. New Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy prioritizes tighter integration of Transport and Trade Facilitation activities and proposes significant extension of CAREC corridors, which now are connected to the CAREC regional deep-sea ports. Simultaneously with Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy refinement, new Trade Policy Strategic Action Plan (TPSAP) has been developed.

CAREC TTFS and TPSAP have been reviewed during the NFP meeting in Bangkok on 27-28 November. Both documented received support from the NFP with proposal for minor revisions.

In 2013 one more CAREC country – Tajikistan joined the World Trade Organization, several more countries are on the way towards the accession, including Kazakhstan which already achieved final stages of the accession process.

Despite all improvement projects, CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring continues to show significant delays associated with border crossing operations. We feel that a more integrated approach to improvement of transport corridors is required, which shall combine development of transport and cross-border infrastructure with more effective management of cross-border and beyond-the-border operations.

This shall be achieved through better planning of projects, which may need to be better aligned with overall development objectives. Ongoing review of Development Effectiveness Review (DEFr) methodology shall enable us to connect individual project objectives with the overall vision of the CAREC Program.

While we invest in new corridors and improve trade procedures, we shall keep in mind our main objective – economic development and prosperity in the CAREC region. Thus, development of Transport corridors into Economic corridors becomes the next important frontier for the CAREC countries. Physical establishment of CAREC Institute gives us increased hope for more developments in knowledge products, which will help us analyze and select the best ways for creating more economic development activity, more jobs and more prosperity in the CAREC region.

With this short overview of main topics and challenges facing us in the CAREC region and which we shall address during this Ministerial Conference let me wish all delegations very productive work during this Ministerial Conference. I would like to remind all delegations that the key motto of the CAREC Program is *Good Neighbors, Good Partners, and Good Prospects*, thus I wish all of us that strong spirit of cooperation will mark this Ministerial Conference and helps us achieve significant progress in all issues included in today's Agenda.