



CAREC PARTNERSHIP FORUM

1. The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program is a partnership of eight participating countries and six participating multilateral institutions (MIs)¹ with a shared objective of development through cooperation, leading to accelerated economic growth and poverty reduction. The CAREC Program is focused on supporting practical, project-based regional cooperation in the priority areas of transport, trade facilitation, trade policy, and energy. CAREC recognizes the importance of strengthening communication and improving coordination with other organizations and agencies supporting work in these areas.²

2. The Summary of Proceedings from the CAREC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) on 24-25 April 2008 included the following statement:

"The SOM heard a presentation on possible approaches to establishing more substantial and consistent interaction between the CAREC Program and a broader array of development partners. The SOM agreed that greater interaction with a range of development partners active in the CAREC region will be beneficial in establishing a coordinated approach to development activities, improving access for CAREC countries to international experience and best practice in CAREC priority areas. The SOM endorsed an action-oriented sector approach to interaction with development partners focused on CAREC priority areas and with National Focal Points as key participants. The SOM requested the Secretariat to consider scheduling the Development Partners' Forum together with the Ministerial Conference."

3. The Secretariat presents the following plans for a CAREC Partnership Forum, for consideration by the SOM on 25-26 September 2008.

I. PROPOSAL

4. The CAREC Partnership Forum (CPF) will be an annual event held in conjunction with the first Senior Officials' Meeting of each year.³ The first CPF will be held in 2009.

¹ Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China (PRC), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan; and Asian Development Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund, Islamic Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and World Bank.

² The CAREC Comprehensive Action Plan and a number of official CAREC meetings have discussed the importance of improving communication and coordination with other organizations and agencies. See: Urumqi Declaration: <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2006/Fifth-Ministerial-Conference/urumqi-declaration.pdf>
Summary of Proceedings, SOM 24-25 April 2008 <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2008/CAREC-Senior-Officials-Meeting/Summary-Proceedings.pdf>

³ The Secretariat does not believe it is feasible to hold the CPF in conjunction with the MC: if held the day before the MC discussion could only focus on the outcomes of the previous year's MC as to do otherwise would presume the outcomes of the MC to come; if held after the MC the CPF would require instant reactions to MC decisions from participating organizations and agencies.

A. Purpose

5. The CPF will serve to:

- brief development partners on recent Program developments and the outcomes of CAREC Ministerial Conferences
- enable development partners to exchange views and explore opportunities for cooperation and coordination of activities at a practical level in identified sectors of work
- improve information flow regarding key investments and policy reforms of regional significance supported by various participants
- enable CAREC to feature special projects or initiatives that require broader donor support or financing

B. Focus

6. The CPF will be an action-oriented meeting and take a sector approach to interaction with development partners focused on CAREC priority areas. The 2009 CPF will focus on the transport and trade facilitation sectors.

C. Format

7. The CPF will be a one-day event. The CAREC Secretariat will act as event coordinator and co-chair with the host country.

8. The CPF will prioritize active discussion by all parties focused on the materials prepared and distributed prior to the meeting (see para. 13 below).

9. Each CPF will include a presentation on major CAREC developments in the past year, including decisions from the preceding Ministerial Conference. This would be followed by 2-3 sessions, each focused on a sector or issue of current interest or significance. In each session, the chair or resource person would provide an opening statement on the topic followed by discussion.

10. To avoid having each participating organization or agency present its program of assistance, each would be requested to provide e-copies of their respective assistance programs in the relevant sectors that are the focus of the meeting. These would be reproduced on CDs and distributed to participants.

D. Participation

11. As noted in the Summary of Proceedings of the April 2008 SOM, it is anticipated that CAREC participating countries will be represented by their CAREC National Focal Point, or representative, as well as relevant senior sector officials. It is anticipated CAREC's partner multilateral institutions would be represented by the head of their delegation to the SOM and relevant sector officials.

12. For the initial CPF in 2009, invitations will be sent to two groups of external parties:
- (i) organizations and agencies that participate as observers at the 7th Ministerial Conference⁴; and
 - (ii) organizations and agencies identified in the foundation studies (see para. 13 below) as significant actors in the relevant sector areas.

CPF Anticipated Participation

CAREC participating countries	- National Focal Points, or representative - Relevant senior sector officials
CAREC multilateral institution partners	- Heads of SOM delegation - Relevant senior sector officials
Other multilateral and bilateral organizations and agencies	- Senior representative - Relevant senior sector officials

E. Preparation

13. In preparation for the 2009 CPF, consultants will be engaged to prepare "foundation studies" for the (i) transport and (ii) trade facilitation sectors in the CAREC countries. The studies will seek to provide a detailed overview of investments and activities (ongoing and planned) with regard to development of each sector, and to identify gaps and overlaps in development plans, especially with regard to implementation of the Action Plan for Implementation of the Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy.⁵ These studies are intended to provide the starting point for forward-focused discussion at the CPF.

14. On 20 November 2008 (the meetings day between the final SOM of 2008 and the 7th Ministerial Meeting) a brief (1 hour) informal session with all MC observers will be held to introduce the CPF proposed for April 2009. This meeting would clarify format and purpose, explain information requirements, and outline expected participation of attendees.

II. NEXT STEPS

15. If the SOM endorses this proposal, the Secretariat will begin preparations for the 2009 CPF to be held as outlined in the preceding paragraphs.

⁴ For an indication of the nature of this group, attachment 1 provides the list of observer organizations and agencies at the 6th MC.

⁵ Available here: <http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2007/6th-Ministerial-Conference-CAREC/Transport-Trade-Strategy.pdf>

**6th Ministerial Conference on CAREC:
Observer Countries and Organizations**

Countries:

1. France
2. India
3. Iran
4. Japan
5. Pakistan
6. Russian Federation
7. Turkey
8. Turkmenistan
9. United States of America

Organizations:

1. Aga Khan Development Network
2. Department for International Development
3. Eurasian Development Bank
4. Eurasian Economic Community
5. European Commission
6. Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)
7. Japan International Cooperation Agency
8. Russian Trade Representative Office in Tajikistan
9. Sweden International Development Agency
10. Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
11. US Agency for International Development
12. World Customs Organization
13. World Health Organization