

# Approaches to Strengthening Strategic Direction of the CAREC Program

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# Report of Senior Officials to the Fifth Ministerial Conference

The Report included the following statement:

"Senior Officials have considered the establishment of a Strategic Management and Priorities Subcommittee to assist the SOM and Ministerial Conference in providing strategic direction for the Program. While further clarification of the reporting arrangements, terms of reference, and manner of funding for its activities is required, we recommend establishment of the Subcommittee on an "as needed" basis."

# The Urumqi Declaration, October 2006

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“Success of the CAREC Program will require strategic direction by our Governments ---. CAREC’s institutional mechanisms must be strengthened to enable Ministerial Conferences and Senior Officials’ Meetings to more actively provide strategic management of the Program.”

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# Rationale for the Subcommittee

- CAP charts new directions for the CAREC Program
  - ❖ Four action pillars (knowledge/capacity building; regional infrastructure networks; trade/investment/business development; regional public goods)
  - ❖ Sector strategies under preparation
  - ❖ Second-tier of regional cooperation initiatives (CAREC Institute)
- Progressing from a largely country-based to a more region-wide approach
- Calls for strategic direction and new institutional capacity

# New Roles for the SOM and MC

- Enhanced role of MC, on behalf of CAREC countries
  - ❖ Consideration of options (e.g., transport corridors)
  - ❖ Tradeoffs and compromise necessary
  - ❖ More complex choices and decisions
- Enhanced role of SOM
  - ❖ Prioritize and sequence regional projects
  - ❖ Integration with country development plans/public investment programs
- Hence need for enhanced strategic institutional support for the MC and SOM

# Options for Consideration

Strategic direction could be strengthened in a variety of ways, including:

- Establishment of a Strategic Management and Priorities Subcommittee (SMPS) as outlined in the CAP document
- Strengthen the SOM to become more strategic
- Initiate a "CAREC Strategy Meeting", as an interim step

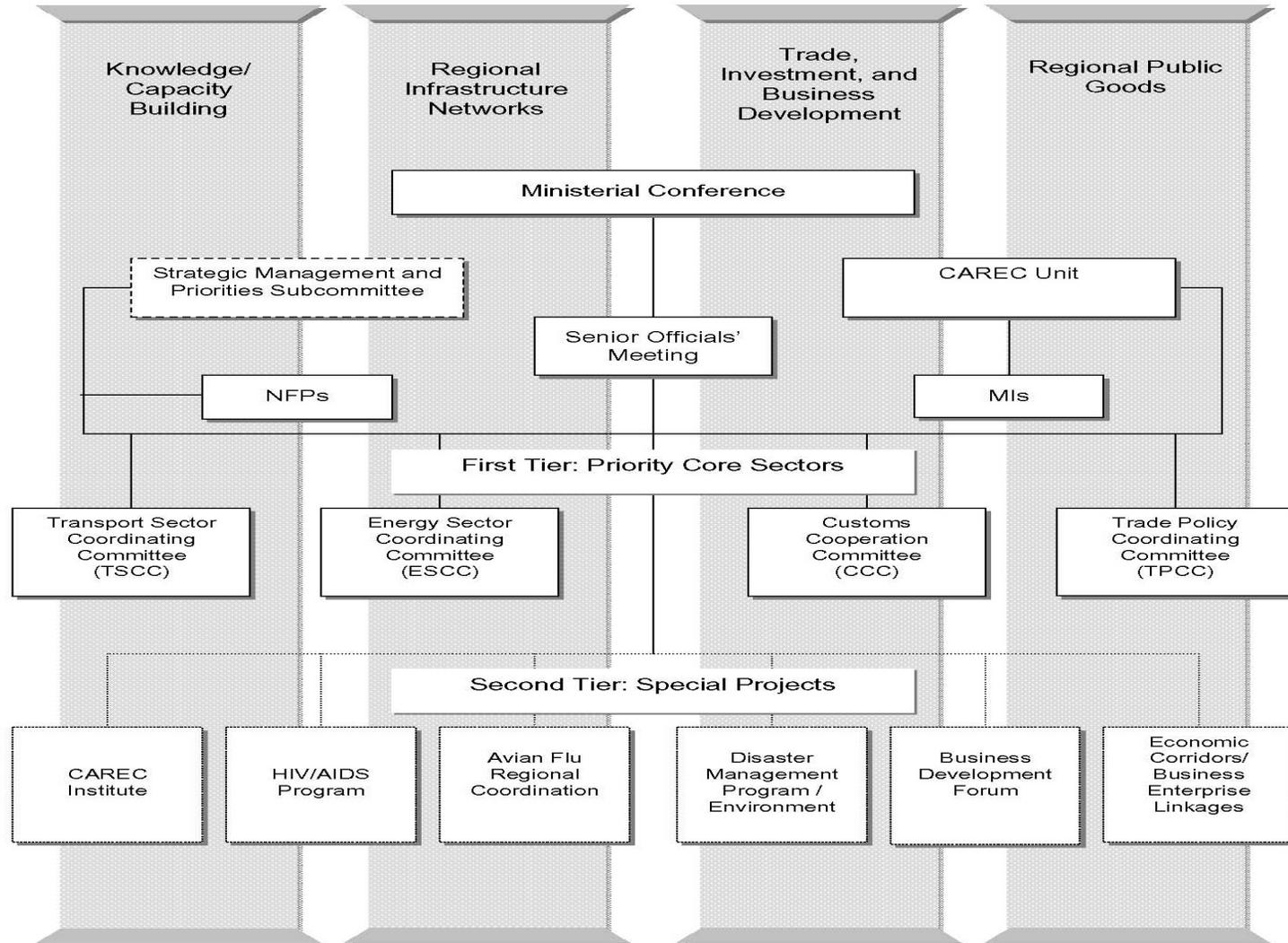
Whatever the means, the central focus should be the required decisions, actions and resources from stakeholders to move toward implementation and generating tangible results.

# Establishment of the SMPS as Outlined in CAP

## Structure

- Composition of SMPS fluid, determined by National Focal Points
- Include representatives of President's/Prime Minister's office
- SMPS supported by CAREC Secretariat/sector committees/advisor/specialists
- Assignments on behalf of the SOM:
  - Cross-cutting issues and regional cooperation “bold strokes”
  - Review of key regional cooperation needs and opportunities
  - Initiatives for realizing regional integration plans of CAREC countries

# CAREC: Strategic Direction and Overall Institutional Framework



# Establishment of the SMPS (continued)

## Preparation of Strategy Papers

- First SOM of year would instruct the SMPS on areas of interest
- Draft of strategy papers by second SOM
- Revised and submitted to final SOM/MC

## Pros and Cons of SMPS

- Meetings on an “as needed” basis
- Deliverables would add an important new agenda item to MCs
- Cost of meetings, both financial and in terms of officials’ time
- Cost considerations may limit scope/depth of work

# Strengthen the SOM to Become More Strategic

## Structure

- Regional meetings of the SOM, perhaps two annually, focused on strategic issues
- Careful attention to the agenda, long lead times, and briefing papers well in advance of the meetings – allowing for in-country consultation and real decision-making
- SOM itself would prepare an annual strategy paper
- Led by NFPs, supplemented by representatives of the President's/Prime Minister's Office and other experts
- Supported by CAREC Secretariat/advisors/regional cooperation specialists/ sector committees

# Strengthen the SOM to Become More Strategic (continued)

## Pros and Cons

- Avoid creation of another committee (or subcommittee)
- Regional workshops would complement in-country workshops
- Costs minimized
- Question as to whether the SOM could transform itself into a strategic management and priorities group

# Initiate a “CAREC Strategy Meeting” as Interim Step

As an interim step to establishing the SMPS, or simply strengthening the strategic management role of the SOM, initiate a “CAREC Strategy Meeting”:

## Purpose and Structure

- Purpose: lay the groundwork for specific “strategic regional initiatives”
- Focus on 2-3 high priority issues that go beyond sector focus
- Possible issues: regional economic corridors/linking CAREC enterprises to international markets/optimizing resource development
- Briefing papers, focusing on requirements for tangible results
- High-level consultations in each country on recommended options/strategies
- CAREC Strategy Meeting of senior officials, report to MC

# Initiate a "CAREC Strategy Meeting" as Interim Step (continued)

## Pros and Cons

- Issues (economic corridors) versus strategic direction (east-west or north-south focus)
- Significant preparation needed to ensure practical results
- Significant follow-up to ensure effective integration of new strategic initiatives within CAREC Program

# Questions for Discussion

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- What is the preferred option of your country delegation?
- What are the strategic regional cooperation issues of most interest/concern for your country?