

Joint Statement

Central Asian Regional Cooperation in Transportation

Delegations from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan met at a Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation in Transportation in Central Asia held in Almaty, Kazakhstan during 26-27 September 2000. They discussed ways and means to strengthen regional cooperation among their countries in the field of transportation, which is vital to the well-being and livelihood of their people.

The delegates acknowledge that given the importance of transportation for national, regional, and international trade and development in the region, cooperation among the countries in developing regional transport networks is of particular importance for the realization of national development aspirations. They pledge their commitment to enhance cooperation so as to upgrade the regional transport network and improve the movement of people and goods.

The delegates recognize the substantial investment needed to maintain and develop the regional transport network. They therefore emphasize that in moving forward cooperation in the field of transportation it is particularly important to focus on identifying and prioritizing projects of regional importance, and raising funds to finance them. Projects and policies to be implemented on the basis of regional cooperation have been identified and discussed. The challenge was to determine a pragmatic, practical and effective mechanism for carrying them forward to implementation.

Based on work in regional cooperation carried out with the support of the Asian Development Bank and other parties involved, the delegates agreed to establish working groups among concerned countries for specific projects. A preliminary economic analysis was undertaken for the following projects: (i) regional railway improvement for the Northern Tajikistan railway; (ii) road rehabilitation of the Almaty – Horgos road; (iii) improvement of the Andijan – Osh – Irkeshtam road, and extension road in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, PRC; (iv) rehabilitation of the Lugovoy – Bishkek – Balykchy rail line; (v) construction of Uzbekistan – Kyrgyz Republic – PRC railway (for which a working group already exists); and (vi) rehabilitation of the Dushanbe – Sarytash road. Additional projects appropriate for support through working groups may be considered in due course.

The working groups will be supported by the Asian Development Bank. The working groups will coordinate the preparation and implementation of these regional projects, and associated regional transport policy matters. The Asian Development Bank, including its Resident Missions, will provide support to the activities of the working groups.

Ultimately, decisions on projects and associated policies will be taken by higher authorities in the respective governments. Currently there are several mechanisms at the policy level in the transport sector, and the working groups will work closely with them.

The delegates emphasize the need to maintain a flexible and evolving nature of the arrangements to accommodate future developments in regional economic cooperation.

The delegates appreciate the initiative of the Asian Development Bank to promote regional cooperation in transportation among its member countries in the region, including supporting and organizing of the Conference. The delegates expressed the hope that the Asian Development Bank would be providing continuing support for project financing.

A delegation from Azerbaijan attended the Conference as an observer.

The delegates express their sincere gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan for hosting the Conference.

27 September 2000