

**Statement for CAREC Ministerial Conference, 6 Nov. 2014, 1:30 – 2.15 pm**

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Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS**

**(3 minutes - Check against delivery)**

**Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to address you today on the theme of this Ministerial Conference: “Linking Connectivity with Economic Transformation in CAREC”.**

**As we have heard today, progress is being made on CAREC Economic Corridor Development and on the operationalization of the Almaty-Bishkek Corridor Initiative.**

**We also learned about progress in the four CAREC sectors, which, taken together, are contributing to enhancing connectivity between CAREC countries and other regional and global markets.**

**These are all critical to promoting economic transformation in the CAREC region, but ultimately insufficient if not complemented by interventions that enhance direct people-to-people connectivity.**

**For example, UNDP is pleased to be supporting the Government of Kazakhstan in its initiative to establish a regional civil service hub that will**

**serve as a network among countries to exchange knowledge and best practices on service delivery and civil service management and reform.**

**UNDP is also supporting the Government of Azerbaijan in the roll out of a “Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway” Project covering over 20 countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The initiative, which is supported by three UN General Assembly Resolutions, seeks to improve ICT connectivity and telecommunications transit routes in the Trans-Eurasian region.**

**The third phase of our regional Aid for Trade project, supported by the Government of Finland, is now well underway in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, contributing to inclusive growth in these countries through the promotion of trade and competitiveness. The project supports policy formulation, capacity building of relevant institutions and increasing productivity, enabling farmers and other producers to directly benefit from trade opportunities. Under its previous phase, the programme provided direct support to more than 33,000 producers, 38% of which were women. Women also filled 56% of the 1,700 jobs created under the programme.**

**We are also scaling up our support to promoting trade links between communities on both sides of the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan with funding from Japan.**

**Finally, the relevance and timeliness of the topic of this year’s Ministerial Conference is reinforced by the Second UN Conference on Land-Locked Developing Countries, which concluded yesterday in Vienna, given that eight**

**of the ten CAREC countries are land-locked. Connectivity, in all its aspects, featured prominently at the conference.**

**UNDP organized the main side-event to the conference focusing on trade and human development in LLDCs. While international trade has been the engine of growth for many countries, too many smaller land-locked countries have not yet experienced significant gains. Moreover, gains that were made may not have been broadly distributed, or have been accompanied by growing and unsustainable ecological burdens.**

**The event featured an interactive discussion on trade and human development, providing insights into how countries at different stages of development can combat jobless growth and “landlockedness” with smart and sustainable trade and industrial policies, in order to advance human development outcomes.**

**Needless to say, the particular challenges faced by LLDCs will need to be reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals as part of the post-2015 development agenda.**

**Let me conclude by saying that UNDP is looking forward to cooperating in another exciting year of CAREC and we are very pleased to be a part of this forum.**

**Thank you for your attention.**