

**FINAL**

**CAREC SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING  
26–27 June 2014  
Manila, Philippines**

**Closing Remarks  
by**

**Mr. Klaus Gerhaeusser  
Director General, Central and West Asia Department  
Asian Development Bank**

Mr. Sanjar Mukanbetov, Chair of this SOM; distinguished National Focal Points and delegates from the CAREC countries; distinguished participants from CAREC's Multilateral Institution Partners, Ladies and gentlemen:

We have come to the end of the Senior Officials' Meeting. I hope you will agree with me that our Meeting has been very productive, thanks to the leadership of Mr. Mukanbetov, and the active participation of the CAREC delegations.

I do not wish to summarize in detail what we have discussed, as these have already been amply covered in the Summary of Proceedings which we have just endorsed. Instead, allow me to highlight some of my observations and reflections on the Meeting that has just transpired.

Last year, we adopted the refined Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy 2020, and agreed to take an integrated approach to planning and sequencing investments in these two interrelated sectors to respond to the shifts in trade patterns and new demands for transport routes and modes in the region. At this meeting, we took a step further by expanding our approach to economic corridor development so that it can build from transport and energy connectivity and transit, further into job creation, spatial transformation and agglomeration. I believe that this move towards greater integration and convergence is setting the bar higher for the CAREC Program as we start to embark on new and equally complex and challenging tasks.

This new approach reaffirms our recognition of the CAREC Program's potential to accelerate the Region's economic transformation. In aligning regional cooperation with national priorities, we leverage the benefits of regional cooperation mechanisms to address emerging regional and global opportunities and challenges. The new approach will also require greater coordination in the efficient implementation and timely execution to take advantage of opportunities without delay.

As we move towards expanding areas of cooperation, we cannot underestimate the importance of institutional mechanisms that drive the process of planning, implementation and monitoring of regional projects. We have agreed to adopt a refined Development Effectiveness Review methodology to better assess Program and sectoral performance results based on concrete interventions. Working towards establishing the physical base of the CAREC Institute by 2014 signifies the importance we attach to knowledge products and services in building institutional capacities to support our regional cooperation agenda, and in having better informed policy choices. Through continuing dialogue, I am confident that we can find mutually acceptable ways to make the Institute a reality.

The integrated and expanded approach we are taking is aptly reflected in the theme we have chosen for the 13th Ministerial Conference and the years to 2020. "Linking connectivity with economic transformation in CAREC: Infrastructure++" suggests the infinite possibilities and opportunities where we could direct our collective efforts towards the vision of a more competitive region as we journey towards *CAREC 2020*. With more than a decade of successful cooperation behind us, I am confident that we can move ahead with even stronger resolve and determination in the years ahead.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Sanjar Mukanbetov for his excellent chairmanship of the SOM, the CAREC National Focal Points and the CAREC delegations, and the representatives from multilateral partner institutions for their active participation, and the ADB staff and CAREC Secretariat for their excellent support.

I wish those of you who are travelling, a safe and pleasant journey back home.