

CAREC SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING
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Manila, Philippines

Welcome and Opening Remarks
by

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Dear Friends and Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Being the Chairman of the Senior Officials' Meeting, I have a great pleasure to welcome all its participants. I also would like to assure you that despite of the fact that the SOM is held not at the native land of the Kyrgyz Republic, but rather at the ADB Headquarters, I'm kindly asking you not to challenge our sincere desire to conquer your hearts with the warmth of our hospitality, and the chance to demonstrate it will be available for us in the near future.

I shall make a small remark here: we made the efforts to refuse the proposal for carrying out the SOM in Manila, but we failed to resist the persuasive arguments and "charming speeches" of the CAREC Secretariat, especially in a view of the fact that ADB has since long ago become not just a development partner but a true sincere friend of all CAREC member countries.

In 2013, the important work was done to adjust the strategic areas of the CAREC program in such sectors as transport, trade facilitation and trade policy. One of the key aspects of the modified Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy 2020 (TTFS) is a significant expansion of CAREC corridors, which are now being connected to the regional CAREC deepwater seaports.

Adoption of the new Strategic Action Plan on Trade Policy (TPSAP) for 2013-2017 requires more efforts focusing on elimination of the non-tariff measures and of the WTO inconsistent quantitative restrictions for the purpose of greater openness of trade.

I would also like to note with satisfaction that in 2013 the World Trade Organization was acceded by one more CAREC country – Tajikistan. Let me express my sincere wishes to the Republic of Kazakhstan to complete the WTO accession process this year.

However, in 2014, we will be facing with no less ambitious and important tasks for the further development of regional integration and improvement of economic cooperation efficiency.

We need to go on with our integrated approach towards deepening of CAREC cooperation, which will require greater coordination, improvement of institutional environment, systemic and targeted support for the activities in the field of knowledge, and capacity building along with improved system for monitoring of the results.

First of all, we are faced with the task to review the methodology of the Development Effectiveness Review (DEfR) that would allow us to connect the objectives of individual projects with a common vision of the CAREC Program, and secondly, we need to modify the system of monitoring of the CAREC results with the purpose of more accurate evaluation of our Cooperation Program.

The next milestone in the process of systemic and progressive approximation of CAREC member countries is transformation of the transport corridors into the economic corridors that enables us to come closer to achievement of our main goal, which is economic development and prosperity of the CAREC region. I hope that in November we will be able to submit our vision about the further steps to the Ministers for their consideration.

And, of course, this year we must complete all preparatory procedures for the physical creation of the CAREC Institute. Today and tomorrow, according to the agenda of our meeting, in addition to the discussions of the above mentioned issues, we will have to assess the current progress in the key sectors of CAREC program and to discuss some other aspects of the work. I have no doubt that the results of our collective work will help us to better prepare the high quality materials for the 13th Ministerial Conference to be held in November this year in Bishkek.

At this, allow me to conclude the welcome speech and once again to wish us all the fruitful work, and I pass the floor to Mr. Gerhaeusser.