



Business Development Forum: Updates on the Preparations

**Senior Officials' Meeting
On Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
28-29 August 2006
Urumqi, XUAR, People's Republic of China**

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Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Business Development Forum

*“Building Partnerships Toward Stronger Business Sector Involvement
in Regional Development Across Central Asia”*

October 16-17, 2005

Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, People’s Republic of China

I. BACKGROUND

1. A preparatory meeting for the establishment of a Regional Business Roundtable (RBR) was held on 3-4 November 2005 prior to the 4th Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and Ministerial Conference (MC). The meeting participants fully endorsed the basic principle of involving the business communities more closely in regional cooperation in Central Asia. The Bishkek Action Plan summarized the discussions and agreements of the RBR meeting, and it was submitted to and discussed at the CAREC SOM and endorsed by the MC.

2. Taking on the suggestion of the People’s Republic of China and building on the goals and recommendations of the Bishkek Action Plan, CAREC will hold a Business Development Forum (BDF) for Central Asia. The CAREC BDF is envisioned to be the mechanism that will deepen awareness of the region and draw attention over the wide range of investment opportunities, and explore public-private sector partnerships in the development and implementation of key infrastructure and regional cooperation projects.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE CAREC BDF MEETING

3. The CAREC-BDF meeting on 16-17 October 2006 is designed to bring together business leaders and policy makers in Central Asia to explore and realize the potential for greater business participation in regional opportunities in industry, services, and infrastructure projects across Central Asia.

4. The specific objectives of the CAREC BDF meeting are as follows:

- (i) To enhance business involvement in regional projects and cooperation programs and identify possible joint initiatives in the priority sectors of development;
- (ii) To facilitate regional trade and investment and enhance business environments;
- (iii) To stimulate public-private partnerships towards meeting Central Asia’s infrastructure needs; and
- (iv) To build private sector networks and provide business a voice in the development of the region.

III. MEETING OUTCOMES

5. The CAREC BDF, which will meet along the fringes of the CAREC Ministerial Conference, is expected to come out with concrete recommendations for submission to and consideration by the Ministers of CAREC. As an action-oriented forum, it will place

emphasis on the identification of ways by which private sector participation in the activities of the working groups of CAREC may be enhanced. Specific opportunities, and challenges will be also be identified by the forum towards addressing obstacles to investments and public-private sector partnership.

IV. PARTICIPANTS AND MEETING FORMAT

6. The CAREC BDF will be participated by 250 senior businesspersons and policymakers from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; major banks active in the CAREC region, representatives from multilateral institutions and business participants from outside the region.

7. The CAREC BDF will involve one day of formal meetings and an additional half day for networking and discussions on specific projects. Discussion Groups will focus on the identification of practical opportunities and partnerships in each of the five priority sectors:

- (i) Energy;
- (ii) Mining;
- (iii) Agribusiness;
- (iv) Finance Sector; and
- (v) Tourism and Related Services.

Day 1, October 16, 2006

08:30-09:00 Registration

09:00-09:45 Opening Session

10:00-11:00 Panel Discussion 1: "Enhancing Trade and Investments in Central Asia: Defining the Role of the Business Sector"

11:00-12:00 Panel Discussion 2: "Infrastructure, Financing, and Public-Private Partnerships: Moving Central Asia Forward"

13:45-16:45 Discussion Groups on Five Priority Industry Sectors

Discussion Group 1: Energy

Discussion Group 2: Mining

Discussion Group 3: Agribusiness

Discussion Group 4: Finance Sector

Discussion Group 5: Tourism and Related Services

17:00-18:00 Plenary Presentation of Key Findings and Recommendations of the Discussion Groups

Day 2: October 17, 2006

09:00-11:00 Networking and Discussions on Specific Projects/Initiatives

11:00-12:00 CAREC BDF Conclusions

V. CAREC BDF PREPARATION UPDATES

8. The following outlines the progress of the preparations for the CAREC BDF:
 - (i) The CAREC-BDF Conference Secretariat has sent out more than 350 invites through email, website announcement, direct mail and fax. An online registration website has been set up to facilitate registration.
 - (ii) Participation of speakers for the plenary sessions and discussion groups will be funded by the Asian Development Bank.
 - (iii) The conference will be held at the Yin Du Hotel in Urumqi, Xinjiang, PRC.
 - (iv) Promotions are being undertaken through a website hosted at the ADB website, media relations activities, and networking and communications by the organizers.
 - (v) Background Briefs on the five priority sectors are being prepared to support the activities of the Discussion Groups. These will include compilations and analysis of information of value to business, and will be based on inputs and materials from existing sources.