



# News Release

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## SENIOR OFFICIALS DISCUSS STRONGER REGIONAL COOPERATION IN CENTRAL ASIA

**DUSHANBE, TAJIKISTAN (23 April 2010)** – Senior government officials from eight member countries of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program discussed ways to deepen and accelerate regional cooperation and integration in a meeting hosted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Manila, Philippines last week.

The meeting brought together senior government officials from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; as well as representatives of CAREC's six partner multilateral institutions - ADB, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund, Islamic Development Bank, United Nations Development Programme, and World Bank.

The Tajikistan delegation was headed by Negmatjon Buriev, Senior Adviser to the President on Economic Policy and CAREC National Focal Point for Tajikistan. Senior officials from the President's Office and the Ministry of Energy and Industry also attended the meeting.

"Next year, we will celebrate the 10th year of CAREC's institutional arrangements. It is time to take stock of what has been achieved over the past decade, identify areas for improvement, and showcase CAREC to the world," said Makoto Ojira, ADB's Country Director for Tajikistan.

The participants discussed the progress on CAREC sector strategies and work plans in the priority areas of transport and trade facilitation, trade policy, and energy; CAREC private sector development initiative; and CAREC Institute activities and work plan. They also reviewed possible activities to commemorate CAREC's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and preparations for the 9<sup>th</sup> CAREC Ministerial Conference scheduled for 31 October – 2 November in Cebu, Philippines.

The implementation of CAREC results framework to show the benefits and potential of practical, project-based regional economic cooperation was likewise taken up during the meeting.

"The initiative to include new projects for infrastructure development and diversification of transport and energy networks was important for Tajikistan," said Mr. Buriev. "In particular, it was decided to consider the construction of power transmission line connecting Tajikistan with Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan."

CAREC is an ADB-supported initiative to encourage economic cooperation in Central Asia. Initiated in 1997, the program to date has focused on regional initiatives in transport, trade facilitation, trade policy, and energy critical to improving the economic performance of the region and the livelihoods of all people—especially of the poor.

ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in the Asia and Pacific region through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members – 48 from the region. In 2009, it approved \$13.2 billion of loans, \$1.1 billion of grant projects, and technical assistance amounting to \$267 million.

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