



Reference Document
For Session 2 of the Senior Officials' Meeting
31 October 2010

Proposed 10-year Commemorative Activities

**9th Ministerial Conference on
Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
31 October – 2 November 2010
Cebu, Philippines**

I. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

1. The CAREC Program will mark the 10th anniversary of the establishment of its institutional arrangements in 2011. Given the significant progress made under the CAREC Program since the first ministerial conference in 2002, it is only fitting that the CAREC countries celebrate their first decade of institutionalization through commemorative activities to be held in conjunction with the 10th CAREC Ministerial Conference.

2. The objectives of the 10-year commemorative activities are to (i) celebrate 10 years of cooperation by showcasing key results and achievements of CAREC; and (ii) reaffirm the commitment of member countries to CAREC's vision and goal. It is hoped that the commemorative activities would raise the profile of CAREC as a results-oriented program, thereby generating further interest and increased support from the multilateral institution (MI) partners and other development partners.

II. POSSIBLE COMMEMORATIVE ACTIVITIES

3. The 10th year anniversary of CAREC's institutional cooperation is an auspicious occasion for CAREC partners to look back and celebrate the progress made, and, at the same time, plan for the future of the Program by building on the achievements of the past decade. In this regard, possible activities revolving around the proposed **anniversary theme of "CAREC 2020"** will be a combination of showcasing CAREC's progress and preparing its future strategic directions.

10-year Commemorative Study

4. At the core of the celebration is the **10-year commemorative study**, which is proposed to be launched by the CAREC Ministers during the 10th anniversary celebrations. Preparation of the study is under way. The study provides both a retrospective and prospective overview of the CAREC Program. As such, it consists of two parts:

- (i) Part 1: Stock-take of CAREC achievements, and issues and challenges during the first decade of CAREC's institutionalization; and
- (ii) Part 2: Enhancement of the CAREC Comprehensive Action Plan, including an updated results framework and a five-year rolling pipeline of priority investments and technical assistance activities.

5. The study is being conducted in close consultation with CAREC partners. Sub-regional workshops were organized in August-September 2010 to discuss part 1 of the study and to start the thinking on CAREC's future. Similar workshops will be convened in the first half of 2011 for part 2. The 9th MC in 2010 is expected to consider part 1 of the study and discuss elements of part 2. Preparations for part 2 of the study are under way. The full commemorative study is targeted for completion by September 2011.

High-level Seminar

6. A **high level seminar** involving eminent persons is proposed to be convened in connection with the launching of the 10-year commemorative study. The objectives of the proposed seminar include (i) showcasing CAREC achievements during the past decade and

introducing to the public the content of CAREC's strategic directions for the next 10 years; and (ii) obtaining views from eminent persons from government, academic and private sector on the commemorative study. The seminar will be held in the lead up to the 10th CAREC MC, and will be made open to the public.

Development Partners' Meeting

7. Since the institutionalization of CAREC in 2001, the six MI partners under CAREC have worked closely together and with partner countries, providing strategic, technical, financial, and advisory support to the CAREC Program. Of the \$13 billion of investments in CAREC-related projects approved to-date, almost \$6 billion have been provided by MI partners. The subregional workshops convened for Part 1 of the 10-year commemorative study revealed the CAREC countries' desire for increased engagement with the six MI partners and other development partners.

8. As a 10-year commemorative activity, the CAREC Secretariat proposes to convene the **first CAREC Development Partners Meeting (DPM)** as a major step for increased engagement between CAREC countries and development partner organizations. DPM participants will include CAREC country delegations (headed by ministers or the national focal points), and senior representatives of external aid agencies and private sector organizations. The DPM will serve as a forum for focused and results-oriented consultation between the CAREC countries and development partners on key issues and priorities under the CAREC Program. Through enhanced engagement between the CAREC countries and development partners, the DPM aims to facilitate resource mobilization for the CAREC program in a more coordinated and effective manner. It is proposed that the first DPM focus on the 10-year commemorative study, particularly key challenges facing CAREC in the next decade of cooperation and future strategic directions.

CAREC Video

9. A major feature of the first decade of CAREC's institutionalization has been the implementation of high-priority infrastructure projects. Regional roads, railways, as well as trade facilitation and energy infrastructure have been built, upgraded, or rehabilitated throughout the CAREC region, enhancing the region's connectivity within itself as well as with the neighboring regions. To showcase this achievement, the CAREC Secretariat proposes the **production of a video of CAREC**, which will feature some of the key CAREC projects that have been completed or are under way, and the benefits that have resulted from these.¹ Production of the video will involve the participation of all CAREC countries, MI partners, and other CAREC stakeholders. The video will be played for the first time at the 10th Ministerial Conference, and, thereafter, will be used as an outreach and promotional tool for the CAREC Program.

Signing Ceremony on Software Initiatives

10. While the provision of hard regional infrastructure has dominated the CAREC Program in the first 10 years of its institutionalization, CAREC countries have recognized that in order to maximize the benefits of such infrastructure, equal attention needs to be given to the associated soft infrastructure, especially the policy, regulatory and institutional aspects of

¹ A ceremony/(ies) on the completion of a CAREC infrastructure project to be witnessed by the CAREC Ministers will also be explored as a 10-year anniversary activity.

physical connectivity.² In line with this, the CAREC Secretariat proposes ceremonies to showcase the increased emphasis to be given to soft infrastructure in the next decade of cooperation.

11. The first proposed ceremony is the **signing of the CAREC Cross-Border Transport Agreement**. The Cross Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) is a transport facilitation accord designed to ease the transnational movement of goods and people along the CAREC corridors, principally by allowing transport operations to cross international borders and international transit for three or more countries. The CBTA is currently being negotiated by the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan for CAREC Corridor 5. It is open for accession by other CAREC countries. Although a number of bilateral land transport agreements are in place between pairs of CAREC members, the CBTA will be the first multi-country transit agreement that will be enforced along identified transport corridors.

12. The second proposed ceremony is the possible **signing of funding agreements for the CAREC projects on border crossing points improvement and single window development**. ADB is preparing investment programs for the improvement of border crossing points (BCPs) along the CAREC transport corridors, as well as establishing a coordinated single window system. The proposed ADB-supported investment will (i) improve CAREC corridor BCPs to remove bottlenecks and support the development of transport and trade logistics adjacent to BCP areas, and (ii) support national single window (NSW) development in selected CAREC member countries and develop a regional platform for the networking of NSWs. The proposed signing ceremony will mark CAREC's entry into "second generation" of regional projects, which complement earlier investments made.

III. FOR SOM CONSIDERATION

13. The above are suggestions from the CAREC Secretariat for the SOM's consideration. Suggestions on possible commemorative activities from the countries and MI partners are welcome.

² This was one of the recommendations coming out of the subregional workshops for Part 1 of the commemorative study.