



The Dushanbe Declaration
16th Ministerial Conference
Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation
Dushanbe, Tajikistan. 27 October 2017.

CAREC 2030: Connecting the Region for Shared and Sustainable Development

We, the Ministers representing the Governments of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, People's Republic of China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, adopt the following declaration after the 16th Ministerial Conference on Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) program in Dushanbe, Tajikistan on 27 October 2017.

Regional Cooperation Has Become Even More Critical to Meet National and Global Goals

1. The economies of our region have demonstrated huge resilience when confronted with the impact of global economic and financial crisis of 2007-2008 and a subsequent slump in commodity prices that began in 2014. Regional cooperation has become even more critical to meet our development goals in these challenging circumstances. The CAREC program, since its inception in 2001, has promoted economic growth in the region by investing in national and cross-border infrastructure and by promoting an enabling environment for trade and investment. The unanimous adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by all countries and the commitments to the COP21 Paris Agreement have further enhanced the relevance of regional actions to complement national endeavors to achieve these goals. CAREC, with its reputable convening power, presents us with a meaningful channel for dialogue and economic and social cooperation to achieve the common goals set out in the national and global development agendas.
2. We commend the more than \$30 billion of CAREC investments in our region that have helped establish multimodal transportation networks; increased energy trade and security; broken down trade barriers; facilitated free movements of people and freight; and laid the groundwork for development of economic corridors. We celebrated for our CAREC Institute obtaining its legal status in September, and expect the Institute to provide innovative knowledge solutions relevant to solving the development challenges of our region. We take pride in the growth of CAREC, starting from an initial group of four countries, to now a constellation of eleven member countries working together to develop our region. We appreciate CAREC's leading role in embedding the spirit of economic cooperation and for enhancing our collective capacities to seize new opportunities for the betterment of our people and the region.
3. We resolve to continue the pursuit of regional integration, recognizing that our collective strength lies in our diversity on the one hand and in our oneness on the other. In this way, we have learned to celebrate our commonalities and complementarities, rather than dwell on our differences and divides. We stand together in solidarity to synergize and find common ground to respond to our challenges of today and tomorrow.

Toward 2030: A New CAREC for a New Era

4. We unanimously endorsed our new strategy that will take the CAREC program to its third decade of operations. *CAREC 2030* is anchored on a broader mission to connect people, policies and projects, serving as the premier economic and social cooperation platform for the region. We are pursuing a dual-track approach of deepening traditional cooperation areas, while expanding into new areas and technologies to boost shared and sustainable development. We are cognizant that CAREC should keep its focus and strengthen its relevance, building upon its comparative advantages. We believe that greater ownership of member countries and expanding partnerships is the way forward for CAREC's greater success.
5. To promote economic and financial stability in the region, we recognize the need and significance of macroeconomic policy coordination among member countries. CAREC, with its standing and credibility, is best positioned to facilitate cross-learning and knowledge sharing on policies to sustain economic growth and overcome the impact of cyclical economic downturns. Regular dialogue on appropriate sector policies and reforms in areas of CAREC's comparative edge to underpin economic stability is also critical. We are convinced that the strengthened policy dialogue under the new CAREC, which is led by the Ministerial Conference itself, will yield positive outcomes in our region.
6. Our region is now physically better connected, in large part due to concrete project investments mobilized by CAREC. CAREC activities have facilitated trade and supported the improvements in the investment climate in the region. We are determined, building upon these accomplishments, to enhance people-to-people contacts to promote deeper intra-regional social and cultural understanding and to increase peoples' mobility. Business-to-business contacts are also vital to spur private sector development and create jobs in our region. To all these ends, we place people-centered regional cooperation at the heart of the CAREC agenda leading to 2030.

Fostering an Open and Inclusive Partnership

7. We stand at the threshold of a new era that calls for cooperation not competition, for openness not closure, for inclusiveness not exclusivity. We resolve to transform CAREC into an open and inclusive platform to motivate participation of the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders; strengthen linkages with other regional cooperation programs active in the region including Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and Economic Cooperation Organization; and promote inter-regional cooperation with other parts of Asia and the world. In this spirit of openness, we welcome both existing and new international development partners to contribute to the CAREC program on equal footings. We are confident that as good neighbors and good partners, we can help secure the future of CAREC with even greater prospects.

We express our gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for chairing and hosting our 16th Ministerial Conference. We thank each of our member countries, all our institutional and development partners and the CAREC Secretariat for their invaluable support. We look forward to our 17th Ministerial Conference to be held in 2018 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.