



The speech of A. Khashimov, Advisor to the Minister of Investments, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the sessions on June 16-17, 2025.

Dear participants of the meeting,

First of all, I would like to convey words of gratitude to the ADB and the CAREC Secretariat for convening the meeting and to the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic for traditional hospitality and excellent conditions for work.

I would also like to thank my Kyrgyz colleagues for inviting us to this meeting in the beautiful city of Bishkek and for their hospitality. Thank you very much.

Session 1

Corridor 2 connects the Uzbek corridors with the northern, southern and eastern economic regions of Kazakhstan.

It provides access to Europe via the E-40 highway.

In the west there is a connection with the Turkmen corridors, and in the south with Afghanistan via Termez.

There is an exit to China through the territory of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, through BCPs Dostuk, Irkeshtam and Torugart.

As part of the program, we completed the construction and reconstruction of 224-km section 2 of the Kungrad – Kazakhstan border corridor leading to Beineu and Aktau port, as well as to Astrakhan and Volgograd.

On sections 2a and b, work is underway on the construction and reconstruction of roads for a total amount of \$391 million.

About \$706 million were attracted from international financial institutions and foreign countries in the first quarter of 2025, including \$ 175.2 million for transport development, or 24.6% of the total attracted capital.

In the future, we will probably be able to strengthen the connectivity of 2D with the transport corridors of Afghanistan Mazar – Sharif - Andkhoy - Shibergan - Maymana – Herat - Dilaram.

Session 2

Cluster 1: Border Crossing Points and Air Connectivity

In 2024, the number of vehicles crossing the border of Uzbekistan exceeded 5 million units or 13,700 daily. Therefore, we consider the tasks of simplifying border crossing procedures to be relevant.

In this regard, we ask that a grant project be launched to study the status and monitor operations of BCPs in Central Asia estimated for 2-3 years.

We note the high growth rates of passenger air services. In 2025, it is projected that more than 14.5 million people will be transported by air.

It worth noting that in recent years 28 foreign airlines have been attracted to Uzbekistan, and the airports of Samarkand and Urgench have been transferred to external management.

Under the program, there is a need to study the status and prospects of air transport, both in individual countries of the region and in Central Asia as a whole.

In general, the region should be considered as a single air transport market. In this regard, it would be useful to conduct a comparative analysis of tariff rates and charges for aircraft ground handling. I mean tariff rates for landing and takeoff, tariffs for fuel, passenger services, catering, technical support of aircraft, etc.

At the same time, along with ensuring the potential for passenger transportation in the region with a population of over 80 million people, there should be more focus on development of freight transport operations.

Secondly, the integration of air transport with surface transport. And, of course, the accelerated digitalization of ground services. All these issues require high-quality research, development of recommendations and, of course, attraction of large investments.

Cluster 2: Road Assets Management and Road Safety

In the coming years, it is planned to reconstruct 2,183 km of international highways and to increase the level of electrification of rail transport to 65%.

In this regard, we ask for assistance in disseminating best practices in planning, construction and management of high-speed roads, including the use of public-private partnership schemes. As is known, there are 6 of them, including: "build - operate - transfer", "build - own - transfer", "build - transfer - operate", "design - build - finance - operate", "build - own - lease - transfer", "build - own - operate"

It is necessary to determine to which extent the program will be involved in road safety issues. This problem is growing and obviously new approaches are needed.

We would like to request the ADB to consider a project to digitalize one road transport company in each Central Asian country performing international transport operations.

Cluster 3: Railway Transport and Logistics

Currently, the program supports the implementation of the projects for electrification of Bukhara-Khiva and Pap-Andijan railways, with a total cost of 472.5 million dollars, and the projects for reconstruction of highways, with a total cost of 391 million dollars.

We believe it is appropriate to assess the relationship between the development of railway transport in the region and the pace of economic transformation in the member countries of the program.

I mean not only the selection of investments, but also the impact of industry, energy, and tourism reforms on further growth of freight and passenger operations by railway.

It is important to focus on the issues of forming through tariffs, introducing deeper tariff preferences for the transit of goods regardless of the volume and type of goods.

We consider it important to conduct a comparative analysis of the formation and structure of tariffs for freight transport operations by this mode of transport, and, of course, to assess the needs of railways for investment for the period up to 2030.

It would be good to launch a project to study the problems of containerization at the level of inter- and multimodal logistics.

Cluster 4: Urbanization and Mobility

Uzbekistan is experiencing high rates of urbanization, agglomeration and motorization of the population. This creates new prospects and new challenges. The traffic intensity in cities is growing, and naturally, the number of road accidents and the volume of carbon dioxide emissions as well. In general, the rates of urbanization and motorization (there are 6 motorized vehicles of land transport for every 7th inhabitant of the country) are outstripping the rates of preparation for this process. In these conditions, of course, we would like the Program to find funding to carry out local and regional studies and develop recommendations.

Session 3

Cluster 2

We would like to request you to consider creation of a transport corridor Uzbekistan – Kyrgyzstan – PRC – Mongolia.

Cluster 3

Currently, transport links are actively developing among Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on the one hand, and between these countries and Afghanistan on the other.

Work has already begun on laying the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India pipeline. Options are being worked out for construction of a trans-Afghan transport corridor leading to the ports of Karachi, Gwadar and Qasem, and to Bandar Abbas and Chobahar.

I would like to note that this year the volume of Uzbek -Afghan trade turnover will exceed \$1.2 billion. CAREC transport projects are capable of stimulating trade among the countries of Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus and other countries with Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India.

We are supporting the projects to create an integrated transport system and transport corridors with a high level of alternativeness.

Closing remarks

The growth rate of Uzbekistan's economy depends linearly on the pace of development of transport, roadside infrastructure, digitalization, unification of the regulatory and legal framework and the country's integration into the global supply chain. In the next 2 years, we plan to attract investments in the development of transport for the amount of \$2.6 billion.

In this regard, we will continue to actively support the projects envisaged by the CAREC Transport Strategy.

Next year we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the CAREC Program, initiated by the ADB. This program anticipated and foresaw the future of the region in the connectivity coordinates system, mutually beneficial cooperation for the sake of sustainable development.

Later, we witnessed the formation of more than 10 new "Central Asia +" platforms.

It seems to me that the foundation of the ADB initiative is solid and will serve the high interests of the peoples of the region.