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Distinguished participants of the Ministerial Conference,

Good morning, everyone. First of all, allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Mongolia for its hospitality and excellent organization of the 25th Ministerial Conference of the CAREC Program.

Over the quarter century of cooperation among our countries within the CAREC Program, we have made significant progress toward sustainable development and integration into the global economy. At the same time, we must acknowledge that we are still not fully leveraging our unique geopolitical position, which offers vast opportunities for the development of transit routes, trade, and economic growth.

The countries of our region are linked not only by borders, but also by a shared history and cultural heritage, and have long-standing trading traditions dating back to the Great Silk Road.

Today, as climate change and a complex geopolitical environment confront the global economy with new challenges and risks, CAREC countries need to rethink the region's development strategy in light of the new realities of the modern world.

Today, we can confidently say that the conditions are in place to intensify economic cooperation by promoting international trade and transit transport, developing infrastructure, adopting digital technologies, and advancing regional integration.

We see strong prospects for expanding cooperation and strengthening our ties with neighboring countries and regions. This will help enlarge our markets, improve the exchange of knowledge and experience, and create new opportunities for development.

The development of regional transport corridors was among the first and key priorities of the CAREC Program from its inception and remains highly relevant today.

For the Kyrgyz Republic, for example, the need to diversify international transport corridors remains a key national priority. This will reduce dependence on one or several transit routes, help improve economic stability and security, and reduce risks in the transport of goods and passengers.

In this context, the strategic China–Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan railway project is of particular importance to our country and other neighboring countries in the region. On 27 December 2024, the Presidents of the three countries officially launched its construction. This was not merely a symbolic step, but the practical commencement of a large-scale, ambitious railway project with a total length of 532–533 km!

The implementation of this megaproject will provide our region with the shortest route out of its transport isolation, connect around four billion people, and expand the geography of transport from Asia through Türkiye to Europe, the Middle East, Iran, the Gulf countries, and North Africa.

Another important CAREC agenda item we would like to highlight is green energy, which is one of the four core development priorities of the Kyrgyz Republic under the National Development Program of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2030, adopted last year.

Today, we all recognize that the transition to a green economy, climate change adaptation, and the sustainable use of natural resources are dictated not only by global trends, but also by vital necessity.

We possess nearly half of the region's water resources, and although our hydropower potential is estimated at 142 billion kilowatt-hours per year, we currently use only 13% of it.

Making maximum use of the region's abundant hydropower potential can undoubtedly become a powerful factor in ensuring energy security and sustainable economic development for all countries of the region.

Today, it is very difficult for any single country to ensure its energy security in isolation from international integration processes. A clear example of successful regional cooperation is the start of joint work by the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan on the construction of Kambarata HPP-1, with a capacity of 1.9 gigawatts.

Implementation of this major energy project should become one of the key regional initiatives in the coming years and will contribute to strengthening energy security throughout the region and ensuring the stability of electricity supply, water supply, and irrigation systems.

Taking this opportunity, we would like to emphasize that just a week ago, President of the Kyrgyz Republic Mr. Sadyr Japarov, speaking at the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly, stressed the critical importance and necessity of uniting international efforts to address climate challenges and the problems of mountain regions. In this connection, he invited countries to participate in the Second Global Mountain Summit "Bishkek+25", to be held in Bishkek on 21–23 October 2027.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our support for and commitment to the CAREC Program and, in particular, emphasize that mutually beneficial cooperation with all CAREC countries and development partners is possible only on the basis of mutual understanding, shared benefits, respect for the economic interests of all participating countries, and strict adherence to the principle of consensus in decision-making.

Finally, allow me once again to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Mongolia and the CAREC Secretariat for the excellent organization of the Ministerial Conference!