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Thank you, Mr. Chairman!

Dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to congratulate everyone on the 25th anniversary of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program.

I would like to express my gratitude to our colleagues from the Government of Mongolia for this year's chairmanship and hospitality, and to the Asian Development Bank and the CAREC Secretariat for the high standard of organization of the anniversary Ministerial Conference and related events.

This conference is of particular significance to me personally.

I have served as Tajikistan's National Focal Point for the CAREC Program since 2002 and during this time have participated in virtually every Ministerial Conference.

I would therefore like to share with you some observations on the evolution of the Program from our country's perspective.

From the outset, Tajikistan has actively supported the idea of CAREC as a practical platform bringing the countries of the region together around shared development challenges.

We believed then and continue to believe today that regional integration should, first and foremost, enable our countries to compete more effectively globally, accelerate economic development, strengthen stability, and improve the well-being of our citizens.

Looking back on Tajikistan's 25 years of participation in the Program, I can say with confidence that CAREC has made a significant contribution to strengthening transport and energy connectivity, developing trade, and creating conditions for our country's sustainable economic growth.

First – enhancing transport connectivity and mobility.

For Tajikistan, a significant part of whose territory consists of difficult mountainous terrain, reliable transport infrastructure is of strategic importance.

It provides not only for the movement of people and goods, but also for people's access to markets, jobs, and social services.

CAREC corridor modernization projects have already delivered tangible results.

In particular, under Corridors 3 and 5 in Tajikistan, road sections totaling approximately 175 kilometers have been upgraded.

Under Corridor 6, 113 kilometers of the Ayni–Uzbekistan border road have been rehabilitated, including 31 bridges.

Behind these figures are tangible results for people.

Residents of mountainous areas have gained year-round access to markets, health, and education services.

Transport operators have benefited from a significant reduction in travel time and transport costs.

Small and medium-sized businesses in border areas have gained a real opportunity to access markets in neighboring countries.

This, in our view, is the Program's main achievement: infrastructure that changes people's daily lives and expands opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Second – energy cooperation.

Tajikistan has significant hydropower potential, and the development of regional energy connectivity creates opportunities for its more efficient use, stronger energy security, and expanded electricity trade.

In this context, an important achievement was the implementation of the Regional Power Transmission Project, aimed at modernizing the high-voltage network and improving the reliability of electricity supply.

I would particularly highlight Tajikistan's reconnection to the Central Asian Power System in July 2024 through an interconnection with Uzbekistan.

This is an important step toward restoring regional energy connectivity and strengthening practical cooperation among Central Asian countries.

The 3,800 MW Rogun HPP will also play an important role in the future of regional energy cooperation; its construction is being carried out in accordance with international requirements and standards.

Its implementation can help diversify the region's energy mix and expand opportunities for sustainable energy supply.

The Rogun HPP is also an important complement to the regional CASA-1000 project, which provides for electricity transmission from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan through Afghanistan to Pakistan.

Tajikistan expects to begin commercial electricity supplies through CASA-1000 in the second half of 2027.

Third – trade and economic integration.

Modernization of border crossing points, simplification of customs procedures, and digitalization of trade logistics under the CAREC Integrated Trade Agenda are reducing costs for our exporters and increasing the country's transit potential.

For us, it is essential that infrastructure projects lead not only to physical connectivity between countries, but also to higher trade volumes, entrepreneurship development, and job creation.

Fourth – climate and water resources.

The melting of glaciers, on which the region's water balance depends, directly affects energy, agriculture, and food security across CAREC countries.

Tajikistan has initiated a number of international resolutions on glacier preservation, and we are convinced that climate resilience should become a cross-cutting theme of all regional projects under the Program.

Distinguished participants of the Conference,

I would now like to outline our vision for the future of the Program.

Over 25 years, CAREC has mobilized nearly $60 billion in investment and has become one of the key platforms for regional integration in Eurasia.

However, today's global environment – geopolitical fragmentation, shifting trade routes, climate risks, and accelerating digital transformation – requires a new level of coordination and ambition.

The CAREC Program's philosophy – "Good Neighbors, Good Partners, Good Prospects" – is particularly relevant today.

We firmly believe that amid global uncertainty regional cooperation, joint planning, and trust among countries are becoming key factors for sustainable growth and investment attraction.

Member countries therefore need to rethink the region's development strategy in light of the new paradigms of the twenty-first century and apply more integrated and holistic approaches.

The synergies arising from coordinated cooperation in the key areas identified in CAREC 2030 can multiply the opportunities available to each individual country.

In our view, one of the key conditions for continued success is a stronger focus on practical results, closer alignment of regional projects with national priorities and ensuring that the benefits of cooperation are as broad and inclusive as possible.

In this regard, Tajikistan believes that the CAREC Program should gradually evolve from a platform for dialogue on regional cooperation into an effective platform for preparing and implementing regional projects that will further strengthen connectivity and accelerate the development of member countries.

This approach will allow us to realize the Program's full potential and deliver more tangible results for our countries and their people.

CAREC is already a platform of trust and cooperation.

The next step is to transform this platform into a fully integrated ecosystem of transport, energy, and digital connectivity across the region.

We are convinced that combining infrastructure investment, institutional cooperation, and innovative solutions will enable CAREC to continue supporting sustainable and inclusive development in the region.

In conclusion I would like to reaffirm Tajikistan's readiness to continue actively participating in the CAREC Program, strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation with member countries and development partners and jointly creating new opportunities for economic growth and prosperity for our peoples.

I wish all participants fruitful discussions and a successful 25th CAREC Ministerial Conference.

Thank you for your attention.