

Statement by Ms. Steliana Nedera
Director, Istanbul Regional Hub, United Nations Development Programme
24th Ministerial Conference
Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program
20 November 2025, Bishkek

I would like to congratulate the Kyrgyz Republic, the ADB, the CAREC secretariat team and countries of the CAREC program for a successful conference today, for its strategic approach taking stock of results but also setting an inspirational and ambitious agenda for the period ahead of us, providing a strategic framework under which partners can come together and cooperate more effectively.

The United Nations Development Programme has approved in August 2025 a new four-year strategic plan (for 2026-2029) with four blocks of work: Prosperity, with people at the center; Healthy Planet; Crisis Resilience and Governance. These areas resonate a lot with what we heard today in terms of strategic spaces for CAREC countries to work together, and this complementarity of visions helps us come together in directing our collective efforts towards sustainable development.

The United Nations Development Programme is present in CAREC countries, we enjoy long-term cooperation with governments and with different partners in advancing priorities that are defined in each of the countries. Our operational and implementation capacity is deployed not only at national level, working with ministries on policies and supporting significant initiatives, but also often at subnational level, working with communities. We are also present at regional level through the Regional Centre and we bring global expertise through knowledge products and such initiatives as the Climate Promise, which has recently supported the preparation of NDC 3.0, with UNDP serving as a technical lead for a joint effort of UN agencies.

Through all our capacities, we stand committed to work together in the period ahead of us. I would like to zoom into three areas. like to zoom quickly into three areas:

- 1) In the area of early warning systems and climate resilience, UNDP's recent \$100 million GCF-funded project "Advancing Early Warnings for All" aims to establish multi-hazard early warning systems reaching 78 million people across seven vulnerable cities. In addition, our early warning initiatives in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Georgia align closely with the CAREC Climate Change Action Plan 2025–2027. We also have experience developing risk profiles for five cities in Central Asia with support from Japan. This platform offers strong complementarity, and we look forward to conducting further scoping and feasibility work to identify investments that will strengthen resilience to climate change and other disasters.
- 2) In the areas of climate and health, UNDP has strong experience in smart health systems and working at the intersection of climate and health.
- 3) Last but not least, regarding trade and transport corridor, it is widely recognized as a highly strategic area for future growth. Our focus is to ensure that this growth puts people at the center. We are therefore prioritizing private sector development; support to micro, small, and medium enterprises; expanded opportunities for communities, and for both men and

women equally. Together with the OECD, we recently launched a study covering 11 countries in the region, which shows that women are not benefiting equally from the green transition. Women face greater barriers in accessing green jobs, and this gap risks widening if we do not take deliberate action.

We welcome the operationalization of the Implementation Action Plan 2025-2030, and I would like to convey UNDP's readiness and commitment to continue collaboration.

Thank you.