

BISHKEK MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

On the Launch of Negotiations for the CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership Agreement (CARTIF)

*Adopted at the 24th CAREC Ministerial Conference
Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic – 20 November 2025*

We, the Ministers of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) member countries,

Acknowledging the long-term strategy of the CAREC Program, CAREC 2030, endorsed at the 16th CAREC Ministerial Conference in 2017, which positions CAREC as a catalyst for trade expansion and economic diversification in the region;

Guided by the CAREC *Integrated Trade Agenda (CITA) 2030*, adopted at the 17th Ministerial Conference in 2018, which focuses on expanding market access, promoting diversification, and strengthening trade institutions;

Building on the progress of CAREC trade cooperation, grounded in mutual trust and collective effort, and responding to the interest expressed by CAREC countries to explore a regional trade agreement as foreseen in CITA 2030;

Recognizing the evolving global and regional landscape, the diverse stages of WTO membership, and the varying economic circumstances across CAREC nations;

Reaffirming our commitment to the multilateral trading system, while recognizing the complementary role of regional initiatives in enhancing connectivity, economic resilience, and inclusive development;

Committed to promoting inclusive, transparent, and flexible cooperation that boosts trade and investment, while upholding each country's right to regulate for legitimate policy goals;

Acknowledging the technical work undertaken to prepare the *zero-draft text of the CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership Agreement (CARTIF)*, and the inclusive consultations held among national authorities;

Appreciating the continued institutional and technical assistance provided by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in support of this effort under the CAREC Program;

Do hereby declare the following:

- 1. We welcome the zero-draft text of the CAREC Trade and Investment Facilitation Partnership Agreement (CARTIF) as the basis for launching formal negotiations among interested CAREC countries.**
- 2. We support the official launch of negotiations on CARTIF, to commence in 2026, with a view to concluding a modern, development-oriented partnership that:**
 - Establishes a structured and flexible framework for a beneficial, effective and progressive trade and investment partnership;
 - Facilitates trade in goods and services, reduces non-tariff barriers and promotes digital and paperless trade;
 - Promotes regulatory transparency and institutional capacity;
 - Enhances investment facilitation and sectoral cooperation;
 - Promotes more sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development of the region;
 - Reflects the principles of differential treatment, voluntary participation, and gradual and modular integration;
 - Promotes integration of logistics systems to ensure the balanced development of trade relations;
- 3. We reaffirm the core principles that will guide these negotiations, including open participation, consensus-based decision-making, respect for existing international commitments, and a transparent and inclusive process.**
- 4. We request the CAREC Secretariat, in coordination with national focal points and with the support of development partners, to provide technical and administrative support for the negotiation process.**
- 5. We express our gratitude to the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyz Republic for hosting this Ministerial Conference and for its leadership in advancing regional economic cooperation.**
- 6. We affirm our commitment to assessing the progress of the CARTIF negotiations at the next CAREC Ministerial Conference and to collaborating in pursuit of a more integrated, resilient, and prosperous CAREC region.**