**Statement by Mr. Ayumi Konishi**
**Senior Advisor to the Chief Executive Officer**
**Multilateral Cooperation Center for Development Finance (MCDF)**
**25th Ministerial Conference**
**Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program**
**29 September 2026, Ulaanbaatar**

Distinguished CAREC Ministers and Representatives of CAREC Countries,

Vice President Yang Yinming of the Asian Development Bank,

Colleagues and Friends,

On behalf of the Multilateral Cooperation Center for Development Finance, and as a former ADB staff member who directly worked with CAREC and helped establish the CAREC Institute, please allow me to extend our heartfelt congratulations on the 25th Anniversary of the CAREC Program. I agree that CAREC has come a long way, and we feel that with the rapid economic growth of many CAREC members, regional cooperation in Central Asia is gaining momentum. We commend CAREC countries and ADB for this great achievement.

Yet, it is also true that there is a growing need to accelerate investment in connectivity in the region further, not only in terms of transport and energy, but also in digital connectivity, with strong involvement of the private sector. This calls for CAREC countries to develop more and more well-prepared, bankable project proposals and, at the same time, harmonize regulatory frameworks and strengthen institutional capacity to ensure that transport, energy, and data corridors are transformed into economic corridors and help CAREC countries take full advantage of AI-supported sustainable and resilient economic growth. MCDF would like to support CAREC countries, both in preparing bankable project proposals and in developing your institutional capacity in collaboration with our partners.

Recognizing that Central Asia also has many development initiatives outside CAREC, and for CAREC to be closely connected with other regions beyond, MCDF also hopes to help bridge the complementarity between other initiatives and CAREC.

Please allow me to share that MCDF adopted its new Strategy for 2027-2031 on 22 September, and we just concluded our third and last meeting on the First Replenishment of the MCDF Finance Facility in Doha the day before yesterday. Central Asia Fund, under the umbrella of the MCDF Finance Facility, will be officially launched today. It will support MCDF operations in Central Asia, and we hope to step up our work in the region in collaboration with various regional initiatives, particularly CAREC.

As a mutual support initiative among developing countries to promote high-quality infrastructure and connectivity investment through partnerships, the new MCDF Strategy enables its donor countries to access MCDF grant funding for project preparation support of the Group of 10 MDBs, including ADB, World Bank, EBRD, and EIB. MCDF can also provide direct capacity development support for our donor countries' development finance institutions, and we would sincerely like to invite CAREC countries to become our close partners.

Thank you.