

**Opening Speech at the 5th Ministerial Conference on
Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation**

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Honorable Vice Premier, Mr. Zeng Peiyan,
Honorable President of the Asian Development Bank, Mr. Haruhiko Kuroda,
Honorable Finance Minister, Mr. Jin Renqing,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

In the golden season of October, we are very pleased to see the opening of the 5th Ministerial Conference (MC) on Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) in Urumqi. On behalf of the Government of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, I would like to express my warm congratulations on the opening of the Conference. I would also like to extend my warm welcome to the distinguished guests and representatives for attending the meeting.

Xinjiang is a treasure land endowed with natural beauty and abundant resources. With a total population of 20.1 million and an area of 1.66 million square kilometers, it is the largest province of the country and stretches the longest borderline sharing with eight countries, more than any other provinces. The vast territory boasts abundant hydropower, land resources, solar power, geothermal energy and mineral resources, let alone the unique tourist attractions. As one of the key provinces covered by the Western Development Strategy, Xinjiang has 17 Class A ports and has become an important stronghold and gateway to the west.

Over the past half century, especially since the implementation of the opening up and reform policy and the Western Development Strategy, under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and with support of the central government and other provinces, the Xinjiang people of all ethnic groups have been working hard in unity for common prosperity and development, and scored great achievements in all the economic and social fields. The economy maintains sustained, rapid and sound development; the infrastructure construction keeps leap-frogging development; the urban and rural outlook has been greatly changed; foreign trade and exchanges have been expanded to a higher level; all the social undertakings have achieved thriving development; and the living standard of all ethnic groups has been notably improved. In short, Xinjiang today enjoys economic growth, social progress, ethnic unity, community harmony and better-off living environment.

This year marks the inception of the Eleventh Five-Year Program. With the intensive implementation of the Western Development Strategy and greater support from the central government, Xinjiang embraces unprecedented opportunities for development. All the ethnic groups here are fully confident and devoted to the lofty cause of building a prosperous society in all aspects.

It is a global trend to strengthen regional cooperation for common development and mutual benefits. The Central Asian economies are highly complementary to each other due to their broad territory, abundant resources and close engagements, which have created amiable conditions for regional cooperation. The Asian Development Bank initiated the CAREC program in 1996, aiming to promote economic exchanges of Central Asian countries for common development and improve the living standard of the people. It is also the common goal and aspiration of all the countries in this region. The 5th MC will play an active role in facilitating regional exchanges and cooperation for common development and prosperity. We will contribute our best meeting services to greater cooperation and friendship among the Central Asian countries.

As a frontier province of China to join CAREC, Xinjiang is connected with the Central Asian countries by rivers and mountains, boding unique geographical advantages for regional economic cooperation. We would like to deepen friendship and cooperation in this region and make Xinjiang a service platform for China's commitment to CAREC. We will spare no efforts to enhance friendship among countries and peoples in the region and jointly strive for regional economic prosperity and development.

In conclusion, I wish the 5th Ministerial Conference on Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation a complete success!

I wish all of you a pleasant stay and good health in Xinjiang!

Thank you.