

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Khusrav Noziri, ECO Secretary General
at the 21st CAREC Ministerial Conference on
Revitalizing Regional Cooperation for a Green, Sustainable
and Inclusive Recovery**

24 November 2022, Manila (virtual mode)

**Honorable Co-Chairs: Mr. Xiande Xia, Deputy Minister of Finance of the People's Republic of China and Mr. Shixin Chen, Vice President of Asian Development Bank,
Distinguished representatives of CAREC program,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

It is my pleasure to gather with you and exchange views on possible ways to keep boosting international partnership to draw synergies in our shared interests and common goals particularly in post-COVID period for the sustainable recovery in addressing challenges and availing opportunities for green growth and sustainable development.

It is at this level that reconnecting economies, reversing the disruption of trade and transport links, and addressing transboundary risks offer more immediate benefits. Effective regional actions require reaching out to multiple partners. The potential of regional collaboration to build back better and meet the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be fully leveraged.

The fact is that post-COVID-19 recovery, resilience building, and actions towards implementation of the SDGs require huge resources, and the significance of the realization of the finance commitments by developed countries and ease of access to these funds for developing countries in such a context, cannot be overstated. We cannot turn a blind eye to this fact that transition from dark brown to light brown then to light and dark green requires some other transitions, including transition in financing. We hope that with such reforms, developing countries especially in our region will have a better access to adequate finance which is requisite for the implementation of the SDGs.

Regional and subregional coordination can help build and restore resilience in supply chains. Existing mechanisms and agreements managed or supported by the regional frameworks can support the facilitation of trade, transport and digital connectivity, which are essential

to supply chain resilience. The impact of the pandemic on trade also presents an opportunity to revisit the effectiveness and efficiency of supply chains and regional trade agreements and address deficiencies that could impede recovery or recreate old vulnerabilities. Lessons learned from impacts and responses to the crisis should be built on to further strengthen regional integration efforts and build resilience in the future.

Regional cooperation and policy coordination on air pollution, climate change, biodiversity conservation, water resources management and land degradation can help to protect and restore ecosystems as a means of building resilience to future pandemics and building back better. The COVID-19 crisis also represents an opportunity to strengthen regional normative frameworks to deal with transboundary risks and strengthen environmental resilience.

To sum up, our vision in two main pillars can be:

First, we need to forge a stronger consensus on green growth and climate-resilient development cooperation. Confronted with global difficulties and challenges, no country can be immune from their impacts. We need to put sustainable development first, better synergize our development strategies and take collective actions.

Second, we need to bolster the drivers for sustainable development. ECO and CAREC enjoy shared membership of countries with high complementarity and strong vitality. We need to tap the potentials of cooperation, improve regional cooperation platforms and establish advanced cooperation mechanisms to cultivate circular economy and sustainable development strengths. Our cooperation may center around five lines of efforts, namely trade and investment liberalization and facilitation through boosting connectivity, industrialization, digitization, low-carbon development and agricultural modernization. This way, we could raise our collective competitiveness and take our cooperation to the strategic one.

The ECO, as an efficiently functional regional organization, is ready to share knowledge and experiences and also join the interested international partners to further contribute to the enhanced partnership among its shared members with CAREC and beyond.

I am sure our cooperation will enjoy broader prospects, and the region that we all call home will see an even brighter future. I wish this event to be a great success, extending my best wishes to all participants.

Thank you all.