



P R E S S R E L E A S E

**Speech of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan
H.E. Mr. Emomali RAHMON
at the opening ceremony of the 6 *Ministerial Conference
on Central Asian Regional Economic
Cooperation (CAREC)*
(Dushanbe, 3 of November 2007)**

On November 3rd, 2007 the Sixth Ministerial Conference of Central-Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) took place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

High level guests and representatives from states-participants of the CAREC Program, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund, Islamic Development Bank, United Nations Development Program participated at the Conference.

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan H.E. Mr. Emomali RAHMON opened the Conference with the welcoming speech. In his address to participants President of Tajikistan stressed issues of vital importance for the region: water management, hydro-energy, regional transport communication, regional cooperation and security. In their speeches participants referred to these problems as well.

Following is the speech of H.E. Emomali RAHMON at the opening of the Conference.

Dear Mr. Kuroda,
Dear Participants of the Conference,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have a pleasure to welcome all participants of the 6th Ministerial meeting of the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC). I would like to wish you fruitful work and take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to all states, organizations and individuals rendered support to the CAREC program.

States of our region have tremendous experience of fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation. It is necessary to mention that recently majority of our countries were part of one united state with common economic, informational space and effectively implemented common projects in various fields.

Today CAREC states need to reconsider regional development strategy with a glance to new realities of the modern world. We well understand that in the circumstances of enhancing globalization the provision of competitiveness of the

national economies and forming common regional markets will have decisive significance for our region.

A number of problems, as inconsistency of national legislation, availability of trade barriers and others, caused by the globalization process can be solved on interstate level only due to its size and importance. None of our states can overcome problems of global importance, which go beyond national borders, separately, without mutually beneficial cooperation.

That is why we shouldn't accept attempts of unhealthy competition and political arrogance in the region. The purposes of the regional integration first of all consist of participation to the world competition in high positions for achieving the acceleration of economic development, providing its stability and improvement of the citizens welfare. Effect of harmonized and coordinated cooperation in four key directions of activity, stated in CAREC Complex Action Plan will enable to increase multiply the capabilities, which exist in each country of the region.

I deeply convinced that being separated it will be difficult for our states to achieve essential growth without strengthening the regional cooperation. Cooperation and cooperation - this is the main imperative of the era of globalization.

In this respect CAREC supports states-parties of the program to deeply open its potential. Phased implementation of the initiatives on trade, transport and energy will facilitate a deepening of integration of the states of the region and establishing of their ties with world markets.

We think that CAREC is the partnership development program and the example of cooperation between states and organizations aimed to provide harmonization of national legislation, achieve real results and guarantee transparency. In the past our region could have been characterized as unstable, but today we witness the stable and sustainable peace with developed political components which serves as the basis for desirable investment climate.

The population of our countries committed to creative live activity. Tajikistan was and remains the convinced supporter of close regional cooperation which to our opinion should be based on the following principles:

First: absolute equality of the rights and duties of participants of cooperation process.

Second: aspiration to creation of common legislative space.

Third: maintenance of free moving of the capital, services, goods and labour between participants of the process.

Fourth: combining of efforts on rational and fair use of water - energy resources of the region.

Fifth: creation of common scientific, cultural and humanitarian space.

The most important is that we are ready to agree and make constructive decisions with the common benefit for all states and it has been once again confirmed during three recent summits in Dushanbe where most of leaders of CAREC states participated.

The countries of our region are connected not by borders only, but also by common history, cultural heritage and traditions of trading since the times of Great Silk Road.

We were always open for trade, and implemented continuous and free turn over of goods between all parts of the world. In the process of effective integration of CAREC states in multilateral trade system they face some difficulties, but at the same time open new real opportunities for economic development.

In this context improvement of the regional trade and removal of not trade related obstacles will enable to use full potential of each state.

And it is necessary to remember, that this potential is very high. In this respect the region can well become self-sufficient. I am sure that the measures on simplification of trade relations included in the draft strategy on trade facilitation proposed for approval by this ministerial conference will help the countries of the region to lower operational costs, to improve common investment climate and to open new business opportunities.

As a result the problems connected to high taxes and duties, excessive bureaucracy, informal payments and development of infrastructure will be eliminated.

In our opinion the widening of the regional trade cooperation would serve to strengthen the base stimulating the poverty alleviation in each country.

The solution of problem of water and energy resources use in the region is the key task for development of Central Asia. Today we observe uneven and unpractical use of water resources in the region.

It differs from 1400 to 4000 m³ per person/year. Given an increasing demand for water in the world, in our region as well, the solution of problem of efficient use of water resources is one of strategic ones in view of achieving of sustainable development.

This urges for constructing of hydro-energy plants which will enable to provide an accumulation and delivery of water during the vegetative period and droughty years with a simultaneous generation of electric power while releasing of water. At the same time it is necessary to remember that use of water for generation of energy does not withdraw the water recourse from the nature and does not lower its quality.

Maximal use of rich hydropower recourses of the region, certainly, can become the strong factor of development of light, processing, food and other industries in the region, as well as the prerequisite for energy security and steady economic development of all countries of the Central Asia.

It is obvious, that today it is very difficult to arrange the security in the country which is separated from international integration processes, even if it has significant resources and sources water and energy supply.

Therefore we need to create balance of interests of the countries-participants which would allow for reasonable use of available opportunities for growth on a mutually beneficial basis.

There are enough examples of the effective and civilized solution of such problems in the world, both on bilateral and multilateral levels.

Examination of their experience specifies necessity of considering of objective interests of each country, mutual recognition of them and, hence, expression of the common political will for realization of mutually beneficial projects.

Today the problem of access to pure potable water and safe sources of water supply is one of the pressing questions not only in our region, but also all over the world.

As we stated earlier, according to information provided by UNICEF and the World Health Organization, more than 40% of the population of the planet live today in unsatisfactory sanitary conditions due to insufficiency of potable water and more than one billion have no access to it at all.

Children suffer from the shortage of pure potable water the most, and more than four thousand children perish every day from the illnesses caused by insufficiency of water.

We always stood for solution of water related problems, in order for them to become catalyst for cooperation between people and nations.

The initiatives introduced by Tajikistan were supported by the international community and 58-th session of UN General Assembly decided to declare the international decade of actions "Water for life".

Therefore I would like to confirm once again the offer made earlier concerning our readiness of use enormous stocks of fresh water of the lake of Sarez (17 km³) in the interests of the countries of the region.

Resources of the lake of Sarez can potentially provide 30-40 million people in Central Asia with pure water forever.

In this connection, **first**, I address to you - to the representatives of esteemed international financial organizations, to consider the possibility of allocating funds for preparation of the feasibility study for this project.

Secondly, we propose to the countries of the region and to the international financial organizations to study a possibility of establishing regional consortium on shared use of the resources of the lake of Sarez and therefore to conduct next year the international scientific-practical conference in Dushanbe.

Dear participants of the conference,

Today it is difficult to talk about development of the region without solution of problems in a sphere of transport and communications. The CAREC states have different level of development of transit transport highways. The remoteness of many countries of region from the large markets, marine ways and railway junctions as well as various obstacles make this problem even more complex, especially for Tajikistan.

The fact that the Central Asian transport and communication infrastructure have lagged behind those in other regions of the world also influences the situation.

Creation of the reliable and safe transport corridors which provide the least transportation costs and their subsequent transformation into economic corridors

will enable to accelerate the economic development and poverty alleviation in the region.

I am sure, that approval by CAREC states of the general strategy on transport corridors development will greatly influence the increase in mutual trade and will be beneficial for all countries.

The specified priority directions of development of regional cooperation will promote interaction of countries and international institutes within CAREC on second level priorities of the program - development of human potential, agriculture, tourism and others.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The common goal of all CAREC countries is the improving of life standards of their citizens. For achievement of this purpose I take a liberty to make some wishes:

First, from CAREC we expect practical actions and mechanisms for solution of hydropower problems, border issues, development of communications as well as the general problems of provision of security. All strategies and plans should be realized in a timely manner. The forthcoming signing of the finance agreement between the Government of Republic Tajikistan and the Asian Development Bank under the Project of improvement of the regional road corridor which connects Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, China, Afghanistan and other countries, may serve as indicator of the progress.

Second, the solution of the mentioned problems will demand strengthening of CAREC countries' potential in the sphere of regional cooperation, first of all, preparation of highly skilled experts capable to solve major problems in a developing world efficiently.

Therefore I call to you to pay adequate attention to questions of human resources development.

Third, in order to implement our long-term vision of regional cooperation, we need to be guided by mutually advantageous strategy based on common interests. In this case we can create a strong basis for maintenance of large-scale integration not only in economy, but also in other spheres of CAREC countries' peoples' lives.

Taking an opportunity, I would like to confirm once again our complete support and adherence to CAREC Program.

We shall continue our interaction with all countries participating in realization of the Program and partners on development for the sake of a deepening of regional cooperation and prosperity of our countries.

Thank you for attention.