

TAJIKISTAN
MUROTALI ALIMARDONOV, Governor

First of all I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to speak today, as well as the organizers of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Board of Governors' Annual Meeting for the hospitality and warm reception rendered to us.

The world experience shows that the strengthening of the peace process and acceleration of reforms in the economy are two processes with direct relationship and mutual influence.

The efforts taken by our President, E. Rahmonov, have been not only of political importance within the country, but demonstrated to the whole world the Tajikistan leadership's will to consistently complete the implementation of peace agreements and strengthen the overall political stability and ensure the country's economic growth.

After having gained its independence, the Republic of Tajikistan has been pursuing the policies aimed at the building of a secular and democratic society to implement economic reforms in order to ensure the sustainable development of all the sectors of the economy and improve the well being and living standards of the population.

GDP in the Republic of Tajikistan has been annually growing and the growth in 2000 was 8.3 percent.

With the purpose to speed up the economic reforms, the Government of the Republic has developed and adopted the midterm economic reforms program. Currently the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is preparing the National Poverty Reduction Strategy in which ADB takes direct participation. ADB also participated in the restructuring of the public sector, and based on its recommendation two new ministries were established: Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Energy.

It should be pointed out that wide-scale activities have been undertaken in the country on privatization of State property. Privatization of small enterprises is already completed and privatization of medium and large enterprises is in progress.

The Republic of Tajikistan Government's economic program on the economic recovery focuses on the development of private entrepreneurship. For this purpose a legal basis responsive to market economy requirements has been created, that is laws have been adopted to ensure development and support for small and medium businesses, to provide a favorable environment for foreign investments, support market structures, and develop the financial and banking sectors.

The high educational level of labor resources is key in creating a favorable environment for investments and allows the efficient development of labor-intensive sectors.

Our Government's hope is that its economic program and activities will be lent serious support by ADB and ADB acting as a catalyst will attract investors from Asian and Pacific countries to our economy.

The Republic of Tajikistan joined ADB in April 1998, and we should mention the successful cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and ADB over this period. In an unprecedented short time the first lending program of ADB for post-conflict recovery and infrastructure rehabilitation in the transport and energy sectors was developed. We also expect a close cooperation with ADB in the energy sector, in particular, in designing and further financing power plant construction projects by setting up a consortium with the participation of other international financial institutions and private sector.

We are grateful to ADB for setting its strategy on Tajikistan, focusing on the development of such sectors as transport infrastructure, social system, agriculture, trade, energy generation, and the financial sector by developing a microlending facility.

At the end of my speech, let me express genuine appreciation and gratitude to the management of ADB in the person of its President, Tadao Chino, the Board of Directors, and all member countries for the assistance and support provided. We hope that the ADB management will pay more attention to our country, and entrepreneurs and business communities of the Asian and Pacific region will be interested in investing in proposed projects, whereby contributing in accelerating the transition to market relations and pick-up of the economy in the Republic of Tajikistan. I would like to assure all of you that the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is strongly committed to pursue the policies of peace and national accord, and to implement at high pace market-oriented reforms in the economy of the country for the purpose of poverty reduction and improving the population's well-being. I believe that Tajikistan will be given further assistance and support in its aspirations.