

**Proceedings**  
**Preparatory Meeting of the**  
**Central – South Asia Regional Business Roundtable (RBR)**  
3-4 November 2005  
Shayr Ballroom, Hyatt Regency, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) in April 2005 endorsed forming a Central and South Asia Regional Business Roundtable (RBR) to involve business communities in Central and South Asia regional cooperation initiatives. The Preparatory Meeting for the RBR was convened on 3-4 November 2005 in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic prior to the Fourth CAREC Ministerial Conference (MC) on 5-6 November 2005. The RBR is expected to consist of 11 countries: the original seven CAREC participating countries plus Russia and three South Asian countries — Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan.

The basic proposed objectives of the Central-South Asia RBR are to: (a) enhance business inputs into CAREC and other regional cooperation programs; (b) facilitate regional trade and investment; and (c) build private sector networks. The Preparatory Meeting intended to set forth the future directions of the RBR, including operational modalities and main activities. See Attachment 1 for the Agenda.

Around 40 business participants from nine countries attended the Preparatory Meeting. Government officials from eight countries and representatives of multilateral institutions and other organizations also attended. See Attachment 2 for the Participant List.

Mr. Djoomart Otorbaev, Executive Director of Kyrgyz Investment Roundtable and former Vice Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic on Economic Development, Trade and Investments and Mr. Robert Bestani, Director General of the Private Sector Finance Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB) served as co-chairs for the Preparatory Meeting.

**Day 1 – November 3, 2005**

**Opening Session**

1. Mr. Sabyrbek Moldokulov, First Deputy Minister of Industry, Trade, and Tourism (Kyrgyz Republic) opened the Regional Business Roundtable (RBR). He noted that experience in regional cooperation has demonstrated the importance of private sector involvement in regional projects and for the private sector to be integrated in the processes of regional cooperation. Mr. Moldokulov pointed out that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) recently established a Business Council, and it is therefore important for the RBR to coordinate with the Business Council. Representatives of the private sector were encouraged to present project proposals for regional cooperation. Mr. Moldokulov thanked ADB and all the other development partners for working within the CAREC framework. Lastly, he expressed his hopes that the 4<sup>th</sup> CAREC Ministerial Conference will help to further integrate the Central Asian countries.

2. Mr. Djoomart Otorbaev, Co-Chair of the RBR, noted the substantial shifts that have occurred in the flow of goods in the region over the past 15 years. He emphasized the need to have concrete results from this RBR preparatory meeting. Ideas emanating from this meeting will be presented to the Ministerial Conference. From a Kyrgyz perspective, Mr. Djoomart highlighted the importance of regional cooperation for landlocked countries and the need for open borders, which was demonstrated back in the Silk Road era. He concluded his

opening remarks by saying that the RBR participants are “co-thinkers” on how the business community should act within CAREC in the future.

3. Mr. Robert Bestani, Co-Chair of the RBR, said that the Central Asia Republics are strategically positioned to capture the trade and economic growth of China, India, and Russia. Although ADB has been active in the region, he acknowledged that the Bank has played only a limited role. ADB’s Private Sector Operations Department (PSOD) has expanded and can now engage with the Central Asian countries. ADB can and should fulfill some of the region’s financial requirements for infrastructure and business financing. Mr. Bestani emphasized the importance of the private sector working together with government in public-private sector partnerships (PPPs).

4. The welcoming remarks were followed by four presentations describing selected regional cooperation programs. Mr. Craig Steffensen gave an overview of the CAREC initiative. The second presentation by Ms. Hyunjung Lee discussed the Central and South Asia Transport and Trade Forum. Mr. Wojciech Hubner introduced the United Nations’ Silk Road Regional Programme. In the final presentation, Mr. Bestani offered more details on PSOD’s operations and its main products.

### **Session 1: The Vision, Objectives and Proposed Terms of Reference of the RBR**

5. The participants were asked to focus on what the RBR ought to achieve by defining a vision and set of key objectives in this session.

6. A participant from Uzbekistan suggested that the business community should lead the RBR, and ADB’s role in the RBR ought to be a facilitation one. He recommended that the RBR could present joint priorities from the business community to the CAREC Ministerial Conferences.

7. A Pakistani participant said the RBR should have broad parameters that can accommodate changes over time. The overall long-term goal ought to be economic integration, but the short-term objectives consist of regional trade and investment.

8. One of the Kazakhstan businesspeople explained that there is a great deal of overlapping business structures and activities in the region. It is imperative that we coordinate all this work to make regional business more effective. He suggested that there is no need to create another regional business body, but what is required is a secretariat to coordinate the various executing bodies. He also recommended that a regional business secretariat be based on the existing secretariat for the Central Asian and Russian Business Association<sup>1</sup> (also called the Business Congress) located in Almaty.

9. A participant from Afghanistan offered a vision statement and key objectives for the RBR. The vision could be “to recognize, stimulate, and support private sector as an engine of development for participating in national and related regional cooperation member countries and global markets.” Objectives of the RBR might consist of:

1. To support the business community’s involvement in CAREC and other regional cooperation programs.
2. To enable and facilitate conditions in respect to policies and procedures for more liberalized private sector participation in regional cooperation.

10. A participant from the Kyrgyz Republic later submitted other contributions for the vision and objectives. His vision for the RBR is “to build an effective public-private

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<sup>1</sup> This initiative, supported by the World Bank and USAID, aims to bring together business associations in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia to deal with issues of significant synergy to the proposed activities of the RBR.

partnership for regional cooperation in Central and South Asia.” Specific objectives could include:

1. To ensure that regional business priorities are fully addressed in CAREC.
2. To facilitate regional business cooperation for trade and investment.
3. To support private sector networks between business associations in Central and South Asia.

11. One of the Kyrgyz participants suggested that an objective of the RBR ought to be improving the business conditions in the region and have ADB help convey RBR outputs and recommendations to the Ministerial Conference. Additionally, monitoring must be conducted periodically; such as a newsletter summarizing which RBR recommendations were submitted to the governments and the status of actions taken to date.

12. Another objective identified by a Pakistan businessperson is to put forth recommendations on how to develop the private sector in the region. He noted that we need to improve the operations of the private sector in the region, and the RBR could play an instrumental role in achieving this objective. An Uzbek participant offered a similar view, saying that the RBR and ADB could offer practical assistance to the region’s private sector in implementing their business operations.

13. A Chinese participant suggested that a wider range of businesspeople be invited to the next RBR. One of the Tajik businesspeople concurred with this idea by saying that the RBR ought to consider the service industries in which many small to medium enterprises (SMEs) operate.

14. Several participants discussed the constraints on conducting business in the region. The private sector encounters a number of obstacles to the movement of goods and people across borders, and many of these are related to customs documentation and procedures, visa requirements, and extortion. These issues must be addressed if the private sector is going to play a larger role in the economic growth and development of the region.

15. A Mongolian participant noted the experience in his country to address government interference in private business by establishing a Consultative Council consisting of 10 state-owned enterprise officials and 10 private sector representatives. This type of public-private sector cooperation is necessary, and hence the RBR should take note of this approach.

16. A Tajik businessperson suggested setting up a Central Asia alliance that would remove visa requirements and establish free business zones. Also, he believes that a club of big businesses in the region would be an effective mechanism for lobbying governments to improve the overall business environment in the region.

17. Another Mongolian representative explained his country’s energy requirements and the accompanying transportation needs to facilitate the distribution of energy. He proposed a project concept for an oil pipeline extending from Kazakhstan to the Korean Peninsula.

18. A Chinese business representative explained China’s outward economic orientation, including via Xinjiang Autonomous Region. There are numerous transit problems that ADB could help resolve.

## **Session 2: The Substantive Activities of the RBR**

19. The resource person presented several possible RBR functional and sectoral activities for the participants to consider.

20. Much of the initial discussion focused on the difficulties in the transport of carriages and cargo across the region. Foreign exchange procedures also delay business transactions. Some of the issues could be tabled to the Ministerial Conference, and others might be suitable for ADB to help resolve.

21. One activity suggested by a Kyrgyz businessperson is to harmonize laws and procedures related to border crossings. Transport documents and standards (e.g., weight limits on vehicles transporting goods) could be harmonized to facilitate regional commerce.

22. A Chinese business representative offered several ideas for RBR activities. These include: (i) organizing regional business seminars for business associations; (ii) conducting trade fairs for the region; (iii) conducting investment missions for Chinese entrepreneurs to Central Asia; (iv) sending delegations from the Central Asian countries to visit China; (v) creating an information platform (website) about key business projects in the region; and (vi) building cooperation among chambers of commerce in the region.

23. An Afghan participant raised the issue of WTO membership of certain CAREC members. He wanted to know about the Kyrgyz Republic's rapid accession to the WTO and whether or not the RBR should be encouraging the Central Asia countries to become WTO members. Co-Chair Otorbaev responded by discussing the Kyrgyz Republic's experience within the WTO so far.

24. A participant from the Kyrgyz Republic discussed WTO-related issues further, and he suggested that technical regulations in accordance with WTO guidelines should be emphasized and harmonized in the region. This recommendation could be presented to the Ministerial Conference.

25. The USAID representative offered a different perspective focusing on SMEs. In his view, SMEs will be the engine of growth in the region, and SMEs depend heavily on the trade of services. The RBR, therefore, could focus on issues related to the trade of services. One example is freight forwarders. The various forwarders in the region lack sufficient linkages with each other to help resolve problems they face operating in neighboring countries. Perhaps the RBR could bring together the freight forwarders of the region in an alliance or association that could effectively deal with the common problems they face.

## **Session 3: The Structure and Mechanisms of the RBR <sup>2</sup>**

26. The resource person previewed this session by offering a range of issues and options related to how the RBR participants might organize themselves.

27. A businessperson from Afghanistan suggested that the RBR include Central Asia, South Asia, Russia, and China. He also advanced the idea that ADB perform the secretariat function for the first year of the RBR. Three committees comprised of RBR participants could be established on transportation, energy, and trade, and these committees would put forth recommendations to the RBR Secretariat. The Secretariat would then submit these issues and recommendations to the governments.

28. A businessperson from Afghanistan agreed with the suggestion for ADB to serve as the initial secretariat for the RBR. He also noted that the RBR shouldn't necessarily be

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<sup>2</sup> Sessions 3 and 4 were effectively combined into one session.

limited to the persons present at this Preparatory Meeting, and perhaps in the future the RBR could become a broader body.

29. One of the Tajikistan businesspersons concurred with the comments and suggestions made by the Afghanistan participant. However, he cautioned that ideas and recommendations made by the RBR might not be channeled to the governments. The RBR mechanisms and structure must be geared for interaction with government agencies.

30. An Uzbek participant pointed out the likely need to conduct training and re-training for people in the three proposed sectors. However, a Pakistani government official encouraged the participants to focus on the objectives provided in the background documents and slides rather than placing too much emphasis on sectors.

31. Another businessperson from Uzbekistan prefers to see ADB play the role of a neutral broker for dealing with problems in the business environment identified by the RBR. The RBR could serve as a forum for discussing these issues and hopefully prompt governments to respond accordingly.

32. A Kazakh participant explained that some of the Central Asian countries have consultative councils that meet with customs authorities to discuss various problems. He believes that the consultative councils are an effective way of resolving problems with the business environment. For instance, the Consultative Council in Kazakhstan keeps businesses informed about changes in the legal and regulatory frameworks. He also pointed out that research has been conducted recently on monitoring the customs authority.

33. A participant from Kazakhstan implored the RBR to take practical steps towards building trust. These include border crossing matters and coordinating activities among the region's business communities. He also discussed the secretariat that was recently established for the Central Asian and Russian Business Association and its planned activities. For the RBR, he suggested that the chairperson rotate annually from among nominated "co-chairs" in each participating country (that is, each delegation would nominate one person to serve as a country chair/head for the RBR).

34. One businessperson from the Kyrgyz Republic called for the integration of an RBR secretariat with the CAREC secretariat in Almaty. Such an arrangement would facilitate the private sector's integration with the overall CAREC program. For the scope of activities, the RBR should focus on the three core sectors of the CAREC program. An important function of the RBR might be the preparation of sector position papers and submitting them to the Ministerial Conference each year. The sector position papers would provide a means for the private sector to articulate its views and concerns in those three sectors to the top level of government.

35. One representative from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) agreed that the RBR should not duplicate what other business groupings in the region are already doing. He pointed out that EBRD has a parallel Business Forum with its Annual Meeting. The RBR could operate in a similar manner with the Ministerial Conference. It is important, however, for the RBR to be self-financing. Lastly, he suggested that the RBR monitor the development partners and governments' regional cooperation programs.

36. Regarding the suggestion that the RBR be self-financing, a World Bank representative thought it is too premature for this to happen. Several of the participating countries lack sufficient resources to help finance the RBR. He also believes once a year meetings of the RBR would adversely impact the implementation of actions.

37. A Kazakhstan representative said it is necessary for the RBR to define specific goals, including short-term goals. A secretariat is only necessary if the RBR has long-term goals.

He recommended that the RBR play a role in monitoring the quality of the business environment in the region.

38. A permanent regional body is necessary for the business community, according to one Kyrgyz businessperson, and we should harness the experience of the SCO Business Council over the past 18 months. Working groups should also be formed. In order to coordinate the business community in the region, the participants here could serve as representatives of their respective countries' private sector and provide relevant information to the permanent regional body.

39. A Pakistani participant related the experience and missed opportunities within the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). If only 25% of what SAARC planned to do had been actually implemented, then South Asia would be much better off today. The relevance of this for the RBR is that it is necessary to have a body representing the business community function continuously instead of organizing meetings only once a year. This would help prevent slippage in the implementation of activities. A permanent secretariat for the RBR is not necessarily required, however, if we have a set of dedicated people who will stay on top of regional cooperation activities. He also suggested documenting a proposed time schedule of what is to be done and who in particular is responsible for carrying out specific actions. Participants of subsequent RBR meetings are urged to implement actions agreed at the RBR in their home countries and post their progress on the Internet instead of waiting to inform members at the next RBR meeting. On the issue of representation on the RBR, he noted that each country could send different representatives to the various meetings instead of sending the same person each time. The ministries of commerce among the participating countries ought to be involved as the main public sector counterparts of the RBR.

40. A representative from the Uzbekistan delegation agreed with the proposal that RBR activities should be closely integrated with the CAREC secretariat. He proposed an alternative view for representation on the RBR. He suggested that each country send one representative to the RBR and identify a supervising business organization (such as the chamber of commerce) to perform a supervisory role over the representative. He agreed that progress of RBR activities in each country should be posted on the Internet. A common portal for the RBR would also assist members in identifying or notifying others about particular problems that occur in implementation.

41. The ADB Co-Chair responded to the discussions about a secretariat or similar body by suggesting that his department of the ADB, the Private Sector Operations Department, serve as the initial secretariat of the RBR to work out details on how each country should organize itself for the RBR. Financing issues need to be discussed later.

42. A representative of Kazakhstan suggested again that the RBR harness the experience of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) Business Council. Regardless of what name is given, he believes it is necessary to have a permanent body to represent the private sector. It should help to prioritize projects and issues relevant to the private sector.

43. A government representative from China concurred that we should use the experience of the SCO Business Council and coordinate closely between the RBR and the Business Council. The SCO Business Council will have a secretariat located in the country hosting the annual SCO meeting. In addition, all participating countries will set up their own secretariats.

44. One of the Kazakhstan businesspersons informed the group that documents about the SCO are available from the governments, namely the ministries of foreign affairs.

45. Another Kazakh participant encouraged the RBR to take an incremental approach in its development due to differences in political systems and economic capabilities.

46. A third Kazakh participant said there should be competition with SCO's Business Council just like in real business. Establishment of the RBR would provide such competition. Also, he expressed his own impression that the SCO's Business Council is too politicized because of the nature of the SCO.

47. A Tajik businessperson cautioned that an RBR secretariat might not receive sufficient funding to perform its tasks, in particular interfacing with the governments.

48. One of the Uzbekistan representatives pointed out that ADB has good communications with the governments of the region. He disagrees with using existing regional business structures for the proposed purposes of the RBR, and he agreed with the idea of promoting competition among these structures. He stated that big institutions are not necessary as long as we have good communication. He endorsed the offer of the ADB Co-Chair to have his department become the initial chair of the RBR. It is also important to consider how the RBR will communicate with the local business communities.

49. A Kyrgyz participant said it is too early to consider a formal structure for the RBR. In the meantime, participants of the RBR can use opportunities to communicate in other forums and meetings and use the mass media.

50. A Mongolian participant endorsed the idea of ADB serving as the initial secretariat for the RBR. The participating countries could provide information to ADB and participate in the various events.

## **Day 2 – November 4, 2005**

### **Session 5: Introduction to Breakout Groups on Substantive Areas**

51. This session consisted of two presentations made by Mr. Ganeshan Wignaraja of ADB and Mr. Simon Kenny of the World Bank. Mr. Wignaraja presented his assessment of Central Asia's future economic prospects, and Mr. Kenny discussed the findings and relevance of the Regional Energy Export Potential Study.

### **Session 6: Breakout Groups on Substantive Areas**

52. The participants of the RBR Preparatory Meeting divided into three breakout groups to discuss specific sectoral issues in energy, trade facilitation, and transport.

### **Session 7: Presentation of Key Elements of the Breakout Group Discussions**

53. The three breakout groups reconvened in a plenary session to present a summary of issues discussed in their groups and recommendations made for the RBR.

**Group 1: Energy**

54. The energy group identified several potential issues for regional cooperation in the energy sector.

- (i) Businesses in the region have much potential to be involved in energy sector projects in Central and South Asia.
- (ii) Alternative energy opportunities exist in the region, and all stakeholders must be encouraged to “think outside the box.”
- (iii) Smaller power producers should be promoted.
- (iv) There is a need to advocate market liberalization and competition.
- (v) Focus initially on reducing commercial losses in the energy sector and improving efficiency.
- (vi) Create awareness of the regional aspects of power production.

**Group 2: Trade facilitation**

55. The trade facilitation group identified the following issues and recommendations for the RBR:

- (i) It is necessary to participate in the various international forums to share information and experiences on trade.
- (ii) Several customs recommendations are proposed:
  - (a) Computerization of customs procedures and electronic declarations of goods.
  - (b) One-stop shops for customs, which have been initiated in some of the Central Asian countries, should be expanded in the region
  - (c) Customs authorities should provide more support services instead of merely collecting fees.
  - (d) Consultative councils related to customs are in effect in some Central Asian countries, and these mechanisms should be expanded in the region.
  - (e) Forms at customs checkpoints are often in a foreign language for people transporting goods. Therefore, border officials should receive more training in languages or language specialists should be present.
- (iii) The countries in the region should strive to harmonize their legislation and regulations (such as with customs) pertaining to trade and the movement of goods.
- (iv) More logistical infrastructure such as warehouses is needed in the region to facilitate trade.
- (v) The chambers of commerce in the region should compile and make available key information related to conducting business in their respective countries.
- (vi) Transportation services in much of Central Asia remain in the government domain. Privatization of transport services would be beneficial to the region.
- (vii) Procedures such as visa requirements should be simplified.
- (viii) The number of payments related to the cross-border movement of goods should be reduced. Also, dual taxation should be eliminated, and restrictions on foreign exchange and payment of goods need to be addressed.
- (ix) Trade exhibitions and commercial fairs should be utilized in the region to promote trade.
- (x) Common standards should be established for weight limits and sizes of vehicles transporting goods across borders.
- (xi) Trade in the region would benefit from effective public-private sector institutions.

56. A participant from the Kyrgyz Republic suggested that the trade facilitation group prioritize the various issues they identified for the RBR.

57. Another participant pointed out the distinction between trade promotion and trade facilitation. The discussions in this meeting have focused on facilitation because this area requires government action. He noted that the RBR should not consider promoting only public-private sector partnerships but rather also private-private partnerships. Regional cooperation among businesses in Central and South Asia will help prepare them for global competition.

### ***Group 3: Transport***

58. The transport breakout group concluded that the following seven issues should be considered by the RBR:

- (i) Allow open competition in all transport sectors – especially in air and rail transport, with specific targets to: (a) privatize Kyrgyz Railways; and (b) promote competition to improve services on Uzbek Railways.
- (ii) Force cooperation in the aviation sector.
- (iii) Provide investment incentives for private sector investment in transport/transit services.
- (iv) Provide the private sector with an integrated information exchange system for passenger and goods traffic for CAREC countries.
- (v) Bring all transport/transit laws and regulations into compliance with WTO requirements and harmonize as far as possible, with specific targets to: (a) request all Central and South Asian economies to recognize multi-modal transport/transit documents; and (b) request the PRC to allow equal treatment of neighbors' vehicles.
- (vi) Simplify all visa regimes to encourage transport/transit and trade.
- (vii) Harmonize the transport/transit policies and priorities of the various Central Asia regional cooperation groupings.

59. A participant from Afghanistan highlighted the need to develop air transportation in his country because Afghanistan is the link between Central and South Asia.

60. The World Bank representative informed the meeting that the World Bank prepared a report for CAREC on the prospects of liberalizing national air transportation sectors. The CAREC working group for transport is currently considering the findings and recommendations of the report.

61. In order to enable people and goods to move more freely in the region, a Pakistani representative recommended liberalizing visa requirements for businesspeople. Perhaps the chambers of commerce in the region could verify business members and support the issuing of a five-year visa throughout the region. He also suggested greater use of AT Carnets for the transit of goods through one country to another.

62. The Azerbaijan delegate believes that ADB has a positive impact on the policies of governments, and thus he encouraged ADB to increase its efforts to advocate good policies for governments. He also would like to see ADB expand its activities in Azerbaijan. Lastly, he expressed Azerbaijan's willingness to host the next RBR in Baku.

63. A businessperson from Uzbekistan requested that the representatives from this meeting inform the Ministerial Conference that there are a variety of interests in this region from outside, and that they should not forget Western financial interests in Central Asia. Foreign investment has an important role to play in developing the region. He is concerned about some countries in the region restricting foreign investment in certain sectors of their economies.

64. A Mongolian participant raised the importance of a road transport network in CAREC. Transportation by road would be the most efficient means of moving people and goods in the region because of the few air linkages among the countries. It is often necessary to fly via Moscow just to travel to one of the neighboring Central Asian Republics. Therefore, ADB should continue to emphasize road construction in CAREC.

65. A Kazakh representative emphasized the need for coordination of activities, but warned that annual meetings were not sufficient to ensure that all the necessary work is completed as planned. More frequent meetings are necessary to clarify what has been implemented and make adjustments if needed. To this extent, he suggested each country organize itself so that sub-groups (perhaps 2 or 3 countries' RBR representatives) of the full RBR can meet more often.

66. A government official from Pakistan said this meeting could have a positive impact on the governments by guiding them on how to utilize the private sector's views. He stated that the Government of Pakistan would support to the fullest extent possible the RBR's outcomes.

67. A representative of a Chinese company in the Kyrgyz Republic requested ADB to give additional attention to trade exhibitions in the region, as he believes such events can help to resolve some of the issues raised during this meeting.

68. A Pakistani businessperson highlighted the importance of separating economics from politics in relation to regional trade. He continued by saying Pakistan and India have wasted decades of economic opportunities because of a political issue. Very little direct trade occurs between the two countries, and instead it often occurs indirectly via a third country.

#### **Session 8: Discussion and Agreement on the Draft Bishkek Action Plan for the RBR**

69. Participants jointly reviewed the preliminary draft Bishkek Action Plan for the RBR that was prepared based on the discussions held during the two-day Preliminary Meeting and the earlier in-country consultations. Participants were invited to offer comments on the draft text in each section of the document.

70. The feedback from the participants was incorporated into a revised draft of the Bishkek Action Plan (see Attachment 3), and delegates were informed that they could offer additional comments after receiving the Russian translation of the document. The Preparatory Meeting Secretariat then produced another revised version of the Bishkek Action Plan for submission to the next day's CAREC Senior Officials Meeting.

71. Upon the suggestion of an Afghanistan representative, the meeting participants observed a minute of silence in respect of the recent earthquake victims in Pakistan.

#### **Concluding Session: Closing Remarks of the Co-chairs**

72. The two co-chairs gave their final remarks and thanked the participants for their attendance and contributions.

#### ***Attachments:***

1. Agenda: Central – South Asia Regional Business Roundtable
2. Participant List – Central – South Asia Regional Business Roundtable
3. Central – South Asia Regional Business Roundtable Bishkek Action Plan