

## **Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Natural Gas Pipeline Project Steering Committee Meeting in Islamabad**

The Fourth Meeting of the Steering Committee for the Turkmenistan – Afghanistan - Pakistan Natural Gas Pipeline Project was held in Islamabad on 22 February 2003. Key attendees included Mr Y. Gurbanmuradov, the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers, and Mr. T. Tagiev, Minister for Oil and Gas Industry and Mineral Resources of Turkmenistan, Mr. J. M. Mohamadi, Minister for Industry and Mines of Afghanistan, and Mr. Nouraziz Shakoor Khan, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, and Mr Abdullah Yusuf, Secretary of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, of Pakistan. This was the first time that the Committee had met in Islamabad since its formation in May 2002.

During the meeting, ADB, which acts as the lead development partner for the Project, and as the Secretariat for the Committee, made presentations on

- the inclusion of an alternative route for the pipeline for detailed examination by the feasibility consultants
- a preliminary risk analysis and possible mitigation measures to enhance the commercial attractiveness of the Project; and
- the principles for the competitive selection of private sector companies that will lead the consortium for implementing the Project, and the prequalification process for shortlisting of such firms.

These presentations were appreciated by the Committee and their conclusions endorsed for further necessary action by the three countries and ADB. The Committee also decided to

- jointly request India to join the Project as a major purchaser of the gas from the Dauletabad field, and also possibly as an investor in the Project; and
- accept ADB's offer to host the next meeting of the Steering Committee in Manila during 8-9 April 2003.

The Meeting was followed by a press conference, wherein about 50 media persons took part. Questions asked by the media persons included concerns regarding security for the Project in Afghanistan, the rationale for the inclusion of the alternative route for the pipeline, the time schedule for implementation of the Project, and the invitation to India to join the Project.

Marshuk Ali Shah, Country Director, PRM, Seethapathy Chander, Principal Project Engineer, SAID, Rajiv Kumar, Principal Project Economist, ECOC, Mukhtar Ahmed, Senior Governance and Energy Specialist, RSDD, and Murat Ovez-Mamedov (Staff Consultant) represented ADB in the Meeting.