



UZBEKISTAN

RUSTAM S. AZIMOV, Governor

Let me first of all to sincerely congratulate Luxembourg and Palau on joining of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) family.

Due to the well-known circumstances we are having today's meeting only two years after our latest gathering in Shanghai.

Unfortunately, recent terrorist attacks in Madrid, Tashkent, Indonesia, Philippines and other places prove that this challenge continues to be a serious obstacle not only for security and stability but also for sustainable economic growth and the process of reforms both in developed and developing countries.

In this context we fully share the concerns on the increasing danger of terrorism expressed by Mr. Lee, the ADB Governor from the Republic of Korea in his Opening Statement, and the necessity to deal with roots causing of terrorism.

We are absolutely confident that a well-developed education system and creation of new jobs through development of small and medium private business are the most efficient weapons to combat terrorism and we highly appreciate ADB's strong commitment to address these problems in the member countries. The Republic of Uzbekistan hopes to continue further fruitful cooperation with ADB in these issues.

Another priority that was correctly highlighted by President Tadao Chino in his Address to the Board of Governors is regional economic cooperation, that is becoming a very important condition for sustainable growth and welfare in the countries of ADB's operation.

In this regard we welcome the timely initiative of ADB to develop the strategy and mechanisms of regional economic cooperation in Central Asian countries.

Ministerial meetings in Manila and Tashkent become an important catalyst for these integration processes in our region. Taking into account deep and comprehensive analysis and studies, the President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, has come to a conclusion that it is necessary to form a Central Asia common market aiming to create a common investment, trade, transportation, and information area in our region. We believe this approach will help rapid growth of foreign direct investment, better and efficient use of natural resources, as well as sound use of land and water resources.

Balanced and rational consumption of irrigated water and land is very important keeping in mind that the income of more than 60% of the population of the region fully depends on timely supplying water for irrigation in the summer time.

The key priority in the process of formation of a common market, from our point of view, is the gradual harmonization of national legal frameworks, first and foremost those related to trade, investments, transport, information technologies, banking, finance, and tariff policies.

The suggested approach is impelled by the existence of objective preconditions for the establishment of the common market based on the country economies' mutually complimenting, rather than conflicting, with each other.

We consider that the People's Republic of China and Russia, as the biggest economic powers bordering our region, will play a significant role in the formation of the Central Asia common market, as will leading economies based on their own strategic interests in our region like the United States, Japan, and European Union.

At the same time, we consider Afghanistan as an organic part of the Central Asia integration. The stabilisation processes in this country creates preconditions for its closer integration into regional cooperation.

The most important of precondition is the participation of the Central Asian countries in the restoration of the Afghan economy, and establishment of the trans-Afghan transport corridor as the shortest route for the region to reach the warm sea ports in the Indian Ocean.

We sincerely hope that ADB will take a leading role in the process of developing the conception and mechanisms of forming the Central Asia common market with the necessity, among others, to ensure the strengthening of stability and security in the region as a whole.

As far as the ADB's other priorities in the countries of its operations are concerned, one of them from our point of view should be agriculture with the special focus on rapid development of market infrastructure for the growing private farmers.

We really welcome the approach of ADB for comprehensive farm support programs, granting loans for the leasing of agricultural machinery, insurance services, as well as the market infrastructure for growing private agricultural sector.

We entirely agree with high evaluation of ADB's management and staff headed by President Tadao Chino.

The efficiency of their activity considerably increased after the reform and ADB is now more committed and dedicated to satisfying the requirements of countries of its operation based on the strategy and features of reforms conducted in these countries.

We congratulate President Chino and his team on the successful completion of negotiations with the donor community on the completion of the Asian Development Fund's IX Replenishment, which is critically important to achieve noble targets and goals of ADB during the next 4 years.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Uzbek delegation I would like to thank the Government of the Republic of Korea and the peoples of Jeju Island for the excellent organisation and outstanding hospitality in this beautiful island.