Improving Connectivity and Regional Integration in Central and South Asia

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is preparing a new strategy to respond to the changes brought about by a rapidly evolving Asia and the Pacific. The new strategy will: a) build on the 2014 midterm review of ADB’s long-term strategic framework — Strategy 2020; b) outline vision and key directions for ADB’s engagement with developing member countries until 2030; c) describe how ADB aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change; and d) identify institutional and organizational reforms necessary to sharpen ADB’s efficiency and effectiveness.

Most Asian economies are also embarking on regional trade, investment and infrastructure overhaul to improving connectivity to be part of global production networks and value chains. This highlights important linkages between inclusive growth and regional integration. The latter has increasingly become important in the Central Asian region as well which has just adopted the new CAREC 2030 strategy in its Ministerial Meeting in October 2017.

The aim of this session will be to showcase and discuss how ADB’s interventions have been successful in difficult political economy circumstances and lessons that may be drawn (from these successful case studies) for developing countries in the Asia and Pacific including Pakistan, in turn enabling them to focus on the following:

- Bringing greater focus towards higher and more inclusive growth through increasing regional integration
- Improving domestic and international connectivity for better economic and social justice outcomes
- Embarking on a path of sustainability in growth and other development.

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