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Dear Mr. Mirzaev, Excellences, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is a great privilege to take part in such a presentable forum together with you.

On the behalf of the UN system in the country, let me to greet you and congratulate you with the celebration – 25 years of establishment of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) in Central Asia.

About ICWC

As I have just learned, since its inception and until the present day, the Commission serves as an important mechanism for coordination of management of water resources in the region.

Speakers before me noted the important role of the Commission in ensuring the equitable distribution of water resources in the region. Having such a functioning regional platform for coordinated management of transboundary water resources is a good sign of solidarity and cooperation among the Central Asian states.

Water is a key natural resource for sustainable livelihoods of the people living in all the countries of the region, the importance of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination cannot be overestimated.

Significance of water resources

I think there is no need to repeat how important the water is for the social and economic well-being of the population and environmental security in the region.

The countries of the region still suffer from the consequences of wasteful and uncontrolled use of water in the recent past. The tragedy of the Aral Sea is a vivid reminder to all of us about the need to preserve limited water resources and ensure its efficient use.

In the conditions of climate change that can potentially aggravate water shortage, we need to once again remind ourselves of the need to take urgent actions to ensure the efficient use of such scarce resource.

This can be achieved both by enhancing coordinated management of transboundary resources but also by minimizing water losses and introducing water efficient technologies in agriculture and other sectors of economy. *Water issue under the Agenda-2030*

As you all know, in September 2015 the world leaders adopted the Sustainable

Development Goals identifying the development vision until 2030.

Preservation and efficient use of water resources prominently feature under the SDGs, namely under goals 6 and 14, as well as indirectly focusing under a number of other goals.

This shows clearly the central role of water resources for sustainable existence of the humanity.

No water – no life on earth!

Commitment of the UN/UNDP

Ladies and gentlemen!

Increasing the efficiency of water resources management and ensuring sustainable development of the water sector depends on a number of factors, including modernization of the physical infrastructure, strengthening capacities, improvement of legal and institutional base, regulating the water management.

Perhaps the most important of them is the quality of human and organizational capacity, among which is the increase and maintenance of the necessary level of knowledge and skills of managers and specialists in the water sector.

UNDP office in Uzbekistan for more than 10 years has been successfully collaborating with national partners in the field of water management in Uzbekistan, assisting the government in improving water resources management.

In close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, a new Water Code was drafted and presented to the government, adoption of which is believed to accelerate the modernization of the water sector in the country.

Currently, UNDP together with the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, with financial support of the European Union, is implementing the project on strengthening technical capacity in the water sector.

The purpose of the project is to strengthen technical capacities for water management at basin, water user associations and farm levels. It aims to strengthen the organizational

structure of water management organizations to ensure the effective delivery of water supply services.

UNDP is also carrying out activities aimed at mitigating the negative consequences of the Aral Sea crisis. Under the leadership of the UNDP, a joint UN programme is being implemented in Karakalpakstan aimed at improving the social and economic conditions of the population affected by the Aral Sea crisis.

After his recent visit to Muynak, the UN secretary General Mr. Antonio Guterres said that “The Aral Sea’s progressive disappearance was not because of climate change, it was mismanagement by humankind of water resources”.

The UN is therefore further committed to supporting the efforts on enhancing water use efficiency in the country and the region.

Thanks and Conclusion

Let me once again congratulate you all with the 25th anniversary of the Interstate Commission on Water Coordination and wish you success in your further work.