

Interstate Commission for Water Coordination of Central Asia	BULLETIN № 4 (103)	October 2024
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Meetings of the Heads of State of Central Asia

State visit of the President of Uzbekistan to the Republic of Kazakhstan¹

On August 8, 2024, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev held talks in a narrow format.

During the talks, the leaders discussed prospects for strengthening cooperation in the political, trade and economic, transport and transit, investment, energy, agriculture, water, cultural and humanitarian, and industrial fields.

Priority areas of cooperation in the spheres of water use and environmental protection have been set.

An agreement was reached to continue cooperation on transboundary waters.

The issues on regional and international agenda were also reviewed.

The first meeting of the Supreme Interstate Council was held in the Akorda Residence under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

In preparation for the visit, meetings of the Intergovernmental Commission and the Business Council, a business forum, political consultations, forums of analytical centers and other activities were successfully held.

The two countries' leaders welcomed the adoption of the historic Strategic Partnership and Alliance Program 2024-2034, which marks the beginning of a

¹ <https://en.inform.kz/news/kazakhstan-and-uzbekistan-sign-15-documents-275445/>

https://uza.uz/ru/posts/prezidenty-uzbekistana-i-kazaxstana-proveli-pervoe-zasedanie-vysshego-mezhgosudarstvennogo-soveta_623179

<https://www.inform.kz/ru/kakie-dokumenti-podpisali-kasim-zhomart-tokayev-ishavkat-mirziyoyev-03251f>

https://uza.uz/ru/posts/prezident-respubliki-uzbekistan-nagrazhden-vysshey-gosudarstvennoy-nagradoy-respubliki-kazaxstan_623204

<https://president.uz/en/lists/view/7448>

new qualitative stage in friendship and good neighborliness between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

The parties welcomed signing of a solid package of agreements worth US \$7 billion following the business forum and meetings held the day before.

This concerns cooperation in energy, logistics, construction, chemical, electrical engineering, textile, agro-industrial and other industries.

An agreement was reached to accelerate the launch of the International Center for Industrial Cooperation and to discuss the issue of creating a Joint Fund to finance promising projects.

A decision was made to transform the forum into a Council of Regions with the involvement of all regions and central cities and to hold its first meeting in Samarkand this fall. The governments were instructed to approve a schedule of mutual visits of the regions to reach specific agreements.

The parties expressed readiness for joint implementation of projects on new energy capacities and infrastructure and alternative energy sources. Preparation of large regional projects, first of all, construction of the Kambarata hydroelectric power station, will be accelerated.

A common approach to water use in the region was noted. Work will continue to form a reliable legal framework and to automate and digitalize water management facilities.

Following the talks, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed the following documents:

- Joint statement of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- Resolution of the Supreme Interstate Council of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on further development of Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan bilateral cooperation.
- Resolution of the Supreme Interstate Council of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan on approval of the Regulations on the Council of Foreign Ministers.

In addition, a number of documents were signed during the state visit of the President of Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan, including:

- Cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of Kazakhstan and the Institute of

Strategic and Interregional Studies under the President of Uzbekistan on the establishment of the Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan Expert Council.

As part of the visit program, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev was awarded the Order of the Golden Eagle of the Republic of Kazakhstan.



Sixth Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asia States²

On August 9, 2024, the 6th Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asia State was held in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The Consultative Meeting was chaired by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and was attended by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov, President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and as a guest of honor, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Head of the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia Kakha Imnadze.



The Heads of State discussed such issues as further strengthening multi-faceted cooperation in the region, including the development of political dialogue, promotion of joint programs and projects in trade, investment, transport, energy, agriculture and ecology, intensification of cultural and humanitarian exchanges, as well as response to modern challenges and threats.

² Source:

https://uza.uz/ru/posts/prezident-respubliki-uzbekistan-oboznachil-ryad-prioritetnyx-napravleniy-prakticheskogo-regionalnogo-vzaimodeystviya_623567

<https://www.inform.kz/ru/prezidenti-stran-tsa-podpisali-v-astane-ryad-dokumentov-1a9db6>



Following the results of the Consultative Meeting, the Presidents signed the following documents:

1. Joint statement on the results of the 6th Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States.
2. Concept of regional cooperation development “Central Asia – 2040”.
3. Resolution of the 6th Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States on awarding the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Mirziyoyev Shavkat Miromonovich with the “Badge of Honor of the Heads of Central Asia States”.

The Joint Statement of the Heads of the Central Asian States endorsed the following documents:

1. 2025-2027 Roadmap for the development of regional cooperation.
2. 2025-2027 Action Plan for the development of industrial cooperation of the Central Asian States.

Members of the official delegations signed the following documents on

the sidelines of the Meeting:

1. Memorandum of Understanding on the development of transport and logistics centers in the Central Asian states.
2. Communique on the results of the first meeting of the Ministers of Energy of Central Asia.
3. Astana Communique of the second meeting of Ministers of Transport of Central Asia.

At the end of the summit, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, as the chairman of the Consultative Meeting, awarded the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev with an Honorary Badge on behalf of the heads of Central Asian states.



Address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev³

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev believes that in the current difficult geopolitical and economic realities it is extremely important to maintain a high dynamic of cooperation in the region. He outlined a number of urgent tasks, the solution of which will contribute to the further progress in Central Asia.



“The Treaty on Friendship, Good neighborliness and Cooperation for the Development of Central Asia in the Twenty-First Century is of particular importance. I am convinced that our states should act on the basis of consolidated approaches within the framework of multilateral organizations, in particular the UN. Given the combined potential of our countries, we can make a significant contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda. In support of this important endeavor, I propose to initiate the UN General Assembly resolution on sustainable development in Central Asia by the 80th anniversary of the United Nations. I hope that the participation of high-level representative of the United Nations, the distinguished Kahi Inmadze, in our Summit will become a good tradition and will mark the beginning of closer

³ Source: <https://akorda.kz/ru/pod-predsedatelstvom-kasym-zhomarta-tokaeva-sostoyalas-vi-konsultativnaya-vstrecha-glav-gosudarstv-centralnoy-azii-971327>

cooperation between Central Asia and the UN", said Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev also mentioned the need to create a solid economic base for multilateral cooperation.

– Joint major infrastructure and transport projects could become new points of growth for our economies. There are already good examples of such mutually beneficial cooperation in the region. We are talking about Kambarata HPP-1 in Kyrgyzstan, Rogun HPP in Tajikistan, gas projects in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the construction of new transport corridors and a number of other important projects. The development of a network of trade, logistics and industrial centers in border areas is a priority. It is necessary to strengthen our comprehensive partnership with new agreements in such promising sectors as agriculture, logistics, textiles, chemicals and construction, said the President.

Another key issue on the regional agenda was the sustainable management of water and energy resources. The President of Kazakhstan believes that it is necessary to develop a new consolidated water policy based on equitable and fair use of water and strict compliance with mutual obligations.

– Initiatives for joint hydropower construction and establishment of a water and energy consortium for Central Asian countries could form the basis for multilateral water cooperation. Digitalization of water distribution and accounting, introduction of RS-based technologies and systemic research work are urgent tasks, stressed the head of state.

According to Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Kazakhstan has always favored the expanding of five-way cooperation in education, science, culture and human capital development. Formation of a single Central Asian higher education space is underway.

Address by the President of Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov⁴

In his speech, the President noted that such Consultative Meetings of Central Asian leaders are much in demand and give additional impetus to enhanced regional cooperation.

“The past five meetings have demonstrated strong commitment of the region's leaders to enhanced collaboration in a wide range of areas, including trade, economy, investment, transport, logistics, regional security, ecology, climate change, and cultural and humanitarian spheres,” said Sadyr Zhaparov, adding that the process of convergence of the countries has become stable and consistent.



Sadyr Zhaparov noted that Kyrgyzstan is actively working towards sustainable management of water and energy resources, as well as the

⁴ Source:

<https://kabar.kg/news/sadyr-zhaparov-predlozhit-glavam-stran-tca-vnedrit-ekonomicheskii-mekhanizm-vodno-energeticheskogo-sotrudnichestva/>

https://24.kg/english/301653_Sadyr_Japarov_speaks_at_Consultative_Meeting_of_Heads_of_State_of_Central_Asia/

development of energy efficiency and energy saving. A cooperation agreement on Kambarata HPP-1 was signed between energy ministries of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

“The parties are working to harmonize the draft intergovernmental agreement. We have actively begun to develop small rivers; small and medium hydroelectric power plants are built throughout the country. We are open to cooperation in this field and to any investment proposals,” mentioned Sadyr Zhaparov.

Last year, he said, Kyrgyzstan initiated a Regional Centre for the Energy Efficient and Resource-Saving Technologies in Bishkek for sound water use and saving.

Taking into account the limited character of water and its critical importance for the region, as well as the lack of an effective cooperation mechanism in Central Asia, we call for joint development and implementation of a mutually beneficial economic mechanism for water and energy cooperation in the region. This mechanism will allow duly valuing energy, economic, environmental and social dimensions of water and considering relevant interests of the countries in the region, said President Zhaparov.

He recalled that at the Kyrgyzstan’s initiative, an item on holding a Global Dialogue on Mountains and Climate Change was added to a final document of COP-28 in Dubai. Such a Dialogue was successfully held on June 5, 2024 in Bonn.

“We are currently working to include the aforementioned dialogue on mountains in the list of annual events for the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in Baku in November this year and we call on the region’s countries to support this initiative”, added Sadyr Zhaparov and noted that environmental projects may help reduce the debt burden for vulnerable states.

Address by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon⁵

In his speech, the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon drew attention of the heads of Central Asia states to such matters as further expansion of trade and

⁵ Source: <https://www.president.tj/event/news/46800>

economic relations, development of dedicated programs on agriculture, industry and new technologies, implementation of large-scale transport, infrastructure and logistics projects, effective use of hydropower resources, as well as cultural and humanitarian collaboration.

Emomali Rahmon emphasized that more than hundred proposals and initiatives were put forward during the past consultative meetings and are under consideration. Such initiatives will certainly increase the potential for joint development.

Enhanced cooperation in the field of e-commerce, digital technologies and energy, especially “green” energy was identified as the key driver of green economy development in the region.



Address by the President of the Republic of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov⁶

President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov put forward an initiative to develop the transport and communications sector in Central Asia. He emphasized the need to create new transport and transit corridors connecting Asia and Europe, and called on the region's countries to actively participate in these processes.



Serdar Berdimuhamedov noted that successful economic development of the region is possible through close and mutually beneficial partnership. He invited the countries of Central Asia to start working on formation of up-to-date logistics, harmonization of legislation and provision of mutual customs and tariff preferences.

The President of Turkmenistan also highlighted energy as one of the priority areas of cooperation. He emphasized the importance of meeting the growing energy needs of the region's states, while also considering the development of industry and agriculture. Serdar Berdimuhamedov called for the creation of a system that would guarantee the energy security of the Central Asian countries in the face of instability in the global energy market.

⁶ Source: <https://turkmenportal.com/en/blog/81291/prezident-turkmenistana-prizval-k-razvitiyu-transportnyh-koridorov-v-centralnoi-azii>

Address by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev⁷

(extract)



[...]

I support the proposals voiced today to launch mechanisms and institutions for regional cooperation, including on meetings of national coordinators, sectoral ministries and agencies.

I believe that to implement our decisions and promote joint projects, we need effective tools at this stage.

Overall, I believe the time has come to jointly consider how to improve our Consultative Meeting modality to deepen regional integration and fill in the agenda of our long-term partnership.

To this end, we propose holding a regular meeting of the Central Asian Expert Forum of leading analytical centers and research institutes of the region's

⁷ Source: <https://president.uz/ru/lists/view/7456>

<https://www.uzbekembassy.in/the-president-of-the-republic-of-uzbekistan-outlines-several-priority-areas-for-practical-regional-interaction/>

countries in Uzbekistan. We can consider their conceptual recommendations and proposals together at our next summit.

[...]

I would like to briefly outline what, in our view, are the priority areas for practical regional collaboration.

[...]

Fourth. Coordination is needed for food security.

As FAO's representatives and national experts state, we are able both to meet local needs for primary food products and also take stronger positions on the international market.

It is important to adopt innovative methods of agricultural production and water-saving technologies, increase yields, develop deep processing, strengthen research efforts in the area of selection, and create clusters and smart farms.

We are going to organize an International Forum on ensuring food security for land-locked countries in Tashkent this September and propose holding a meeting of the region's agriculture ministers on the sidelines of the Forum to develop a regional strategy.

Fifth. The effects of global climate change are being felt in each of our countries. Rising temperatures, melting glaciers, floods, droughts, dust storms and many other challenges continue causing severe damage to the region's countries.

During the upcoming Climate Summit in Azerbaijan in November this year, our countries could speak in one voice.

We are talking about holding a joint presentation of the environmental situation in the region to attract attention of international community, funds and donor organizations to solve these pressing problems, including the Aral catastrophe.

Our new proposals include the development and adoption of a comprehensive program for the sustainable development in Central Asia and a Regional Strategy for the rational use of transboundary water resources.

Sixth. Partnership in the energy sector is especially important.

Today, several strategic projects are under development on a regional scale to increase electricity generation and exports to third countries. In addition, there are plans to develop nuclear energy and increase hydrocarbon supplies.

I believe that this is one of the key areas for coordinated work within the framework of regular meetings of energy ministers.

Address by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev⁸

(extract)

[...]

The invitation of Azerbaijan to these meetings testifies to the friendly and brotherly ties and evolving cooperation between our countries.

[...]

Azerbaijan is interested in close cooperation with Central Asian countries in the field of renewable energy. “The Memorandum of Cooperation on interconnection of energy systems of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan” signed this May, is the first step of cooperation in the field of green energy.

[...]

Joint investment projects with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan are being actively implemented. Azerbaijani-Kazakh, Azerbaijani-Kyrgyz and Azerbaijani-Uzbek joint investment funds have already been established.

The ongoing Digital Silk Road project will contribute to the development of digital infrastructure and digital security.

Azerbaijan and the Central Asian countries successfully cooperate within the framework of international organizations. In this context, I would like to mention the UN Special Program for the economies of Central Asia – SPECA. The outcomes of the Summit held on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of SPECA in Baku last November are important in light of developing our practical cooperation. I would like to thank the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan once again for their participation in the SPECA Summit.

Having secured the unanimous support of the international community, Azerbaijan will host COP29 this November.

Within its COP29 Presidency, Azerbaijan stands ready to support joint initiatives with Central Asian countries to address climate change impacts in our region.

⁸ Source: <https://www.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3932223.html>
<https://president.az/en/articles/view/66644>

State visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Republic of Tajikistan⁹

On August 22-23, at the invitation of the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had a state visit to Tajikistan. During the visit, the Tajik-Kazakh high-level talks took place.

The state visit of the President of Kazakhstan was marked by a series of parallel events in the capital of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, including business forum, conference of scientists, women's forum, youth forum, Kazakh cinema days and Kazakh fine arts and folk crafts exhibition, etc.



Discussions began in a narrow format with a meeting between the leaders

⁹ Source:

<https://khovar.tj/rus/2024/08/vstrechi-i-peregovory-vysshego-urovnya-mezhdu-tadzhikistanom-i-kazahstanom/>

<https://www.inform.kz/ru/kasim-zhomart-tokaev-i-emomali-rahmon-proveli-peregovori-v-rasshirennom-formate-a2f882>

<https://khovar.tj/rus/2024/08/tseremoniya-podpisaniya-novyh-dokumentov-o-sotrudnichestve-mezhdu-tadzhikistanom-i-kazahstanom-2/>

of the two countries, Emomali Rahmon and Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, and continued in an expanded format.

The parties discussed the issues of cooperation in political, trade and economic, investment, financial and banking spheres, as well as in the fields of industry, energy, agriculture and other areas of mutual interest.

Following the meeting of the heads of state, negotiations continued involving official delegations.

Priorities and tasks were defined to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in the agro-industrial, water-energy, transport and transit sectors. The parties agreed to focus their efforts on launching joint projects and creating favorable conditions for doing business.

Opportunities to develop mutually beneficial partnerships in the area of digitalization, education and space applications were also discussed.

Following the high-level meetings and negotiations between Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, a ceremony was held with participation of the heads of state to sign 16 documents on cooperation.

The President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed the “Treaty on Allied Relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan”.

Then the series of documents were signed, including:

— Memorandum on cooperation in the field of oil and gas between the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

— Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of innovation and digitalization, training and retraining of agricultural personnel.

— Memorandum between the Committee for Food Security of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Committee for Veterinary Control and Supervision of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation in the field of veterinary.

After the signing ceremony, the leaders held a press conference.

“We agreed to continue coordinated work on the rational use of transboundary water resources in Central Asia. Kazakhstan is grateful to the Tajik side for timely decisions in fulfillment of commitments in the water-energy sphere, in particular on water supplies to Kazakhstan. This is very important for us. For its part, Kazakhstan is fulfilling all its obligations under the trilateral protocol on operation of the Bahri Tojik reservoir. We have expressed

our intention to continue constructive cooperation in this area”, - said Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the press conference.

Activities under umbrella of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

12th Meeting of the Working Group on Institutional and Legal Improvement of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

The 12th meeting of the Working Group on Institutional and Legal Improvement of IFAS was held on 4-5 September in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The meeting was attended by representatives of government bodies and national experts dealing with water, energy, environment and finances. Director D. Ziganshina participated in the meeting on behalf of SIC ICWC.



The meeting was organized in the form of 5 sessions, during which current issues of the Fund's activity were addressed with a view to increasing its effectiveness.

The experts studied experiences and models of integrated water and energy resource management, actively discussed feasible mechanisms of regional water and energy cooperation, and defined next steps based on a common approach.

The results of the discussions and recommendations have been submitted for consideration for the IFAS Board meeting to be held in Astana on 18 September 2024.

Meeting of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea¹⁰

On September 18, 2024, Kazakhstan hosted a meeting of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan K.Bozumbaev.

This was the first meeting of the Board since Kazakhstan assumed the Chairmanship in IFAS in January 2024 which will last until the end of 2026.

The participants included: Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan S. Ziyozoda, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan T. Atahallyev, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.Ganiev, Minister of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Khamraev, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Republic of Kazakhstan D. Dyushekeev, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nurzhigitov, Chairman of the Executive Committee of IFAS A. Orazbay, one representatives of foreign, energy and water ministries of the founding states of IFAS.

The participants discussed the current matters related to activities of the Fund and further improvement of its institutional and legal frameworks as well as prospects for cooperation among the five Central Asian states under umbrella of IFAS.

¹⁰ Source: <https://ecifas.kz/news/sobytiya/zasedanie-pravleniya-mezhdunarodnogo-fonda-spaseniya-arala>

As a result of the meeting, relevant decisions have been signed and the EC IFAS Work Plan, proposed by the Kazakh side, comprising 10 focus areas and more than 40 activities in the fulfillment of instructions of the Heads of the Founding States and the President of IFAS has been approved.



Decisions of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

1. On the Work plan of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea for the period of chairmanship of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2024-2026.

1. Approve the Work plan of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea for the period of chairmanship of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2024-2026.
2. The Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea shall ensure the fulfilment of the Work Plan and inform the IFAS Board regularly on progress.

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhallyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

2. On progress in implementation of the Action Program for Assistance to the Countries of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Protection Programme for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REP4SD CA)

1. Take into consideration the information of the IFAS Executive Committee on progress made in ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA.
2. The IFAS Executive Committee, ICWC and ICSD jointly with relevant ministries and agencies of the IFAS founder-states shall continue joint activities on implementation of ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA.
3. The IFAS Executive Committee shall regularly inform the Board on the progress in ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA.

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhallyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

3. On activities of the Working Group on Institutional and Legal Improvement of IFAS

1. Take into consideration the information of the IFAS Executive Committee on activities of the Working Group on institutional and legal improvement of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

2. The IFAS Executive Committee shall take measures to complete as soon as possible the process of institutional and legal improvement of IFAS jointly with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development and relevant ministries and agencies of the Fund's founder-states.

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhallyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

4. On the progress made in implementation of the Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project (CAHMP)

1. Take into consideration the information of the IFAS Executive Committee on the progress made in implementation of the Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project (CAHMP, 2011-2023).
2. The IFAS Executive Committee together with the national hydrometeorological services of the Central Asian countries shall take appropriate measures to prepare the second phase of the Central Asia Hydrometeorology Modernization Project (CAHMP II).

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhallyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

**5. On participation of the IFAS Executive Committee
in One Water Summit**

1. Take into consideration the information of the IFAS Executive Committee about preparatory activities for participation in the One Water Summit planned for the end of 2024.
2. The Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea shall participate in the One Water Summit.

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhallyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

6. On the agenda of the next regular meeting of the IFAS Board

The following issues will be discussed at the next regular meeting of the IFAS Board:

- Activities of the IFAS Executive Committee for the reporting period.
- Activities of the Working Group on institutional and legal improvement of IFAS.
- Results of participation of the IFAS Executive Committee in One Water Summit.
- Agenda of the next regular meeting of the IFAS Board.

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhallyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

Coordination Meeting of the IFAS Executive Meeting with international development partners¹¹

On September 18, 2024, the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) held a Coordination Meeting with international development partners.

The event was opened by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan K. Bozumbaev, along with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan S. Ziyozoda, the Advisor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Ganiev, the Minister of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. Khamraev, the Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Republic of Kazakhstan D. Dyushekeev, and the Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nurzhigitov.



The meeting was attended by leaders and representatives from over 30 international organizations, including the European Union, the World Bank,

¹¹ Source: <https://ecifas.kz/news/sobytiya/koordinatsionnaya-vstrecha-ik-mfsa-s-mezhdunarodnymi-partnerami-po-razvitiyu>

the OSCE, the OECD, the Eurasian Development Bank, UN agencies, USAID, the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the French Development Agency (AFD), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), as well as representatives from the Kazakh Agency for International Development (KazAID), the Sovereign Wealth Fund "Samruk-Kazyna," and others.

During the event, chaired by the Chairman of the IFAS Executive Committee A. Orazbay, discussions focused on the implementation of current and new projects and programs in the Aral Sea basin, as well as the plans and initiatives of the international development partners in support of the implementation of the Action Program for Assistance to the Countries of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REP4SD CA).

Representatives from the World Bank made a presentation about the implementation of the fourth phase of the Central Asia Water and Energy Program (CAWEP-4) and the Bank's contributions to improving the situation in the Aral Sea basin.

The international development partners expressed their strong commitment and interest in further collaboration with the IFAS Executive Committee, as well as readiness to make proposals for launching new projects for joint implementation in the Aral Sea region.

Additionally, representatives from the IFAS founder-states informed about their governments' efforts to support the implementation of ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA.

At the end of the meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the IFAS Executive Committee and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ).

79th UNGA session

Before the high-level week of the 79th UNGA session, a two-day Summit of the Future was held in the UN Headquarters in New York.¹²

This high-level event was organized upon initiative of the UN Secretary General and was aimed to concrete steps to respond to current and emerging challenges.

World leaders adopted a Pact for the Future.

The Pact outlines about 56 general statements that the UN members countries committed to.

The Pact includes a Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations. It covers a broad range of issues including peace and security, sustainable development, climate change, digital cooperation, human rights, gender, youth and future generations, and the transformation of global governance.

General debate (high-level week) of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly took place in New York on 24–30 September. It brought together more than 130 heads of states and over 100 foreign ministers. Participants addressed a broad range of issues, including conflict prevention and settlements, climate mitigation, socio-economic development and other global threats.

Representatives from 193 UN Member States, the Vatican, and Palestine (observers at the UN), along with the European Union, addressed the General Assembly.

The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and the 79th session's President Philemon Yang started the General Debate.

Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Sadyr Zhaparov and Emomali Rahmon, respectively, delivered their statements on 24 September. Uzbekistan was represented on the rostrum by Foreign Minister, Bakhtiyor Saidov on 25 September. Foreign ministers of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan took the floor on 27 September and 28 September, respectively.

¹² Source: <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/about>

Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Murat Nurtleu¹³

His Excellency Murat Nurtleu, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan took the floor at general debate of the 79th session.



Speaking on climate challenges, H.E. Nurtleu has called on the developed countries and international financing institutions to share the burden by providing green technologies and concessional financing to low- and middle-income countries in line with the Paris Agreement.

Kazakhstan will contribute by hosting a Regional Climate Summit in 2026.

In view of approaching terms set for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and for the enhanced coordination of UN agencies' activities in the region, the Minister called on UN member countries to support Kazakhstan' initiative on the establishment of the UN Regional Centre on Sustainable Development for Central Asia and Afghanistan in Almaty.

¹³ Source: <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa/press/news/details/854683?lang=ru>

Statement by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov¹⁴

(extract)



[...]

On behalf of the Kyrgyz Republic, I reaffirm our commitment to international law, the principles and provisions of the UN Charter and express our full support for the Organization's efforts to maintain international security, address global social, economic and climate challenges, and protect human rights and freedoms.

Modern global challenges, such as the climate crisis, threats to food security and growing inequality, require the united efforts of the international community.

[...]

We are facing unprecedented challenges – a global climate catastrophe, economic inequality dividing peoples and continents, and, of course, conflicts that destroy hope for a peaceful future. In this context, we observe a troubling

¹⁴ Source: https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/79/kg_en.pdf

paradox: global military spending is growing, while least developed and vulnerable states continue to suffer from a lack of resources for their development and survival.

[...]

The world faces an important choice.

We can continue increasing arms, seeking security through military power, or we can choose the path of sustainable development aimed at eradicating poverty and supporting the most vulnerable.

Resources that are directed to military needs could make a huge contribution to addressing global challenges - whether it is access to clean water, education for children in developing countries, fighting famine, or financing climate change programs.

To make progress in this direction, coordinated efforts are needed from both: rich and least developed countries.

First, developed countries should not only increase the financial assistance to least developed countries, but also make it targeted, focusing on infrastructure projects and social development.

Second, least developed countries should actively be involved in international initiatives on sustainable development and commit to the efficient use of the provided resources.

Third, the transfer of modern technologies from rich countries to poor ones is crucial, enabling the latter to develop their economies independently and reduce dependence on external assistance.

[...]

One of the most dangerous challenges threatening the very existence of our planet is climate change, which is getting worse every day and affects almost all countries and peoples worldwide.

The accelerated melting of glaciers, the increasing frequency of natural disasters and the reduction of water resources in mountain ecosystems are deeply concerning. These negative consequences threaten the lives of local communities, contribute to rising poverty levels, deterioration of infrastructure and inflict serious damage on national economies.

Kyrgyzstan faces a triple challenge - the need to invest in development, reduce poverty and adapt to climate change to achieve carbon neutrality.

Each of these areas requires special financing, especially in the context of ensuring climate resilience for our country and vulnerable communities.

We are determined to succeed by working together with our partners.

Kyrgyzstan proposes to strengthen and globally expand the debt-for-nature mechanism, thus helping developing and least developed countries jointly combat climate change.

Kyrgyzstan supports the UN Secretary-General's position on the need to reform the international financial architecture and reduce the debt burden for developing countries.

We also propose a mechanism of swapping the external debt to climate and sustainable development projects, and we are working on creating a Climate Trust Fund that will finance environmental projects in mountainous regions.

The Kyrgyz Republic pays special attention to climate issues in the implementation of its national policy and, based on the principles of green development, sets an ambitious goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

More than 95% of our energy is produced mainly by hydropower plants, which are the main driver towards achieving the goal of zero emissions.

Our country has vast opportunities to integrate renewable energy sources into various sectors of the economy, developing electric transport infrastructure, sustainable agriculture and ecotourism.

[...]

Central Asia is becoming an important region in terms of global security and the world economy.

Kyrgyzstan, together with neighboring states, continues to work on the sustainable development of the region. Together with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, we are building the Kambar-Ata-1 hydropower plant, which will meet the region's needs for energy and water.

[...]

At the Future Summit, UN Member States reaffirmed the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals and the need for their full implementation. Kyrgyzstan remains committed to the global 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and our achievements confirm our firm intention to achieve the Goals, taking into account national priorities and financial capabilities.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are integrated into the National Development Strategy of Kyrgyzstan until 2040, which creates opportunities for sustainable economic and social development, digitalization, entrepreneurship, as well as the introduction of innovative and environmentally friendly technologies for current and future generations.

[...]

Next year, our country will present the National Voluntary Review on the implementation of the SDGs.

We are ready to share our experience, discuss the progress we have made, and continue moving toward our goal of becoming one of the top 30 countries in the world in SDG implementation by 2030.

As a mountainous country, Kyrgyzstan has consistently drawn global attention to the challenges of sustainable development in mountain regions since the early 2000s. With our initiative and the broad support of mountain countries, the “Five-Year Action Plan for the Development of Mountain Regions” is being implemented from 2023 to 2027.

I call on all states to participate actively in this project. I invite you to take part in the Second Global Mountain Summit “Bishkek+25” in 2027, where the results of the “Mountain Five-Year Plan” will be reviewed. Furthermore, we are promoting the initiative to include a permanent global dialogue on “Mountains and Climate” in the annual program of the UN Climate Change Conference.

Kyrgyzstan is actively working to preserve the snow leopard, which has become a symbol of long-term sustainable development in our region. In December 2023, the snow leopard was recognized as a national symbol of Kyrgyzstan. Together with 11 countries, we are working on protecting this unique animal. In this regard, I am honored to announce the submission of a UN General Assembly resolution to proclaim an “International Snow Leopard Day” and ask everyone to support this initiative.

The inhabitants of mountainous regions face daily challenges such as water shortages, food insecurity, poverty, and limited access to basic services.

These countries should not be left alone to face these problems. We call on the international community to take active steps to address these issues.

[...]

Statement by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon¹⁵

(extract)

[...]

At the same time, I would like to emphasize that the Republic of Tajikistan continues an uninterrupted, unwavering support of an implementation of the 2030 Agenda to achieve sustainable development goals.

It is worth noting, that the principal message of this Agenda is also reflected in Tajikistan National Development Strategy 2030, and continued efforts are being taken to achieve its set goals.

Nevertheless, the existence of a wide range of difficulties hinder the timely financing of sustainable development.

Challenges include security turmoil, economic and financial crises, unprecedented warming due to climate change and loss of biodiversity, as well as an outbreak of contagious diseases.



¹⁵ Source: <https://www.president.tj/event/news/47788>

In a political declaration recently adopted by the General Assembly, Member States have admitted that “the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is in threat”.

According to the UN Secretary General's report, the international community will be capable to achieve only 17% of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

We are witnessing the setbacks in results achieved within the Sustainable Development Goals in many developing countries.

In view of this, we need to intensify our efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda in a timely manner and pay particular attention to the financing for sustainable development.

We do also believe that the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), scheduled to be held in Spain in July 2025 as per the UN General Assembly Resolution, will play a crucial role in exploring new approaches to remove barriers to financing for development.

Necessarily, the activities of the international financial and economic system should meet the needs of developing countries so that it can facilitate the timely counter-response of member states to modern threats and challenges.

In that context, in order to implement the goals and programmes outlined, we believe it is important to continue financing countries in need by international financial institutions, especially through the International Development Association.

Digital technologies and artificial intelligence pave the suitable ways for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Tajikistan is taking effective and necessary measures for the gradual transition to digitalization system by adopting the national strategy and relevant conceptual legal acts.

In this respect, I propose to the General Assembly to adopt at its upcoming session a Special Resolution on the Role of Artificial Intelligence in Creating New Opportunities for Socio-Economic Development and Acceleration of the SDG achievement in Central Asia.

[...]

It has been more than a year since the UN Water Conference 2023.

According to the reports of relevant United Nations agencies, progress in water supply and sanitation, despite some improvements, does not meet our expectations.

As a result, Tajikistan, as a champion country, actively cooperates with all stakeholders to implement the commitments stemming from the “Water Action Agenda” of the United Nations Water Conference - 2023.

Successful accomplishment of these and other water-related commitments and goals will depend on effective multi-stakeholder partnerships that ensure integrated and systematic, coherent approaches.

In this regard, it is important for us to take advantage of the Dushanbe Water Process platform to monitor the outcomes of the United Nations Water Conference - 2023.

We believe, that the Dushanbe Water Process will play a pivotal role as a platform for a broad inclusive dialogue of stakeholders for comprehensive preparation for the United Nations Water Conference in Dushanbe in 2028.

[...]

In the backdrop of climate change impacts, the international community needs to work on collective approaches and initiatives in the proper use of natural resources and the relentless activities of various fields of human life.

In recent years, the natural disasters along with a series of droughts cause enormous damage to the agriculture, environment and economies of developing countries in general.

Being 93% of its territory covered by mountains, Tajikistan is also vulnerable to climate change due to the frequent occurrence of natural disasters.

Natural disasters annually bring damage to the national economy of Tajikistan worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and unfortunately, in many cases they cause death toll.

Climate change is causing the accelerated melting of glaciers and the reduction of the water volume of rivers in different parts of the world, including Central Asia.

This process has a negative impact on real sectors of the national economy, such as energy, industry and agriculture.

To date, more than 1,000 out of 14,000 of Tajikistan's glaciers, which are the main source of drinking water in the region, have completely melted, and the pace of their melting is dramatically increasing.

This is despite the fact that precipitation and glaciers of Tajikistan make up to 60% of the source of water resources in Central Asia.

Meanwhile, the UN General Assembly’s declaration of 2025 as the “International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation” at the initiative of Tajikistan provides a suitable basis for developing cooperation among stakeholders.

Pursuant to this UNGA Resolution, March 21 was declared as the “World Glaciers’ Day”, and an International Trust Fund to promote the Glaciers Preservation was established under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General.

Congruently, the first High-Level International Conference on the Glaciers will be hosted in Dushanbe, Tajikistan next year.

Taking this opportunity, we call on partner countries and organizations to actively participate and contribute to the arrangement of this Conference.

We believe, that this important international conference which is scheduled to be held in cooperation with UNESCO and the World Meteorological Organization, will play an effective role in assessing the global glacier problems and exploring specific approaches for their solutions.

Alongside with this, we invite all partners to financially contribute to the “International Glaciers’ Trust Fund”.

It is worth highlighting, that to further advance the glaciers’ preservation agenda, Tajikistan, together with France, has put forward another initiative to declare 2025-2034 the Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences.

Our country has adopted the National Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change 2030 based on its international obligations, including provisions of Paris Agreement.

Evidently, one of the ways to successfully mitigate the problems related to climate change is the development of "green economy", which in turn calls for development of “green energy”.

Considering the importance of this reality, our country has approved and currently implementing the Green Economy Development Strategy for 2023–2037.

We currently produce 98% of our electricity from the country’s hydropower resources, and we are ranked the sixth in the world in terms of the share of “green energy” produced from renewable sources.

The goal of the implementation of our plans in this direction is to turn Tajikistan into a "green country" by 2037.

Today, finding solutions to the daily issues of adaptation to climate change and reducing the severity of its negative consequences is considered one of the top priorities for the international community.

We hope that developed countries, the United Nations and its specialized agencies, influential international financial institutions and other international and regional multilateral entities will further continue to pay serious attention to these pressing issues.

We are convinced, that the international community succeeds to achieve its common goals and objectives through the development of trustful dialogue, mutual understanding and constructive cooperation.

[...]

Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov¹⁶

(extract)



[...]

In addressing the global climate agenda, Turkmenistan will be focusing on protection of the environment in Central Asia and Caspian Sea region.

In this context, our country advocates for more active and extensive UN involvement in saving the Aral Sea.

Turkmenistan initiated the adoption of two recent UN General Assembly Resolutions on cooperation between the UN and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. Furthermore in 2023, ESCAP adopted a Resolution on the modalities for creating UN Special Program for the Aral Sea Basin.

¹⁶ Source: https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/79/tm_en.pdf

Among other specific problems of Central Asia, which have much broader consequences and impact, we highlight desertification and the reduction of water resources. All of this requires more active cooperation with the UN and presence of its resident offices in the region on a permanent basis.

Turkmenistan is ready to work on this.

As a concrete step, in cooperation with the UN, our country is promoting the establishment of specialized structure – the Regional Center for Climate-Related Technologies.

Another topic has gone far beyond regional borders is the Caspian issue. In this regard, we especially emphasize that preserving the Caspian Sea as unique natural complex - are not just the internal affairs of the littoral states, but a global-scale problem and challenge.

The approaches to solving them should be appropriate. Therefore, Turkmenistan appeals to the UN, its relevant agencies, such as UNEP and UNDP, financial institutions, environmental funds, primarily Global Environmental Facility, Green Climate Fund and other structures, urging them to move towards systematic and targeted cooperation with the Caspian states to combat the sea's shallowing, destruction of its ecological balance, reduction of bio-diversity, and other ecological and climate issues affecting the Caspian Sea.

The President of Turkmenistan at the last session of the UN General Assembly proposed the Caspian Environmental Initiative. We are ready to start the active dialogue on this topic and hope for the full support of the General Assembly.

In matters of Sustainable Development, we propose moving forward with a number of specific initiatives from Turkmenistan.

In particular, we are talking about developing a Global Framework Program for the transition to a circular economy.

Other initiatives include the creation of a:

- Global Atlas of Sustainable Transport Connectivity;
- and Alliance for Global Energy Security and Sustainable Development.

In cooperation with the UN we are ready to begin developing algorithms for joint work on these proposals.

[...]

Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov¹⁷



[...]

Our debates are taking place at a time of escalating global challenges. Wars and conflicts, triple planetary climate crisis, worsening of the world economy and technological gap are affecting all countries without exception.

Commitment to Sustainable Development Goals and active role in maintaining peace and stability in Central Asia remain our key priorities.

[...]

In this context, Uzbekistan proposes:

- to reform the international financial system to extend rights and opportunities for developing countries;
- to ensure safe and affordable digital technologies for everyone;
- to promote international cooperation in fighting climate change, especially in vulnerable areas of Central Asia;
- to empower women and youth;
- to unite our efforts to counter terrorism and corruption;
- to extend transport corridors and economic ties in and outside Central Asia;

¹⁷ Source: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2024/09/26/minister-un/>

- to expand the Educational center for Afghan citizens in the Uzbek city of Termez into the Global training center.

[...]

The air temperature in Central Asia is rising faster than the global average. This creates a wide range of problems, which pose serious risks to food and energy security. Thus, the level of water availability per capita in Central Asia has halved over the past few decades.

The Aral Sea disaster continues to have an extremely negative impact on the ecosystems of all states in the region. We call on the international donor community to expand projects in the Aral Sea region aimed at mitigating the devastating consequences of this disaster.

He recalled that the Aral Sea became the first region in the world to be granted by the UN the status of a Zone of Environmental Innovation and Technology. “Our best experience could benefit other countries facing similar problems,” said the Minister.

Events

Training on water diplomacy

From August 5 to 16, 2024, Tashkent hosted the Training on Water Diplomacy for the teaching staff of Central Asian universities. This training was organized by the National Research University (TIAME), in cooperation with the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED), the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) under the Erasmus+ HWCA project. The event brought together the representatives of water management organizations in Central Asia, teachers and doctoral students from 4 universities in Europe and 12 universities in Central Asia.



The program included lectures, seminars and workshops covering a wide range of topics related to water diplomacy. Each day, the participants listened to lectures by leading experts on such topics as a water concept and the urgency of water diplomacy, international water law, the role of water diplomacy in the context of climate change, tools and methods for settling transboundary water disputes, and the role of gender in water diplomacy.

The invited lecturers included international experts such as Nidhi Nagabhatla, Christina Leb, Ana Elisa Cascao, John Marco Church, Emma Hakala, Iskandar Abdullaev and many others. Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC, delivered a lecture on Legal Framework for Regional Water

Cooperation in Central Asia. Her speech aroused special interest among the participants, as she highlighted key legal aspects contributing to enhanced transboundary water cooperation in the region.



The participants consolidated their knowledge through group work and practical exercises based on real examples and cases.

SIC ICWC staff member A.I. Dolidudko took part in the two-week training and actively participated in group discussions and practical exercises, sharing his experience and knowledge with colleagues from different universities in Central Asia.



On August 10, a field trip was held. During this trip scholars, experts and doctoral students from Europe and Central Asia visited unique water facilities located in the Chirchik River basin. The trip organized with the support of BWO Syr Darya, the Ministry of Water Management of Uzbekistan and the agency «Uzbekhydroenergy», as well as water reforms carried out in Uzbekistan left a great impression on the participants.





The training ended with a certificate awarding ceremony. Both the participants and organizers noted the importance of further cooperation and knowledge exchange on water management in Central Asia. The participants who successfully completed the program received certificates, underlining the significance of this training for strengthening professional skills and cooperation in the region.



Seminars dedicated to women in water management and youth

In 2021, the OSCE launched «Women, Water Management and Conflict Prevention» - Phase II project, initiating the implementation of the Mentorship and Career Growth Program aimed at uniting and supporting women professionals in the field of water resources management from five countries in Central Asia and Afghanistan, as well as enhancing their professional level and active role in water resource management in the region.

Over 20 women professionals regularly participate in virtual and in-person events, where they exchange experiences with international experts and mentors, contributing to expanding their knowledge, skills and opportunities for career advancement. This mentorship program played a key role in the establishment of the Network "Women in Water Resources Management in Central Asia and Afghanistan". The Network's co-organizers are the OSCE, the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), and the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC). This is a community of women experts and practitioners whose activities are related to various aspects of transboundary water cooperation in the region.

On September 4-5, the regular seminar of the Network was held in Almaty to review the work progress and plans for 2024, facilitate the discussions on the draft Network Code and elect representatives for the Global Council of the Women in Water Diplomacy Network. Yodit Balcha, one of the founders of the African Association 'Women in Water and Climate', presented the experience of women's participation in the Nile River Basin Commission, shared by 11 countries. Representatives of the Global Water Partnership (GWP) reported on the thematic “Communities of practice” established as platforms for the exchange of experience, opinions and information, sharing of scientific papers and publications.

Members of the regional Network shared their experiences and talked about the impact that their involvement in the network has had on their professional development, discussed how the water diplomacy processes benefit from the role of professional women associations in the water sector, and emphasized the need for professional trainings. Representative of SIC ICWC, O. Usmanova spoke about the positive impact of such associations, using the example of the Network “Gender and Water in Central Asia”, established in 2007, as the first experience of highlighting gender aspects in the regional water sector and organizing trainings for women. She reported on the work being

started as part of the OECD project “Regional mechanism for the low-carbon, climate-resilient transformation of the energy-water-land Nexus in Central Asia”, one component of which is to establish a regional Center of Excellence on the nexus approach on the basis of the existing expert platform. This Center of Excellence aims to bring together scientists and practitioners from different disciplines for collaborative research, knowledge production, peer-to-peer learning and exchanges. She encouraged all members of the Network to join this platform.

The Youth Seminar "Drops of the Future", focusing on the water-food-energy nexus, took place in Almaty on November 6-7. This is the second in a series of seminars supported by the OSCE and the Swiss program "Blue Peace Central Asia", which aims to create a common vision among young people on the interlinkages between different sectors and to establish a dialogue between representatives of the older and younger generations. The first meeting was held in Vahdat, Tajikistan. The next meeting will take place in Tashkent in the second half of September.





ECUMENE Global Forum

Moscow hosted the fourth ECUMENE Global Forum on September 16-18, 2024. 140 speakers from 30 countries participated in this event. The topics discussed included science and education, urban development, sustainability of financial systems, technology, biodiversity, desertification, inclusiveness and climate change.

Director of SIC ICWC Dinara Ziganshina spoke at two Forum sessions on technologies and desertification.

The session on Technological Neutrality moderated by Ekaterina Salugina-Sorokovaya, first vice-president of “Gazprombank”, was addressed by Sergey Mochalnikov, Deputy Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation, Xiangyu Meng, Deputy Director of the Institute of Sustainable Development and Low Carbon Policy, Tsinghua Innovation Centre in Donggua (China), Shashi Nath Mishra, Senior Vice-president, IRCLASS Systems and Solutions Pvt. Ltd, Global Head, IRQS, Dinara Ziganshina, Director, Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia (SIC ICWC), and Andrey Slepnev, member of the Board (minister) for Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission.

Dinara Ziganshina made a presentation on water-saving technologies adopted in the Central Asian countries to improve water management in the context of climate change. She noted that technologies were adopted successfully when there were appropriate legal regulation, economic incentives and advisory support.

Olga Andreeva, program coordinator of Science, Technology and Innovation Unit, UN Convention to Combat Desertification, Sergey Vasilyev, coordinator for Russia's participation in UNCCD, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Natural Resources of Russia, Dr. Natalia Frolova, Head of the Land Hydrology Department, Faculty of Geography, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Dinara Ziganshina, Director, Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia (SIC ICWC), all spoke at the session on the UN Desertification Convention. The moderator of the discussion was German Kust, head of N. F. Glazovsky Scientific Coordination Center for combating desertification and drought, Institute of Geography, RAS.



The panel members discussed the practical measures and cooperation mechanisms on degradation of land, including desertification- and drought-prone land, the reduction of biodiversity of terrestrial ecosystems, the decrease in the productivity of arable, pasture and forest land, and the increase of dust and sand storms. The importance of interlinking land and water management was underlined, particularly in the arid zone, including Central Asia. Speakers highlighted the significant contribution and rich experience of the Central Asian countries in combating desertification and land degradation. Dinara Ziganshina

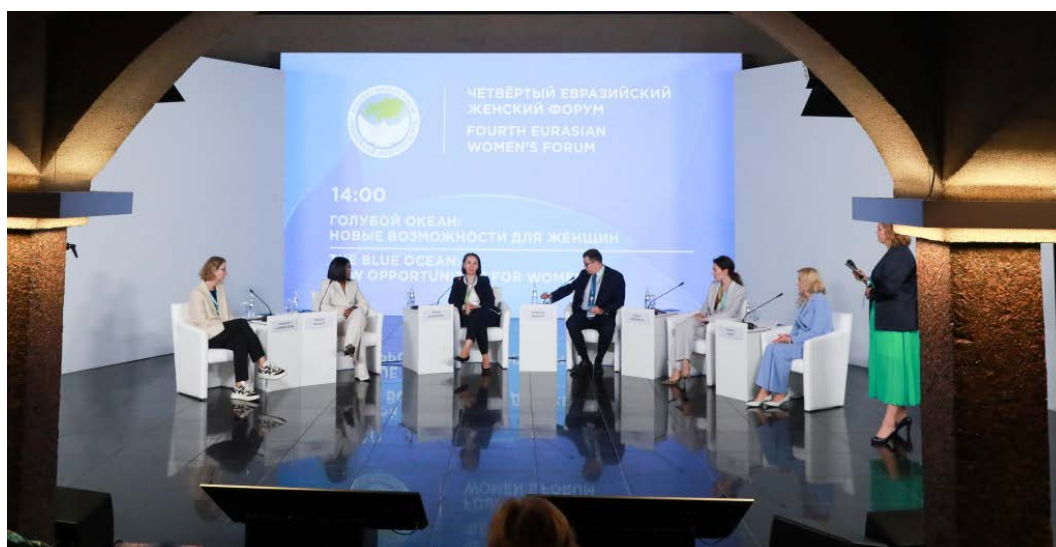
reported on the implementation of national and regional programs in this direction. In particular, she noted that since 2017 large-scale afforestation efforts have been made on the dried bottom of the Aral Sea covering a total area of 1,800 thousand ha in Uzbekistan and 800 thousand ha in Kazakhstan.

The 4th Eurasian Women's Forum

The Fourth Eurasian Women's Forum was held in St. Petersburg on September 18-20, 2024.

The Eurasian Women's Forum is an influential international platform that enables women leaders from all continents to engage in a dialogue and adopt joint decisions on key issues concerning international cooperation, sustainable economic development, the assimilation of new technologies, a healthy lifestyle, environmental safety, and the promotion of social charitable projects. The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the Interparliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS) organized the event.

In 2024, the Forum was attended by 2000 delegates from 126 countries. For the first time, the Forum organized a thematic session dedicated to water - Blue Ocean: new opportunities for women.



The session, chaired by Irina Gaida, Deputy Director of the Skoltech Energy Transition Center, was addressed by Elena Gershelis, Executive Director of the International Scientific Center for Ecology and Climate Change of the ANO VO "Scientific and Technological University Sirius", Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC, Alexander Kraevoy, Head of Department, PJSC RusHydro, Nelisiwe Nhlapo, Project Manager, State Agency for Vocational Training in the Field of Energy and Water Workforce of South Africa, Anastasia Lavrentyeva, Deputy Head of the Center for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Principles at "Gazprombank", and Evgeniya Chibis, Chair of the Supervisory Board of the ANO "United Volunteer Center" of the Murmansk Region.

The reporters covered a wide circle of issues related to women opportunities for sustainable development of water and energy resources (SIC ICWC, RusHydro), mobilization of new financing sources and tools for the sector (Gazprombank), enhancement of scientific and technological base in ecology and climate change (Sirius University, SIC ICWC), and development of water diplomacy tools (SIC ICWC, South Africa). Dinara Ziganshina spoke on experience of the Central Asian countries in gender mainstreaming in the water sector. She underlined the importance of gender disaggregated statistics and assessments to identify current challenges and real needs of women. She also noted the work in progress in Uzbekistan on the development of the Gender concept for the water sector of Uzbekistan till 2030.

Discussions on the gender strategy in the water sector of Uzbekistan until 2030

On September 24, 2024 a roundtable was organized in Tashkent as part of the development of the gender strategy in the water sector of Uzbekistan until 2030.

The achievement of gender equality in all spheres, including the water sector, is one of priorities in Uzbekistan. The 2030 Strategy of Uzbekistan adopted by the Decree of the President of Uzbekistan in 2023 sets the following goal: "Goal 25: strengthening the system of support to women, ensuring their rights and legally protected interests, increasing social, economic and political activities of women and ensuring gender equality. The Strategy for the achievement of gender equality in Uzbekistan by 2030 was adopted in 2021 (Resolution of the Oliy

Majlis Senate of Uzbekistan, No. PS-297-IV of 28.05.2021).



Based on the results of the Gender Assessment in the water sector conducted in 2021, the Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan noted the need to promote gender equality in the water sector and decided to develop a Gender Concept for the water sector based on the principles of integrated water resources management and interrelated with the Concept of Water Sector Development in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030.

An interdepartmental working group was established to develop the Gender Concept and its first meeting was held on September 24, 2024.

The objectives of this meeting included:

- assessing the current state of gender equality in the water sector of Uzbekistan and identify the areas for improvement, taking into account best international practices;
- discussing approaches to the development of the Gender Concept.

As a result of the discussion, the main approaches to the development of the Gender Concept for the water sector were agreed, and, most importantly, concrete steps and further actions were identified together with the main stakeholders.

SIC ICWC assists in developing the first version of the Gender Concept and studying advanced domestic and foreign experience in this direction.

Expert meeting on developing a roadmap for “Advancing the women, peace and security agenda in Central Asia”

More than twenty years ago (2000), the UN Security Council adopted a resolution (S/RES/1325) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), reaffirming the important role of women, their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security. Resolution 1325 was followed by ten other resolutions that set out the commitments of the UN, its Member States and partners to ensure that the needs of women and girls affected by conflict are met and that peace is achieved in a systemic and sustainable manner.

In February 2020, "UN Women" initiated a series of dialogues in Europe and Central Asia with civil society and women's organizations on WPS. The consultation in Central Asia provided an opportunity to voice and highlight the needs of women and youth, discuss perspectives of women and solutions that underpin decisions on WPS, including the implementation of national action plans on resolution 1325 in the Central Asian region. While the WPS agenda is gaining momentum globally, its implementation in Central Asian countries remains uneven. The region faces growing security threats, including border disputes, as well as the impacts of water scarcity and climate change, which disproportionately affect women and girls. As a result of the meeting on WPS hosted by the “UN -Women” in Almaty on October 16, it was decided to develop a regional action plan on WPS.

In this context, a meeting of key stakeholders from Central Asian countries - WPS coordinators and experts on WPS diplomacy/climate/water and civil society representatives, was held in Almaty on September 23-24. The focus was on expert discussions to advance the approach to implementing the WPS agenda and the priorities of the subregional roadmap for implementing the WPS agenda.



The meeting reviewed the current progress and challenges in implementing the WPS agenda in the region; identified gaps and new opportunities for cooperation; discussed ways and benefits of a coordinated regional approach to the WPS agenda, including the development of a roadmap; reviewed the process of integrating environment/climate (new priorities) into the WPS agenda; also identified key priorities and actions for practical implementation of the WPS agenda in Central Asia, with a focus on regional cooperation, and discussed regional monitoring mechanism to assess the implementation of the WPS agenda in the region to ensure accountability and track progress.

The representative of SIC ICWC, A. Galustyan, spoke about the main climate related threats and challenges to security in Central Asia, the existing initiatives and policies on climate security in Central Asia, the possibility of integrating new priorities to improve the effectiveness of WPS policies. She presented the work of SIC ICWC within the project "Regional mechanisms for the low-carbon, climate-resilient transformation of the energy-water-land nexus in Central Asia" on the establishment of a Centre of Excellence, with the involvement of women and youth.

Development of the roadmap will continue.

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