

INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA
INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR WATER COORDINATION
OF CENTRAL ASIA



BULLETIN

ICWC

of Central Asia

May 2026

№ 4 (117)

Scientific-Information Center of Interstate Commission for Water Coordination
of Central Asia

Interstate Commission for Coordination Central Asia	Water of	BULLETIN № 4 (117)	May 2026
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Events as part of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

Meeting of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea¹

On 30 March 2026, a meeting of the Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea was held in Astana. The meeting was chaired by Kanat Bozumbayev, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Sulaymon Ziezooda, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan, Tangryguly Atakhallyev, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan; Shukhrat Ganiev, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Nurzhan Nurzhigitov, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of the Republic of Kazakhstan; and Askhat Orazbay, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the IFAS took part in the meeting.

The Kyrgyz Republic participated as an observer. The delegation was led by Almaz Zheenaliev, Deputy Minister and Director of the Water Resources Service.

As a result of the meeting, five joint resolutions were signed. Decisions were adopted regarding preparations for the upcoming meeting of the Council of Heads of State-Founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS), to be held in Astana on 22 April 2026 and the results of the EC IFAS work during the reporting period, including on institutional and legal improvement of IFAS.

A document governing the coordination of activities between the Executive Committee of IFAS and international development partners in implementation of joint programs was approved, along with the agenda for the next meeting of the IFAS Board.

The following items were also discussed and noted on the agenda: development of a draft Work Plan for implementation of a unified automated system for water accounting, monitoring, management and distribution in the Syr Darya River basin, as well as declaring 2026–2036 as the “Decade of Practical Action for the Rational Water Use in Central Asia.”

¹ Source: <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/water/press/news/details/1190158?lang=ru>





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

1. On Preparation to the Meeting of the Council of Heads of IFAS Founder-States

1. Take into consideration the information provided by the Executive Committee of IFAS on progress in preparation to the meeting of the Council of Heads of IFAS Founder-States, scheduled to be held in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan on 22 April 2026.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS, the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development, and relevant ministries and agencies of the Fund's Founder-States shall actively contribute to the preparation of the meeting.

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhalyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

2. On Progress in Activities of the Executive Committee of IFAS for the reporting Period

1. Take into consideration the information provided by the Executive Committee of IFAS on the progress of its work during the reporting period (2025)

2. To continue implementing the Work Plan of EC IFAS for the period of Kazakhstan's chairmanship (2024–2026) and regularly report to the Board on progress.

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhalyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

3. On Progress on Institutional and Legal Improvement of IFAS

1. Take into consideration the information provided by EC IFAS on progress on institutional and legal improvement of IFAS.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS jointly with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development, and relevant ministries and agencies of the Fund's Founder-States shall intensify the activities of the Working Group on institutional and legal improvement of IFAS and take necessary measures to expedite this process with a view to its timely completion.

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhalyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

4. On the Approval of the Document Governing the Coordination of Activities between the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and International Development Partners in the Implementation of the Fourth Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REP4SD CA)

1. Take into consideration the information provided by the Executive Committee of IFAS on the document governing the coordination of activities of the Executive Committee of IFAS and international development partners regarding implementation of the ASBP- 4 and the Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia

2. To approve the document governing the coordination of activities between the Executive Committee of IFAS and international development partners regarding the implementation of the ASBP-4 and the Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (Working arrangements of EC IFAS and International Development Partners).

3. EC IFAS shall ensure compliance of the Working arrangements of EC IFAS and International Development Partners and shall submit to the Board relevant information on progress in implementation of ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA.

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhalyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

5. On Agenda of the Regular Meeting of the IFAS Board

The regular meeting of the IFAS Board shall address the following issues:

- outcomes of the meeting of the Council of Heads of IFAS Founder-States held in Astana on 22 April 2026;
- activities of the Executive Committee of IFAS during the chairmanship of Kazakhstan in the Fund;
- progress in implementation of the Fourth Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4);
- agenda of the next regular meeting of the IFAS Board.

Republic of Kazakhstan

K. Bozumbaev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

S. Ziyozoda

Turkmenistan

T. Atakhalyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh. Ganiev

Approved
by Resolution of the
IFAS Board
No. 4 of 30 March 2026

**Document Governing the Coordination of Activities between the
Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and
International Development Partners in the Implementation of the Fourth
Aral Sea Basin Program and the Regional Environmental Protection
Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (Working
arrangements of EC IFAS and IDP)**

1. General Provisions

1. This Regulation defines the objectives, principles, and coordination mechanisms governing cooperation between the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS) and international development partners (IDPs) in the implementation of the Fourth Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Protection Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REP4SD CA).

2. For the purposes of this Regulation, coordination shall mean the process through which the activities of the parties are aligned, harmonized, and carried out in an effective manner.

3. This Regulation has been drafted with due regard to the constituent documents of IFAS, the applicable principles and norms of international law governing official development assistance, as well as the internal policies, rules, and procedures of international development partners.

4. The activities of the relevant ministries and agencies of the IFAS Founder States, as well as those of the subordinate organizations of the Fund, relating to the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA, shall be coordinated in accordance with the Decisions of the IFAS Board of 29 June 2021 and 22 February 2022.

2. Purpose and Objectives

5. The purpose of coordination is to ensure transparent, coherent, and effective cooperation between EC IFAS and IDPs in implementation of ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA.

6. This purpose shall be achieved through the following objectives:

- 1) establishing and maintaining a framework for cooperation;
- 2) coordinating and harmonizing the initiatives of IDPs aimed at supporting implementation of ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA.
- 3) preventing duplication of efforts and promoting the effective use of resources;
- 4) facilitating the exchange information and results of activities.

3. Principles

7. The coordination of activities between the Executive Committee of IFAS and IDPs shall be guided by the following principles:

- 1) voluntary participation and equality of the parties;
- 2) non-interference in the internal affairs of the parties;
- 3) due consideration of the needs and interests of all IFAS Founder States, priorities of IDPs, and objectives of the Fund;
- 4) inclusivity in implementation of ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA
- 5) transparency with regard to planned projects and results of their implementation.

Coordination of the activities of IDPs shall also be based on the UN principles of cooperation.

4. Coordination Mechanism

§ 1. Legal mechanism

8. This shall be implemented primarily through Memorandums of

Understanding (MOUs). MOUs relating to projects under ASBP-4 shall be concluded with the Executive Committee of IFAS, while MOUs relating to REP4SD CA shall be concluded with the Scientific-Information Center of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development of Central Asia (ICSD), including with respect to the exchange of information concerning their implementation.

9. The Parties are encouraged to exchange information on ongoing and planned projects, results of implementation, challenges encountered, and proposals to enhance cooperation. The format and timelines for the submission of information, as well as the principles and conditions governing its disclosure and exchange, shall be specified in relevant Memorandums. A recommended reporting format is set out in the Appendix to this document.

10. In view of the rotating principle of the IFAS chairmanship among its Founder States and the resulting periodic change in the legal person and location of the Executive Committee of IFAS, the validity of any Memorandum concluded under this Initiative shall not be limited to the term of a particular chairmanship.

§2 Institutional Mechanism

11. To facilitate cooperation between EC IFAS and IDPs, a coordination platform is hereby established, namely the EC IFAS–IDPs Coordination Meeting (CM).

12. The CM shall not constitute a legal entity and shall not be subject to legal registration. It shall function as a consultative and deliberative mechanism, and its final documents shall be advisory in nature.

13. The composition of the CM shall be determined by EC IFAS in consultation with IDPs. The current list of CM members, including the names of participating organizations, shall be published on the official website of EC IFAS.

14. The Coordination Meetings shall be chaired by the Chair of EC IFAS and a Co-Chair from IDPs, who is elected at each meeting.

15. The CM shall gather at least once a year in person, online, or in a hybrid format. Additional meetings may be convened as necessary.

To ensure consistency in decision-making and the equal consideration of the interests of all States of the Aral Sea basin, the participation of representatives of relevant ministries, agencies, and diplomatic missions of the IFAS Founder States shall be mandatory.

16. The CM shall operate in the following areas:

- 1) discussion of proposals related to the implementation of ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA;
- 2) exchange of information on the progress of programs and projects, as well as future plans;
- 3) consideration of analytical materials on relevant topics;
- 4) organization of joint events and, where necessary, monitoring missions.

17. EC IFAS shall serve as the Secretariat of the CM and shall be responsible for:

- 1) preparing and distributing the agenda and meeting materials no later than 30 days prior to the meeting;
- 2) preparing the final documents of meetings;
- 3) collecting, systematizing, and storing information, as well as preparing reference materials based on the outcomes of the CM;
- 4) promoting the outcomes of the CM; and,
- 5) publishing the materials of the CM on the official website of EC IFAS.

§ 3. Other Coordination Mechanisms

18. Coordination of activities between EC IFAS and IDPs shall also be carried out through the participation of EC IFAS in international events, during which the Executive Committee shall conduct outreach on the priorities of the Fund, present the results of its activities to the international community, share experience in addressing regional challenges, and engage new IDPs, including development funds, in cooperation to enhance the effectiveness of implementation of ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA.

19. Harmonization and synchronization of coordination activities may be achieved through the participation of EC IFAS in meetings of other coordination platforms. Materials from such meetings, as well as reports on the results of such participation, shall be published on the official website of EC IFAS.

20. All information related to coordination activities shall be archived and stored in EC IFAS' database of the chairing party for further use in analytical and other studies aimed at improving coordination between EC IFAS and IDPs.

21. To ensure continuity and uninterrupted coordination of activities between EC IFAS and IDPs, the current EC IFAS shall, no later than 30 days prior to the end of the chairmanship term, transfer the whole database to the party assuming the chairmanship of the Fund for the subsequent term.

5. Final Provisions

22. In the event of amendments or additions to this document, relevant proposals shall be submitted to the IFAS Founder States and IDPs for consideration and approval. Upon completion of relevant procedures, the document shall be submitted to the IFAS Board for review and approval.

23. The coordination and approval procedure set out in para. 22 of this document ensures its legitimacy, irrespective of the location and legal person of EC IFAS, and allows for the uninterrupted continuation of coordination between EC IFAS and IDPs.

24. This Regulation shall remain in force throughout the implementation period of ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA.

Information on Progress of Projects under ASBP-4 and/or REP4SD CA

No.	Project title, place	Key quantitative and qualitative parameters of the project	Total amount proposed for financing (in thousand USD)	Actual completed works/services	Amount of funds spent (in thousand USD)
1	2	3	4	5	6

Note:

The attached Table is recommended; the specific format and timelines for information exchange shall be agreed upon in the relevant Memorandums of Understanding.

Column 3 shall indicate the project components, implementation timelines, key activities, as well as main indicators characterizing their scope, or other relevant indicators/information (in a concise form).

With regard to Column 4, if several partners or donors finance the project, their joint contribution is recommended to be indicated separately.

Columns 5 and 6 shall be completed based on the most recent data available at the time of request from EC IFAS (no separate data collection is required).

Meeting of the Council of Heads of State–Founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

On 22 April, a meeting of the Council of Heads of State–Founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) was held at the Akorda Presidential Residence and chaired by the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.



The meeting of the Council of Heads of State–Founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea was attended by Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov, President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon, President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov, President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea Askhat Orazbay.



As a result of the Summit, the parties signed the following documents:

1. Decision of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States “On the progress of the Kazakhstan’s chairmanship in IFAS”;
2. Decision of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States “On declaration of 26 March the International Day of the Aral Sea, the Amu Darya, and the Syr Darya rivers”;
3. Decision of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States “On the election of the President of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea”;
4. The Astana Declaration of the Heads of State–Founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

Decisions of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States

On the Progress of Kazakhstan's Chairmanship in the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

The Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea have decided:

1. To take into consideration the information on the progress under the chairmanship of Kazakhstan in the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.
2. To approve the activities of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and its President, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev carried out under the chairmanship of Kazakhstan in IFAS.
3. In view of the positive progress achieved in improving the institutional and legal framework of IFAS, to instruct the Executive Committee of IFAS to expedite the completion of this process within the relevant IFAS bodies for subsequent approval.

Done in Astana on 22 April 2026 in a single original copy in Russian.

The original copy shall be deposited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which shall transmit a certified copy thereof to each Founder-State of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

For the Republic of Kazakhstan

For the Kyrgyz Republic

For the Republic of Tajikistan

For Turkmenistan

For the Republic of Uzbekistan

**On Declaration of 26 March the International Day
of the Aral Sea, the Amu Darya, and the Syr Darya Rivers**

The Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea have decided:

1. Take into consideration the information provided by the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea regarding the establishment and declaration of 26 March the International Day of the Aral Sea, the Amu Darya, and the Syr Darya.

2. Declare 26 March the International Day of the Aral Sea, the Amu Darya, and the Syr Darya.

3. Instruct the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea to inform the United Nations, international development partners, and other concerned organizations and institutions of the decision adopted by the Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea to declare 26 March the International Day of the Aral Sea, the Amu Darya, and the Syr Darya.

Done in Astana on 22 April 2026 in a single original copy in Russian.

The original copy shall be deposited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which shall transmit a certified copy thereof to each Founder-State of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

For the Republic of Kazakhstan

For the Kyrgyz Republic

For the Republic of Tajikistan

For Turkmenistan

For the Republic of Uzbekistan

On the Election of the President of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

The Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea have decided:

To elect Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as President of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea for a term of three years, effective since 1 January 2027.

Done in Astana on 22 April 2026 in a single original copy in Russian.

The original copy shall be deposited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which shall transmit a certified copy thereof to each Founder-State of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

For the Republic of Kazakhstan

For the Kyrgyz Republic

For the Republic of Tajikistan

For Turkmenistan

For the Republic of Uzbekistan

Astana Statement by the Heads of State-Founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

On April 22, 2026, Astana hosted a regular meeting of the Council of Heads of State-Founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS), chaired by the Republic of Kazakhstan. The event was attended by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan, President Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan, President Serdar Berdimuhamedov of Turkmenistan, and President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan. President Sadyr Japarov of the Kyrgyz Republic also attended as a guest of the Kazakh President.

Engaging in substantive discussions defined by mutual understanding, trust, friendship, and constructive cooperation, the Heads of State-Founders of IFAS (hereinafter referred to as the "Heads of State" or the "Parties") addressed a broad range of issues aimed at strengthening cooperation within the Aral Sea basin.

The Heads of State emphasized the pivotal role of IFAS as the primary regional institutional platform for addressing critical environmental, water, energy, and socio-economic challenges. In this regard, the Parties agreed to continue reforming the institutional and legal framework of IFAS to enhance its efficiency and elevate its international standing.

The Parties welcomed the progress made in modernizing the institutional and legal framework of IFAS, reaffirming their commitment to sustaining these efforts while fully respecting the interests of all Central Asian states.

The Heads of State underscored the critical importance of water resources and ecosystems in ensuring the environmental, food, and energy security of Central Asia. To this end, the Parties reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening regional water cooperation, viewing it as a vital component for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and fostering peace, stability, and prosperity across the region.

The Heads of State expressed deep concern over the deteriorating situation in the Aral Sea basin, driven by ecosystem degradation and global climate change. These factors have accelerated the melting of mountain glaciers and increased the frequency and intensity of natural disasters, leading to growing water scarcity and a negative impact on human health and regional ecosystems.

Consequently, the Parties advocated for stronger regional cooperation in climate change mitigation and adaptation; the restoration of water, forest, mountain, desert ecosystems, and wetlands; disaster risk reduction and emergency response; and the combat against desertification. They also emphasized the sustainable, integrated use of water resources, environmental

protection, glacier preservation, and the promotion of projects aimed at nature restoration, reducing water-intensive production, and introducing resource-saving and "green" technologies. In this regard, they called upon UN agencies and international and regional organizations for active partnership in tackling these challenges.

The Heads of State reaffirmed the positive outcomes of large-scale afforestation efforts, ecosystem and wetland conservation, the partial restoration of the Aral Sea, and other measures taken to mitigate the Aral Sea crisis. They also expressed their support for the Parties' initiatives aimed at global greening.

The Heads of State recognized the importance of consolidating efforts for a comprehensive solution to the environmental and socio-economic challenges in the Aral Sea basin, particularly in areas highly vulnerable to ecological crisis and climate change impacts.

The Heads of State emphasized the importance of developing a sustainable, mutually beneficial cooperation mechanism to address environmental, water, energy, and food security issues in Central Asia, while respecting the interests of all countries in the region.

The Heads of State noted that ensuring universal and equitable access to safe and sustainable drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) is an inherent human right, critical for preventing water-borne diseases. Consequently, the Parties encouraged targeted investments in maintaining these services and expressed their readiness to strengthen cooperation aimed at enhancing the healthcare and health-security dimensions of these initiatives.

The Heads of State highlighted the importance of existing and under-construction hydropower facilities in addressing water and energy issues and achieving climate resilience in the river basins of Central Asia.

The Parties noted the importance of developing data repositories and sharing environmental and water information in accordance with national legislations. They also stressed the need to implement automated water accounting and monitoring systems across the Aral Sea basin countries to ensure efficient and rational water management.

The Parties underscored the necessity of taking effective measures to widely deploy innovative water-saving technologies for more efficient and rational use of Central Asia's water resources.

The Heads of State emphasized the importance of the Program of Actions to Assist the Countries of the Aral Sea Basin (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development of Central Asia (REP4SD CA) in addressing shared environmental, water, and socio-economic issues, as well as in promoting green economy principles and climate adaptation.

In this context, the Parties called for the continued effective implementation of joint projects and programs by leveraging external investment, including within the framework of these programs. They also acknowledged the coordination efforts between the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and international development partners in implementing ASBP-4 and REP4SD CA.

The Heads of State emphasized the importance of regional youth and volunteer movements dedicated to water conservation and environmental protection, aiming to ensure their active engagement in addressing today's challenges and threats.

The Parties intend to continue jointly advancing initiatives that strengthen cooperation, promote the rational and efficient use of water resources, and draw the attention of the international community to these issues at key international platforms.

The Heads of State noted the significance of the outcomes of major international forums, including the Third High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development 2018–2028” (June 10–13, 2024, Dushanbe); the One Water Summit (December 3, 2024, Riyadh, co-chaired by Kazakhstan, France, and Saudi Arabia); the Samarkand Climate Forum (April 4–5, 2025, Samarkand); the International Conference “Global Mountain Dialogue for Sustainable Development: Towards the Bishkek+25 Summit” (April 24–25, 2025, Bishkek); the High-Level International Conference on Glacier Preservation (May 29–31, 2025, Dushanbe), held within the framework of the International Year of Glacier Preservation; the Third United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (August 5–8, 2025, Avaza National Tourist Zone); and the International Water Forum – Tashkent Water Week 2026 (March 25–26, 2026, Tashkent). These events provided pivotal platforms for addressing the pressing climate challenges facing Central Asia and the wider world, while expanding regional and international cooperation toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Parties welcomed and supported upcoming events geared toward advancing the SDGs, including the Regional Environmental Summit in Astana (April 22–24, 2026); the Fourth High-Level International Conference on the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development 2018–2028” in Dushanbe (May 25–28, 2026); the World Forum on the Introduction of Water-Saving Technologies in Samarkand (October 2026); the Second Caspian Environmental Forum in Turkmenistan (2027); and the Second Global Mountain Summit “Bishkek+25” in the Kyrgyz Republic (2027). In this context, the Heads of State underscored the importance of consolidating regional efforts to ensure the successful delivery of these events.

The Heads of State took note of Turkmenistan's initiative to develop a Special United Nations Programme for the Aral Sea Basin and emphasized the importance of the initiative to establish a Regional Centre for Combating Desertification, which would serve as a regional mechanism to coordinate national programs and actions across Central Asian states.

Taking into account the initiative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to declare 2026–2036 the “Decade of Practical Action for Rational Water Use in Central Asia,” the Parties underscored the importance of pooling efforts to promote water conservation and integrated water management throughout the region.

The Parties noted the importance of granting regional organization status to the Regional Centre for Waste Management in Central Asia, located in Dushanbe, and incorporating it into the structure of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

The Parties took note of Kazakhstan's “Water Towers Partnership” initiative, as well as the vital role of existing centers and proposed initiatives to establish new global and regional centers on climate technologies, glaciology, and mountain resilience, geared toward building capacity across Central Asian states in the face of climate change.

The Parties expressed support for Tajikistan's initiative to establish a Coordinating Glaciological Centre in Dushanbe. This center will serve as a complementary regional mechanism designed to strengthen scientific capacity, enhance glacier monitoring and data exchange, foster research and training, and improve early warning systems to bolster climate resilience in Central Asia.

The Parties took note of Kazakhstan's initiative regarding the potential establishment of an International Water Organization within the United Nations system, emphasizing that further consideration of this matter should proceed on the basis of a broad international consensus within relevant UN frameworks.

The Parties expressed their appreciation to international development partners and donor countries for their steadfast support in addressing the challenges of the Aral Sea basin, and called for continued cooperation to assist regional states in achieving sustainable development.

The Heads of State underscored the relevance and importance of declaring March 26 as the International Day of the Aral Sea and the Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers, aiming to strengthen and expand cooperation among the countries of the region.

The Parties will continue close cooperation to improve the environmental and socio-economic situation in the Aral Sea basin.

The Heads of State highly commended Kazakhstan's chairmanship of IFAS and praised the successful organization of the Summit of the Heads of

State-Founders of the Fund.

The Parties emphasized that the constructive negotiations held in Astana, characterized by openness and mutual understanding, made a substantial contribution to further advancing traditionally good-neighborly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation among the IFAS founding states in tackling the challenges of the Aral Sea basin.

The Parties expressed their profound gratitude to President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan for his warm hospitality and the high level of organization of the meeting of the Council of Heads of State-Founders of IFAS.

**President
Republic of Kazakhstan**

K-J.K. Tokayev

**President
Republic of Tajikistan**

E. Rahmon

**President
Turkmenistan**

S.G. Berdimuhamedov

**President
Republic of Uzbekistan**

Sh.M. Mirziyoyev

Astana, April 22, 2026

Cooperation among the countries of Central Asia on water

Meeting of the Joint Kyrgyz-Tajik Water Management Commission²

On 6 March 2026, Bishkek hosted a meeting of the Joint Kyrgyz-Tajik Water Management Commission, aimed at further strengthening cooperation between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan in the management and use of water resources.



During the meeting, the parties discussed key water-related issues of mutual interest and reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining constructive dialogue and further improving mechanisms for bilateral cooperation.

The Water Resources Service under the Ministry of Water Resources, Agriculture and Processing Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic expressed its

² Source: <https://bluepeace-centralasia.ch/ru/materials/-blue-peace-central-asia-110326/>

appreciation to the Agency for Land Reclamation and Irrigation under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for the fruitful cooperation and constructive engagement between the two sides in the field of water management.



One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the confirmation of the Ak-Suu River, also known as the Isfara River, as a pilot basin for the work of Blue Peace Central Asia. This decision was reflected in the Commission's protocol, a copy of which was received following the meeting. The document recommends considering the Ak-Suu (Isfara) River as a pilot basin for activities to be carried out in coordination with the authorized bodies of both parties for the purpose of attracting investment.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the parties emphasized the importance of continuing joint efforts to ensure the effective use of water resources, strengthen partnership relations, and develop sustainable mechanisms for cooperation in the interests of both countries.

Central Asian Ministers Discussed Water and Energy Cooperation³

A regular quarterly working meeting of the ministers of energy and water resources of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan was held in Bishkek to discuss the coordination of water and energy cooperation in the region.



The meeting was attended by Uzbekistan's Minister of Energy, Zhura-bek Mirzamahmudov; Kyrgyzstan's Minister of Energy, Taalaybek Ibraev; and Kazakhstan's Minister of Energy, Yerlan Akkenzhenov. Uzbekistan's Minister of Water Resources, Shavkat Khamraev, and Tajikistan's Minister of Energy and Water Resources, Daler Juma, joined the discussion via videoconference.

During the talks, the parties noted that multilateral cooperation initiated in recent years at the level of heads of state has been steadily developing and proving effective, including in the fuel and energy sector.

The central topic of the meeting was the coordination of operating regimes for water-energy systems during the upcoming 2026–2027 growing season. The participants emphasized the interlinkages of the region's energy

³ Source: <https://www.uzdaily.uz/ru/ministry-tsa-obsudili-vodno-energeticheskoe-sotrudnichestvo/>

infrastructure and the need to strengthen coordination to ensure its stable operation.

Particular attention was paid to the results of the fall-winter season, as well as to measures for load balancing and maintaining an uninterrupted power supply.

The parties reaffirmed their readiness to further deepen their cooperation on the basis of mutual trust and coordinated approaches.

Following the meeting, an agreement was reached to continue implementing the previously agreed-upon operation procedures, expand cross-sectoral cooperation, and strengthen regional partnerships in the energy sector.

The next meetings are scheduled for May 2026 in Tashkent and June 2026 in Bishkek.

International and Regional Events

28th Session of the Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment

On 20 January 2026, the 28th session of the Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. The session was organized with the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).



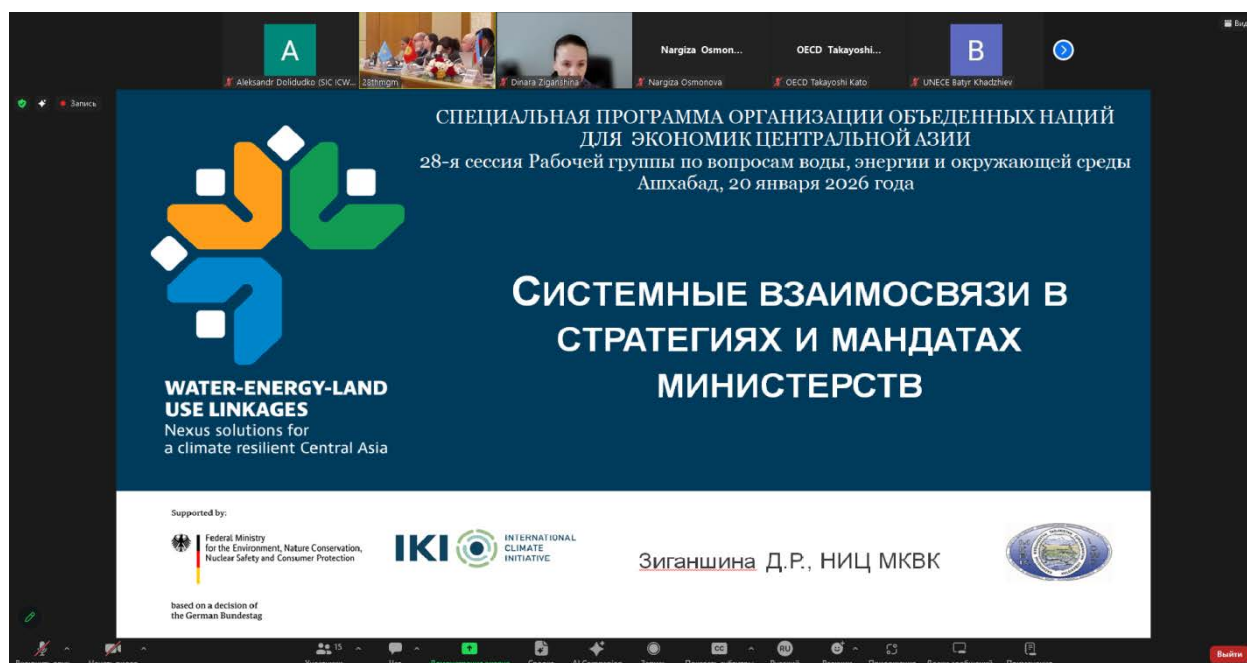
The meeting brought together representatives of relevant ministries and agencies of Central Asian countries and Azerbaijan, as well as international organizations and regional institutions, including UNECE, ESCAP, SIC ICWC, GIZ, the World Bank, OECD, and the Finnish Water Forum.

The agenda comprised four thematic sessions:

- Water-energy-land use-ecosystems nexus
- Nature-based solutions (NBS)
- Dam safety
- Sustainable small hydropower

The first session focused on advancing the nexus approach to addressing interlinkages among water, energy, land use, and ecosystems. As part of this session, Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC, spoke on “Nexus in ministerial strategies and mandates.” In her report, she emphasized the need to shift from description of nexus to mainstreaming nexus directly in strategic

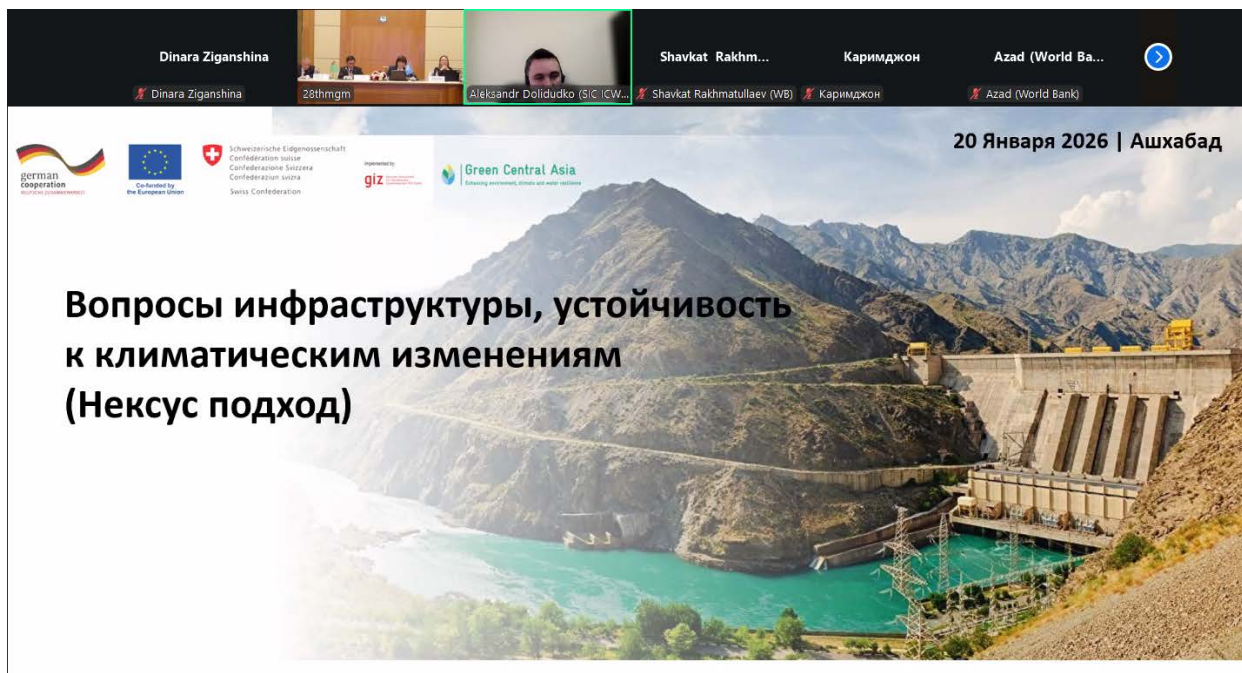
planning systems and activities of government agencies. She also highlighted SIC's work in this area. In addition, participants noted the contribution of the IKI project to fostering coordinated decision-making in water, energy, and land management while taking climate risks into account.



Participants discussed recommendations of the Regional Working Group on the mechanism of mutually beneficial water and energy cooperation, the matters related to strategic management, water modeling, decarbonization and connectivity, as well as achievements under the water and health nexus in Central Asia. Country representatives shared national experiences and explored opportunities for practical application of the approaches presented.

The second session focused on nature-based solutions. Discussions addressed the current situation and country priorities, practical experience in applying nature-based solutions and considered proposals for future regional initiatives and the work plan.

One session was devoted to dam and hydraulic infrastructure safety. During the session, Alexander Dolidudko, expert of SIC ICWC, presented preliminary results of an assessment of the condition and climate resilience of water infrastructure in the Syr Darya River Basin. The study is conducted in support of the Syr Darya River Basin Dialogue, with assistance from the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) under the Green Central Asia initiative.



Participants discussed national approaches to risk monitoring and management, challenges of infrastructure resilience to climate change, and international experience in ensuring dam safety and protecting population and ecosystems.

The final session addressed the sustainable development of small hydropower. Participants discussed the matters related to availability of water resources for hydropower, environmental aspects of small hydropower siting, approaches for environmental impact assessment, and perspectives for developing regional principles and a methodological framework for sustainable development of small hydropower. Participants proposed also to present the outcomes of this joint work at the Regional Environmental Summit to be held in Astana in April 2026.

At the end of the session, recommendations were formulated on key priority areas of the SPECA Working Group, including further development of the water–energy nexus, promotion of nature-based solutions, enhancement of dam safety, and support for the sustainable development of small hydropower. Further steps to strengthen regional cooperation were also identified.

Second Steering Committee Meeting of the National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management in Uzbekistan

On 12 February 2026, the 2nd Steering Committee meeting of the National Policy Dialogue (NPD) on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) was held in Tashkent.

The meeting was organized as part of the National Policy Dialogue on Water with the support of the UNECE Water Convention Secretariat and development partners. The meeting brought together representatives of relevant ministries and agencies of the Republic of Uzbekistan, international organizations, financial institutions, and the expert community.

Dinara Ziganshina, Zulfiya Yarullina, and Alexander Dolidudko participated on behalf of the SIC ICWC.

The agenda included three thematic sessions:

- Groundwater management and coordinated intersectoral approach;
- Environmental flow;
- Improved management of hydraulic structures in the Republic of Uzbekistan.



During the first session, participants discussed regulation of groundwater

in the context of the new Water Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the progress on ongoing reforms, and key challenges. Particular attention was paid to the need for integrated management of surface water and groundwater, as well as intersectoral coordination among water, agricultural, municipal, and geological sectors. Development partners, including GIZ, SDC, and the Geological Survey of Finland, presented their current and planned support activities.

The second session focused on environmental flow. Participants reviewed international and regional approaches to its assessment and monitoring, including experiences of Kazakhstan and the European Union, as well as proposals on methodology for Uzbekistan.

Zulfiya Yarullina, chief specialist of SIC ICWC, made a presentation on “Approaches and Challenges in Developing an Environmental Flow Methodology for Uzbekistan.” In the presentation Ms. Yarullina highlighted key historical treaties, including the 1992 Almaty Agreement and the Master Plans for Integrated Water Use and Protection in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya river basins. She also presented the current situation in water allocation and outlined major uncertainties that should be considered when developing a methodology for assessment of sanitary and environmental flows and water quotas.



All experts emphasized the importance of introducing environmental flow standards to conserve aquatic ecosystems, ensure the sustainability of river basins, and support the implementation of the new water legislation.

The third session focused on legal and institutional framework for

hydraulic structure safety, improvement of operation and supervision, capacity building and emergency preparedness.

Alexander Dolidudko, leading expert of SIC ICWC, presented preliminary results of an ongoing study assessing the condition and climate resilience of water infrastructure in the Syr Darya basin. The study is conducted to support the Syr Darya River Basin Dialogue with the assistance of the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) under the Green Central Asia initiative.

Representatives of national authorities, international organizations, and financial institutions — including the World Bank and the Finnish Water Forum — presented potential areas for technical and investment support.

Concluding the meeting, participants reaffirmed the importance of continuing the National Policy Dialogue as a key platform for coordinating reforms, exchanging experience, and developing consensus-based solutions for implementing the new Water Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Further steps were outlined to advance the methodological framework for groundwater management, environmental flow and hydraulic structure safety.

Workshop “Regional Center of Excellence on Nexus Approach in Central Asia: from Concept to Partnership»

On 17 February 2026, a workshop “Regional Center of Excellence on Nexus Approach in Central Asia: from Concept to Partnership” was held in Tashkent. The event was organized by SIC ICWC within the framework of the International Climate Initiative (IKI) project “Regional Mechanisms for a Low-Carbon and Climate-Resilient Transformation of the Energy-Water-Land Nexus in Central Asia.” The workshop was held under the auspices of the Expert Platform on Water Security, Sustainable Development and Future Studies. The Platform’s Coordinator, S.R. Ibatullin, provided overall leadership and substantive guidance to the workshop.

The event brought together experts in water, energy, agriculture, and ecology from Central Asian countries, representatives of research and analytical centers, project partners, and young researchers.



Today, Central Asia faces increasing impacts of climate change, growing economic and population demands, and mounting pressure on natural resources. These processes are interconnected and require an integrated management approach. The nexus approach, which considers water, energy, and land as a single system, enables the development of more coherent and sustainable solutions that take into account environmental, social, and economic aspects of development.

The discussions focused on the idea of establishing a sustainable partnership based on the Expert Platform on Water Security, Sustainable Development and Future Studies and the ICWC Regional Training Center, aimed to contribute to scientific evidence-based decision-making on water, energy, and land nexus.

During the first session of the workshop, Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC, briefed participants on the IKI project and the results of analytical work. Particular attention was paid to presentation of the publication “Water Heritage of Central Asia: Its Value for Present and Future Generations.” The publication views water heritage not only as evidence of the past but also as a source of practical knowledge that can contribute to more sustainable development models in the future.

SIC’s experts presented results of the research on the ecosystems of the Amu Darya River basin, followed by a screening of the film “From the Pamir Heights to the Amu Darya Lower Reaches” (Z. Yarullina). They also presented work on assessing infrastructure resilience to climate change (A. Dolidudko) and on developing a system for assessing and monitoring water security within the administrative territories of the Aral Sea basin (Sh. Muminov).



The second part of the workshop focused on discussing the future partnership and its key thematic areas, presented by Expert Platform's Coordinator S.R. Ibatullin. Experts agreed that establishing such a partnership is both timely and in demand. It was emphasized that the Platform should promote the consolidation of efforts by scientists and practitioners to address complex regional challenges, particularly adaptation to new climatic conditions. Participants underlined that the nexus approach requires the integration of expertise from various fields — from water and energy to agriculture and environment. They also noted that communication between research institutions and experts in the region remains insufficient.



Engagement of youth and educational institutions was another important topic of discussion. Representatives of some regional universities participated in

the workshop. The President of the Kazakh-German University, V. Rommel, presented an initiative on the Nexus institute. It was emphasized that the development of a new generation of experts should begin at the university level and be accompanied by practical research activities. Participants also stressed the need to create incentives for the professional growth of young experts and for capacity building. At the same time, it was highlighted that within the framework of the partnership it is important not to duplicate efforts but to build complementary cooperation, combining the scientific, educational, and analytical potential of existing institutions.

The workshop was therefore a crucial step, moving from conceptual discussion to the creation of practical mechanisms for partnership, and laying the groundwork for future collaboration.



World Water Council Board of Governors Meeting

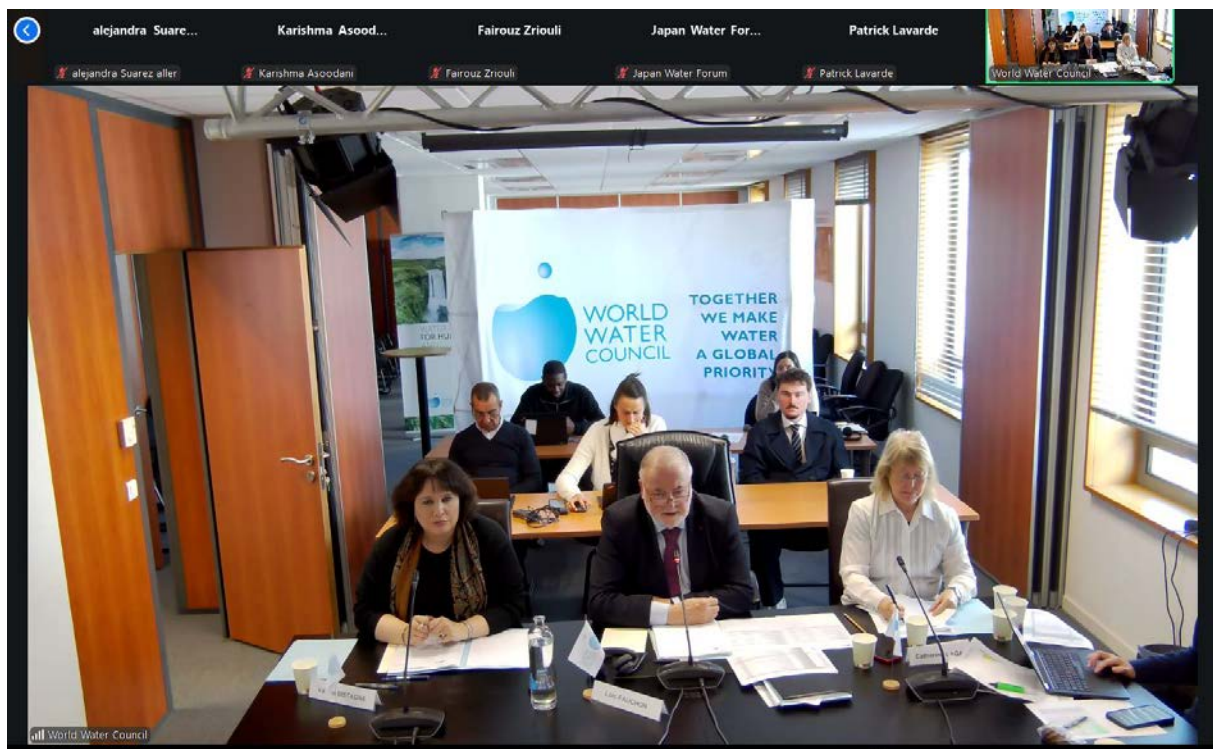
The World Water Council (WWC) convened its 92nd Board of Governors meeting in a virtual format on 24 February 2026.

The meeting focused on the agenda and progress updates regarding the 11th World Water Forum, scheduled for March 21–25, 2027 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The upcoming Forum will be held under the theme: "Action for a Better Tomorrow."

The Forum organizers announced the 2nd Stakeholder Consultation meeting, which will take place on April 8–9, 2026 in Jeddah, alongside Saudi

Water Week. The meeting aims to refine the political, thematic, and regional processes of the Forum, strengthen coordination between them, and discuss expected outcomes. The organizers called upon the Board and all WWC members to take an active part in the meeting to shape a substantive and effective agenda for the Forum.

The meeting was attended by WWC Board members from SIC ICWC: D. Ziganshina and O. Usmanova. The next Board meeting will be held in person in Saudi Arabia on the eve of the Second Stakeholder Consultation meeting.



Online seminar “Advancing Water Cooperation through Global and Regional Platforms: Building Momentum towards the UN Water Conference”

On February 27, an online seminar "Advancing Water Cooperation through Global and Regional Platforms: Building Momentum towards the UN Water Conference" brought together members of the Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan and the Women in Water Diplomacy Network in the South Caucasus.

The event was held under the auspices of the OSCE ExB project "Women, Water Management, and Conflict Prevention – Phase III." This initiative aims to contribute to more inclusive water governance and to strengthen the capacity of women water professionals to take leading roles in transboundary water cooperation.

The seminar centered on elevating women's leadership in transboundary water diplomacy and aligning regional priorities with the United Nations agenda - specifically the "Water for Cooperation" interactive dialogue of the 2026 UN Water Conference. Participants explored how the practical insights from Central Asia and the South Caucasus - two regions defined by high transboundary interdependence - can be formally integrated into global discourse to shape international water policy.

Particular attention was paid to the upcoming Dushanbe Water Conference recognized as a critical regional milestone leading up to the 2026 global water event.

Sogol Jafarzadeh of the UN University Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH) outlined the strategic roadmap for both the Dushanbe and UN Water Conferences.

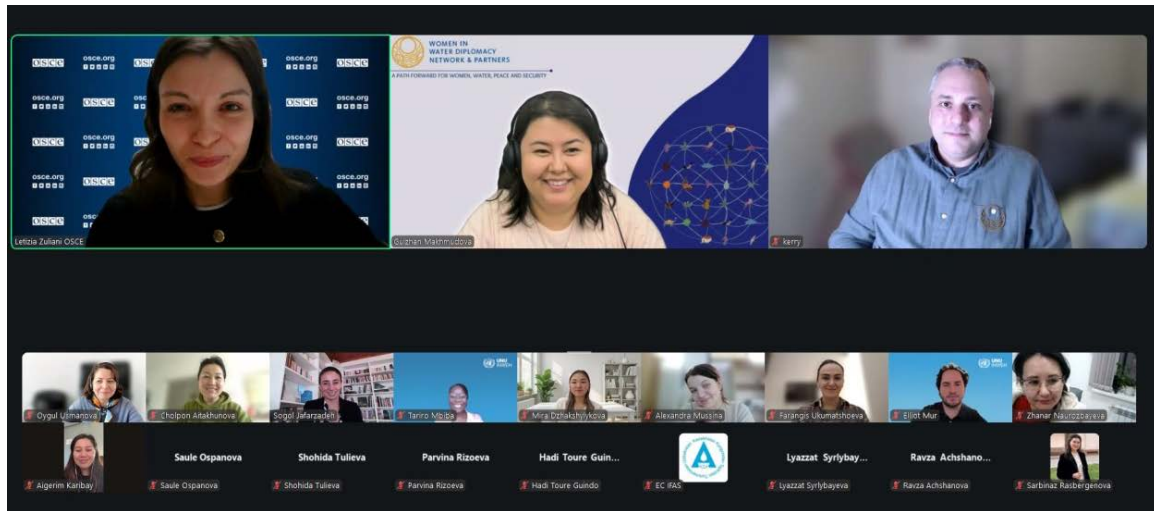
Other distinguished speakers included:

- Zulfiya Suleimenova, Ambassador-at-large of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, who presented the nation's global initiatives ahead of the UN Conference.
- Yolanda Lopez, representing the Women in Water Diplomacy Network, who provided a briefing on the outcomes of the High-Level Preparatory Meeting in Dakar.

During the open dialogue - the first in a series of preparatory sessions for 2026 - Oygul Usmanova, SIC ICWC and member of the Women in Water Management Network in Central Asia and Afghanistan, advocated for the promotion of science diplomacy, including through the lens of the water-energy-land nexus, at both regional and global levels.

The participants reached a consensus that increasing women's expert participation is not a mere formality, but a fundamental requirement for enhancing the quality of negotiations and ensuring the long-term sustainability of water-related decisions.

Ultimately, the seminar served as a practical catalyst for forging a unified regional position, poised to influence global processes on water diplomacy and broader sustainable development agenda.



Preliminary Findings on the Progress of Uzbekistan towards Achieving SDG6

On 12 March 2026, a preparatory workshop on a thematic study aimed at accelerating Uzbekistan's progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6) was held in the UNDP conference hall, Tashkent. The event brought together the Deputy Minister of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, as well as representatives of relevant ministries and agencies.

Each year, UN-Water selects three countries that have demonstrated significant progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals to be highlighted through case studies. In 2026, the selected countries are China, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Uzbekistan.



The main objective of the workshop in Tashkent was to discuss the preliminary findings and key messages of the study focusing on Uzbekistan. The thematic study serves as an important recognition of the progress the country has made toward achieving SDG 6. In particular, the study highlighted a significant reduction in water stress (SDG indicator 6.4.2), which decreased from 169% in 2018 to 122% in 2022. Total water withdrawal has also shown a steady decline, from 58,918 mcm in 2017 to 45,281 mcm in 2024. Participants also noted that this progress has been driven by several key factors, including substantial government investments (including in concreting canal), promotion of public–private partnerships, and financial support mechanisms. These include preferential loans provided through Agrobank (at interest rates of 10–14% for up to five years), as well as subsidies supporting the adoption of water-saving technologies.

The thematic study aims to encourage further action toward achieving SDG 6 in Uzbekistan and to share the country’s experience with other nations. Uzbekistan’s approach — combining financial instruments with capacity-building measures — may serve as a valuable example for countries facing water scarcity and managing closed drainage basins.

The final version of the study on Uzbekistan will be launched at the annual Special Event on SDG 6, to be held in July as part of the UN High-Level Political Forum.

International Forum “Tashkent Water Week-2026”

On 25-26 March 2026, the international forum “Tashkent Water Week-2026” was held in Tashkent.

The theme of the Forum was “Technologies and Innovations in Water Resources Management: Central Asia and the Global Water Cycle.”

The main goal of the Forum is to promote reforms in the water sector, develop sustainable strategies, and strengthen partnerships between the private sector, the government, and international institutions.

The Forum covered four key topics:

1. Sustainable irrigation and agriculture.
2. Hydropower and resource balance.
3. Innovation and technology.

4. Science, education, and workforce development.

The Forum's program included 16 thematic sessions featuring approximately 80 speakers and more than 1,200 delegates from 19 countries, including Austria, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Kazakhstan, China, the Netherlands, the UAE, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, France, Switzerland, and other countries.

Key takeaways and topics from the 2026 Forum:

- Addressing Water Scarcity: Focus on the Critical State of Water Resources in Central Asia and Transboundary Cooperation.
- Digitalization and Modernization: Measures have been approved to automate hydroschemes and implement technologies aimed at saving up to 3.5 billion cubic meters of water annually.
- International Participation: The Forum brought together experts, relevant ministries, and international organizations to discuss climate change adaptation.
- Transboundary waters: The position on issues related to transboundary water use in the context of regional projects was discussed.

Tashkent Water Week-2026 served as a platform for developing a unified water strategy for the region, bringing together government agencies and international experts.

Women Water Week in Uzbekistan: From Theory to Practice – Strengthening Women's Role in the Water Sector

On 25-26 March, Tashkent hosted the “Women Water Week: from Theory to Practice” bringing together around 70 representatives of the country's water sector, including experts from basin irrigation system authorities, government agencies, research institutions, and international organizations.

The event was organized with the support of the Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan and international partners, including IWMI, SDC, ADB, UNDP, OSCE, as well as SIC ICWC (within the framework of the International Climate Initiative (IKI) project “Regional mechanisms for a low-carbon and climate-resilient transformation of the energy-water-land nexus



In the afternoon, thematic sessions were held, during which representatives of SIC ICWC — Dinara Ziganshina and Zulfiya Yarullina — presented the Gender Concept for the Water Sector of Uzbekistan for 2025–2030 and the new Water Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The second day of the program focused on capacity building and leadership skills development. Sessions featured successful women professionals from the water sector and international organizations, who shared their experiences of career growth, professional challenges, and achievements. These contributions became an important source of inspiration and motivation for participants aspiring to further develop and actively engage in the water sector.

Oygul Usmanova (SIC ICWC) spoke on behalf of the “Women in Water Management in Central Asia and Afghanistan” network and the Expert Platform on Water Security, Sustainable Development and Future Studies developed

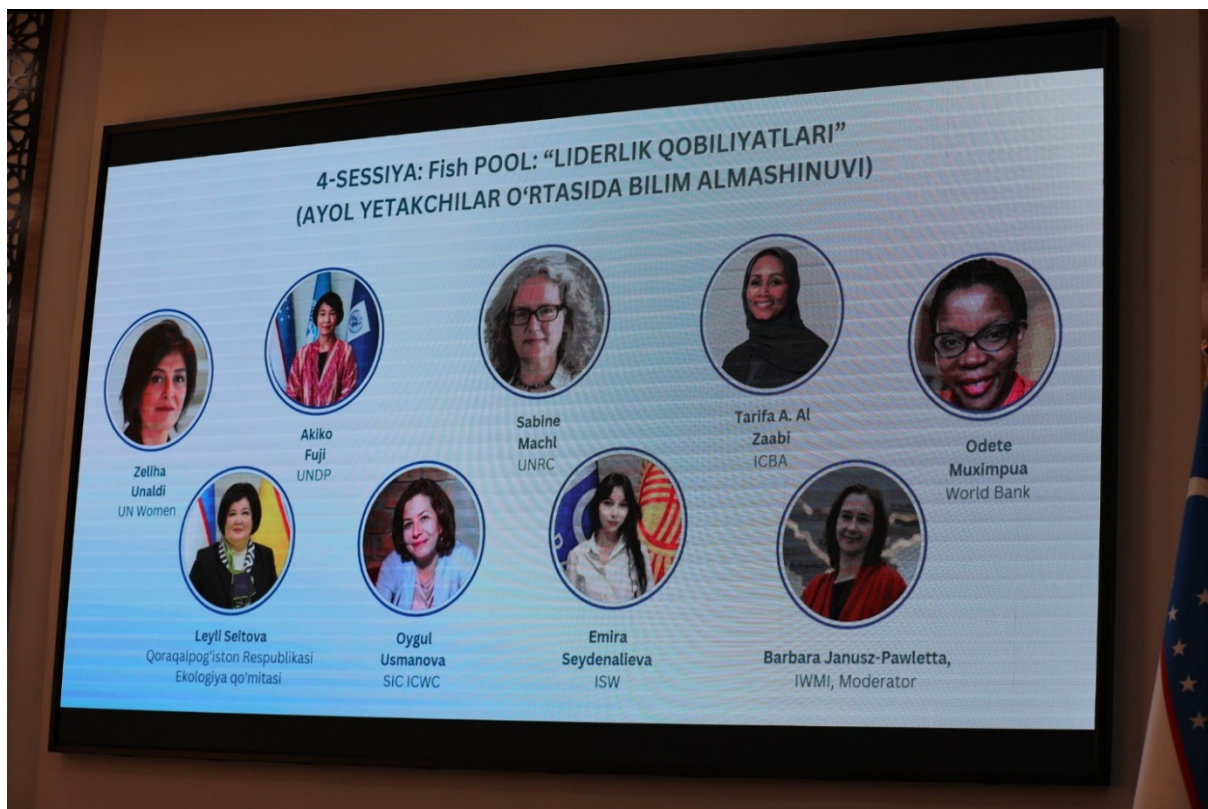
under SIC ICWC, highlighting ongoing efforts to engage women and youth in the platform's activities.



The sessions generated significant interest, with participants actively engaging in discussions, asking questions, and sharing their experiences to foster an open and productive dialogue. Attendees also established new professional connections and discussed opportunities for future collaboration.

Women Water Week concluded with a closing ceremony where participants received certificates for their active involvement. Special recognition was given to women who have made outstanding contributions to the development of Uzbekistan's water sector.

The event marked a major milestone in advancing gender equality, expanding opportunities for women, and strengthening their roles as experts in water management.



Roundtable Discussion on Water Security in Central Asia: Building Resilience amidst Climate Change

On 14 April 2026, the International Institute for Central Asia in Tashkent (IICA) hosted a roundtable titled “Water Security in Central Asia: Building Resilience amidst Climate Change” jointly with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) ahead of the Summit of the Heads of State, scheduled for 22 April 2026 in Astana.

The aim of the event was to develop coordinated expert approaches and practical recommendations on ensuring water security in Central Asia, as well as addressing the impacts of climate change, which are progressing faster. The event brought together representatives of leading think tanks and research institutions, relevant ministries and agencies from Central Asia and Afghanistan.



Work was focused on three key areas:

During the session “Priorities of regional cooperation on water in the context of climate change”, participants discussed such priority issues as rational and sound water use, strengthening of institutional coordination, development of joint monitoring and data exchange, as well as integrated adaptation and mitigation strategies to enhance resilience in the region.



The session “IFAS as a mechanism of regional cooperation for stability and resilience in Central Asia” addressed the IFAS’ role as a key institutional

mechanism of regional cooperation. The discussion was focused on the improvement of institutional and legal frameworks of the Fund, the development of the systems of monitoring and data exchange, and the more effective implementation of regional programs. Particular attention was paid to the discussion of the outcomes of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in IFAS in 2024-2026 and to priorities of the chairmanship to be taken by Uzbekistan in the next 3 years.

As part of the session "Cooperation between the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan for water security in the region", participants had detailed discussions on approaches applied to achieve rational water use, taking into account the situation in Afghanistan, and the matters related to environmental responsibility in transboundary hydrotechnical projects.

National Dialogue on Combating Drought – Uzbekistan

On April 20, 2026, the National Dialogue on Drought Mitigation was held at the Training Center of the Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (SIC ICWC). The event brought together leading experts and government officials to translate analytical findings into concrete investment decisions and sustainable development programs.



The meeting was organized by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and the SIC ICWC, with support from the World Bank.

The dialogue was held as part of the Central Asian Water and Energy Program (CAWEP). A key component of this program is the “Drought Risk and Resilience Assessment” (DRRA), which covers five countries in the region, with particular focus on the transboundary basins of the Amu Darya, Syr Darya, and Chu–Talas rivers. The project is implemented with financial support from a coalition of international donors, including the World Bank, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and Switzerland.

During the opening session, the heads of the partner organizations—B. Janusz-Pawletta (Director of IWMI), D. Ziganshina (Director of SIC ICWC), and E. Strikeleva (World Bank representative)—emphasized the importance of shifting from reactive measures to long-term strategic planning. They noted that the National Dialogue format facilitates a unified approach, linking theoretical risk assessments with practical investments in infrastructure and coordinated

government action.

Participants were presented with the results of a comprehensive study covering three key areas in the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- Economic impact: Analysis of the effects of drought on key economic sectors and natural ecosystems.
- Crisis preparedness: Assessment of existing rapid response mechanisms.
- Institutional framework: Review of laws, regulations, and government programs to evaluate their effectiveness in the context of climate change.



The final part of the event was conducted in the form of working group discussions, where representatives of relevant ministries, agencies, and research institutions identified priority measures to mitigate the impacts of drought. These included the implementation of early warning and digital monitoring systems, improving irrigation efficiency and water supply reliability, promoting climate-resilient agriculture, developing climate risk insurance and financial support mechanisms, and restoring degraded lands and ecosystems.



The proposals developed during the dialogue will serve as a foundation for national action plans and inform the development of future investment projects in Uzbekistan’s water management and agricultural sectors.

Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region: Accelerating SDGs Progress and Strengthening Regional Cooperation

On 21–22 April, the tenth session of the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region was held in the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The Forum brought together representatives of member States, international organizations, academia, the private sector, and civil society to review progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Held under the overarching theme “Transforming Together: Innovative and Equitable Actions for the SDGs”, the event served as a key regional platform for exchanging experience, assessing achievements and challenges, and identifying practical solutions to accelerate progress in the context of ongoing global crises.



The Forum featured thematic round tables on key SDGs, including SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation. This round table also served as a regional preparatory event for the 2026 UN Water Conference, focusing on priorities, best practices, and next steps toward sustainable water management.

Participants noted that, despite significant regional progress, including high levels of access to safely managed drinking water and well-established transboundary cooperation mechanisms, serious challenges remain. These include unequal access to water supply and sanitation, water pollution, ecosystem degradation, and the growing impacts of climate change, such as droughts and floods.

During the round table, Oygul Usmanova presented on behalf of SIC ICWC experience of Central Asian countries in transboundary water cooperation. She highlighted that effective cooperation is underpinned by a combination of legal and institutional frameworks, regular intergovernmental and expert dialogue, and strong analytical and information support. Particular emphasis was placed on the water, energy, food, and ecosystems nexus approach and its operationalization.



The panel discussion “Beyond GDP” focused on rethinking how progress is measured. Participants discussed the limitations of gross domestic product as a sole indicator of development and emphasized the need for more comprehensive metrics that capture quality of life, social equity, and environmental sustainability. Special attention was paid to integrating such indicators into public decision-making and policy development processes.

At the conclusion of the Forum, participants reaffirmed the importance of strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing youth engagement, advancing innovative tools, and promoting knowledge exchange to accelerate progress toward the SDGs. Particular emphasis was placed on moving from dialogue to implementation of concrete solutions capable of ensuring sustainable and inclusive development across the UNECE region.

EDB Seminar on Water and Energy Cooperation in Central Asia

On 21 April 2026, the seminar Sustainable Management of Central Asia's Water and Energy Complex: Mechanisms for Joint Action was held in Astana, Kazakhstan. The event organized by the Eurasian Development Bank (EDB) was aimed to support the development of harmonized approaches among government agencies of Central Asian countries for managing the water and energy complex with account of transboundary linkages, climate risks, existing national programs, and the capacities of multilateral development banks.

Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC, participated in the seminar and delivered a presentation titled Information Systems and Analytics to Support Sustainable Solutions and Cooperation among Central Asian Countries. In her presentation, she shared SIC ICWC's experience in developing regional information systems, as well as analytical tools and models that support interstate cooperation and decision-making in water and energy.



Particular emphasis was placed on the practical format of the event. The workshop organized in line with high professional standards combined expert presentations, panel discussions, and interactive sessions to jointly identify

challenges, discuss coordination mechanisms, and develop practical recommendations. This format enabled a substantive and focused exchange of views among representatives of government agencies, international organizations, financial institutions, and the research and analytical community.

The analytical materials prepared by EDB for the seminar worth special mention. These materials provided a strong foundation for discussions, helped structure professional dialogue on key challenges and prospects for sustainable water and energy management, and supported a more in-depth examination of existing risks, scenarios, and mechanisms for joint action.

The launch of the EDB *Digital Academy* also deserves recognition as a timely initiative aimed at enhancing professional knowledge, strengthening expert capacity, and promoting modern approaches to training specialists in water, energy, economics, and sustainable development.

Training in Gender Equality for Women Water Leaders at JSC “Uzsuvta’minot”

On 28 April, a Training of Trainers (ToT) session on gender equality was held at the headquarters of JSC “Uzsuvta’minot” for women managers. The event was organized as part of the WASH project implemented by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) with support from the World Bank

Background: The project “Uzbekistan’s Water Supply and Sanitation Governance” is implemented by IWMI and aims to enhance the institutional capacity of JSC “Uzsuvta’minot”. Its overall objective is to improve the coverage, quality, and efficiency of water supply and sanitation (WSS) services through innovative approaches and strengthened accountability mechanisms. Key areas of the project include: Citizen engagement: development of a methodology to assess customer satisfaction with water supply and sanitation services; Gender equality: preparation of action plans to promote gender equality and inclusivity in the WSS sector; GIS training and implementation: capacity building on geographic information systems and remote sensing tools for planning, monitoring, and evaluation in the sector; Reporting: support for the preparation of the annual national sector status report to ensure transparency and evidence-based planning.

The project implementation period is from October 2025 to December 2026. The Republic of Karakalpakstan and Samarkand and Syrdarya provinces

have been selected as pilot areas. The initiative directly contributes to Uzbekistan's progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 6.



More than 50 female professionals from the central office and regional water supply enterprises participated in the training. The session was held in a hybrid format: participants from Tashkent city and Tashkent province attended in person, while specialists from regional offices joined online. The participants included HRs, as well as specialists from laboratories, economic analysis units, accounting, environmental protection, and other technical and administrative fields.

The event was opened by Nodir Khojaev, Deputy Chairman of the JSC “Uzsuvta’minot”’s Board, who emphasized the importance of strengthening the role of women in the water supply and water management sector. Barbara Janusz-Pawletta, Director of IWMI also delivered a welcome address, highlighting the importance of applying a gender-sensitive approach in water projects.

A representative of the Committee on Family and Women of the Republic of Uzbekistan also took part in the event. She spoke about ongoing national measures and opportunities to support women, as well as government policies aimed at ensuring gender equality and expanding women’s participation in socioeconomic and administrative spheres. The training session featured presentations by Iskandar Abdullaev, Senior Researcher at IWMI; Kamila Zukhridinova, IWMI Gender Specialist; and Suriya Turaeva, Gender Project Consultant. They presented the project’s preliminary findings and outlined future directions for implementation.



Particular attention was paid to gender analysis in the water supply sector. Nilufar Sapaeva, Information Service and Gender Officer, presented the results of her research on gender mainstreaming within the JSC “Uzsuvta’minot” system. Her presentation highlighted women’s participation in management processes, as well as opportunities for strengthening their professional capacity and career development.

Gulnoza Khamdamova, a guest expert from SIC ICWC, also spoke at the event. She shared practical experience in the field of water management and presented key regulatory and legal documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including the updated Water Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the 2025–2030 Gender Concept of the Water Sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The training was conducted in an interactive format and included role-playing exercises, group discussions, and practical exercises aimed at developing leadership skills, raising awareness of gender issues, and strengthening the capacity of women professionals in the water supply sector.

At the conclusion, all participants were awarded certificates confirming their participation in the training, successful completion of the program, and contribution to advancing gender equality.



The organizers noted that the training session marked an important step toward establishing a sustainable platform for promoting gender equality within the JSC “Uzsuvta’minot” system. Participants emphasized the high practical value of the event, its interactive format, and relevance of the topics discussed. Such training sessions are expected to strengthen women’s professional capacity, expand their participation in management processes, and further promote an inclusive approach in Uzbekistan’s water sector.

Training and Education

SIC ICWC Teaches Value of Water Using a Game-Based Approach at Pre-school Level

Water is a finite natural resource without which life on Earth would be impossible. Although water covers most of our planet, less than 3% is suitable for drinking in the form of fresh water, which is rapidly declining due to climate change and unsustainable consumption.



Modern children often perceive water as an unlimited resource — something that simply flows from the tap. Therefore, it is essential to begin teaching children about the value of water from an early age, laying the foundation for environmental awareness.

Preschool age (3–7 years) is a critical period for the formation of habits and values. At this stage, children easily develop empathy toward nature — fish, plants, and animals — especially when they understand that all living things depend on water to survive.

Habits formed in early childhood — such as turning off the tap while brushing teeth and avoiding water wastage — often last a lifetime. It is far more effective to cultivate responsible behavior in children than to change established habits in adulthood.

To address this, SIC ICWC has developed and launched interactive classes on how to save water for preschoolers.



The first class took place on February 11, 2026, at Kindergarten No. 113 in Tashkent. The session was led by Olga Borovkova. During the class, children learned about the journey water takes before it reaches their homes — including purification, pumping, and transportation — and why this complex work deserves respect.

SIC ICWC Held Open Lesson “Secrets of Clean Water” for Elementary School Children

On 23 February 2026, SIC ICWC held a special open lesson titled “Secrets of Clean Water” for first-grade schoolchildren at school No. 279 in Tashkent. Olga Borovkova conducted the lesson.

Through games and interactive activities, the youngest schoolchildren learned why water is one of the planet's most precious treasures and got known how to care the natural environment. At the end of the lesson, the children took a symbolic oath as 'Water Guardians', promising to look after water and the environment.

During the lesson, schoolchildren:

- find out why water purification is a complex and essential process;
- learned the “closed tap rule” and understood through visual examples how much water is wasted, for example, while brushing teeth;
- gained an understanding of water’s vital role in sustaining life on Earth;
- watched an educational film about the ecosystem of their native region.

The event marked an important first step in fostering environmental awareness among young learners and developing practical habits for the responsible attitude to natural resources.



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