

Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia	BULLETIN № 1 (76)	March 2018
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JOINT STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC SOORANBAY ZHEENBEKOV AND PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN EMOMALI RAKHMON

Upon invitation of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbay Zheenbekov made a state visit to the Republic of Tajikistan on February 1-2, 2018.

In a friendly spirit, the Presidents of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan (hereinafter, the Parties) have discussed the state of and prospects for development of bilateral relations, as well as pressing regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The Parties, reaffirming their commitment to friendship, good neighborliness, mutual respect, state sovereignty, territorial integrity, equality, and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs,

and noting with satisfaction that during 25 years of diplomatic relations, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan have been developing step by step political, trade and economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation and other mutual interactions, guided by provisions of the Agreement of July 12, 1996 on basic principles of interstate relations between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan and Agreement of May 26, 2004 on good-neighborly relations between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan,

striving for further strengthening of bilateral partnership which would serve the interests of both states

and noting the importance of documents signed during the visit, declare the following:

1. The Parties have underlined that further strengthening of good neighborliness between the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan serves national interests of both states, ensuring religious security and stability in the Central Asian region.
2. The Parties have agreed to continue joint efforts on further development of mutually beneficial cooperation in all key areas to bring it to a new level.
3. The Parties have underscored the need for maintaining close contacts at the high and highest levels, as well as for improving interparliamentary, intergovernmental, and inter-agency mechanisms of cooperation.
4. The Parties have noted their will to contribute to strengthening peace and stability, enhancing trust and mutual understanding on regional and global scales.
5. The Parties intend to strengthen and deepen cooperation in foreign policy, military and technical areas to fight against international terrorism, extremism, illegal drug trade, transnational organized crime, and other challenges and threats to security.

They have confirmed the importance to continue improving the contractual legal framework and develop efficient cooperation in these areas to build security, protect sovereignty and territorial integrity of two states.

6. In this context, the Parties have positively assessed the organization of the International Conference “Islam in the Modern Circular State” in Bishkek in 2017, as well as the International High-Level Conference “Counteraction to Terrorism and Radicalism” in Dushanbe in 2018.

7. The Parties have underlined the importance of efficient and sustainable institutional mechanisms, such as the Interstate Coordination Council, Council of Foreign Ministers, as well as the Kyrgyz-Tajik Intergovernmental Commissions for Comprehensive Addressing of Bilateral Issues and for Delimitation and Demarcation of the State border.

8. The Parties have underlined the importance of revitalizing the work of the Kyrgyz-Tajik Intergovernmental Commission on Delimitation and Demarcation of the state border in the spirit of constructive cooperation, mutual understanding and trust.

9. The Parties have stressed the need to improve implementation of decisions made by the Intergovernmental Commission for Comprehensive Addressing of Bilateral Issues to bring bilateral trade and economic cooperation to a brand new level.

10. The Parties have underscored the need for active cooperation and continuous engagement of ministries and agencies in trade and economy in order to ensure stable growth of bilateral trade, its diversification, and development of long-term economic cooperation.

11. The Parties would prioritize cross-border cooperation between the two states as well as take measures to create favorable conditions for mutual trips and stays of the Kyrgyz citizens in the Republic of Tajikistan and vice versa.

12. The Parties have agreed to continue expanding and strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation in trade and economy and science and technologies to bring industrial and scientific-technical cooperation to a new level and increase goods turnover.

13. The Parties have confirmed existing favorable conditions to further increase cooperation in transport, energy, industry, and agriculture and avoid and prevent emergency situations. In this context, the Parties have underlined the need to further promote bilateral contacts.

14. The Parties have mentioned that mutual participation in various projects to establish international transport corridors would enable strengthening and expansion of economic cooperation and development of transport communications of both states.

15. The Heads of State have underlined the importance of creating conditions for expansion and development of bilateral cooperation in air transport.

16. The Parties have underscored the importance of continuing cooperation and consultations on water and energy issues of mutual interest.

17. The Parties have spoken in favor of integrated and rational use of water and

energy resources in Central Asia and underlined the importance of developing sustainable mechanisms for mutually beneficial cooperation in this area.

18. The Parties have reaffirmed their commitments to the regional CASA-1000 project and agreed to actively interact for its speeded implementation.

19. The Parties have paid a particular attention to cultural and humanitarian cooperation, having underlined the importance of engagement between education entities, organizations and cultural and arts communities, public organizations and mass media.

20. The Parties have underlined the importance of agreements reached to host the Days of Culture of the Kyrgyz Republic in Tajikistan and Days of Culture of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Kyrgyz Republic.

21. The Parties have underlined the need to create favorable conditions on parity basis for provision with textbooks in mother tongues for Kyrgyz-language schools in the Republic of Tajikistan and Tajik-language schools in the Kyrgyz Republic.

22. The Tajik party have positively assessed the World Nomad Games held regularly in the Kyrgyz Republic as they contribute to intercultural dialogue.

23. The Heads of State, having underlined their commitments to generally recognized principles and norms of the International Law, have spoken in favor of further close interaction and mutual support under UN, OSCE, CIS, SCO, CSTO, and other international and regional organizations of multilateral interactions, to which the Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Tajikistan are parties.

24. The Parties have expressed mutual desire to interact for implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution, which proclaims the decade 2018-2028 as the “International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development”, initiated by the Republic of Tajikistan to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

25. The Parties, taking into account urgency and importance of addressing the problems related to uranium tailing sites in Central Asia, which are also located in the Kyrgyz Republic and Republic of Tajikistan, have stressed the need for promotion of the Resolution at the 73rd UN General Assembly, which calls for further international support in resolution of the uranium heritage in Central Asia.

26. The Parties have agreed on maintaining constant liaison at the highest level and expressed confidence that the results of the official visit of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Republic of Tajikistan would give a substantial momentum to further strengthening and development of friendly and good neighborly relations to the benefit of two fraternal nations.

The President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbay Zheenbekov has expressed gratitude to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan and the people of Tajikistan for warm welcome and hospitality and invited the leader of the country to the Kyrgyz Republic at the time of his convenience. The dates of the visit would be negotiated through diplomatic channels.

Sooronbay Zheenbekov
President
Kyrgyz Republic

Emomali Rakhmon
President
Republic of Tajikistan

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN EMOMALI RAKHMOM AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN SHAVKAT MIRZIYOYEV ON STRENGTHENING FRIENDSHIP AND NEIGHBORLINESS

On March 9-10, 2018, at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid a state visit to the Republic of Tajikistan.

During the fruitful talks held in an open, friendly and constructive atmosphere, the Heads of State discussed in detail key issues of the current state of relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, prospects for further expanding and deepening of bilateral multifaceted cooperation in the political, trade and economic, transport and communication, culture and humanitarian and other fields, as well as current regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The Heads of State have underlined with satisfaction a high level inter-state dialogue, achieved in recent years, as well as credible positive dynamics of the development of cooperation between the two countries, and

guided by the centuries-old historical and cultural communality of the peoples of the two countries, based on the firm principles of friendship, good neighborliness and mutual respect,

expressing their belief that constructive and mutually beneficial cooperation between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan meets the long-term interests of peoples of the two countries, which is also a key factor in ensuring peace, stability, security and sustainable development throughout the vast region of the Central Asia,

reaffirming adherence to the universally recognized principles and norms of international law, as well as the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, including the principles of mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit,

striving for further expanding and deepening of Tajik-Uzbek relations, ensuring the timely and full implementation of the reached agreements,

state the following:

1. The Heads of State, being deeply aware of their high responsibility for maintaining and strengthening peace and stability, ensuring development and prosperity in the whole region, also being guided by the provisions of the Treaty on Eternal Friendship between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan

dated 15 June 2000, confirm their determination to further develop and strengthen the relations of traditional friendship, neighborliness and cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The two leaders have expressed their confidence that the Agreement between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan on certain parts of the Tajik-Uzbek State border signed during the visit will serve for these purposes.

The Heads of State have stressed the importance of transforming the State border between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan into a border of friendship, good neighborliness and cooperation that meets the vital interests of the two brotherly people.

2. The Parties, noting the significance of constructive political dialogue for the progressive expansion of relations between the two states, have supported the further development of contacts at the highest, higher and other levels.

Aimed at further development of the legal framework for long-term cooperation and overall implementation of the existing huge potential in all spheres of cooperation, the Presidents have agreed to develop a Treaty on Strategic Partnership between the two states in the nearest future.

3. The President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon has expressed his support for the large-scale reforms carried out by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Uzbekistan, which are aimed at strengthening the country's potential, developing the national economy, improving wellbeing of the people, and strengthening the international prestige of the country.

The leadership of the Republic of Tajikistan has expressed its support for the initiatives of the Republic of Uzbekistan to intensify regional cooperation, in particular, to organize a consultative meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia on a regular basis.

4. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoev has expressed his support to the efforts of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon on ensuring social-economic development of Tajikistan and strengthening regional security.

The leadership of Uzbekistan has expressed its support to Tajikistan's initiative on the "International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development" 2018-2028.

5. The Presidents have stressed on the strategic character of further expansion of the mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Parties have noted with satisfaction credible positive dynamics in mutual trade cooperation and stressed the presence of significant potential for diversification of nomenclature of bilateral goods turnover and increase of its volume up to \$ US 500 million in near future.

In this regard, the Parties have emphasized the importance of further expansion

of mutual trade nomenclature. The Parties have noted that there is a great potential for developing industrial cooperation, establishing joint ventures and trading houses, active developing the infrastructure for foreign trade and mechanisms for export and import operations, as well as conducting business-forums and national exhibitions of industrial products on mutual basis.

The Parties would take joint efforts to attract and encourage investments to the economy of both countries. In this context, the Presidents welcome signing of Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on encouragement and mutual protection of investments.

The Parties have noted the successful conduction of national exhibitions and business forums in Dushanbe and Tashkent in 2017, which resulted in expansion of contacts between the business circles and signing of huge set of trade agreements and contracts.

An exhibition entitled “Made in Uzbekistan” and the Joint Tajik-Uzbek Business-Forum organized in the framework of the high-level visit in Dushanbe were highly appreciated.

Heads of two states have positively valued the results of the 5th meeting of Inter-Governmental Commission on trade and economic cooperation, conducted on 10 January 2018 in Dushanbe, and underlined the necessity of further strengthening its role as an effective mechanism for resolving a set of issues related to the development of trade and economic and culture and humanitarian cooperation, as well as for defining new perspective directions of interaction.

The Parties have noted the need for expanding and deepening of the relations between two countries’ regions in trade and economic, science and technical, as well as culture and humanitarian spheres within the framework of Agreement between the Republic of Uzbekistan the Republic of Tajikistan on interregional cooperation, signed during the visit.

6. The Heads of State, paying a particular attention to comprehensive implementation of common transport and communication opportunities and transit potential of the both countries, have instructed the relevant authorities to intensify cooperation in the sphere of transport communication and address the issues of renewal of existing and elaborating of new transit automobile, railway and flight routes.

The Presidents have underlined with a great satisfaction the opening of a direct flight between Tashkent and Dushanbe on April 2017.

The Parties have noted that the renewal of previous and opening of new transit automobile, railway and flight routes between the cities of two countries will contribute to intensification of cultural, humanitarian and trade and economic relations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

There was noted that the further cooperation on forming competitive tariffs for transportation of foreign-trade goods with participation of railways of the Republic of

Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan would allow to ensure the effective use of the current transport corridors.

In this context, the heads of two states welcome the renewal of railway communication at the “Ghalaba-Amuzang” section.

7. The heads of both states have emphasized the priority of cooperation on culture and humanitarian sphere, development of direct contacts and exchange of experience between scientific institutions, educational establishments, mass media, creative and sport teams, youth and women organizations, trade unions and other institutions of the civil society.

The Heads of State highly have appreciated the successful conducting of the Culture Days of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Republic of Tajikistan and the Culture Days of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017.

The Heads of State have noted the importance of enhancing of cooperation in the sphere of education and science, including through strengthening cooperation between higher education institutions and academies of sciences of two countries.

The Parties would cooperate and create favorable condition in the sphere of training scientific and teaching staff, exchange of scholars, specialists, higher-education teaching personnel and students, as well as information on mutual recognition of educational certificates, qualifications and academic degrees.

8. The Parties would further continue to create favorable conditions for the activities of national cultural centers on the territory of two states in preserving and developing of native language, culture, traditions and customs, taking measures to ensure rights and interests of citizens of one state residing in the territory of the other State.

The Presidents of two states would pay attention to improvement of learning and teaching of the Tajik language in Uzbekistan and the Uzbek language in Tajikistan, expansion of networks of general education institutions with Tajik and Uzbek languages of study, establishment of cooperation on exchange of educational and fiction books, periodicals and scientific publishing, as well as on support of translation of classical writers and poets and contemporary authors of the two countries.

The Tajik side has welcomed the establishment of a monument to the outstanding representatives of two peoples A. Jami and A. Navoi, as well as the reconstruction of the museum of the founder of modern Tajik literature S. Ayni in the city of Samarkand.

The Uzbek side, in turn, has welcomed the decision of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to build a park named after A.Navoi in Dushanbe and to install a monument to A. Jami and A. Navoi therein.

9. The Parties have welcomed resumption of functioning of border checkpoints in the Tajik-Uzbek State border and stressed that their full-fledged function would serve for interests of the both peoples and create favorable conditions for the further

development of the bilateral ties.

The Heads of State have noted with satisfaction the introduction of a visa-free regime for a mutual travel of citizens of two states up to 30 days, which would foster expanded contacts between the peoples of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

10. The Presidents have confirmed their readiness to strengthen cooperation in countering terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, illegal arms trade, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal migration and other challenges and threats to the regional and international security, both in bilateral and international formats, as well as to prevent unlawful activities directed against interests of the national security of the Parties in their territories.

In this respect, all necessary measures will be taken to improve cooperation through consultations of the relevant structures of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

11. The heads of two states have reaffirmed their readiness to develop cooperation in the military and military-technical fields, as well as in military education on mutually beneficial terms.

12. The Presidents have welcomed establishment of a joint Tajik-Uzbek working group on neutralization of sites with engineering obstacles in the border areas between two countries and noted the necessity to complete this work in 2018-2019.

13. The Presidents have noted the importance of deepening cooperation, enhancing practical interaction and implementing specific activities in the sphere of disaster management.

14. The Parties have confirmed the concurrence or closeness of positions on current issues of ensuring peace, stability, security and sustainable development in Central Asia.

The Heads of State have stressed that the whole set of intra-regional problems in the Central Asia could and should be solved only by states of the region through an open and constructive dialogue, based on the principles of equality, mutual benefit, respect and consideration of each other's interests.

15. The Presidents have stressed that one of key factors of prosperity in Central Asia is an integrated use of water and energy resources, taking into account the interests of all states of the region. The importance of open dialogue, strengthening of mutual understanding and developing of constructive cooperation, searching for mutually acceptable, fair and rational solutions was noted.

The parties have expressed their mutual interest in developing regional partnership in the sphere of rational and fair use of water resources and stressed the importance of existing hydropower facilities for the Central Asia, and those under construction, in order to solve water and energy problems.

In this context, the Uzbek side has expressed its readiness to comprehensively consider the possibility of participating in the construction of hydropower facilities in the Republic of Tajikistan, including Roghun HPS, taking into account the universally recognized international norms and standards on the construction of such facilities.

The Heads of State stressed the need to improve the legal mechanisms for integrated and efficient use of transboundary water resources in Central Asia that facilitate a constructive dialogue, taking into account the interests of all states of the region.

The Parties have welcome conducting of the Central Asian International Ecological Forum (Tashkent, June 5-8, 2018) and International High-Level Conference on International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development,” 2018-2028 (Dushanbe, June 20-22, 2018).

16. The Presidents agree that the resolution of any contradictions and disagreements in the international affairs is possible only through political means, negotiations and other peaceful means.

The Parties have noted the substantial potential for continuation and strengthening of bilateral cooperation in the international arena and expressed mutual desire to further develop their cooperation within the framework of the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other international organizations.

The Presidents agree that UN remains the leading universal international structure promoting maintenance of global security, as well as the main platform for resolving interstate and international problems. The Parties reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening its central coordinating role in international relations.

The Parties welcome conducting the International High-Level Conference on Afghanistan “Peace Process, Cooperation in the Sphere of Security and the Regional Cooperation” (Tashkent, March 26-27, 2018) and High-Level International Conference on Combating Terrorism and Radicalism (Dushanbe, May 3-4, 2018).

The Tajik side has supported the initiative of the Uzbek side on development and promotion of the UN General Assembly resolutions «Strengthening regional and international cooperation for peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region” and “Education and religious tolerance”, as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of Youth.

The Parties, taking into account Tajikistan`s chairmanship in CIS in 2018, have expressed mutual interest in more efficient use of the Commonwealth`s mechanisms for its transformation into an effective platform for the development of mutually beneficial cooperation.

The Uzbek side supported the initiative of the Tajik side to establish a Counternarcotic Center of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Dushanbe.

The support of the Tajik side rendered to the initiatives of the Uzbek side on organization of regular meetings of heads of the railway administrations of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization countries and adoption of a Joint appeal of the heads of SCO member states to the youth was appreciated.

The Presidents have highly appreciated the constructive interaction of two

countries within the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Tajik side supported the proposal of Uzbek side to hold the second OIC Summit on Science and Technology in 2020 in Uzbekistan.

17. The Heads of State have expressed their commitment to implement the signed bilateral documents between the Parties timely and in a good faith, and spoke out in favor of the further improvement and expansion of the legal base to enhance the Tajik-Uzbek relations in the areas of mutual interest.

The Parties have expressed satisfaction with the results of the state visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev to the Republic of Tajikistan and stressed that the talks held and the documents signed during the visit would give a new impetus to the further development of bilateral mutually beneficial cooperation in the various fields, and would also significantly contribute to comprehensive deepening of the interstate relations.

18. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev has expressed his gratitude to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon, and all Tajik people for the hospitality extended to the Uzbek delegation, as well as a cordial and friendly reception, and invited the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon to pay a return State visit to the Republic of Uzbekistan. Exact date of the visit would be coordinated through the diplomatic channels.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev
President
Republic of Uzbekistan

Emomali Rakhmon
President
Republic of Tajikistan

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN EMOMALI RAKHMOMONOV AND PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN NURSULTAN NAZARBAYEV

Upon invitation of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan paid a state visit to Kazakhstan on March 14, 2018.

In the course of negotiations held in the 25th anniversary since the establishment of diplomatic relations, the Heads of State have discussed the prospects for expansion and deepening of Tajik-Kazakh relations and the pressing regional and international challenges of mutual interests.

The leaders of state, having underlined stable way towards friendly and good neighborly relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Kazakhstan,

expressing confidence that bringing bilateral multifaceted cooperation to a new level serves long-term interests of two fraternal nations, as well as stability, security, and sustainable development in Central Asia,

based on principles enshrined in the Agreements on Basic Relations of January 13, 1993 and on Strategic Partnership of September 14, 2015.

declare the following:

The Presidents of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan set priority on strategic bilateral cooperation and enhanced interaction in political, trade and economic, cultural and humanitarian areas.

The Heads of State have underlined the similarity or closeness of positions on key issues of international policy, as well as reaffirmed intention to actively cooperate under UN, SCO, CSTO, CIS, OIC, ECO, CICMA, CARICC and other international and regional organizations.

In this context, the Presidents have highly valued efforts of the Republic of Kazakhstan as a non-permanent UN Security Council member over 2017-2018 and promotion by Kazakhstan of common interests of the Central Asian states.

The Presidents have underscored the need for further development of cooperation on fighting against international terrorism, religious extremism, illegal migration, illegal drug trafficking, transnational organized crime and other challenges and threats to international security both at bilateral level and globally.

The leaders consider it to be appropriate to host the International High-Level Conference "Counteraction to Terrorism and Radicalism" in Tajikistan on May 3-4, 2018. This event is aimed at providing a regional platform for dialogue and exchange

in this area.

The Presidents have reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring rapid peace and stability in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and stressed their will to develop long-term cooperation with Afghanistan.

The Parties have stressed importance of the Tajik initiative on proclaiming the decade 2018-2028 as the ‘International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development’ and also noted the importance and timeliness of holding the relevant International high-level conference in Dushanbe on 20-22 June, 2018.

The Heads of State support integrated and rational use of water and energy resources in Central Asia and underscore the importance of developing sustainable and long-term mechanisms for mutually beneficial cooperation, taking into account the interests of all the states in the region. They welcome the establishment of a Joint working group for deepening bilateral water cooperation.

The Parties have noted that equitable, rational and integrated use of water resources in Central Asia is an important factor for achieving sustainable development, stability and prosperity of the entire region.

The Presidents, noting the important role of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea in consolidation and increase of efforts to overcome the consequences of the Aral disaster, express their readiness to continue active and close cooperation under the umbrella of the Fund.

The Heads of State, taking into account the mutual interest of the Parties in integrated and rational use of water and energy resources in Central Asia, have noted the positive role of hydroelectric facilities under construction on transboundary watercourses to promote socioeconomic development in the entire region based on recognized international norms and standards.

The heads of Tajikistan and Kazakhstan have noted with satisfaction the positive trends in development of trade and economic ties between the two countries and expressed their mutual intention to ensure constant growth in bilateral trade, diversification of trade, and development of long-term economic and investment cooperation.

The Parties have stressed the priority of bilateral cooperation in transport and development of transit corridors that ensure the shortest and most effective access to foreign markets.

The Presidents have positively assessed the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan. On February 12-13, 2018, the 13th meeting of the Commission was held in Dushanbe.

The Parties have noted the coordinating role of the Commission as an efficient mechanism for intensive trade and economic relations in priority areas of bilateral partnership.

The leaders of states have reaffirmed their commitment to developing

cooperation in the field of defense and defense industry.

The Presidents have noted the prospects for bilateral space cooperation and their intention to implement mutually beneficial projects.

The leaders of Tajikistan and Kazakhstan have stressed the importance of mutual trips of citizens of the two countries, encouragement of labor migration and resolution of related legal, social, humanitarian and other issues.

The Heads of State, noting the cultural and historical commonality of two peoples, have reaffirmed their commitment to further developing cooperation in science, education, health, culture, art, tourism, folk crafts, sports, and other fields.

Taking into account special role of the Tajik and Kazakh diasporas in the rapprochement of two fraternal peoples, the Parties have reaffirmed their readiness to ensure favorable conditions for both communities in preservation and development of their native language, national culture, traditions and customs and take all necessary measures to ensure inalienable rights and legitimate interests of citizens.

The leaders of the Republic of Tajikistan and Republic of Kazakhstan have stressed the importance of proper implementation of bilateral and multilateral treaties, as well as of further improvement of contractual and legal framework between the two countries.

The President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon expressed gratitude to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev for warm hospitality and invited the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Tajikistan at a convenient time for him. The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan gratefully accepted the invitation. The terms of the visit would be coordinated through diplomatic channels.

Emomali Rakhmon
President
Republic of Tajikistan

Nursultan Nazarbayev
President
Republic of Kazakhstan

Astana, March 14, 2018

ON THE ACTIVITY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA

At the meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers on June 16, The President of Turkmenistan signed a package of documents related to chairmanship of Turkmenistan in the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) over 2017-2019.

Particularly, the Executive Committee of IFAS was established in Ashgabat; its structure and Regulations of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea were approved.

The main objectives of the Executive Committee of IFAS are ensuring implementation of decisions approved by the Council of Heads of the founder-states, the President and the IFAS Board related to the Aral Sea basin problems; conducting expertise and implementing projects and programs aimed at improving environmental conditions in the Aral Sea basin. The Committee coordinates activities of its branches, special agencies and foundations that are situated on the territories of the Fund founder-states, facilitates activities of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD).

An important aspect is the close collaboration with ministries and agencies of the countries in the region, public and international organizations, donor-states, environmental and other foundations to revitalize activities on environment protection. In this context, EC ensures the IFAS mission in prestigious organizations, accumulates financial and other assets, ensures their targeted use, provides the IFAS founder-states with information analytical support, carries on information and editorial and publishing activities. It also focuses on preparing materials and organizing meetings of the Council of the Heads of the founder-states and the IFAS Board, thematic conferences, symposiums and workshops on matters related to activities of IFAS, etc.

As a Chairman of IFAS, Turkmenistan intends to pay the utmost attention to rational use of water resources in the region and adaptation of the Central Asia states to global climate changes. That is the goal of initiatives proclaimed by the President Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20, UN Summit on Sustainable Development 2015 held under the 70th UN General Assembly, III UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan, and 7th World Water Forum in the Republic of Korea.

Those include the establishment of the Regional Center for Climate Change-related Technologies in Central Asia, for work of which the Turkmen side is ready to present necessary infrastructure in Ashgabat, as well as development of a special UN Program of Saving the Aral Sea, and UN Water Strategy.

On January 30, 2018, the meeting of the IFAS Board was held in Ashgabat.

Along with members of the Board and the EC IFAS, the authorized representatives of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, as well as the Turkmen ministries and agencies participated in this meeting.

The participants of the meeting considered the Action Plan of EC IFAS during the chairmanship of Turkmenistan, preparation of the Summit of the Heads of Central Asian States, development of the Program of Actions to assist countries in the Aral Sea basin (ASBP-4), as well as agenda of the ordinary meeting of the IFAS Board.

Further we present documents related to the above-mentioned meetings.

Appendix # 1 to the
Decision of the President of the
International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea
of June 16th, 2017

REGULATION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA

I. GENERAL PROVISION

1.1. The Executive Committee (hereinafter referred to as EC) of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (hereinafter referred to as IFAS or Fund) was established by the Decision of the IFAS President, the President of Turkmenistan as of June 16th, 2017, and is a permanent acting executive body of the Fund.

1.2. EC IFAS is an assignee of regulations, property and other assets of previous ECs IFAS.

1.3. EC IFAS fulfills its activities in accordance with the Regulation of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (hereinafter referred to as the Regulation of IFAS) and the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Government of Turkmenistan, and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the Status of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and Its Organizations (hereinafter referred to as the Agreement on the Status of IFAS and Its Organizations), approved by the Heads of the IFAS founder-states on April 9th, 1999 in the city of Ashgabat, and in accordance with the present Regulation.

1.4. The activities of EC are organized on the basis of the principal IFAS management scheme approved by the Decision of the Heads of the Fund founder-states on February 28th, 1997 in the city of Almaty.

1.5. EC IFAS represents a juridical entity with the status of an international intergovernmental organization, and immunities and privileges provided for by the Agreement on the Status of IFAS and Its Organizations.

1.6. The legal address of EC IFAS: 744013, Turkmenistan, Ashgabat city, Hero of Turkmenistan Atamyrat Niyazov Ave, 142.

The official name of EC IFAS:

in the Russian language – Исполнительный Комитет Международного Фонда спасения Арала (ИК МФСА);

in the English language – Executive Committee of the International Fund for

Saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS).

II. OBJECTIVES OF EC IFAS

2.1. The EC is established to accomplish the following objectives:

- Ensure practical implementation of decisions of the Council of the Heads of the founder-states, the President and the IFAS Board on the Aral Sea basin challenges;
- Implement programs and projects aimed at improving environmental situation in the Aral Sea basin;
- Coordinate activities of EC branches, special agencies and foundations for improvement of the social and environmental situation in the Aral Sea basin, which are situated on the territories of the Fund founder-states;
- Facilitate activities of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) and Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD);
- Expand collaboration with international organizations, donor-states, ecological and other funds to enhance activities on environmental protection.

III. FUNCTIONS OF EC IFAS

3.1. EC executes the following functions:

- Participates in development and implementation of projects and programs on the Aral Sea basin problems;
- Collaborates with ministries, agencies, public ecological organizations of the founder-states of the Fund;
- Ensures the IFAS mission in international organizations;
- Organizes expertise of concepts, programs and projects on the Aral Sea basin problems and make adequate conclusions;
- Accumulates financial and other assets, ensures their targeted use;
- Provides the IFAS founder-states with information analytical support on the matters of IFAS activities;
- Carries on information and editorial and publishing activities;
- Provides safety of IFAS documentation;
- Prepares materials and organizes meetings of the Council of the Heads of the founder-states and the IFAS Board;
- Organizes thematic conferences, symposiums and workshops on matters related to activities of IFAS;

- Promotes collaboration with foreign states and international organizations on IFAS reserved matters.

IV. RIGHTS OF EC IFAS

4.1. EC has the right to:

- define priority areas for allocation of IFAS assets within the frameworks programs and projects on improving environmental situation in the Aral Sea basin;
- participate together with interested ministries, agencies of the IFAS founder-states, and other institutions to involve organizations and individuals to implement programs and projects on solution of the Aral Sea basin problems;
- involve experts, and conclude agreements with organizations, institutions and individuals;
- organize and hold biddings (tenders), place funds into deposit accounts in banking institutions;
- request and receive data required to accomplish objectives and functions vested in the EC IFAS, from ministries, agencies, statistical offices and other structures of the IFAS founder-states, in accordance with procedures established;
- conduct a check of documentation submitted by branches, states and results of their activities;
- acquire and dispose of property, be a claimant and defendant in a court.

4.2. EC IFAS has bank accounts in national and foreign currency to support its activity and accumulate contributions of the Fund founder-states, international organizations, donors-countries, grants, charitable and other donations from juridical entities and individuals in order to implement projects, programs and render an emergency assistance to population in the Aral Sea basin.

EC has its standard forms, seal and stamps with its name.

4.3. EC activities and property are exempt from all direct taxes and charges. Contributions of the founder-states, donors-countries, international organizations, grants, donations of juridical entities and individuals, foreign states, as well as assistance in a form of equipment, facilities, materials, food, and medicine are exempt from taxes, charges and customs duties.

EC and its officials are exempt from customs duties when bringing in and carriage their personal stuff, items, materials, equipment intended for personal and official use, as well as for providing functions vested in them. Exemption from customs duties does not apply to EC officials who are citizens of EC host country.

4.4. Financing of EC activities is provided at the expense of contributions of the IFAS founder-states, international organizations, donors-countries, grants, and charitable donations from individuals and juridical entities, foreign states as well.

4.5. EC keeps books and accounts in accordance with laws of the host state.

4.6. The IFAS founder-states are not liable for duties of EC, and EC, in its turn, is not liable for those of the Fund founder-states.

4.7. Official languages of EC are Russian and English languages.

V. ACTIVITY ARRANGEMENT OF EC IFAS

5.1. EC includes the Chairman, his/her Deputy, Legal Counsel, Secretariat, Information- Analytical, Administration and Centralized Accounting departments, and Auxiliary Staff.

5.2. Governments of the founder-states delegate their two authorized representatives (EC members) to ensure EC operation. Leadership and management of their activities are vested in the Chairman.

5.3. EC is headed by the Chairman assigned to and discharged from the post by the IFAS President in consultation with the Heads of the IFAS founder-states.

5.4. The Chairman:

- performs management of EC in accordance with decisions of the Council of the Heads of the founder-states, the President and the IFAS Board, and is personally liable for accomplishment of objectives vested in EC;

- undertakes arrangements on preparation and organization of meetings of the Council of the Heads of the founder-states and the IFAS Board;

- coordinates activities of ICWC, ICSD on all issues related to implementation of programs and projects for improving environmental conditions in the Aral Sea basin;

- acts on behalf of IFAS, represents its interests, disposes funds and property of EC, concludes contracts (agreements), hires and discharges employees of the EC apparatus and heads of its structural subdivisions;

- addresses to the IFAS President, the governments of the founder-states the views of competence and qualification of authorized representatives delegated to work for EC;

- within his/her competence, issues orders, regulations, and decisions and, guided by commissions of the President and the IFAS Board, gives instructions subject to compulsory accomplishment by the branches and other bodies of IFAS;

- approves a staff schedule of EC with the permission of the IFAS President;

- approves regulations of structural subdivisions and other regulatory documents prescribing the rights and duties of officials of EC IFAS;

- assigns leaders to regional projects, and approves their estimate and financial and program documents as well;

- submits to the IFAS Board a report on EC activities on the outcomes of a fiscal year;

- fulfills other functions vested in him/her by the Council of the Heads of the founder-states, the President and the IFAS Board.

5.5. Maintenance of the EC apparatus and payments for labor to the employees are made on the conditions and at the expense of contributions of the IFAS founder-states, grants of donors-countries and funds of international organizations.

5.6. A first fiscal year of EC is a period since a day of approval of the Regulation of EC and till the end of a respective calendar year. Further, a fiscal year of EC starts on January 1st and ends on December 31st of each year.

5.7. By results of every financial year, EC provides audit of its financial activity.

VI. BRANCHES OF EC IFAS

6.1. EC, in accordance with the approved IFAS principal management scheme, has its branches in the founder-states of the Fund.

6.2. The branches of EC are the territorial bodies.

6.3. The branches act in accordance with the laws of the IFAS founder-states, on which territories they are located, decisions of the President and the Board of the Fund, orders, instructions of EC, the present Regulation and the Regulation of a relevant branch.

6.4. EC branches are juridical entities, have banking accounts in national and foreign currency.

6.5. The branches collaborate with state, public organizations, juridical entities and individuals, as well as with structures of different patterns of ownership, and facilitate expansion of cooperation on issues of the Aral Sea basin.

6.6. EC branches are financed at the expense of contributions of the IFAS founder-states, on which territory they are located.

6.7. The EC Chairman assigns and discharges directors of branches who have been delegated by governments of the IFAS founder-states, on which territory the branches are located.

6.8. A branch is headed by a director, who is personally liable for activity management, performance of duties vested in him.

6.9. A staff schedule of a branch is agreed with the government of an IFAS founder-state, on which territory it is located, or a body authorized by it, and approved by the EC Chairman.

6.10. A fiscal year is fixed from January 1st to December 31st of a calendar year. A branch submits a report to the EC quarterly.

6.11. Accounting and reporting are kept in accordance with procedures established by laws of a state, on which territory the branch is located.

6.12. Organizational and financial activities of a branch to be monitored by EC.

6.13. Introduction of changes and supplements to activities, rules and procedures of a branch falls within the competence of EC.

6.14. Activity of EC branch to be terminated in accordance with a decision of EC, on a proposal of the government of a founder-state of the IFAS.

VII. LIQUIDATION OF EC IFAS AFTER THE ESTABLISHED PERIOD IS COMPLETED

7.1. Liquidation EC IFAS is made on a decision of the President of IFAS.

7.2. Provided the decision on liquidation of EC has been made, the Chairman of EC makes the order on appointment of a liquidation commission and ensures its execution in accordance with laws in force in a host country.

7.3. EC loses the right of a juridical entity and considered as ceased to exist since the date a respective decision on approval of results of the liquidation commission has been issued.

DECISION OF THE IFAS BOARD

1. ON ACTION PLAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA DURING THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF TURKMENISTAN

January 30, 2018

Ashgabat

1. Approve the Action plan of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea during the Chairmanship of Turkmenistan.

2. The Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea is assigned to ensure implementation of the Action Plan and regularly inform the IFAS Board on its progress.

Republic of Kazakhstan

U.Shukeev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

M.Zokirzoda

Turkmenistan

E.Orazgeldyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Z.Mirzaev

DECISION OF THE IFAS BOARD

2. ON PREPARATION OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF HEADS OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES

January 30, 2018

Ashgabat

1. Take into account information of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea on preparation of the meeting of the Council of Heads of the IFAS founder-states in 2018 in the city of Ashgabat.

2. The Executive Committee of IFAS, the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development should contribute to the preparation and organization of the meeting of the Council of Heads of the IFAS founder-states.

Republic of Kazakhstan

U.Shukeev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

M.Zokirzoda

Turkmenistan

E.Orazgeldyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Z.Mirzaev

DECISION OF THE IFAS BOARD

3. ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM OF ACTIONS TO ASSIST COUNTRIES IN THE ARAL SEA BASIN (ASBP-4)

January 30, 2018

Ashgabat

1. Take into account information of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea on preparation of the draft Program of Actions to assist countries in the Aral Sea basin (ASBP-4).

2. Approve the following directions of ASBP-4:

- integrated water resources use;
- environmental;
- socio-economic;
- improved institutional and legal mechanisms.

3. The Executive Committee of IFAS in cooperation with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development should facilitate the development of ASBP-4 with the involvement of national experts and international partners.

Republic of Kazakhstan

U.Shukeev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

M.Zokirzoda

Turkmenistan

E.Orazgeldyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Z.Mirzaev

DECISION OF THE IFAS BOARD

4. ON THE AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF THE IFAS BOARD

January 30, 2018

Ashgabat

The following issues are to be considered at the ordinary meeting of the IFAS Board:

- the results of the meeting of the Council of Heads of Central Asian states;
- progress on the development of ASBP-4;
- activity of the Executive Committee of IFAS over the reporting period;
- activity of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination over the reporting period;
- activity of the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development over the reporting period;
- progress of the Working Group on the Improvement of Institutional and Contractual- Legal Base of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea;
- approval of draft Regional Environmental Program for sustainable development in Central Asia;
- agenda of the next meeting of the IFAS Board.

Republic of Kazakhstan

U.Shukeev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

M.Zokirzoda

Turkmenistan

E.Orazgeldyev

Republic of Uzbekistan

Z.Mirzaev

Approved by the Decision of the
IFAS Board
January 30th, 2018

ACTION PLAN OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA DURING THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF TURKMENISTAN

#	List of activities	Time of execution	Executors
I. Preparation of materials and organization of meetings of the Council of Heads of the founder-states and the IFAS Board			
1.	Organization of meetings of the IFAS Board and control over execution of decisions adopted		
1.1	Preparation of materials for meetings of the IFAS Board	every meeting of the IFAS Board	EC IFAS
1.2	Dissemination of materials of the meetings of the IFAS Board	Prior to 30 days to the meeting	EC IFAS, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)
1.3	Holding of the meetings of the IFAS Board	In the time of meetings	EC IFAS, MFA
1.4	Ensuring implementation of the decisions and control over implementation	Continuously	EC IFAS
2.	Holding of the meetings of the Council of Heads of the founder-states and control over implementation of decisions		
2.1	Drafting documents to the meeting of the Council of Heads of the founder-states	Till August 2018	MFA, EC IFAS
2.2	Organization of activities related to meetings of the Council of Heads of the founder-states	2018	MFA, EC IFAS
2.3	Development of the Action plan to implement decisions approved by the Council of Heads of the founder-states	2018	EC IFAS
2.4	Implementation of decisions approved by the Council of Heads of the founder-states and control over implementation	Continuously	EC IFAS
II. Implementation of programs and projects aimed at improving socio-economic and environmental conditions in the Aral Sea basin			
3.	Development of the Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4)		

#	List of activities	Time of execution	Executors
3.1	Establishment of national and regional working groups consisting of the representatives of IFAS branches, ministries, agencies, and local authorities of the IFAS founder-states with the involvement of international experts on the following areas: - integrated water resources use; - environmental; - socio-economic; - improved institutional and legal mechanisms.	January-February 2018	EC IFAS, ICWC, ICSD, Central Asian states, international partners
3.2	Consultations with international organizations and partners on development of ASBP-4	2018-2019	EC IFAS
3.3	Organization of working meetings to develop ASBP-4	2018-2019	EC IFAS, international partners
3.4	Organization of conference of international partners on the development of ASBP-4	2018	EC IFAS, international partners
3.5	Presentation of the draft ASBP-4 for consideration of the IFAS Board	2019-2020	EC IFAS
4.	Return to improvement of organizational structure and contractual-legal base of IFAS	2018-2019	EC IFAS, international partners
4.1	Mobilization of international experts and funding of the Working Group for the improvement of organizational structure and contractual-legal base of IFAS	2018	EC IFAS, international partners
4.2	Establishment of the Working Group with the involvement of Central Asian and international experts	2018	EC IFAS, international partners
4.3	Meetings of the Working Group	2018-2019	EC IFAS
5.	Under updating of the Regional Environmental Action Plan in Central Asia, facilitate development of the Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development in Central Asia	2018-2019	EC IFAS, ICSD, relevant state agencies
III. Facilitate the work of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD)			
6.	Facilitate the work of ICWC		
6.1	Participation in the activities of ICWC (meetings, conferences, round tables, workshops, etc.)	Regularly	EC IFAS, ICWC
6.2	Help in mobilization of donors to the improvement of operation of gauging stations in the Aral Sea basin	2018-2019	EC IFAS, ICWC

#	List of activities	Time of execution	Executors
6.3	Participation in and promotion of regional projects on water and capacity building of ICWC branches	Continuously	EC IFAS, ICWC
7.	Facilitate the work of ICSD		
7.1	Participation in the activities of ICSD (meetings, conferences, round tables, workshops, etc.)	Regularly	EC IFAS
7.2	Promotion of accession to and ratification of the “Framework Convention on the Environmental Protection for Sustainable Development in Central Asia” by the Central Asian states	2018-2019	EC IFAS, ICSD, relevant state agencies
IV. Expansion of interactions with international and regional organizations, financial institutes, donor-states, environmental and other funds to enhance activities on the Aral Sea problems			
8.	Contribution to the achievement of goals and objectives of the International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028	Continuously	EC IFAS, ICWC, ICSD
9.	Revitalization and expansion of cooperation with UN and other international organizations on the use and protection of water resources, environmental conservation, and sustainable development	Continuously	EC IFAS
10.	Revitalization of work with international organizations and financial institutes to attract funds for solution of the Aral Sea problems	Continuously	EC IFAS
11.	Drafting a special UN program for the Aral Sea basin		
11.1	Negotiate on the concept of the special UN program for the Aral Sea basin with the founder-states	2018	EC IFAS, ICWC, ICSD, ministries and agencies, international partners
V. Information and analytical work			
12.	Development of a web-site dedicated to activities of IFAS	The first half of 2018	EC IFAS
12.1	Development of media plan of EC IFAS	The first half of 2018	EC IFAS
13.	Organization of a regional scientific expedition to study the current state of the Aral Sea	2018-2019	EC IFAS, ICWC, ICSD, international partners
14.	Organization of permanent monitoring of the Aral Sea conditions and presentation of monitoring data to the founder-states	2018-2019	EC IFAS
VI. Thematic forums, conferences, symposiums and workshops on issues related to the activities of IFAS			

#	List of activities	Time of execution	Executors
15.	Activities on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of IFAS		
15.1	Organization of the Scientific-Practical Conference on the occasion of the 25 th Anniversary of IFAS	The first half of 2018	EC IFAS, ICSD, ICWC, their branches, ministries and agencies of Turkmenistan
15.2	Organization of lectures on the Aral Sea basin problems, painting and essay contests among children, etc.	In the course of 2018	EC IFAS, relevant ministries and agencies
16.	Participation in the 8 th World Water Forum	March 2018	EC IFAS, ICWC
16.1	Development and approval by countries of the common vision of the Central Asian states on the priority themes of the 8 th World Water Forum	February-March 2018	EC IFAS, ICWC, Central Asian states
16.2	Organization of a special event under the 8 th World Water Forum to present the common vision of the Central Asian region	February-March 2018	EC IFAS, international partners
17.	Ensuring participation of international organizations in the events organized by IFAS	Continuously	EC IFAS, ICWC, ICSD, ministries and agencies
18.	Participation of the representatives of EC IFAS in the national, regional, and international workshops and conferences dedicated to the Aral Sea problems and sustainable development	Continuously	EC IFAS
VII. Coordination of activities of EC IFAS branches in the Central Asian states related to improvement of socio-economic and environmental conditions in the Aral Sea basin, according to the Regulations of EC IFAS			
19.1	Assistance in functioning of EC IFAS branches	Continuously	EC IFAS
19.2	Consideration and approval of the Action Plans of branches and analysis of their fulfillment	Regularly	EC IFAS
19.3	Meetings with representatives of IFAS branches	Continuously	EC IFAS

MEETING OF THE NATIONAL WATER POLICY DIALOGUE IN KAZAKHSTAN AND ON ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSESSMENT CENTER IN KAZAKHSTAN

Meeting of the National Water Policy Dialogue in Kazakhstan

On December 7, 2017, the meeting of the National Policy Dialogue on IWRM was organized in Kazakhstan. The event was aimed at sharing experience in conducting national water policy dialogues in the Central Asian countries, as well as drawing proposals on regional cooperation under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UNECE Water Convention).

The meeting was opened by Mr. Ermek Kosherbaev, Executive Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Head of the UNECE Water Convention Secretariat, H.E. Urs Schmid, Ambassador of Switzerland to Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, H.E. Peter Juza, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Slovak Republic, Ms. Snejana Popova, EU Delegation to Kazakhstan, and Ms. Diana Digol, Deputy Head of the OSCE Program Office in Astana.

The role the UNECE Water Convention and the International Water Assessment Center play in developing transboundary water cooperation was discussed during Session 1. Particularly, Ms. Bernardini spoke on the Water Convention's contribution to develop transboundary water cooperation. Mr. Boris Minarik (Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute) and Mr. Jos Timmerman (Wageningen Environmental Research, Netherlands) spoke on the experience of the International Water Assessment Centre in implementing Water Convention in the Slovak Republic and Netherlands, respectively. Mr. Serik Akhmedov, Director of newly-established International Water Assessment Center in Kazakhstan, presented the role, objectives and future perspectives of the organization.

Mr. Giovanni Capannelli, Country Director of the Asian Development Bank in Kazakhstan, shared information on the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Strategy 2030 (CAREC Strategy 2030). Particularly, he mentioned that a new Agriculture and Water Cluster was included into the CAREC 2030's Operation Priorities. Mr. Capannelli also spoke on work carried out to establish the Almaty Knowledge Hub on Integrated Water Resource Management at the Kazakhstan National Agrarian University with the support of the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan. The Center is aimed at initiating a new approach to water education

beginning from kindergarten. He pointed out to new perspectives for regional cooperation as a result of new and more open approach of Uzbekistan to this issue. This offers new opportunities for better interaction, particularly, in part of innovative technologies.

During Session 2 “National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resource Management in Central Asia”, the process coordinators in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan spoke on main directions and achievements in their respective countries. Information on National Water Policy Dialogue in Turkmenistan was presented by UNECE.

Session 3 was dedicated to cooperation of Central Asian states, Russia, and China on transboundary rivers.

Mr. Anatoly Bykov, Head of the Lower Volga Basin Water Authority, Federal Agency of Water Resources, Russian Federation, spoke on key areas of transboundary water cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan. The focus was on the Ural River, including spring flood discharge, water accumulation in reservoirs, state monitoring, and water protection areas.

Mr. Hu Wenjun, Deputy Head of the Center for International Technical and Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Water Resources of the People's Republic of China, spoke on water cooperation of China with Russia and Kazakhstan.

Mr. Saulat Toreshov, Leading Specialist, Department for Water Resources Development and Implementation of Innovation Technologies, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan, presented key areas of water cooperation of Uzbekistan with neighboring countries. A special focus was on new dynamics of interactions over the past year.

Mr. Musilim Zhienbaev, Head of Transboundary Rivers Department, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan, made a factful presentation on multilateral water cooperation in Central Asia under umbrella of the ICWC, as well as on bilateral water cooperation of Kazakhstan with neighboring countries.

Ms. Dinara Ziganshina, Deputy Director of SIC ICWC, presented information on achievements of the ICWC over 25 years of its activity. She presented the final resolution adopted at the ICWC Anniversary Conference "The 25 years of Water Cooperation in Central Asia: Lessons Learnt and Future Outlook" held in Tashkent on November 23-24, 2017. She called the country representatives and development partners to consider directions of future actions set in this document when developing their programs and action plans.

In Session 4, “Priority thematic areas of the National Policy Dialogue in Kazakhstan”, the participants talked on OECD Projects on water resource management and "nexus" (by Mr. A. Martusevich), transboundary groundwater problems (by Mr. Oleg Podolny, LLP Hydrogeoecological Research and Production, Design Firm "KAZGIDEK"), and scientific and educational components of the Berlin Process (by Mr. Almas Kitapbaev, Kazakh-German University in Central Asia).

Work meeting on the Kazakh initiative on the regional water policy dialogue in Kazakhstan

On December 8, 2017, a special session was dedicated to the International Water Assessment Center (IWAC) in Kazakhstan to discuss IWAC potential contribution to further development of cooperation in the Central Asian countries under the UNECE Water Convention.

IWAC was established by the Meeting of Parties to the Water Convention at its seventh session in Budapest. In May 2017, the Government of Kazakhstan and UNECE signed the respective Memorandum. IWAC office was launched in Astana as a branch of the Institute of Geography LLP in August 2017.

IWAC aims at supporting implementation of the Convention, its Protocols on Water and Health, and their respective programs of work. The Centre's work will focus on Kazakhstan's neighboring countries, other Central Asian countries and beyond. The program of work of IWAC will be developed in close cooperation with the Government of Kazakhstan and the Bureau of the Water Convention and will be in compliance with the program of work of the Convention and the Protocol.

IWAC should more definitely identify its geographic and thematic scope of work. It is not clear, whether it will work actively only with the Central Asian states, or will be a platform for expanded water cooperation between all five Central Asian states with Russia, China, Afghanistan, and possibly with Mongolia.

The participants shared their comments and recommendations related to the IWAC activity. In particular, if focused on the Central Asian states, it was strongly recommended to send official notification to these countries on the established Center and its mandate as soon as possible. It was also recommended to review the mandate and work of all regional organizations in order to avoid the duplication of functions and more definitely define the scope of work for IWAC. It would be desirable to develop the Program of Work of IWAC in close coordination with the Program of Work under the Water Convention. Answers provided in the reporting template under the Water Convention may be crucial to reveal interests and define needs of the countries in the region. To develop the Program of Work of IWAC, it was recommended to appeal to the countries to nominate their experts for this purpose as well.

The first meeting of IWAC is scheduled for April. This regional event will be focused on sharing experience in the National Water Policy Dialogues in the countries.

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON WATER SCARCITY AND 9th MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON WATER AND CLIMATE

International workshop on water scarcity

On December 11-12, 2017, International Workshop on Water Scarcity was held at UNECE Headquarters in Geneva with the focus on actions taken in transboundary basins and mitigation of health impact. The measures to prevent water scarcity and mitigate its consequences taken at transboundary and national levels were considered during the workshop.

The workshop was opened by representatives of UNECE, Italian National Institute of Health, and Federal Office for the Environment (Switzerland).

The keynote speech on “Water scarcity trends on a global level” was delivered by Mr. Michel Jarraud, former Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and ex-chair of UN-Water. He mentioned that though there was no generally recognized definition of drought, it should not be confused with water scarcity. Drought is a natural phenomenon, whereas a range of social and economic reasons may cause water scarcity (population growth, inefficient water management, etc.). Mr. Jarraud focused on importance of availability and proper use of data. Annual data are not enough, seasonal and ten-day data are of great value. This issue is becoming particular critical in light of climate change impact. According to scientific forecasts, the temperature growth by 1°C may result in 20% reduction of water resources.

Mr. Oliver Schmoll, WHO Regional Office for Europe, made a report on “Water scarcity and health”. He focused on three types of impact of water scarcity on health:

- Impact as a result of decreased water quantity (dehydration, poor hygiene, and physical damages). 20 liters is an absolute minimum for basic requirements;
- Impact as result of deteriorated water quality;
- Possible negative health impact from measures undertaken to combat water scarcity (re-use of improperly treated water).

He concluded that basic human needs for water and integration of health issues in the general issues of water management should be set as indisputable priority.

During Session 1 the participants addressed “Policy and institutional setups to address water scarcity”. Mr. Frederik Pischke, Global Water Partnership (GWP),

presented an Integrated Drought Management Program (IDMP): guidance on drought management plans and tools, which is implemented in cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization. This program was initiated at the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policies in 2013. This resulted in the development of the Handbook of Indicators and Indices. Currently, regional programs to combat droughts are developed using the approach by WHO and GWP, which generally calls to shift from emergency situation response to proactive and risk management.

It is impossible to quit droughts; however, we can end hunger. Mr. Ruhiza Jean Boroto, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), spoke on resolving water scarcity in agriculture through the Global Framework on Water Scarcity in Agriculture (WASAG). Mr. John Kabayo, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), introduced the IGAD Drought Disaster Resilience and Sustainability Initiative (IDDRSI). There also were presentations on addressing of water scarcity in the Alpine region and drought management in Spain.

During Session 2 legal aspects and practices were discussed in addressing water scarcity through transboundary cooperation. Mr. Owen McIntyre, Cork University, reviewed basic provisions of the international water law regarding issues of drought. He mentioned that only few agreements directly address drought-related problems, i.e. less than 40% of them deal with water scarcity and droughts and less than 5% - with measures taken in case of droughts and water scarcity. At the same time, basic principles and norms of the international water law, such as equitable and wise use and maintenance of environmental flow, suggest the adoption of necessary measures to take into account the needs of population and ecosystems in various contexts. As part of the European Water Directive, member states should also develop specific plans to combat droughts if basin plans do not fully address this matter.

Mr. Adrian Schmidt-Breton, International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, told about the work undertaken under conditions of low water level in the Rhine basin. Ms. Aram Ngom Ndiaye, Organization for the Development of the Senegal Basin, told about “How drought has triggered creation of a river basin organization in the Senegal basin”. Detailed presentation on how droughts were addressed under transboundary water cooperation between Mexico and the United States was made by representatives of these countries. Particularly, they informed that Minutes 323 was signed in October 2017. It extended Minutes 319 until 2026, setting key provisions on the Colorado River management to maintain desired environmental flow, restore the river delta, and jointly address water scarcity.

Mr. Kawa Sahab from the Afghan Ministry of Energy and Water presented key provisions on water allocation in the transboundary agreement on the Helmand basin shared by Afghanistan and Iran.

Then the participants were grouped to discuss the following questions:

1. Which measures for addressing water scarcity are beneficial and effective from a transboundary perspective?
2. Is water scarcity an issue in your basin / country? How is it addressed or planned to be addressed at the transboundary level?

3. What are the health implications of water scarcity in your basin/ country and how are they addressed?

The Russian-speaking participants answered the questions as follows:

1. The following measures to solve water deficit are useful from a transboundary perspective:

- Coordinated (long-term, seasonal) flow regulation with proper engineering infrastructure and operation rules
- Monitoring and data sharing on quantity and quality
- Hydrological forecast
- Early warning system
- Legal basis for water allocation in different flow conditions and seasons
- National policies to improve water efficiency and implementation of best agricultural practices.

2. Water deficit at the transboundary level is resolved through a set of legal, institutional, and technical measures, including:

- Setting quantity of environmental flow
- work of commissions (ICWC, Chu-Talas and others), including bilateral working groups for the lower (for instance, on the Amudarya River) and basin councils of small rivers (case studies)
- development of joint strategies and management plans, with droughts taken into account.

3. Water deficit negatively affects human health as a results of deteriorated water quality and decreased water quantity (hygiene, Preearalie, enteric infections, etc.). Preventive measures include:

- monitoring of sources of decentralized water supply and population warning
- restriction of types of use (consumption)
- public awareness
- development of guiding documents and instructions
- implementation of the Plans of water security under the Protocol on Water and Health
- improvement of cross-sectoral interaction and work with local authorities
- notification of neighboring countries and interaction with them.

The second day started with reports on results of group work. Then sessions were continued.

Practical measures to address water scarcity from the health perspective were discussed at Session 3. Ms. Kate Medicott, World Health Organization (WHO), presented an approach based on sanitation safety plan (SSP), which is a practical tool for managing health risks from wastewater reuse. This tool has been developed to help local water suppliers and currently is used in more than 93 countries worldwide.

Regulatory aspects of wastewater reuse and SSPs were highlighted by Ms.

Ghada Kassab from the University of Jordan. Mr. Enrico Veschetti, Italian National Institute of Health, presented preliminary results of research conducted in Italy to assess the impact of droughts on water quality. Particularly, he presented the Standardized Precipitation-Evapotranspiration Index (SPEI) developed by Vicente-Serrano et al. on the basis of climatic water balance in 2010. SPEI shows deviations from the norm.

The interactive session Marketplace of approaches, tools and examples for addressing water scarcity included discussions of questions in groups:

1. Addressing water scarcity in agriculture (FAO)
2. Environmental flows: successful case studies (World Wide Fund)
3. Practical measures for reducing water scarcity in the lake Chad basin (Lake Chad Basin Commission)
4. Monitoring low water at the basin and national level: the Meuse river basin and the Dutch system (International Meuse Commission)
5. Danube experience and national drought plan development in the context of the European Union Water Framework Directive (IDMP Central Eastern Europe)
6. Building climate resilience through improved planning: demonstration of the Flood and Drought Portal (International Water Association)
7. From EU guidelines on water reuse to practical applications (National Institute of Health, Italy)
8. Water scarcity provisions in the transboundary Chu-Talas basin (Mr. Erkin Orolbaev, National Policy Dialogues on IWRM in Kyrgyzstan; Ms. Indira Akbozova, Chu Talas Basin Commission; Ms. Svetlana Dolgikh, National Hydrometeorological Service "Kazhydromet")
9. Conjunctive use of surface water and ground water for drought management: example of the Orange basin (Orange-Senqu River Commission)
10. The potential of wastewater treatment as a gateway for transboundary cooperation
11. Facilitating financing of transboundary adaptation projects through the incubation platform (International Office for Water).

Two reports were presented during Session 4 “The enabling environment for addressing water scarcity”. Mr. Andre Oosterman, European Investment Bank (EIB), informed on policy and projects of the Bank on financing drought management measures. This direction is a part of water security projects. Mr. Paul Sayers, WWF Consultant, highlighted issues related to drought risk management and safeguarding ecosystems. He called to apply strategic approaches to efficiently address these sensitive matters. Then panel discussion was organized with participation of representatives of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain, Ministry of Water and Sanitation of Senegal, Ministry of Environment and Natural

Resources of El Salvador, African Development Bank, and Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan. They shared experiences of their countries in drought management and financial problems. Particularly, they focused on how to attract attention of the banks to projects on improvement of environmental infrastructure, not only to technical projects aimed at construction of structures.

During discussion, Ms. G.Yusupova, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, presented the experience of her country in this direction, with focus on transboundary problems. She highlighted the activities of bilateral working groups on water issues between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. She also underlined the initiative of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia on maintaining regional dialogue and developing draft conventions on the Amudarya and Syrdarya Rivers.

In conclusion, the participants shared opinions on the workshop and identified issues which need to be considered in detail in the forthcoming events. Those are transboundary impact of water scarcity on health, the role of joint river commissions in health issues, regulation of wastewater, and transboundary impact.

9th Meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate

On December 13, 2017, the 9th meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was held. The meeting was aimed at discussing, planning and providing guidance to the implementation of the activities on water and climate under the program of work for 2016-2018 of the Water Convention.

The first item of the agenda included the program of pilot projects and activity of the global network of transboundary basins working on adaptation to climate change. In 2013, the global network of transboundary basins working on climate change adaptation was created by UNECE, in cooperation with the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), with the aim to promote cooperation on adaptation in transboundary basins, compare different methodologies and approaches for adaptation and promote a shared vision between the participating basins. The network members meet and share opinions at their annual meetings and regular workshops. By present, the following transboundary basins are included in the network: Chu-Talas, Dniester, Neman, Sava, Rhine, Dauria, Niger, Congo, Senegal, Mekong, Drina, Meuse, Lake Victoria, Sixaola, as well as the Sahara and Sahel Observatory. In four of these basins (Chu-Talas, Dniester, Neman, and Sava River basins), pilot projects are implemented with the support of UNECE, UNDP, OSCE, International Office for Water and others.

The Task Force was informed about the progress of the global network of basins. Representatives of transboundary basins of the global network informed the participants about their activities, challenges and lessons learned, and got a number of comments. Particularly, it was mentioned that the network activities duplicate those of

other platforms; however, substantial experience was accumulated and can be shared. At the same time, the participants underlined that the activity of the Water Convention for 2019–2021 may be enhanced by:

- establishing basin commissions
- developing international management plans
- supporting policy-making on adaptation, including Directives on Droughts
- working on general approaches to water management and adaptation
- classifying water quality indicators.

Representatives of the Chu-Talas Commission told on adaptation carried out in three directions, including the development of strategic document on adaptation, demonstration of some adaptation measures, and strengthening capacity on adaptation. Close coordination of various projects on adaptation to climate change significantly improve work.

Other transboundary basins were invited to become members of the global network.

The next item of the agenda was preparation of a “Words into Action” guide on water and disasters. The Task Force was updated by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction on the latest developments with implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. Particularly, they focused on three main achievements after its adoption:

- 1) UN General Assembly approved indicators to assess 7 global targets in February 2017. Development of indicators and their monitoring includes preparation of technical guidelines for accountability and minimum standards for data. The UN Statistical Committee approved Sendai indicators for SDGs 1, 11, and 13. Such alignment of indicators on various platforms allows harmonizing their implementation and monitoring, as well as lessening burden on the countries in terms of accounting.
- 2) The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Cancun in 2017, which gathered more than 5,000 participants and called on assessing risks of critical infrastructure by 2019 and investing in new infrastructure only after assessing all risks.
- 3) Working on task (e), including
 - a. Development and update of national and local strategies and policies by 2020
 - b. Improvement of legislation and national databases and risk assessment
 - c. Technical support of member countries
 - d. United Nations plan of action on disaster risk reduction for resilience is a key tool to ensure convergence and coherence at the national level

The speakers also underlined that water-related problems are fully addressed in items 34(e) and 33(c) of the Sendai Framework Program.

Mr. Jos Timmerman informed the Task Force about the progress in preparation of the Sendai Framework “Words into Action” Implementation Guide for Addressing Water-Related Disasters and Transboundary Cooperation. The Task Force was invited to provide feedback and comments, including proposals on case study of the draft document until January 15, 2018.

Under Item 3 “Contribution to global processes on water, climate and disasters” the Task Force was informed about the latest developments with regards to water and climate under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), namely the outcomes of the 23rd UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (Bonn, 6 - 17 November 2017), the Nairobi Work Program, the Adaptation Committee, etc. The outcomes of the “International summit of the great rivers of the world: "taking action for water and climate" (Rome, 23-25 October 2017) were also presented.

Then the Task Force was informed about the progress with regards to financing adaptation in transboundary basins and the newly started cooperation with multilateral development banks in this field. Representatives of these banks informed the Task Force about the outcomes of the training on how to prepare bankable project proposals for financing adaptation in transboundary basins (Dakar, 21-23 June 2017), as well as called to express an interest in similar training workshops in the future.

Ms. Dinara Ziganshina, SIC ICWC, informed the Task Force about the outcomes of the Anniversary Conference of ICWC held on November 23-24 in Tashkent. The final Resolution of the Conference outlines directions for further activities to strengthen cooperation and improve water management. One of the measures is strengthening adaptation capacity in the water sector.

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THIRD ASIA-PACIFIC WATER SUMMIT

The 3rd Asia-Pacific Water Summit was organized by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in cooperation with the Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF). It was held in Yangon, Myanmar on December 11-12, 2017.

The Asia-Pacific Water Summit is the largest high-level event, dedicated to water resource development in the Asia-Pacific region. It was initiated at the 4th World Water Forum in Mexico in 2006.

As a host-country, Myanmar defined the theme of the 3rd APWS “Water Security for Sustainable Development”. Thus, the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all – was underlined. Myanmar expressed the will to cooperate with other countries not only on water resource management but also through water for socioeconomic development in general.

Objectives of the 3rd APWS:

- Setting out a course for the sustainable development of the Asia-Pacific region with a perspective on water
- Providing and sharing concrete actions, solutions, innovations toward transboundary and multi-partnership cooperation for integrated water resources management, water-based economy and implementation of globally agreed agendas.

Representatives of only 39 out of 49 member-countries of APWF participated. In fact, Muslim countries did not participate due to recent harassment of Muslims in Myanmar. At the Summit, Central Asia was represented only by official delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic in the person of the Second Secretary of the Department of analytics, planning, and coordination of the external relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic Mr. Timur Kydyrmyshev.

Large delegation of the Global Water Partnership (four sub-regions – Central Asia and Caucasus, South Asia, South-East Asia, and China) took part in the Summit. GWP Central Asia and Caucasus was presented in the face of Mr. V.I.Sokolov, regional coordinator of GWP CACENA and head of GEF Agency of IFAS.

In her welcoming and opening remarks, H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counselor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar noted “Myanmar was isolated for several decades. This resulted in complete degradation of all economic sectors and life of the country. Today Myanmar has chosen firm way of democratic development and is very interested in strengthening all spheres and forms of cooperation in the Asian region.”

15 heads of delegation and a range of international organizations and agencies delivered their speeches during a plenary session. It is important to emphasize the statement of Timur Kydyrmyshev, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic. He focused on the problem of economic compensations to be supposedly paid by downstream countries to upstream countries for water, which flows downstream in the transboundary basin. However, no one else raised and discussed this issue.

The Summit was organized around the following sessions:

1. Reviving Hydrological Cycles: Rainwater Harvesting and Sustainable Groundwater Management
2. Governance for Sustainable Urban Water Supply
3. Better Governance: Inclusive Approach through Good Practices on Water Governance and Integrated Water Resource Management
4. Water and Disasters in the Context of Climate Change: From the Mountains to the Islands
5. Water-Energy-Food- Ecosystems Nexus
6. Improving Sanitation and Wastewater Management
7. Roles of Women and Youth in Water Security and SDGs
8. Financing the Implementation of the Water-Related SDGs
9. Working Together: Multi-Stakeholders Partnership for Regional Cooperation (Session of the Global Water Partnership)
10. Source-to-Sea Opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region

In conclusion, the Yangon Declaration: The Pathway Forward was adopted.

V.I.Sokolov

YANGON DECLARATION: THE PATHWAY FORWARD

The Asia-Pacific region, with the largest and most dynamic economies in the world, is experiencing vigorous growth accompanied by a rapid reduction of poverty. However, approximately 1.1 billion people in Asia alone live in areas currently experiencing severe water stress and, unless significant action is taken, the number of affected population is expected to increase by more than 40% by 2050. Water security is a key component of sustainable development and faces enormous challenges. Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can only be materialized if water is valued and if water resources are effectively protected and managed for the enhancement of water security in all the countries of the region.

The Third Asia-Pacific Water Summit (3rd APWS) was convened in Yangon, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on 11-12 December 2017, with the aim of promoting cooperation and partnership, as well as sharing knowledge and experiences to enhance water security in the region towards concrete actions and solutions for sustainable development. This marks the beginning of a regional endeavor to take a leading role in the implementation of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018-2028.

We, the Leaders of the Asia-Pacific region,

Celebrating the significant progress made in the past ten years since the First Asia-Pacific Water Summit held in Beppu, Japan, in 2007, and the Second Summit in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2013, in which period there have been large contributions to the achievement and improvement of the water-related targets of the Millennium Development Goals across the region, particularly in strengthening water supply to fulfill basic human needs,

Expressing continued concern over the remaining gaps between the ambition to deliver internationally agreed post-2015 water-related goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the increasing threats to water security, such as climate change, particularly in the lowest income countries, countries with mountain areas and Pacific Island Countries, as well as the impacts on vulnerable groups, such as women, children and the elderly, in rural areas alongside emerging and rapidly growing urban areas,

Reaffirming shared commitments to achieving the water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to enhance resilience and the quality of socio-economic growth,

Being aware that the abovementioned threats will continue to intensify as the world population is expected to reach 10 billion inhabitants in 2050, in which over half of them will be living in the Asia-Pacific region, meaning that the sustainability of the region becomes a key component of our global future,

Hereby express our determination to achieve water security for sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region and declare to:

Provide safe and affordable drinking water and basic sanitation for all in the region by 2025, five years in advance compared to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as agreed at the First Asia-Pacific Water Summit, both in fast-growing urban areas, as well as in rural areas;

Double investment at the regional level in infrastructure and community-based efforts to address water-related disasters and significantly increase water security;

Advance research and development, as well as education and training, to generate innovative solutions, particularly in water use efficiency and productivity, recycling, risk assessment and reduction, policy and governance, meet growing water demand, reduce disaster damage and improve sanitation and wastewater management;

Recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all solution and apply measures tailored at local conditions of countries and communities through regional knowledge management;

Facilitate the implementation of integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation, as appropriate, and partnerships.

We envision the Pathway Forward to upscale innovation for water security in the Asia-Pacific region and are determined to:

Sound water cycle management

Integrate rainwater, rivers, groundwater, glaciers, oceans and ecosystems, where relevant, into water cycle analysis and related policies at the river basin level;

Undertake efforts to conserve and restore water-related ecosystems, including deltas and estuaries, and promote the inclusion in the development agenda of wastewater management, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction;

Take actions to increase water productivity in irrigation and drainage to achieve food security and sustainable agriculture;

Combine the management of water resources and urban, regional and national land use planning;

Governance and inclusive development

Establish sound regulatory mechanisms and planning at the local and national level to supply safe and sustainable drinking water and to extend and improve sanitation and wastewater management services;

Ensure the protection of vulnerable groups from water-related disasters and engage them in disaster management;

Promote the integration of scientific and engineering approaches with sociologic and economic perspectives, along with local and traditional knowledge, in water-related assessments and activities;

Take measures to build the capacity of all stakeholders, particularly women, youth, disabled and the poor, and create mechanisms for involving them in water-related decision-making processes and multi-stakeholder partnerships at the different levels of governance;

Urge all parties to end open defecation by 2025, as agreed at the First Asia-Pacific Water Summit, ensuring the availability of sanitation facilities, as well as promoting hygiene education for behavioral change;

Financing the implementation of water-related Sustainable Development Goals

Support the development of innovative and sustainable financial instruments that generate low-interest lending mechanisms, long-term cash-flow and attractive returns for high impact water-related investment at multiple levels and scales;

Adopt innovative financial solutions such as reforming public finance, advancing Public-Public Partnerships, Public-Private Partnerships, structuring blended finance, applying Environment, Governance and Society investment and developing financial tools for long-term investment;

Focus on ex-ante investment for infrastructure and community-based efforts, including disaster preparedness and risk reduction, in addition to post-disaster recovery;

Develop a regional monitoring system on the financing of water-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets, aiming at harmonizing and complementing national and international initiatives and incentivizing collaborative partnerships.

We request the Asia-Pacific Water Forum (APWF), as a leading coordination and facilitation platform for water security solutions in the region to:

Water cooperation at all levels

Present this Yangon Declaration “The Pathway Forward”, accompanied by a supporting document to Call for Action, to relevant regional and global fora;

Provide region-specific inputs to the outcomes of the High-Level Panel on Water (HLPW);

Contribute to the Asian Water Development Outlook as an ongoing analysis to support the improvement of the water security situation in the Asia-Pacific region;

Lead the regional contribution to the Eighth World Water Forum, to be held in March 2018 in Brasilia, Brazil;

Advocate innovation and lead through action at the Singapore International Water Week, to be held in July 2018;

Keep playing its coordination role for the contributions of the Asia-Pacific region to the Stockholm World Water Week.

We collectively express our sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for successfully hosting the Third Asia-Pacific Water Summit and for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all participants.

December 12, 2017

FIRST CONSULTATION MEETING OF THE HEAD OF STATES OF CENTRAL ASIA¹

On March 15, Astana hosted the first consultation meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia.

It was attended by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sooronbay Zheenbekov, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Imomali Rahmon and the Chairperson of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan Akja Nurberdiyeva.

The participants discussed issues related to expansion of political, trade-economic, and humanitarian cooperation between the regional countries, joint fight against terrorism, extremism, drug and arms smuggling, strengthening of security and stability in Central Asia.

It was emphasized that Central Asia was not only a geographical and geopolitical, but also a single cultural and civilizational space. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to issue of development of cooperation between the territories, which along with ensuring sustainable development in Central Asia will allow to fully use the industrial, investment and intellectual potential of the regions of Central Asian countries.

The Heads of State noted the need for further strengthening of cooperation within the framework of CIS, SCO, OIC and other authoritative international structures. At the meeting, a wide range of issues related to cooperation of the countries of the region in political, trade-economic, transport, cultural, humanitarian and other spheres were discussed.

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev noted that relations based on mutual understanding of Central Asian countries play a decisive role in ensuring peace, security and sustainable development, as well as in expanding regional and international cooperation. Central Asia, with its huge energy potential, natural resources, transport and communication capabilities, has an important geopolitical significance, and the process taking place affect the stability of the whole Eurasia.

For establishment of a regular dialogue in this direction, joint search for a solution to regional problems, conducting a consultation meeting of the heads of

¹ Inputs from:

<http://uza.uz/en/politics/consultation-meeting-of-the-heads-of-states-of-central-asia--15-03-2018>

<http://president.tj/en/node/17299>

http://uzbekistan.nsk.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9583:first-consultative-meeting-of-the-heads-of-state-of-central-asia&catid=42:news&Itemid=138

Central Asian states should become traditional.

The participants also focused on the rational use of the region's water resources.

It was noted that unification of regional and international efforts in order to eliminate the consequences of the ecological catastrophe of the Aral Sea was the main factor of worthy confronting this problem.

In this regard, President Emomali Rahmon noted "I repeatedly in my address to the United Nations and in my annual messages to Majlisi Oli have been noting that Tajikistan has never created and would never create water-use-related problems to its neighbors. Today, I want to stress once again that we will never leave our neighbors without water. I believe that an open dialogue, the strengthening of mutual understanding and development of constructive cooperation would contribute to the achievement of our objectives in this area".

The head of state expressed interest in developing regional partnership in the sphere of rational and targeted use of water and energy resources. According to him, existing hydropower facilities would provide a solution to the region's energy and water problems.

During the meeting, the Chairperson of the Mejlis of Turkmenistan read out the written message of President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov to the summit of the Head of state of Central Asia. The appeal emphasized that cooperation with the nearest neighbors was one of the priority aspects of the foreign policy strategy of the state, which was set for the broadest partnership with the countries of the region, in every way promoting the promotion of an equal, trustful dialogue in all directions, both in bilateral and multilateral formats.

The Turkmen leader focused on the water diplomacy tasks. In this context, it is emphasized that Turkmenistan that has chaired the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea since 2017, was actively working in the field of ecology and rational water use in Central Asia, given their colossal influence on the social and economic development of the states in the region. In this context, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between countries on improving the environmental situation in Prearalie, rational use of water resources and ensuring the high level of environmental protection in this region.

In Central Asia, water-related problem is an essential factor in regional processes. Hence, a consensus is the only acceptable platform for efficient interaction, including for ensuring environment and food security, creating a comprehensive system of sustainable energy, adaptation to climate change.

At the meeting with representatives of the mass media, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that the first consultation meeting of the Heads of States of Central Asia was fruitful, such summits would serve to further development of cooperation in the region.

The Parties agreed to conduct the next consultation meeting on the eve of celebration of Navruz 2019, in Tashkent.

In conclusion, a joint statement of the Heads of State of Central Asia was adopted.

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE HEADS OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES ON NAURYZ HOLIDAY

We, the Presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan, cordially congratulate the nations of Central Asia on Nauryz, the common holiday for all of our area.

We emphasize that on February 23, 2010, the holiday was recognized by the UN General Assembly Resolution as the International Day of Nauryz and was included by UNESCO in the List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

For its thousand-year history, the Nauryz Holiday has become a symbol of the revival and renewal of nature and society, spiritual purification and self-improvement of a human being. This blessed holiday epitomizes prosperity, unity, brotherhood and mutual support; all those enduring cultural and historical values that unite our nations. We must cherish and develop this great heritage, inherited from our common ancestors.

The period of celebrating Nauryz at all times is accompanied by the consolidation of human and family relations, ties of friendship and good neighbourliness, a special hospitality between neighbours. This is important today for our countries, united by the common history, culture, way of life and traditions.

It is very symbolic that on the eve of this general holiday we express our desire for regional cooperation, mutual support, and joint solution of topical issues in order to ensure security, stability and sustainable development of our entire region.

Mutually beneficial trade, economic and investment cooperation, the expansion of the regional transit and transport infrastructure, the rational development of water, energy and food potential, the development of industry and processing industries, the use of advanced technologies and innovations, the advancement of the digital economy will contribute to the sustainable growth of the well-being of the Central Asian nations.

Realizing our historical responsibility for preserving and strengthening the relations of mutual respect, friendship and unity between our peoples, we call for deepening cooperation in the sphere of culture and art, education and science, tourism and sports.

On the eve of the vernal equinox, the holiday of renewal and spiritual cleansing,

we wish the people of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as all the nations of our planet peace and well-being, welfare and joy, progress and success.

Let Nauryz bring prosperity and happiness to every family!

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