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National events and programs in the Central Asian States

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev` s State of the Nation Address – «Economic course of a Just Kazakhstan» (extract)

[..]

Dear Compatriots!

As many of you know, I deliver my annual State of the Nation Address at the opening session of Parliament. This has evolved into a meaningful tradition.

At this juncture, representatives from all branches of Government convene. We outline key directions for the medium-term, issue specific instructions, and set new objectives. This event breathes new life into the work of Parliament, the Government, and other authorized bodies, playing a pivotal role in the smooth and effective functioning of our state apparatus.

[..]

The new paradigm for Kazakhstan's economic development will hinge on the effective exploitation of our competitive advantages and the full realization of the potential of all key production factors—labor, capital, resources, and technologies.

As part of this new economic policy, we will move away from the long-term ephemeral goals. All objectives outlined in this Address should be accomplished within three years; for the most complex tasks, specific deadlines will be set.

Let me now delineate the main contours of the upcoming structural economic reforms.

[..]

We face another task: achieving a real breakthrough in the agro-industrial complex. The potential of the domestic agricultural sector is enormous, but we still cannot fully explore it.

Large markets surround Kazakhstan that require quality food products. Our country's strategic goal is to become one of the leading agricultural centers on the Eurasian continent. This will only be possible with a gradual transition

from primary production to higher value-added products. The aim is to increase the share of processed products in the agro-industrial complex up to 70% within three years. To do so, we will need to revise tax policy to stimulate processing.

A qualitative breakthrough in the industry requires a critical mass of large players. In order to retain our own markets and increase exports, we must have enterprises capable of ensuring volume, quality, and regularity of supplies.

Priority should be given to sectors that are promising for us: deep processing of meat, milk, and grain, and the development of industrial greenhouse farming. At the same time, we should not overlook the potential of domestic agricultural enterprises. The example of the North Kazakhstan region, where more than 100 large dairy farms are being built, illustrates this point well. The professionalism of agrarians and the availability of a fodder base, combined with well-designed government support, are yielding good results. This experience should be extended to the construction of poultry farms, vegetable warehouses, and meat cattle breeding enterprises.

Support for small farms is crucial for rural development. The «Auyl Amanaty» program has proven its relevance. The next stage of its development should not only provide soft loans but also stimulate cooperation among private subsidiary farms.

The deterioration of machinery and the tractor fleet has become a serious problem; this indicator currently stands at 80%. Therefore, the renewal rate of agricultural machinery should be increased to 8-10% per year. The interests of domestic machinery manufacturers and agrarians must be considered.

Sales policy is especially important amid growing global competition and the reorientation of commodity flows. It is crucial to preserve the domestic and export niches developed over the years. The Government faces the task of systematically expanding export geography. Measures should be taken to promote Kazakh goods in foreign markets.

Modern agriculture is a high-tech industry. Land and climate are no longer the determining factors for the success of agrarians; innovative solutions have come to the fore. Without modern science, the industry will not just stagnate but deteriorate.

Measures should be taken to develop agro-science, especially its practical application in agriculture. The National Agricultural Research and Education Centre should be transformed into a vertically integrated agro-technological hub.

Scientific and practical cooperation with recognized foreign agro-science centers should be established. Private scientific and technological initiatives will be supported, and educational programs will be adapted to the needs of the agricultural sector.

Serious reforms are needed in plant science. Focus should be on diversifying crops, increasing areas under high-yielding varieties, and reducing water-intensive and monoculture crops. Providing farmers with indigenous seeds and breeding new productive varieties should be prioritized.

It is important to address the issue of excessive price regulation, which seriously hampers the development of the agro-industrial complex.

The Food Contract Corporation should play a more active stabilizing role. If necessary, it will intervene to restrain price growth and should support the private market in creating a comprehensive network for the production, storage, and marketing of agricultural products.

Last winter, a series of failures at thermal power stations sharply highlighted the problems of our worn-out infrastructure that have been accumulating for years. Outdated infrastructure directly impacts both the social well-being of citizens and the pace of industrialization. A new economic model cannot be implemented without renovating our infrastructure. The Infrastructure Plan being developed by the Government should identify all problems in this sector and outline ways to rectify them.

Energy security must also be addressed. We should rely as much as possible on our own resources.

The key role is assigned to the power generation sector. Over the next five years, at least 14 gigawatts of new energy capacity will be introduced. The reconstruction of the first unit of the Ekibastuz Hydroelectric Power Station-1 will be completed this year. For the first time, the plant will operate all eight units. The project to expand Hydroelectric Power Station-2 is in process, while the project on Hydroelectric Power Station-3 is about to start.

Kazakhstan should not have to import electricity or be dependent on neighboring countries. The current situation is unacceptable from all viewpoints, particularly in terms of state security.

Of course, the implementation of renewable energy projects will continue. Special emphasis should be placed on the development of hydroelectric power plants. Energy, heat, and water supply constitute a single, technologically interconnected system. This system should be treated as an important, separate branch of the economy. The current approach has largely exhausted itself. Today, new solutions are required.

It is necessary to reset the tariff policy, implement new methods of tariff setting, and increase the investment attractiveness of the industry. Adequate market tariffs should be introduced for all natural monopolies for a period of 5-7 years. A guaranteed long-term tariff will allow for better planning of investments and serve as reliable collateral when attracting credit funds

At the same time, the responsibility of monopolists should be significantly increased. Digital control tools will be introduced, and citizens' access to information on the execution of tariff estimates and investment programs will be expanded. Further gasification of the country is also on the agenda.

[..]

Electricity, heat, and water are basic goods necessary for a comfortable life. These resources should be used responsibly and carefully. This approach should serve as the basis for a new household culture in our country. This notion applies not only to households but also to all participants in economic relations. Wasteful consumption is no longer acceptable. The Government needs to fundamentally revise the current energy efficiency policy in line with OECD standards.

Clear regulatory requirements for energy efficiency and resource conservation should be introduced step-by-step. The goal is to reduce key energy consumption indicators and energy intensity by at least 15% by 2029.

Emphasis should be placed on the development of a green economy. It is clear that in the long-term period, a global transition to clean energy is inevitable. According to international analysts, about a third of global capital investment is already being invested in renewable energy projects.

Kazakhstan has also made significant progress in this field, adopting a new Environmental Code and a Strategy for achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. The share of renewable energy in total generation has increased to almost 5% over the last five years.

By 2027, another 1.4 GW of capacity will be commissioned. The structure of the country's energy balance will inevitably change. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance approaches to managing the entire energy industry, from generation to sales.

The development of hydrogen generation is necessary.

The expansion of generation facilities serves as the basis for technology transfer and the localization of production in power engineering, as well as the creation of the battery industry. Fortunately, we have abundant raw materials

New solutions are needed in the field of creating balancing capacities and energy storage systems.

The transition to carbon neutrality can be accelerated by greenhouse gas emissions trading.

The Government and businesses should seize the opportunities in these areas.

[..]

The issue of water availability and quality remains critical. Given the growth of population and the economy by 2040, the water deficit in Kazakhstan may reach 12-15 bln. m³

Our country depends on transboundary water resources. Eurasia's rivers and canals are a shared natural asset designed to unite peoples and economies. We should always seek understanding and a mutually beneficial consensus with our neighbors and friends on this issue. Therefore, conducting a balanced water policy and solving issues of transboundary water use are the most important tasks of the Government.

Farmers and industrialists need qualitative analyses and forecasts on water supply, covering both annual supplies and the medium-term perspective. Therefore, planning in advance is necessary. At the same time, it is crucial to manage inland water resources in a rational manner. The process of introducing water-saving technologies is extremely slow, and there is no culture of responsible water consumption. Losses in agriculture, as a key water consumer, reach up to 40% in some regions. The existing condition of water management facilities exceeds 60% deterioration.

Decisive and quick measures are needed to rectify the situation. Firstly, the introduction of advanced water-saving technologies should be accelerated, targeting up to 150,000 hectares per year. It is necessary to address the issue of meltwater accumulation and losses during its transfer, as this represents our internal reserve. For this purpose, we should build 20 new and reconstruct at least 15 existing reservoirs, and modernize and digitize at least 3,500 km of canals. The aim is to provide about two additional cubic kilometers of water by 2027.

Introduction of water-saving technologies is a pressing issue that requires immediate action. Concurrently, we cannot do without a new tariff policy that suits the current circumstances. The outdated infrastructure is operating to the limit of its capacity. Creating a new one is a market task.

Excessive water consumption will result in increased tariffs. In summary, it is necessary to conserve water in every possible way. At the same time, the black market for water must be completely eradicated.

Water is a limited resource; its availability is crucial for the survival of farmers. Therefore, violations in this area will be strictly suppressed and punished to the full extent of the law.

Water resources are no less important for our country than oil, gas, or metal. In this regard, I am ordering the establishment of a full-fledged independent department to manage water resources effectively. The Ministry of

Water Resources and Irrigation will be created. The National Hydrogeological Service will be reconstituted within this new ministry.

The entire water management system, including key water companies like «Kazvodkhoz» and «Nurinsk group water pipeline,» will be reformed. This will require significant material and, most importantly, personnel investments in the sector.

Growing water scarcity is a common problem for Central Asian countries. Rational use of water resources, coupled with energy and transportation, can become another important element in a new model of regional cooperation. I instruct the Government to address this issue thoroughly with our neighboring countries.

[..]

Meetings of the Heads of State of Central Asia

The Fifth Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia



On September 14, 2023, the anniversary 5th Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The Central Asian Summit was chaired by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon.

The 5th Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia was attended by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov, the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev as a guest of honor.



The Heads of State discussed a wide range of topical issues in relations between the region's countries and considered the prospects for expanding regional cooperation in the area of sustainable economic development and strengthening the foundation for good neighbourly relations, further development of the cultural and humanitarian space of the region.

The Head of State Emomali Rahmon drew the attention of the Heads of State of Central Asia to the issues of cooperation for further expansion of trade and economic ties, development of cooperation programs in agriculture, industry and new technologies, major transport and infrastructure projects, efficient use of hydropower, development of cooperation in cultural and humanitarian spheres, establishment of the Association of Mass Media of Central Asia states and other relevant issues to ensure security in the information space of Central Asia.

Following the speech of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, presidents of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan took the floor.

Then the video-address of the UN Secretary-General António Guterres was presented.

By the decision of the Heads of State of Central Asia, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the National Leader of the Turkmen people, Chairman of the

Khalk Maslakhaty of Turkmenistan was awarded the «Badge of Honor of the Heads of Central Asia States.»



Five documents were adopted at the 5th Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States:

- Joint statement on the results of the 5th Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States.
- Agreement between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan on general focus areas of youth policy.
- Agreement on strengthening the transport connectivity in Central Asia.
- Provision on the Council of National Coordinators for the Consultative Meetings of the Heads of Central Asian States.
- «Roadmap» in support of health and well-being in Central Asia for 2022-2025.

On the sidelines of the summit in Dushanbe, 14 side events have been held. These are (1) Central Asia EXPO 2023, (2) Gala Concert «Evening of Friendship», (3) Economic Forum, (4) The Second Forum of Rectors of Higher

educational institutions, (5) First Meeting of Ministers of Transport, (6) Dialogue of women leaders of Central Asia, (7) Exhibition of artists, (8) Forum of scientists, (9) Festival of National Food, (10) International Swimming Tournament, (11) Volunteer Forum, (12) Forum of Youth Organizations, (13) Forum of young entrepreneurs (14) Forum of heads of state bodies on youth affairs.



The Presidents put forward the following initiatives and proposals¹

Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan



1. Individual programs for sectoral development

We need to identify new opportunities for growth and cooperation, as well as utilize the full potential for a strategic breakthrough in the economic direction. The economies of the region should complement each other,» said Emomali Rahmon.

In this context, he proposed developing individual cooperation programs between the Central Asia countries in the field of agriculture, industry and new technologies.

¹ Source: What did the Central Asian presidents propose at the Dushanbe summit?<https://asiaplustj.info/ru/news/tajikistan/politics/20230915/chto-predlozhili-prezidenti-tsentralnoi-azii-na-dushanbinskom-sammite>

2. Concept of logistics centers in the countries

The Leader of the Nation proposed drafting a concept for integration of logistics centers in the Central Asian countries in order to maximize the effect of international freight transport development.

3. Association of Central Asia Media

“In recent years, media interest in Central Asia has increased dramatically. Media landscape is full of diverse, sometimes contradictory and distorted information about the state of affairs in the region. It is important to take measures to create the information atmosphere of genuine friendship and cooperation based on evidence rather than on speculations,” said Emomali Rahmon.

In this context, Emomali Rahmon proposed establishing an Association of Mass Media of Central Asian States.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Kazakhstan



1. Dialogue on security

The President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev proposed holding a Dialogue on Security and Cooperation in Central Asia at the level of Security Council secretaries.

2. Unified electronic database of commodity producers

“To establish direct ties between business entities, we propose developing a unified electronic database of commodity producers, for example, as a part of the Central Asia Gateway portal,” said Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

3. Plan on industrial cooperation

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev proposed developing an Action Plan for the development of industrial cooperation among the Central Asian states, aimed at establishing a closed production cycle for certain goods, bearing in mind their third-country export markets.

4. Region-wide TV Channel of Central Asia

The President of Kazakhstan pointed out that there is still acute information shortage in mass media in terms of reporting on people’s lives in the region.

«It is desirable to change this trend, perhaps it makes sense to set a region-wide TV channel or an Internet news site,» he suggested.

5. Forum of Historians

Tokayev proposed organizing the first Forum of Historians of Central Asian states that would serve as a basis for joint research and publication of scientific works.

«We have a great opportunity to show the world the unique nature and distinctive culture of our countries by jointly promoting the touristic brand of Central Asia,» said the President.

Serdar Berdimuhamedov, President of Turkmenistan

1. Central Asian Chamber of Commerce

The President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov proposed establishing a Central Asian Chamber of Commerce.

In his opinion, it will help to coordinate joint steps of the countries in trade development, ensure the commercial interests of all business entities of the Central Asian market, and attract investments for major regional projects.

2. Council of Central Asian countries on new technologies

By putting forward this proposal, Serdar Berdimuhamedov noted that such a Council could serve as a think tank for forming a united strategy of the states on new technologies, making relevant recommendations and drafting specific proposals.



3. Energy Dialogue between the Central Asian countries

Serdar Berdimuhamedov said that Turkmenistan is ready to supply its natural gas and electricity to Central Asian countries and through their territories to foreign markets on mutually beneficial terms.

“We believe it is possible to consider the proposal of establishing Energy Dialogue between the Central Asian countries for developing long-term cooperation between our states,” he said.

4. Regional Center for climate technologies in Central Asia

The President of Turkmenistan proposed establishing a specialized organization – the Regional Center for technologies that could help tackle climate change in Central Asia.

“We are ready to provide all necessary infrastructure to host such Center in Ashgabat,” he stated.

Sadyr Japarov, President of Kyrgyzstan



2. Simplification of customs regulations

The President of Kyrgyzstan, Sadyr Japarov called for simplification of customs procedures and provision of efficient transport and logistics networks to optimize the flow of goods and services across the borders of Central Asia.

2. Attraction of investments to the water sector of Central Asian countries

The President noted that for rational use of water and energy resources in Central Asia, it is necessary to take drastic, concrete and effective measures to attract large-scale investments, both public and private, to water and hydro-energy sectors of the countries.

3. Regional center for energy efficient technologies

The President of Kyrgyzstan proposed establishing a regional center for energy efficient and resource-saving technologies in Bishkek.

This, he said, would ensure the sound use of water and energy resources in our region as a whole.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of Uzbekistan



1. Development of industrial cooperation and an Economic Council

The President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev proposed elaborating a Strategy for development of industrial cooperation in Central Asia.

«Production of mineral fertilizers, polymers, finished metal products, assembly of agricultural machinery, production of finished textile and food products for export to the third countries may become a promising area,» he said.

The President of Uzbekistan also proposed forming an Economic Council of Central Asian States to expand trade and economic ties.

2. Agreement on transport and transit

Shavkat Mirziyoyev also proposed signing an Agreement on Transport and Transit in Central Asia, forming a mechanism to promote efficient transport corridors to access the markets of China, South Asia and Middle East, the European Union, with application of through rates that are favorable to business.

In addition, he proposed to draft a Program of measures to ensure liberalization of transport service market and optimization of authorization procedures and consider the issue of creating an integrated digital international transportation platform.

3. Regional strategy on adaptation to climate change

“Adoption of the Regional Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change can be our real contribution to climate resilience and “green” development,» said Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

He proposed establishing a multilateral platform «Central Asian Climate Dialogue» at the level of environmental ministers to form a common climate agenda in the region and take collaborative and effective measures.

4. Media-platform “History and Culture of Central Asia”

The President of Uzbekistan proposed establishing an international media platform “History and Culture of Central Asia: One Past and Common Future”, with involvement of scholars and representatives of the general public to form a region-wide content.

“All this will serve to strengthen mutual understanding and region-wide identity”, stated Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan

The President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev attended the meeting as a guest of honor. He also put forward some ideas for cooperation.

1. Use the opportunities of Azerbaijan in the sphere of transportation and logistics

“For the Central Asian countries, Azerbaijan is a reliable transit country to the markets of Turkey and Europe.

Not least significant is the transit in the opposite direction. Our brothers in Central Asia know that Azerbaijan’s entire transportation and logistics infrastructure is available to them,” Ilham Aliyev said.



2. “Digital Silk Way” project

Azerbaijan has been consistently promoting the “Digital Silk Way” strategic telecommunications project designed to turn the country into a regional digital hub.

The initiatives implemented as a part of this project include the establishment of fiber-optic communication line between Europe and Asia, the creation of the region's largest DATA-center and the provision of modern digital services to neighboring countries.

The President of Azerbaijan invited the Central Asian countries to utilize this project to their benefit.

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

Meeting of the Council of the Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

The regular meeting of the Council of the Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea was held on September 15, 2023.

The event chaired by the Tajik side was attended by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov, as well as the First Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic Adylbek Kasymaliev and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Head of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia Mr. Kakha Imnadze.



The agenda of the IFAS summit included the issues of cooperation for further improvement of water management, environmental and socio-economic situation in the Aral Sea basin, strengthening the role of IFAS in solving water

and energy issues in the region, as well as improving the image of IFAS on the international arena. The issues of expanding the range of potential partners for the implementation of targeted programs under umbrella of the Fund were also raised.



Following the results of the event, the Heads of IFAS Founder-States signed the following documents:

- Dushanbe Declaration by the Heads of IFAS Founder-States.
- Decision of the Council of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States on the results of chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan in the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.
- Decision of the Council of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States on election of the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev as the President of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea for 2024-2026.
- Decision of the Council of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States on activities on institutional and legal improvement of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

The chairmanship in IFAS has been passed to the Republic of Kazakhstan for the period of 2024-2026.

Address by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon²

Over the years, the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and its bodies did a lot to improve water, environmental and socio-economic situation in the Aral Sea basin. The President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon said this at the meeting of the Council of Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.



Emomali Rahmon particularly noted international activities of IFAS and its bodies. During the years, the Fund has been progressively developing cooperation with international organizations, financial institutions and country donors. Thanks to this, in 2008 IFAS got the observer status to the UN General Assembly.

All prerequisites for further cooperation with the UN and its institutions were created. This is clearly confirmed by IFAS participation in the UN Water Conference, which was held in March in New York under the co-chairmanship

² Source: <https://khovar.tj/rus/2023/09/emomali-rahmon-za-gody-deyatelnosti-mezhdunarodnogo-fonda-spaseniya-arala-prodelana-kompleksnaya-rabota-no-mnogo-eshhyo-predstoit-sdelat/>

of Tajikistan and the Netherlands. Here one should note the Central Asian session, where regional water commitments were voiced.

During Tajikistan's chairmanship, four meetings of the IFAS Board were held and 29 important decisions were made.

Meanwhile, as the President of Tajikistan noted, much remains to be done. «This is especially relevant considering the regional population growth, economic development and the negative impacts of climate change on water resources. The rapid melting of glaciers and increasing number of natural disasters, such as floods, drought, and mudflows pose serious threats. All these challenges require consolidation of our actions,» added the President.

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

Dear Heads of delegations, Presidents, Friends!

First of all, let me express my sincere gratitude to the Tajik side and personally to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Mr. Emomali Sharipovich for the traditionally warm reception and excellent organization of the event.

I also welcome the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Mr. Kakha Imnadze.

Our today's meeting has a symbolic significance - this year is the 30th anniversary of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

Since the establishment, IFAS has become the most important institution of regional cooperation on transboundary water sharing and on environmental and socio-economic issues in the Aral Sea basin.

It is difficult to overstate the role of the Fund in ensuring security, stability and sustainable development in Central Asia.

Moreover, IFAS is one of the few successful mechanisms of regional cooperation representing Central Asia on the international stage.

Tajikistan's chairmanship in the Fund and the work of the Executive Committee made a significant contribution to the development of this unique institution and further deepening of cooperation in the region.

During Tajikistan's chairmanship there was an active process of institutional and legal improvement of IFAS .



The Aral Sea Basin Assistance Program (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Program for Sustainable Development of Central Asia (REP4SD) were adopted.

All this contributed to strengthening the capacity of the organization and improving its performance.

In the Joint Statement adopted at the end of the Fifth Consultative Meeting, we noted the importance of continuing this work.

It is also worth noting Tajikistan's efforts to raise the credibility of the Fund on the international stage.

The Executive Committee of IFAS took part in large international water conferences, which allowed to attract a significant amount of donor funds (about \$655 million) for implementation of regional and national projects.

For the first time in almost half a century, the UN Water Conference was held in New York under the co-chairmanship of Tajikistan and the Netherlands.

Undoubtedly, this is a landmark event for our region.

From the high rostrum of the UN General Assembly, a unified voice of the Central Asian region on the future of the Aral Sea was heard, and the Joint Statement of the Central Asian States was presented.

Kazakhstan highly values the results of Tajikistan's chairmanship in IFAS and expects further active participation of the Tajik side and other founder-states in the Fund's activities.

Dear Colleagues!

Today's meeting is called to give new impulse to IFAS work taking into account changing ecological situation and new challenges in the Aral Sea basin.

The successful activity of the Fund is of fundamental importance to ensure the sustainable development and prosperity of our region.

Central Asia's security is threatened by global climate change, the onset of the dry season and the shortage of irrigation water

According to international experts, the temperature in our region is rising much faster than the global average.

This leads to a reduction in the area of glaciers, the main source of water in the Aral Sea basin. Their volume has decreased by 30% over the last 50 years

According to analysts' estimates, by 2050, droughts in Central Asia may cause damage amounting to 1.3% of GDP per year, resulting in approximately 5 million internal climate migrants.

We also face the problems of inefficient water use and ignoring environmental impacts.

Our two main rivers - Syr Darya and Amu Darya – are over-regulated.

More than 80 reservoirs reaching 65 km³ in total have been built in their basins.

As a result, we can expect an increase in anthropogenic load, continuation of extensive natural resource use, and an aggravation of diverse socio-ecologic problems.

All of this creates serious risks to regional security. A Kazakh proverb says: «Water is a source of well-being».

I believe that our states should formulate water policies based on the understanding that water is a limited natural resource, upon which the well-being and sustainable development of the entire region directly depend.

The issue of maximizing water saving through the adoption of digital technologies is pressing. This direction can become the main focus of our cooperation on water resources.

In my recent Address, I paid special attention to water issues. At my directive, Kazakhstan has established the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, which will address pressing issues in this sector.

We look forward to constructive interaction with all our neighboring states.

Dear Colleagues!

According to the rules of rotation, the chairmanship in IFAS for a three-year period will pass from Tajikistan to Kazakhstan from January 1, 2024.

In this context, I would like to share a vision for future development of the Fund.

The President then shared his vision for the further development of the Fund. He called for the swift completion of the process of improving the institutional and legal framework of IFAS.

First. It is important to finalize the process of institutional and legal improvement IFAS as soon as possible.

The powers and responsibilities of the Board and the Executive Committee of the Fund should be extended.

I also propose to transform the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination into the Interstate Commission for Water and Energy. These steps would improve the IFAS performance.

It is necessary to address the issue of equitable distribution of IFAS working bodies among the participating countries and to staff them with representatives of all Central Asian states.

Taking into account the inefficient, in our opinion, experience of rotating the location of the IFAS Executive Committee, we believe it is expedient to place it on a permanent basis in one of the countries. We would suggest Astana in this regard, but this can be discussed.

This would avoid downtime between Chairmanships and strengthen the institutional framework.

All these measures are to enhance the effectiveness of the Fund's activities, as well as to strengthen its interaction with international partners.

Second. Establish a long-term and sustainable regional cooperation mechanism for efficient use of water and energy resources in Central Asia, taking into account the interests of all countries in the region in the spheres of irrigation, hydropower and ecology.

In our opinion, the International Water and Energy Consortium could serve such a mechanism.

Third. Develop a Work Plan for implementation of a unified automated system of water accounting, monitoring, management and distribution in the Aral Sea basin.

Implementation of this initiative will ensure transparency of water use in the region and strengthen the dialogue and friendship between the Central Asian countries.

Another important initiative is the establishment of a Central Asian Project Office for climate, which would enable joint development of effective adaptation and mitigation measures.

We positively assess participation of Bishkek in the activities of the Working Group on institutional and legal improvement of IFAS.

We hope that the Kyrgyz Republic will resume its full membership in IFAS.

In the future, we look forward to the chairmanship of brotherly Kyrgyzstan in the Fund.

Dear Colleagues!

This summit convincingly proves that only close cooperation, mutually beneficial partnership and respect for each other's interests can ensure stable development, security and economic self-sufficiency of our region.

I am confident that our meeting will make it possible to make timely and consolidated decisions that will contribute to further strengthening of regional water cooperation.

I propose to hold the next summit in Kazakhstan in 2026, in conjunction with the Regional Climate Summit initiated by me under the auspices of the UN.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the readiness of Kazakhstan to do as much as possible to bring IFAS activity to a qualitatively new level.

I am sure that active participation of all founder-states in the Fund's work will contribute to successful solution of water issues and further deepen regional integration.

Thank you for your attention!

Address by the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov³

Distinguished Heads of States!

Dear members of delegations!

First of all, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Sharifovich Rahmon for the invitation to visit Dushanbe to participate in the meeting of the Council of Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

The current meeting on hospitable Tajik land is an evidence of the high level of our relations and mutual desire to jointly and solidly solve the problems of the region.

The current event for our countries as founders of IFAS is especially symbolic, since this year we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the the Fund.

Let me congratulate everyone on this significant date and note that over the past years, IFAS has become an important regional platform for dialog and cooperation to address environmental and socio-economic problems caused by desiccation of the Aral Sea.

Today one must particularly note that Tajikistan effectively chaired the Fund. Our Tajik colleagues have done much work to support IFAS and increase the international prestige of the Fund.

I wish success to the chairmanship of the Republic of Kazakhstan. I am confident that in the coming period our Kazakh colleagues will make every effort to solve the tasks at hand, co-ordinate our steps, support and promote constructive initiatives.

Dear participants!

As you know, Turkmenistan always emphasizes at international fora that the Aral problem has gone far beyond the region and has become a truly global problem requiring global response.

Our country backs up its initiatives with concrete actions both at the national level and on the world stage

³ Source:<https://turkmenistan.gov.tm/ru/post/75571/vystuplenie-prezidenta-turkmenistana-serdara-berdimuhamedova-na-zasedanii-soveta-glav-gosudarstv-uchreditelej-mezhdunarodnogo-fonda-spaseniya-arala>



Back in 2012, Turkmenistan approved the National Strategy on Climate Change, which reflects the Aral Sea issues, in particular, reducing the negative impact of the Aral Sea drying up on the natural environment, curbing desertification and land degradation, improving the sanitary and epidemiological situation in the Aral Sea region, as well as addressing a number of social and humanitarian issues.

In 2019, we updated this strategy taking into account the current realities and then adopted the National Program on the Aral Sea for the period of 2021-2025, which provides for the implementation of 86 projects in the economic, social, environmental, and water spheres.

At the same time, on the international arena, by the initiative of Turkmenistan, the UN General Assembly Resolutions on Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea were adopted in 2018 and 2019. In particular, they underline the importance of multilateral efforts aimed at minimizing and eliminating the consequences of the Aral ecological crisis, emphasizing the importance of strengthening dialogue, cooperation and coordination between the UN system and the Fund.

As a follow-up to the above-mentioned actions, on May 19, 2023, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) adopted a Resolution initiated by Turkmenistan on «Consideration of conditions for the establishment of a special UN program for the Aral Sea basin».

Turkmenistan will continue advocating for the implementation of initiatives of the IFAS founder-states aimed at intensifying regional interaction and forming systemic mechanisms of cooperation in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development in the Central Asian region.

In this context, it is proposed to boost the work on institutional and legal improvement of the Fund and determine objectives for further work. It is necessary to continue this process taking into account the interests of all the founder-states of IFAS and following the norms of international law.

We believe that to solve issues directly related to the Aral Sea problem, as part of a region-wide environmental agenda, we need deeper international partnership, further promotion of constructive initiatives, and active involvement of relevant UN bodies.

At the same time, we need to create opportunities for more dynamic interaction of the Fund with international financing institutions and donors to implement projects and programs for overcoming a wide range of current challenges in the Aral Sea basin.

I am sure that the problem of the Aral Sea, like the entire environment of Central Asia, should take its proper place in the international ranking of environmental priorities. Our efforts here should be targeted and focused on ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of millions of our citizens, solving economic and social problems for decades to come.

As an important step in developing a strategic approach to environmental issues in the region, Turkmenistan proposes to establish a specialized structure - the Regional Center for Climate Technologies in Central Asia, which would work substantively and systematically in cooperation with the UN across the entire regional environmental agenda.

In addition, it is important to speed up the process of development and adoption by our countries of international documents aimed at conservation and sound use of water resources in Central Asia. We propose to strengthen joint diplomatic efforts in this direction.

Dear the Heads of State!

Turkmenistan together with other Central Asian countries pays great attention to promoting «water diplomacy» in the region. To this end, our country initiated the process of drafting the Central Asian Water Strategy during its chairmanship in IFAS. At the same time, we consider it expedient to enshrine in this document the basic principles and rules of political and diplomatic interactions between our states on water issues based on mutual respect, equal partnership and taking into account the interests of all countries in the region.

The Central Asian Water Strategy in the future could become the basis for development of the UN Global Water Strategy.

We also propose to address the issue of modernizing the Regional Action Plan for Environmental Protection of Central Asia adopted within the framework of the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development in order to include the main provisions of this Plan as an environmental component in the new Aral Sea Basin Program.

These proposals are united by one goal - creating a harmonious, sustainable and long-term system of cooperation based on the interests of all countries in our region, the well-being of our people, their health, development and progress. We hope that the proposals made by Turkmenistan will find understanding and support.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the distinguished Emomali Sharifovich once again for his great personal contribution to the organization and successful holding of the meeting of the Council of Heads of IFAS founder-states and wish everyone success in their work.

I am sure that the current meeting will give positive impetus to promotion of our common interests. Turkmenistan is ready to do whatever necessary for this.

Address by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev⁴

Distinguished Heads of delegations!

I would like to join the words of gratitude to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, distinguished Emomali Sharipovich Rakhmon for the warm welcome and excellent organization of our meeting.

I sincerely congratulate all colleagues on the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

Over the past period, the Fund has shown its relevance as an important platform for promoting common interests in countering environmental challenges. Coordinated approaches were developed, decisions were made and joint programs were implemented in the Aral Sea basin during this period.

⁴ Source: <https://president.uz/ru/lists/view/6662>



I would also like to note the fruitful results of Tajikistan's presidency in our Association. In particular, an extensive work has been carried out to develop practical engagement within the Fund. Contacts with international organizations and financial institutions have expanded.

I would like to point out the fact that the activities as part of the Global Water Conference, under co-presidency of distinguished Emomali Sharipovich were successfully held in March this year at the UN headquarters. This historic event has enabled to attract the attention of the entire international community to vital issues and problems in Central Asia's water sector.

Dear colleagues!

The International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea is, above all, a unique experience of multilateral cooperation of the countries of Central Asia in addressing one of the most pressing problems on a global scale.

I would like to especially point out that the Fund has become the most important platform for regional cooperation in the water and environmental sphere.

The Interstate Water Commission, as well as «Amu Darya» and «Syr Darya» basin organizations carry out systemic work to coordinate the issues of water resources management and water intake regulation .

The Scientific Information Center has accumulated a strong analytical base of knowledge and competencies, open to all international partners.

The activities of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development contribute to the expansion of practical cooperation in the environmental sector.

In addition, the Fund coordinates the implementation of a number of regional programs and projects, interacts with international institutions and donor organizations.

The role and significance of our structure increases even more in the context of the emergence of new challenges and threats due to global climate change.

The consequences of deteriorating water and environmental situation in the region are of particular concern due to melting glaciers and natural disasters, as well as man-made factors caused by rapid demographic growth, urbanization and industrialization processes.

Colleagues are well aware that the problem of water shortage in Central Asia has become acute and irreversible and will only worsen in the future.

Experts believe that in some regions of Central Asia pressure on water resources will increase three times by 2040. Economic damage could eventually reach 11% of regional gross product. Already now, according to the United Nations, the countries of the region annually lose up to USD 2 billion due to scarcity and inefficient use of water resources.

All of this requires the development and implementation of further agreed long term steps within the Fund.

Dear participants of the meeting!

Today we are facing important tasks related to ensuring legal and institutional effectiveness of multilateral partnership.

In this context, I would like to share our proposals in accordance with the agenda of this summit.

First, Uzbekistan stands for further improvement of the legal framework and modernization of the institutional mechanisms of the Fund.

In particular, we propose the following:

- conducting an inventory and revising the key documents and agreements, including the Regulations on the Fund, which was adopted back in 1990s;

- performing joint analysis of the current structure and developing proposals to improve the coordination and effectiveness of the work of the Fund's structures;

-developing “Rules and Procedures ” that clearly regulate issues of cooperation and activities of the Fund.

It is important that the Fund’s development and reform process is held on the basis of cross-sectoral principle - an integrated approach “water - energy - food”, accounting for modern environmental challenges.

In addition, generally recognized international regulations, principles and mutual obligations in the field of management and use of water resources of transboundary rivers should be reflected in the main documents of the Fund.

We also stand for a radical increase in the effectiveness of the existing structures of the Fund by expanding the competence and building up their capacity and technical potential.

Second. Prior to our meeting, we analyzed the project activities within the Fund over the past thirty years. There is an obvious discrepancy between the provisions of our main program documents and the declared results with real progress in the implementation of projects.

I think all our countries should also be concerned about the progress of the fourth Action program to assist the countries of the Aral Sea basin . The work is mainly carried out in line with national plans.

In this context, I would like to propose to instruct the Fund’s Board to critically review the current Program, providing for the preparation of “road maps” for the implementation of each regional project, identifying the volumes and sources of financing, as well as agreed schedules for their implementation.

Third. It is necessary to strengthen systemic engagement on the issues of attracting investments and technologies and technical assistance to advance priority regional projects.

We have several proposals in this regard.

First, each of our countries should commit to attract external assistance into regional projects by defining specific targets.

Under the coordination of the presiding party, it would be necessary to develop mechanisms for attracting and distributing investments and technical assistance.

Second, we propose to convene a special regional conference in order to accelerate the implementation of joint projects with the involvement of foreign partners, leading international institutions and donor organizations.

Third. We consider it appropriate to instruct the working bodies of the Fund to engage international consultants and devise long-term development Plans for basins of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers. It is important to

provide for modeling of various scenarios for the development of the situation in the basins of these rivers.

We are confident that the adoption of such strategic documents will enable to pursue a coordinated policy of integrated management of water and energy resources in our region.

Fourth. Particular attention should be paid to working with the youth at the regional level to raise their awareness on the need to soundly use of water and other natural resources, supporting youth initiatives and start-ups through the adoption of a special program.

We count on close engagement with the Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in addressing these issues.

Dear participants of the summit!

Specifically, I would like to dwell on cooperation in preventing further degradation of ecosystems, primarily in the Aral Sea region.

I'd like to note that currently Uzbekistan is carrying out large-scale work to improve the environmental and social situation in the Aral Sea region.

Based on the UN Resolution «On declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of environmental innovation and technology» we are implementing the Action Plan and the Program of Measures for sustainable socio-economic development, employment and living standards improvement.

In the last few years, afforestation have been carried out on the dried seabed of the Aral Sea on an area of 1.7 Mha.

In the next two years, we intend to create protective green screens on another 400 thousand ha.

To mitigate the consequences of the Aral sea disaster, as well as to conserve biodiversity in the Aral Sea region, natural parks and reserves were arranged on an area of more than 3.5 Mha.

Today, the total area of protected natural areas in the Aral Sea region is 4.6 Mha.

In addition, Uzbekistan implements full-scale measures to improve water use efficiency. Over the last 7 years, water-saving technologies have been introduced on an area of more than 1 Mha, which is about a quarter of all irrigated land area in the country.

As part of the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan, we intend to elaborate a National Water Saving Program.

We could strengthen our cooperation in the field of water conservation, identifying it as one of the priorities of the Fund.

As part of the International Climate Forum planned next year in Samarkand, we are keen to organize an exhibition of modern water-saving technologies from the world's leading companies.

In order to address all these issues, we propose to establish a Regional platform for regular meetings of water, energy, ecology and economy ministers of our countries.

Dear Heads of delegations!

I would also like to share my vision regarding the construction of the Qush-Tepa canal.

In fact, a new stakeholder in the water use has appeared in our region and is not bound by any obligations with our countries.

You know very well that the Afghan side is actively constructing the canal. Its commissioning could radically change the water regime and balance in Central Asia.

We believe it necessary to set up a joint working group to study all aspects of the construction of the Qush-Tepa canal and its impact on the water regime of the Amu Darya, with the involvement of research institutes of our countries.

We propose to consider the possibility of involving representatives of Afghanistan into the regional dialogue on water sharing.

Dear colleagues!

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan distinguished Kasym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev with the assumption of presidency of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

I am convinced that implementation of the initiatives put forward and documents adopted will increase the efficiency and expand mutually beneficial cooperation within the Fund to the benefit of our peoples and for the prosperity of the entire Central Asian region.

Thank you for your attention.

First Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Adylbek Kasymaliev participated in the meeting

The delegation of the Kyrgyz Republic headed by the First Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, Adylbek Kasymaliev took part in the meeting of the Council of Heads of IFAS founder-states as an observer.



The First Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers noted that despite the fact that the Kyrgyz delegation is participating in the Summit as an observer, the Kyrgyz Republic continues following the position that constructive and mutually beneficial regional cooperation is important and has no alternatives.

«Kyrgyzstan promotes at the international level the initiatives aimed at sustainable development of mountains, preservation of glaciers and water catchment zones,» Adylbek Kasymaliev emphasized.

In this context, the Kyrgyz side proposed to join efforts in efficient use of water and energy resources and increase of the resilience of these sectors to natural and anthropogenic impacts.

The Kyrgyz side also emphasized the importance of reforming the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, so that this process would ensure the

formation of a highly effective and transparent activity of the new regional body, taking into account the interests of all Central Asian countries.

Dushanbe statement of the Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

On September 15, 2023, in Dushanbe, a meeting of the Council of Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) was held under the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan. The meeting was attended by President of the Republic of Kazakhstan K.K. Tokayev, President of the Republic of Tajikistan E. Rahmon, President of Turkmenistan S.G. Berdimuhamedow, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, and First Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic A.A. Kasymaliev as an observer.

Based on the results of a substantive discussion on a wide range of issues related to regional cooperation aimed at further improving the ecological, socio-economic, water, and energy situation in the Aral Sea basin, which took place in a traditional atmosphere of mutual understanding, trust, and friendship, the Heads of Founder-States of IFAS (hereinafter referred to as the Heads of States or Parties) declare the following:

The Heads of States note that water resources play a key role in Central Asia's sustainable development, and transboundary water cooperation is an essential component of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring peace, stability and prosperity in the region. In this context, the Parties, expressing their readiness to prioritize water issues in national and regional strategies and development plans, reaffirm their commitment to further strengthening regional water cooperation.

The Parties recognize the important role of water resources in ensuring ecological, food and energy security, as well as achieving climate resilience and socio-economic development, taking into account an integrated and cross-sectoral approach to addressing these issues.

The Heads of States especially emphasize that IFAS is a key and unique regional institution for ensuring mutually beneficial cooperation between the countries of Central Asia in order to improve the ecological, socio-economic, water and energy situation in the Aral Sea basin. In this context, every effort will be made to further improve the institutional structure and legal framework of

IFAS, as well as strengthening its potential and enhancing its image on the international arena.

The parties note the progress in improving the institutional structure and legal framework of IFAS and advocate for the rapid completion of this process, taking into account the interests of all the founder-states of the Fund.

The Heads of States express concern about the worsening Aral ecological disaster, which resulted in the formation of more than 5.5 Mha of deserts, which have a significant negative impact on human health and the state of ecosystems throughout the region and beyond. The parties declare a firm commitment to jointly confront this crisis and its negative consequences, including by taking specific measures to comprehensively solve problems related to improving the socio-economic and ecological situation in the Aral Sea basin, especially in areas prone to ecological crisis.

The Heads of States note the positive results of large-scale forest reclamation work, conservation of ecosystems and wetlands, restoration of part of the Aral Sea and other measures to reduce the negative impact of the Aral crisis on the environment.

The Heads of States express concern about the deteriorating situation due to the impact of climate change, which has led to the accelerated melting of glaciers and to a growing number and intensity of natural phenomena, leading to an increased shortage of water resources. In this context, the Parties emphasize that only concerted actions by the states of the region, especially within the framework of an improved IFAS, will make it possible to take measures aimed at achieving climate resilience.

The parties emphasize the importance of expanding interaction and coordination in the field of the climate agenda, caring for natural resources, in particular the preservation of glaciers and water resources in general, building a low-carbon economy, and introducing resource-saving and “green” technologies.

The Heads of States note that ensuring universal and equitable access to safe and sustainable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services for all people is critical to preventing water-related diseases. In this regard, the Parties encourage targeted investments in maintaining such services and express their readiness to strengthen cooperation aimed at enhancing the health aspect of activities in these areas

The parties recognize the important role of hydropower facilities on interstate watercourses to promote the integrated and rational use of water resources and resolve water and energy issues in Central Asia, taking into account the interests of all countries in the region.

The Heads of States emphasize the importance of developing a comprehensive and mutually beneficial mechanism for water and energy cooperation in ensuring water, energy and food security in Central Asia.

The Parties note the need to take coordinated measures aimed at the widespread introduction of advanced information and communication technologies for water resources management, as well as innovative water-saving technologies for more efficient and rational use of water resources at the national and regional levels.

The Heads of States advocate the development and implementation of joint projects and programs with the attraction of external investments within the framework of the Action Program to assist the countries of the Aral Sea basin (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (REP4SD-CA).

The Heads of States emphasize the importance of regional youth movements on protection of water resources and environment in order to ensure the participation of the younger generation in overcoming modern challenges and threats.

The parties note the need to develop information bases and exchange information in the field of water management and ecology, including the introduction of new technologies at the national and regional levels.

The Heads of States express satisfaction with the adoption of resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on the Aral Sea basin and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and emphasize their commitment to further intensify interaction with the UN system.

The Heads of States note the importance of the adopted Joint Statement of the Central Asian States at the UN 2023 Water Conference, which confirms the readiness to work together to implement the commitments adopted within its framework.

The Parties express gratitude to international development partners and donor countries for their support in solving the problems of the Aral Sea basin and call on them for further interaction to assist the countries of the region in achieving sustainable development.

The Parties emphasize that the constructive negotiations held in Dushanbe in an atmosphere of openness and mutual understanding made a significant contribution to the further development of traditionally good neighborly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation of the IFAS founder-states in solving the problems of the Aral Sea basin.

The Heads of States highly appreciated the chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan in IFAS and noted the successful holding of events dedicated to the

30th anniversary of the Fund, as well as the fruitful results of the UN 2023 Water Conference held under the co-chairmanship of the Republic of Tajikistan on 22-24 March 2023 in New York.

The Parties express gratitude to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan H.E. Emomali Rahmon for the hospitality and high level of organization of the meeting of the Council of the Heads of IFAS founder-states.

Dushanbe, 15 September 2023

Decisions of the Heads of Founder-States of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

On the results of Tajikistan's chairmanship in IFAS

The Heads of founder-states of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea have decided the following:

1. Take into consideration the information on Tajikistan's chairmanship in IFAS.
2. Approve the activity of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and of its President Emomali Rahmon for the period of Tajikistan's chairmanship in IFAS.

Done in the city of Dushanbe on September 15, 2023 in one true copy in Russian.

The original copy shall be kept by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, which shall send its certified copy to the IFAS founder-states.

Republic of Kazakhstan

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Republic of Kazakhstan

On activities on institutional and legal improvement of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea

The Heads of founder-states of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea have decided the following:

1. Take into consideration the information on activities of the Working Group on institutional and legal improvement of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.
2. The IFAS Board shall take measures to complete the process of institutional and legal improvement of IFAS.

Done in the city of Dushanbe on September 15, 2023 in one true copy in Russian.

The original copy shall be kept by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, which shall send its certified copy to the IFAS founder-states.

Republic of Kazakhstan

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Republic of Uzbekistan

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

The Heads of IFAS founder-states have decided:

To elect the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Kemelevich Tokayev as the President of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea for a period of three years since January 1, 2024.

Done in the city of Dushanbe on September 15, 2023 in one true copy in Russian.

The original copy shall be kept by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, which shall send its certified copy to the IFAS founder-states.

Republic of Kazakhstan

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

Turkmenistan

Republic of Uzbekistan

The 78th session of the UN General Assembly

The High-Level Week of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly opened in New York. This event traditionally gathers heads of state, prime ministers, foreign ministers, and representatives of international organizations from all over the world. The High-Level Week took place from September 19 to 23 and on September 26.

The High-Level Week will open with speeches by the President of the 78th Session of the General Assembly, Dennis Francis, and the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, as part of the general policy debate that forms the core content of the entire event.

Presidents Kasym-Jomart Tokayev of Kazakhstan, Sadyr Japarov of Kyrgyzstan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov of Turkmenistan and Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan spoke on September 19.

The president of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon spoke on September 20.

Address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (extract)

[...]

The Head of State emphasized that the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated our vulnerability to future biological risks and threats. In this regard, Kazakhstan appealed to the Secretary-General and the President of this Assembly to launch the process of establishing an International Agency for Biological Safety.

[...]

Much of the presentation focused on the issue of climate change.

“Even if we successfully limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C by 2030 – which looks increasingly unlikely – we will experience between 2 and 2.5 °C of temperature rise in Central Asia. Despite the long road of the Paris Climate Agreement, we must all remain committed to a carbon-free future. The climate agenda should not be used to introduce measures restricting trade and

investment cooperation. Instead, we must focus on positive change, such as the Six Climate-Positive Actions identified by the United Nations including investing in green jobs, ending fossil fuel subsidies, and ensuring that all climate actions are fair, inclusive, and involve women at all levels. Yet without proper funding, ambitious plans to combat climate change will remain unmet”, – the President said.

Kazakhstan has proposed to launch the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) program in the country. Our Head of State believes that a gradual, sustainable and socially responsible transition away from the use of coal would be a great asset in achieving global climate change goals.



Kazakhstan’s initiative to open the Project Office for Central Asia on Climate Change and Green Energy in Almaty can lead on these issues. We look forward to hosting a Regional Climate Summit in Kazakhstan in 2026 under UN auspices, – the Kazakh leader said.

He noted that water scarcity creates serious economic and other challenges in transboundary river basins in Central Asia. Tokayev warned that the same situation will be replicated all over the world: by 2040, global water

demand may exceed supply by 40%.

We must therefore combine political will and economic resources to address this critical global issue simultaneous with climate action. Next year, we will assume chairmanship of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. We will continue efforts to prevent further degradation of the environment and its impact on livelihoods around what was once the fourth largest lake on the planet.

Today it is the world's largest lake – the Caspian Sea – that also faces ecological challenges including shallowing, water diversion, and the pollution of flora and fauna. Saving the Caspian Sea must be a matter of common priority that requires long-term international cooperation, – Kassym-Jomart Tokayev stressed.

[...]

Address by the President of Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Japarov (extract)

[...]

Just yesterday the SDG Summit was concluded and once again reaffirmed the importance of unwavering commitment to sustainable development, identifying challenges in their implementation, and outlining specific commitments by states.

We are halfway to 2030, the deadline for reaching Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Kyrgyzstan, in its pursuit of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), currently ranks 45th out of 166 UN Member States. We aim to be among the top 30 countries in reaching SDGs by 2030.

The international community must breathe new life into these goals and strengthen solidarity in their attainment.

It's important that we don't get lost in numbers, schedules, diagrams, and other 'economic intricacies,' because the essence and core of the 17 Goals are about people themselves

The year 2030 is approaching quickly, and we must ask ourselves: Have we addressed the pressing needs and aspirations of a human being? Are we

ensuring his safety, prosperity, and well-being? Is he happy? What does his future hold?

Problems such as extreme poverty and climate change can only be solved by finding a global, collective response.

As the distinguished UN Secretary-General rightly noted in his *Financing for Sustainable Development Report*, without the means to invest in sustainable development and transform energy and food systems, developing countries are falling behind in achieving the SDGs.

The current reality is that developing countries face a dual challenge - the need to invest in development and at the same time adapt to climate change.

In this regard, we call for urgent action to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. Specifically, for the swift establishment of the Fund aimed at providing compensation to countries for losses and damages related to climate change, alleviating the burden of external debt, and improving the international architecture for debt resolution.



Ladies and gentlemen,

At previous climate change summits and conferences, ambitious statements and promises were made.

It is also clear that the level of annual funding announced in 2015 under the Paris Agreement is no longer sufficient today.

We consider it necessary to revise and significantly increase the level of funding that meets the real needs of countries vulnerable to climate change.

Another problem is that most climate finance is provided to low and middle-income countries in the form of loans. There is also no difference in the procedures for allocating loans for projects worth one million or one billion dollars.

This undermines the very essence and purpose of climate agreements.

I have already addressed our partners with a request to exchange external debt for environmental projects.

Unfortunately, we received no reaction from many of the developed countries. Government of Germany was the only country that wrote off 15 million Euro of the debt.

We call on donors to reconsider their approaches to providing climate finance to countries in need on a grant basis.

We support the Bridgetown Initiative proposed at the last climate conference in Sharm el-Sheikh, as well as the calls made at the Summit for a New Global Financial Pact in Paris in June this year to mobilize the necessary financing and structural reform of the international financial architecture.

If we don't start doing this now, then injustice in the world will grow. Rich countries will continue getting richer, and poor countries will continue getting poorer.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In light of global climate change, mountainous regions have been particularly vulnerable. In Kyrgyzstan, mountains occupy about 94% of the territory.

Mountain glaciers are an integral part of the Earth's cryosphere, influencing not only the climate of our planet but also providing a habitat for flora and fauna and supplying water to people.

Climate change in Central Asia has led to intensive melting of glaciers. If earlier it was predicted that by 2050 the area of glaciers in Kyrgyzstan would be reduced by half, and by 2100 they could disappear altogether, now there is reason to believe that this will happen much faster.

This leads to aggravation of problems throughout the region: such as lack of water for drinking and agriculture, land degradation, and a threat to food security.

In accordance with the latest assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the adverse effects of cryospheric changes are particularly acute for the residents of high mountain regions, where ecosystems have reached the limits of adaptation.

In order to effectively preserve mountain ecosystems and glaciers, based on the resolutions previously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on sustainable mountain development, our country, in collaboration with the Global Mountain Partnership and other representatives of the UN system, has developed a Global Action Plan.

We are grateful to all our partners, countries, and international organizations for their joint work.

Kyrgyzstan advocates for the creation of a broad coalition of mountainous countries.

We believe that climate adaptation and the transition to a 'green' economy will be among the main priorities of this future coalition. As you may know, in 2022, at the initiative of our country and the Italian Republic, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution on 'Sustainable Mountain Development' co-sponsored by 110 Member States.

This document declared the years from 2023–2027 as Five Years of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all UN Member States for supporting our initiative.

To further implement the UN resolution, I have signed a decree 'On Declaring the Period from 2023 to 2027 as the Five- Year Period of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions in the Kyrgyz Republic' and a national 'Roadmap' for the implementation of the 'Five-Year Period of Action for the Development of Mountain Regions for 2023-2027' has been developed, which will be adopted shortly.

The 'Roadmap' includes measures at the global, regional, and national levels, including within the framework of existing and prospective projects and measures related to the Sustainable Development Goals.

As the concluding stage of the “Five-Year Action”, we plan to host the Second Global Mountain Summit “Bishkek+25”, in Kyrgyzstan in 2027, 25 years after the First Summit.

I would like to invite everyone from this distinguished rostrum to actively participate and make concrete commitments to preserve mountain ecosystems.

We express our gratitude to our partners from the Group of Friends of Mountainous Countries, the Global Mountain Partnership, and the entire UN system for their comprehensive support of Kyrgyzstan's initiatives. We express our readiness to continue fruitful cooperation.

[...]

Address by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon (extract)

[...]

In today's challenging and turbulent time, international community more than ever needs integration and trust.

[...]

At the same time, the disastrous impacts of climate change – extreme heat, floods, droughts, fires and other natural disasters, as well as water shortages and famine – pose a serious threat to humanity.

In this context, joint concerted efforts to address these threats and challenges and achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda have become imperative.

To this end, we welcome the theme of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly “Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and SDGs towards peace, prosperity, progress, and sustainability for all.

Ladies and gentlemen!

Despite the efforts of the international community to attain the 2030 Agenda, the world is not on track to meet most of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Unfortunately, developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing states are bearing the brunt.

In the course of implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, Tajikistan also faced certain problems to attain SDGs 1, 7, 12 and 13.

Therefore, we understand that solidarity, financing, implementation of commitments and other practical measures should be strengthened, and this requires truly fundamental shift.



Therefore, Tajikistan has supported the United Nations Secretary-General's proposal on «Our Common Agenda». We also welcome the Secretary-General's SDG Stimulus to Deliver Agenda 2030 and call for at least 500 bln. US dollars to be made available to developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing states annually to accelerate progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

We also welcome the call to reform international financial architecture to ensure the mobilization of stable and long-term financing scale for investments needed, among other things, to achieve SDGs and tackle climate issues.

Distinguished participants!

As we all observe, climate change impacts are increasing across the globe.

This year we witnessed the highest air temperature over the entire period of observation.

Asia is warming faster than the global average, as a recent World Meteorological Organization latest report, “State of the Global Climate” indicates.

The negative consequences of this process, such as droughts, floods, landslides and fires in different regions of the world, including Tajikistan, are very alarming phenomena.

Tajikistan, with 93% of its territory covered by mountains, is experiencing the impact of climate change firsthand and considered one of the world’s most vulnerable countries to climate change’s impact.

Frequent climate-related disasters in the forms of landslides, mudflows, floods and draughts in Tajikistan result in human and infrastructure loss.

To this end, Tajikistan attaches particular importance to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which is called upon to promote the improvement of early warning systems, to increase investments in programs on natural disaster risk reduction, and to render financial assistance to developing countries.

Tajikistan is one of the pilot countries to implement the UN Secretary-General’s “Early Warning for All” initiative.

In that regard, we express our willingness to cooperate with the United Nations and its specialized structures.

Ladies and gentlemen,

More than 13 thousand glaciers are registered in the Republic of Tajikistan. 60% of the region’s water resources form in our country.

Unfortunately, over the past decades, Tajikistan has lost more than one thousands of glaciers, which will have significant implications for future food security, water availability, and ecosystems of Central Asia and beyond.

The intense melting of glaciers as the primary source of freshwater requires the adoption of concrete measures, including research, data collection and processing, and enhanced international cooperation.

I express my gratitude to all Member States for their cooperation in adopting the UNGA Resolution 77/158 from 14 December 2022 on “International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation, 2025. I invite all interested parties to join efforts to ensure the targeted implementation of this Resolution.

We stand ready to work with the international community within the newly created Group of Friends of Glaciers and beyond to implement the mandates of the Resolution.

Tajikistan is convinced that this initiative will give a powerful impetus to a new global movement to take necessary collective action and to protect glaciers from intense melting.

I would also like to highlight the successful outcomes of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028.

I believe that fulfilling the commitments made by the international community at the Conference will contribute to achieving SDG6 and addressing other internationally agreed water-related goals.

Recently, the General Assembly unanimously adopted another Resolution following this Conference, proposed by Tajikistan, the Netherlands and Senegal.

We hope that member states and other partners will join our efforts in this process.

It is worth noting that Dushanbe will host the Third High-Level Conference on the Implementation of the Decade of Action “Water for Sustainable Development” in 2024 and the International Conference on Glaciers’ Preservation in 2025.

We expect the international community to take an active part in these important international events.

As a proactive and champion country in the global water and climate agenda, Tajikistan will continue to strive to promote cooperation between countries and organizations.

In modern conditions, the formation of a “green economy” has become one of the urgent tasks of humanity

In our country, 98% of electricity is produced from renewable sources, that is, hydropower, and according to this indicator, Tajikistan ranks sixth in the world

Effective and rational use of Tajikistan’s tremendous hydropower resources can provide a favorable ground for the development of green energy generation throughout the region.

We consider the role of the “Green Climate Fund” to be positive and constructive in the process of addressing environmental challenges and adapting to climate change.

In support of the Fund’s Strategic Plan for 2024-2027, we invite Member States, especially developed countries, and other stakeholders to contribute to financing its implementation.

[...]

Address by the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov (extract)

[...]

Among the key areas of UN activities for the coming years, Turkmenistan considers the solution of urgent climate and environmental problems. Among them, we emphasize issues related to the global methane commitment.

As noted, with accession to the Paris Climate Agreement in 2017, a number of relevant national programs were adopted in our country. National measures are being carried out at a priority pace in order to reduce and eradicate the negative consequences of methane emissions into the atmosphere. We are talking, first of all, about a phased transition to the introduction and use of modern environmentally friendly and resource-saving technologies, especially in the fields of energy, industry and transport.



At the same time, President Serdar Berdimuhamedov emphasized, we welcome the efforts of the world community to implement the Global Methane Commitment.

And of course, we are counting on substantive cooperation and targeted assistance from specialized UN agencies, member states of the Organization, and other interested partners. In this context, Turkmenistan has recently approved a Roadmap for the development of international cooperation aimed at studying the issue of Turkmenistan's accession to the Global Methane Commitment. We will send this document to the Organization's Secretariat in the near future.

In general, I believe that the time has come here at the UN to pay closer and more effective attention to environmental problems in Central Asia, overcome a certain inertia in their consideration and begin targeted and concrete measures to form a holistic UN environmental strategy for a region with almost 80 million people occupying vast areas, possessing unique natural resources and biodiversity and at the same time being in the zone of serious environmental risks.

As an important step in adopting a strategic approach to the environmental problems of Central Asia, Turkmenistan proposes the establishment of a specialized structure – the Regional Center for Climate Change Technologies in Central Asia, which would work on climate issues in a substantive and systematic manner. We are ready to provide organizational and technical conditions for the functioning of such a Center in the capital of Turkmenistan – Ashgabat.

Central Asia is also a region directly adjacent to the Caspian Sea. Everyone knows the importance of this reservoir with its unique natural complex in the context of the planetary environmental agenda.

As a result of many years of vigorous and respectful cooperation by the littoral countries of the Caspian Sea, common key principles of Caspian Sea policy have been developed, including the adoption of the main document – the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea. Last summer, at the Sixth Caspian Summit in Turkmenistan, all participants firmly confirmed their readiness for close cooperation on environmental issues. I believe that this opens up good opportunities for the beginning of a broad and systematic interaction of coastal states with the UN.

In this connection, Turkmenistan proposes the establishment of a Caspian Environmental Initiative, which will be designed to become an international platform for substantive and professional cooperation on a wide range of issues related to environmental protection of the Caspian Sea, the preservation of its

biological resources, and the solution of a number of pressing environmental problems.

We believe that the implementation of this initiative should be carried out in close cooperation with the UN, its agencies, and institutions.

[...]

The most important direction of Turkmenistan's activities for the implementation of the SDGs is the maximum assistance of the UN in solving the food problem. The COVID-19 pandemic, along with other adverse factors, exposed the vulnerability of those States where this problem has not been solved, where the population does not receive adequate nutrition.

Unity, integrity and determination are needed when considering issues related to the access of States and regions to food resources, guarantees of adequate nutrition as an inalienable right of any person, a key factor in health and normal physical development, especially children.

It is obvious that breakthrough solutions are needed here, new approaches that overcome political, ideological, and opportunistic barriers.

Based on this, Turkmenistan takes the initiative to convene a major international forum on food security under the auspices of the United Nations, in cooperation with the World Food Program, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Children's Fund.

We express our readiness to provide conditions for hosting such an event in the capital of Turkmenistan within the agreed time frame.

[...]

Address by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev (extract)

[...]

Currently, the world is facing a critical environmental situation. The triple planetary crisis - crises of the climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the environmental contamination are worsening.

In such challenging conditions, while Central Asia continues to grapple with the Aral Sea tragedy, the region is becoming one of the most vulnerable

parts of the world in the face of climate change. Uzbekistan is doing its best to mitigate the consequences of the Aral Sea tragedy, which remains a global problem.

In recent years, 1.7 Mha of green areas with drought-tolerant plants had been created on the dried up bed of the Aral Sea. The support of the international community is essential for us to continue these efforts.



Over the next thirty years, the air temperature in our region has increased by one and a half degrees. This is more than twice the global average warming. As a result, nearly one third of the total area of glaciers in the region has melted. If this tendency continues, the flow of the two major rivers in our region (Amu Darya and Syr Darya) may decrease by 15% in the next twenty years. It is expected that per capita water supply will decrease by 25% and agricultural yields - by 40%. Unless we take timely and effective measures, the consequences of these problems will seriously undermine our region's socioeconomic stability.

Given this context, we support the establishment of the position of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for Water Resources. We are in favor of attracting and introducing the state-of-art technologies in the

process of establishing a Water Saving Technologies Platform in Central Asia, using the United Nations Water mechanism.

We are building up a systematic cooperation as part of the Green Development Program adopted by the counties of the region. Such a partnership completely meets our interest and is aimed at preventing threats related to climate change. In this context, I believe that the introduction of the Central Asian Climate Dialogue would be expedient.

We put forward an initiative to adopt a UN General Assembly Resolution “Central Asia Facing Global Climate Threats: Solidarity for Common Prosperity”. We propose to discuss its substance at the International Climate Forum to be held in Samarkand next year.

In this regard, I would like to emphasize that adapting the main sectors of Uzbekistan’s economy to climate change, achieving carbon neutrality and drastically increasing the share of green energy remain a strategic task for us.

[...]

International events

The 84th WWC Board of Governors meeting

The 84th Board of Governors meeting of the World Water Council (WWC) was held in Beijing on September 9-10, 2023. The President of the World Water Council, Loic Fauchon and the Minister of Water Resources of China, Li Guoying opened the meeting.

The Minister highlighted the key areas of water management improvement in the country, focusing on flood regulation and earlier warning system, water conservation and better water use, integrated water resources management and accounting, and rivers' environmental status improvement.



The speech was followed by signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the World Water Council and the Ministry of Water Resources of China.



Ms. Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC, took part in the meeting.



Members of the Board approved replacement of some members of the Board and also discussed the work on improvement of the Board of Governors' regulatory documents carried out by a special commission

Information was provided on the preparatory process for the 10th World Water Forum to be held in May 2024 in Bali. The thematic process is organized

in six key directions. SIC ICWC participates in the coordination group on strengthening intersectoral cooperation and diplomacy. Regional processes have been initiated in the American continent and the Mediterranean region. The regional process in Asia-Pacific region and Africa is under preparation.

Five Expert groups were established and started their work to implement the three-year strategy of the Council: “Water security and sustainability”, “Water for humans and nature”, “Financing water”, “Water quality and health” and “Observatory of non-conventional water resources and associated renewable energies”. Coordinators of Expert Groups presented preliminary proposals on their work plans. SIC ICWC participates in the Expert group “Water for humans and nature”.

Members of the Board of Governors were familiarized with the project on transferring the Yangtze River flow from the South to increase water supply of the Chinese North, including Beijing.

The 85th meeting of the Council’s Board is scheduled to November 28, 2023 online and the 86th meeting is to be on February 2024 in Istanbul.

The XVIII World Water Congress “Water for all: harmony between humans and nature”

The XVIII World Water Congress was held in Beijing on September 11-15, 2023.

The Congress was organized by the International Water Resources Association (IWRA) and the Ministry of Water Resources of the People’s Republic of China.



The objective of the World Water Congress is to provide a meeting place to share experiences, promote discussion, and to present new knowledge, research results and new developments in the field of water sciences around the world.

XVIII World Water Congress dedicated to the theme “Water for all: Harmony between Humans and Nature” aimed to promote coordination and balance between the water needs of humans and nature. The Congress will facilitate knowledge and experience sharing, focusing on investigating the relationship between water, humans and nature, identifying and reconciling all water-related factors in a coordinated manner, and making and implementing water management strategies and policies using systematic approaches.

During the Congress, 36 regular sessions, 72 special sessions, 15 side events, and 278 posters were presented. The Congress hosted almost 3,000 participants from 83 countries, 36 international organizations, 852 water management institutions. More than 130 papers were presented in 6 directions and 44 topics - from advanced scientific research to innovative practices and policies.

The exhibition was organized as part of the congress, where 90 booths were presented. About 10 thousand people visited the exhibition.

The Congress was organized around 6 sub-themes:

1. Water-human-economy (agriculture, industry, city...) – ecology nexus under a changing environment;
2. Promoting water efficiency, productivity and services;
3. Building resilience for disaster prevention and mitigation;
4. Supporting aquatic ecosystem health and functions;
5. Establishing sustainable water infrastructures;
6. Innovation for water governance and management.

The Minister of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Sh. R. Khamraev attended the World Water Congress on behalf of Central Asian countries and delivered a welcoming speech at the opening ceremony.



He informed the participants about priority directions of water development, the tasks defined in the Concept for the development of water sector in the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030 and their implementation, the effective management and rational use of water resources, the water conservation, and the adoption of digital technologies on a large scale. The work in the field of bilateral and multilateral improvement of good-neighborly relations with the countries of the region, joint management of transboundary water resources, use of interstate canals and water facilities has been carried out by Uzbekistan.

Dr. Dinara Ziganshina, SIC ICWC Director, took part in the World Water Congress. She made a report on «Guaranteeing basic human rights: ensuring access to safe drinking water for all» at the 3rd Global Water Security seminar.



On September 13, D. Ziganshina made the reports on «Shared and innovative water information systems for an improved water resources management at national and basin levels» and «Implementation of national and international law – a look at the role and work of the Implementation Committee of the Water Convention».

Key messages and reports of the XVIII World Water Congress

1. The balance between humans and nature can be achieved through the implementation of **nature-based solutions**, i.e. measures address social issues while ensuring both human well-being and benefits for nature.

2. It is suggested that **water should not be seen as a sector or capital but as an institutional principle** for linking SDGs, climate change action and biodiversity conservation.

3. With the current progress of implementation, the global community will not be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on water (SDG 6) by 2030. The UN-Water coordination of SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework has identified **five «accelerators»** that can assist countries in their efforts:

- *Governance*: strengthening cross-sectoral coordination and transboundary water cooperation, clearly defined roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, effective and inclusive institutions.
- *Financing*: shall be increased dramatically on the part of public and private sectors, and donors, water suppliers shall improve efficiency and effectiveness to ensure optimal use of funds, and governments shall provide a stable and transparent administrative, regulatory and policy environment that encourages investment. This provides a quantifiable positive return on investment in water supply at the expense of medical cost savings and increase in efficiency that makes 3 USD per dollar invested in urban basic drinking water, and from 7 USD in rural basic drinking water.
- *Development*: comprehensive human and institutional capacities at all levels.
- *Data and information*: building trust by collecting, verifying, standardizing and sharing data for decision-making.
- *Innovation*: application and expanding innovative practices and technologies.

4. A new report of the World Water Council “**Opening up Integrated Water Resource Management to include Energy, Food, Health and Education**” has been presented. Levers for implementing this updated vision include: (a) technological solutions, (b) regulation and incentives, (c) education and raising awareness for behavior change.

5. Innovative forms of financing by attracting the public and private sectors. For example, Washington has issued 5-year «water» bonds to strengthen the existing infrastructure with natural solutions for flood control and water quality improvement. California has launched a specialized bank that sells loans to meet measures for climate change mitigation on marshes.

6. Urbanization and climate change exacerbate both water scarcity. A key aspect of urbanization is that urban planning has not kept pace with population growth and rural-to-urban migration. Planning, budgets and infrastructure are failing to provide water and sanitation to most urban residents in developing countries, contributing to poor health and high pollution of wastewater.

The Beijing Declaration that resulted from this conference calls on countries from all over the world to rationally use and effectively protect water resources, supporting the development and implementation of innovative principles, technologies and strategies for water resources management, striving to make decisions on water resources management based on scientific data, contributing to poverty reduction by solving water problems, promoting science

and water and improving water literacy, sharing experience on rational water use, jointly solving water problems.

Official launch of the International Water Law Academy in Wuhan

The official launch of the International Water Law Academy took place at the China Institute of Boundary and Ocean Studies (CIBOS) at Wuhan University on September 15-16, 2023.

The Academy was established in 2019 and currently has around 60 global affiliates. Prof. Patricia Wouters is the ideological inspiration and the Director of the Academy. In her message at inaugural launch event, she outlined the “new waves” in international water law that require a focus on deeper understanding of communities, cooperation and integrated water law.



In 2020, the Academy introduced its initiative “Charting a Path to Enhanced Transboundary Water Cooperation” aimed to address hard transboundary water challenges through the lens of water law. The event in

Wuhan was dedicated to three broad cross-cutting themes: “Water and Peace”, “Water and Climate” and “Water and Sustainable Development”. Speakers noted the role of international water law in these areas and outlined directions for future, including joint studies.



Dr. Dinara Ziganshina, Director of SIC ICWC, member of the Academy, spoke about new tasks for improving legal frameworks in the field of water and climate in general and particularly in Central Asia

She also reported on the role of the Implementation Committee of the Water Convention at a session organized by the Academy during the 18th World Water Congress in Beijing.

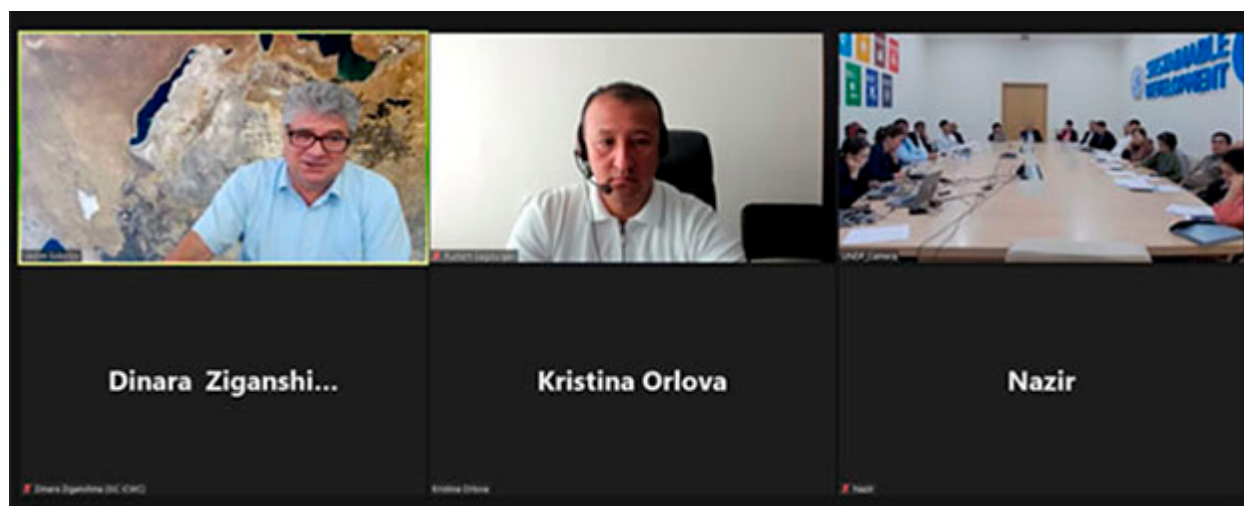
Workshop on “Implementation of IWRM as a tool for adaptation to climate change”

On September 19-21, Ashgabat hosted the workshop «Raising awareness on measures for adaptation to climate change and climate risks in different economic sectors and activities of Turkmenistan».

The workshop organized as part of the UNDP-GCF Project “Developing a National Adaptation Planning Process in Turkmenistan” combined trainings and workshops.

The first area is focused on raising awareness of decision-makers on integrated risks imposed by climate change in Turkmenistan in the short- mid- and long-terms and on strengthening their knowledge and capacities for mainstreaming adaptation and mitigation techniques and practices into planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of relevant sectorial policies, programs and strategies at all levels (from national to local one). The second area is focused on organization and delivery of training in mainstreaming adaption techniques and practices into water planning

This was the third from the round of six workshops for the members of Coordination Mechanism and decision-makers on mainstreaming of adaptation to climate change into water planning in Turkmenistan which was held on September 20. The theme of the workshop was «Implementation of IWRM as a tool for climate change adaptation.»



The workshop was organized by UNDP jointly with SIC ICWC and SIC ICSD, with financial support of the Green Climate Fund. It covered such themes as IWRM and adaption measures; IWRM in Turkmenistan; IWRM planning and

climate change; Water-energy-food nexus in the context of climate change; Forecast plans for the water sector development in the context of climate change in Turkmenistan in the future; Water supply and demand management; Planning water use as a way to determine water demands; and, Small Basin Councils in Turkmenistan.

Presentations were made by experts of SIC ICWC, SIC ICSD, Agency for Implementation of IFAS Projects and CAREC Project Office in Turkmenistan.

Что такое интегрированное управление водными ресурсами?

Интегрированное управление водными ресурсами (ИУВР) – это **система** управления, основанная на учете всех видов водных ресурсов (поверхностных, подземных и морских) и признание гидрологического цикла, который связывает все процессы: атмосферной и грунтовой влаги, испарения, конденсации, осадков, стока, инфильтрации, пополнения водоносных горизонтов, а также взаимодействия с другими природными ресурсами и интеграция устойчивого обеспечения потребностей аграрной и животноводческой отраслей.

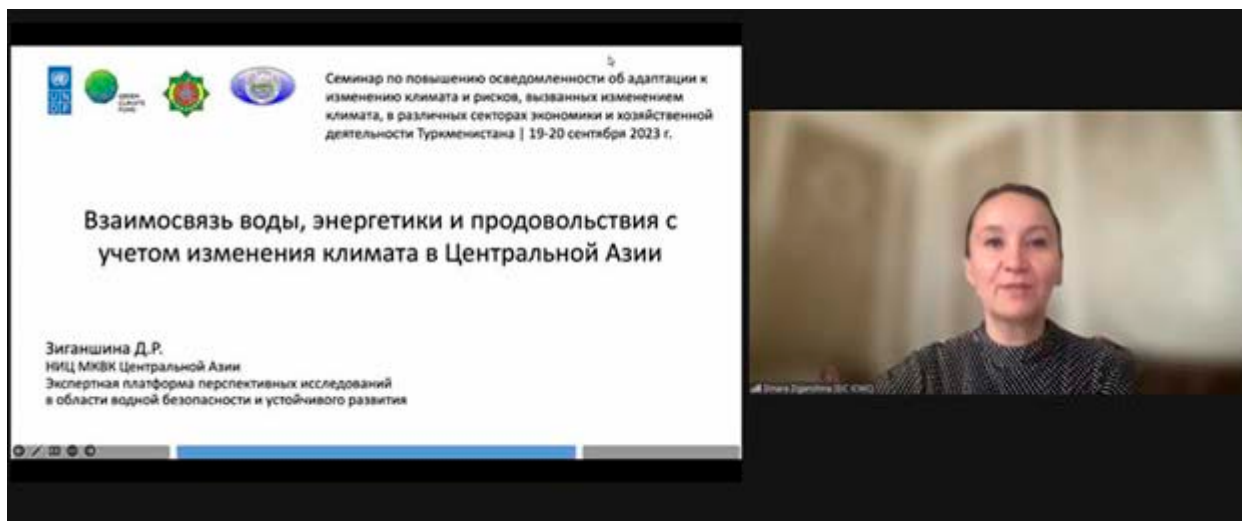
Применение этой системы управления ИУВР – эффективный инструмент мер по устойчивости (Бенчмарк) и среднему управлению (Мониторинг) водными ресурсами на фоне происходящих в стране региональных процессов социально-экономического развития, а также обеспечения мер по адаптации к изменениям климата.

Достижением целей ИУВР – устойчивое, стабильное, справедливое и равноправное обеспечение водными ресурсами всех видов пользователей и различных регионов – базисом для комплексной территории в кризисной ситуации.

План мероприятий

- ❖ Разработка плана мероприятий (**«КАК достичь краткосрочных целей»**): определение мер с учетом ресурсов.
- ❖ План, в отличие от стратегии, отражает тактику внедрения ИУВР в краткосрочный период.
- ❖ План представляет собой часть стратегии, ориентированная на намеченный краткосрочный период.
- ❖ Далее, после обсуждения, доработки и утверждения плана ИУВР, разрабатывается детальный план мероприятий (мер, действий).

14



Семинар по повышению осведомленности об адаптации к изменению климата и рисков, вызванных изменением климата, в различных секторах экономики и хозяйственной деятельности Туркменистана | 19-20 сентября 2023 г.

Взаимосвязь воды, энергетики и продовольствия с учетом изменения климата в Центральной Азии

Зиганшина Д.Р.
НИЦ МКВК Центральной Азии
Экспертная платформа перспективных исследований в области водной безопасности и устойчивого развития


Ирина Зиганшина НИЦ МКВК

ИУВР В ТУРКМЕНИСТАНЕ

Подготовка высококвалифицированных специалистов в области использования и охраны вод в вузах, колледжах и лицеях.

В 2022 году Министерством образования Туркменистана для Туркменского с/х института для обучения студентов института по специальностям, относящихся к направлению «сельское, лесное и рыбное хозяйство» рекомендована **Учебная программа по дисциплине «Интегрированное управление водными ресурсами».**

Учебная программа включает основные понятия, связанные с дисциплиной **«Интегрированное управление водными ресурсами».**



SIC ICWC and IWMI Jointly Held a Workshop on Efficient Water Allocation in Amu Darya River basin in the context of climate change

On September 28, SIC ICWC jointly with BWO “Amu Darya” and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) held a training workshop “Efficient water allocation in the Amu Darya River basin in the context of climate change”. The event was dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea. Managers and leading experts of BWO “Amu Darya” participated in this training workshop.



The workshop was moderated by Sh. Muminov, Deputy Director of SIC ICWC, who opened the event by congratulating all the participants with the 30th anniversary of IFAS. A. Nazariy, Deputy Director of SIC ICWC reported on regular meeting of the Council of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States, which was held on September 15, 2023.



Experts of SIC ICWC made presentations on technical tools for efficient water allocation and water accounting, information systems and platforms, etc.

The training workshop included also group work to discuss topical issues after each of presentations. In particular, discussions allowed identifying problems on water accounting, limitations of information platforms, etc.

At the end, the participants thanked the organizers of the workshop and recommended holding such training workshops for all branches of BWO “Amu Darya”.





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