

## PROTOCOL

### Working Group Meeting to discuss the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Mitigation of Sand Dust Storms in the Republic of Kazakhstan

March 5, 2021

The meeting participants heard a presentation on the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Mitigation of Sand Dust Storms (SDS) in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Karibaeva K.N., Doctor of Biological Sciences, Director of the Institute of Ecology and Sustainable Development, in her opening remarks to the presentation, noted the following:

“Recognizing the increased risk of droughts and SDSs, the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification have adopted decisions on countering the negative impacts of droughts [decisions 29 / COP.13 and 23 / COP.14] and SDS [decisions 31 / COP.13 and 23 / COP. 14]. The project “Regional approaches to combating sand and dust storms and drought” is funded by the Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and implemented by the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC). The development of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Mitigation of Sand Dust Storms in the Republic of Kazakhstan within the framework of this project was directly entrusted to the Institute of Ecology and Sustainable Development (IESD). The National Action Plan should become an important component of the medium-term regional Strategy for the prevention and mitigation of SDSs in Central Asia. This initiative of the UNCCD Secretariat for Central Asia aims to support the countries of the region in the development and implementation of strategies to reduce the risks of SDS and droughts at the national and regional levels and facilitates the coordination of the actions of the relevant government agencies, the academic community, practitioners and local communities working in this direction. With the help of a comprehensive strategy to reduce drought and SDS risks, including monitoring and early warning systems, CA countries will be able to strengthen regional integration and capacity to effectively improve their preparedness and resilience to relevant environmental and natural events, focusing on proactive management actions in accordance with national plans for disaster risk reduction and mitigation; and national plans for the management of land, water and other natural resources”.

IESD expert, Nurlan Bekmukhamedov presented the prepared National Action Plan for the Prevention and Mitigation of SDSs in the Republic of Kazakhstan. He noted that:

“The dangers posed to societies by droughts and dust storms, and the threats associated with the achievement of some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), have become an issue of increasing concern to governments and the international community. From high death rates to slower economic growth, the impact of sand and dust storms can be significant, especially for low-income countries. Kazakhstan is at risk. However, through collaboration and information exchange, these risks can be mitigated.”

The UNCCD National Coordinator, Head of the Department for Forests and Specially Protected Natural Areas of the Forestry and Wildlife Committee of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Abzal Baltabaev greeted the participants and thanked partners and experts for the presented National Plan.

Moreover, Mr. Baltabaev pointed out the fact that land degradation impedes the processes of sustainable development in Kazakhstan. Significant areas of valuable ecosystems, as a result of desertification / land degradation, lose their nature-forming functions and biological diversity, which makes the problem of ensuring SLM in Kazakhstan of global significance. Measures aimed at increasing the productivity of agricultural lands and using economic mechanisms to combat desertification / land degradation could effectively reduce the level of poverty and improve the living standards of the population in areas affected by desertification. The Republic of Kazakhstan is significantly affected by drought and SDS, especially in areas outside the high mountainous regions, where a semi-arid and arid climate prevails. Kazakhstan is characterized by a dry and continental climate with hot summers. Strong winds and sparse vegetation are often seen at the end of the dry season.



The head of the department also noted the timeliness of the support provided and expressed hope for further fruitful cooperation.

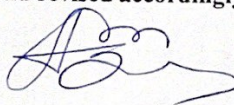
The participants of the meeting expressed their interest in this work and provided their comments on the National Plan in written format.

Ms. Karibayeva K.N., summing up the results of the Working Group Meeting, recalled that at the next Nineteenth Session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 19), dedicated to the implementation of the tasks of the UNCCD in our countries and the world as a whole, the national coordinators of the UNCCD in Central Asia were strongly recommended to prepare presentations from CA countries on the Drought Initiative, exchange of experience on a regional drought project, including intermediate results and lessons learned, experience in assisting the Convention in project development, as well as individual positions of CA countries. In addition, the meeting participants agreed that a representative of Uzbekistan and a representative of Kyrgyzstan on behalf of the CA countries will speak on drought issues at the upcoming regional meeting.

National Coordinator of the UNCCD Mr. A.M. Baltabaev thanked the organizers of the meeting and expressed hope for further support by the Secretariat of the Convention for the implementation in the medium and long term of measures to reduce the risk of sand and dust storms, focusing in particular on the implementation of strategies to prevent their consequences by promoting environmentally sound methods of land use and water resources management for various natural zones and regions of the country. At this level, the scope should include croplands, pastures, deserts and urban areas of the Republic of Kazakhstan. He emphasized that such strategies should be integrated with climate change adaptation and mitigation measures and biodiversity conservation, which are currently lacking in many vulnerable regions.

**Comments to the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Mitigation of Sand Dust Storms in the Republic of Kazakhstan were received and revised accordingly by the IESD team.**

**National Coordinator  
UNCCD**



**Abzal Baltabaev**

**Head of Forest Department  
and Specially Protected Natural Areas  
Committee of Forestry and Wildlife Ministry of  
Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources  
Republic of Kazakhstan**