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CAREC NEWSLETTER

#6 (17)



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

01

Dear readers!

I am pleased to welcome readers of the quarterly newsletter as the new Executive Director of CAREC. It is a great honor for me to lead a regional organization with a dynamic team of professionals driven by a noble mission to improve the environment for the sustainable development of Central Asian countries.

Today CAREC is a leading regional knowledge center on environment and sustainable development, recognized by national, regional and international partners. Through consistent implementation of projects and initiatives, CAREC continues promoting effective practices in the field of environmental management, water resources management, environmental education, adaptation to climate change in the region. In 2019, CAREC's key focus was to support the strategic regional programs: the fourth Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Protection Program for Sustainable Development of Central Asia with the use of intersectoral nexus approach to achieve water, energy and food security in Central Asia.

This year marks the successful launch of the new initiatives. We keep working on our projects in all countries of Central Asia, by strengthening partnerships and trust to solve common environmental problems. Recent months were no exception. In November, our team presented in Ashgabat the results of the regional mega-project "Central Asia Nexus dialogue: fostering

water, energy and food security nexus dialogue and multi sector investment" supported by the European Union. The project aimed to develop favorable opportunities for multisectoral climate-sustainable investment to enhance water, energy and food security in the CA region. Qualitative changes are also being achieved locally. For example, recently, as part of the UzWaterAware project, a series of large-scale eco-marathons was held in Kokand and Nukus with more than 2,000 trees planted using water-saving technologies – hydrogel - which can save up to 50% of water during irrigation.

By the end of the year, CAREC took part in 25th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in Madrid and supported the work of several side events involving delegations of countries of the region. At this significant international event the CA countries presented their experience on implementation of climate change programs and exchanged new knowledge and best practices. Central Asia is of great interest to the world community, therefore, it is important for the region to share countries' progress and challenges in the field of environmental protection at such global platforms. On behalf of CAREC, I would like to thank all our partners and colleagues for this interesting and dynamic year. I hope that in the next year our fruitful cooperation will continue and reach even greater results for the benefit of sustainable development of the region and environmental protection. Happy New Year 2020!



*Executive Director
Zafar MAKHMUDOV*



CAREC AT THE UNFCCC CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES IN MADRID

02

On December 12, CAREC together with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) organized a side event at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Madrid as part of the World Bank's CAMP4ASB project. The event "How to Get Involved with the IPCC?" generated great interest among the participants of the climate negotiations.

The side event moderated by Youba Sokona, IPCC Vice-Chairman began with welcome speeches by Malik Amin Aslam, Pakistan's Federal Minister for Climate Change, Hoesung Lee, IPCC Chairman and Zafar Makhmudov, CAREC Executive Director.

Minister Mr. Malik Amin Aslam noted the importance of scientific knowledge for decision-making on climate change and the importance of involving scientists from different countries in the work of IPCC. The IPCC Chairman Hoesung Lee stressed the uniqueness of the organization and importance of author contributions to drafting the reports. In his speech, CAREC Executive Director Zafar Makhmudov emphasized an increasing need for involvement of the region's experts and academic community in the IPCC activities, especially in reviewing the Sixth Assessment Report.

Thelma Krug, IPCC Vice Chair, made a comprehensive presentation of the organization's work on the Sixth Assessment Report. Philippus Wester, one of the IPCC key authors, shared the results of practical work on engagement of the expert community of the Himalayan region to the IPCC report preparation.

Zafar Makhmudov spoke about the IPCC outreach events



organized in August 21-22 in Almaty, Kazakhstan which gave an opportunity for parliamentarians, decision makers, representatives of scientific and research communities, media, expert and international organizations, as well as Master's and PhD students to learn more about the activities of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and its

reports. He also encouraged the researchers from Central Asia to become authors and reviewers to the IPCC reports.

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NEXUS PROJECT FINAL CONFERENCE: RESULTS AND IMPACT

03



On November 28, the closing conference for the EU-funded “Central Asia Nexus Dialogue Project” was held to present the results of the project. The project aimed at increasing the understanding of the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Security Nexus approach to foster multi-sectoral thinking and cooperation among Central Asian countries, leading to the development of an investment portfolio of WEF Nexus project ideas. Over 80 representatives from regional intergovernmental and basin organizations, relevant national government bodies, international financial institutions, the donor community, academia and experts from Central Asian and European countries came together to discuss how

to scale up the WEF Nexus approach in the Central Asian region. Thematic discussions were paired with an exhibition of video and information materials, publications and an opportunity to play the “WEF Nexus Game”. The Investment Portfolio comprising eight project ideas of regional significance that addresses a wide range of transboundary natural resources management challenges, including on water allocation, dam safety, technical upgrading, eco-tourism, combating desertification and other environmental issues of the Aral Sea was confirmed as relevant by all beneficiary countries. Small-scale projects in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan implemented during the project have already

helped to pilot the practical application of WEF Nexus approach, namely in multipurpose dam management, providing sustainable access to water in desert areas and promoting investment in more energy efficient water pumps.



As water and energy resources in Central Asia are highly imbalanced, the water, energy and food security is at the heart of the region’s socio-economic development. Our Nexus Project is aimed at rendering support to the countries of Central Asia through cross-border and multi-sectoral planning with an ultimate goal of facilitating sustainable and climate-resilient investments for increased security in Central Asia.



Lubomir FREBORT,
Chargé d’Affaires of the EU
Delegation to Turkmenistan

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CAREC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ATTENDS ECCA30 IN NEW YORK

04



On September 22, 2019, CAREC Executive Director Mr. Zafar Makhmudov took part in the launching event of ECCA30 – The New forest landscape restoration initiative in Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to unlock climate action. The event took place in New York, USA and brought together restoration champions, high-level representatives and leaders from government ministries and international community. The ECCA30 initiative aims to unite the regions of Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in promoting the potential of the forest landscape restoration (FLR) method as a means of adaptation to climate change. Governments, private entrepreneurs and other interested parties will be able to interact and improve their knowledge through the ECCA30 platform, it will also serve as a means to mobilize resources and attract financing for the implementation of FLR projects in the region. Central Asia, as a region particularly affected by the threat of serious consequences from climate change, is especially interested in introducing comprehensive adaptation measures. In his keynote speech, Mr. Makhmudov emphasized the peculiarities of the region and its changing climate, as well as expectations from using the FLR method in a number of Central Asian countries. For instance, it is expected that 66.000 ha in Tajikistan and 1.500 000 ha in Kazakhstan will be brought under restoration by 2030. Initial estimates in Kyrgyzstan suggest that Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) efforts in the country could result in 23,200 ha. being brought into restoration by 2028. Mr. Makhmudov also made references to the role of CAREC



in providing technical and expert support in development of recommendations for integrated natural resources management, such as water and landscapes. Under its current projects, CAREC implements a set of measures to reduce land degradation, desertification and forests loss through promotion reversal of land degradation, introduction of sustainable agro-practices and energy-efficient technologies and renewable energy sources, improving local community's sustainable livelihood, promotion and sharing of the effective technologies and best practices.

Mr. Makhmudov expressed his appreciation to the organizers of the event and in particular the World Bank for inviting CAREC, and in turn, invited participants to the Central Asian Climate Change Conference planned to be held in Dushanbe in June 2020.

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THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY CALP

05

The opening ceremony of the 10th Anniversary Central Asian Leadership Program on Environment for Sustainable Development (CALP) was held on September 16 in Almaty.

The leadership program in 2019 focused on environmental innovation and was designed for advanced mid-level professionals from Central Asian countries and Afghanistan, representing the state, non-governmental, academic and business sectors. During the lectures, young leaders were provided with the latest innovative solutions to environmental problems at the national, regional and global levels.

This year, the CALP was supported by: UN Environment, the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna, Austria; OSCE Program Office in Nur Sultan, United States Agency for International Development (USAID); European Union; World Bank, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI).



The main goal of the 10th Anniversary CALP is to promote the unification of Central Asian youth through the promotion and support of a neutral regional platform for youth dialogue on issues of water cooperation, water

diplomacy, gender equality, climate change, energy efficiency, a nexus approach between governments, academia, and civil society, as well as strengthening the role and voice of youth in regional cooperation.





“ Nature knows no boundaries, and all environmental problems of the region must be addressed together. The approach to solving problems should be comprehensive. It’s necessary to understand that today’s participants of the Leadership program tomorrow can become people who will make sustainable environmental decisions in their countries. ”



György SZABÓ,
Ambassador, Head of the OSCE
Programme Office in Nur-Sultan









CENTRAL ASIAN LEADERSHIP PROGRAM ON ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



 CALP alumni
interviews 



 The CAL Alumni
network 

 The Central Asian Leadership Programme fosters new
generation of environmental leaders 

 Learn more about
the CALP 

 CALP
speakers 

 Watch the video about
10th CALP 

 Read a report about
10th CALP 

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50% WATER SAVING: ECO-MARATHONS IN UZBEKISTAN



On March 25-27, the first eco-marathon of the UzWaterAware project using water-saving technologies was held in Kokand and Nukus. Within three days, the participants of the marathon planted 2,000 trees using a «hydrogel», which saves about 50% of water during irrigation.

The composition of the hydrogel, adapted for agriculture, includes mineral fertilizers and trace elements that protect plants and promote growth. It is able to absorb and retain water and fertilizers near the root system of plants, and when it is added to the soil, evaporation of moisture from the soil surface is minimized. Hydrogel does not lose its qualities within 3-5 years and does not negatively affect the soil. According to the test results, an increase in the fertility of various crops reaches 20-50%.

The water-saving eco-marathon covered the media representatives of Karakalpakstan and the

neighboring Khorezm region, as well as students of the journalism department of the Berdakh Karakalpak State University, where the event was held. The project pays special attention to coverage of water and environmental issues, “data journalism”, the correct presentation of information on problems in the field of water conservation and their solutions.

During the marathon, an “open eco-conversation” was organized on the territory of the Kokand maternity hospital and secondary school No. 3. A special game-based training for educators was held and information booklets on the importance of rational water consumption in agriculture were distributed.

On November 13-14, 2019 another UzWaterAware water-saving eco-marathon was held in Karshi city of the Kashkadarya region of Uzbekistan within

the “One million trees” initiative in cooperation with Public Movement “Yuksalish”. As a part of this joint initiative, 300 trees were planted.



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In 2019, CAREC's key focus was to support the strategic regional programs: the fourth Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4) and the Regional Environmental Protection Program for Sustainable Development of Central Asia with the use of intersectoral nexus approach to achieve water, energy and food security in Central Asia.

With the support of CAREC projects, in particular, the European Union's Nexus project and the USAID's Smart Waters project, EC IFAS took a number of important measures for the region:

1. FAS Board meeting to prepare a meeting of the Council

of Heads of Central Asian countries on January 30, 2018 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan;

2. Creation and support to the activities of interdepartmental working groups for the development of proposals into the ASBP-4 and the Regional Environmental Protection Program for Sustainable Development of Central Asia in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan;

3. Meetings of the regional working groups for the preparation of the ASBP-4 and the Regional Environmental Protection Program for Sustainable Development of Central Asia in 2018-2019;

4. Preparation of a portfolio of regional projects of the ASBP-4, which, among others, includes 7 Nexus projects. The projects were approved by all countries involved (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan);

5. Coordination meeting of EC IFAS with partners and the final meeting of EC IFAS on November 27 and December 27, 2019 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.

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SMALL BASIN COUNCILS - THE KEY TO ENHANCING TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION

09

An extended seminar of the Small Basin Councils of Central Asia and Afghanistan was held on June 25 in Mary (Turkmenistan). The event was organized within the framework of the Smart Waters project (USAID) in cooperation with the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS).

CAREC has been working in the direction of the Small Basin Councils (SBC) on small transboundary rivers since 2012. To date, extensive experience has been accumulated in the establishment and operation of such councils.

Over 100 participants from all countries of Central Asia and from Afghanistan attended the seminar - representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, state bodies for water management and environmental protection, experts, as well as the main participants of the event - members of 13 Small Basin Councils created under the Smart project Waters. The seminar consolidated the network interaction of small basin councils, as well as expanded the prospects for cooperation of international partners with the basin councils of the region.

The countries of the region are currently reforming the water sector, and each country has a different level of implementation of the principles of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) and basin planning. The Republic of Kazakhstan switched to basin planning in 2003, but Turkmenistan adopted the new Water Code with IWRM elements only at the beginning of 2017 and created its first basin council on the Murghab River in 2018 as part of the implementation of the Smart Waters



project. In the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan, they began to create national basin councils, in Afghanistan, the created SBC on the Nizhny Garirud river will be the first to use the functions prescribed in national legislation. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, the SBC on the Padshaata river will be based on the experience of other countries in the region, including areas of legal regulation, since in Uzbekistan's national legislation the principles of IWRM and basin planning are not yet fully reflected.

One way or another, all countries in the region encounter

similar problems and difficulties in developing institutes of basin and small basin councils - questions about the status of councils and their financial stability were raised in each speech. And the exchange of experience that occurs at such events helps countries better understand the process of transition to basin management, be prepared for challenges and present possible solutions.

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MEETING OF THE REGIONAL WORKING GROUP ON WATER QUALITY

10



The water quality issues keep gaining interest of the governments and international development community, not only as an essential factor to ensure the health of the population and ecosystems, but also as one of the underpinning elements in economic development. According to the recent [World Bank report](#), the “invisible crisis of water quality” may cost a third of the potential economic growth.

On November 11- 12, 2019 the regular meeting of the Regional Working Group on Water Quality was organized in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. During the first day, the members of the RWG-WQ have visited the new water pumping station constructed instead of the old one in order to provide water to the residents of Beshbulok and the villages in the surrounding area. The [Syrdarya Water Supply Project](#) financed by the State Secretariat

for Economic Affairs (SECO) of Switzerland focuses on the improvement of the drinking water supply through rehabilitation of the old water system and supporting water utilities in Samarkand, Bukhara and Syrdarya regions. In the second half of the day, the participants were introduced with the result of the [SDC project](#) that enabled the rural populations in Uzbekistan to have access to drinking water. The decentralized models of water supply to each household were successfully realized in several villages of the country. The RWG members had a chance to hear from the local Drinking Water Organisations established at the community-level and responsible for the maintenance of the water supply systems in their villages. The spotlight of the meeting on November 12 was the presentation on the transition of Kazakhstan to the Unified System of Classification of Water Quality in water bodies. Kazakhstan is the first country in the region to

implement the reforms in the categorization of water quality aiming to accommodate the characteristics of the EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60 and make the classification system more digestible for water users. The new Classification system allows to assess the actual ecological state of the watercourse at a given time; determine the category of water use for a specific water body as well as set the “targets” to achieve better water quality in a watercourse than its current state.

Members of the RWG-WQ were also familiarized with the [interactive map](#) to provide open access to the information of water quality for the population of Kazakhstan developed by the specialists from KazHydromet agency.

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CAREC TOOK PART IN EVENTS IN THE ARAL SEA REGION

11

On October 24-25, 2019, CAREC Executive Director Mr. Zafar Makhmudov attended the meeting of the International Commission on Sustainable Development of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (ICSD IFAS) and the International High-Level Conference on the Development of Environmental Innovations and Technologies in the Aral Sea region. Both events took place in Nukus, Uzbekistan with the participation of the Ministers of Ecology of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, representatives of government and state bodies from Central Asian countries, expert and international community.

In his opening speech, Mr. Makhmudov emphasized CAREC's contribution to achieving the priorities of the Regional Environmental Program for the Sustainable Development of Central Asia through program and project initiatives. CAREC cooperates with ICSD through the use of regional dialogue platforms (Central Asian International Environmental Forum, Central Asian Conference on Climate Change) for a joint and coordinated solution of environmental issues in Central Asia. Mr. Makhmudov also emphasized the role of donors and development partners and expressed appreciation for their comprehensive support of CAREC in this process.

During the high-level international conference on the development of environmental innovations and technologies in the Aral Sea region, the participants attended the exhibition banner stands on the consequences of the Aral Sea crisis and possible investment projects for the development of the region. During the plenary and parallel sessions of the conference,



participants discussed opportunities to attract foreign investments to environmentally friendly technologies, introducing the principles of green economy that ensures food security, developing eco-tourism, etc. CAREC Executive Director also made a speech at the session on “Establishing conditions for attracting foreign investment in the development and implementation of environmentally friendly technologies”, where he presented investment ideas for the NEXUS projects to address environmental issues in the Aral Sea basin.

The conference adopted the outcome document which contain the main principles and directions for further cooperation to improve the environmental situation in the Aral Sea region.

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Ekaterina Ustinenko

*PR Specialist, CAREC
Office in Uzbekistan*

I was born in sunny Tashkent, Uzbekistan. I graduated from secondary school #71 and Children's Art School #1 in piano. From my early childhood it has been my dream to become a teacher of Russian language and literature, and then English. Therefore, in 2006, after graduating from the school, I entered the Uzbek State University of World Languages, on the Faculty of English Philology. I was lucky that this university had a specialized IELTS department, opened by an American professor, where all special subjects were taught in English using American textbooks. However, I did not work a day by my profession.

After the university, I didn't know what I really wanted to do. At first, I worked in a travel company, promoting Uzbekistan as an unique, interesting destination with a rich history, cuisine and traditions. Afterwards, I went to work as a PR specialist at the Center for Economic Research under the State Advisor to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which was a completely new area for me at that time. Since 2013, I have been constantly working as a specialist public relations and media. In addition, I really liked working in the industries of publishing and organizing events. I also enjoy working with the journalists.

I learned about CAREC by chance. I saw a job vacancy for PR specialist and decided to apply. Now, I am working in the UzWaterAware project supported by EU. CAREC is a place where you constantly learn something new through every program and project. Sometimes, I feel like a real "why-bother", as in the course of my work I ask a lot of questions to the different experts in

the field. My job is quite interesting – there is a bunch of opportunities to constantly update my knowledge, to create something new, to meet new interesting people. The water project I am involved in taught me a lot – now I understand how we, humans, affect water resources, their condition, quality and availability for future generations. It is also very important to explain everything in detail not only to children but also to adults, as we do not teach the "ecology" at schools, and this is necessary for ensuring environmental literacy of the population. In this project, we are trying to change people's attitude toward the efficient use of water resources and the behavioral stereotypes. That is why the main appeal of the UzWaterAware project is "Respect water".

To achieve this, we organize various events for different target audiences – children, schoolchildren, teachers, the press services of state organizations, representatives of NGOs, journalists. All events have creative approach to delivering important information. The project has its own role play characters which help us in this. We always say in our trainings "Start with yourself" - because every drop matters. By setting a good example, we demonstrate others how to treat the resources and the surrounding environment. Change your daily household habits – use a glass of water while brushing your teeth, fill up a sink for washing dishes, load a full washing machine, take a ten-minute shower instead of a full bath, etc. Such simple actions could help us improve the environment, save the natural resources for future generations and slow down the climate change.



Murat Yakubov

*Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
of the Smart Waters project*

I was born and raised in the city of Tashkent, exactly at the junction of its old and new parts. So, most of my conscious and almost the entire unconscious life is connected with this very cosmopolitan city, both spiritually and culturally. Since childhood, my preferences have changed or, most likely, have been under the constant influence of everything that has surrounded me or happened to me. I wanted to be an astronaut, a pilot, a bus driver, a musician, a cool hockey player — in short, all that the Tashkent courtyard, schools and a huge country lived in back then, and what I learned from books, newspapers, magazines and TV. Perhaps, in this sense, I still have not fully figured out who I want to be in a major professional sense. Therefore, probably, I changed many areas and directions. I worked as a maintenance worker at the aircraft factory, then as a radio announcer, representative of the foreign agricultural business, I was also engaged in website development, advertising, and translations. Until suddenly water appeared on the horizon...

It appeared in the form of the International Institute for Water Management (IWMI). Having worked a bit as a translator, here I quickly got involved in the research environment and made a journey from a junior scientific staff member to an independent researcher in the field of institutional reforms of the water sector in the countries of the region. Given these new realities and interests, in 2007-2008 I studied at Metropolitan University in London and graduated with a degree in sociological research in the context of water management reforms. In addition, in 1990 I also graduated from Tashkent State University as an Orientalist and Indologist, and in 1997, at Swinburne University of Technology in Australia, specializing in business administration.

I learned about CAREC around 2010, while working at IWMI. Apparently, I even attended a number of seminars held by CAREC in Almaty. I joined CAREC's regional Smart Waters projects in 2017. This project includes 6 countries of the region, including Afghanistan, and covers a wide range of issues - from preparing a new wave of water specialists and contributing to the progress of national water sector reforms in each country to developing local institutions for managing water resources on a number of transboundary rivers in the region. It is the regional scope and, at the same time, focus on innovation, modernity, dynamism and executive flexibility that distinguishes CAREC from many other similar organizations in the region.

The significance and importance of water for all of us and everything that surrounds us is so obvious that today it does not require additional arguments and evidence. In my opinion, water and other natural resources, which are considered finite and exhaustible in economic science, will always be enough, or at least at necessary level - no more, no less. Most of the problems associated with water, including its sufficiency, are artificial and created by people themselves. Therefore, it would be more correct to speak about the correct and reasonable use of it, rather than its preservation. These are the key principles that determine and form the basis of the key water conventions in the world. Therefore, much will depend on us, how successfully and fairly we will be able to implement these principles both in general and in each particular case - whether it be a small brook, a canal, an underground source or a huge river crossing the borders of multiple states. Then all next generations will get something in return.



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