

# CAWECOOP newsletter

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The “Promotion dialogue for conflict prevention related to water nexus in Central Asia. Central Asia Water Nexus Cooperation (CAWECOOP)” project is implemented by the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC) in five countries of Central Asian Region: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in the framework of EU supported initiatives on water energy nexus in Central Asia. Within the period from December, 2015 to June, 2017 the project aims to stimulate transboundary trust and high-level, trans-national political involvement in the Central Asia water nexus.

## IN FOCUS

### Latest development in water sector in Central Asia

#### KAZAKHSTAN

A new state program on water management for 2014-2020 was approved by the Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev. The program is the first policy document on water resources adopted by Kazakhstan after the independence. The purpose of the program is to ensure water security through improving water resources management. The program discusses the water supply issues more comprehensively considering the sustainable development and “green economy” concepts. It proposes a number of measures to prevent water scarcity by introducing institutional reforms; technical solutions as water saving and efficient use technologies in Kazakhstan. Further, program highlights the importance of an equitable allocation of waters in Transboundary Rivers and improve water cooperation with neighboring riparian countries. The regulation of inland water resources will be achieved through implementation of state funded projects to rehabilitate and upgrade water infrastructure. In addition, to advance water management system it introduces a novel tariff and regulation policy.

Kazakh Senate approved the Law on “Introduction of Changes and Amendments to Some Legislative Acts based on Kazakhstan's Transition to “Green Economy””. The changes and amendments touch 12 existing Laws. Accordingly, the Water and Land Codes were affected, which introduce new advances to improve protection of water bodies, reduce water scarcity, improvement of methodical provision of government agencies and water users. Water Code is a key legislative framework to support public water system in Kazakhstan.

#### KYRGYZSTAN

On 22 March 2016, to promote rational water resources use, a new tariff system for surface water use was determined in the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic's Resolution № 137 "On approval of the Interim order of price determining and charging for surface water use in the Kyrgyz Republic".

On 28 March 2016, the Government approved the development strategy for drinking water supply and improvement of sanitation systems in rural area of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2026.

On 15 April 2016, the fourteenth meeting of the Coordination Council of the National Dialogue on Water Policy in the field of integrated water resources management will be held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Currently, Department of Water Resources and Land Improvement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the KR is implementing the following projects:

- «National Water Resources Management Project Phase 1» project is financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and administered by the World Bank;
- «Promotion of intergovernmental cooperation on water resources management of the transboundary rivers Chu and Talas»;
- «Improvement of agricultural productivity and nutrition»;
- «Innovative monitoring and modeling of water resources» (iMoMo);
- «Formation of decision-making system aimed at ecological and economic development of Issyk-Kul Lake's territory based on results of environment monitoring (KGZ-Water/Issyk-Kul)», supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

#### TAJIKISTAN



Succeeding the approval of the Water Sector Reform Program on 30 December 2015 (Resolution #791), the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan decentralized the water resources regulation and policy development. The Resolution assigns the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources establishment of a Coordination Unit with key development partners to harmonize activities in the implementation of the reform. The first meeting of the Coordination Unit took place on 10 March 2016 where several issues have been agreed as initial steps. These included:

- a) Development of a National Concept on Basin Planning and Management;
- b) Annual Work Plan for development of collaborations for 2016-2017;
- c) Establishment of River Basin Organizations (RBOs);
- d) Establishment of River Basin Councils.

It was agreed to invite a few additional key development partners, as the World Bank, ADB, UNDP, EU, USAID, JICA, UNECE, OSCE and others, whose role is crucial in supporting the reform process.

## TURKMENISTAN

On 8 January 2016, the Cabinet of Ministers of Turkmenistan held the extended meeting and took a number of measures to reorganize and improve the system of Turkmenistan's entire agro-industrial complex. It was decided "To create the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Turkmenistan" and "to establish the State Committee for Environmental Protection and Land Resources of Turkmenistan."

The structure of the new Ministry of Agriculture and Water Industry of Turkmenistan will include: Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water Resources, the State Concern "Turkmenpagta" and trade company "Ak Altyn", State Association "Turkmengallaonumleri" and

"Turkmenobahyzmat" as well as the State Livestock Association.

Thereafter, the agricultural production associations will be established in the regions on the basis of provincial departments of the aforementioned structures.

The Scientific Research Institute of Cotton at the Ministry of Agriculture, Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture at the Turkmen Agricultural University and the Scientific Research Institute of grain crops at the State association "Turkmengallaonumleri" are united into the Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture, which will operate under the new Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of Turkmenistan. N. Sapardurdyev is appointed Minister of Agriculture and Water Management.

The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Land Resources Service of the Ministry of Agriculture are transformed into the State Committee for Environmental Protection and Land Resources. M. Annabaev is appointed Chairman of the State Committee for Environmental Protection and Land Resources, and A. Altyev from now on is acting as his deputy.

## UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan is to enhance its water education. Cabinet of Ministries of Uzbekistan on 3 November 2015 released a resolution №311, which is titled as "on Measures of further improvement of provision of agricultural and water sectors with highly qualified specialists with higher education". Government is further to improve the quality of water education through reinforcement of higher educational institutions (HEI) to prepare qualified specialists for agriculture and water sectors.

Since 2016, European Union started financing of its new program "Sustainable Management of Water Resources in Rural Areas of Uzbekistan" for the period of 2016-2020 with budget of 20 mln euros. The program aims at reaching its objectives through: enhancing legal, financial and organizational frameworks of water resources management; strengthening water management skills and raising public awareness on water efficiency. The main implementers are Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in Uzbekistan.

On 22 March 2016, MAWR and Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) signed a joint protocol on implementation of a new project "Master plan and pilot project on developing a integrated system of water management on the basis of introduction of information-communication technologies in Uzbekistan". The budget is 7 mln. USD and planned for next 4 years. Mainly the project is to built administrative and technical capacity of MAWR staff through transfer of Korean know-how in terms of water management through introduction of smart-waters system.

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to start new National Water Resources Management Project, which is under review by the Cabinet of Ministers. The budget is about 8 mln. USD and planned for the period of 2015-2022. The overall goal of the project is to promote an integrated, transparent and needs-based water resources management and diminish water-related disaster

risks. It consists of four components: i) Water strategy, water code implementation; ii) Water information system; iii) Disaster Risk Management; iv) Support to water managers.

### Progress in implementation of CAWECOOP

During the inception phase, CAREC conducted **national consultation meetings with its main partners** in order to consider the views of stakeholders and adopt proposed activities to national needs and context. Meetings were structured as a half-day consultation with key national stakeholders, such as Ministries/Agencies of Water Resources Management, Environmental Protection, Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Academia, NGOs and others. The meetings were held in the period of February-March, 2016. Key findings from national and regional meetings are presented below:

- Partners recognize opportunities exist within the current project, which gives advantageous platform to formulate joint Central Asian vision on practical issues in water and energy sectors by joint participation in major water and energy events at the international and regional levels;
- The academia representatives expressed high interest in regional cooperation initiatives, especially with respect to student exchanges, scientific cooperation, data sharing, best practices and exchange of experience on developing new training modules / curriculum between Central Asian educational institutions;



*European Union Special Representative for Central Asia Mr. Peter Burian addresses participants at the first regional meeting of CAWECOOP project in Almaty*

- A number of pilot sites with best water management practices were suggested by national agencies, which demonstrates the willingness to exchange experience within the region;
- The preliminary needs assessment and consultations prove the feasibility of project's dissemination approach, which relies on sharing "best practices" through existing capacity building centers in Central Asia;
- Partners acknowledge that discussion of practical/ technical issues of transboundary water management as a great opportunity for countries to collaborate to increase peace and stability in CA. The project's platform, along with other regional frameworks, can be a useful tool to support countries to discuss practical issues related to better management of their shared waters.

Consequently, on 14 March 2016, CAREC organized its **first regional meeting** where official delegations from all CA countries were present, including representatives from MFAs and water resources management and environmental protection as well as academic organizations. In addition, EU's Special Representative for Central



Asia, EU Delegations in Central Asian countries and IFAS took active part in discussions. Participants discussed, commented and provided recommendations on the project's **work plan for the first year, which later was adopted also** considered comments from national consultation meetings.

The regional kick off meeting concluded with the unanimous decision to commence the implementation phase of the project. National partners will officially nominate representatives for project's Regional Coordination Committee.

### Steps to further implementation

Considering all comments and recommendations that were stated during the national and regional meetings, the project Concept as well as the Work Plan have been updated and now shared with EC for its approval.

Despite this, some activities have already started its implementation, including:

- National consultations in Central Asian countries on joint vision development and participation in the upcoming "Environment for the Europe" Conference (8-10 June 2016, Batumi, Georgia);
- Research on existing training centers in countries in order to analyze their capacities and gaps;
- Developing the Concept of Regional Cooperation to foster cooperation of regional organizations in Central Asia.



European Union Special Representative for Central Asia Mr. Peter Burian giving an interview

### Overview and recommendations

The water resources management in Central Asia became a political process after the collapse of Soviet Union. In early 1990s, politicization of water has been still less noticeable but currently it is impossible to ignore. Moreover, differing economic models and growing competition for different uses of water made water relations quite conflictive. At the regional level, indigenous dialogue (initiated by Central Asians) has been intense until mid of 2000s.

Afterwards, water dialogue in the region became more difficult and mostly it led by international partners but with varying results. Therefore, the project is an important chance – a first step for Central Asian countries to take cooperation efforts in their own hands, for which CAREC can provide its platform and moderate discussions. These steps should start from discussing practical and technical matters rather than focusing on political issues. Following recommendations can be made to further project activities:

1. Central Asian countries focus on strengthening their national water governance systems through introducing new strategic programs, reforms and capacity building initiatives. Interventions by international projects should be built around these nationally important development programs in order to establish ownership and sustainability;
2. International water initiatives and projects in CA region require close cooperation, trust and coordination of their differing efforts at the regional level. Absence of such may lead to misunderstanding among the national partners and potential duplication of their efforts. International organizations with a mandate and resources to work at the regional levels and organizations, such as UNRCC or UNECE, could lead such processes;
3. Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Central Asian states are becoming stronger players in water relations at the regional level. Therefore, facilitation of the regular and continuous dialogue between Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Central Asian states becomes a key for water cooperation;
4. Launching of Central Asian Water Vision could enhance water partnership in Central Asia. Such vision is different from developing and signing joint water agreements and politically less sensitive. Therefore, adoption of Water Vision could be facilitated easier and can serve as a long-term water cooperation forum in the region.

*Mr. Kaisar Karbozin, Department of pan-Asian cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan: "At the national consultation workshop in Astana a lot of valuable comments have been proposed, and I am pleased to find that they all are taken into account, and some of them coincide with the comments from other countries, which proves that Central Asian countries have similar needs and aspirations in development direction. Getting together people from different water sectors of the country is already a first step towards the strengthening of cooperation."*

