

## **HSTRENGTHENING THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION IS A REQUIREMENT OF TODAY**

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Water problems are the subject of a large number of international, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The attention of international community increasingly focused on the approaching crisis of water resources.

The Aral Sea basin with a total area of about 2.3 million km<sup>2</sup> that comprises the entire territory of Central Asia and the southern part of Kazakhstan within its boundaries is one of the largest and the most ancient region for irrigated agriculture in the world.

Development of the economies of Central Asia, particularly, the development of their major industries, i.e. agriculture production and hydropower, completely based on the use of water resources. (Generally, Amudarya and Syrdarya river basins). Basin streams which were formerly united began to subdivide into cross-border and national under conditions of sovereign states. As a result, the water relations in the region have moved to a completely different stage.

Natural hydrologic regime of transboundary rivers is changing, water used for own benefit is discharged into the territory of underlying states, artificial floods and droughts cause damages.

Today, the Aral Sea has lost more than half of the gene pool of plant and animal life, many small lakes became shallow and dry, and almost 90% of tugai tangles have disappeared, tracts of reeds perished on an area of 800,000 hectares as well as their inhabitants.

According to predictive estimate for the period up to 2035 material effect on the land resources through the important indicator i.e. the degradation of water resources is expected in case of further runoff reduction of Amudarya and Syrdarya rivers.

At all times, transboundary rivers and river basins were a source of provision of essential needs of population and states and their use should be under the greatest attention. Today, it is the interest of the more than 55 million people living in the region.

Climate change, desertification, struggle against poverty, problems of environment, degradation of large bodies of water and related issues of sustainable development, provision of population by safe drinking water and food, and finally, the health of population is a problem of the whole region of Central Asia.

ICWC and IFAS has great services in strengthening cooperation in the field of water resource management in the Aral Sea basin that working hard to strengthen the legal basis for cooperation on the basis of international water law. Water and energy resource management of the region at transboundary level should be accomplished jointly and meet international principles, considering the importance of water resources for the people of Central Asia.

According to the opinion of lots of international experts and specialists many agreements have very little legal basis.

The basis for an effective system of joint use of transboundary water resources in Central Asia should be the existing international legal framework. Accepted international rules and

regulations guarantee sovereign equality, mutual benefit and fairness for both parties. Every country has the same right to use the waters of transboundary rivers.

It should be noted that a strong and modern legal framework for regional structures will facilitate the development of mutually beneficial and sustainable solutions to the problems associated with the complex issues of water and energy. Institutional strengthening and modern regulatory framework will build confidence among the participant countries, offering reliable guarantees of performance of mutually beneficial solutions for the issues of regional water resources management.

In this connection, another great and laborious work of various specialists (power engineering specialists, ecologists, economists, international lawyers, water transport workers) is needed, but first of all, it is necessary for all countries to accede to the 1992 and 1997 Convention, thereby demonstrating the will and recognition of justice and equal rights to the use of water, as Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.