

Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia	BULLETIN №1 (86)	April 2021
---	-----------------------------	---------------

CONTENTS

SPEECH AT THE FIRST MEETING OF HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON WATER AND CLIMATE (VIDEOCONFERENCE).....	3
SPEECH AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER-RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS OF THE 2030 AGENDA	7
JOINT STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN KASSYM-JOMART TOKAYEV AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC SADYR ZHAPAROV	11
JOINT STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC SADYR ZHAPAROV AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN SHAVKAT MIRZIYOYEV	13
MINUTES OF THE 79 TH MEETING OF THE INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR WATER COORDINATION (ICWC) OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZ REPUBLIC, REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN AND REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN	15
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS, AND CENTRAL ASIA NETWORK OF WATER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS “TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION IN THE EECCA COUNTRIES: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS”	25
INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL CONFERENCE “WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION” DEDICATED TO THE 105TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROFESSOR L.YE. TAZHIBAEV	33
WATER ISSUES IN STATEMENTS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES AT UNGA OVER THE PERIOD FROM 1992 TO 2020	39
WATER CONVENTION’S IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE PROVIDES ADVICE TO ALBANIA AND MONTENEGRO ON THE TRANSBOUNDARY CIJEVNA/CEM RIVER	58

SPEECH AT THE FIRST MEETING OF HIGH LEVEL PANEL ON WATER AND CLIMATE (VIDEOCONFERENCE)

3 March 2021, Dushanbe

Distinguished Members of the High Level Panel,

Dear Secretary General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to welcome the launch of a new initiative integrating the two most pressing issues of the current development agenda - water and climate.

I am grateful to the World Meteorological Organization and the UN-Water for this initiative and for the invitation to participate in this important process.

Everybody is aware that water and climate are inextricably intertwined with each other.

Undoubtedly, climate change is adjusting our daily life, primarily through the impact on water resources. We believe that one of the main indicators of this process is the intense melting of glaciers due to global warming. Unfortunately, we observe accelerated ice melting in various parts of the planet – in the Arctic, Antarctica and Greenland.

We notice significant changes on continental glaciers as well. According to the Assessment of the Himalayas in the Hindu Kush, we may lose more than two-thirds of the Himalayan glaciers by the end of this century. A similar situation is developing on the Pamir glaciers.

The melting of the world's largest continental glacier in Tajikistan is a vivid example. I mean the Fedchenko Glacier with more than seventy-five (75) kilometers of length.

Studies show that in the last seventy - eighty (70-80) years alone, the Fedchenko Glacier retreated by more than 1 km, and has decreased by 44km². Moreover, it has lost more than 15km³ in volume, and the glacier tongue has been retreating by 16m per year.

Dear colleagues,

Glaciers are the main resource for freshwater. Their accelerated melting, coupled with an increase in water consumption associated with

population growth and economic development, can lead to very negative consequences.

Analysis of the trend of the impact of climate change and population growth shows the following. If in the sixties (1960) of the last century, the per capita water supply in Central Asia was more than eight (8.4) thousand cubic meters per year, today this indicator has decreased by more than four (4) times – down to two (2,1) thousand cubic meters per year.

Unfortunately, the melting of glaciers in the Arctic and Antarctica is causing the sea level rise. This, in turn, can pose a threat to the lives and well-being of hundreds of millions of the planet inhabitants, especially in small island states and coastal regions.

It is obvious that this critical issue should be in the special focus of the world community, especially political leaders. In this regard, I propose to declare 2025 as the International Year for the Preservation of Glaciers, and to determine the date of the World Glacier Day.

In this context, I would like to recall once again about Tajikistan's proposal to create a special International Fund for Glaciers, which could mobilize financial resources from various sources to take the necessary actions and implement objectives in this area.

I am convinced that these and other related initiatives would give impetus to a new global movement to take the necessary collective action and to protect glaciers from intense melting and disappearance.

It is also my belief that these initiatives organically fit into the mainstream of the measures currently taken by the world community within the framework of the Paris Agreement to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and prevent the global temperature from rising above two degrees Celsius (2.0 °C).

Dear Members of the Panel,

You are aware that the Republic of Tajikistan has abundant water resources. The country forms about sixty (60) percent of the water resources of Central Asia.

The main source of these waters is the region's glacial resources, more than sixty percent of which are located on the territory of Tajikistan.

In the twentieth (20) century, there were more than 14.500 glaciers in Tajikistan covering 8 percent of the country's total territory. Unfortunately, due to the climate change impact, these glaciers began to melt intensively. Today, more than 1,000 glaciers of Tajikistan have completely melted.

The volume of the mass of the country's glaciers has decreased by almost a third over a relatively short period.

This trend can obviously have very dramatic consequences in the medium to long term. At the same time, climate change has intensified the frequency of such natural hydro and meteorological phenomena as mudflows, floods, droughts, landslides and avalanches. Natural disasters inflict huge damage to Tajikistan's economy and environment every year, undermining our efforts to achieve sustainable development. I would like to note that such challenges are typical for other countries of Central Asia as well.

That is why Tajikistan has identified the issue of climate change impact as a top priority in the framework of its presidency of the International Fund for Aral Sea. In this context, we will make every effort to draw the attention of the governments across the region and the world community to proactive actions and taking urgent measures to counteract to this challenge.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 2020 has become the most abnormal year for humanity. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a major financial, economic and even humanitarian crisis. Moreover, last year was the warmest year for the entire period of observation. And, this is not the edge. According to some estimates, we can face tougher crises both in terms of the spread of new viruses and climate change. And, humanity should be prepared for them.

In this regard, it is necessary to encourage in every possible way any effective mechanisms in the field of conservation of water resources and the global climate.

We are convinced that in the current context it is the nexus approach that can lay a strong foundation for addressing many issues and developing a "green" and sustainable economy. In our opinion, a comprehensive review of water, energy, food security, environment and climate issues harmoniously fits into the 2030 Agenda.

At the same time, we believe that special attention should be given to financing and investments in infrastructure and innovation. Global climate funds can make a significant contribution to this process. We believe that high-speed development of new technologies will play an important role in rational use of water and other natural resources. Achieving these goals is also impossible without proper cooperation and partnership.

We are convinced that the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028)" provides a good platform for uniting the efforts of the world community.

The international conference on the mid-term review of this Decade, which will be organized by the UN in two years (2023), can play a key role in integrating water and climate issues, contribute to their comprehensive solution to achieve sustainable development.

I am sure that our High-level Panel will decently contribute to the preparatory process of this important event, will further facilitate consolidation of the efforts by the world community, particularly political leaders, for more proactive action and adequate measures.

I wish all of us success and good luck along the way!

Thank you!

Source: President.tj¹

¹ <http://www.president.tj/en/node/25174>

SPEECH AT THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER-RELATED GOALS AND TARGETS OF THE 2030 AGENDA

19 March 2021, Dushanbe

Excellency Chairman,

Secretary General,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my profound gratitude to Mr. Chairperson for the invitation and the opportunity to outline my thoughts at this High-Level Meeting.

Today's meeting, which is being held as a part of the International Decade for Action 'Water for Sustainable Development', is indeed very important for Tajikistan and the world community as a whole.

At the time we have initiated to declare this Decade, our main goal was to start early actions to promote implementation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals.

Nowadays this goal gained even greater importance given the modern challenges and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our lives.

It has to be noted that 29 percent of the world's population still does not have access to safe drinking water and 55 percent face lack of access to basic sanitation services.

In the current context, many UN member states, particularly developing and least developed countries will obviously face difficulties in timely implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Beyond doubt, this state of affairs dictates to urge further strengthen cooperation in order to accelerate coordinated actions for achieving 2030 Agenda's water-related goals.

Mr. Chairman!

Tajikistan has made significant efforts to promote water issues on the global development agenda over the past two decades.

The UN General Assembly, at the initiative of Tajikistan, adopted by consensus eight resolutions on water issues, which testifies the importance

and timeliness of this agenda.

Today, we can confidently claim that Tajikistan's initiatives on water issues have remarkably contributed to strengthening and promoting specific actions for achieving Sustainable Development Goals, including those related to water resources.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to reiterate Tajikistan's commitment to further advance water agenda, particularly prevention of such modern threat as the climate change at all levels.

We have recently had the first Meeting of the newly established High Level Panel on Water and Climate, which Tajikistan is a member of.

During this Meeting we proposed to declare 2025 as the International Year of Glaciers Preservation and to determine the date of the World Glacier Day.

This initiative will undoubtedly draw the attention of the international community to the linkage between the water and climate issues.

We voice a hope that the UN member states and our partners will support this proposal.

The accelerated melting of ice on the water surface and on land, which may lead to unpredictable consequences in the near future, is the main driver of our initiative.

The rapid melting of glaciers in Tajikistan, where our country accounts for about 60 percent of the water resources of Central Asia, is the vivid example of this process.

Today, more than 1,000 small and medium glaciers of Tajikistan have completely melted and the total volume of glaciers has decreased almost by three times.

This state of affairs certainly affects negatively not only Tajikistan but also other countries in the region.

In this context, Tajikistan has included climate change topics into the agenda of its presidency at the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

In view of the impact of this process on water resources, we will make every effort possible within the Fund to further strengthen regional cooperation in this area.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Tajikistan has undertaken a number of important actions for transformation of its water sector.

Thus, in order to improve the water system and align it with the current

requirements, we have adopted and have been implementing our Ten-Year Water Reform Program to 2025.

As part of this reform, we endorsed our revised Water Code based on an integrated water resources management principles in 2020, and concurrently created river basin organizations.

In this process, we have also enacted our Law on Drinking Water Supply and Waste Water Disposal, which enshrines the rights to drinking water as a priority.

It is obvious that the reform process cannot be successful without appropriate financing and investment.

This implies not only for Tajikistan, but also for other developing and least developed countries.

In this regard, support of these processes by donor countries and development partners is essential, especially in financing and development of water infrastructure.

Mr. Chairman!

Indeed, it would be impossible to achieve Sustainable Development Goals without bringing together all stakeholders, particularly in the face of influence of modern challenges.

We are convinced that the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development” creates a favorable platform for collective actions and the world community would want to use this platform to the maximum possible.

We do hope that our joint efforts will provide an opportunity to present tangible outcomes at the UN Conference on Comprehensive Mid-Term Review of the Goals of this decade in 2023.

This forum is the first UN Conference at this level since the time of Mar Del Plata High-Level Water Conference in 1977.

Tajikistan as a co-chair of this Conference is strongly eager to cooperate with all parties on the process to effectively arrange this important international event.

In this connection, we will host a High-Level International Conference on the review of the Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development” in 2022 in Dushanbe and harbor aspirations that it will make a worthy contribution to the preparatory process for the Conference in 2023.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that only coordinated actions by all countries would enable us to achieve significant results towards achieving the

SDG 6 and other water-related goals.

In this context, coherent cooperation through even respect of the interests of all parties and significant increase of financing of infrastructure is an important factor of success in this process.

I thank you!

Source: President.tj²

² <http://www.president.tj/en/node/25295>

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN KASSYM-JOMART TOKAYEV AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC SADYR ZHAPAROV

(extract)

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov paid a state visit to the Republic of Kazakhstan on March 2-3, 2021.

During the negotiations, which took place in a friendly and trusting atmosphere, the Heads of State discussed the perspectives for further strengthening strategic partnership and alliance and exchanged views on current issues on the regional and international agenda.

The Presidents emphasized the historic role of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Elbasy Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbaev, in developing and strengthening fraternal and good-neighborly relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic, as well as his outstanding contribution to the development of regional cooperation in Central Asia.

The Heads of State, while stressing with satisfaction the positive dynamic of Kazakh-Kyrgyz relations based on centuries of friendly, good-neighborly and spiritual relationships between fraternal peoples in the political, commercial, economic, cultural and humanitarian fields and guided by the provisions of the Treaty of Eternal Friendship between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic of 8 April 1997 and the Treaty of Alliance Relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic of 25 December 2003 have declared the following:

[...]

Stress the need for expansion of business relations to implement cooperation projects in industry, hydropower, fuel and energy, subsoil use, agriculture, process sector, logistics and road transport infrastructure and banking.

[...]

Express their mutual interest in constructive cooperation on environmental and energy security among the Central Asian countries and the integrated use of water and energy resources on the basis of strategic

partnership, trust, good-neighborliness, equality and mutual accommodation.

Confirm the similarity of positions on topical issues of regional cooperation and the mutual desire to contribute to the atmosphere of trust, stability and security in Central Asia.

Particularly stress the priority of further developing the Consultative Meetings of the Heads of Central Asian States that create favorable conditions for more intensive pentilateral cooperation in all areas of intraregional cooperation. Noted the importance of the next Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States to be held in 2021 in the Kyrgyz Republic depending on the epidemiological situation.

The Parties agree on the need to continue constructive dialogue under the auspices of UN, OSCE, CIS, EAEU, SCO, CSTO, CCTS, OIC and other international organizations.

[...]

Source: Akorda³

³ https://www.akorda.kz/ru/events/international_community/foreign_other_events/sovmetnoe-zayavlenie-prezidenta-respubliki-kazahstan-kasym-zhomarta-tokaeva-i-prezidenta-kyrgyzskoi-respubliki-sadyra-zhaparova

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC SADYR ZHAPAROV AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN SHAVKAT MIRZIYOYEV

(extract)

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, a state visit of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov to the Republic of Uzbekistan took place on March 11-12, 2021.

In the course of fruitful negotiations held in an open, friendly and constructive atmosphere, the Heads of State expressed their appreciation of the current level of relations between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan in the political, trade and economic, investment, transport and communication, cultural, humanitarian and other areas.

The Presidents exchanged views on a wide range of issues related to further development of multifaceted Kyrgyz-Uzbek cooperation, as well as on topical regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Proceeding from the centuries-old historical and cultural commonality of the two countries' people, based on the inviolable principles of good-neighborliness and mutual respect,

expressing its conviction that the strategic nature of bilateral relations meets vital and long-term national interests of the two countries and will also be a key factor in ensuring peace, stability and security in Central Asia,

Having guided by the Treaty of Eternal Friendship between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan of 24 December 1996 and the Declaration on Strategic Partnership of 5 October 2017 between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan

Attaching great importance to the forthcoming thirtieth anniversary of independence of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan, seeking to further expand and deepen Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations and to ensure timely and full implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, the Heads of State have declared the following:

[...]

3. The Kyrgyz side reaffirmed its support to the initiative of the Republic of Uzbekistan to hold Consultative Meetings of the Heads of Central

Asian States on a regular basis, as well as efforts aimed at deepening regional and international cooperation in the Central Asian region and strengthening regional integration.

The Parties noted the importance of holding the next Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States in 2021, as the epidemiological situation improved.

[...]

13. The Heads of State noted the huge potential for expanding cooperation in agroindustry, farming, engineering and light industry, transport and communications and for increasing the number of significant joint projects, including the transboundary information cooperation between state bodies.

The Parties noted the importance of creating favorable conditions for organization in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic of assembly of passenger cars and agricultural and trailer equipment, home appliances, as well as for establishment of joint textile and construction materials ventures in in the border area.

While noting the importance of enhancing relationships in the area of agro-industry, the Presidents called for increased cooperation between sectoral departments and research institutes in the area of agriculture and food security.

[...]

19. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan advocate integrated and rational use of water and energy resources in Central Asia. To that end, they agreed to develop sustainable long-term mechanisms for mutually beneficial cooperation.

The Uzbek side expressed its readiness to take part in hydropower projects in the Kyrgyz Republic.

20. The Parties noted the importance of intensifying and deepening cooperation in the area of natural disaster management.

The Parties intend to carry out regular exchange of information on the status of high-altitude breakthrough-prone lakes between the emergency agencies and the hydrometeorological services of the two countries, and the radioecological and geotechnical status of radioactive and toxic waste tailings located in the territories of the Parties.

[...]

Source: CABAR⁴

⁴ <http://kabar.kg/news/prezidenty-kyrgyzstana-i-uzbekistana-priniali-sovmestnoe-zaiavlenie/>

**MINUTES OF THE 79TH MEETING OF THE INTERSTATE
COMMISSION FOR WATER COORDINATION (ICWC) OF
THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN, KYRGYZ REPUBLIC,
REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN AND
REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN**

November 24, 2020

(video meeting)

Chairman:

Baidjanov Guyzgeldi
Nazargeldiyevich

Chairman of the State Committee for Water
Management, Turkmenistan

ICWC members:

Nysanbayev Yerlan
Nuralievich

Vice Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural
Resources, Republic of Kazakhstan

Shoimzoda Djamshed
Shodi

First Deputy Minister of Energy and Water
Resources, Republic of Tajikistan

Akhmadjonov Vokhidjon
Mukhamadjonovich

Deputy Minister of Water Management,
Republic of Uzbekistan

EC IFAS

Rakhimzoda Sulton
Nurmakhmadpur

Chairman of IFAS Executive Committee

ICWC executive bodies:

Nazarov Umar
Abdusalomovich

Head, ICWC Secretariat

Makhramov Makhmud
Yakhshibayevich

Head, BWO Amu Darya

Kholkhuzhaev Odil Akhmedovich	Head, BWO Amu Darya
Dukhovniy Viktor Abramovich	Director, Scientific Information Center (SIC) of ICWC
Ziganshina Dinara Ravilievna	Deputy Director, SIC ICWC

Invited:**Republic of Kazakhstan**

Shalabekova Aliya Lazarevna	Director, Department of Transboundary Rivers, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources
Zhienbaev Musilim Rysmakhanovich	Deputy Director, Department of Transboundary Rivers, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources
Seisenov Sembai Baymenovich	Deputy Chairman, Committee for Water Resources, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources
Sagadiev Daniyar Gabitovich	Head, Division of Transboundary Rivers, Department of Transboundary Rivers, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources
Baijanov Nurlan Sabitovich	Third Secretary, Division of transboundary rivers, International Legal Department, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources
Sharip Daniyar Esenuly	Chief Expert, Division of Transboundary Rivers, Department of Transboundary Rivers, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources
Nurymbetov Seilbek Sergazyugly	Head of Aralo-Syrdarya Basin Inspection, Committee for Water Resources, Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources

Biymbetov Khamit
Mukhambetjanovich

Director, Kyzylorda branch of RGP
“Kazvodkhoz”

Konovalov Denis
Valerievich

Director, Turkestan branch of RGP
“Kazvodkhoz”

Sairov Serik
Biakhmetovich

Deputy Director, RGP “Kazgidromet”

Republic of Tajikistan

Abdurazokzoda Daler
Abdukhalok

Head, Department of Water and Energy Policy,
Science and Technology Development, Ministry
of Energy and Water Resources

Gafurzoda Tagoymurod

Head, Division of Water Resources, Ministry of
Energy and Water Resources

Nazifov Sh.

Head of Basin administration of land
reclamation and irrigation, Agency for Land
Reclamation and Irrigation

Turkmenistan

Paschyev
Yanov Durdyevich

Head, Water Use Division, State Committee for
Water Management

Nurgeldiev Tirkesh
Yolliyevich

Chief engineer, Water Use Division, State
Committee for Water Management

Atayev Dovlet
Bekmuradovich

Chief expert, Water Use Division, State
Committee for Water Management

Republic of Uzbekistan

Tashpulatov Abduvoris
Abduvosikovich

Acting Head of Water Resources and Water Use
Division, Ministry of Water Management

Juraev Ilkhom
Usmonovich

Head, Irrigation System and Hydrostructure
Operation Division, Ministry of Water
Management

Agenda

1. Results of the use of water withdrawal limits and the operation regimes of reservoirs in the Syr Darya River and the Amu Darya River basins over the growing season 2020.
2. Approval of the country water withdrawal limits and forecast operation regimes of the reservoir cascades in the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya River basins for the non-growing season 2020-2021.
3. Progress on implementation of the proposals and initiatives voiced at the Summit of the Heads of IFAS founder-states in Turkmenbashi.
4. Agenda and venue of the next regular 80th meeting of ICWC.
5. Additional matters.

Decision on the first item:

Take into account information provided by BWO Amu Darya and BWO Syr Darya on the results of the use of water withdrawal limits and the operation regimes of reservoirs in the Syr Darya River and the Amu Darya River basins over the growing season 2020.

Decision on the second item:

1. Approve country water withdrawal limits in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya River basins for the non-growing season 2020-2021 (Annexes 1 and 2).
2. Take into account forecast operation regimes of the reservoir cascades proposed by BWO Amu Darya and BWO Syr Darya for the Amu Darya (Annex 3) and the Syr Darya (Annex 4) basins for the non-growing season 2020-2021.
3. The Kazakh party proposed to consider and approve water withdrawal limits on the Karadarya River and the Chirchik River. In this context, the parties instructed BWO Syr Darya to draft a proposal on setting and approval of water withdrawal limits for the Karadarya River and the Chirchik River on the basis of existing regulations.

Decision on the third item:

Take into account information of SIC ICWC on progress on implementation of the proposals and initiatives of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States voiced at the Summit of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States (Turkmenbashi city, 24 August 2018).

Decision on the fourth item:

1. Hold the next ordinary 80th meeting of ICWC in Dushanbe. The date of the meeting is to be negotiated in due course.

2. Propose the following agenda for the next ordinary 80th meeting of ICWC:

1) Results of the use of water withdrawal limits and the operation regimes of the reservoir cascades in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya River basins over the non-growing season 2020-2021;

2) Approval of the country water withdrawal limits and forecast operation regimes of the reservoir cascades in the Amu Darya and Syr Darya River basins for the growing season 2021.

3) Progress on implementation of the proposals and initiatives voiced at the Summit of the Heads of IFAS Founder-States in Turkmenbashi city.

4) Additional matters;

5) Agenda and venue of the next ordinary 81st meeting of ICWC.

Republic of Kazakhstan

Ye.N. Nysanbayev

Kyrgyz Republic

Republic of Tajikistan

D.Sh.Shoimzoda

Turkmenistan

G.N. Baidjanov

Republic of Uzbekistan

Sh.R.Khamraev

Annex 1

Limits of water withdrawal from the Amu Darya River and water supply to the river delta and the Aral Sea for the non-growing season 2020-2021

River basin, state	Water withdrawal limits, mcm	
	Total annual (1.10.20 to 1.10.21)	including growing season (1.10.20 to 1.10.21)
Total withdrawal from the Amu Darya River	55 424	15 730
of which:		
Republic of Tajikistan	9 854	2 880
Republic of Uzbekistan	1 570	370
From the Amu Darya River to the nominal Kerki gauging station	44 000	12 480
Turkmenistan	22 000	6 500
Republic of Uzbekistan	22 000	5 980
Plus:		
- water supply to the river delta and Aral Sea, including irrigation water and CDW	4 200	2 100
- sanitary and environmental releases to irrigation systems in:	800	800
Dashoguz province	150	150
Khorezm province	150	150
Republic of Karakalpakstan	500	500

Annex 2

Limits of water withdrawal on Naryn-SyrDarya Reservoir Cascade for the non-growing season

Republics, reaches	According to Master Plan	Request for non-growing season 2020-2021	Difference (non-gr.2020-2021 – Master Plan)
I reach -Toktogul-Uchkurgan			
Total to Uchkurgan hydroscheme, incl.	1235	1376	141
Uzbekistan	1172	1252	80
Tajikistan	58	84	26
Kyrgyzstan	5	40	35
II reach -Uchkurgan-Bakhri Tojik			
Total to Bakhri Tojik, incl.	311	247	-64
Uzbekistan	152	171	19
Kyrgyzstan	15	7	-8
Tajikistan	144	69	-75
III reach - Bakhri Tojik -Shardara			
Total to Shardara, incl.	2684	2635	-49
Uzbekistan	2023	1924	-99
Kazakhstan	430	498	68
Tajikistan	231	212	-19
Total Toktogul-Shardara			
Syr Darya (to Shardara), incl.	4230	4258	28
Uzbekistan	3347	3347	0
Kazakhstan	430	498	68
Kyrgyzstan	20	47	27
Tajikistan	433	365	-68

**Forecast operation regimes of Nurek and Tuyamuyun reservoirs
(October 2020 – March 2021)**

Nurek reservoir	unit	Actua I	Forecast					total
		X	XI	XII	I	II	III	
Volume: beginning of the period	mcm	10574	10313	9766	8904	7876	6781	10574
Inflow to the reservoir	m ³ /s	289	238	200	230	233	253	
	mcm	774	617	536	616	563	678	3783
Water releases from the reservoir	m ³ /s	378	444	521	570	600	402	
	mcm	1012	1151	1395	1527	1451	1077	7613
Volume: end of the period	mcm	10313	9766	8904	7876	6781	6217	6217
Accumulation (+) drawdown (-)	mcm	-261	-547	-862	-1028	-1095	-564	-4357

Tuyamuyun reservoir	unit	Actua I	Forecast					total
		X	XI	XII	I	II	III	
Volume: beginning of the period	mcm	2458	2416	2934	4009	4895	4305	2458
Inflow to the reservoir	m ³ /s	444	389	570	550	541	500	
	mcm	1189	1008	1527	1473	1308	1339	7844
Water releases from the reservoir	m ³ /s	460	189	169	219	785	941	
	mcm	1232	490	453	587	1899	2520	7180
Volume: end of the period	mcm	2416	2934	4009	4895	4305	3122	3122
Accumulation (+) drawdown (-)	mcm	-42	518	1075	886	-590	-1183	664

Forecast operation schedule of Naryn-SyrDarya reservoir cascade for 1 October 2020 - 31 March 2021

		October	November	December	January	February	March	Total mcm
Toktogul reservoir								
Inflow to the reservoir	m ³ /s	237	202	168	159	158	166	2861
	mcm	635	524	450	426	382	445	
Volume: beginning of the season	mcm	15202	14812	13944	12707	11392	10274	
end of the season	mcm	14812	13944	12707	11392	10274	9371	
Water releases from reservoir	m ³ /s	383	535	630	650	620	500	8679
	mcm	1025	1386	1687	1741	1500	1339	
Bakhti Tochik reservoir								
Inflow to the reservoir	m ³ /s	455	871	968	936	941	727	12799
(Akdjar GS)	mcm	1218	2259	2592	2507	2276	1948	
Volume: beginning of the season	mcm	1684	2617	3037	3264	3368	3472	
end of the season	mcm	2617	3037	3264	3368	3472	3439	
Water releases from reservoir	m ³ /s	105	720	900	920	920	750	11256
	mcm	281	1866	2411	2464	2226	2009	
Shardara reservoir								
Inflow to the reservoir	m ³ /s	175	667	902	950	971	780	11594
	mcm	470	1728	2415	2544	2348	2089	
Volume: beginning of the season	mcm	829	995	2076	2790	3848	4732	
end of the season	mcm	995	2076	2790	3848	4732	5092	

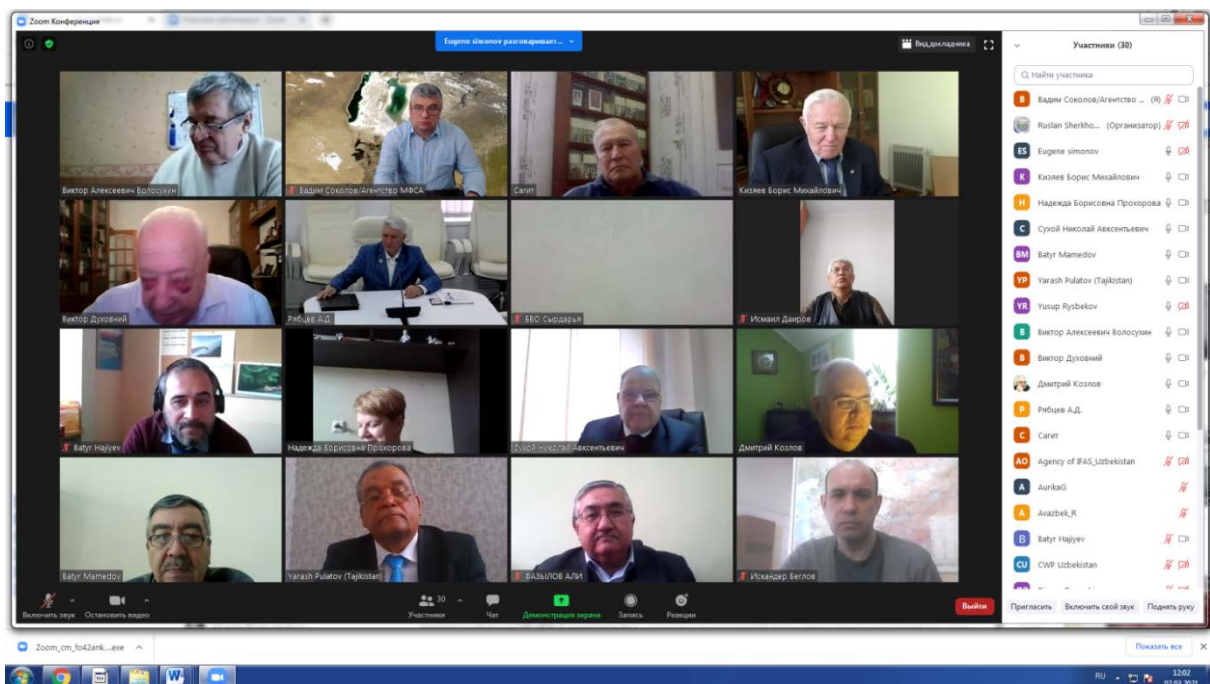
		October	November	December	January	February	March	Total mcm
Water releases from reservoir	m ³ /s	86	247	630	550	600	640	7195
	mcm	230	639	1687	1473	1452	1714	
Water supply to the Aral Sea	m ³ /s	18	82	195	225	210	190	2402
	mcm	49	212	522	603	508	509	
Charvak reservoir								
Inflow to the reservoir (4 rivers in total)	m ³ /s	109	97	83	73	72	105	1419
	mcm	292	253	222	196	175	281	
Volume: beginning of the season	mcm	1282	1213	1169	1122	1058	1015	1015
	mcm	1213	1169	1122	1058	1015	1055	
Water releases from reservoir (water discharge from Gazalkent HPP)	m ³ /s	134	113	100	96	90	90	1637
	mcm	358	294	268	258	218	241	
Andizhan reservoir								
Inflow to the reservoir	m ³ /s	32	48	65	55	53	60	822
	mcm	85	125	174	147	129	161	
Volume: beginning of the season	mcm	383	263	290	447	578	693	693
	mcm	263	290	447	578	693	725	
Water releases from reservoir	m ³ /s	77	38	6	6	6	48	480
	mcm	206	98	16	16	15	129	

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS, AND CENTRAL ASIA NETWORK OF WATER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS “TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION IN THE EECCA COUNTRIES: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS”

For the first time the EECCA Network of Water Management Organizations held its conference on “Transboundary Water Cooperation in the EECCA countries: Lessons Learned and Future Directions” in the format of a videoconference on 2-3 March 2021. The conference was organized as part of the UNECE Project “Support to the Network of Russian Speaking Water Management Organizations” financed by the Government of the Russian Federation.

The opening remarks and welcome speeches were delivered by:

- Prof. D. Kozlov, President of EECCA NWO
- B. Hajjyev, UNECE.



Then, the following speakers reported:

Session “Water cooperation between Central Asian and neighboring countries”

Prof. V. Dukhovniy (SIC ICWC) – Diagnostic report on water resources in Central Asia as of 2019

Prof. S. Ibatullin (International Training Center for the Safety of Hydraulic Structures, Kazakhstan) – Reconstruction of the common academic space in the water sector as an objective for the EECCA Expert Platform

A. Ryabtsev (Kazakhstan) – Transboundary water cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia

Ch. Uzakbayev (Kyrgyzstan) – Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

Prof. Ya. Pulatov (Tajikistan) – Interstate water cooperation between Tajikistan and neighboring countries

B. Mamedov (Turkmenistan) – Regional environmental cooperation in Central Asia

V. Sokolov (IFAS Agency for Implementation of the Aral Sea Basin and GEF Projects, Uzbekistan) – Cooperation for solving problems in the South Aral region under umbrella of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea

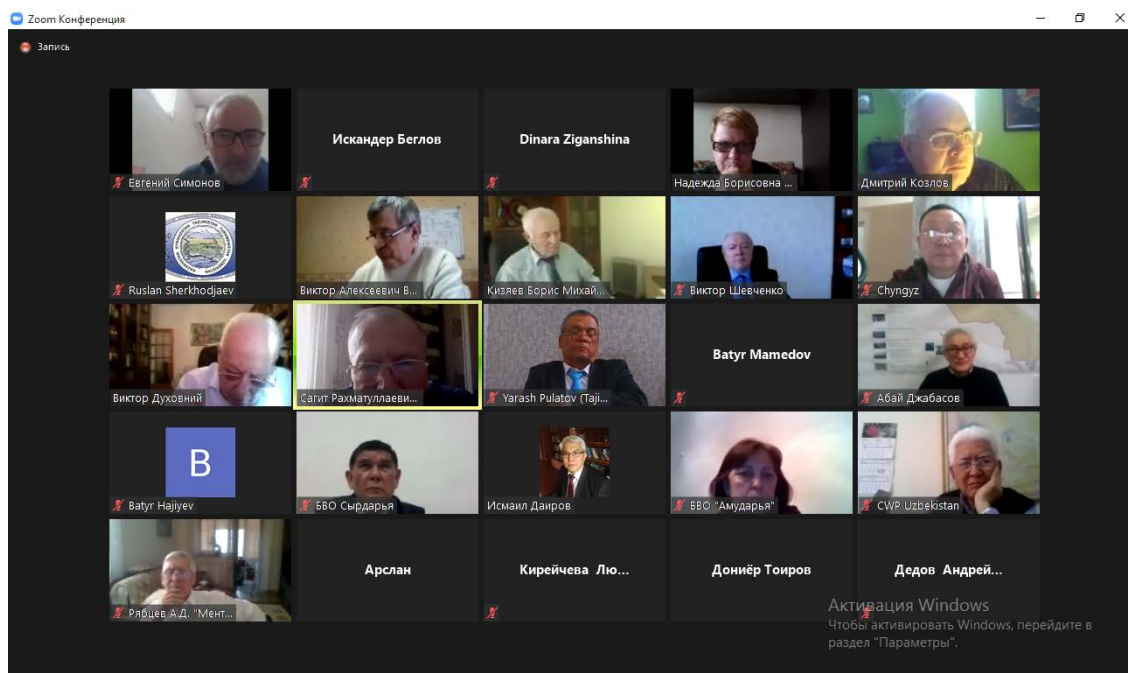
Prof. V. Dukhovniy (SIC ICWC) – Aral Sea Basin as an example of IWRM

D. Ziganshina (SIC ICWC), A. Galustyan (UNECE consultant) – Coverage of environmental issues in speeches of the EECCA countries at UN GA over 1992-2020

E. Simonov (Rivers without Boundaries Coalition) – ‘Modest water hegemon’»: China’s involvement in water management and renewables in Central Asia – challenges and prospects

G. Tilyavova (BWO Amu Darya) – How to bring BWO Amu Darya operations in line with IWRM principles

Kh. Makhkamov (BWO Syr Darya) – How to bring BWO Syr Darya operations in line with IWRM principles



Session “Water cooperation between the Eastern Europe and neighboring countries”

D. Kozlov (EECCA NWO President, Russia) – Russian-Finland transboundary water cooperation

B. Kizyaev (VNIIGiM, Russia) – On water supply to Crimea

N. Prokhorova (FGBU RosNIIVH, Russia) – The transboundary Selenga River

S. Dubenok (Central Research Institute for Integrated Water Use, Belarus) – Integrated water management in the Dnepr-Pripyat basin

E. Simonov (State Nature Reserve “Daurskiy”, Russia) – Transboundary risks of adaptation strategies and country climate obligations (Russia-Mongolia case-study)

Session “EECCA NWO contribution to cooperation between Eastern Europe, Central Asia and neighboring countries”

N. Mirzaev (SIC ICWC) – Experience in implementation of IWRM: IWRM-Fergana Project

I.V. Belikov, I. Beglov (UNECE consultant) –Expert Platform on Water Security, Sustainable Development, and Future Studies: website and experts’ database

Resolution EECCA NWO International Conference “Transboundary Water Cooperation in the EECCA countries: Lessons Learned and Future Directions”

An international videoconference of the EECCA Network of Water Management Organizations was held on 2-3 March 2021. The participants addressed the current issues of transboundary water cooperation, summed up annual results and discussed future tasks of the Network.

Following the discussion, the Conference’s participants identified the next key points and recommendations.

1. Increasing competing water uses of sectors and countries combined with the impact of climate change make close cooperation and **collaboration at national, basin, transboundary and international levels** imperative. Comprehensive and systemic measures for rational and optimal water and land use, including digitization and automation of hydraulic structures and application of water-saving technologies become particularly important. To give additional momentum to cooperation in the field of water and sustainable development, it is proposed to start developing **strategic documents**, including the Regional Program of Rational Water Use in Central Asia and apply to the Eurasian Economic Union’s (EAEU) leadership with the proposal in favor of developing a Water Strategy of EAEU countries up to 2050.

2. Having heard the case-studies of bilateral cooperation in river basins of EECCA countries, the participants noted the positive value of such cooperation in solving operational issues of water management and emphasized the importance of developing **basin-wide cooperation** for coordinated use and development of shared water resources.

3. Taking into account increased frequency and intensity of extreme hydrological phenomena, including floods and low water, as well as imminent water shortage, the participants take the view that they could apply to the governments of the Russian Federation and the Central Asian countries about expediency of **a new view on re-distribution** of surplus flood water of Siberian rivers to the regions of southern Siberia and Central Asia.

4. The participants expressed concern over the problem of **sustainable water supply in Crimea** and called on Russia and Ukraine to make maximum efforts to ensure the right of the population to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation and to respect the relevant economic, social and cultural rights of Crimean residents.

5. While expressing serious concern about the shortage of qualified personnel in the water sector, the participants emphasized the urgent need for **coordination of activities on training, retraining and professional**

development in the sector. In particular, it was decided to exchange experience within the Network in unification of educational and methodical base and preparation of specialized courses. Successful implementation of the Central Asian Knowledge Network's Program for methodological base development was noted and could be of use for EECCA NWO in part of developing a common water educational space and academic mobility. In this context, it would be expedient to form a Training and Methodological Expert Group to develop water training standards in EECCA countries. It is suggested to consider the possibility of establishing a virtual international water education academy to build capacities of water professionals in EECCA countries. The next Network's conference is suggested to be held on the theme "Water Education: Challenges and Prospects" in late 2021 or early 2022.

6. Working with **youth** as the main driving force of the countries' development is recognized as one of future strategic directions of the Network. Young people should be central in initiating new sustainable approaches to water management and in promoting cooperation between the countries. Consider it necessary to involve young professionals in the Network's activity and form a group of future water leaders. Apply to UNECE with the request to support this proposal next year, including financial support.

7. The participants noted the importance of efforts of EECCA NWO and SIC ICWC in developing the **Expert Platform** for water security, sustainable development and future studies in the EECCA region and neighboring countries. Particularly they noted development of the Platform's web-site (cawater-info.net/expert-platform/) and the database of experts, as well as joint work of experts on the "Diagnostic Report on Rational Use of Water Resources in Central Asia as of 2019" and in the review of speeches of EECCA countries at the UN General Assembly over the period from 1992 to 2020. It was suggested to apply to concerned countries and international partners to support multidisciplinary research within the framework of the Expert Platform.

8. Since China's "Belt and Road" Initiative can have a substantial influence on economic, socio-environmental and geopolitical conditions of EECCA countries' development, it is recommended for members of EECCA NWO to consider carefully the **water component of the Initiative**. Exchange of information on countries' cooperation with Chinese organizations and companies will help to better plan future cooperation, avoid unnecessary risks and identify beneficial areas for collaboration.

9. In the context of the **risks posed by adaptation projects in Russian and Mongolian river basins**, the following was recommended:

- Apply to authorized bodies responsible for transboundary water basins in Russia and Mongolia with the recommendation to suspend construction of a dam on the Ulza River until a joint comprehensive environmental and

economic impact assessment is made and the public discussion of the project assessment results is completed in the two countries. Recommend analyzing alternative ways to meet water demands in the context of changing climate and cyclical water fluctuations.

- Apply to the UNESCO World Heritage Center and Committee, the advisory bodies of the World Heritage Convention, and the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands with a recommendation to urgently consider threats to a world heritage site under the title "Landscapes of Dauria" and call for immediate EIA of a dam project on the Ulza River with the project suspended until the Convention bodies review the assessment.
- Apply to the Mongolian Government with a proposal to conduct a strategic environmental assessment of the "Blue Horse" (Huh Mor) Project for its impact on river ecosystems and economy, as well as on water sharing mechanisms in transboundary basins. Recommend the Government of Mongolia to hold consultations with neighboring countries (PRC and Russia) on the development of joint adaptation programs in the transboundary basins of Ulza-Torey Lakes, Khalkhingol-Kerulen-Argun, Selenga-Baikal, Bulgan, etc.
- Apply to UNDP, the International Adaptation Fund, the Secretariat and relevant bodies of the Framework Convention on Climate Change with the recommendation on the need to conduct a systematic comprehensive socio-environmental assessment of water management measures proposed by countries as part of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) for mitigation and adaptation under the Paris Agreement, especially projects in transboundary basins. Recommend disseminating those contributions among all riparian countries of transboundary basins for evaluation and opinions. Submit information on the Ulza and Selenga River projects that require such assessments at international level to the above mentioned bodies as examples.
- Recommend that UNECE support the use of the Water Convention's tools and impact assessments for the hydraulic projects submitted as part of a pilot project on climate adaptation in Dauria basins.

10. The participants were pleased to note the **effective and fruitful activity of EECCA NWO over more than 12 years**. With the support of UNECE, the Government of the Russian Federation, SIC ICWC and the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), this activity contributed to regular exchange of ideas, information and best practices in various water-related aspects and maintained professional unity and mutual understanding between experts and countries in the region. In 2020, despite the quarantine

restrictions, the Network collaborated with the Expert platform of future studies with mutual benefits.

The following achievements of the Network can be highlighted over 2019-2020:

- organization and holding of the international conference of EECCA NWO on the theme “Science and Innovations for Water Security” (23-24 September 2019, Yekaterinburg, Russia);
- participation of EECCA NWO members in the meeting of the ICID Working Group on Irrigation and Drainage in the States under Socio-Economic Transformation, WG-IDSST (28 October 2020 via video-conference) and in the meeting of the INBO International Liaison Bureau (3 November 2020 via video-conference);
- issue of information and research publications. The recent ones included: the collection of EECCA NWO papers “Science and Innovations for Water Security” (volumes 1 and 2); the collection “Selected transboundary water agreements signed between European and Asian states over 1992-2019”; Water Yearbook: Central Asia and around the Globe that presented short reviews of key water-related developments and events over the past year;
- preparation and dissemination of a weekly digest “Water management, irrigation and environment in Central Asia”;
- further development of the Central Asian knowledge portal - CAWater-Info portal (cawater-info.net) – as a component of the set of unified tools for implementation of IWRM, adapted to specific conditions in river basins with different degrees of water shortage in arid and semi-arid zones in EECCA countries;
- further development of the E-Atlas of water-management and environmental organizations in EECCA countries;
- support to establishment of the regional Expert platform on water security, sustainable development and future studies and to multidisciplinary research and exchange.

11. It was noted important to strengthen efforts of the Network in the following key areas:

- further development of the information space on water management, land reclamation, and nature conservation, including exchange of best practices, experience and knowledge in the area of management;

- initiation of joint multidisciplinary research on water security and sustainable development;
- organization of training workshops, study-tours and webinars to share experience and information on research and technological base developments and innovation application in water sectors of the EECCA countries, as well as implementation of joint projects;
- attraction of basin organizations and the youth to the Network's activity.

12. While appreciating an **invaluable contribution of UNECE, the Russian Government, SIC ICWC and INBO** to the development of EECCA NWO, which has proven to be a useful platform for communication, knowledge sharing and joint research on water and sustainable development, the participants apply to UNECE and the Russian Government to continue support of the Network's activity in the future.

All materials of the conference can be found on:

<http://www.eecca-water.net/content/view/24668/75/lang,russian/>

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL CONFERENCE “WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION” DEDICATED TO THE 105TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PROFESSOR L.YE. TAZHIBAEV

The International Scientific and Practical Conference «Water Resources Management in the Context of Globalization» dedicated to the 105th anniversary of Professor L.YE. Tazhibaev took place in Almaty on March 11-12.

Experts from a number of UN agencies and other international organizations, scholars and specialists from Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and other countries participated in the online Forum.

A wide range of issues related to water management and the use of transboundary watercourses, the need to improve water cooperation in the context of globalization and the new challenges arising from global climate change were discussed at the plenary and six parallel sessions.

Resolution of the International Scientific and Practical Conference «Water Resources Management in the Context of Globalization»

Sustainable socio-economic development of states is constrained by a multitude of problems in the water sector. One of the main factors is the distortion of the natural balance between water availability and demand.

The world water crisis will be caused primarily by growth of the world's population and the increasing demand for water. According to the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), water consumption has increased sixfold over the past 100 years, and would double from today's level by 2050. The UN forecasts that by 2025 the population of the planet will grow from 5 to 8.5 billion and, consequently, will need approximately 6.000 km³ of freshwater additionally.

The water crisis is closely linked to the growing global food crisis. Over the next 15 to 20 years, the deteriorating water security threatens to worsen the global food crisis. As early as now, water hampers economic growth and causes armed conflicts in many countries.

In this context, ensuring water security as an integral part of food security is the main condition for the development of Kazakhstan.

Partners of the conference: JSC “Institute of Geography and Water Security” MES RK, International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, U.M. Akhmedsafin Institute of Hydrogeology and Geoecology, Kazakh Research Institute of Water Management, Kazakh-German University, M. KH. Dulaty Taraz Regional University.

Aim of the conference: discuss the current problems in the water sector and agricultural science in the era of digitization and modernization of public consciousness in a globalized economy.

The conference was attended by leaders and experts from SIC ICWC, IFAS, NASEC MoA RK, MFA RK, Committee for Water Resources of MEGNR RK, scholars and experts from leading foreign universities and research centers in over than 30 countries, including Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Hungary, China, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Turkey, USA, CIS countries and other representatives of financial and business entities, sectoral associations, universities, research institutes, agricultural organizations, etc.

The conference included the following panel sessions:

- water resources and land reclamation;
- sustainable water management of natural resource systems;
- the Aral Sea basin: experience, cooperation, prospects;
- promoting a multi-sectoral approach (NEXUS) to enhance environmental security and promote water and energy cooperation in Central Asia;
- water management and issues. Hydro-engineering;
- economic issues related to water security.

63 speakers, including 38 ones from the near and far abroad countries, took the floor at the panel sessions.

The Forum enabled formation of new, successful scientific groups, involvement of youth in R&D, expansion and strengthening of scientific and technological relations of the academic community, holding of discussions on innovation research, etc.

The panel sessions included research presentations, discussions and debates on topical issues of integrated water resources management in agro-industry, as well as equitable transboundary water sharing.

The conference addressed such issues as the development of global trends in the water sector, the transfer and adoption of innovation technology in agribusiness, the implementation of a comprehensive approach and integrated water resources management, modern water use technologies in economic sectors (mainly agriculture), the preservation of favorable environment and enhancement of transboundary dialogue and cooperation among neighboring countries. The participants also discussed matters related to adoption of innovation technologies in water supply and pasture irrigation, use of renewable energy for economic development of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Having heard and discussed presentations by leading scientists and specialists at the plenary session and panel sessions, the participants and organizers of the Conference have addressed the current water management problems in Kazakhstan and made the following proposals and recommendations:

- adopt a strategy to prevent an increase in water withdrawals as a measure contributing to rational use of basin's water resources, adoption of resource-saving technologies in agriculture and other sectors, as well as to mutual trust; good-neighborly relations, etc.;

- facilitate multilateral international cooperation in the region and use international experience for dealing jointly in coordinated manner with solution transboundary water problems;

- accelerate the development and implementation of IWRM principles, taking into account world experience and to ensure reliable and safe operation of water management systems, simultaneously bearing in mind development of economic sectors and preservation of natural environment;

- make greater use of joint programmes and projects in the field of arid hydrogeology of groundwater as a basis for successful agricultural water supply and pasture irrigation;

- note the need for further development of basic knowledge on water, energy and production nexus;

- welcome initiatives of the World Bank on development of the Central Asia Knowledge Network as an tool of water and energy cooperation;

- recognize the need to develop new technological principles in water resources management, improve forecasts, exchange and transparency of information on transboundary water use;

- continue the institutional and legal improvement of IFAS and the support in solving the current problems of the Aral Sea basin countries;
- accelerate the development of the Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4), taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals for 2015-2030, targets of the International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development for 2018-2028 and wishes of the international donor community;
- take measures to improve the educational and research base for training, retraining and capacity-building in the water sector;
- make use of opportunities of knowledge-sharing, cross-country exchange of students and teaching staff, and synchronization of curricula to improve the quality of training.

The participants thank organizers of the Conference, the Kazakh National Agrarian Research University, as well as representatives of State, international and non-governmental organizations, leading scientists and specialists for their contributions.

Side event of the International scientific and practical conference “The Aral Sea Basin: experience, cooperation, prospects”

Executive Board of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea in the Republic of Kazakhstan held a side-event on “The Aral Sea Basin: experience, cooperation, prospects” during the International Scientific-Practical Conference “Water Resources Management in Conditions of Globalization” devoted to 105-year birth anniversary of Prof. Tazhibayev L.E. The event was held online on March 12, 2021.

The aim of the event was to further strengthen and develop international cooperation, attract public attention to urgent issues in the Aral Sea basin in the context of preparation for the IX World Water Forum (Dakar), the successful implementation of goals and objectives of the International Decade “Water for Sustainable Development” 2018-2028, and identify future directions of transboundary cooperation.

At the end of the Side Event, a resolution was adopted.

Source: kazaral.org⁵

⁵ <http://kazaral.org/parallelnoe-meropriyatie-mezhdunarodnoj-nauchno-prakticheskoy-konferencii/>

Resolution of the side-event “The Aral Sea Basin: experience, cooperation, prospects”

Participants of the International Scientific and Practical Conference, bearing in mind the Sustainable Development Goals⁶, including:

UNGA Resolution A / RES / 73 / L.87 “Cooperation between the United Nations and the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea” dated May 21, 2019;

UNGA Resolution A / RES / 71/222 “The International Decade for Action“ Water for Sustainable Development” for the period 2018 - 2028” dated December 21, 2016;

Resolutions adopted at the UNGA 75th session dated December 21, 2020:

- UN Conference on the Mid-Term Comprehensive Review of the Progress towards the Goals of the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development, 2018–2028”;

- “Disaster Risk Reduction”;

- “Implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries experiencing serious drought and / or desertification, particularly in Africa”;

- “Fighting sand and dust storms”;

- “Promoting sustainable tourism development, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection”;

Guided by the Joint Communiqué of the Council of Heads of States - Founders of the IFAS dated August 24, 2018, **recommend**:

1. that the work on the development of the Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4) shall be speed up, taking into account the Sustainable Development Goals 2015-2030, target indicators “International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028” and wishes of the international donor community;

2. the activity to improve the organizational structure and legal framework of IFAS shall be continued to render effective assistance jointly with the international community in solving urgent problems of the countries of the Aral Sea basin;

⁶ Resolution A/70/L.1 UNGA dated September 18, 2015

3. the work on the Regional Environmental Protection Program for Sustainable Development of Central Asia shall be actively seized;

4. scientific and applied research based on elaborated mathematical and spatial simulation models for a feasibility study of the joint use of water and energy resources in Central Asia shall be conducted;

5. the need to reduce pollution in transboundary waters, atmospheric air, land degradation and increase the area of forest plantations shall be given special attention;

6. new opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation between interested government agencies, universities, research institutes, water management, international and regional organizations in solving water management, environmental and socio-economic problems shall be considered;

7. the necessity to promote broad information exchange and cooperation in the areas of water management, forestry and fisheries, integrated water resources management, meteorology, hydrology and ecology shall be supported;

8. regional projects to address water and environmental problems, including conducting joint scientific and practical expeditions in the Aral Sea basin shall be implemented;

9. highlight positive trend of international water cooperation under presidency of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Water Convention Bureau during 2019-2021 and the active sub regional operation of the International water assessment Centre.

10. establish central Asian platform “Science for Aral” on scientific researches and monitoring of the Aral Sea basin under UNESCO.

11. determine a date for World Glacier Protection Day and establish a special International Foundation for the Preservation of Glaciers.

12. support Uzbekistan's initiatives to declare the Aral Sea region a zone of innovative green technologies.

13. express appreciation to the UN specialized structures, international financial institutions, donor countries, other partners on development that provide assistance and support to the countries of the region in solving urgent problems of the Aral Sea basin.

WATER ISSUES IN STATEMENTS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN STATES AT UNGA OVER THE PERIOD FROM 1992 TO 2020

Ziganshina D.R., Galustyan A.G., Abasova D.K.

Every September, representatives of all UN Member States arrive in New York to attend the General Assembly, one of the six principal organs of the United Nations. During general debates, Heads of State, Government or foreign policy departments share their countries' concerns and discuss ways to address the global challenges of our time. What did the countries of Central Asia say from the world's main rostrum from 1992 to 2020, what initiatives did they propose, what did they call for? The answers to these and other questions were explored in the study "Highlights of the statements made at the UNGA general debates from 1992 to 2020" carried out as part of the UNECE Project "Support to the Network of Russian speaking water management organizations" financed by the Government of the Russian Federation.⁷

Environmental issues were among the most frequently discussed for Central Asian countries over the entire period. The problem of the Aral Sea (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan), water issues (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), sustainable development, green economy, problems of mountain territories (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) are among the most discussed environmental issues over the period under review.

In given review we present the synthesis of the Central Asian country statements on water topics.

⁷ Full versions on all countries are available on:

- <http://cawater-info.net/expert-platform/kazakhstan-un-ga-1992-2020.htm> Kazakhstan
- <http://cawater-info.net/expert-platform/kyrgyzstan-un-ga-1992-2020.htm> Kyrgyzstan
- <http://cawater-info.net/expert-platform/tajikistan-un-ga-1992-2020.htm> Tajikistan
- <http://cawater-info.net/expert-platform/turkmenistan-un-ga-1992-2020.htm> Turkmenistan
- <http://cawater-info.net/expert-platform/uzbekistan-un-ga-1992-2020.htm> Uzbekistan

Water topic in Kazakhstan's statements

Water problems in a rather disturbing context were raised in Kazakhstan's very first statement at UNGA in 1992. The President of Kazakhstan said:

"... taking a look forward from the present day to the twenty-first century in a search for hotbeds of potential tension, I wish to draw the world community's attention, among other questions that give cause for great concern, to the problem of water in the Central Asian region, which in time might become a source of dangerous disputes in the very heart of the oldest continent. I am convinced that we need to speed up work now, not later, on the preparation of special United Nations projects that would provide for a gradual and effective solution to the problem of furnishing water resources to Central Asia". (47/1992).

It is noteworthy that water topic was voiced among the first range of issues designated as the "world community and the new role of the UN", which referred to preventive diplomacy, borders inviolability, bridging the gap between rich and poor and strengthening of the UN's peacekeeping mission (47/1992).

The conflict potential of the water factor was also raised in other statements of Kazakhstan (55/2000, 59/2004, 74/2019). In particular, it was noted in 2000 that environmental issues, such as the "problem of rational use of transboundary water resources "had moved from socio-economic to political sphere and got the global importance (55/2000). And then:

"There have been many cases in history of nations and States being in conflict over the lack of drinking water and water for irrigation. Thousands and thousands of people have often had to pull up their roots because of problems with water. Reducing the number of people without access to safe water is as vital today as ever. Kazakhstan calls for every country to adopt, under bilateral and multilateral treaties, legislative and administrative measures with regard to transboundary water resources and their management". (55/2000).

At the 59th meeting in 2004, along with the increasing spread of drugs, illegal migration, surging religious extremism, poverty and environmental degradation, **the lack of water resources** was called as providing "a breeding ground for international terrorism" (59/2004).

Water issues were raised quite frequently (at 12 meetings), but generally did not take much time. They were often considered in conjunction with other issues and threats. Until 2011, water issues had been mostly presented in the context of the **lack of water** (59/2004, 60/2005), including the catastrophic shortage of drinking water in the Aral Sea region (52/1997, S-19/1997) and increasing scarcity of water (55/2000, 66/2011). Since 2013, the term "**water security**" has been used extensively as a key aspect of sustainable development and regional (71/2016) and global security (68/2014, 70/2015, 73/2018). Water issues were raised in national, regional and global contexts.

In the national context, reference was made to the shortage of drinking water in the Aral Sea region (52/1997, S-19/1997) and to the development of a national plan for transition to green economy, which included programs in the main economic sectors - energy, *water supply*, utilities, agriculture, industry and biodiversity (68/2013).

Water issues were most frequently addressed **in the context of the Central Asian region**, starting with the very first presentation (47/1992). The severity of water problems in Central Asia was stated at the 57th (2002), 59th (2004), 60th (2005) and 74th (2019th) meetings. In recent years, Kazakhstan has been committed to promoting food, water and energy security for a safer and more prosperous region (71/2016) and strengthening further regional cooperation and integration between fraternal Central Asian nations in various fields such as water management, trade and development, transport and many others (72/2017). In 2019, at the 74th meeting the country representative, noted the impact of climate change in Central Asia, which, in particular "would result in dramatic existential challenges, such as desertification, the melting of glaciers and the subsequent depletion of drinking and irrigation water" (74/2019). At the 75th meeting of the UNGA, Kazakhstan proposed to establish a **Regional Water and Energy Consortium**.

In the global context, water issues have been raised in terms of "preventing global hunger and increasing water scarcity" (66/2011) and as one of the key threats to development (73/2018). At the 70th session of the UNGA in 2015, Kazakhstan proposed to develop under the auspices of the UN the concept of "a new future", which should be about "nuclear, energy, water and food security, trust, mutual understanding and reforms" (70/2015).

Kazakhstan has made it a priority to develop cooperation with **the United Nations to address water issues**, including the solution of river problems in border areas, the provision of drinking water to the population in a number of areas (56/2001) and the rational use of water resources (57/2002). In 2000, satisfaction was expressed that the UN Economic Commissions for Europe and Asia (ECE and ESCAP) had developed a joint program for the Central Asian States - SPECA, which covered all priority issues for the countries in the region:

development of transit transport capacity, multiple pipeline systems, rational use of energy and water resources, environmental protection and technological growth (55/2000). But it was also noted that Kazakhstan might expect from the UN "more effective actions in this direction" (57/2002).

Water topic in Kyrgyzstan's statements

For the first time, water issues were raised in Kyrgyzstan's statements to the UNGA in 1994. It was noted that the United Nations could play a leading role in studying typical conflict cases, systematizing approaches, principles and ways of solution to problems in traditional subjects of dispute, such as **sharing of water and other natural resources** (49/1994). For the distribution of water and natural resources Central Asia "needs international legal expertise, the introduction of proven legal, political, socio-economic norms and regulations" (50/1995).

The conflict potential of the water factor was also raised in later statements by Kyrgyzstan. It was stressed that "global climate change, growing population in the face of environmental degradation, declining mineral resources and access to drinking water, as well as many other challenges combined to increase tensions and conflict potential in the international cooperation arena" (67/2012). A significant reduction in river flow within Kyrgyzstan as a result of global warming could lead to socio-economic tensions in the region as a whole (68/2013).

The largest number of statements focused on **Kyrgyzstan** as one of the principal repositories of glaciers and **suppliers of freshwater in the region** (53/1998, 60/2005, 61/2006, 63/2008, 65/2010, 68/2013, 72/2017). At the same time, as a result of **global warming**, the total area of Kyrgyzstan's glaciers could be reduced by 30-40 per cent by 2025 (65/2010, 68/2013, 72/2017) and disappear altogether by 2100 (68/2013, 72/2017). In 2008, Kyrgyzstan noted that it had been already encountering the consequences of warming and of a period of water scarcity, which negatively impacted the delivery of electricity to both domestic and external markets (63/2008). The Republic therefore calls for urgent efforts to preserve river headwaters and restore forests (65/2010) and for joint projects to conserve glaciers in the mountain ecosystems of upstream countries (71/2016, 72/2017). The preservation of glaciers and clean water sources is a common duty and responsibility of all riparian countries (65/2010).

"We are at the top of the highland rivers that give life to many millions in the Central Asian countries. We believe that the preservation of glaciers and clean water sources is a common duty and responsibility of all riparian countries" (65/2010).

The extraordinary **importance of water** as the most important strategic resource for "green economic growth of Kyrgyzstan" (68/2013) and the "key factor of well-being" in the region (69/2014, 72/2017) has been noted repeatedly. Kyrgyzstan supported the initiative of the Republic of Tajikistan to proclaim 2003 the International Year of Freshwater within the framework of the United Nations (55/2000).

The issue of access to **safe drinking water** was raised **in the national context**. Kyrgyzstan, while a flow formation area of Central Asia, has the lowest per capita access to drinking water in the region; in rural areas about 40 per cent of the population is not adequately provided with clean drinking water (74/2019). With regard to **implementation of measures on water management at the national level**, the country mentioned the national project "Capacity 21", one of the components of which was sustainable water resources management (52/1997).

Water and Energy. The discussion on water and energy was launched in 2009. It was stated that "despite the activities to increase the effectiveness of **water and energy regulation in Central Asia** pursued within the framework of integration organizations and regional structures, rallying countries around this issue remains the most pressing problem in the region" (64/2009). The country's basic point is that **water and energy are inseparable** (69/2014, 70/2015). With the impressive water and energy potential of about 142.5 billion kWh (67/2012), Kyrgyzstan has expressed its interest in **developing hydropower** as one of clean

development mechanisms (65/2010, 68/2013, 69/2014, 70/2015, 71/2016, 74/2019). It was noted that the construction of the Kamar-Ata and the Upper Naryn power plants would allow Kyrgyzstan allow Kyrgyzstan not only to increase the development of cost-effective, environmentally clean electricity but also to preserve water in the lower Toktogul for irrigation. Its neighbors in the region were invited to participate in their construction (67/2012). Kyrgyzstan also stressed its

“We consider it important to use our water and energy potential through the construction of hydroelectric power plants and our participation in the CASA-1000 international project. This will contribute to the accumulation of water resources for the irrigation needs of our neighbours and the sustainable development of the entire region” (75/2020).

interest in regional hydropower projects as part of the regional electricity market for Central and South Asia and, first of all, the Kyrgyzstan —Tajikistan—Afghanistan — Pakistan transmission line project (65/2010), in particular the **CASA-1000** project (74/2019, 75/2020).

Economic mechanism of water use and compensation for water storage and conservation services. It was noted that “within the framework of its existing relationships Kyrgyzstan is not adequately compensated economically for the services it renders through its accumulation and storage of water resources that are important to the entire region” (71/2016, 74/2019). Limited water resources will sooner or later lead to an understanding that water is an economic resource that needs to be managed wisely (72/2017). “It is essential to create conditions to improve incentives to store water in reservoirs during the winter and then to make it available for irrigating fields in the summer. If this proposal was pursued, the largest reservoir in Central Asia, on the Naryn and Syr Darya Rivers, the largest watershed of the region, would have the required stocks of water in times of drought and be able to provide water at least to maintain food and energy security for all the countries of Central Asia. If decisions are taken only for short-term benefit, and water is depleted and regulating capacities are lost, that would inevitably have dangerous consequences for the entire region. These strategic issues can be solved only by merging the irrigation and energy schedules for supplying water and providing compensation fuel deliveries that should be the subject of intergovernmental cooperation among stakeholders. Water conservation technologies should also be exploited”. (64/2009).

Kyrgyzstan warned of the high risk of **contamination of rivers with highly toxic radioactive wastes** in the event of accidents at uranium tailings, most of which are “located in seismically active areas, mudflow- and flood-prone areas, with high water table, as well as near the riverbanks, which form the basis of the vast water basin of the Central Asian region. The potential

consequences of ineffective solution to this problem may have a negative impact on millions in Central Asia" (68b/2013, 72/2017).

Kyrgyzstan expressed its interest in **sustainable water use** and environmental safety (65/2010) and its willingness to participate in the process of sharing best practices in water management, water use and irrigation system construction (68/2013). It is important that international financial and environmental organizations assisted the Central Asian countries in their transition to sustainable use of water resources and natural ecosystems (68/2013).

Kyrgyzstan expressed the following **approaches to water cooperation**:

- In view of the expected passing of the Chairmanship in **the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea** to the Kyrgyz Republic, it called on the international community to consolidate its efforts in implementing programmes and projects in the Aral Sea basin (61/2006);
- Proposed **creating a dialogue platform** of the five Central Asian countries where water issues, among others, could be specifically addressed (70/2015);
- Stated that the issues related to water use in Central Asia could and should be addressed **only by the States in the region** themselves through open dialogue, taking into account the interests and needs of all parties. It is inadmissible for international and regional organizations to impose their approaches and ways of developing cooperation to Central Asian countries in this area (72/2017). It also saw the "special role and new mission of regional unions such as CIS, SCO, CSTO and EAEU" (73/2018);
- Supported the implementation of **integrated water resources management** (73/2018, 74/2019), noting that comprehensive use of water and energy resources in the region should be guided by a system of measures aimed at sustainable development of all Central Asian States (71/2016, 73/2018);
- Spoke for the development and implementation of **mutually beneficial economic mechanisms** in the water sector in Central Asia (73/2018, 74/2019).

Water topic in Tajikistan's statements

Water issues are given priority in Tajikistan's statements to the United Nations General Assembly.

The country's enormous **hydropower potential** was the first water issue raised by Tajikistan at the General Assembly. It was noted that the "tremendous hydropower...offers great potential for cooperation with European countries" (47/1992). The country's hydropower potential is estimated at 525 billion kWh per year, of which less than 5 per cent is utilized (60b/2005, 63/2008). In order to realize its right to development, Tajikistan believes "it has the right to develop the hydropower sector of the economy by building water reservoirs and dams on the major rivers of the country, because sustainable development, improved living standards of the population, achievement of the MDGs, the provision of reliable regulated irrigation water flows and an increased production of electrical energy depend on the availability of hydropower resources" (62/2007, see also 63/2008, 68/2013).

"As hydropower facilities generate energy by utilizing water rather than by consuming it, hydropower engineering plays an important role in developing energy production and the socio-economic sphere, as well as in environmental protection not only in Tajikistan but in the entire Central Asian region" (64/2009).

Tajikistan is steadily stepping up its efforts for the integrated development of this sector, building "a number of small, medium and large hydroelectric power plants which have not only energy-related applications but also irrigation **importance for the entire Central Asian region**" (65/2010). "Not only is the implementation of hydropower projects in Tajikistan extremely advantageous for the country itself, but it will also be able to influence favourably the sustainable development of the other States of the region. For instance, the completion of the construction of the Rogun hydropower station in Tajikistan alone will make it possible to supply an extra three million hectares of land with water in the neighbouring Central Asian states" (62/2007). It was emphasized that:

"... we sincerely advocate mutually beneficial regional cooperation and partnership. It is against that backdrop that we should view Tajikistan's active cooperation with the World Bank in developing a technical, economic, social and ecological assessment of the Rogun hydropower station, a project of vital importance to my country. Similarly, we expect that while the assessment is being carried out, the parties concerned in the region will abstain from hasty and unconsidered statements and actions that may run counter to existing international agreements and to the spirit of friendship, cooperation and good neighbourliness" (67/2012).

Coordinated and integrated hydropower development, including the construction of small, medium and large hydropower plants, will help to deliver electricity **not only to all of Central Asia but also to neighboring countries** (64/2009). In this respect, implementation of regional projects such as the "Central Asia-South Asia" Regional Electricity Market (**CASA-1000**) project will be decisive for the prospects of our vast region, which includes Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Pakistan (64/2009, 66/2011).

The risk of breakthrough of highland Lake Sarez was the first water issue on which Tajikistan elaborated:

"In our view, one of the most serious ecological challenges posed not only to Tajikistan but to almost all the countries of the region is to eliminate the potential threat of the major natural disasters that could occur if no effective action is taken to normalize the situation in the area of Lake Sarez, which lies 3,263 metres above sea level and contains 17 billion tonnes of water. This poses a grave danger not only for the people of Tajikistan but also for neighbouring Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Afghanistan, which could sustain serious damage in the event of a breakage of the natural dam that was formed at the beginning of this

century as a result of an earthquake.” (53/1998).

“In case of its breach, approximately 5 million people in our region may be left homeless. This will be a real ecological disaster” (55a/2000). To address the problem of water scarcity in the region, Tajikistan proposed to supply Central Asian countries with clean water from Lake Sarez, which would provide drinking water to half of the population of Central Asia (62/2007). Having put forward the idea of using safe drinking water from Lake Sarez to meet the needs of the entire region, Tajikistan proposed concrete measures in this direction and expressed the hope that the United Nations and other international organizations, regional commissions and relevant institutions would be able to offer constructive and continued assistance in this regard (64/2009).

Among the **global water challenges raised by Tajikistan** are the lack of access to clean water for billions of people (54/1999, 58/2003, 62/2007, 68/2013), diseases and deaths caused by water pollution (54/1999, 58/2003, 68/2013), increased risk of “water wars” between States for the right to own fresh water (54/1999), resource and groundwater depletion (55b/2000, 65b/2010), maintaining water balance and access to drinking water, reduction of the world’s drinking water supply (56/2001), lack of water (57/2002, 58/2003, 65b/2010, 69/2014), increased demand for water for food (58/2003, 63/2008), deterioration of water resources and their quality (69/2014).

Tajikistan has drawn the international community’s attention to the **multidimensional** (54/1999) and **multifaceted** (55b/2000) **nature of freshwater problems**, including humanitarian, economic, environmental, political and security dimensions. “One of the most important assets of our planet, which is not only the basis of ecological balance but also the most important basis of economic well-being, is water. It is an essential component for food production, social welfare and economic growth” (57/2002, 60a/2005). “The indispensable role of water not only for drinking purposes, but also for production, environmental protection and the development process in general is obvious” (63/2007).

“ We would be well advised to recall our relationship with the two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen that, bound together in nature, support our lives on earth” (55b/2000).

In this context, **water issues have often been linked** in Tajikistan’s statement **to the achievement of development goals**: “Our efforts in the area of water are part and parcel of the strategic programme for the attainment of the MDGs ” (61/2006), “Water is a vital resource that brings together all the MDGs” (65/2010), “Water is a crucial resource of immense importance to sustainable

development and to life on our planet " (66/2011). Tajikistan actively supported the process of promoting an idea of the need to develop a sustainable development goal for water resources, suggesting that elements such as "ensuring universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation, introducing the integrated management of water resources at the national and regional levels, increasing the efficiency of water use and secondary use of water, adequately financing and investing in watereconomy facilities and infrastructure, transferring and introducing advanced technologies, and setting up mutually acceptable mechanisms for the gathering and dissemination of information and data" (68/2013). Awareness of the key role of water resources in achieving sustainable development has benefited from the decisions of the General Assembly initiated by Tajikistan together with other Member States, beginning with the first initiative proposed in 1999 for declaration of an International Year of Freshwater.

"Issues of water and other challenges of the new age are thus directly linked to problems of security in the context of interdependence" (54/1999).

Global Water Initiatives. Tajikistan is actively promoting the water agenda in the United Nations and is an initiator of four global water initiatives: proclamation of 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater (resolution 55/196); 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation (resolution 65/154); International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015 (resolution 58/217); International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018-2028 (resolution 71/222). All these steps are aimed at in-depth study of water issues and development of appropriate coordinated action by the international community (65b/2010). It was noted that:

"Water is our common heritage, and it is necessary to ensure that all States share in the responsibility to preserve it for the benefit of future generations. Constructive global cooperation could become a worthy political dimension of the twenty-first century, and could guarantee that this will never acquire a military aspect." (54/1999).

Regional Water Cooperation. The efforts of Tajikistan in matters of water have focused not only on the sustainable and efficient use of the country's potential but also on strengthening **mutually advantageous and equitable regional cooperation:**

"We believe that water cooperation should strengthen rather than undermine interaction in other areas. It should increasingly build confidence among all water users and contribute to the introduction of integrated management of water resources at the local, national and

regional levels.” (65b/2010).

Tajikistan is ready to cooperate closely with all the countries in the region on rational use of water and energy resources, **taking into account the regional interests** (66/2011). “We need to strengthen international and regional water cooperation through the **effective use of existing mechanisms and instruments**” (66/2011).

It was stressed that only an **integrated and mutually beneficial approach** by the Central Asian countries to the use of water and energy and other natural resources, based on the principles of mutual understanding, assistance and trust among the region’s countries can ensure the sustainable development of the countries of the region and help to solve environmental problems that are closely linked to the rational use of these resources (62/2007, 63/2008). This “can help to resolve the interrelated energy, food and environment problems and to ensure the sustainable development of all Central Asian countries” (64/2009). “Only mutually beneficial cooperation aimed at rational and efficient use can bring well-being to the peoples inhabiting that vast region” (63/2008). Thus, “not only is the implementation of hydropower projects in Tajikistan extremely advantageous for the country itself, but it will also be able to influence favourably the sustainable development of the other States of the region ” (62/2007).

Tajikistan advocated the need to “create an **economic mechanism** for the transfer of water and energy resources, which would serve the interests of both upstream countries, which are rich in water resources, and downstream countries, most of which are rich in hydrocarbon raw materials” (63/2008). “As a country that has one of the largest amounts of freshwater resources in the world, Tajikistan is convinced that creating an economic mechanism for the cross-flow of water and energy resources between upstream countries that are rich in water resources and downstream countries where hydrocarbon deposits are primarily located would promote long-term mutually beneficial cooperation among those States.” (64/2009)

Given the particular severity of the water problem for the Central Asian countries, Tajikistan has proposed, under the auspices of the United Nations, to establish **an international mechanism for coordinating efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Aral Sea disaster**, through which a regional pilot project on achieving the Millennium Development Goals could be implemented as a matter of priority (60a/2005).

In the regional context, Tajikistan has expressed its interest in the **rational use of water and the observance of ecological balance**. In response to the Aral Sea disaster, it called for the implementation of *long-term joint measures for the*

rational use of water and energy resources throughout the Aral Sea region (66/2011). Given the reduction of runoff in the region's rivers as a result of the impact of climate change, the demographic growth and the expansion of irrigated areas, the country offered the countries of the region "to review their programmes and *strategies with regard to water use*, especially in agriculture, and take consolidated and concerted action to promote sustainable development " (64/2009). Tajikistan proposed to carry out under the auspices of the United Nations "a *comprehensive expert study of water use in Central Asia*, including on issues related to the effectiveness and rationality of the use of existing reservoirs and an investigation of the environmental situation in the region as a whole " (66/2011).

Tajikistan stressed that "our common goal is to develop a **qualitatively new pattern of sustainable water resource management** and to address water economy challenges at the national, regional and international levels by bringing together international community support and national efforts, while ensuring that the countries themselves and even subregions facing water supply problems play the leading role" (60b/2005, 61/2006). The importance of "achieving rational and fair water management" was noted as it would "contribute directly to progress towards the MDGs by helping to address challenges related to, inter alia, food security, employment, sanitation, the reduction of disease and increased school attendance" (60b/2005). It was proposed to regulate water management "on the basis of the principle of joint development, which provides for a broad framework for the harmonization of interests and the strengthening of mutual trust in addressing water issues" (69/2014).

Water and climate change. Since 2007, Tajikistan has drawn attention of the international community to the negative impact of climate change on water resources, in particular the shrinking of glaciers and snow fields, which was expected to reduce river flow by 5-15% (64/2009) and increase extreme intensity of floods, mudslides, droughts and other water-related natural disasters (65/2010). In this context, Tajikistan proposed "to review existing practices of water-resource management in order to ensure adequate adaptation not only to climate change, but also to population growth and a changing world economy, as well as to the scarcity of freshwater resources " (70/2015). Water issues were also raised in relation to natural disasters and drought (56/2001).

Water topic in Turkmenistan's statements

For the first time, the matter of water was addressed in Turkmenistan's statements to the UNGA in 2002, when an initiative of the President of Turkmenistan to establish a Regional Consultative Council of the Heads of

Central Asian States for development of joint decisions on topical issues directly affecting the States of the region was presented. . **Water use in Central Asia** was identified as such priority issue (57/2002). It was noted that in Central Asia, the rational use of water resources was a determining factor in the socio-economic development of the countries (65/2010) and the "regional development, the overall environment and social and economic plans, and the solution of serious environmental issues " (71/2016). It was stressed that it has become extremely important for the States of the region to design a **unified strategy on the issue of the use and preservation of water resources"** (71/2016). "The development of States on the economic and social fronts, as well as their peoples' levels of well-being and quality of life, is directly dependent on their access to water resources and ability to use them effectively. Equal rights, mutual respect and responsibility should therefore be the main criteria determining relations among the States of Central Asia." (73/2018).

In the national context, it was noted that Turkmenistan has been providing its citizens with free water since 1993(60/2005, 61/2006).

Equitable distribution of water resources was also mentioned among most important issues of **global concern** (64/2009, 74/2019). "The issue of the conservation and use of water resources is one of the most important and urgent challenges of our time. It is not an exaggeration to say that today the course of various global processes and the prospects for ensuring stability, development and well-being all over the world depend to a large degree on its resolution. Water issues, which have political, economic and social implications, require international consensus and demand that States concert their efforts on a common platform, where secondary and local interests and benefits must give way to an acknowledgement of truly global aims and priorities and the creation of a **unified long-term strategy of action.**" (74/2019).

Since 2018, Turkmenistan has stated its firm adherence to the principle that " **water is the common heritage** of every people on our planet and that equal and fair access to clean drinking water is a **fundamental human right** " (73/2018). "The key condition for concerted activity should continue to be an unconditional commitment to the principle of fair and equitable access to water resources and the recognition that it is a basic human right. Ensuring and assuming responsibility for the right of access to water is an obligation for every State, primarily because water is a common good of all nations in the world." (74/2019).

The position of Turkmenistan with regard to solving water problems in Central Asia (65/2010, 73/2018) and globally (74/2019) was based on three key points:

First, water issues in different regions of the world, including Central

Asia, should be addressed **on the basis of generally accepted international law** (65/2010, 73/2018) and, first and foremost, relevant UN conventions (74/2019).

Second, water topic should be addressed on the basis of the principles of mutual respect, consent and **consideration of the interests of all States** in the basins of transboundary rivers, watercourses and lakes (65/2010, 73/2018, 74/2019). In this context, Turkmenistan opposed the construction of large hydraulic structures on transboundary rivers since those posed significant environmental, socio-economic and humanitarian risks (74/2019).

Third, Turkmenistan advocates more active and **broader involvement in solution of water challenges of international organizations** (74/2019), primarily the United Nations (65/2010, 73/2018) and other reputable international organizations (65/2010). In particular, it was noted that the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), with headquarters in Turkmenistan, was "an effective link between the United Nations and the Central Asian countries in addressing many emerging threats" (74/2019). In the course of joint work with the Centre, they have been developing common approaches to urgent problems, including the management of transboundary water resources (74/2019). Turkmenistan considered it necessary for the Regional Centre to work more closely and substantively with international organizations - OSCE, the European Union, SCO, CIS and others for the development of common approaches, including to transboundary water and energy resource management (69/2014). Turkmenistan also referred to its active participation in international efforts to address critical environmental issues, including water resources management, in the light of Turkmenistan's chairmanship of IFAS (72/2017).

Based on these principled positions, Turkmenistan "will continue working to establish effective negotiating mechanisms between States and international entities with a view to arriving at a coordinated approach. ... this is the only way we can achieve positive results and ensure a stable and sustainable balance of interests" (73/2018).

Water topic in Uzbekistan's statements

In its very first statement to the United Nations General Assembly in 1992, Uzbekistan noted that the water resources of the region were among the **connecting threads** of the peoples of Central Asia:

"The peoples of our region. Central Asia - Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmenans, Kyrgyzes and Tajiks - are the children of common forefathers. We share the same land and water, the same religion, the same history and the

same fate; we share the same cares, joys and anxieties.” (47/1992).

Since then, water has also been presented as an **important component of the integration processes** in the region. In particular, in 2003, Uzbekistan supported further development of regional integration, including through the creation of the “Central Asian Cooperation” organization, attaching “priority importance to its economic component, creation of water-energy and transport-communication consortia” (58/2003). In 2005, Uzbekistan urged countries to “unite their efforts to solve problems related to pollution of environment, lack of water and drinking resources, deterioration of ecological situation in cities and industrial areas” (60/2005).

Between 2007 and 2014, water topic was covered in each of Uzbekistan’s statements. **It was linked to the need to achieve concrete results in attainment of development goals**, including formation of “fair and acceptable approaches to access, use and distribution of natural wealth” (62/2007, 68/2013), ensuring food security (67/2012).

“...all of us share responsibility for the reasonable use of natural resources, including the transboundary rivers in Central Asia” (63/2008).

During these years, the **sharing of common water resources of the region** became one of the priorities of security and stability in Central Asia, as the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya “have traditionally been considered a common good and the source of life for the States of the region” (68/2013).

The concerns of Uzbekistan were caused by the plans of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to build **large hydropower plants** - the Roghun plant on the Vakhsh and the “Kambarata-1” plant on the Syr Darya (2013) that could lead to disruption of the natural flow of rivers with subsequent hazardous environmental and socio-economic consequences (64/2009, 65/2010). It was also feared that the construction was planned “in the highland and high-seismic zone with the probability of earthquakes of magnitude 9 or higher, which could pose a risk of destructive anthropogenic catastrophe” (64/2009, 65/2010, 67/2012, 69/2014), with serious threats to security of the population ... (66/2011).

Uzbekistan considered that the construction of large hydroschemes on transboundary rivers was possible only after the prior **approval** of all interested countries (66/2011, 67/2012) and an international **independent assessment** under the auspices of the United Nations to assess possible impacts on the natural water regime, the environment, flora and fauna (62/2007, 64/2009, 67/2012). Among Uzbekistan’s requirements were guarantees not to harm the environment or the interests of the population in neighboring territories (62/2007, 69/2014). The following priorities for water use were proposed: “The

limited water resources of the region should be used first for drinking and sanitation purposes, and then for food security, environmental, industrial and energy needs" (67/2012).

The construction of "small and medium hydropower plants that do not harm the environment, safety and socio-economic well-being of the population" was proposed as **an alternative** to the construction of giant dams (65/2010, 66/2011, 68/2013, 69/2014).

Uzbekistan firmly adhered to the key position that issues of rational use of transboundary water resources of Central Asia should be resolved in accordance with **generally recognized norms of international law** and within the framework of the relevant UN conventions on the use of international watercourses (62/2007, 63/2008, 66/2011, 67/2012, 68/2013, 69/2014).

At the 72nd meeting of the UNGA in 2017, Uzbekistan supported the Secretary-General's position that "water, peace and security issues are inextricably linked" (S/PV.7959, p. 2) and stated:

" ... that there is no alternative to addressing the problem of water besides equally taking into account the interests of the countries and nations of the region. Uzbekistan supports the draft conventions on the use of water resources of the Amudarya and Syrdarya river basins, which were developed by the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy" (72/2017).

Conclusion and expert recommendations

Water is one of the most pressing problems in Central Asia. Therefore, all the countries of the region have raised this topic from the rostrum of the UN General Assembly. The issues covered included access to water (all the countries), the conflict potential of water (Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan), water and sustainable development goals (Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), water and food security (Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), water and climate change (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), water and natural disasters (Tajikistan), river pollution with highly toxic wastes (Kyrgyzstan), untapped hydro potential and hydropower development (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), concerns over the construction of large hydropower plants in the region (Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), water and regional cooperation, including rational water use (all the countries), as well as global water initiatives (Tajikistan).

From the rostrum of the United Nations, the Central Asian countries expressed their positions and proposed various approaches to resolving water issues in the region. Those included the following; taking into account the interests and needs of all the parties (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan); taking into account region-wide interests (Tajikistan); addressing water issues on the basis of international law, including the UN global water conventions (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan); adoption of an integrated and mutually beneficial approach to the use of water and energy resources (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), development of an economic mechanism for water use (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan); compensation for water accumulation and storage (Kyrgyzstan); revisiting of water use strategies in the countries, especially in agriculture (Tajikistan). Turkmenistan (57/2002) and Kyrgyzstan (70/2015) proposed the establishment of a pentilateral dialogue platform at the highest level, which would address, inter alia, water issues. Turkmenistan advocated more active and broader involvement in water issues of international organizations, primarily the United Nations (65/2010, 72/2017, 73/2018, 74/2019). Tajikistan stated that there was the need "to strengthen international and regional water cooperation through the effective use of existing mechanisms and instruments" (2011).

Based on the results of the assessment made and the conclusions of the national experts, **the Central Asian countries are recommended in future presentations to the UNGA:**

- demonstrate regional unity of initiatives, actions and synchronization of movement towards common development goals;
- support each other's initiatives and put forward joint initiatives aimed at implementation of steps for regional integration to ensure environmental, water and energy security and achieve sustainable development;
- give more visibility to the issues related to the risks of water and environmental security, increasing water scarcity, with the development of a common approach and a single model of interaction to solve the problem of water scarcity in Central Asia and the world; raise issues of water conservation and agricultural intensification;
- further promote the experience and successes of transboundary cooperation and the ideas of sharing the water and energy potential in the region;
- contribute to better coordination among the countries and international partners under the auspices of IFAS to strengthen cooperation in addressing the water crisis, biodiversity loss and human-induced environmental disasters.

WATER CONVENTION'S IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE PROVIDES ADVICE TO ALBANIA AND MONTENEGRO ON THE TRANSBOUNDARY CIJEVNA/CEM RIVER

In 2020, the Implementation Committee under the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Water Courses and International Lakes (Water Convention) initiated its advisory procedure in response to a request made by Montenegro related to its concerns about the possible transboundary impact of planned additional small hydropower plants on the Cijevna/Cem River in Albania. Albania has subsequently accepted to participate in the advisory procedure that would facilitate the implementation of the Water Convention.

The Committee enquired all needed information from Albania and Montenegro, held separate and joint consultation sessions with the countries and, as a result, provided operational advice on how to establish effective interaction between the parties.

Following joint consultations facilitated by the Committee, Montenegro and Albania agreed:

a) That the existing bilateral commission established under the 2018 Framework Agreement should establish a joint technical working group on “Monitoring and assessment”, define the mandate of the joint technical working group based on pressures in the Cijevna/Cem River basin and ensure its regular meetings;

b) To develop and implement an information exchange protocol;

c) To use the meetings of the bilateral commission to exchange information, including on existing and planned uses of water and related installations;

d) To convene the next meeting of the bilateral commission in the third week of March 2021, with a view to setting up the joint technical working group;

e) To ensure that the meetings of the bilateral commission were held regularly in the future.

The Committee stated its readiness to assist Montenegro and Albania in the implementation of the advice and that a member of the Committee, Mr. Cunha Serra, would be available to assist the countries, as appropriate, in the

implementation of the technical aspects of the Committee's advice, should such assistance be welcomed by the two countries.

The results of the first consultation session of the Committee allow making the following conclusions:

1. Applying to the Committee does not necessarily mean “unfriendly” relations between the countries. On the contrary, this indicates to respect to each other, willingness to remove at the earliest existing concerns and readiness to discuss possible solutions in a constructive way and with the help of experts. Montenegro and Albania have shown the strongest respect of their obligations to cooperate in the spirit of good faith. Albania had promptly accepted to participate in the procedure initiated by Montenegro. Both countries replied to requests of the Committee for further information, openly stated about the lack of information, actively participated in searching for possible solutions and largely contributed to openness of the process by agreeing to make the information on the process and its results publicly available.

2. The Committee demonstrated its capacity for competent and quick response to country requests. The Committee suggested an advisory procedure to the parties during one month since the receipt of the request from Montenegro⁸. The Committee's members have thoroughly examined complex and detailed technical documentation on the matter and were able to quickly process the request, despite some obstacles caused by the pandemia of COVID-19. This favorably distinguishes the Committee from other frameworks dealing with disputed matters that may delay for years.

3. The Committee has organized its work in such a way that the countries itself were co-initiators of proposed solutions, step by step from the simple to the complex. This made it possible to make feasible concrete decisions that would lay the foundation of more effective bilateral cooperation between the countries. The Committee also offered its assistance in next steps, thus showing its interest in the implementation of its advice in practice and going beyond the formal closure of the procedure.

4. The advisory procedure showed that the Water Convention and the Implementation Committee are of practical importance in the multistep water management system. Montenegro and Albania have a bilateral agreement and a bilateral commission, and both countries cooperate as the Drin riparians. Nevertheless, global mechanisms were able to facilitate first positive steps towards cooperation.

⁸Montenegro applied in November 2019. The Committee made written proposal to the both countries on the advisory procedure on 6 December 2019. Albania responded on 3 February 2020, while Montenegro responded on 7 February 2020.

General information: The Implementation Committee under the UNECE Water Convention was established by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention in 2012. It consists of nine members – lawyers and water management professionals – that were elected by the Meeting of the Parties to serve in personal capacity (Kari Kinnunen, Johan G. Lammers, Stephen McCaffrey, Martins Paporinskis, Anne Schulte-Wülwer-Leidig, Pedro Cunha Serra, Attila Tanzi, Ivan Zavadsky and Dinara Ziganshina).

The Committee's report can be read on:

https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/ECE_MP.WAT_IC_2021_1_ENG_advance%20copy%20web.pdf

Prepared by D. Ziganshina,
Vice-Chair, Implementation Committee

Editorial Board:

V.A.Dukhovniy

D.R.Ziganshina

I.F.Beglov

Editorial Office:

Karasu-4, B-11 A, Tashkent,
100187, Republic of Uzbekistan,
SIC ICWC

Our web-site:

sic.icwc-aral.uz