

## **THE VOICE OF CENTRAL ASIA**

### **DRAFT STATEMENT BY CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES**

#### **AT THE 26th UNFCCC CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**

(GLASGOW, October 31 – November 11, 2021)

#### **Distinguished Participants of the Conference of the Parties,**

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen!**

The countries of Central Asian – the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan – welcome the renewed efforts by the international community and partner states on addressing climate change, in particular the promotion of the European Union’s Green Deal, the return of the United States of America to the Paris Agreement, and China declaring its new climate commitments.

The world today is suffering from two simultaneous emergencies: the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis, both requiring sensible, urgent and concerted actions by all.

Yet, another extraordinary development has brought our Region to the forefront of the global agenda – the humanitarian crisis caused by the recent dramatic events in Afghanistan. This fact once again highlights the importance of the Central Asian Region for the global community and likewise for the Region’s prosperity and stability. This being said, Central Asia is firmly committed and determined to promoting regional and global sustainability.

For many centuries, the Great Silk Road had crossed the Region, with caravans of merchandise travelling from Asia to Europe and vice versa, galvanizing cultural exchange and the overall advancement of the world civilization. The role of Central Asia as a bridge connecting Asia and the Western world is once again gaining significance.

Central Asia is located in the heart of Eurasia, far from the oceans, where precipitation, cyclones and water currents emerge. This unique geographical position predetermines the Region's extreme vulnerability to global climate change. In Central Asia, surface temperature increases more aggressively and rapidly than globally, suscitating severe impacts on public health, ecosystems and national economies.

The rate of global warming and climate change impacts occurring in Central Asia cause the most serious concerns worldwide. We must take collaborative and urgent steps to reverse the dramatic aftermath that the Region’s population is facing already.

Intense ablation in the mountains may lead to the disappearance of thousands of small and shrinkage of dozens of large glaciers by the end of this century. Floods, mud- and landslides will become even more devastating prompted by the growing population and expanding infrastructure. At the same time, water resources are getting scarcer, the number of dry and hot days is increasing, further exacerbating the situation in densely populated areas and cities, especially in the Aral Sea Area.

The heads of Central Asian states had repeatedly drawn attention to the Aral Sea crisis from the high-level rostrum of the UN General Assembly. The Consultative Meeting held this August has emphasized the need to enhance regional cooperation on climate mitigation and adaptation.

Regional and international teamwork is essential for winning the battle against climate change, fostering sustainable development, keeping populations in their respective countries and reducing internal as well as external climate-induced migration.

Central Asia can serve a venue for testing innovative technologies, methods and approaches of building up climate resilience, achieving the de-carbonization objectives under the Paris Agreement, promoting the post-pandemic recovery, and ensuring peace and prosperity in the Region.

The resources and capacities available, though, are insufficient to address the mounting challenges, and we hereby appeal to all stakeholders, including donor countries, international financial institutions and the UN agencies, to support our efforts on responding to climate change in the Central Asian Region.

We are strongly committed to promoting cooperation and attracting climate finance, applying international transparency frameworks, ensuring stability and institutional synergies at all levels. Our countries have been executing reforms to stimulate responsible and reliable partnerships.

The 6<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report by the International Panel on Climate Change points to the undeniable influence of human activities on the rising Earth's surface temperature. Some changes affecting the planet's climate system are already irreversible.

We are united, strong and ready to join our forces with the international community to ensure global recovery for the environmental and economic sustainability of Central Asia.

More than ever before, we need the tangible engagement of the international community in securing a more equitable future for the generations to come, promoting peace and stability, enhancing the resilience of our Region and beyond, as well as the pro-active contribution to climate adaptation efforts and accomplishing the overarching global aims of the Paris Agreement.

**Thank you for your attention!**