



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

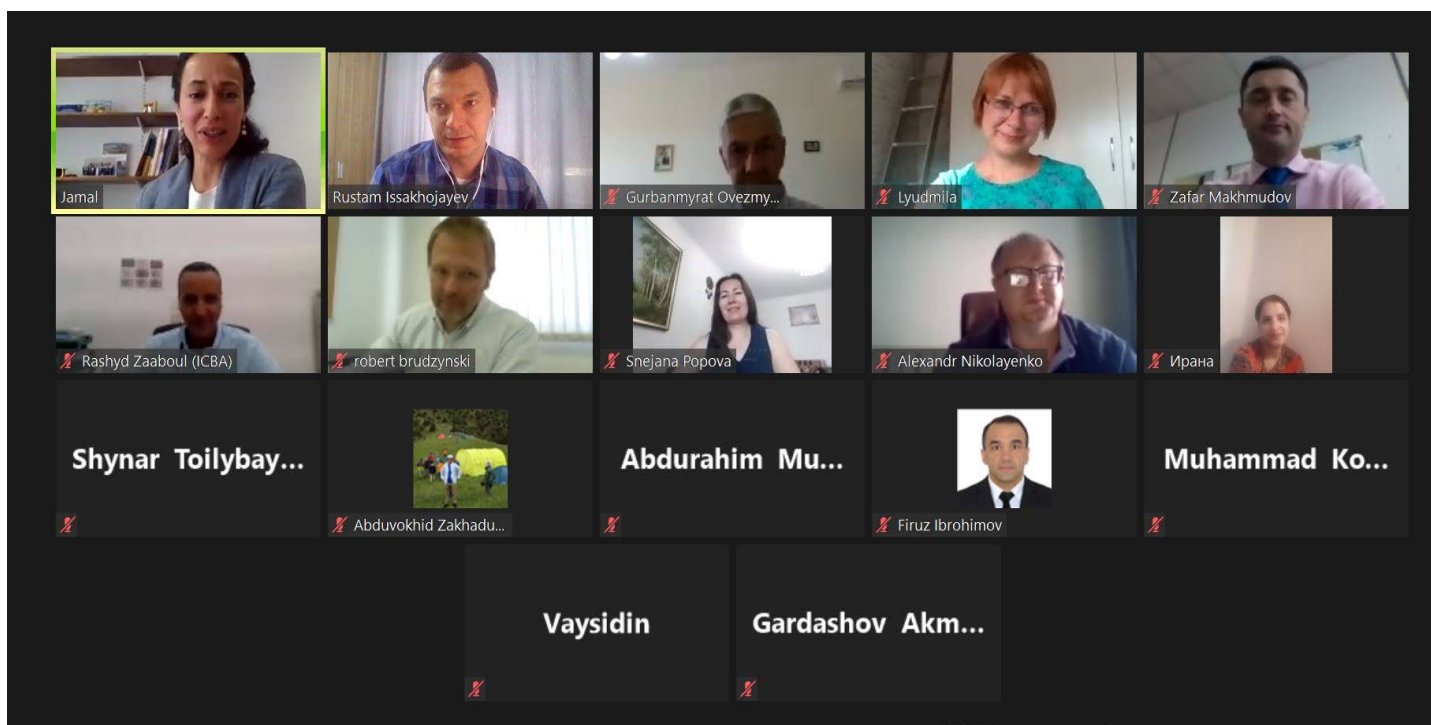
State Forestry and
Grassland
Administration
of the People's
Republic of China



MEETING MINUTES

of the First Online Stakeholders Coordination Meeting
of the “Regional approaches for combatting sand and dust storms and
drought in Central Asia” project

Date: 28 July 2020
Start time: 16:03 (Almaty time)
Duration: 2 hours 10 minutes
Number of participants: 29
Prepared by: R. Issakhoyev



Background

Jointly organized by UNCCD and CAREC, First Online Stakeholder Coordination Meeting aimed to introduce the Project to the regional development partners working within the similar or related scopes, receive their strategic feedbacks, comments and recommendations on the approaches, focus, and objectives and more specifically identify possible synergies during preparation of regional strategic documents to be prepared within the framework of the Project.

To this end, following three questions were proposed as an anchor for discussion:

- What are the main elements that the regional strategies (drought and sand and dust storms) should focus on the most?
- How can they complement already existing programmes or initiatives?
- How can a synergy between programmes be achieved?

"Tour de table"

Participants introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of their work.

For more details please refer to the list of participants below.

Opening and welcoming remarks

- **Zafar Makhmudov (Executive Director of CAREC)** – Greeted the participants and gave an overview of the Project implementation progress at the national and regional levels.
- **Jamal Annagylyjova (Regional Liaison officer for Central and Eastern Europe for the UNCCD Secretariat)** – thanked participants for joining the meeting and appreciated the diversity of the audience representing all five Central Asian countries and variety of international agencies active in the region.

Presentations

- **Jamal Annagylyjova (UNCCD)** – shared information about Drought and Sand and Dust Storm related decisions of the UNCCD which mandates UNCCD Secretariat to provide institutional “infrastructure” and services towards high-level policy formulation, national reporting on drought related information and data, building countries capacity in drought and SDS prevention. Partnership with WMO, UNDRR, FAO, Global Water Partnership and many other agencies are at the core of the work of the UNCCD.
- **Rustam Issakhojayev (Project Manager, CAREC)** – Presented overall project structure, main involved actors at the regional and national levels, and expected deliverables. Additionally, he summarized main findings and challenges, and called participants to provide their insights to identify possible synergies and ensure cooperation and coordination between projects.

Q&A session

A summary of comments and recommendations from the participants.

- **EU Delegation to Kazakhstan**
- **Robert Brudzynski and Snejana Popova (Project Managers)**
 - The Project is working on the broader context of the climate change topic; hence the Project should utilize already existing information from related fields: climate change, IWRM, desertification, environmental and others focus areas;
 - We invite you to utilize the information available in the EU’s CIRCABC platform for the PLANET Cluster EU funded projects/programmes on environment, water, sanitation, climate change, disaster risk reduction, nuclear remediation, biodiversity, energy efficiency and renewable energy. CAREC got already the access to the CIRCABC platform;

- Look into and coordinate with EU financed CAWEP, WECOOP and Disaster Risk Reduction projects. Some capacity building activities done within the scope of these projects might be helpful to the Project;
 - EU funded WECOOP project maintains the database of activities done within other projects, which may be helpful in identifying the appropriate synergies related to water and climate change in the region since 1990th.
- **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**
 - **Olzhas Atymtayev (National Programme Officer)**
 - Drought and SDS has huge direct and indirect impact on countries and their economic activities, therefore it is important to clearly demonstrate the economic implications of such natural phenomena and benefits that comes with their management. It would be very helpful to use nature-based solutions and sustainable infrastructure;
 - Necessary to demonstrate the direct correlation of the air quality and health, especially within the context of COVID-19.
 - Environmental Performance Review (EPR) developed by UNECE is a great source of information and recommendations. It assesses the progress countries already achieved in this context.
- **International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA)**
 - **Rashyd Zaaboul (Climate Modeling Specialist)**
 - The main focus of any mitigation strategy should be to know what to combat, otherwise it is not possible to formulate any recommendations which would work or could be adapted. To this end climate scenarios are important;
 - Additionally, formulating scenarios is as important as monitoring the conditions of the area, since any scenario is based on the data collected during previous monitoring events and extrapolated into the future predictions.
 - A system that was developed by ICBA is based partially on the globally available data for monitoring, which could be also something that the Project should look into, when working with available data.
 - Decision-makers have to be empowered with necessary and appropriate technical tools when reacting to drought occurrences.
 - “Forecast” is something that everyone asks for but there is no reliable seasonal forecasting yet. It is possible to make relatively reliable forecasting for 15-30 days in advance, all after that is just predictions.
- **UNCCD Inter-governmental Group on Drought**
 - **Abduvokhid Zakhadullaev (CA Representative)**
 - Inter-governmental group agreed to form 4 task groups, as per UNCCD’s three pillars:
 - Drought Monitoring and Early Warning Systems
 - Drought Impact and Vulnerability Assessment
 - Drought Risk Mitigation and Response Measures
 - Physical stream
 - Policy stream
 - Each of the task groups is expected to assess current institutional and coordination frameworks.
 - We are looking for possibility to assess drought impact and how to minimize its negative effect on the economies.

- It is important to find synergies not only between projects and donors, but also with local partners, ministries and agencies. By doing this we can surely develop a strong and useful regional strategy.
- **United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)**
 - **Abdurahim Muhidov (Regional Coordinator)**
 - UNDRR is implementing an EU-funded programme in Central Asia that includes a review of strategic documents in DRR in the five countries. The assessment aims at identifying the gaps in addressing the existing and emerging threats and hazards, and will provide the national counterparts with recommendations for focusing on the areas that are not fully addressed.
 - One of such focuses is related to biological hazards – the area that is a common/shared problem for the world.
 - UNDRR will also support developing plans of action for implementing the strategies, with consideration of the new challenges and the changing environment.
 - The UNDRR Central Asia Initiative includes work at the local level, assessing resilience of capital cities to disasters and supporting development of local DRR strategies; and supporting DRR at community level in selected districts, building capacity and knowledge of the population in reducing risk and the level of preparedness for disasters.
- **Central Asia Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM II) FAO**
 - **Aizhan Karabayeva (Regional Programme Associate)**
 - We work on scaling up the sustainable practices that enhances the capacity of rural population to adapt to drought and salinity.
 - According to the project's activities baseline studies on Early Warning System, Drought Risk Management and Agro-meteo Services were completed by 90% in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and initiated in Turkmenistan.
 - Land degradation map was developed in Kazakhstan.
 - **Bozayeva Zhanyl (National Project Manager in Kazakhstan)**
 - Comprehensive report EWS and climate related events in 3 countries are completed. For Kazakhstan it is in the final stage.
 - We will be developing drought vulnerability maps.
 - In Kazakhstan we are considering using FAO's Agriculture stress index database, taken from the national statistics, which will be utilized during report and map formulation. Maps will be developed next year.
 - In Uzbekistan, the project is procuring meteorological stations. So, we are not only working within the qualitative realm, but also with hard component.
- **Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC)**
 - **Ludmila Kiktenko (Programme Manager)**
 - One of the greatest challenges of the regional strategies (drought and sand and dust storms) which are developed with support of the project, is to ensure their implementation. Therefore, it is important to start thinking about resource mobilization now and plan for future activities accordingly.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the following was directly or along the lines said almost by all participants: working in the synergies with relevant on-going initiatives and programs, making the best use of existing database and communication platforms.

It is also noted that in order to convince decision-makers to act the project needs to form a strong evidence base, including economic losses, assessment of vulnerabilities and risk, and give the resulting document and people-centric element.

Strengthening national knowledge and capacity on drought and SDS related events, understanding the vulnerability indicators, use of monitoring and forecasting tool will also ensure long term strategic planning, that will be beneficial across borders.

Reference Materials:

- UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP) Decisions:
 - o Decisions 29/COP.13 - Policy advocacy on drought:
https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-08/29COP13_0.pdf
 - o Decisions 31/COP.13 - Policy Advocacy Framework to combat Sand and Dust Storms:
https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-08/31COP13_0.pdf
 - o Decisions 23/COP.14 - Policy advocacy on drought:
<https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2019-11/23-cop14.pdf>

- Environmental Performance Review:
 - o **First-cycle EPRs** - From 1994, the first cycle of reviews was performed in the following CA countries: Kazakhstan¹, Kyrgyzstan², Tajikistan³, Turkmenistan⁴ and Uzbekistan⁵;
 - o **Second-cycle EPRs** - Since 2000, second EPRs were carried out in the following CA countries: Kazakhstan⁶, Kyrgyzstan⁷, Tajikistan⁸, and Uzbekistan⁹;
 - o **Third-cycle EPRs** - Since 2012, UNECE has carried out third EPRs in the following CA countries: Kazakhstan¹⁰ and Tajikistan¹¹.

- Central Asia Water and Energy Project (CAWEP) -
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/eca/brief/cawep>

- EU CIRCABC platform for activities in Central Asia
<https://circabc.europa.eu/ui/welcome>

- Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation (WECOOP) - <https://wecoop.eu/>,
<https://wecoop.eu/regional-knowledge-centre/project-database/>

¹ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=14930>

² <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=14928>

³ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=14887>

⁴ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=31562>

⁵ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=14908>

⁶ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=14813>

⁷ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=14802>

⁸ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=31560>

⁹ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=14740>

¹⁰ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=51819>

¹¹ <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=46564>

Participants list:

#	Name	Title	Organization
1	Abdurahim Muhidov	Regional Coordinator	UNDRR
2	Abduvokhid Zakhadullaev	CA Representative at the UNCCD Inter-governmental Group on Drought	Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Uzbekistan
3	Aizhan Karabayeva	Regional Programme Associate	FAO/CACILM2
4	Alexandr Nikolayenko	Regional Advisor	Green Central Asia, GIZ
5	Aziz Karimov	Head of Regional office for CA and South Caucasus	ICBA
6	Bozayeva Zhanyl	National Project Manager in Kazakhstan	FAO/CACILM2
7	Daler Domullodzhanov	National Technical Officer	FAO/CACILM2
8	Firuz Ibrohimov	Programme Coordinator	Sustainable Development Unit, UNDP
9	Gardashov Akmyrat	National Project Manager in Turkmenistan	FAO/CACILM2
10	Gaygysyz Kurbanseidov	National Project Assistant in Turkmenistan	FAO/CACILM2
11	Gurbanmyrat Ovezmyradov	National Water Expert	FAO/CACILM2
12	Jamal Annagylyjova	Regional Liaison Officer for Central and Eastern Europe	UNCCD Secretariat
13	Maya Ashirova	Programme Country Coordinator	GIZ
14	Muhammad Kosimov	Regional Project Coordinator	FAO
15	Norah Tapera	Partnership and Resource Mobilization Officer	ICBA
22	Olzhas Atymtayev	National Programme Officer	UNEP
16	Rahmanberdi Hanekov	National Project Manager	FAO
17	Rashyd Zaaboul	Climate Modeling Specialist	ICBA
18	Robert Brudzynski	Project Manager	Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Kazakhstan
19	Snejana Popova	Project Officer	Delegation of the EU to the Republic of Kazakhstan
20	VEISOV		

21	Yerlan Zhumabayev		UNDP
23	Zafar Makhmudov	Executive Director	CAREC
24	Shakhnoza Umarova	Country Director in Uzbekistan	CAREC
25	Shynar Toilybayeva	Country Director in Kazakhstan	CAREC
26	Vaysidin Saidov	Country Director in Tajikistan	CAREC
27	Irana Bagirova	Country Director in Turkmenistan	CAREC
28	Lyudmila Kiktenko	EMP Programme Manager	CAREC
29	Rustam Issakhojayev	Project Manager	CAREC