

Meeting minutes

Subject: the meeting on completion of «Proposal for structure and content of the National Strategy of Turkmenistan to reduce the risks of sand and dust storms».

Presentation of the final version of «Proposal for structure and content of the National Strategy of Turkmenistan to reduce the risks of sand and dust storms», the main conclusions and recommendations formed on the basis of the data obtained and analysis of the situation in the region and in the country. Comments and suggestions on the document from the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, as well as compliance of document with the approved National goals and objectives.

Location: Ashgabat, CAREC office at 142, the Hero of Turkmenistan Atamurad Niyazov Ave.

Date and time: April 20, 2021, 10.00 – 12.00

Attendees:

Bagirova I.	Coordinator of CAREC projects in Turkmenistan;
Kharchenko O.	TKM project office assistant;
Akmuradov M.	Counselor of the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan (attended online);
Saparmuradov D.	Head of the Environmental Protection Department of Hydrometeorology of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan (attended online);
Durikov M.	National Coordinator of UNCCD in Turkmenistan;
Shayhullina V.	GIZ, Green Central Asia
Veisov S.	Project expert, specialist on desertification;
Aganov S.	Independent expert, agricultural economics specialist;
Mukhamedova L.	Health Representative;

Welcome speech:

Irana Bagirova (Coordinator of CAREC projects in Turkmenistan) - briefly introduced all persons present and thanked the participants for joining the meeting. She briefly told about development and steps taken by CAREC to agree the Proposal on the structure and content of the National Strategy of Turkmenistan to reduce the risks of sand and dust storms. It was noted that this document has particular relevance now and is in line with national strategies and priorities in the field of nature protection and health.

Presentations:

Sultan Veisov (Project expert, specialist on desertification) - presented the main provisions and structures of SDS.

During his speech, Mr. Veisov noted that the goal of the national strategy of Turkmenistan for the management of sand and dust storms is a long-term understanding and solution of the issues of neutralizing the impact of SDS processes, and forming of state policy of Turkmenistan in order to combat the consequences of their negative impact on the economy and health of the country's population;

indicated the main issues that should be solved to eliminate the negative development of SDS processes; demonstrated impact of SDS on agriculture, water management, environment, standard of living of the population; told about the methodology of combating the SDS processes, in which interregional and international cooperation plays an important role.

Particular attention was paid to the priority areas of regional activities and the unified action plan of the Central Asian countries.

Stanislav Aganov (Independent expert, agricultural economics specialist) – introduced the participants the main difficulties, challenges and opportunities of SDS and provided SWOT analysis.

As the strengths, Mr. Aganov noted the understanding of the importance of managing the SDS processes, support by the government and the population for adaptation measures that ensure the reduction of risks from the SDS, ratification of the Paris Agreement by the region and the development of country NAPs.

This document fully supports and supplements the State Program "Saglyk" ("Health"), the National Strategy on Climate Change, includes scientific researches and achievements of National institute of deserts, flora and fauna of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan.

The weaknesses include the lack of a coordinating body for the implementation of the NAP for SDS, limited financial resources, the lack of a unified information base, the lack of specialized scientific institutes and highly qualified specialists who specialized in research and development of practical methods for combating SDS processes.

A general system for collecting and analyzing information, warning, forecasting and monitoring the processes of SDS, the creation of a data bank, the effective use of existing and development of new financial mechanisms, the continuation of research on the formation of SDS and the development of recommendations to reduce the risks from SDS in the CA countries, GIS - mapping of the main foci for the development of SDS in the region, as well as uniting the efforts of regional organizations and international donors to coordinate actions to solve the problems associated with the processes of SDS have been classified as possibilities.

Discussion:

Muhammed Durikov (National Coordinator of UNCCD in Turkmenistan) - expressed his gratitude for the project implementation and noted that a large, very relevant work had been done, a huge amount of material on the country and the region had been considered.

The National Coordinator recognized the importance of the coordinating body in combating desertification, he also reported with regret that at the moment only the National institute of deserts, flora and fauna of Turkmenistan is dealing with SDS issue and this sector needs to be improved and strengthened.

Mr. Durikov highlighted once again that it is very useful document that can be used for development of the national strategy and expressed his gratitude to the representative of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification - Jamal Annagilyeva, CAREC represented by Irana Bagirova and Rustam Isakhodjaev, and to all participants of the meeting.

Djuma Saparmuradov (Head of the Environmental Protection Department of Hydrometeorology of the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan) - thanked the experts for the good presentations provided after the long-term work, expressed his sincere gratitude to the Secretary of the Convention to Combat Desertification and CAREC and noted that huge and important work has been done, very useful for the Ministry of Agriculture, and assured that this document will be approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan and implemented.

In this regard, the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection issued an official letter confirming the acceptance of this document and its compliance with national interests and current policies.

At the moment - said Mr. Saparmuradov - according to the decree of the President of Turkmenistan Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, the National Aral Program is developing, aimed to reduce the negative impact of the Aral Sea and all ministries are involved in this Program and he hopes that Proposal for structure and content of the National Strategy of Turkmenistan to reduce the risks of sand and dust storms will work synchronously with the Aral Program, complementing each other. This matter is not only for one ministry, this problem covers all sectors of the countries of Central Asia, and especially Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

At the end of his speech, Mr. Saparmuradov promised to discuss with the management in what form this document will be approved and expressed confidence that it will serve as a basis for the development of the National Strategy.

Final speech:

Irana Bagirova (Coordinator of CAREC projects in Turkmenistan) - summed up results of the meeting, thanking Mr. Saparmuradov for the letter of gratitude for the adoption of the document and, taking the opportunity, invited everyone to take part in the round table, which will be organized in the frame of the Green Climate Fund project, with the aim of formation the Country Program.

The Project Coordinator proposed to consider important aspects of desertification and land degradation to be reflected in the Country Program, since these projects in the future can be funded from the GCF side.

The meeting was concluded with words of gratitude for the work done and hope for future cooperation in other projects.