



United Nations
Convention to Combat
Desertification

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



WORKSHOP MINUTES

Drought Management and Mitigation in CA

Date: 5th May, 2021
Start time: 14:00 (Almaty time)
Duration: 3 hours 10 minutes
Number of participants: 90
Prepared by: R. Issakhoyev

Background

Jointly with UNCCD and CAREC, the “Drought Management and Mitigation in CA“ workshop aimed at introducing the Project results and receiving the strategic feedback, comments and recommendations of international development partners on the approaches, focus, and objectives of the “Regional Drought Risk Management Strategy for Central Asia”, presenting the DMEWS tool, and discussing the ongoing initiatives and development agendas pertaining to the drought and climate change related events management was organized on May 5th, 2021.

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 the variety of international agencies active in the region.
- **Dr. Tarifa A. Al Zaabi (Acting Director General of ICBA)** - welcomed the participants and noted the importance of working jointly to reduce the negative impact of drought on the population of the region and the world considering that frequency and magnitude of drought all round the world is increasing.

Session 1: Overview of the UNCCD Pilot project in CA

- **Rustam Issakhoyev (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 within the identified directions and tasks.

For more details, please refer to the presentation.

- **Rashyd Zaaboul (International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA))** – Presented the Regional Drought Monitoring System, which will be built on the operational Middle East and North Africa DM System and lessons learned from it. During his presentation Mr. Zaaboul highlighted the following: 1) Definition and types of drought, 2) Drought Management Pillars, 3) CA Drought Management and its gaps, 4) Drought monitoring system developed by ICBA and tailored system for the CA, 5) Validation and adaptation steps, 6) Building the forecasting system, 7) Way forward.

For more details, please refer to the presentation.

Q&A session

- **Q: Zafar Gafurov:** Geographic extent varies greatly, and 1 degree grid might not be well suited for this task. Could you please comment on the resolution relating to Central Asia?
A: Rashyd Zaabool: We will use statistical tools to bring down the scale and calibrate the open data to make sure that resolution in combination with bias correction will also give useful results.
- **Q: Muhammed Usman:** How realistic is this working plan considering the amount of work and project duration? How could you combine different spatial data to one resolution and scale?
A: Rashyd Zaaboul: Implementation of the DMEWS tool is not linked directly to the current project. We are working on the preparation of the project proposal now to start the implementation phase after the pilot project is over. Scaling and combining data has been done already in the MENA region, which is to say we have necessary experience.
- **Q: Gurbanmyrat Ovezmyradov:** How can the system be scaled to different zones and locations?
A: Rashyd Zaaboul: ICBA has a good experience to work with the MENA region and customize the system to reflect the climate conditions respectively to the needs of stakeholders and local communities. We will do the same for CA - regional model will be built for the whole region, while national components will be customized for the local needs.

Statements:

- **UNDRR (Abdurahim Muhidov, Regional Coordinator):** One of the components of the UNDRR lead programme in CA is development of the Disaster Loss Data accounting system' (DesInventar-Sendai) in every country of the region that would allow collecting and structure the current and historic data, aligned with the Sendai Framework indicators.
- **Kyrgyzstan (Ryspek Apasov, UNCCD representative in Kyrgyzstan):** A national platform for forecasting and reducing the risks of natural disasters is functioning in Kyrgyzstan. Our mountainous country is geographically located in the upper reaches of rivers. Therefore, low water is typical for us. However, due to climate change, there is a

risk of drought. Therefore, without coordination with the countries of Central Asia, forecasting, reducing the risks of droughts, direct and indirect damage will not be successful. It can be said that at present there is no joint action plan in Central Asia to combat drought and desertification.

- **FAO / CACILM II (Makhmud Shoumarov, Regional Program Coordinator):** Base assessment of the early warning system in CA has been done by FAO, and we will be able to share them. Based on what we know now is that local communities and land users do not have direct access to the EWS and DRR information that could allow them to react accordingly to the adverse natural events.
- **FAO / CACILM II (Daler Domullodzhanov, FAO Representation Office in Tajikistan):** The Lost and Damage Assessment methodology (D&LA) in Agriculture was developed by FAO and introduced in Europe and the Central Asian region. Now it is being introduced in Tajikistan jointly with the line ministries and entities.
- **Institute of Ecology and Sustainable Development (Kuralay Karibayeva, Head):** CA is a region composed of LLDC. For the past decade countries have been working actively to reduce anthropogenic effects on the land, but we need to make sure that we have strong hydrometeorological services that could give proper recommendations to local authorities and decision-makers on what and where should be done. Since there is a strong interconnection between all elements of the environment and economy, we need to make sure that we move to sustainable practices and ensure that we develop further without damaging the environment. We have an idea how this work should be done; hence we would like to note that additional financial support should be provided to support our work and initiatives.

Session 2: Drought Management in CA: opportunities and challenges

- **Dr. Andreja Sušnik (Slovenian Environment Agency)** - Shared useful information about the Drought Management Center for South and Eastern Europe, its operational structure and difficulties faced during its set-up and operation. Dr. Susnik also shared her insights on how the challenges could be overcome for such a Center in CA and what should be the strategic steps. Additionally, she stressed the importance of cooperation with other drought-related initiatives in the region like IDMP program run by WMO & GWP.

For more details, please refer to the presentation.

- **Prof. Dr. habil Christopher Conrad (University of Halle-Wittenberg)** - Presented the current development and future plans for the “Monthly drought bulletin in the Aral Sea Basin Cropland area” and how it will help both local communities and decision-makers in preparing for the drought events in the Aral Sea Basin. He has also explored possible synergy with other projects and initiatives, and especially with CAREC and ICBA on DMEWS tool.

For more details, please refer to the presentation.

- **Br. Badji Ougfali (Islamic Development Bank)** - Shared his insights to the financial opportunities and expectations International Financial Institutions have in respect to the project proposals and development aid recipients. He noted that all activities should be clearly laid out and focused on a specific aspect that would contribute to an overall sustainable development of the land. A special emphasis is given to the project of transboundary character, that involves several countries.

- **Batyr Mammedov (ICSD)** - Presented the Regional Environmental Programme for Sustainable Development of Central Asia (REP4SD CA) and its possibility for synergetic regional actions within the presented Regional Drought Strategy. He noted that additional work should be done to synchronize the tasks and directions, and ICSD would be happy to collaborate.

For more details, please refer to the presentation.

Q&A session

- **Q: Ludmilla Kiktenko (CAREC):** How are local reporters motivated to provide info on a regular basis?

A: Gregor Gregorič (ARSO):

- Data to DroughtWatch is mainly transferred from Copernicus data service (remote sensing data);
- numerical products are prepared by Slovenian weather service (host of the drought center);
- observers are difficult to motivate - during the DriDanube project, we had resources to organize events on the fields where we got majority of volunteers;
- some products (limited) are provided by regional partners (via FTP service).

A: Dr. habil Christopher Conrad:

- First of all, we need to start from the demand point of decision-makers, because it is important that they have the data they need to make educated decisions and hence support our activities;
- Financial support is also important when collecting data and ensuring sustainability of results;
- Involving young people and academia is also important for sustainability of results.

Statements:

- **Ludmilla Kiktenko (CAREC):** There is a need for soil surface moisture analysis of the Aral Sea Basin territories with high-resolution that would allow to plant saksaul seedlings and ensure higher survival rate. Local partners are happy to help with local data and collaboration.
- **Valentin Aich (Global Water Partnership):** The joint GWP/WMO Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP) is currently establishing a regional Programme similar to the IDMP Central and Eastern Europe, that could provide technical assistance and workshops to stakeholders and beneficiaries.
- **UNCCD Focal Point to Uzbekistan (Abduvokhid Zakhadullaev):** Countries in the region want to work and strengthen their cooperation in ensuring the land degradation is reversed, especially in the Aral Sea Basin. We need to further coordinate our activities and regional centers might be a way to go. Additionally, a joint action plan should be developed to combat desertification and drought in the Region.

Closing remarks:

Delivered by Daniel Tsegai (Programme Officer, UNCCD).

Proposed Synergies:

- **CAREC (Zafar Makhmudov, ED):** Ready to provide a platform to host climate related data and tools at the Central Asia Climate Change Platform which is being developed by the CAMP4ASB (World Bank) Project implemented by CAREC.
- **WMO (Robert Stefanski):** WMO and member services are happy to work with the project partners on the seasonal climate forecasts and drought monitoring.
- **FAO / CACILM II (Makhmud Shoumarov, Regional Program Coordinator):** CACILM II project team is happy to share EWS reports with CAREC and ICBA.
- **FAO / CACILM II (Bozayeva Zhanyl, National project manager in Kazakhstan):** Within the FAO-GEF CACILM-2 project monitoring of the agricultural drought in Kostanay oblast being done using CDI tool and ground data. This year drought forecasting will be developed. The CACILM II project team will be happy to cooperate.
- **IWMI (Giriraj Amarnath):** International Water Management Institute (IWMI) recently developed a cloud-based drought early warning system for Afghanistan. The tool is currently being used by the government partners for early warning and preparation of drought response strategies. IWMI is interested in collaborating with UNCCD and CAREC.
- **ICSD Secretariat (Batyr Mammedov, Head):** Regional strategic documents support the activities and directions proposed by the REP4SD of CA, hence there is a possibility of identifying strategic entry points for collaboration.
- **GIZ / University of Halle-Wittenberg (Prof. Dr. habil Christopher Conrad):** The team working within the framework of Green Central Asia initiative will be happy to share and collaborate on further strengthening the Monthly bulletin and work with ICBA on the DMEWS tool.

Resources:

- Gerlitz, L., Vorogushyn, S., Gafurov, A. (2020): Climate informed seasonal forecast of water availability in Central Asia: State-of-the-art and decision-making context. - Water Security, 10, 100061. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wasec.2020.100061>
- <https://www.cawa-project.net/ru/issledovaniya/wp-2/>
- <http://af-dews.demo.iwmi.org:3000/>
- <https://www.droughtmanagement.info/>
- <https://knowledge.unccd.int/drought-toolbox>
- <https://wuemoca.geo.uni-halle.de/app/>
- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCspnRJE3MI_9yvexWjijt-Q