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CENTRAL ASIA CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

KEY MESSAGES



CAMP4ASB
Climate Adaptation & Mitigation
Program for Aral Sea Basin
CENTRAL ASIA

24–25 January 2018
Almaty, Kazakhstan

The Central Asia Climate Change Conference 2018 was organized under the framework of the Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin (CAMP4ASB) and is a continuation of the World Bank's initiative for climate change knowledge and information exchange in Central Asia. It brought together more than **250** representatives from governmental and non-governmental agencies, academia, development partners, multilateral development banks, civil society and business companies that work in the area of climate change adaptation in the region and beyond.

The Conference aimed at fostering regional dialogue, knowledge and information exchange on adaptation to climate change, exploring opportunities for joint actions between international, regional and national stakeholders, and building a common vision towards climate resilient future. The Conference sought to:

- **Inform** about the latest global climate change discussions and trends amid adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the post-COP23 discussions, and while focusing on implications of these developments for Central Asia.
- **Present** good practices, lessons learnt, research findings, innovative climate-resilient technologies and climate finance opportunities, which proved to be sustainable and effective at regional and global scale.
- **Explore** opportunities to strengthen synergies and multi-stakeholder regional partnerships to foster the Global Climate Action Agenda.

The Conference was composed of five sessions to elaborate discussions on *Climate Policy, Research, Best practices, Climate Finance and Climate Information* services. Outlined below are the key messages from speakers and ensuing discussions within the sessions.

Session 1 Policy. Global Climate Regime – implications for Central Asia

The session provided an overview of the international climate policy and mechanisms, and touched upon the Sustainable Development Goals initiative. The global overview was supplemented by information on climate actions by Central Asian states.

- **Evolving international climate regime**

The session presented a brief overview on global climate policy development, mechanisms of the Paris Agreement's implementation, as well as on key decisions of the latest global climate negotiations. The international climate discussions recognize adaptation as important as mitigation. There is a growing understanding that adaptation should move from disintegrated single projects to a more programmatic scope, via inclusion into national and sectoral plans. It was noted that the Paris Agreement envisage setting a global goal for adaptation, supporting adaptation efforts by including it into INDCs and linking the latter with GCF financing, establishing a MRV mechanism for adaptation.
- **Convergence of climate action and SDGs**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have a strong interlinkage with fighting climate change. The SDGs (goal #13) call for taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. It is evident that mitigation and adaptation efforts in the region would also contribute to attaining respective SDGs in the countries, concerning affordable and clean energy, water and sanitation, poverty and biodiversity.
- **Central Asian countries are committed to tackle climate impacts**

The CA countries recognize the need to reduce global pressure on climate system and to adapt to its inevitable adverse effect. All the states have signed the Paris Agreement, and are on track of developing national policies to fight the climate change. Many countries in the region have already adopted national adaptation strategies, and established respective national work groups. Furthermore, in some countries climate change concerns already taking place in emerging sectoral programs and strategies on agriculture, forestry, hydropower, etc.
- **Development cooperation is important for implementing national policies**

International technical assistance is crucial for achievement of climate change goals set up by the Central Asian states. Acknowledging continuous support from Multilateral Development Banks and international climate funds, there is a need for widening financing and technology transfer for enhancing climate actions undertaken by the countries.

Session 2 Science. How climate change affects Central Asia

Within the **SCIENCE** session, the speakers presented and discussed key findings of the latest climate research and vulnerability assessments conducted in various sectors in Central Asia.

- **Central Asian mountains and glaciers are among key research interest**
A substantial part of research presented during the session focused on mountains and glaciers, reflecting their importance as a key source for run-off formation of Central Asia's rivers. Decades of glaciers monitoring, analysis of multi-year satellite images and multiple assessments undertaken by both national and foreign scientific institutions unanimously conclude that the Tian-Shan and Pamir glaciers are melting at alarmingly fast rates.
- **Water resources are at the frontline of climate threats**
One of the most adverse impacts of climate change is on water resources – the presented research findings point out at forecasted decrease in the rivers run-offs in the long run, expected shift in hydrological dynamics of Central Asian rivers over the years, etc. These phenomena will eventually negatively affect agriculture sector in the region.
- **Agriculture and DRM are under risks**
A more disaggregated assessment of climate risks for some river basins in Central Asia validate the above mentioned findings. On one hand those expected changes may potentially offer some opportunities, in terms of more water available for irrigation during the beginning of vegetation season (spring months) and possibility for earlier sowing. Nevertheless, magnitude of expected adverse effects will very likely outweigh those noted benefits. Those associated risks include: higher possibility for flooding in early spring, accompanied decrease in rivers' discharge during the vegetation period; and intensification of soil salinization on irrigated lands.
- **Climate and health**
Climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter. Public health in Central Asia will likely be affected via extreme weather conditions, changing infectious diseases vector, air quality, emerging implications for food and water security.
- **Further research is needed, access to data is crucial**
It was noted during the session that, even though climate research in the region is advancing, there is still insufficient high resolution disaggregated level data and information on climate change processes, which in many cases does not provide an adequate knowledge base for development and implementation of appropriate adaptation measures. Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Program for Aral Sea Basin

(CAMP4ASB), among other objectives, intends to address these gaps by enhancing research capacities in the region, and supporting modernization of climate processes monitoring systems in the region.

- **International research cooperation is important**

It is important to establish and strengthen cooperation on research between foreign and national scientific institutions for deepening interdisciplinary knowledge base on climate change. This would also foster generation of sound and unbiased data and information on climate change processes. It was also emphasized that the linkages between Paris agreement, Agenda 2030 and Sendai Framework for Action needs to be strengthened and scientific research and cooperation in the region can play a pivotal role in it.

Session 3 Best practices and technologies. Global challenges – local actions

This session familiarized the participants on existing initiatives for climate technology transfer at global and regional level. The session showcased information products and databases, within the Central Asian region and beyond, on practices and technologies for sustainable management of natural resources.

- **Common solutions for diverse climate risks**

The Central Asian countries share common but diverse landscape and agro-climatic zones (mountains, valleys, arable and dry steppes), which in turn determine a diverse spectrum of farm activities – irrigated agriculture, horticulture, pasture farming, and others. This determines diversity of climate threats, similar for all the countries, which in its turn offers common technological solutions as well as opportunities for intraregional cooperation on technology and knowledge transfer.

- **Increasing knowledge and evidence from existing efforts**

The multiple pilot projects on testing sustainable land management (SLM) practices have been carried out in the Central Asian countries up to date, with the help of number of international and regional networks and institutions (such as WOCAT, CTCN, FAO, GIZ, IWMI). Those efforts have already provided a substantial volume of knowledge on SLM practices that ensure long-term productivity of land resources and help to cope with local challenges of climate change.

- **Win-win solutions are there**

Beside addressing explicit challenges in agriculture, the introduction of SLM practices and technologies on a wider scale has other positive side-effects. A relevant example presented during the session – introduction of water saving technologies, in the context of pumped irrigation, lead to cuts in energy costs.

- **“Soft” technologies are of equal importance** and in some cases, they might even emerge as a prerequisite for the viability of technical measures. As it was exemplified during the session, pilot re-introduction of rotational and participatory pasture management and establishment of pasture user networks in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan allowed farmers to use pasture resources in a more sustainable manner.
- **Time for upscaling sustainable practices in the region**
While the knowledge base on SLM should be further enlarged, there is a need for upscaling of evidence based practices in the region. In this regard there is a call for mainstreaming those sustainable practices and technologies into wider state projects and programs.

Session 4 Finance. Global funding sources and local mechanisms of climate investments

The session provided the latest available information about the trends and climate financing opportunities from international climate funds and Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), as well as private sector. In addition, the session made an overview of existing climate investments and schemes in Central Asia at national level.

- **Expanding climate finance on global arena**
The global climate finance architecture has increased over the past decade both in size and complexity, with financing being offered through multiple multilateral funds, bilateral channels and private capital markets.
- **Financing from the multilateral climate funds in Central Asia also increases**
With regard to Central Asia, seven multilateral climate funds¹ have funded a number of projects up to date, with a total amount of financing being slightly under USD 0.5 billion. Mitigation projects make up the largest share of the funding compared to adaptation projects, though there is a slightly higher number of adaptation projects.
- **Clear national climate policies help to facilitate inflow of climate finance**
Out of the total amount of climate investments attracted into the region up to date, comparatively larger share had been mobilized by Kazakhstan for mitigation action, and noticeable amount of investment attracted by Tajikistan for climate adaptation. To some extent, this may be linked to existence of appropriate policy frameworks in these countries: Kazakhstan has adopted quantitative commitments on GHG, established a

¹ Green Climate Fund, Clean Technology Fund, Pilot Programme for Climate and Resilience, Global Environment Facility, Special Climate Change Fund, Adaptation for Smallholder Agriculture Programme, Adaptation Fund

national Emissions Trading System and set up necessary market conditions for energy efficiency refurbishments; whereas Tajikistan has pursued the Pilot Program on Climate Resilience (PPCR).

- **Preparedness is important**

As practice shows there are several key factors that facilitate access to funding, which include being a party of the UNFCCC; having experience and knowledge on system and procedures of IFIs, GEF Agencies, and Bilateral Donors; greater involvement of government or government agencies. Ability to design a robust and transparent MRV mechanism is also of instrumental asset.

- **Need for boosting of private investments**

Evidence from other parts of the world shows that each 1\$ of climate investment from public and multilateral funds, is leveraged with up to 7\$ from private sources. There is a different situation in this regard in Central Asia – private investments so far constitute a small portion of total amount of climate-related financing in the region.

- **Emerging South-South cooperation as a new opportunity for climate-related investments**

Central Asia is becoming more integrated in intra-regional cooperation; the Belt and Road Initiative is one of the recent examples. Even though, the initiative mainly envisages investments into transport networks, it offers opportunities to enhance climate resilience and energy efficiency aspects in the transport infrastructure.

Session 5 Information services. Communication and specificity of climate-related information delivery

This session presented case-studies of effective delivery of climate-related information to various target groups, including decision-makers, practitioners, farmers, etc. It was supplemented by a discussion of the concept for an information knowledge platform on climate change in Central Asia to be developed under CAMP4ASB project.

- **Multiple climate-related information and knowledge online platforms available**

Multiple platforms and networks exist for sharing information on ongoing climate processes, research findings, sustainable technologies and practices. Several case studies were presented during the session, including WB's [climate knowledge portal](#) on knowledge dissemination, [database of sustainable technologies](#) generated with CACILM program and [WOCAT database](#) on SLM practices.

- **Insufficient outreach of climate knowledge to end-users**
Despite of the impressive knowledge base accumulated in the region, information is not reaching all segments of local stakeholders due to technology, language, or other barriers. The speakers emphasized the importance of tailoring appropriate content, scope, format and channels for information delivery, taking into account the specificity of target users (e.g., policy makers, academia, practitioners, farmers).
- **Need for mobilizing scattered knowledge sources and outreaching all users**
It was noted that the climate knowledge platform for Central Asia under CAMP4ASB project should build on already existing climate change information, knowledge and expertise in the region; facilitate in-country, regional and international cooperation; and be accessible by a range of information end-users.

The 2018 Central Asia Climate Change Conference provided a platform for dialogue for stakeholders from state organizations, academic institutions, international development agencies, and civil society dealing with climate change in Central Asia and beyond. Climate change impacts were the main theme of the conference, and the participants discussed different dimensions of climate adaptation in the region – *Policy, Research, Best practices, Climate Finance* and *Climate Information Services*. The organizers are confident that the rich content and exchanges during the Conference will contribute to new directions for further climate research, climate policy framework, promotion of integrated approaches, and open routes to new partnerships for climate resilient development in the region.