



CONCEPT NOTE

High-level side event

“Central Asia: Commitments to Water Action Agenda”

23 March 2023, UN Headquarter, Room: CR-8, New York, USA

Background

Pursuant to the resolution 73/226 of the UN General Assembly, the decision was made to convene in New York, from 22 to 24 March 2023, the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, subsequently referred to as the United Nations 2023 Water Conference. The United Nations 2023 Water Conference will help to accelerate progress by reviewing the objectives of the Water Action Decade, which aims to advance sustainable development, accelerate implementation of existing programs and projects and mobilize action to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Under the proposed themes, the five interactive dialogues of the Conference will identify challenges and obstacles for successful implementation of the Decade and propose actions and initiatives required to overcome them.

A number of preparatory global, regional and national events were organized worldwide in preparation of the Conference to ensure the adopted three principles of the Conference are guarded and aiming for the Conference to be inclusive, cross-sectoral and action-oriented.

One of the key events leading up to the Conference was the Second Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference designed to serve as a platform for soliciting and consolidating inputs ahead of the UN 2023 Water Conference. The Dushanbe Conference held in Dushanbe on June 6-9, 2022 provided an important platform for the Central Asian countries to intensify their efforts towards strengthening water cooperation in the region as a vehicle for accelerating joint progress towards the 2030 agenda. This agenda was discussed at the regional forum on water cooperation in Central Asia organized by the Executive Committee of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea jointly with the WB-administered Central Asia Water Energy Program and other international partners in Dushanbe within the Second Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference.

The Regional Forum and a follow up regional preparatory meeting organized by the EC IFAS in Tashkent in September 2022 enabled the Central Asia countries to have in depth and broader discussion of regional commitments and initiatives that could be jointly declared and implemented towards the 2030. The results of the discussions and reached agreements were summarized in the Joint Statement of Central Asian states (attached). The Statement was endorsed at the IFAS Board meeting on November 28, 2022 and the proposal of the EC IFAS to hold a side event on water cooperation in Central Asia during the UN Water conference in New York was approved in this meeting too.

The Joint Statement of Central Asian countries is planned to be presented in the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York to show the commitment of Central Asian region to the water cooperation agenda, demonstrate a cross-cutting nature of water in setting and achieving priorities for the region’s sustainable development and defining the existing challenges and national and regional commitments to address them jointly through collaborative approach. The Joint Statement includes the commitments of Central Asian states to be registered in the Water Action Agenda of the UN 2023 Water Conference.

Goals and objectives of the High-level side event

The main objectives of the side event are to demonstrate the solidarity of the region in jointly addressing water issues to achieve water-energy-food and environmental security in Central Asia in the context of climate change and other challenges, including via innovative, transformational and action-oriented commitments on the regional and national levels.

The high level side event also provides an opportunity to inform participants of the Conference of the commitments made by the Central Asia region towards implementation of the Water Action Agenda, strengthen existing and establish new partnerships for implementation of the regional commitments.

Co-organizers of the High-level side event

The Executive Committee of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS) with the support of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the World Bank.

Participants of the High-level side event

High-level representatives of the governments of Central Asian countries, the United Nations system, development partners, international financial institutions, other interested stakeholders including civil society organizations represented by local communities, youths and women.

Preliminary Program

9:30-9:32	Introduction to the side event Moderator <i>Mr. Sulton Rahimzoda,</i> Chairman of the Executive Committee of IFAS
9:32-9:42	Keynote statement H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon President of the Republic of Tajikistan, President of IFAS
9:42-9:47	Keynote statement Mr. Saroj Kumar Jha Global Director, Global Water Practice, World Bank
9:47-9:50	Statement High-level representatives of the UN
9:50-10:15	Statements from the country representatives National-level commitments towards 2030 Water Action Agenda and implementation mechanisms H.E. Ms. Zulfiya Suleimenova - Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan H.E. Mr. Daler Juma – Minister of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan H.E. Mr. Khamraev Shavkat – Minister of Water Resources of the Republic of Uzbekistan High-level representatives of Turkmenistan High-level representatives of the Kyrgyz Republic
10:15-10:40	Statements by the key development partners Partnerships and collaboration mechanisms needed for implementation of the regional commitments announced in the Joint statement

	High-level representatives of the EU High-level representatives of the ADB High-level representatives of the EDB High-level representatives of the USAID (United States) High-level representatives of the GIZ (Germany) High-level representatives of the SDC (Switzerland)
10:40-10:45	Summary and conclusion <i>Mr. Sulton Rahimzoda,</i> Chairman of the Executive Committee of IFAS