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THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR SAVING THE ARAL SEA

**REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE WORKING
GROUP ON STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL
FRAMEWORKS OF IFAS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF
ASBP-3**

Almaty, Kazakhstan, 20-22 April 2010

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**SUMMARY REPORT OF THE SECOND MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP
ON STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS OF IFAS
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASBP-3**

Almaty, Kazakhstan

20-22 April 2010

1. The second Working Group on Strengthening the Institutional and Legal Frameworks of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) and Development of the Aral Sea Basin Programme – 3 (ASBP-3) was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, April 20 – 22, 2010. The meeting was organized by the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in the framework of the Project “Regional Dialogue and Cooperation on Water Resources Management in Central Asia”. The Project is funded by the Government of Germany through GTZ.
2. Delegations from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan participated in the meeting. Participants included representatives of the Executive Committee of IFAS, national experts, as well as experts from regional organizations of IFAS, the Scientific Information Center of Interstate Coordination Water Commission (ICWC), Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (SIC ISDC), Amudarya and Syrdarya Basin Water Organizations (BWOs).
3. The meeting was also attended by UNECE Secretariat, GTZ staff, international experts and representatives of international and regional organizations. In total, the meeting was attended by 78 participants.
4. The main objective of the meeting was to facilitate the implementation of decisions taken under the joint declaration of the Heads of Founding States of IFAS, adopted in Almaty on 28 April 2009, where it was stated "... the willingness to further strengthen the institutional and legal framework of IFAS to improve the efficiency of its operations and to achieve greater interaction with financial institutions and donors with respect to implementation of projects and programs related to the problems of the Aral Sea ... ", and the Executive Committee has been mandated to develop, together with the Interstate Coordination Water Commission and Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development of IFAS, involving national experts and donors for subsequent review and approval by the founders of IFAS, the Action Program of support to the Aral Sea Basin countries for the period of 2011-2015 (ASBP-3).
5. The first session of the meeting was devoted to discussions on "Strengthening the structure and legal framework of IFAS" and a step-by-step approach to improve the institutional structure

and the legal framework. National experts and regional organizations made presentations on the ongoing work on the development of the ASBP-3 during the second session “On development of the ASBP-3”. The results of an EC-IFAS Workshop with representatives of international and donor organizations on 17 March 2010 were also presented.

6. During the second day of the meeting, devoted to the development of ASBP-3, participants worked in groups according to the 4 components of ASBP-3: Group A: “Integrated use of water resources with consideration of the interests of all states in the region”; Group B: “Environmental”; Group C: “Social and Economic”; Group D: “Strengthening the legal and institutional mechanisms”. During the separate sessions in small groups, the requirements, expectations and proposals of member states and regional organizations on the 4 ASBP-3 components were discussed in more detail, and proposals and ideas on possible directions of regional projects were presented. Outcomes of discussions were summarized in the reports of chairpersons and moderators of Groups A, B, C and D.

7. In Group A on “Integrated use of water resources with consideration of all states in the region” – the participants identified the key problems in this area and possible indicators. In particular, the important problems identified include:

- Dryout of the Aral Sea;
- Minor environmental flow releases (across the entire channel);
- Problems with changes of the natural flow regime and increase in frequency and intensity of natural disasters related to water;
- Reduction in water availability, increased demand of water resources;
- Lack of agreed mutually acceptable arrangements for water resources management (not agreed);
- Insufficient monitoring of water and land resources at the regional level;
- Degradation of water infrastructure (cross-sectoral or regional); and
- Low use of hydropower potential of the region (not agreed).

8. In Group B, “Environmental” - participants also identified the key problems in this area, and the priority areas for project cooperation. Important directions of work include:

- Protection and rational use of water resources;
- Air protection;
- Protection and rational use of land resources;
- Climate change and adaptation to its consequences;

- Conservation and sustainable use of ecosystems, including the Aral Sea and Aral Sea region;
- Conservation of mountain ecosystems;
- Environmental education and education for sustainable development;
- Management of chemicals and wastes;
- Preservation of landscape and biological diversity;
- Environmental monitoring and assessment;
- Prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, and
- Building databases and exchange information on national and regional levels.

9. In Group C, "Social and economic", the participants identified the key problems in this area as well as possible target indicators. Important directions of work include:

- Water supply, sanitation and health;
- Strengthening the educational and scientific capacity for sustainable development;
- Introduction of energy saving technologies;
- Food safety;
- Energy security (not agreed);
- Ensuring employment and creation of sustainable sources of income;
- Prevention, mitigation and elimination of natural and environmental disasters.

10. In Group D discussing "Strengthening the legal and institutional mechanisms" it was concluded that there is a need to improve the existing legal framework of IFAS.

Short, medium and long term prospects for strengthening the institutional and legal mechanisms of IFAS have been identified. Important directions of work include:

- Strengthening the existing legal and institutional mechanisms of IFAS;
- National and regional dialogues on water conventions in ASBP-3;
- Establishing a database of projects and project proposals for ASBP-3, and monitoring the progress of the program;
- Investigating the feasibility to establish Amudarya and Syrdarya Basin Councils;
- Establishing a single IFAS information system;

- Incorporating the principles of international conventions in the preamble of the ASBP-3;
- Amending the draft agreements as follows: “Agreement on joint integrated use and protection of water resources of Syrdarya river basin” and “Agreement on joint integrated use and protection of water resources of Amudarya river basin”, and to develop them as a medium-term option;
- Including the Agreement on Safety of Hydraulic Structures in Central Asia into the ASBP-3 (as a medium term activity);
- In the long term, an opinion was expressed to develop Framework Conventions “On joint integrated use of water resources of the Aral Sea basin by Central Asian countries” and “On Sustainable Development of the Aral Sea basin”.

11. In the final session the Chairman of EC-IFAS Mr Ibatullin informed meeting participants that project proposals to the program must be submitted not later than 20 May 2010. It was also decided to form a working group with 2 representatives from each country, to prepare amendments and additions to the statutory documents of IFAS.

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**SECOND MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP
ON STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS OF IFAS
AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASBP-3**

Almaty, Kazakhstan

20-22 April 2010

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Annex 2

Agenda of the SECOND MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL STRENGTHENING OF IFAS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ASBP-3

20-22 April 2010

Address: Almaty oblast, Karasayskiy region, Tau Samaly (ex.Kamenka),
Resort facility "Alatau"

First day (20 April 2010)

09.00 Opening statement by Saghit Ibatullin, Chairman of EC IFAS

Opening statements by representatives of UNECE and GTZ

Outcomes of the visit of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to Central Asia in light of the problems in the Aral Sea basin, by Fedor Klimtchouk, Deputy Head of the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia

09.30 Session 1: Institutional and legal strengthening of IFAS

Moderator: Marton Krasznai

The session will focus on the identification of easy to implement first steps to improve the effectiveness and coordination of the work of IFAS and its regional organizations. A proposed list of such steps will be presented. Participants will be invited to discuss a phased approach to the improvement of the organizational structure and legal basis of IFAS: each phase could be developed and agreed upon after the successful completion and evaluation of the previous phase.

Proposals by participating countries and regional organizations

Additional statements: International experts

EC IFAS members

Representatives of regional organizations

11.00 Coffee break

11.20 Summary of discussion

13.00 Lunch

14.30 Second session: Development of ASBP-3

Moderator: Saghit Ibatullin

The session will hear a report on on-going work on the development of ASBP-3 and provide an opportunity for the donors to present their views and expectations concerning the Programme. Participants are expected to comment on the Framework Document and agree upon a shared vision of ASBP-3 that provides an overall review of on-going or planned national programs, projects funded by the donors' community and a coherent set of proposed new projects that build on and complement on-going or planned activities.

Overview of the process of development of ASBP-3: by Murat Bekniyazov, Head of the IFAS Regional Working Group.

Statements by: Heads of regional working groups on the development of ASBP-3, national experts on the development of ASBP-3, IFAS regional organizations and CAREC.

Information on the outcomes of the Workshop of EC IFAS with representatives of international and donor organizations on 17 March 2010, by Alfred Diebold, EC IFAS Technical Director

16.00 Coffee break

16.30 Continuation of the discussion

18.00 End of the session

19.00 Reception

Second day (21 April 2010)

09.00 Session 3: Development of the ASBP-3

Group A (3rd floor hall): First direction of ASBP-3: Integrated water resources management with due account of the interests of all states in the region

Co-Chairs: H. Ibodzoda, N. Sheraliev

Moderator: A.Demydenko

*The break-out session of **Group A** will offer an opportunity to discuss in more detail the needs, expectations and proposals of member States and regional organizations and to get acquainted with the activities of donors under the first direction of ASBP-3. It is expected that participants will exchange information on the ongoing work under the first direction of ASBP-3 development in their countries and will present proposals and ideas on possible regional projects under this direction.*

Group B (4th floor hall): Second direction of ASBP-3: Environmental protection

Chair: M.Kazakov

Moderator: A.Nikolayenko

*The break-out session of **Group B** will offer an opportunity to discuss in more detail the needs, expectations and proposals of member States and regional organizations and to get acquainted with the activities of donors under the second direction of ASBP-3. It is expected that*

participants will exchange information on the ongoing work under the second direction of ASBP-3 development in their countries and will present proposals and ideas on possible regional projects under this direction.

Group C (5th floor hall): Third direction of ASBP-3: Socio-economic activities

Co-Chairs: M. Narbayev, M.Omorov

Moderator: A.Krutov

*The break-out session of **Group C** will offer an opportunity to discuss in more detail the needs, expectations and proposals of member States and regional organizations and to get acquainted with the activities of donors under the third direction of ASBP-3. It is expected that participants will exchange information on the ongoing work under the third direction of ASBP-3 development in their countries and will present proposals and ideas on possible regional projects under this direction.*

Group D (6th floor hall): Fourth direction of ASBP-3: Institutional and legal strengthening

Chair: K.Ballyev

Moderator: Bo Libert

*The break-out session of **Group D** will offer an opportunity to discuss in more detail the needs, expectations and proposals of member States and regional organizations and to get acquainted with the activities of donors under the fourth direction of ASBP-3. It is expected that participants will exchange information on the ongoing work under the fourth direction of ASBP-3 development in their countries and will present proposals and ideas on possible regional projects under this direction.*

11.00 Coffee break

11.30 Continuation of the break-out sessions of Groups A, B C and D.

13.00 Lunch

14.30 Report by the chairs and moderators of Groups A, B, C and D

Groups A, B, C and D will present the developments on the directions of ASBP-3, in particular the status of preparation at national level and ideas for possible regional projects. The discussion is expected to outline an ASBP-3 composed of four well-balanced and coherent main directions, described in as much detail as possible at this stage.

16.00 Coffee break

16.30 Closing session

Moderator: Bo Libert

General discussion and summary

Participants are expected to agree upon the overall vision of a coherent and balanced ASBP-3 as well as modalities and timelines for its development, in particular substantial preparation of

the Donors' Coordination Meeting (third week of May), including the timely provision of information to EC IFAS on on-going and planned national programs, projects implemented or planned by the donors' community and new projects to be included in the ASBP-3.

18.00 End of the session

Third Day (22 April 2010)

09.00 Discussion in Groups A, B, C and D on the development of four components of ASBP-3

Group A: First direction of ASBP-3: Integrated water resources management with due account of the interests of all states in the region

Group B: Second direction of ASBP-3: Environmental protection

Group C: Third direction of ASBP-3: Socio-economic activities

Group D: Fourth direction of ASBP-3: Institutional and legal strengthening

13.00 Lunch

14.00-16.00 Continuation of discussion