# Сoncept Note

# Second Training for Young Governmental Officials from Central Asia and Afghanistan on Water Resources Management in the Context of Climate Change

# September 2016

## Introduction

Water resources of the region of Central Asia that is infamous for the Aral Sea catastrophe, is today exposed to a serious impact of changing of global climate, and they significantly influence regional interstate relations. The Aral Sea basin is shared between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. The region is characterized by the low rainfall, and the irrigations systems are drawing primarily from the two main rivers – Amu Darya and Syr Darya. The former practice of overuse of the scarce water resources that was common during the Soviet time together with the climate change have led to the infamous catastrophe of the Aral Sea. However, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union the five newly independent states – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are experiencing difficulties in cooperation between each other and with Afghanistan to determine common use of the water resources and also how to address the Aral Sea desiccation particularly against a backdrop of climate change.

During the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UNFCCA, held in Paris between November 30th and December 11th, 2015, it was reiterated that the current climate change situation has a severe impact on the decreasing surface and groundwater resources and that the international basins are put under a more severe pressure than the inland basins. Particularly the challenges that the climate change imposes, among others the temperature increase and shrinking of the glaciers, are now added on top of the issues that are usually typical for the transboundary interstate cooperation in Central Asia, such as weak institutional arrangements, inefficient infrastructure, poor resource and information management, and lack of capacity.

To cope with existing water related challenges in the region on 1 April 2008, the German Federal Foreign Office announced the launch of the “Water Initiative for Central Asia”. The initiative is an offer made by the German Federal Government to the countries of Central Asia to support them in water management including the capacity building and to make water a subject of intensified transboundary cooperation in the context of climate change. The aim of this initiative, also known as the Berlin Process, is to avert conflicts and foster regional development.

The need for a closer cooperation in the region is increasing, but the challenges are still severe, as there is a lack of professional capacity to adopt the relevant climate policy. Such cooperation should rely on specialists that have deep understanding of the recent developments in water management particularly in the context of climate change and its impact on water resources. Therefore, there is a strong need for strengthening capacity of the decision makers from all of the countries, which share the trans boundary rivers in the region. Special emphasis shall be put on the younger generation of civil servants, which are more capable to gain modern knowledge, and generate innovative ways of its application into the public sector of water management.

Capacity building activities in the water domain that have a regional focus as opposed to the national focus in Central Asia are not organized very often. Such regionally focused approach should be continued in future, particularly due to the growing need among countries. A good proof if such interest is the fact that during the pilot training all countries that were invited officially nominated their representatives, which proves their willing to cooperate further on capacity building on water-related aspects in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

## Pilot Training for Young Governmental Officials from Central Asia and Afghanistan on Water Resources Management in the Context of Climate Change

In autumn 2015, the first attempt was made to bring the young civil servants of the five countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan together to allow them to discuss various aspects of transboundary water management in the context of climate change together with national experts and representatives of international organizations. The participants represented a large number of various governmental institutions working in water and related sectors, among those ministries of water, energy resources, ministries of agriculture and nature protection, energy producers and hydrometeorological agencies of the five countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan.

The project was carried out with generous financial support of the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, World Bank, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia of the United Nations (UNRCCA), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE Project Office in Astana). The project was also supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. First, a three day training was held at the Kazakh-German University in Almaty (from 23 to 25 September 2015). During this training the participants have taken part in the lectures and trainings on the international, regional and national water law and cooperation, impacts of the climate change on the water resources and inclusion of climate change-induced concerns into the legislation.

Then, a study tour to Germany, Berlin (from 26 September to 1 October 2015) was organized with support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany and other partners of the “Berlin Process”. In the course of the study tour the participants were familiarized with the German experience in the water and water-related sectors, namely water diplomacy and international cooperation for development, fostered by Germany as a measure of preventive diplomacy.

In general, the training received positive feedback from the participants, both the training in Almaty and the study trip to Berlin. The participants stated that they as professionals found the training useful and would recommend continuing such trainings in the future. The participants agreed there is a need for further building of capacity of young civil servants and Central Asia and Afghanistan involved into transboundary water management, and that such trainings could be a means to that end.

## Project Objectives in the Light of the 21 Conference of Parties to the UNFCCA

The 21 Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC held in Paris in 2015 reiterated the influence of climate change on the availability of renewable surface and groundwater resources. Particularly in the arid regions, like Central Asia, climate change has a potential to exacerbate interstate and intersectoral conflicts over the scarce water resources. Thus, relevant and sustainable climate change policy can play an important role in preventing conflicts.

The Paris Agreement adopted during the 21 COP in 2015 has been called an important milestone in a political process as it has set long term goals that encourage the countries to increase their national ambitions in combating climate change. Importantly the language of the Agreement stipulates a joint action and mobilization thus encouraging each country to participate in its best possible way.

It is therefore important for the civil servants in Central Asia at the national and regional/basin level to have a clear and a common understanding of the recent developments in the global climate change policy and legislation, its implementation mechanisms and implications of action or inaction. It is also important that the countries sharing a common river basin have an understanding of the ever-growing interconnectedness of the natural resources in the light of the changing climate and understand an importance of the joint action and cooperation to fight this common challenge.

The Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan) are also paying an increasing attention to climate change and its implications and have participated in the COP. In is important that the civil servants that are now implementing the climate policy in the countries of Central Asia and will be the ones doing this in future share a correct and common understanding the Paris Agreement and its consequences, are able to apply the provisions of the Agreement to their national policies and understand the importance of joint action to combating climate change.

Thus the overall aim of the second Training is to familiarize the young governmental officials with the new prospects in transboundary water management on the global, basin and national level. These prospects will be explained in the light of the outcomes and implications of the COP 21 and the Paris Agreement. A particular attention will be paid to its potential in conflict prevention in the region, as stipulated by the Berlin Process.

It is also aimed to share knowledge and experience of international community, especially Germany in the sphere of water management under the influence of climate change for young specialists..

## Project Implementation

Differently the Pilot project, this year the project will consist only of a training in Almaty but will be extended to 5 days. The training will cover the following topics:

* Global transboundary water management in the context of climate change and UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris, 2015, and preventive diplomacy;
* The impact of climate change on the transboundary water management at the basin level;
* National water management in Central Asia and Afghanistan and application of the Paris Agreement on the national levels.

Currently the communication with relevant international and regional organizations is in process, and the following organizations have expressed their willingness to support the project:

* Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
* United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA)
* International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO)
* United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

## Post-project strategy

The project, being oriented to the region of Central Asia and Afghanistan, shall be seen as an input to the regional cooperation on water management in transboundary watersheds in the framework of the Berlin Process Phase III, and the Paris Agreement. The main aim of the training is policy

A successful implementation of the activities within the proposed Project will give new impulses to further collaboration between the ministries of different countries, responsible for water resources management, which will allow to work towards conflict prevention in the region

The young water specialists of the public sector, after attending the training, will gain better understanding of the Paris Agreement and its implications and application to the region of Central Asia. They will also gain knowledge of the advanced technologies in the water sector, applied to lessen the impact of climate change, technologies used to protect the water infrastructure from the impacts of climate change particularly on the example of Germany.

The participants will have an opportunity to improve their contacts with their colleagues from the Central Asia countries and Afghanistan, as well as with colleagues from the international partner organizations.

## Timeplan of the activities

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| Time period | Activities |
| April, 2016 | * Developing and sending invitation letters to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Ministries responsible for water resources management and related areas in the countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan vie German Consulates in these countries * Confirming reception of the letters and following up on the procedure of nomination of participants in the countries |
| April-May,2016 | * Contacting partners in Central Asia * Drafting the agenda, training scope and programme |
| June-July, 2016 | * Receiving answers from the ministries and other participating relevant institutions in Central Asia on nomination of participants * Contacting the nominated participants, receiving documents and personal information from them for booking tickets etc * Further development of agenda and training scope * Confirmation from all partners in Almaty |
| August, 2016 | * Final reservations and booking Almaty * Confirmation of the final agenda and programme |
| 19-23 September, 2016 | Training in Almaty |
| October-November, 2016\* | * Analysis of evaluation forms * Development of narrative report * Preparation of financial report |

\* *These dates may change*