



The International Fund for saving the Aral Sea - in best interests of peoples of Central Asia

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Introduction

In order to reduce the environmental and social tensions, to avoid potential conflicts with respect to water allocation and management of water resources, on October 12, 1991 the Heads of water authorities in Central Asia had issued a Statement in which, based on the historical commonness of the Central Asian nations, and recognizing their equal rights and responsibilities with respect to the management of water resources in the region, they acknowledged that only the combined and joint actions for coordination and management can effectively address the water problems of the region. Based on the Statement, on February 18, 1992, the Ministers of Water Resources of the Central Asian states had signed an agreement on “Cooperation in joint management, use and protection of transboundary water resources”.



History of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea (IFAS)

August 28, 1992, Nukus

(Uzbekistan), the International Workshop Conference on Problems of the Aral Sea and the Aral Sea region had issued an Address to the Presidents, Parliaments and the public of sovereign states of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and other CIS countries, stating their intention to establish an International Fund to address the Aral Sea problems and to sign an agreement on the Aral Sea basin, as well as other legal and regulatory instruments for water management.

January 4, 1993, Tashkent

(Uzbekistan), a meeting of the Heads of five Central Asian (CA) states was held, following which the parties had agreed to create the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea (IFAS). The main purpose of this supranational organization was to develop and fund environmental, scientific and practical projects and programs aimed at environmental rehabilitation of areas affected by the Aral Sea disaster, as well as to address socio-economic problems of the region.

March 26, 1993, Kyzyl-Orda

(Kazakhstan) Heads of the Central Asian states had approved the Statute of the IFAS, according to which the Executive Board of the Fund was established in Almaty, and the decision to create the Interstate Council for the Aral Sea basin with a permanent Executive Committee in Tashkent was taken.

February, 1997,

H heads of the Central Asian states have modified and approved a new principal scheme of management of the IFAS, under which the Interstate Council and the Executive Board of the Fund were converted into the Executive Committee of IFAS, hosted on a rotational basis in a country of Presidency of the IFAS. The countries-founders of IFAS will alternately preside at the Fund, and the Heads of the Central Asian states will elect a President of IFAS for each 3 years.



Founders of IFAS are the Central Asian States:

- The Republic of Kazakhstan
- The Kyrgyz Republic
- The Republic of Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- The Republic of Uzbekistan

Since 1993, the presidents of IFAS were alternately the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev (1993 - 1997), the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov (1997 - 1999), the President of Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov (1999 - 2001), the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rakhmonov (2002 - 2008).

And since August 2008, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, was elected again as the President of the IFAS.

Activities of IFAS

contribute to the development of qualitatively new international relations in the region, strengthening of regional cooperation and conflict-free resolution of complex water issues. For all the difficulties of the situation, IFAS and its institutions: the Board, the Executive Committee (EC), the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC), the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD) take all measures to resolve the issues of water allocation and environmental security, and socio-



Meeting of the Board of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea

economic problems on a priority basis, taking into account the interests of each country. This task is a challenge because many factors that have a significant impact on the current state of water resources and their management have to be taken into account. The pressure on water resources and deterioration of their quality are associated with the increased population, and consequently, increasing water demand for irrigated lands, and for urban development. These factors also include the inefficiency of water use and the climate change, causing general lack of river flow, and are featured with increased incidence of very disastrous floods and droughts, decrease in ice water reserves.

It is important that in addressing the issues of the use of international watercourses, an integrated approach to ensure the maintenance of the capacity of river systems would be used, since their depletion would lead to a reduction of social security in the region. It is therefore very important to take on preventive measures against environmental crises in the river basins on an international level, to develop a new approach to management in order to ensure safe water supply and water use.

The heads of states in the Joint Statement of 28 April 2009, noting the positive role of IFAS, confirmed their interest in working out mutually acceptable mechanism for integrated water resource management and environmental protection in Central Asia with regard to the interests of all states in the region.

In recent years, IFAS and its structures have

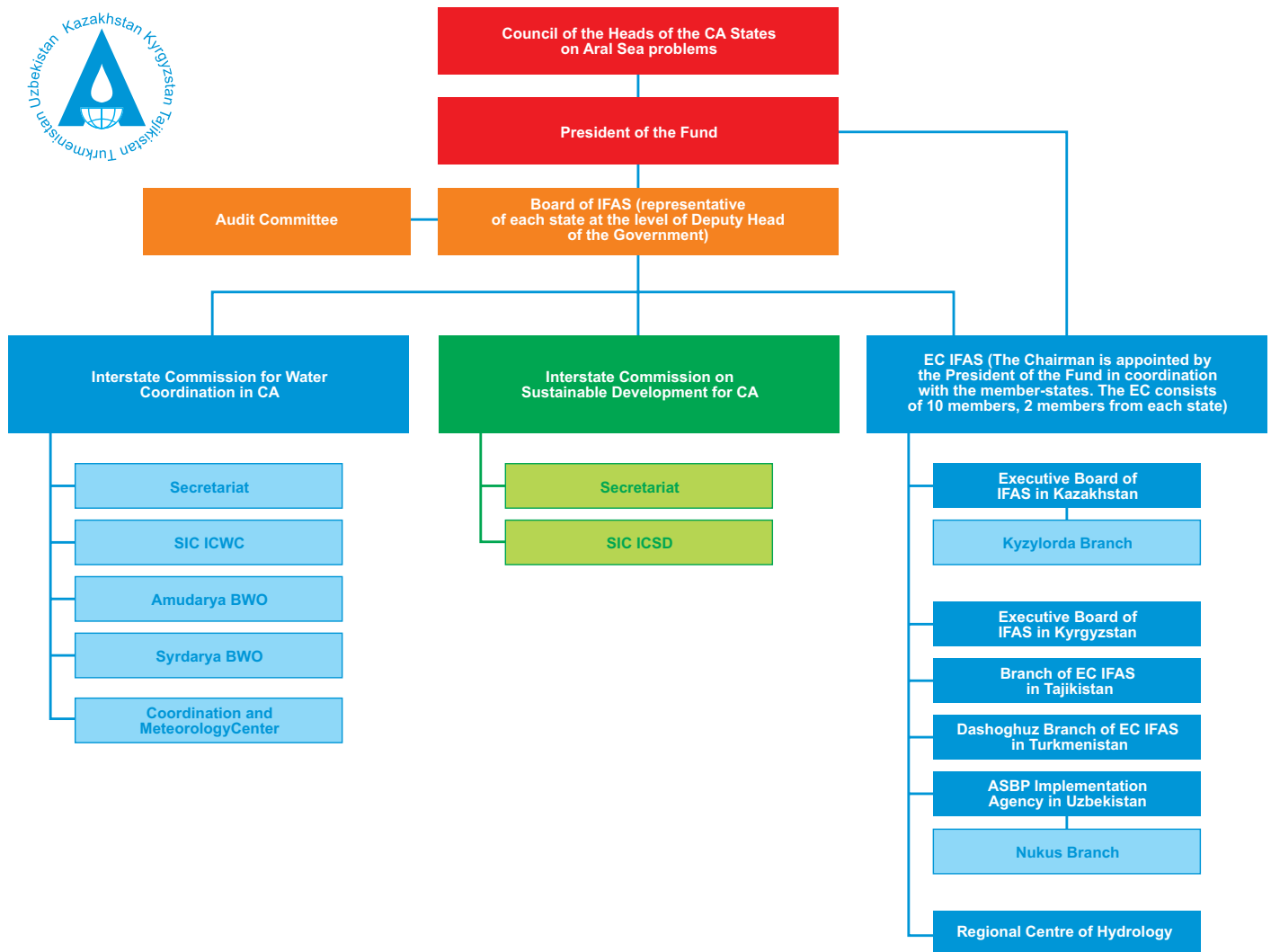
become a regional platform for the development and adoption of bilateral and multilateral agreements, as well as for the recognition of international conventions on IWRM.

The Fund is managed by the Heads of states-founders of IFAS on a rotational basis.

The President of IFAS directs the activities of the Fund, determines its foreign economic and international course of action, makes suggestions for additions and changes to the Statute of the Fund, reviews and approves the Work plans of the Fund. The President of the Fund establishes the Executive Committee of IFAS, approves the Statute of the EC and in consultation with the Heads of the Central Asian states, appoints the Chairman of the EC. The EC is located in a country whose President currently presides in the Fund.

The Board of IFAS represented by the Deputy Prime Ministers of the five founder-states of IFAS is the highest political body for decision-making or preparation of the decisions for their approval (if necessary) by the Heads of States. Function of the Board of the Fund is to prepare draft political decisions. The documents on the most important issues prepared by the Board are then considered by the Heads of the States (founder-states of IFAS) and forwarded for implementation to the Executive Committee of IFAS.

Structure of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea



The Audit Committee

The Audit Committee includes one representative from each founder-state of the IFAS at the level of Deputy Ministers of Finance. Function of the Audit Committee is to check the financial activities of the structural divisions of IFAS.

The Executive Committee of IFAS is

a permanent executive and administrative body of IFAS, established by the founder-states: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The EC IFAS works to:

- ensure the practical implementation of decisions of the Council of Heads of the Central Asian States, President of the Fund and the Board of IFAS on the Aral Sea basin issues;

- implement the relevant projects and programs in the Aral Sea Basin;
- administrate and coordinate the activities of branches and special social and other funds located within the IFAS founder-states;
 - coordinate the activities of IFAS, ICWC and ICSD;
 - increase interaction with international organizations, donor countries, environmental and other funds to revitalize the environmental activities and rehabilitate the environmentally damaged areas;
 - accumulate financial and other resources and ensure their proper use.

The EC IFAS is headed by the Chairman, who is appointed and dismissed by the President of IFAS in consultation with the Heads of the Central Asian states - founders of the Fund.

In order to ensure operation of EC IFAS, governments of the founder-states direct two authorized representatives (Members of EC IFAS) from each state-founders of

the Fund. Guidance and management of their activities rests with the Chairman of EC IFAS.

Branches of EC IFAS function in each founder-state of IFAS, and interact with the public, social, environmental and other organizations, corporations and individuals, as well as with the structures of different forms of ownership, and promote greater cooperation on issues related to the problems of the Aral Sea:

- Executive Board with Kyzylorda branch in Kazakhstan;
- Executive Board in Kyrgyzstan;
- Branch in Tajikistan;
- Dashoguz branch (Turkmenistan);
- Agency for the Implementation of the Aral Sea Basin Program and the Nukus branch in Uzbekistan.



A water facility

The Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC)



A reservoir spillway

On February 18, 1992 in Almaty, five Ministers of Water Resources of the Central Asian states signed the “Agreement on cooperation in joint management, use and protection of transboundary water courses”. This Agreement had actually established a single body – the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC). This agreement was confirmed by the decision of the Heads of States in Kyzyl-Orda on 26 March 1993, and by the “Agreement on joint actions to address the problem of the Aral Sea and Aral Sea region, environmental rehabilitation and socio-economic development of the Aral Sea region”, and later by the Agreement of five states of the region of April 9, 1999 “On the status of IFAS and its organizations”.

The ICWC equally represented by five Ministers of Water Resources or their first deputies is the body of the five governments who have entrusted the Ministries (State Committees, Departments) of Water Resources direct responsibilities for managing and developing water resources to maintain the sustainability of natural and hydrological processes in transboundary water courses.

The ICWC holds quarterly alternating meetings in each country under the chairmanship of the host country to discuss the draft intergovernmental agreements on water sharing, legal framework of water management, creation of a common information base on water resources, monitoring of irrigated lands and adjacent areas, general meteorological support, coordination

of joint research for scientific and technical support to address regional water issues and to implement the designed schemes, etc.

Executive bodies of the ICWC:

- Research and Information Center of ICWC (SIC ICWC);
- Training Center of ICWC (TC ICWC);
- Coordination and Metrology Center ICWC (CMC ICWC);
- Secretariat of ICWC;
- Amudarya Basin Water Organization (Amudarya BWO);
- Syrdarya Basin Water Organization (Syrdarya BWO).

Immediate implementation of intergovernmental agreements on water allocation is assigned to the Amudarya and Syrdarya Basin Water Organizations, charged with the main tasks to:

- ensure guaranteed supply of water to consumers in necessary periods in accordance with the limits of waterintakes and releases established by the ICWC from the interstate sources into the delta of Amudarya, Syrdarya and the Aral Sea in annually planned volumes, as well as to execute ongoing control of compliance with established limits, operation of interstate water reservoirs and water quality;
- develop plans for water intake by the parent water-intake facilities, operation modes of shared reservoirs, preparation and coordination with the ICWC of limits of water resources for all users in the basin;
- create an automated water management system (AWMS) for rivers, organize the water

metering and accounting on parent water-intake facilities and equip them with automation and remote control systems;

- measure, in cooperation with the Hydrometeorological services, the water on the border stations of regional branches to account the river flow by the balance-sheet method;
- comprehensively renovate and operate the waterworks, head water-intake facilities, inter-republican channels, automated systems of water resources management in rivers and other facilities owned by the organizations or transferred for temporary use, and run maintenance to keep them technically sound;
- serve as the Customer for research projects, designing, building new and upgrading the existing industrial and socio-cultural facilities listed on the balance-sheets of the organizations;
- develop and implement, jointly with the State water authorities and other interested companies and organizations, the measures required to ensure accident-free discharge of flood water and protection of human settlements and agricultural lands from flooding and other catastrophic situations involving water.

The Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD)

established in 1994 to ensure development of proposals to determine the priorities of the basin and conduct research and development work aimed at environmental rehabilitation of the Aral Sea region, has intensified its work in 2000 after the Presidential powers were moved on to Kazakhstan. The effectiveness of the ISDC was largely affected by the lack of funding, lack of clear definition of the legal framework and



The Kokaral dam spillway

organizational structure of its executive bodies. During the years of ISDC operation, a number of activities had been implemented:

- the Regional Action Plan on Environmental Protection (RAPEP) was prepared;
- the regional position of the Central Asian countries on RIO+10 was coordinated;
- the mechanism for coordination of programs and projects on environmental protection and sustainable development to be implemented in the region was developed;
- the creation of the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC) was initiated, and the Center was formed in 2000 with its headquarters located in Almaty;
- the high-level international conferences on sustainable development of the Aral Sea region were held in Nukus and Cholpon-Ata.

The ICSD consists of 15 members - 3 representatives from each state (Ministers of Environment, Deputy Ministers of Economy, representatives of science and other fields), appointed by the Governments of the Central Asian states.

The executive bodies of the ICSD are:

- The Research and Information Centre (SIC ICSD), based in Turkmenistan, and its four branches in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- The Secretariat which provides the technical and financial support to the ICSD;
- The Advisory Board, consisting of experts from the sustainable development network, NGOs and donors.



Syrdarya estuary

Water and Land Resources of the Aral Sea Basin

Country	Runoff, km ³ /year			Irrigated lands, thous. hectares
	Syrdarya	Amudarya	Total	
Kazakhstan	4,5	-	4,5	786
Kyrgyzstan	27,4	1,9	29,3	415
Tajikistan	1,1	62,9	64,0	719
Turkmenistan	-	2,78	2,78	1714
Uzbekistan	4,14	4,7	8,84	4259
Afghanistan	-	6,18	6,18	-
Total	37,14	78,46	115,6	7893

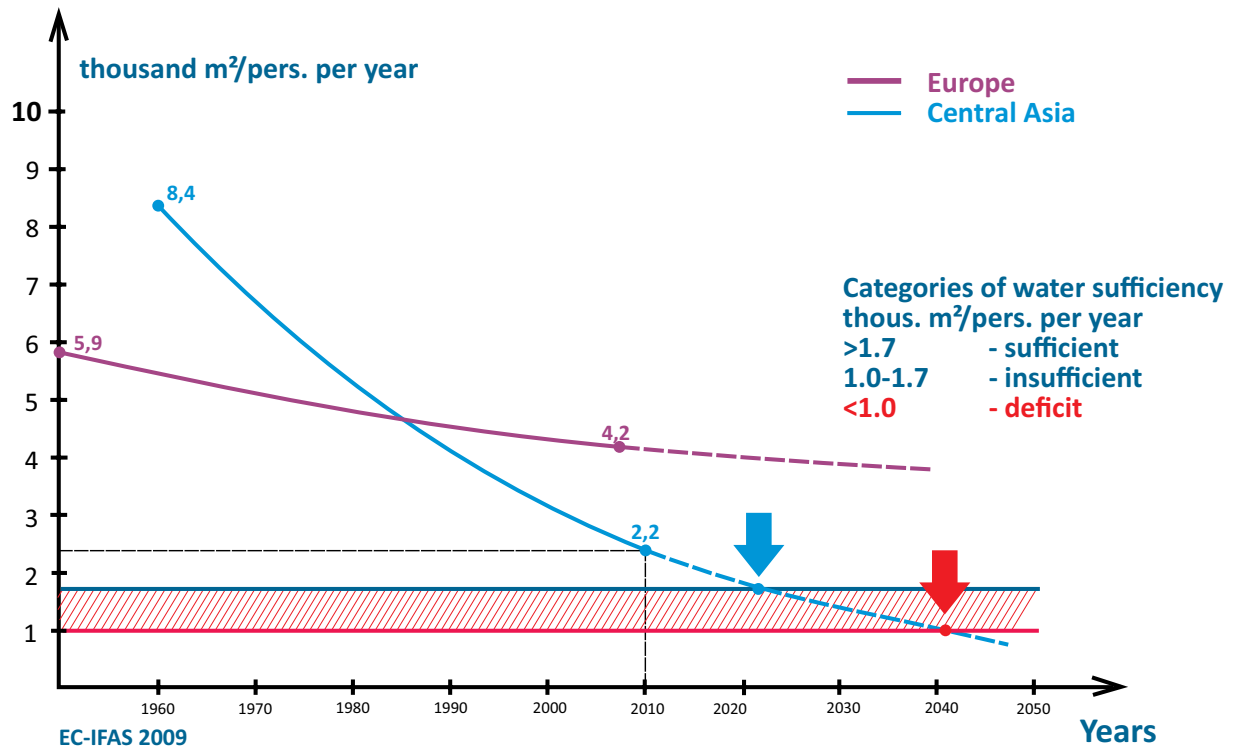
The total average annual flow of all rivers of the Aral sea basin is 115.6 km³ (including 78.46 km³ in the Amudarya and 37.14 km³ in Syrdarya).

The main flow of Amudarya (length = 2540 km, area = 309 km²) is formed in Tajikistan

- 80.17% (7.88% in Afghanistan and Iran, 5.99% in Uzbekistan and 3.54% in Turkmenistan.)

The main flow of Syrdarya (length = 3019 km, area = 219 km²) is formed in Kyrgyzstan - 73.77% (11.15% in Uzbekistan, 12.12% in Kazakhstan and 2.96% in Tajikistan).

Dynamics of water-resources per capita in the Central Asian states, thousand m²/pers. per year





The IFAS States-Founders



The Republic of Kazakhstan

located in Central Asia, deep in the Eurasian continent.

The area of the country is 2724.9 square kilometers. The territory of the Republic extends over 3000 km from the lower reaches of Volga river in the west to the foothills of the Altai Mountains in the east, spanning two time zones, and over 2000 km from the West Siberian Plain in the north to the Kyzyl-Kum desert and the Tien Shan mountains in the south.

Population: 16 442 thousand people.

Capital: Astana (684 thousand people).

Kazakhstan has 14 provinces and 86 cities - 41 of them are of Republican and regional subordination, 175 districts, 35 towns, 34 settlement and 2468 aul (village) administrations.

In order to improve the socio-economic and environmental situation in the Kazakh part of the Aral Sea region, the Kazalinskiy and Aralskiy districts of Kyzylordinskaya province, the Executive Board of IFAS, located in Almaty, was formed in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1997. The Executive Board has an office in Kyzylorda.



The Kyrgyz Republic is located in north-eastern part of Central Asia, confined by the Pamir-Altai ridges in the south-west and the Tien Shan mountains in the north-east. It borders Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and China.

The area of the country is 199,9 thousand sq. km (5.8% are forests, 4.4% is water, 53.3% are agricultural lands, and 36.5% are other lands). Glaciers cover about 4% of the country.

Population: 5300 thousand people.

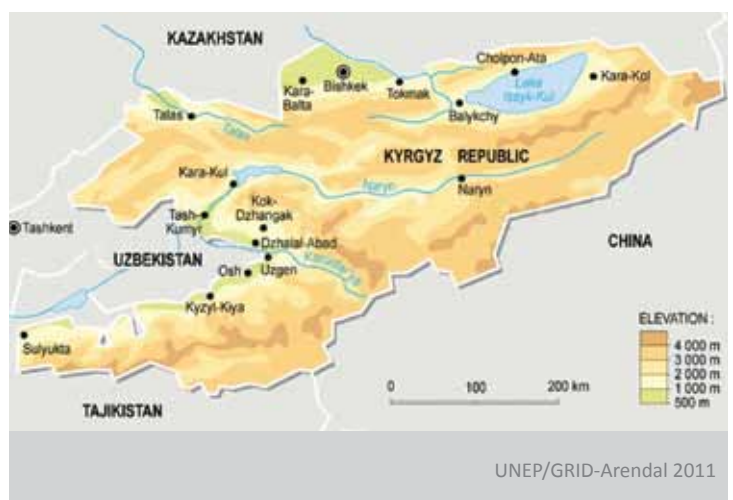
Capital: Bishkek (859.8 thousand people).

The country is divided into seven administrative provinces - Chuyskaya, Talasskaya, Issyk-Kulskaya, Narynskaya, Jalal-Abadskaya, Oshskaya and Batkenskaya.

The mountain and foothill regions of Kyrgyzstan are the main zones of flow formation for the Aral Sea. Therefore, the ecological and



Kirghiz Highlands



socio-economic situation in the Republic determines the success of addressing the Aral Sea basin problems as a whole. To this end, the Executive Board of IFAS in the Kyrgyz Republic (Bishkek) was formed in August 1997.





The Republic of Tajikistan is a state located in the south-east of Central Asia.

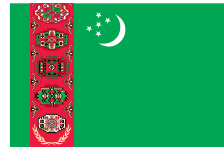
The territory of Tajikistan extends by 700 km from west to east and 350 km from north to south. Tajikistan borders the Republics of Uzbekistan (910 km) and Kyrgyzstan (630 km) in the west and north, Afghanistan (1030 km) in the south, and China (430 km) in the east.

About 93% of the country is mountains, with more than a half territory located at an altitude of 3000 m above the sea level.

Population: 7600 thousand people.

Capital: Dushanbe (661 thousand people).

The Tajikistan Branch of EC IFAS in Dushanbe was established in 1997, in order to implement the specific action programs to improve the environmental and socio-economic situation of the Aral Sea basin within the Republic of Tajikistan.



Turkmenistan is a country in Central Asia, which borders Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The area of the country is 488.1 square kilometers (650 km from south to north, and 1100 km from west to east). It is bathed by the Caspian Sea from the west.

Population: 6700 thousand people.

Capital: Ashgabat (540 thousand people).

In order to improve the socio-economic and ecological situation in Turkmen part of the Aral Sea region – that's the area of the Dashoguzskiy province and Draganatinsky district of Turkmenistan – the Dashoguz branch of EC IFAS was formed in 1995. The branch is located in Dashoguz.







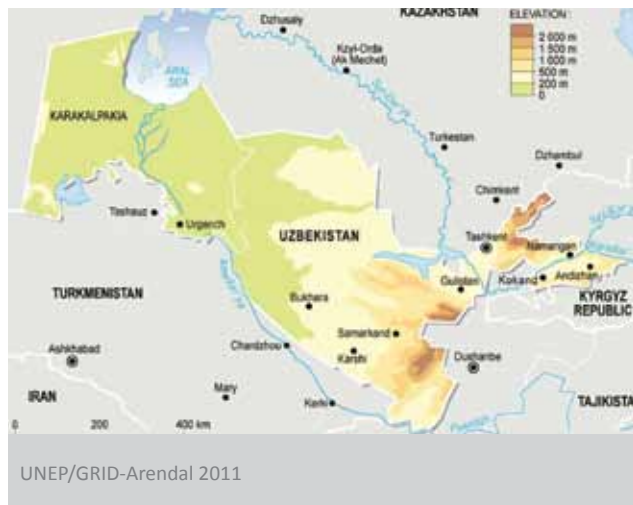
The Republic of Uzbekistan is located between Amudarya and Syrdarya rivers, and covers the area of 447.4 thousand square kilometers. The span of the territory from east to west is 1425 kilometers, and from north to south - 930 km.

The areas in the north and north-east border Kazakhstan, on the east and south-east border Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the west borders Turkmenistan, and the south borders Afghanistan. The total length of the borders is 6221 km.

Population: more than 28 million people.

Capital: Tashkent (2500.0 thousand people).

In order to address the socio-economic and environmental issues, to develop and implement projects to improve the environment and social situation, the Nukus branch of EC IFAS was created in 1996; the IFAS Agency to manage the implementation of the Aral Sea basin projects and the GEF (Tashkent) were established in 1998.



North Aral Sea

Period of Presidency of the Republic of Kazakhstan in IFAS (1993-1997)

March 26, 1993, Kyzylorda - Heads of the Central Asian states decided to elect the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to be the President of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea.

The bodies of IFAS have emerged during this period. The bodies which operated at the time - the Executive Board of IFAS and the Executive Committee of the Interstate Council, including the authorized representatives of the countries of the region (accommodation, salaries, travel expenses) – were funded by the member-states and the UNDP.

January, 1994, Nukus - Heads of the Central Asian states had approved the First Program of specific actions to improve the ecological situation in the Aral Sea basin for the next 3-5 years, taking into account the socio-economic development of the region (ASBP-1). The document envisaged 10 priority directions for the development of a common strategy for water allocation, development of a unified system of water resources accounting, improvement of water quality, creation of artificially watered areas, study of the possibility of donor water supply to the rivers in the Aral Sea basin, etc.

March 3, 1995, Dashoguz - term of office of President of the Fund, Nursultan Nazarbaev, was extended for the next period.

September 20, 1995 - the International Conference on Sustainable Development of the Aral Sea Basin adopted the Nukus Declaration of the Central Asian states and international organizations.

February 28, 1997 - Heads of States adopted the Almaty Declaration.



A market in Khiva



Period of Presidency of the Republic of Uzbekistan in IFAS (1997-1999)

February 28, 1997, Almaty – President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, was elected as the President of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea.

Heads of the Central Asian states had signed an agreement on the status of IFAS and its institutions, under which the Fund and its structural organizations were given the status of an international organization. During its presidency in the Fund, Uzbekistan made active efforts to develop a legal framework for IFAS, enhance networking and cooperation with international organizations and financial institutions to ensure sustainable development in the Aral Sea.

October 1997, Tashkent - the International Technical Meeting of Donors - which resulted in the launch of the international project "Management of water resources and environment in the Aral Sea basin" - was held, giving a significant impetus for a broad review of the Aral Sea problem in international format.

Period of Presidency of Turkmenistan in IFAS (1999-2001)

April 9, 1999, Ashgabat - President of Turkmenistan, S. A. Niyazov was elected as the

President of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea for two years.

The Ashgabat Declaration and the Joint Statement of the Heads of CA states on the restoration of the Aral Sea basin ecosystem were signed.

During this period, the Statute of IFAS with the changes and additions was approved by the Heads of the States, and the Agreement on the status of IFAS (April 9, 1999, Ashgabat) was adopted.

Period of Presidency of the Republic of Tajikistan in IFAS (2002-2008)

February 28, 2002, Almaty - President of the Republic of Tajikistan, E. Rakhmonov, was elected the President of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea for a period of two years.

The Dushanbe Declaration of the Heads of the Central Asian states was adopted (October 6, 2002, Dushanbe).

The Program of specific actions to improve the environmental and socio-economic situation in the Aral Sea basin in 2003-2010 was approved. The basis for the IFAS to obtain the observer status in the UN General Assembly was prepared.

At the initiative of the EC IFAS and the decision of the Board of IFAS of August 28, 2003, a Regional Centre of Hydrology (RCH) was established, aiming to improve the water resources monitoring system of the five countries of Central Asia, in line with the international standards.

A lake system





The IFAS: 2008-2011

25 August 2008. The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, was again elected as the President of IFAS.

In October 2008, in consultation with the Heads of the Central Asian states, the President of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, decided to appoint S.R. Ibatullin as the Chairman of EC IFAS.

In December 2008, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on granting the observer status to the IFAS. The high level status of this international organization had allowed the founder-states to carry out the necessary activities to inform the world community about the problems of the Aral Sea and to attract donor funding to address the environmental and social problems.

April 28, 2009, Almaty – the Summit of the Heads of the Central Asian states on the Aral Sea Basin was held. The meeting had adopted a Joint Declaration of the Heads of founder-states of International Fund for saving the Aral Sea.

The Joint Statement of the Heads of the IFAS

founder-states had assigned the EC IFAS in cooperation with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination and the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development under IFAS, and with engagement of the national experts and donors, with the task to develop the Third Program of action on providing assistance to the countries in the Aral Sea Basin for the period of 2011-2015 (ASBP- 3) for subsequent consideration and approval by the IFAS founder-states.

In course of implementation of provisions of the Joint Statement of the Heads of the IFAS founder-states of April 28, 2009, starting from May 2009 the Executive Committee of IFAS has put a massive effort to prepare the ASBP-3 with the active involvement of international donors.

The cooperation with the international and donor organizations to develop the third Aral Sea Basin Program for 2011-2015 has entered into its final stage. The draft ASBP-3 was presented at the Coordination Donor Conference in December 9, 2010 in Almaty, which was attended by over 60 representatives of international organizations. The result of the Coordination Donor Conference was the approval of the Third Aral Sea Basin Program for 2011-2015 (ASBP-3) and adoption of the Joint Statement on full support to the Program and willingness to fund it.

Fishermen in the Northern Aral sea



