



# Section 4

Bilateral  
Water Cooperation  
between the Countries  
of Central Asia

## 4.1. Kazakhstan – Kyrgyzstan

### High-level contacts

The President of Kyrgyzstan, S. Japarov paid a state visit to Kazakhstan in March. The Heads of State adopted a joint statement that, among other things, stressed a need to expand business ties for implementation of joint projects in industry, hydropower, fuel-energy sector, mineral resources, and agriculture. The parties also expressed their mutual interest in constructive cooperation in the area of environmental and energy security in Central Asia and integrated water and energy use in the spirit of partnership, trust, friendliness, equality and mutual consideration. A number of official documents for strengthened bilateral cooperation have been signed at the end of the visit.

The Presidents had telephone conversations in the course of which they discussed the armed conflict on the Kyrgyz-Tajik boundary (May 1) and the implementation of agreements aimed at enhancing trade, economic, investment, cultural and humanitarian cooperation (December 6).

### Cooperation within the Chu-Talas Water Commission

Bilateral water relations between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are regulated by the Agreement on the Use of Water Management Facilities of Intergovernmental Status on the Chu and Talas Rivers (January 21, 2000). The Chu-Talas Water Commission (CTWC) is a joint body, which is to ensure the joint operation of the water facilities of interstate use and estimate operational costs required for their safe and reliable operation.

**Meetings.** Over the period from 2006 to 2021, 29 Commission's meetings were held. In 2021, the Commission had two meetings:

*28<sup>th</sup> meeting* (April 15 and 23, online). The following matters were addressed in the agenda: results of the growing season 2020; operation regimes of interstate water facilities on the Chu and Talas Rivers in the 2021 growing season; allocated funds and the work done on the facilities in 2020; Kirov dam safety; amending and complementing the 2000 Agreement. The draft of the joint Strategic Action Plan for the Chu and Talas basins was adopted also. The parties took note of the information on drafting a project proposal for the GEF-funded SAP implementation and ordered the CTWC Secretariat to facilitate this process.

*29<sup>th</sup> meeting* (December 9, online). The Commission took note of the information on the approval of the National Action Plan for the Chu-Talas basins in Kazakhstan and on the inclusion of the National Action Plan for the Chu-Talas basins in the agenda of the Kyrgyzstan's National Water Council for approval. However, due to re-organization of the Government's structure, the National Water Council has not gathered.

**Working groups and other activities.** CTWC Secretariat Working Group on environment protection (WGEP) continued working according to the decision of the 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. Three surface water samplings were organized in the river basins with the OSCE's support. The *9<sup>th</sup> extended meeting* of WGEP took place in Almaty on November 18. The participants listened to the results of the seasonal water sampling campaign and the needs assessment for the conservation of wetlands in the Chu River Basin (in Kazakhstan).

For fulfillment of decisions of the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Kyrgyz-Kazakh Intergovernmental Council of April 2, 2021, a commission comprised of water experts from the two countries, the Kazgiprovodkhoz Institute and the Secretariat visited the Kirov reservoir to determine the scope and efforts for repair and rehabilitation for 2022-2024 (September 9). Following the visit, it was recommended to carry out a multifactor inspection of the dam and all structures and develop a Kirov dam safety declaration. Technical aspects on replacement of the 6<sup>th</sup> gate at the dam were discussed during a meeting in December.

*Source:* Head of Kyrgyz side in CTWC Secretariat

### Other bilateral water-related arrangements

To avoid critical drawdown of the Toktogul reservoir and ensure irrigation water for agriculture in Kazakhstan, a Protocol was signed between the countries electric energy exchange on March 2, 2021 and the Governmental Decree on electric energy exchange between the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Kazakhstan was issued by the Kyrgyz Government on March 19. The Parties agreed to exchange 900 M kWh of electricity at a conditional price of US\$ 0.0000001 per 1 kWh during growing seasons 2021-2023. Electricity was to be supplied from Kazakhstan to Kyrgyzstan from March to November. The Kyrgyz party was to provide return of 300 M kWh of electricity and equivalent release of 330 Mm<sup>3</sup> of water annually from June to August 2021-2023.

## 4.2. Kazakhstan – Tajikistan

### High-level contacts

The President of Kazakhstan paid an official visit to Tajikistan on May 19-20. The Heads of State have signed a joint statement, where, among other things,

they underlined the role of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea as a unique institution and a solicited platform for solution of socio-economic, water and environmental issues in the Aral Sea Basin.

The President of Kazakhstan had a working visit to Tajikistan for the CSTO Collective Security Council session and had a meeting with the President of Tajikistan before the session on September 15. The Parties discussed the cooperation aspects and expressed their readiness to coordinate joint actions both in bilateral format and within the framework of multilateral structures.

In the course of telephone conversations, the Presidents discussed the boundary conflict and the current situation on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border (May 1), the implementation of agreements reached during the official visit of K.-J. Tokayev to Dushanbe in May (June 23), the situation in Central Asia in the context of aggravating situation in Afghanistan (July 5), and the

prospects of bilateral cooperation in trade, investment and cultural-humanitarian fields (October 5).

### **Trilateral water-related arrangements (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)**

On June 14, water agencies of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan agreed on operation regime of the Bakhri Tojik reservoir for the period from June to August 2021. The Tajik party has agreed to provide additional releases of water from the reservoir, while the Kazakh and Uzbek parties have expressed their readiness to extend support to Tajikistan in order to reduce the negative impacts of the additional releases on intake structures of the reservoir and maintain embankments.

## **4.3. Kazakhstan – Turkmenistan**

### **High-level contacts**

The President of Kazakhstan, K.-J. Tokayev paid a state visit to Turkmenistan on October 24-25. The Heads of States have signed a joint statement, in which, among other things, they recognized the importance of consolidating efforts for comprehensive solution of socio-economic and environmental problems in the Aral Sea Basin and of institutional and legal improvement of IFAS. The Presidents have recognized transboundary water resources in Central Asia as the common good for people in the region and, therefore, acknowledged the need to continue open dialogue and constructive cooperation for searching mutually acceptable, equitable and sustainable solutions.

On August 6, the President Tokayev had a meeting with the President Berdymukhamedov on the sidelines of the Consultative meeting of the Central Asian leaders in Turkmenbashi. The parties announced their intention to boost trade and economic cooperation, make full use of transit and transport potential, and enhance cultural-humanitarian ties.

In the course of telephone conversations the Presidents discussed how to extent mutual trade and joint projects in industrial, agricultural, energy, transport and logistics spheres (April 28) and further collective actions to boost regional cooperation and achieve stability and security in the region (June 29).

## **4.4. Kazakhstan – Uzbekistan**

### **High-level contacts**

Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited Kazakhstan with an official visit on December 5-6. As a result of negotiations, a number of cooperation and mutual understanding deeds, including the Declaration of friendly relations and agreements on extended cooperation in trade, transport and communications, energy, science and education, defense, emergencies, and space, have been signed. The Governments have agreed to search for lasting sustainable mechanisms of mutually beneficial water cooperation. The urgency of application of water conservation technologies and joint actions for afforestation in the Aral Sea region has been particularly noted.

The Presidents had several telephone conversations, in the course of which, among other things, they discussed the matters related to cooperation for security, stability, and wellbeing in CA (March 15), implementation of agreements in industrial, mechanical engineering, agricultural and transport spheres and cooperation matters in the context of the situation in Afghanistan (June 3), trade and economic relations (July 24), etc.

### **Bilateral water-related arrangements**

Several meetings of officials representing water sectors in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan took place in 2021:

On April 12, Uzbek Minister of water management Mr. Khamraev and Kazakh Vice-minister of ecology, geology and natural resources Mr. Kozhaniyazov discussed in the online format the preparations to the 2021 growing season and the draft intergovernmental Agreement on joint management and use of transboundary waters.

On May 13, the ministers had a meeting in Tashkent. They have agreed on joint measures to increase water availability along the Syr Darya River and on the operation of the Bakhri Tojik reservoir in the growing season 2021, and also discussed other bilateral water management issues, including planned work at Uzbekistan's waterworks facilities located in Kazakhstan.

On June 29 in Dushanbe, Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Sklyar and Minister of ecology, geology and

natural resources Mr. Mirzagaliyev discussed with Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Ganiyev and Minister of water management Mr. Khamraev the matters related to provision of unconstrained transit flow of additional water - released from the Bakhri Tojik reservoir – through Uzbekistan to increase inflow into the Shardara reservoir.

On July 19, Kazakh Minister of ecology, geology and natural resources Mr. Mirzagaliyev and Uzbek Minister of water management Mr. Khamraev discussed the joint measures for better water supply in middle and lower reaches of the Syr Darya River. The ministers have agreed to increase water discharge from the interstate Dostyk canal from 80 to 90 m<sup>3</sup>/s for farmers in Makhtaardal and Zhetysai districts, Turkestan province and continue working jointly on the improvement of inflow into the Shardara reservoir.

### **Kazakh-Uzbek Joint Working Group (Commission) on Environment Protection and Water Quality in the Syr Darya River Basin**

The Kazakh-Uzbek Joint Working Group (Commission) on Environment Protection and Water Quality in the Syr Darya River Basin (hereinafter Working Group) is formed of experts from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in line with the 2017-2019 Strategy for Economic Cooperation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and the 1997 Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on cooperation in the field of environmental protection and management.

**Meetings.** By 1 January 2022, the Working Group had four meetings: on September 27-28, 2018 in Tashkent;

on November 7-8, 2019 in Nur Sultan; on December 24, 2020 in the video-conference format; and on December 13, 2021 in Almaty.

The fourth meeting was attended by national experts representing environmental, geology, health care, emergency, hydrometeorology, and water sectors from Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and international experts and representatives of CAREC. The meeting was co-chaired by the Chairman of the Committee for Environmental Regulation and Control at the Kazakh Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources, Mr. Zholdosov and the Deputy Chairman of the Uzbek State Committee for Ecology and Environment Protection, Mr. Kazbekov.

The Parties considered progress on the work plan, including quarterly water sampling and analysis in the Syr Darya and data exchange. As a result of comparison of samples, the experts found that the measurement error was reasonable. The Parties informed each other on the results of their activities in 2021 regarding public water monitoring and suggested performing joint analysis of water. The participants listened to the information on the regional project "Development of joint measures to prevent and respond to pollution of the Syr Darya river in emergency situations", which started with the involvement of the Working group. Finally, the work plan for 2022 was adopted.

*Source:* State Committee of RUz for Ecology and Environment Protection

### **Trilateral water-related arrangements (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)**

See Subsection 4.2. Kazakhstan-Tajikistan.

## **4.5. Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan**

### **High-level contacts**

The President of Kyrgyzstan, S. Japarov paid a state visit to Tajikistan on June 28-29. The Parties discussed the aspects of Kyrgyz-Tajik state boundary delimitation and demarcation and prospects for bilateral cooperation in political, economic, cultural-humanitarian and other spheres.

The Presidents have adopted a joint statement, by which, among other things, they agreed to reopen the inter-departmental Kyrgyz-Tajik working group for dealing with bilateral aspects of water use. As a result of the visit, a number of documents was signed to extend the Kyrgyz-Tajik cooperation in different spheres.

## **4.6. Kyrgyzstan – Turkmenistan**

### **High-level contacts**

The President of Kyrgyzstan paid a state visit to Turkmenistan on June 27-28. The Heads of State discussed the cooperation aspects in trade and economic, energy and cultural-humanitarian spheres and adopted a joint statement, where they underlined the importance of strengthening cooperation in the field of emergency prevention and elimination, environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, nature management and climate mitigation. As a result of the visit, a number of bilateral documents, including Memorandums of Understanding between the Kyrgyz State Committee for Ecology and Climate and the Turkmen Ministry of Agriculture and Environment Protection and between the Kyrgyz Ministry of Energy and Industry and the Turkmen Ministry of Energy, has been signed.

Also, bilateral negotiations were held between the Presidents of Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan on the sidelines of the Consultative meeting of the Central Asian leaders in Turkmenbashi.



## High-level contacts

The President of Tajikistan Emomali Rakhmon paid a state visit to Turkmenistan on August 4 to 5. As a result of negotiations, the Presidents adopted a joint statement, where they underlined the importance of existing and ongoing hydropower projects along transboundary watercourses, taking into account the interests of all countries in the region in promoting social and economic development of Central Asia. They also noted the progress made within the framework of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea during the chairmanship of Turkmenistan and the efforts of the current chairmanship in the face of the Republic of Tajikistan to further intensify activity of the Fund, including its institutional and legal improvement, prioritize the climate change issues and deepen regional cooperation. The Parties stressed that the recently adopted Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-4) would serve an important tool for promotion of national and regional projects aimed at water, environmental and socio-economic improvement in the region.

## 4.9. Tajikistan – Uzbekistan

### High-level contacts

The President of Uzbekistan, Sh. Mirziyoyev paid an official visit to Tajikistan on June 10-11. As a result of negotiations, the Heads of State signed a joint statement, in which, among other things, they underlined their commitment to integrated and mutually beneficial use of water and energy resources in Central Asia, their intention to develop lasting collaborative arrangements to this end, and their readiness to develop jointly hydropower projects in Tajikistan. Taking into account the processes related to climate change, the Parties noted the need for closer interaction between the relevant agencies of the two countries to mitigate the impact of this global phenomenon and joint measures to prevent natural and man-made disasters and overcome their consequences. Also, the Heads of State underlined the great importance of cooperation within the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea, which serves a unique platform for addressing the socio-economic, water and environmental problems in the Aral Sea basin and expressed their hope that the International Innovation Center of the Aral Sea Region under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region would contribute to environmental, social and economic improvement in the Aral Sea region.

In the course of negotiations, a number of documents have been signed also. Those included the Agreement between the Governments of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on establishment of a joint stock company, development of a feasibility study for construction and operation of two hydropower plants in the Zarafshan basin, and a Roadmap for development of agricultural cooperation between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan for 2021-2022.

The President of Tajikistan also had working visits to Turkmenistan to take part in the Consultative meeting of the Central Asian leaders in Turkmenbashi on August 6 and in the 15<sup>th</sup> Economic Cooperation Organization Summit in Ashgabat on November 27. On the sidelines, the Presidents of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan held bilateral negotiations to address country ties in economy, industry, agriculture and other spheres. The Presidents also had a meeting within the framework of the Summit of the SCO Heads of Member States, where they discussed priorities of Turkmen-Tajik cooperation on both bilateral and regional scales (September 17, Dushanbe).

### Bilateral working groups

The 10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Turkmen-Tajik Inter-governmental Commission on Trade-Economic and Science-Technological Cooperation was held in Dushanbe on July 28. The participants have discussed the key aspects of cooperation in energy, industry, agriculture and water, as well as joint activities in transport domain.

The Presidents of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan also met on the sidelines of the Summit of the SCO Heads of Member States (September 16, Dushanbe) and the 15<sup>th</sup> Economic Cooperation Organization Summit (November 28, Ashgabat). The parties discussed priorities of bilateral cooperation and interaction at the regional and international levels.

### Meetings of the Working Group on integrated transboundary water use in Central Asia

As part of the state visit of the President of Uzbekistan to the Republic of Tajikistan, an Uzbek-Tajik Working Group on integrated transboundary water use in Central Asia was established (March 9-10, 2018). The Working Group did not gather in 2021.

### Cooperation on the Zarafshan River

In June, as part of the state visit of the Uzbek President to Tajikistan, the parties signed an Agreement on development of a feasibility study for construction and operation of two hydropower plants in the Zarafshan basin and on establishment of a joint stock company. The construction of hydropower plants will have two stages: 1<sup>st</sup> stage – construction of 140-MW Yavan HPP to generate 800 million kWh a year (tentative cost – US\$282 million; and, 2<sup>nd</sup> stage – construction of 135-MW Fondaryo HPP to produce 600 million kWh a year on average (estimated cost – US\$270 million).

### Trilateral water-related arrangements (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan)

See Subsection 4.2. Kazakhstan-Tajikistan.

## 4.10. Turkmenistan – Uzbekistan

### High-level contacts

The President of Turkmenistan paid an official visit to Uzbekistan on October 4-5. As a result of negotiations, the Presidents adopted a joint statement, where, among other things, they noted that the transboundary water resources of Central Asia were the common good of the people in the region and that the fate of tens of millions currently living and of future generations, stability and well-being of the entire region depended on equitable and sound use of these resources. They further noted the importance of continuing open dialogue in this sphere. The Parties consider the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) to be a universal platform for joint implementation of environmental and scientific-technological projects and programs aimed at environmental rehabilitation of regions affected by the Aral Sea disaster. They also underlined the need for the two countries to work closer together to mitigate global climate change processes, develop and undertake joint measures for prevention and control of natural and man-made hazards and the importance of the regional program "Green Agenda for Central Asia" launched during the Third Consultative Meeting of the Heads of Central Asian States. In the course of the visit, 23 documents, including the Memorandum of Cooperation on water saving technologies and the Agreement on conservation of biodiversity, have been signed.

The Presidents held bilateral negotiations on the sidelines of the Consultative Meeting in Turkmenbashi on August 6. The parties addressed the issues of bilateral cooperation agenda, prospects of transport and logistics development, and entries to new markets via South Asia and South Caucasus corridors, including establishment of an international transport-transit corridor as part of the Ashgabat agreement.

### Bilateral water-related arrangements

On May 26<sup>30</sup>, an Agreement between the Governments of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on formation of a joint Turkmen-Uzbek Inter-governmental Commission for Water and a Sub-agreement to the Agreement between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on compensated land use were signed in Ashgabat. The Sub-agreement covers the construction by the Uzbek party of the Sultan-Sanjar dam of Tuyamuyun reservoir. According to the Uzbek Ministry of Water Management, as a result of this Sub-agreement, 1.0 billion m<sup>3</sup> of water will be accumulated additionally to improve water supply of 1.2 Mha and increase the guaranteed reserve of drinking water.

### Bilateral working group

The first meeting of the joint Turkmen-Uzbek Inter-governmental Commission for Water was held on September 13 in Tashkent. The participants discussed such matters as interactions in the course of operation of structures and use of water along the Amu Darya River.

### Trilateral working group for water

Water cooperation between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan is also maintained within the framework of the trilateral Working Group, which includes BWO Amu Darya as well. By January 2022, the Group had 225 meetings, including 6 meetings in 2021 where the heads of water management organizations of the Amu Darya lower reaches discussed water allocation issues.

*Source:* BWO Amu Darya

<sup>30</sup> Documents signed during the visit of the Uzbek delegation to Turkmenistan

