



Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies and programs

Sub-regional consultations for Central Asian countries to prepare for 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, 15 February 2022

Key results and recommendations

The objective of the consultations was to discuss the main challenges and obstacles to strengthening gender-responsive climate actions in the Central Asia (CA) region. The participants shared their views on how to ensure equal participation of women in the development and implementation of climate-relevant strategies, policies, and programs and to consider the specific needs and priorities of women and girls. Participants also discussed best practices and provided examples of success stories of climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. As a result, suggestions were made to be presented at the 66th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

International initiatives of the Central Asian states in the field of sustainable development and environmental and disaster risk reduction:

➤ To prevent the negative consequences of the drying-up of the Aral Sea, posing a serious threat to the entire Central Asia region, [the Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region \(MPHSTF\)](#) was established in 2018, at the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan. The Government of Uzbekistan became the MPHSTF's first donor, allocating USD 6,5 million for development programs in the Aral region. The European Union, the governments of Finland, Norway, the Republic of Korea, and other donors has made contributions to the Trust Fund.

➤ In 2021, the [UN General Assembly Special Resolution declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of ecological innovations and technologies](#)¹ was adopted. The Resolution defines strategic directions and priorities based on principles of green and circular economies, environmental innovations, and technologies, to guide transformation of the Aral Sea region from an environmental disaster and humanitarian crises-related area into a sustainable, socially, and economically developed region.

➤ **Uzbekistan** came up with the initiative of a regional program «The green agenda for Central Asia», aiming to contribute to countries of the region's adaptation to climate change.

➤ [The International Center for Innovations](#) established by the decision of the President of **Uzbekistan** is operating successfully in the Aral Sea region.

➤ At the initiative of the President of Kyrgyzstan, the UN declared 2022 as the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development (the resolution was adopted at the plenary of the 76th UN General Assembly session on 16 December 2021). **The Republic of Kyrgyzstan** will further advance the adoption by the UN of its initiative on «Five Years of Action for Mountain Development» **for 2023-2027, focused on the conservation of mountain ecosystems.**

➤ **The Republic of Tajikistan** has initiated the declaration of 2018-2028 as the International Decade for Action on "Water for Sustainable Development". In June 2022, the [Second International Water Decade](#)

¹ The resolution has been initiated by Uzbekistan and supported by more than 50 countries, including the Central Asian states.



[Conference](#) will be held in Tajikistan; the Women Forum on Water will be a part of the program of the Conference.

Actions taken at the country level:

➤ In 2021, the Environmental Code of the **Republic of Kazakhstan** came into force, with a special chapter dedicated to climate change adaptation as well as to the promotion of supportive measures to the most vulnerable groups in the context of climate change.

➤ The development of the decarbonization strategy in **Kazakhstan** contains a chapter on just transition and jobs creation, in particular, for rural women. Women comprised more than 60 percent of this document's developing team.

➤ In 2019, **Kyrgyzstan** ratified the Paris Agreement and is now planning and organizing training for women in agriculture on climate-smart agriculture; enhancing women's participation in climate-relevant strategies and decision-making; gender mainstreaming into the national strategic documents; improvement of access of vulnerable groups to information on climate change adaptation practices, and capacity building of 200 women MPs on climate change adaptation.

➤ **Uzbekistan** has adopted several legal and regulatory instruments aimed at environmental and disaster risk reduction and mitigation, such as "The law on the renewable energy sources" and the President's address on the transition to the green economy for 2019-2025. In 2017, Uzbekistan joined the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. The issues of environment and gender equality have been discussed in the "New Uzbekistan" Development Strategy 2022-2026.

➤ In November 2021, a nation-wide project «Яшил макон» ("Green belt") was launched in **Uzbekistan**, providing for plantation of some 200 million seedlings.

➤ **Tajikistan** has adopted a National strategy on climate change adaptation until 2030.

➤ The national strategy of **Turkmenistan** on climate change includes an extended list of adaptation activities for water management and agriculture sectors, soil and land resources, ecosystems, and woodlands, as well as simulation exercises for industry, energy, and transport sectors. Over the past year, the deputies have developed and adopted the laws of Turkmenistan «On the environmental assessment»; «On waste management»; «On the environmental auditing»; «On the renewable energy sources»; among others.

Recommendations on the support of the international initiatives initiated by Central Asian states:

- The Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region (MPHSTF) represents an effective model for broad partnership, joint action, and contribution in addressing environmental problems and challenges from a human rights and gender equality perspective. Such practices should be expanded in light of long-term partnership, as well as possible extension to other regions and countries to address their specific problems;

- It is proposed to support the measures taken by the countries of the region to rehabilitate the dry seabed of the Aral Sea by planting drought- and salt-tolerant seedlings (trees, shrubs, and grass), to reduce air pollution and improve the local population's health and wellbeing levels;

- It is proposed to support and participate actively in the efforts of the Central Asian states towards the conservation of mountain ecosystems and water resources management, to pass on these non-degraded vital resources to the next generations.

Recommendations on the women's full participation in the development and implementation of strategies, policies, and programs:

➤ To advocate on the women's leadership in natural resources' management (with a particular focus on water management) at the 66th CSW session and at the International Water Decade Conference in Dushanbe in June 2022;

➤ To analyze the level of women's participation and leadership in the sphere of environment, as well as to identify existing barriers and opportunities, for all countries to find practical solutions;

➤ To promote the participation of women and girls in policymaking in the field of scientific research on water issues and in the development of concepts for evidence-based decisions;



- To design flexible interventions at the local level;
- To establish regional and international platforms for women to take joint decisions;
- To take measures for improvement of women's access to independent use of land, water, and biological resources;
 - To disseminate goals and objectives of National Red Crescent Committees until 2025 as examples of successful approaches, namely, to ensure that all national member societies are safe and inclusive organizations, in which dignity, access, engagement, and safety of all individuals regardless of their identities are central to their entire work;
 - To take measures on elimination, prevention, and response to all forms of gender-based violence related to access to sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity (including the protection of women environmental human rights defenders);
 - To address the issue of lacking participation and representation of women in leadership roles in the field of agriculture and the climate-related decision-making process. To continue the involvement of women in the economy by ensuring equal pay and empowerment of women and girls;
 - To make climate education for women more accessible and allocate grants for women and girls to conduct impact studies of ozone layer depletion on the quality of life for women and girls in urban and rural areas; creation of documentaries on the role of women in the environmental protection; development of IT-products to address climate change issues. For this purpose, to enhance partnership with international institutions;
 - To introduce and provide long-term loans for women to develop their income-generating activities, considering all factors and risks of climate change and its impact on their resilience. In particular, to introduce green credit lines for women entrepreneurs as well as to provide concessional public finance for the most vulnerable groups;
 - To launch online educational courses with the participation of the world's top experts on the success stories of promotion of gender equality, and on the sensitive issues in the process of the green transition.

Measures to be taken for the implementation of the required changes:

- It is important to assess new risks and challenges and focus on problems in the countries' national policy, which were identified through detailed gender analysis of the situation and to conduct gender analysis to ensure the informed process of national adaptation plans;
 - All systems and mechanisms of early warning and prevention, as well as disaster risk reduction must be fully gender mainstreamed;
 - It is advised not to focus only on the national level but to pay special attention to identifying and tackling problems on the local level, to fully tap the potential of community-based organizations and institutions at the grassroots level;
 - To facilitate the elaboration of joint research, including research expeditions aimed at analyzing the state of Central Asian glaciers;
 - To conduct an in-depth analysis of women's engagement in the rescue entities (related to emergencies) to enhance their participation, as well as to address the issue of building the capacity of the gender-sensitive emergency prevention and response measures;
 - To increase access to education and equal access for women and girls, to foster the development of their professional skills;
 - The problems of women in agriculture remain a high priority for action. To solve these problems, it is important to ensure effective inter-agency cooperation;
 - The issue of environmental conditions must be included in the specific assistance to the agriculture sector to encourage a shift of firms to cleaner technologies;
 - The lack of gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data prevent an objective assessment of the current situation of climate change adaptation and risk reduction. Bold steps and measures are needed to improve the collection and use of gender data for the decision-making, design, and evaluation of policies and programs;
 - It is important to raise general public awareness – a lack of understanding hinders the ability to address problems at the local level;
 - To ensure the participation of representatives of local authorities and activists in the discussions to address the issues of climate change adaptation and environmental and disaster risk reduction;
 - To promote greater use of joint educational training involving government structures, public organizations, and local authorities.



Measures concerning financing:

- Funding might be increased through consolidation of financial and human resources of all partners, which will allow for significant progress;
- Commitments to finance “green” measures need to be strengthened, especially for the cleaner technology introduction schemes, which can bring social benefits in the medium-to-long term;
- To ensure the close link between the provision of financial support, including that from the development partners, aimed at strengthening the economic recovery measures, and the inclusion of environmental actions in recipients’ activities;
- To promote funding of the UN entities in the framework of regional projects to study and address the climate change-related issues.

Further dissemination of best practices of climate change mitigation and adaptation, demonstrating the unique contribution of women in Central Asia:

- It is necessary to share experience and knowledge while addressing transboundary water resources management issues. River basins which are the environmental disaster areas (the Ural River in the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation) can serve as an example. The Republic of Kazakhstan is ready to share its solutions and experience.
- Women work for the emergency response and mitigation bodies, many of them being military personnel. A work-life balance and shared care work are very important pre-requisite for their career development.
- For partners in the Central Asian region, it is advised to consider the possibility of joining [the Generation Equality Action Coalition on climate justice](#) aimed at ensuring the transition towards an inclusive and regenerative green economy, recognizing the linkage between climate change and gender justice, and protection and amplification of voices of grassroots initiatives and communities, including defenders at the frontline of environmental activism.
- The UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia should compile best practices and develop a joint database of climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction cases. Hence, all countries will be able to access this database.

