

The background of the cover is a large, circular, ornate Islamic geometric pattern. It features intricate star and polygonal designs in shades of blue, gold, and brown, with a central medallion. The pattern is set against a dark red background.

**THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
IN CENTRAL ASIA**

CENTRAL ASIA AT A GLANCE

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 produced five new countries in Central Asia – Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – with a total population of 57 million people. New borders carved up the region like a jigsaw puzzle. They interrupted trade and other human links, and weakened critical but vulnerable region-wide water and energy systems.

Dramatic economic collapse brought about a significant increase in poverty, severely weakening the region's human development and human security. At the same time, the break-up of the Soviet Union also created new opportunities for establishing dynamic trade and communication links between the region and the rest of the world, and for sending the region's rich energy resources to world markets. Capturing these possibilities to their fullest extent will require countries to work together cooperatively towards a common future.

Today, the Central Asian republics vary widely in terms of their geography and population size, natural resource endowments, human development, political orientation and readiness to cooperate and integrate with each other and with the rest of the world. Nonetheless, they share many challenges and opportunities, in part because of their common history and their important cross-border trade, water, energy and environmental links as well as their shared perceptions and realities of internal and external threats to human and national security. The region is particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters.

Since the late 1990s, the region has seen sharp economic growth, although there are wide disparities in economic strength between the countries. The growth is fuelled in part by increased oil and gas exports along with an expansion of oil-related foreign investments. However, living standards have not always seen proportionate improvements, contributing to increased economic disparities. The energy-intensive nature of much economic activity also has environmental implications.

While there was reason for deep concern about the long-term future of the region in the late 1990s, there is justified hope today that Central Asian countries can thrive and achieve rapid advances in human development and human security for their people. UNDP is working with the five countries both at the national and regional levels to build national capacities to advance human development and achieve the globally agreed anti-poverty targets known as the Millennium Development Goals.

THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME IN CENTRAL ASIA

FIVE COUNTRY OFFICES

Country Offices work with governments, the private sector, civil society and other partners to enhance national development efforts and engage in regional initiatives.

CENTRAL ASIA TEAM IN THE REGIONAL BUREAU FOR EUROPE AND THE CIS (RBEC)

The Central Asia team in New York is responsible for support to Country Offices, oversight, partnership-building and identification of regional trends.

BRATISLAVA REGIONAL CENTRE/RBEC

The Centre is responsible for developing and launching regional and sub-regional initiatives and programmes.

THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

UNDP is the United Nations' global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. UNDP is on the ground in 166 countries, working with them on their own solutions to global and national development challenges.

A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Weak regional cooperation continues to be a major obstacle preventing countries from developing unified strategies for promoting trade, protecting the environment and ensuring the continued flow of water and energy. UNDP views increased cooperation as a driver of improved human development, greater equity and enhanced security. Consequently, UNDP is engaged in the following areas:

MANAGING BORDERS, FOSTERING TRADE

Borders should facilitate the movement of people and goods. UNDP in Central Asia has focused on improving border management as a way to unlock the flow of trade while ensuring security between countries. It is implementing the European Commission-funded Border Management in Central Asia programme (BOMCA), which works to enhance border security and facilitate legal trade and transit. The primary beneficiaries of this programme have been the shuttle traders and border communities whose livelihoods depend on the free flow of trade and people. UNDP is also implementing the European Commission-funded Central Asian Drug Action Programme, which helps create drug control strategies that ensure a sustained reduction of drug consumption and trafficking.

IMPROVING WATER MANAGEMENT

Central Asia's water resources are of critical importance to the region's economy, people and environment. Due to the arid climate, irrigation water is an indispensable input for agricultural production. Agricultural output supported by irrigation accounts for one fourth of GDP in Turkmenistan and more than one third of GDP in Uzbekistan. An estimated 22 million people depend directly or indirectly on irrigated agriculture in these countries. Water is also important for energy production, contributing more than 90 percent of total domestic energy generation in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

UNDP is currently working to improve water resources management at the local level. This ground-up approach will improve agricultural yields and water availability for all, and should also create new opportunities for regional cooperation and dialogue on water management. At the local level, UNDP supports community-based solutions to improving water supply and quality.

UNDP is also promoting National Integrated Water Resources Management Plans (IWRM). Several proposals are now under development for improved land and water resource management in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as in the upper Syr Darya (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) and the Amu Darya (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan) river basins. The projects would aim to achieve sustainable water and land management as a part of these countries' adaptation to climate change.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND MITIGATING RISKS

UNDP is actively involved in strengthening governmental capacity to effectively address the challenges and mitigate the risks of natural and man-made disasters, through disaster preparedness and management programmes. UNDP is committed to work with the international community to gain a common understanding of the threats facing the region and provide effective and coordinated answers in support of the governments' efforts.

With funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP is implementing programmes that address climate change. In particular, UNDP has focused on carbon finance. Its MDG Carbon Facility is a pioneering initiative in market-based environmental finance, encouraging investment to support cuts in carbon emissions. UNDP will provide a one-stop service focusing on assisting greenhouse gas reduction projects aimed at broader sustainable development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It also supports projects that can attract additional financing through the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism.

The five Central Asian countries and the international donor community have been working together to reverse land degradation within the framework of the Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM). CACILM's goal is to restore, maintain, and enhance the productive functions of land in Central Asia, leading to improved economic and social well-being of those who depend on these resources while preserving the ecological attributes of the land. UNDP contributes to this partnership by *inter alia* promoting sustainable rangeland and mountain pasture management in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and helping to restore degraded lands in Karakalpakstan and the Kyzylkum desert in Uzbekistan.





PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG RURAL WOMEN

Through a regional project funded by the Asian Development Bank, UNDP is promoting rural women's economic entrepreneurship in the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. The project promotes the incorporation of gender concerns and women's entrepreneurship into the design and implementation of initiatives and policy-making. For example, UNDP is developing a comparative analysis of major challenges and opportunities in the area of rural women's entrepreneurship in agriculture-related activities. Through the project, UNDP also aims to build organizational capacity and strengthen national women's associations such as women's self-help groups, cooperatives and non-governmental organizations.

BOLSTERING SECURITY THROUGH COOPERATION

In the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) initiative, UNDP works with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC). Together they support countries in their efforts to manage environmental risks, including radioactive contamination and hazardous waste disposal. This partnership recognizes that the best way to address environmental and security concerns is through international dialogue and cooperation. It helps governments to develop joint projects for achieving common goals.

FROM ANALYSIS TO ADVOCACY

The Central Asian Gateway Project has built a network to support think-tanks, research and media institutions. It links governmental demand for expertise with knowledge and policy advice. UNDP has also established the Economic Policy Institutes Network (EPIN), which has bolstered the ability of economic policy think-tanks in the region to provide high-quality advice.

UNDP's **Central Asia Human Development Report** *Bringing down barriers: Regional Cooperation for Human Development and Human Security*, produced with assistance from the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, makes recommendations for policy makers and the international community to strengthen regional cooperation in such areas as trade and the efficient use of water and energy resources.



AN EXTENSIVE ON-THE-GROUND PRESENCE

UNDP has an unmatched network of offices in each of the five Central Asian countries. This major presence allows UNDP to work closely with governments, civil society groups and the private sector, tailoring programmes and projects to the needs and aspirations of each country.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.



KAZAKHSTAN

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

UNDP in Kazakhstan supports national efforts to protect globally significant biodiversity and address the threats of global warming and ozone depletion. It promotes the management of wetlands, mountain agro-biodiversity and rangeland ecosystems. It supports improved energy efficiency in heat and water supply systems, and increased use of renewable energy sources. Through the Small Grants Programme, which is supported by the Global Environment Facility, it provides funding to civil society for projects to protect the environment. Through outreach efforts, UNDP informs citizens that their social and economic well-being depends on the sound use of environmental resources.

REDUCING INEQUALITY

UNDP helps national partners develop policies aimed at stimulating pro-poor growth. Drawing on its wide international experience, it helps create programmes that benefit women, minorities and rural inhabitants. It supports business incubators, investment initiatives, and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. In selected regions of the country, including the former nuclear site of Semipalatinsk, it works on improving microlending. It provides policy advice on making social policies more cost effective. Advocacy on poverty and civil society contributes to broader and more effective public participation in policy design and implementation. UNDP has effectively engaged private sector actors to join the Global Compact, promoting the concept of corporate social responsibility.

IMPROVING GOVERNANCE

Drawing on the best of global practice, UNDP provides support to parliament and other branches of government. It increases the effectiveness of state administration by helping the government boost accountability, strengthen human resource management and improve the delivery of public services. It builds the capacity of the Ombudsman office and the Human Rights Commission to ensure they adequately protect human rights. In the process, it builds partnerships with non-governmental organizations to facilitate cooperation among civil society, government and the private sector.

For more information, please visit www.undp.kz

UP CLOSE: INCREASING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

In an already energy-intensive economy, heat and hot water account for around one third of Kazakhstan's energy use. The expected rise in consumption in coming years implies an ever greater need for energy efficiency. Through its project **Removing Barriers to Energy Efficiency in Municipal Heat and Hot Water Supply**, UNDP is making progress on several fronts. Communications activities have informed individuals of their role in conservation efforts, and a Law on Energy Saving has been drafted. Associations of property owners, heating companies and municipal governments in Almaty and Astana are learning how to save energy. Their level of cooperation will have a real impact on greenhouse gas emissions. This project will help to cut energy losses in Kazakhstan's two largest cities by more than 50 percent by 2011.



KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

REDUCING POVERTY

UNDP in the Kyrgyz Republic helps to create opportunities for rural inhabitants, women and other vulnerable groups to work their way out of poverty. It develops people's knowledge of how to run competitive and sustainable businesses, and assist with access to micro credits. It provides support to agricultural development in the poorest regions. It supports the government in creating local development plans that advance progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and ground-breaking socio-economic analyses, such as of the shadow economy. It also works with the media, religious leaders, ministries and civil society organizations to foster leadership at the national and local levels to address HIV/AIDS.

PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

UNDP supports the government in streamlining public administration, empowering women in decision-making, and improving service delivery at the local level. It helps the parliament strengthen its ability to make laws, exert oversight over other branches of government, and represent the interests of the electorate. It assists the government in protecting human rights, making better use of information and communication technologies, and ensuring that programmes equally benefit men and women.

PREVENTING CRISES

UNDP works with local governments and communities to reduce the risk of disasters, particularly in the south of the country, where floods, landslides, earthquakes and avalanches present a hazard to people. It also supports efforts to identify, understand and address the root causes of conflicts.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

UNDP works with the government and local communities to introduce new energy-efficient technologies, promote sustainable land management, develop local biodiversity management plans, introduce ozone-friendly technologies, eliminate persistent organic pollutants, and codify proper waste management practices. UNDP also helps the government access external financing through the Debt for Sustainable Development Swap mechanism. UNDP also engineers carbon finance schemes under the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

For more information, please visit www.undp.kg

UP CLOSE: MANAGING DISASTERS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL

When disasters hit remote areas, a centralized response system can take time to deliver targeted assistance. Through its **Disaster Risk Management Programme**, UNDP and the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic have helped 36 local self-governments – *ail okmotu* – to develop ‘preparedness and response plans’ that are tailored to the conditions and risk profile of the local area. Increased local responsibility and resources mean less reliance on assistance from far away and less vulnerability. Other *ail okmotu* are expected to develop their own plans. UNDP also supports the government in mainstreaming risk management into budgetary processes and strategic development plans.



TAJIKISTAN

TRANSFORMING LIVELIHOODS

UNDP in Tajikistan helps the government foster entrepreneurship by providing business advisory services and offering vulnerable groups the skills needed to find jobs and boost incomes. It promotes investment by developing local financial institutions. It improves access to drinking water, monitors water quality, and ensures that natural disasters do not diminish people's access to this vital resource.

REDISTRIBUTING RESPONSIBILITIES

UNDP improves government services by fostering dialogue and accountability to citizens. It charts the country's progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, works to incorporate them into national development strategies, and campaigns to ensure that they remain at the centre of the agenda. It works to bolster security along the border with Afghanistan to combat drug trafficking.

FIGHTING DISEASE AND LAND MINES

UNDP reduces the vulnerability of labour migrants, street children, and prisoners to HIV/AIDS by providing access to education and prevention programmes. For people living with HIV/AIDS, it ensures that they receive effective treatment, care and support. Against malaria, it works to reduce the threat of the disease in rural communities by bolstering the capacity of health agencies through training and the provision of equipment. To fight tuberculosis, it supports the capacities of the Ministry of Health to prevent, detect, and treat the disease. UNDP also helps national authorities to clear the country of mines, provides support to educate rural communities about mine risks, and assists victims so they can lead productive lives with dignity.

OVERCOMING ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS

UNDP works to ensure environmental sustainability, improve disaster preparedness, and address the consequences of environmental damage. Together with other UN agencies, it helps communities reduce their exposure to environmental risks. UNDP encourages the sustainable use of natural resources and assists the country in meeting its international obligations.

For more information, please visit www.undp.tj

UP CLOSE: HARNESSING REMITTANCE INCOME

Remittances from Tajik seasonal workers abroad make up 20 percent of Tajikistan's GDP, which is a great potential source of investment for communities. In partnership with JRCs – community-based government organizations – UNDP launched the project, **Enhancing the Development Impact of Migrant Remittances and Assistance to the Reintegration of Labour Migrants Through Microfinance Initiatives in Rural Areas**. This encourages local people to invest remittances in projects that benefit the local community: infrastructure such as schools, bridges and health centres, and economic development including agriculture and livestock breeding. Co-financing by JRCs and local people means strong buy-in and sustainability.

More than US\$ 50,000 in remittances was used in this way in 2007, by 15 communities. The practices have proven very successful and are being expanded among the 90 JRCs nationwide.



TURKMENISTAN

DEVELOPING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICIES

UNDP in Turkmenistan assists the government in implementing a reform agenda started in 2007 in the area of market reforms, private sector development, public administration, electoral systems and local governance. It creates opportunities for impoverished rural women to generate income. It is working to help modernize the accounting and audit systems of the Central Bank. It bolsters the capacity of the government to manage pensions and other social protection schemes for vulnerable groups. Through media campaigns, it enhances awareness of the dangers of drug abuse. It works to integrate the visually and hearing impaired into the workforce through job creation programmes. It partners with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that international obligations are being fulfilled.

FOSTERING BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES

UNDP provides access to computers, the internet, and training – boosting the opportunities for children to learn about science and technology. It offers peer-to-peer initiatives to vulnerable groups such as sex workers, prisoners and intravenous drug users, so they can better protect themselves against HIV/AIDS. In cooperation with the State Statistics Committee, UNDP produced a national survey on social and living standards, aiming at a better understanding of the depth of poverty in the country.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

UNDP is developing the country's ability to monitor and report on environmental threats. It helps to promote the revival of degraded land through better land-use techniques. It promotes the protection of nature reserves and addresses climate change by supporting energy efficiency initiatives and carbon markets. It also supports integrated water resource management, in part by improving water quality. Together with the United Nations Environment Programme, it supports regional initiatives such as the Caspian Environment Programme, addressing environmental problems that threaten more than one country.

For more information, please visit www.undptkm.org

UP CLOSE: DEVELOPING THE SKILLS OF THE DEAF AND BLIND

In partnership with the Deaf and Blind Society (DBS), UNDP runs the project, **Social and Economic Integration of Visually and Hearing-Impaired People**. Having had difficulty living independently in the past, hundreds of deaf and blind people have received vocational and skills training through this project, allowing them to work in various fields from carpentry to sewing. Moreover, the DBS has been given wide-ranging support, including management training, sign language training and the provision of transport and classroom facilities. This will allow DBS to continue and develop its work as the leading group advocating for and providing opportunities to disabled people, beyond the life of the project.





UZBEKISTAN

REDUCING POVERTY

UNDP in Uzbekistan supports the government in undertaking financial, tax, and customs reforms. It also gives high-level policy advice on how to liberalize trade, promote exports and attract foreign investment. It supports the government in areas such as agricultural reform, rural development, trade and private sector development. Together with the European Commission, it is helping to ensure access to such basic necessities as clean piped water, gas, healthcare and sanitation facilities. It also helps vulnerable groups generate income through micro-credit and rural enterprise schemes.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

UNDP supports the government in ensuring that international commitments are reflected in national policies. In cooperation with the Global Environment Facility, it is extending small grants to help preserve biodiversity, promote sustainable land management, and introduce environmentally friendly technologies. It is assisting the country in meeting its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol, and helping it to combat global greenhouse gases by fostering a carbon finance market. It is supporting the development of a national strategy for solar power, and it is contributing global expertise to sustainably develop the country's livestock sector – a key to the country's economic growth.

IMPROVING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

UNDP helps to promote accountability, transparency and access to public services. It works with civil servants to enhance their skills and provide the best examples of global practice. It connects citizens, particularly vulnerable groups, to their local authorities through the internet. It also undertakes training of legal professionals to ensure that affordable legal services are available to those who need them most. It supports the government and civil society in raising awareness about labour migration and human trafficking, and it provides employment alternatives for women living in rural areas. Together with the Border Management Programme for Central Asia, it provides critical advice on how to enhance border security and implement a sustainable drug control strategy.

For more information, please visit www.undp.uz

UP CLOSE: IDENTIFYING LOCAL PRIORITIES

Rural communities share a number of transition challenges, including under employment and low agricultural productivity. Through the European Commission funded **Enhancement of Living Standards** project, UNDP empowers local communities to play an active role in shaping their future. Through regional and local development strategies, local people identify priorities for infrastructure, healthcare and micro-credit projects. To date over 75,000 people have benefitted from closer access to health facilities, and 50,000 to gas supply. Over 200,000 now use clean piped water and over 1,000 families have had their lives improved by access to microfinance.



OUR MAIN PARTNERS

UNDP is implementing two large European Commission-financed regional programmes: Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) and Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP). UNDP and the European Commission are also partnering on several national poverty alleviation projects.

Other partners include the UN development agencies, the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the Asia Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Eurasian Economic Community (EURASEC) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), as well as many others.

OUR MEMBERSHIP

UNDP is a member of the *Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation Programme*. CAREC is a partnership of eight countries (including four Central Asia countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). It also includes six institutions – the Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the WorldBank (WB).





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