

MINUTES

of the 7th - final Programme Board meeting of the UN Joint Programme "Building the resilience of communities affected by the Aral Sea disaster through the Multi-partner human security Fund for the Aral Sea region"

Date: 29th November, 2019

Venue: Conference room of UNDP Country office

List of participants:

National partners:

1. Ms. Yulduz Abduganieva, Deputy head of the Department of demography, employment and living standards of, Ministry of Economy and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan
2. Mr. Jusipbek Kazbekov, first Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan
3. Mr. Daniyar Khodjiev, Minister of Health of the Republic of Karakalpakstan
4. Mr. Tulegen Abdulganiev, Head of environmental monitoring, State Committee on ecology and environmental protection
5. Mr. Jahangir Tolipov, Chief specialist of the international department, State Committee for ecology and environmental protection
6. Ms. Olga Mirshina, Specialist of the Agency of sanitary and epidemiological welfare, Ministry of Health
7. Mr. Muhammad Umarov, Deputy head of water use and meteorology Department, Ministry of agriculture
8. Mr. Mukhtaram Burieva, Chief specialist, the women's Committee of Uzbekistan

UN agencies in Uzbekistan

9. Ms. Doina Munteanu, Deputy Resident Representative of UNDP
10. Mr. Zarif Zhumayev, Economist, UN Coordinator office
11. Mr. Behruz Yusupov, National programme specialist, UNFPA
12. Mr. Azizbek Aminjonov, UNICEF
13. Mr. Jan Hladik, UNESCO Representative in Uzbekistan
14. Mr. Abdugani Bazarov, Specialist, UNESCO
15. Representative of WHO
16. Mr. Hurshid Rustamov, Head of the Sustainable Development Cluster, UNDP
17. Ms. Elvira Izamova, Program Specialist, UNDP
18. Ms. Kamila Alimdjanova, Resource Management Associate
19. Mr. Bakhadur Paluaniyazov, UN Joint Programme Manager
20. Mr. Uktam Abdurakhmanov, Head of the Tashkent office of the UN Joint Programme
21. Mr. Shukhrat Umarkhodjaev, M&E Specialist, UN Joint Programme
22. Mr. Tulkun Karimov, Fund Establishment and Coordination Specialist, UN Joint programme
23. Mr. Kamal Hamidov, Team Leader UN Joint programme
24. Mr. Sherzod Shukurov, Procurement Assistant, UN Joint programme
25. Ms. Malika Musayeva, Public Relations Specialist, UN Joint programme

Agenda:

- Inform the Programme Board members about the results of the Programme from 2016 to 2019;
- Discuss further plans on support to the Aral Sea region in mitigating the consequences of the environmental disaster;
- Discuss the exit strategy of the UN Joint Programme for the Aral Sea Region;
- Discuss and agree on the operational aspects of the UN Joint Programme closure including the issues related to unspent funds and the decision on further use of the UN JP office space, office equipment and property of the UN Joint Programme;
- Discuss the possibility of maintaining the platform and personnel of the UN Joint Programme as the basis for the implementation of new projects in order to facilitate smooth and quick start of new projects and ensure the effectiveness of projects implementation.

Ms. Doina Munteanu, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative opened the meeting with welcome remarks and greeted the government partners and representatives of the UN Agencies, and thanked for the fruitful cooperation and assistance in the implementation of the Joint Programme. Ms. Munteanu, stated that the UN Joint Programme has become a platform for highlighting the importance of a comprehensive approach to solving interrelated problems and increasing the resilience of communities in the region. Moreover, the Program demonstrated the great value and experience of the UN in uniting the efforts of its agencies for development, which led to the strengthening of partnerships within the framework of a common vision and goals for coordinated planning, implementation and monitoring. Ms. Munteanu introduced the participants with the Agenda of the meeting (as indicate above). It was noted that the programme staff would make a presentation on the Programme achievements over the period of its implementation and bring up to the attention of the Board members the issues to be discussed for consideration. Ms. Munteanu also noted that the UNDP in Uzbekistan remains committed to assisting the Aral Sea region in transforming the region from an environmental disaster zone to an innovation and technology region. It was noted that UNDP will continue to promote new approaches for the development of the region. Further, Ms. Munteanu gave the floor to Ms. Abduganieva.

Ms. Abdiganieva, Deputy head of the Department of the Ministry of Economy and Industry, noted that the Government has worked on the development of the Terms of Reference of the UN Multi-partner Human Security Trust Fund (MPHSTF) for the Aral Sea region, which was approved by the government of Uzbekistan. It was noted that on the sides of the 73rd UN General Assembly in New-York in November 2018, a high-level event was organized to launch the MPHSTF for the Aral Sea region. It was noted that the Presidential decree on the support of the MPHSTF under the auspices of the UN was adopted on 8 January 2019. It has been indicated that bilateral and multilateral negotiations have been held with a number of donor organizations to attract financial resources for the MPHSTF. It was noted that the government of Uzbekistan has allocated 6.5 million USD to support the activities of the MPHSTF, 2 million of which have already been received and 1.5 million will be received next year. The Steering Committee of the MPHSTF approved the financing of 2 projects for implementation in Karakalpakstan. Ms. Abdiganieva highlighted that an agreement has been reached also with the European Union on the allocation of 5.2 million euros to the MPHSTF.

Next, **Mr. Jusipbek Kazbekov, 1st Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Karakalpakstan**, thanked UNDP and the representatives of other UN agencies and noted that within the framework of the UN Joint Programme, in partnership with the regional government, significant results accomplished in improving the social and economic livelihoods of local population and the restoration of the environment. Mr. Kazbekov noted that one of the biggest achievements of the UN Joint Programme and the government was the establishment of the MPHSTF. It was noted, to date, the resources of the Government of Uzbekistan, Norway, Japan, the EU, the UAE have already been mobilized, and negotiations are being held with the EIB, Germany, Korea and Finland in accordance with the Fund's Strategy to support the Aral Sea region. Mr. Kazbekov noted that the UN Joint Programme has exceeded its objectives and did much more than it was expected in line with the project document, however, it is necessary to continue to provide assistance to the Aral Sea region using the experience of the UN Joint Programme. On this, it has been noted that project proposals approved by the Steering Committee of the MPHSTF for the Aral Sea region and the upcoming project funded by the Japanese government (the launch ceremony of which is scheduled for December 2, 2019) are based on the experience of the Joint Programme and will contribute to improve the living conditions of the communities most affected by the negative impact Aral ecological disaster. In conclusion, Mr. Kazbekov, note that, the High-Level International Conference "Aral Sea region - Zone of Environmental Innovations and Technologies" was held in Nukus on October 24–25, 2019. UNDP rendered great assistance in attracting resources and international technical specialists to revise the draft Concept to reflect innovative approaches. In this regard, thanked and welcomed the UNDP initiative to integrate the SDGs in the Aral Sea region and the importance of introducing a systemic approach to solving complex problems in the Aral Sea region.

Mr. Daniyar Khodjayev, Minister of Health of Karakalpakstan noted that the Ministry of Health of Karakalpakstan has been closely cooperating with the UN Joint Programme since 2012. The Minister indicated the uniqueness of the Joint Programme lies in the fact that the joint efforts of UN Agencies in the Aral Sea region are combined. With the support of UN Agencies (UNDP, UNFPA, UNV, WHO and UNICEF), the construction of a refrigerator for the State Epidemiological Surveillance in Nukus and Urgench has been completed, a vaccine information system has been introduced, rural medical centers in Muynak region were provided with solar panels, and a PAL strategy has been introduced to provide the standardization, integration and coordination of efforts at primary health-care facilities. As a result of volunteer activities, the level of awareness of the population about various diseases increased considerably. Besides, district health facilities are increasingly being approached by population, which helps detect diseases at early stages. Mr. Khodjayev expressed hope for further cooperation in the framework of new initiatives in the Aral Sea region.

Mr. B. Paluaniyazov, UN Joint Programme Manager, made a presentation on the activities and achievements of the Programme for the entire period of its implementation (presentation attached).

- ❑ [33] infrastructure projects implemented benefiting **21,191 people (51.3% women)** in 33 communities (access to drinking water, electricity, improved health and education facilities).
- ❑ [27] inclusive business projects launched, creating **[123]** new jobs (48% women) in such areas as bee farming, sewing and crafts development, food and milk processing, bakery, etc. Projects covered over 30,000 (40% women) direct and indirect beneficiaries.

- ❑ [131] health care specialists from 10 districts trained on supportive supervision system for primary healthcare on managing mother and child health services;
- ❑ [400] makhalla specialists from 14 districts and Nukus city had tailor-made training on gender mainstreaming, covering the aspects of reproductive health and rights, gender issues to uphold their social and economic status and refine gender relations in families and communities.
- ❑ International Conferences held **to promote sustainable tourism** development, a tourist web-site about Karakalpakstan launched;
- ❑ [300] women and youth (local ethno-fashion designers and crafts people) enhanced their capacity on jewelry making, traditional textile, design and felt-weaving;
- ❑ [2081] **community volunteers** trained (94.4% women) to conduct campaigns on 4 interventions: *respiratory, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal diseases and promoting mother and child health*. Over [386 906] rural population (49% women) covered with awareness raising activities by community volunteers;
- ❑ Construction of **cold chain warehouse of State Epidemiology Surveillance** in Nukus and Urgench finalized and transferred to the respective departments of the Ministry of Health;
- ❑ The new facility's storage capacity is **around 21,000 liters of vaccines for vaccination of almost 40,000 children under 1-year age**. Cold rooms are equipped to ensure the safety of vaccines at 2-8°C temperature.

Mr. B. Paluaniyazov presented the following Programme Exit Strategy/Sustainability Plan:

- ❑ **Operationalization of the MPHSTF**, issuance of the **Presidential Resolution**. The Fund's Strategy is based on the HS concept, aims at addressing the Aral Sea crisis (**institutional sustainability**);
- ❑ **Launch of 3 joint projects with over 6 million USD with participation of** (UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO) to address the environmental, social, economic and health insecurities in the Aral Sea region, that replicates and upscales the JP best-practices;
- ❑ On-going UNDP support for **SDG Integration in the Aral Sea Region** and the importance of implementing a Systemic Approach to Addressing Complex Problems in the Aral Sea Region;
- ❑ **Knowledge sharing and support** to the **Innovation Centre** for the Aral Sea region and UNDP **Acceleration Lab** to promote and advocate for evidence-based new innovative approaches for development;
- ❑ **Institutionalization** of community health volunteering through the **Nurses Association at the Ministry of Health** of Karakalpakstan.

Then, **Mr. U. Abdurakhmanov, UN Joint Programme Technical Coordinator** informed the board members about the activities and results of the Government and the Joint Programme on the establishment of the MPHSTF for the Aral Sea region (presentation attached).

- **Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan** No. PP-4099 "On measures to support the activity of the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan";
- **A governmental Inter-Agency Working Group (IWG) was established** to assist PUNOs with the development of the project proposals for potential implementation under the Trust Fund;

- 1st contribution by the Government of Uzbekistan to the Trust Fund in the amount of \$ 2 million; and contribution by the Government of Norway to the Trust Fund in the amount of \$ 1.1 million processed;
- **Two projects** (UNDP/UNESCO and UNICEF/UNFPA joint proposals) with the total budget of \$3.1 mln. were approved by the Steering Committee;
- Ongoing resource mobilization: **UAE** (\$ 7 mln. Grant); **European Union** (€ 5,2 mln. grant); **European Investment Bank** (€ 100 mln. loan + € 25 mln. grant) and **Japan** (\$ **3.2 mln. grant**).

Next, **Ms. Elvira Izamova, UNDP SDC Programme Associate**, made a presentation on the Programme quality assurance (closure stage) of the Joint Programme and on the operational issues related to the closure of the UN Joint Programme (presentation attached). It was noted that Programme quality assurance procedures are carried out for all projects at the opening, implementation and closing stages, and in connection with the closure of the UN Joint Programme, a final quality assurance was carried out. According to the results of the online quality assurance assessment against 7 criteria, its results were found as Exemplary.

Ms. Izamova also proposed the cancellation of the initially planned Programme Final Evaluation because of the following reasons:

- UN Joint Programme was in the list of selected projects for Independent Country Programme Evaluation in 2019;
- Mid-Term Evaluation was held in Sep 2018 (14 months ago), Programme performance rated as Satisfactory; Management response developed and all recommendations were fulfilled.
- Reference was also made to updated UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, which states that projects with a budget between \$3 to \$5 million can conduct one evaluation, either **Midterm or Final Evaluation**.

Based on the above, as per earlier discussions, it was proposed to the Programme Board to cancel the final evaluation of the Joint Programme.

In addition, with reference to the impact assessment of income generation projects and signed MoUs, it was proposed to transfer equipment/machineries on temporary use under the income generation component to the beneficiaries (list is enclosed):

1. Small Enterprise "Muynak Kompyuter Servis" (large format plotter)- USD 9,499;
2. Family Enterprise "Borshi"-Snack production facility (roasted sunflower)- USD 16,300;
3. "Tkachixa Taxta" LLC (set of sewing machines)- USD 22,450;
4. Elion Sharap, PE (wood slicing equipment)- USD 5,499
5. Malika Sofia, LLC (set of beauty salon equipment)- USD 8,900;
6. "Sarsenova Zamira" PE (kneading machine)- USD 2,450;
7. Rano Sheber, PE (quilting equipment)- USD 16,697;
8. Fatima Karamatdinova, LLC (cold room and packing equipment)- USD 22,421;
9. Shumanay Charm, PE (shoe manufacturing equipment)- USD 18,110
10. Shumanay Invest Plyus, LLC (cold room)- USD 36,750.

For the following income generation projects, due to recent delivery of equipment, midway to achieve agreed indicators, it was proposed to further monitor them under new UNDP projects through extending MOU/signing:

1. Nazarkhan Broiler, LLC (packing equipment)- USD 11,768;
2. Takhtakupir Agrolmpeks (cold room)- USD 47,210;
3. Saipova Ulzada Kenesbaevna" PE (halva producing equipment)-USD 12,760.
4. Nukus Agro Fish, LLC (fish sorting equipment)- USD 36,850.

Also on Operational Closure of the Programme the following was proposed:

- With reference to the Programme's Exit Strategy & Sustainability Plan, for the cost-efficiency purposes it was suggested to sustain the JP Human Resources to implement new projects funded by the MPHSTF and the Government of Japan in the Aral Sea region;
- Considering the Programme closure and noting the Programme Tashkent office's function as the Technical Secretariat of the MPHSTF, it is proposed to establish a separate platform for effective functioning of the Technical Secretariat;
- For the cost-efficiency purposes, it was proposed to allow the use of the Programme office premises located in Nukus, and transfer of the equipment and furniture to the new UNDP projects in the Aral Sea region, while the equipment based in the Tashkent office to be transferred to the balance of the Technical Secretariat of the MPHSTF.

On use of unspent funds, Board members were informed that according to the Cost-sharing agreement signed between UNDP and the Aral Gene Pool Charity Fund in 2016, the Government (AGPF) transferred to UNDP the funds in the amount of \$ 500 thousand USD. Specifically, the funds were used to establish the MPHSTF and to improve social infrastructure and establish income generation sources for rural population. The Board Members were informed that while all the set targets are accomplished, the funds for the approximate amount of \$ 43,000 USD were saved. Ms. Izamova proposed to the Programme Board meeting to transfer the unspent funds for the operations of the Technical Secretariat of the MPHSTF in 2020.

Discussions part:

Mr. Jan Hladik, UNESCO Representative in Uzbekistan thanked for the invitation to the Programme Board meeting and the opportunity to speak and said that he was starting his work in Uzbekistan and that he had learned a lot about the activities of the UN Joint Programme and received a lot of information about it.

Mr. Kazbekov drew the attention of the participants of the meeting to the activity of the Innovation center, to which a land area of 25 hectares in Nukus and 25 hectares in Muynak districts were provided by the Government for scientific research and scaling up of new plant species in the Aral Sea region. Mr. Kazbekov proposed to work together with the Innovation center, which could ensure the sustainability of activities.

Ms. Munteanu thanked the representative of the Council of Ministers and noted that this issue is really important and ensuring the sustainability of activities should be considered in advance. She noted that in the framework of today's meeting the Joint Programme closing issues are to

be discussed, and soon there will be an announcement on acceptance of project proposals for the funding from the MPHSTF, which could include projects on innovation jointly with the Innovation Center.

Mr. Merkushkin, project Manager of the UNDP's Adaptation Fund project noted that the project assisted the Innovation center and collaboration will continue. Next year, it is planned to provide a greenhouse for the demonstration plot of the Innovation Center in Muynak district to grow plants that could be used for the afforestation of the dried bottom of the Aral Sea. This work could also contribute to ensure the sustainability of the Innovation center.

On a different note, **Mr. Merkushkin** noted that the synergy between the UNDP AF Project and Joint Programme have produced very good results both in performance and in effective using of financial resources. It was noted that these projects are interlinked where the Joint Programme focused on economic and social issues, and the Adaptation fund project is more focused on issues of climate adaptation. **Mr. Merkushkin** expressed hope that the newly launched projects will continue the joint work.

Mr. Zarif Jumayev, Economist, UN Coordinator office thanked for the presentations and the results achieved in the framework of the UN Joint Programme, specifically the establishment of the MPHSTF for the Aral Sea region. Referring to proposal on the transfer of the unspent funds of the AGPF for the approximate amount of \$ 43,000 for the use by the Technical Secretariat in 2020, he expressed support for the initiative. He noted that according to the decision of the first meeting of the MPHSTF Steering Committee, the Tashkent office of the UN Joint Programme was functioning as a Technical Secretariat, while it's work was overseen by the UN RC office. Given the fact that the Joint Programme is coming to an end, and the fact that the Technical Secretariat must be neutral in its functions from the PUNOs, it had been decided that it would be administered by the Office of the UN Resident Coordinator in Uzbekistan. Therefore, **Mr. Jumayev** stated that the UN RC Office would be ready to accept the un-spent funds (\$42,000) to finance the operations of the Technical Secretariat in 2020.

Mr. Paluaniyazov regarding the proposal of **Mr. Kazbekov**, noted that the Innovation Center is a member of the Project Board of the new project financed by the MPHSTF and during the development of the project document the Center was involved in the work of the project. It was noted that already an expedition to the dried bed of the Aral Sea was carried out and the joint activities will continue.

Mr. Kazbekov was also interested in the issue of cooperation between UN agencies within the framework of launched projects in Karakalpakstan and placement of projects in the office of the UN Joint Programme in Karakalpakstan.

Mr. Rustamov, Head of the UNDP Sustainable Development Cluster clarified that the UN Joint Programme project office has always been managed by UNDP, but all agencies involved in the project activities have been located to fulfill their activities in Karakalpakstan. It was noted that the UNDP is a strong advocate for integrated approach to addressing the Aral Sea crisis, thus the current structure will be continued within the framework of the upcoming projects, if necessary, this issue will be further discussed with UN agencies.

In conclusion, **Ms. Doina Munteanu** thanked all the participants for their active participation and gave the floor to **Ms. Abduganieva** to announce the preliminary decisions of the Programme Board meeting.

Ms. Abduganieva announced the decisions of the final Board Meeting of the UN Joint Programme as follows:


DECISIONS
of the Programme Board meeting of the UN Joint Programme
"Building the resilience of communities affected by the Aral Sea disaster through the
Multi-partner human security Fund for the Aral Sea region"

1. Take note of the results of the UN Joint Programme achieved in 2019.
2. Consider that all the tasks of the UN Joint Programme for the period entire duration (2016-2019) have been successfully completed.
3. Conclude the activities of the Joint UN Programme "Building the resilience of communities affected by the Aral Sea disaster through the Multi-partner human security Fund for the Aral Sea region" and ensure its operational closure as of 31 December 2019.
4. Agree with the cancellation of the final evaluation of the Programme due to the fact that the UN Joint Programme was part of the Country Programme evaluation conducted in 2019, and the mid-term evaluation was held only 14 months ago, whereas all recommendations of which were successfully implemented.
5. In accordance with the findings of the assessment of income generation projects implemented within the framework of the UN Joint Programme, approve the transfer to beneficiaries all equipment temporarily provided for the implementation of income generation activities in the pilot areas in accordance with the established procedures of UNDP, whereas for the 4 business projects extend the MOUs to further monitor their performance (list is enclosed).
6. Approve the submitted report on quality assurance for closure stage of the Programme.
7. Approve the proposal from Government partners on transferring the unspent funds received from the AGPF on the basis of Cost-Sharing agreement signed between UNDP and the AGPF from 6 December 2016, in the amount of \$43,000 USD, to the UN RC office for establishment of a UN RCO coordination project for financing the staff and operations of the Technical Secretariat of the MPHSTF for the Aral Sea region.
8. Agree with the proposal to provide the office space of the UN Joint Programme in Nukus (at 56, Ernazar Alakoz) to UNDP for the use by the new joint programmes of UNDP-UNESCO "Addressing the urgent human insecurities in the Aral Sea region through promoting sustainable rural development " and UNDP-UNFPA "Building the Resilience of Local Communities Against Health, Environmental and Economic Insecurities Caused by Environmental Destruction in the Aral Sea Region", free of charge until 31-December 2021.

9. In view of the completion of the UN Joint Programme, transfer all the office equipment, vehicles, furniture and other assets of the UN Joint Programme according to the list (attached), to the balance of new UNDP projects in Karakalpakstan, and transfer of all equipment and furniture in the Tashkent office of the Programme to the balance of the Technical Secretariat of the MPHSTF for the Aral Sea region.
10. Maintain the structure and staff of the UN Joint Programme to continue the work of the newly launched UNDP-UNESCO project "Addressing the urgent human insecurities in the Aral Sea region through promoting sustainable rural development " and UNDP-UNFPA project "Building the Resilience of Local Communities Against Health, Environmental and Economic Insecurities Caused by Environmental Destruction in the Aral Sea Region".
11. Request the UN Joint Programme to prepare the draft of the Minutes and the approved Decisions of the meeting of the Programme Board meeting by December 10, 2019 and submit to all members of the Programme Board for consideration and approval.
12. Request the members of the Programme Board to send their comments to the draft minutes and the approved Decisions by the Programme Board meeting within 10 days of receiving the draft minutes.

Approved:

Ms. Doina Munteanu
Deputy Resident Representative
UNDP in Uzbekistan

 13.12.19
signature date

Approved:

Ms. Yulduz Abduganieva, Deputy head of
the Department of demography,
employment and living standards of,
Ministry of Economy and Industry of the
Republic of Uzbekistan


signature date


Agreed:

Mr. Hurshid Rustamov
The head of the Sustainable Development
Cluster, UNDP in Uzbekistan


signature date 12.12.2019

Prepared:

Mr. Bakhadur Paluaniyazov
UN Joint Programme Manager


signature date