

UZBEKISTAN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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Annotation: In this article, Uzbekistan is a firm supporter of mutual dialogue, practical cooperation and strengthening of good neighborliness. This article describes the initiatives, experience, achievements of Uzbekistan in the field of environmental protection.

Keywords: UN, Euro, ILO, SCO, OIC, MIX, EU, ecology, convention, investment, nature, earth, planet, climate, memorandum.

Introduction. “The products we consume, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the climate that brings life to our planet – everything is because of nature. Moreover, today nature itself is sending us a sign: to take care of ourselves, we must first take care of nature. Now is the era of Awakening. It is time to notice the problems, to raise our voices... It is time to create a better environment for humanity and Planet Earth. This World Environment Day is the time for nature,” states the agenda of "International Environment Day – 2020".

Materials and methods. According to the UN Environment Programme data, human activity has significantly altered the ecological environment of three-quarters of the Earth's land area and two-thirds of its water bodies. Over the next five years, 32 million hectares of forest area were lost due to human factors. Over the last 150 years, the living coral reef cover in water bodies has shrunk by half due to global warming – they are drying up and bleaching. The salinity level of the world's oceans is increasing. Glaciers are melting at high speed. This increases the rise of ocean waters and the probability of flooding near coastal areas, leading to a disruption in the ratio of heat to moisture. Wildlife is going extinct; over the next 10 years, the biodiversity of wild animals is expected to decrease by a quarter. Excessive pollution of soil, water, and air, climate change, and alarming shifts in flora and fauna are turning environmental problems into one of the serious threats to the security of developing nations. Therefore, all governments pay special attention to ensuring ecological stability within their territories.

Main part. In Uzbekistan, too, environmental problems are causing serious concern. In most regions, soil is eroding, fertile lands are shrinking, and desertification, water scarcity, drought, and providing the population with clean drinking water are becoming serious problems [Sh.M. Mirziyoyev, New Uzbekistan Strategy. – T., “O‘zbekiston” publishing house, 2021. – P. 388]. In recent years, the State Committee for Nature Protection, in accordance with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, participated in preparing analytical materials to justify the position of the Republic of Uzbekistan on this pressing issue during the preparation period for the Copenhagen Accord (COP-15) International Conference and submitted it to the Executive Secretariat of this UN Convention. Analytical materials were presented on the activities carried out within the framework of preparing the Third National Communication of the Republic of Uzbekistan under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The draft Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the accession of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the UNECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters” was prepared and forwarded to the Cabinet of Ministers. Since gaining independence, Uzbekistan has been actively participating in the programs of the United Nations system and cooperating with its agencies. In particular, Uzbekistan is a member of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and has



ratified more than 150 international conventions and protocols to date. The Republic is a member of the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC), the Central Asian Cooperation Organization (CACO), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Main part (Continued). Uzbekistan, being deeply concerned with coordinating water resource management in the region, is a member of major regional frameworks such as the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Program. Uzbekistan actively pursues cooperation within the framework of agreements with the European Union (EU). To organize and further develop cooperation with the EU and its member states, the President of Uzbekistan issued Resolution No. PP-18, "On Developing Cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan, the European Union, and its Member States," on March 1, 2008. The Republic of Uzbekistan is a member of the Global Water Partnership (GWP), reflecting that the utilization and distribution of water resources, along with finding their solutions, remain a top priority for the country.

Uzbekistan participates in nearly all programs of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), including those in hydrology, meteorology, climate, data management, severe hydrometeorological hazards, drought management, and the implementation of the international decade for hydrometeorological safety. It is also a member of UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and the scientific programs of the Interstate Council for Hydrometeorology of the CIS countries. Furthermore, Uzbekistan collaborates closely with several international financial institutions, such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). These organizations provide essential assistance with foreign investments, global expertise, and access to clean technologies.

Simultaneously, Uzbekistan coordinates regional integration efforts through bilateral agreements with individual CIS members (such as the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Georgia) and the Interstate Ecological Council, an auxiliary body of the CIS Executive Committee. The CIS Action Plan for country planning up to 2015 envisions several environmental protection measures, including environmental monitoring, ecological safety, and industrial waste classification and labeling within the system.

Uzbekistan's engagement and initiative are most prominently reflected in its cooperation with Central Asian states. This collaboration continues within the framework of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS), where Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan hold membership. The primary mandate of IFAS is to coordinate expenditures aimed at solving socio-economic development challenges, environmental protection, and ecological improvement to achieve sustainable development in the Central Asian region. Many European countries have also shown strong initiative in saving the Aral Sea. For instance, between 2008 and 2010, under a plan funded by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ/GIZ), a project was implemented to improve the institutional structure and legal framework of IFAS, as well as to develop the Aral Sea Basin Program for socio-economic development and ecological improvement. Notably, the working groups of IFAS member states generated 44 regional projects based on these outcomes.

During the official visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Qatar (November 2010, Doha), a "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection and Rational Use of Natural Resources for Sustainable Development between the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Government of the State of Qatar" was signed. To carry out domestic state procedures for the Memorandum to enter into force, the State Committee for Nature Protection, together with interested ministries and agencies, drafted a Presidential Resolution to approve this Memorandum and submitted it to the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan.



During the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan's visit to the Republic of Korea, a "Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Cooperation between the State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea" was signed. An Action Plan to implement this Memorandum was prepared and submitted to the Government of the Republic of Korea through the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Within the scope of this Memorandum, a capacity-building seminar on environmental impact assessment was conducted in Tashkent (December 2010), co-organized by the State Committee for Nature Protection and the Korea Environment Institute (KEI). Following the visits of South Korean experts to the Republic of Uzbekistan (March 16-19 and July 12-20, 2010), a Memorandum of Agreement to implement a joint project was signed between the Korea Environment Corporation (KECO) and the "SUVGEO" Research Institute under the Uzbek State Committee for Nature Protection. In November 2010, a joint seminar was held featuring experts from the "SUVGEO" Research Institute, KECO, KOICA, and representatives from several South Korean educational institutions.

Cooperation with the British Council is maintained through the "International Climate Change Action" Program, where young specialists from the State Committee for Nature Protection participate actively. The State Committee for Nature Protection has also reached an agreement with the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of Germany to collaborate on environmental protection, specifically focusing on national park development with ecotourism integration, chemical and industrial waste management, and renewable energy resource utilization.

Main part (Continued). In accordance with the assignment of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan and in coordination with the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, a draft "Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Environmental Protection between the State Committee for Nature Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Latvia" was prepared and forwarded to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. During the reporting period, Committee officials organized and participated in the preparations for an international conference in Tashkent titled "*Transboundary Environmental Problems of Central Asia: Application of International Law Mechanisms in Their Resolution.*" Furthermore, joint visits to ecologically vulnerable districts of the Surxondaryo Region were arranged for deputies of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, members of the Ecological Movement, international environmental organizations, and specialists from other ministries and departments to engage in field dialogues.

The State Committee for Nature Protection, acting as the national executing agency, implemented a series of environmental conservation projects funded by international organizations. These include:

Asia was held in the Republic of Uzbekistan. During the session, progress reports from the ICSD and its structural bodies were reviewed. Critical resolutions were adopted regarding the implementation of the Action Plan following the Joint Statement of the Heads of IFAS Founder States (Almaty, 2009), the outcomes of the 6th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development for Asia and the Pacific (Astana, September 2010), preparations for the Seventh "Environment for Europe" Ministerial Conference (Astana, 2011) and the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the transition of the ICSD chairmanship to the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the core strategic directions of the Commission's activities for 2011–2012. During Uzbekistan's chairmanship of the ICSD in 2009–2010, foundational work was carried out to establish the Central Asian Regional Center for Renewable Energy Sources, headquartered in Tashkent. Uzbekistan actively participated in drafting the Third Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-3). Measures were taken regarding the accession of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the "*Framework Convention on Environmental Protection for Sustainable Development in Central Asia*" and the alignment of the draft "*Subregional Strategy for Sustainable Development*



of Central Asia.” Lastly, the Central Asian Regional Seminar on Environmental Diplomacy for Central Asian countries and regular sessions of the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development were successfully hosted.

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