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**COMMISSION  
ON ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND HEALTH PROTECTION**

**SIXTH MEETING**

**MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES AND LAND**

**REPORT**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. In accordance with the Plan of Activities for 2020 of the Secretariat adopted during the 9<sup>th</sup> TURKPA Plenary Session held in Baku, Azerbaijan, it was decided to take up subject "Management of water resources and land" for the sixth meeting as a main item of agenda.
2. Water resources and land are central to sustainable development, especially in agriculture and rural spheres, and are intrinsically linked to global challenges of food insecurity and poverty, climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as degradation and depletion of natural resources that affect the livelihoods of millions of rural people across the world.
3. TURKPA member countries address water resources and land issues at regional and international levels by taking concerted actions in the context of environmental sustainability reflected in the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and further Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that serve as umbrella tasks for all the countries.
4. On its behalf, since establishment TURKPA Commission on Environment and Natural Resources hold 5 Commission meetings and 3 workshops regarding environmental issues which have important linkages with the protection and management of water resources and land.
5. Recommendation of the Commission meeting on "Combating against desertification in the Turkic speaking countries" adopted on 2 April 2015 in Ankara, proposes to the national parliaments and the governments of the TURKPA member-states to harmonize the environmental legislation with the internationally accepted standards of environment protection, including combating desertification.

6. Recommendation of the Commission meeting on “Global Climate Change: causes and consequences for the TURKPA member countries” adopted on 24 November 2016 in Baku, stresses the importance of regular consultations on issues related to climate change and sustainable development in the context of meetings of the Subsidiary Bodies and Conferences of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
7. Recommendation of the Commission meeting on “Development of alternative energy sources in member countries” adopted on 22 June 2017 in Astana, recommends to improve legal and institutional basis that facilitates development of renewable and alternative energy sources in member countries.
8. Concluding reports of the workshops on Legislation and Implementation on Waste Management and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) adopted on 16-18 April 2018 in Istanbul, recognize that the most important reason for waste collection and management is protection of the environment and the health of the population, and expresses necessity to develop experience sharing programs both on legislation and practices of waste management.
9. Recommendation of the Commission meeting on "Environmentally Consistent Utilization of Natural Resources: Legal Support" adopted on 30 May 2019 in Bishkek, mentions the importance to increase the social activity of the population, to form of a public ecological world outlook and the awareness of responsibility for the preservation of the natural resource potential which are important and strategic objectives for the development of the country.
10. As can be seen from adopted documents, TURKPA member countries are very interested in addressing issues and finding solutions to the problems regarding environmental protection and rational utilization of natural resources such as water and land.
11. The purpose of this report is to work out priorities of regional cooperation on the issue. Report is based on the contributions received from the relevant ministries of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey, as well as data of relevant international institutions.

## **II. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON WATER AND LAND**

12. Concerns about food security, poverty reduction, environmental protection and climate change are increasing day by day. Therefore, international cooperation on sustainable management of water resources and land has become a high priority in many institutions.
13. As it was mentioned above, international cooperation on water and land originated with concerns about food security in the 1940s. Over the past 50 years, humans have changed ecosystems more rapidly and extensively than in any comparable period in human history, largely to meet rapidly growing demands for food and fresh water. And negative environmental impacts from unregulated use of natural resources became increasingly apparent at local, regional and global scales.
14. From the 1980s, the UN emerged as the forum where global values and principles for sustainable development were negotiated. The sustainable use and management of

natural resources have therefore come into focus beginning with the UN summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Such milestone conferences as the Millennium Summit (2000), and the Johannesburg Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), helped shape the global development agenda that was summarized in the 2002 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

15. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) all have important linkages to land and water management.
16. International cooperation has created opportunities for countries to share knowledge and develop principles and approaches that can be applied at regional, national and local levels. But Despite agreement on important component principles, there is no consolidated and agreed set of principles for the joint management of land and water within a sustainable ecosystems context. There is thus no agreed international integrated framework around which major initiatives for sustainable land and water management can be formulated. Advantage should be taken of these aforementioned agreements to work towards an agreed set of principles for the management of land and water resources.

### **III. CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) EFFECTS ON WATER RESOURCES AND LAND**

17. The global COVID-19 pandemic adversely affected all countries of the world. Since the first days of the pandemic TURKPA member countries started to take serious measures to prevent the spread of the disease. Task Forces were set up under various structures of the governments of member countries. Including a series of measures of social distancing, a special quarantine regime, even state of emergency was introduced.
18. During the pandemic, the priority for member countries were the protection of people's health and their social protection. In order to ensure economic stability in member countries, solve the problems associated with employment, ensure macroeconomic and financial stability, a socioeconomic support packages were adopted.
19. Besides the economic and social threads, natural ecosystems and protected species are at risk during the coronavirus crisis. In many countries, environmental protection workers at national parks and land and marine conservation zones are required to stay at home in lockdown, leaving these areas unmonitored. Their absence has resulted in a rise of illegal deforestation, fishing and wildlife hunting.
20. So, COVID-19 has effects on water resources and land management, as well as air. But it should be noted that in addition to the environmental damage of COVID-19, many positive effects have also been reported. While developments have inflicted substantial economic and social shocks as global production, they have also been associated with significant reductions in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
21. As a result, air quality levels in the world's major cities improved dramatically in March, April and May. Air quality improved largely because of a reduction in factory and road traffic emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) and related ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) formation, and particulate matter (PM).
22. Due to the above-mentioned industrial and transportation reasons, water resources and land also positively affected by the limiting factors. Due to the fact that many factories and

plants do not work globally, the amount of harmful waste discharged into water and soil has been significantly reduced. These factors have led to the depletion of water resources and soil for a period of time.

#### **IV. WATER AND LAND MANAGEMENT IN MEMBER COUNTRIES**

##### **Azerbaijan**

23. Azerbaijan possesses rich natural resources and among these resources attaches particular importance to the protection and management of water resources and land.
24. In the Development Concept "Azerbaijan 2020: Future Vision" approved by Presidential Decree No. 800 dated December 29, 2012, in the framework of "Strategic roadmap for national economy and key sectors of economy" and other strategic documents, state programs, national activity plans, action plans, and etc. targets were identified to improve the environmental situation, to protect the environment and the efficient use of natural resources.
25. In addition, a number of laws adopted by the Parliament have created a legal framework for regulating these areas. Legal relations regarding use and protection of water objects in the Republic of Azerbaijan are regulated by the Water Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan adopted in 1997. More than 60 amendments have been made to the Law.
26. The main land management document is the Land Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This law was adopted in 1999 and Parliament has enacted some 40 amendments to the law.
27. In addition to the codes, a number of laws have been adopted in the Republic of Azerbaijan regulating separate areas related to water resources and land management.
28. These are Laws of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the Earth's Ground" (1998), "On water supply and waste water" (1999), "On Municipal Water Management" (2001), "On specially protected natural territories and objects" (2000), "On Environmental Protection" (2001), "On Land Reform" (1996), "On Land Lease" (1998), "On Land Market" (1999), "On Municipal Land Management" (2001), "On Land Acquisition for State Needs" (2010), "On Environmental Impact Assessment" (2018) etc.
29. Efficient use of water, prevention of water loss is always in the focus of Mr. President Ilham Aliyev. According to the Decree signed by President Ilham Aliyev in April this year, the Commission was established to ensure the efficient use of water resources in the country, improve water management and coordinate activities in this area. Thus, the correct assessment of water resources, the definition of project priorities, electronic management of water resources and balance and the establishment of an electronic control system are the most important issues for Azerbaijan in the coming years.
30. On July 23 2020, a video conference on the state of water resources was held under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. The problems in the water industry and the work to be done in the future were discussed at the meeting. Mr. President informed about the infrastructure projects implemented in our country in energy, transport and other fields.

## Kazakhstan

31. Water resources management in the Republic of Kazakhstan is based on the basin principle. In Kazakhstan, there are eight water basins, seven of which are transboundary, and differ by the availability of groundwater and surface water resources in each basin.
32. In accordance with the Water Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Committee on Water Resources of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan (hereinafter - the Committee) is the authorized state body in the field of use and protection of the country's water fund. The Committee is entrusted with the management, regulation of use and protection of the water fund, including renewable water resources. The Committee implements its functions directly or through the Basin Water Management Directorates (STB).
33. In order to improve water management and introduce international experience, the Committee, since June 2004, under the project of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) with the support of the Government of Norway, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), as well as the Global Water Partnership (GWP) carries out the development of the National Plan for Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Conservation.
34. Kazakhstan has ratified more than 20 environmental Conventions, including the Helsinki Convention for the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, as well as the Aarhus Convention for Access to Environmental Information. In addition, according to the program-strategic documents of the Republic, work is underway to harmonize regulatory legal acts with European legislation. On June 30, 2005, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan signed the law on ratification of the Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the republic and the European Union.
35. The country has the necessary legislative framework, such as the Water, Land and Forest Codes (2003), the Law on Sanitary and Epidemiological Well-Being of the Population (2002), and the Law on Rural Consumer Cooperative of Water Users (2003). A new Environmental Code is being developed to replace the current Law on Environmental Protection (1997). It is planned that the new Environmental Code will strengthen the "polluter pays" principle, which will serve to improve the ecological status of water resources.
36. In general, despite the presence of certain shortcomings in the regulatory framework, the existing legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan allows for the necessary organizational changes in the water sector.
37. In addition, Kazakhstan already has a certain advantage for the transition to integrated water resources management, as according to the Water legislation, water bodies are based on the basin principle, which corresponds to the first principle of Integrated Water Resources Management.
38. As of November 1, 2018, according to the balance of land, the total territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan amounted to 272.5 million hectares, of which 9.9 million hectares are used by the Russian Federation at the Baikonur cosmodrome and military ranges. For its part, the Republic of Kazakhstan uses 0.9 thousand hectares of land for the Shymkent

sanatorium on the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan. As a result, the land fund of the Republic of Kazakhstan is 262.5 thousand hectares.

39. Land resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan are divided into 7 categories depending on their purpose: agricultural lands, lands of inhabited localities (cities, towns and rural settlements), lands for the needs of industry, transport, communications, space activities, defence, national security and other non-agricultural lands, lands of especially protected natural territories, lands of health-improving purpose, recreational and historical-cultural appointment, lands of forest fund, lands of water fund and reserve lands.
40. Today, land degradation is a topical issue in land relations. One of the most dangerous types of land degradation is land erosion, which can lead to destruction of soil, humus-accumulation and its fertility. In most cases, erosion processes occur and develop under the influence of human influence.
41. According to the qualitative characteristics of land in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 29.3 million hectares of land were eroded, including 4.9 million hectares washed, 24.2 million hectares' sediment and 201.7 million hectares subjected to water and wind erosion. The most prone to desertification and degradation are pasture lands, which amount to 186.1 million hectares (84.1% of agricultural land), including improved - 5.8 million hectares and irrigated - 106.1 million hectares.
42. In 2017, the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Pastures" was adopted, which regulates social relations related to the effective use of pastures, improving pasture lands and their infrastructure, and preventing pasture degradation. During implementation of this Law the Ministry has developed and approved:
  - rules of rational pasture management;
  - pasture irrigation action plan;
  - methods of combating pasture degradation and desertification, including desertification;
  - the loading norms for the total pasture area have been revised.
43. The Ministry, together with NCO "Government Corporation for Citizens", is conducting soil and geobotanical surveys on agricultural lands on a 66 million hectares intensively used land within the State Program for the Development of Agro-Industrial Complex for 2017-2021.

## **Kyrgyzstan**

44. For the Kyrgyz Republic, water and land resources are the most important sources for the formation of the state budget and its natural, economic and financial resources.
45. The mechanism of land and water resources management in the country, based on the sustainable and careful use of these natural resources, dictates ways and methods to improve the use of land and water resources and will contribute to the growth of both tax and non-tax revenues of the state budget and will further enable the implementation of environmentally significant management steps.
46. For the effective management of water and land resources, the first version of the Land Code of the Kyrgyz Republic was adopted, which was put into effect on June 2, 1999, and

over 20 years more than 47 changes and additions were made to it. This is due to a change in attitude towards the earth. The Code was the first attempt to stretch the inextensible, integral and limited to translate it into the form of goods and create a land market. The concept of water and land resources management of this Code was aimed at creating strong local levels of government by weakening the central government - towards decentralization. The first task was accomplished - the central administration was weakened, that is, the influence of the "owner" on the management of water and land resources was weakened.

47. The current Land Code declares the integrity of water and land resources and types of land ownership. It is aimed at the rational use of water and land resources, its richest bowels, which requires the rational management of land plots, including those occupied by ground and surface waters, as the main element of life, of all living things. 90 percent of the formation of the revenue side of the state budget should be associated with land resources in all their diversity. Defence, medicine, education, social benefits, prosperity and life, culture - all spheres of public life form the dignity of the state as a whole. From this point of view, the Code regulates land relations, the organization of large peasant collective, cooperative farms, the grounds for its occurrence, the procedure for exercising and terminating land rights.
48. Particular attention in management is given to pastures. Pastures are recognized as the basis of the material well-being of rural residents who, according to the ancient tradition, are engaged in horse breeding, sheep breeding and cattle breeding. Pastures are part of the cultural tradition, the spiritual principle, the basis of life. Therefore, the thesis that pastures should be only state in the Kyrgyz Republic is not discussed and it received full approval in the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic and in the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic.
49. Despite the negative and positive practices, the management of water and land resources in the Kyrgyz Republic has steadily taken a course towards the implementation of a "balanced and careful attitude" to water and land. In accordance with international principles, "water" is a commodity, and "land" is not a commodity and should be in state ownership. Therefore, the water and land management policy in the Kyrgyz Republic is determined only by the Kyrgyz Republic.
50. Water resources form the basis in the development of its budget. Water resources should be considered as part of other energy resources extracted from the bowels of the earth in the TURKPA member countries. It is allowed to exchange water for other resources extracted from the lands of neighbouring countries participating in TURKPA. This concept is fair and using this concept as a basis and model Laws of TURKPA will be fair and applicable, acceptable.
51. The objectives of water and land management are:
  - provide access to drinking water for the population of the Kyrgyz Republic;
  - to provide access to irrigation water to all agricultural lands for ensuring food security of the Kyrgyz Republic;
  - land reclamation in order to grow agricultural crops.

## Turkey

52. Turkey's main institutions responsible for water policy is the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the General Directorate of Water Management within it. Wastewater, water resources in some special areas and climate change planning are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization.
53. The main task of the General Directorate of Water Management: to formulate policies for the conservation and sustainable use of water resources, to prepare legislation, to provide integrated watershed management by basin-based planning, to coordinate national and international water management of the country”.
54. Turkey's current National Water Plan covers the period 2019-2023. The National Water Plan (2019-2023), in the context of the objectives "Turkey with formed National Water Policy" as of 2023, set out the general lines of national water policy and implementations; has been prepared with a participatory and holistic approach for sustainable management in terms of quantity and quality considering the balance of protection and utilization of water resources.
55. The National Water Plan is a general strategy document. It has been developed by considering the current situation of the water resources of the country and its future potential and the climatic conditions which vary greatly according to the geographical regions of the country. In this respect, it has been prepared in order to provide a guide for the implementation of national water policy.
56. International water conventions that Turkey is a party: United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Exposed to Serious Drought and / or Desertification, in particular in Africa, European Landscape Convention (Florence Convention), Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Environments (Bern Convention), Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Bucharest Convention), Convention on the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea against Pollution (Barcelona Convention), International Trade Convention on Endangered Species of Wild Animals and Plants (CITES Convention), Convention on Wetlands of International Importance as a Water Environment for Waterfowl in particular (Ramsar Convention).
57. Turkey's main institution responsible for the management of land is the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The activities of the Ministry can be evaluated under two headings as "land protection" and "land management". The General Directorate of Agricultural Reform is the institution responsible for soil management, which includes the protection and efficient use of soil and water resources. The institution responsible for the protection of soils is the General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion (ÇEM) within the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.



58. The aim of the General Directorate of Agricultural Reform is making rural area livable and ensuring development by arranging agricultural infrastructure in order to turn rural into working, producing, living and protected areas.
59. The aim of ÇEM is to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources and sustainable development, issues to combating desertification and erosion, create strategies and policies, to ensure effective and efficient way of execution, to combat desertification and erosion on a global scale, to transfer Turkey's the experience to other countries, to make more effective cooperation with international organizations.
60. The strategic plan of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry covering the period of 2019-2023 has been prepared in line with the principles of good management, taking into consideration the opinions and suggestions received from internal and external stakeholders. The aim of the strategic plan is to ensure economic security, food supply security and human health.
61. Providing sustainable management of soil and water resources is one of the most important items of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan Objectives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

## **V. COOPERATION AMONG MEMBER COUNTRIES AND CONCLUSIONS**

62. The role of water and land resources is important and diverse in the formation of state security and territorial integrity. It is the main means and natural basis of food production and an indispensable condition for the development of society, mentality and food security. Effective management of water resources and land, their rational use is the main condition for economic development and environmental conservation. Therefore, the issues of rational use of these natural resources are priority areas of the state policy.
63. In order to improve the ecological situation and in support to environmental protection goals, TURKPA member countries developed and approved a number of laws, legal documents and state programs on water resources and land which conform to international law requirements.
64. It is necessary to create national awareness that our resources are scarce in order to ensure sustainable use of soil and water resources, and to prepare education-themed training materials in member countries. The level of awareness and understanding of the problem among people are an important factor in the successful solution of the problem.
65. Increasing the effectiveness of scientific process and developing advanced technologies and usage culture is very important in sustainable use and management of land and water resources in member countries. It is necessary to pay attention to the protection of soil and water resources by minimizing the pollution.
66. Expansion of cooperation and interaction among member countries by holding of joint events and actions such as seminars, conferences or experience exchange programs would strengthen cooperation on the matter.

67. “Workshop on Protection of Natural Wealth of Forests and Environmental Use of Natural Resources - Legislation and Practices” held by TURKPA on 23-24 January 2019 in Ankara with the support of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) and the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the TURKPA Commission on Environment and Natural Resources on “Environmentally Consistent Utilization of Natural Resources: Legal Support” held in the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic on 29 May 2019, played an important role in strengthening cooperation among our relevant structures. Representatives of relevant academic institutions and experts from member countries met and changed information and their contacts with each other.
68. The organization of such meetings will enable to the realization of legal arrangements necessary for the protection of the use of land and water resources for the benefit of the society in member countries.
69. At the same time, organization of such meetings will contribute to the development and preparation of model laws in the relevant areas, which is one of the main activity directions of TURKPA.
70. Expansion of relations in the relevant fields with leading international organizations and developed countries, and cooperation within the framework of international organizations they are members and in the framework of international agreements in which they are partner should be main directions of the environmental policy of TURKPA member countries in order to minimize environmental pollution and strengthen protection.
71. Water and land management must be fair above all, in order the rule of equitable management of resources be achieved in the TURKPA member countries.