Outcomes of the Special issue session R32AP
Development of the cooperation in the Aral Sea Basin to Mitigate Consequences of the Environmental Catastrophe

Vadim Sokolov
Regional Coordinator GWP CACENA

The 17th Governing Council Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Water Forum
Singapore
10 June 2015
The Aral Sea Basin could be observed as an area where excessive exploiting of human and natural capitals radically distorted all the components of the environment.
Aral Sea Problem

• **Environmental Aspects:**
  
  • Aral Sea- worlds 4th largest Lake **dried up:**
    • Water inflow decreased by 5 times
    • Area of sea decreased from 69000 km2
      13 times
    • Water volume decreased by 8 times
    • Salinity increased 25 times
    • Aral sea had 38 types of fishes, 638 types of flora, 50% of it lost
  
  • 5.5 million hectare of **new desert** in
    Central Asia- Aral Kum with 100 million
    tons sand and salt blown out by wind-storms
  
  • Water quality deterioration, land
    degradation, contamination of air, impact
    of climate change

1964
area 64800 km²
100
%

2001
area 21100 km²
32,5
%

2014
area 8730
km²
13,5
%
Aral Sea Problem

Level of water
- Increased by more than 13-25 times
- Exceeds average salinity of the World ocean by 7-11 times

Level of salinity
- Ocean: 18-24 (g/l)
- Aral Sea: 120-280 (g/l)
Aral Sea Problem

- **Socio-economic aspects:**
  - Human health problems: tuberculosis, kidney diseases, oncology and other diseases, decline in generational health
  - Degradation of local economy and livelihood opportunities: fishing, hunting, short term tourism
  - Lost of cultural heritage for local population
  - Increased environmental migration (internal and external)
Aral Sea Problem: global support

«... one of the most serious environmental disasters in the world...»

«...collective responsibility of the whole world, not only the countries of Central Asia...»

April, 2010, the Aral Sea

H.E. Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary General
Mitigation plans and efforts

• **Aral Sea Basin Programmes**: joint efforts of countries of Central Asia and international community to mitigation consequences of environmental catastrophe

• **The implemented Programs:**
  - ASBP-1 (1995-2001)
  - ASBP-2 (2002-2010)

• **Renewed effort in ASBP-3 (2011-2015)**
  - ASBP-3 was adopted by the Decision of the IFAS Board (December 10, 2010, Almaty).
  - ASBP-3 provides implementation of more than 300 national and regional projects at the total sum over 8,5 billion dollars
The session R32AP at the 7th World Water Forum in Korea

Session was organized by the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS) in collaboration with the network of the Global Water Partnership of Central Asia and Caucasus (GWP CACENA).

The main goal of the session is to intensify cooperation of the EC IFAS with the international community, in particular, international organizations, financial institutions, donors, foundations and countries in order to attract their attention and efforts to address the problems of the Aral Sea and the implementation of the third phase of the Aral Sea Basin Program (ASBP-3), approved by the Governments of Central Asian countries.
Session outcomes: suggested the following four areas for joint efforts of regional stakeholders:

1. **Strengthening of cooperation within IFAS** – to ensure close interaction between the Member States of IFAS to address water and environmental problems of the Aral Sea Basin; strengthen the capacity of the executive bodies of IFAS; and utilize the potential and advantages of IFAS in addressing regional issues. The measures to promote and develop dialogue within the IFAS should be supported in order to achieve consensus between the countries.
Session proposed the following:

2. **Ensuring implementation of the ASBP-3** - it is necessary to take urgent measures to implement the regional and national ASBP-3 programs and projects, and, in this regard the financial and technical assistance from international organizations and financial institutions and donor governments should be extensively involved; to ensure greater involvement of the executive bodies of the IFAS for more effective implementation of ASBP-3 regional projects.
Session proposed the following:

3. **Solution of the Aral Sea problems** - given the enormity of the Aral Sea disaster and the problems to be solved, it is necessary to consolidate the efforts of the international community to eliminate the negative consequences of the Aral Sea desiccation and reduce its damaging effects on the environment and livelihoods of millions of people living in the Aral Sea region.
Session proposed the following:

4. Enhancing international cooperation – to develop mechanisms for effective interaction and cooperation of the Executive Committee of IFAS, the executive bodies of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination and the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development with international organizations and financial institutions, as well as the donor community in order to attract their attention and efforts to address the problems Aral Sea Basin
Conclusions

It is anticipated that the prospective road-map (up to 2018) of cooperation building should include 5 key implementation strategies:

- **Demonstration** – using demonstration and testing of how to make cooperation operational in a basin as a basis for confidence and trust building, shared learning and joint action on concrete steps towards building national and transboundary water governance capacity.
- **Learning** – using training and capacity building for multiple stakeholder groups.
- **Dialogue for consensus building** – initiate actions and learning events to demonstrate and catalyze new dialogues on technical, development, and political issues.
- **Leadership** – supporting empowerment of champions for transboundary water cooperation and improved water governance who can effectively advocate mobilization of water diplomacy capacity.
- **Advice and support** – providing advice and technical assistance to governments and stakeholders on demand and including development and use of institutional and legal frameworks.
Thank you for interest and support the efforts to solve key problems in the Aral sea basin!