

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

THE COMMITTEE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

**REPORT OF THE FIFTH BILATERAL MEETING ON HYDROLOGY AND
ENVIRONMENT COOPERATION BETWEEN AFGHANISTAN AND TAJIKISTAN***

Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 22-23 October 2015

* This report has been issued without official editing by the Environment Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

A. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

1. The fifth bilateral meeting between Afghanistan and Tajikistan senior officials and experts on hydrology and environment took place in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 22-23 October 2015. The meeting was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in partnership with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office in Dushanbe and close cooperation with the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, with logistical and substantive support from Zoï Environment Network (Geneva, Switzerland). The agenda of the meeting can be found in *Annex I*.
2. The meeting was held within the framework of the project “Strengthening cooperation on transboundary watershed management between Afghanistan and Tajikistan in the upper Amu Darya River basin” implemented by UNECE with financial support provided by the Government of the Russia and additional support by the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. The project is aimed at improving the bilateral cooperation in the field of mountain ecosystem management, hydrology, natural disasters, climate change and other priority issues, and at enhancing institutional and technical cooperation.

1. Objectives of the Meeting

3. The objectives of the meetings were to:
 - Provide an overview of the five years of collaboration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Tajikistan on implementation of the bilateral agreement and other ways of cooperation under multilateral processes, and the outlook for the next five years
 - Review the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on hydrology and the initial phase of hydrological data exchange (2014-2015)
 - Inform on and discuss the joint expedition in the Panj/Amu Darya River basin in summer 2015
 - Review and agree on the further development of the draft Memorandum of Understanding on the exchange of environmental information and cooperation in the field of environmental protection in the Panj/Amu Darya basin between the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP) under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
 - Review and agree on the draft concept of common (shared) environmental indicators and information exchange on environmental issues
 - Discuss the prospects of cooperation and updating of the programme of priorities for joint work in 2016-2020, with the focus on 2016 activities and synergies

2. Attendance

4. Six participants from Afghanistan and over 40 participants from Tajikistan and international organizations took part in the meeting. The following international organizations and institutions were represented: the Tajik office of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, UNECE, WMO, OSCE, Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR), UNDP and FinWater. Overall, 58 participants attended the meeting. The list of participants is available in *Annex II*.

B. OPENING OF THE MEETING

5. Day 1 of the meeting (22 October 2015) was opened by Ms. Oikhon SHARIPOVA, Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. In her welcoming speech she greeted the distinguished members of the Afghanistan delegation and other guests and recalled that sound management of freshwater resources is a key

environmental priority and challenge in the 21st century. The intergovernmental agreement on the Panj/Amu Darya River was signed by both countries in 2010. Since then, over the last five years, several bilateral meetings, exchange visits and training took place, including the joint expedition to the upper parts of the Panj River in Dashtijum-Khorog-Ishkashim-Wakhan area in summer 2015 and the initiation of hydrology data exchange in spring 2015. She also emphasized the key role of international partners such as UNECE and OSCE to develop the bilateral ties. After the welcoming remarks, Ms. SHARIPOVA took the position of meeting chairperson and facilitator.

6. Mr. Bo LIBERT, UNECE, thanked Tajikistan's Committee for Environmental Protection and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for hosting the meeting and expressed appreciation to the delegation of Afghanistan, headed by the Deputy Minister of Energy and Water of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, representing the country. Sincere thanks were also expressed to the essential funds for the cooperation provided by the Government of Russia. One of the future challenges of cooperation is to broaden the partnership and deepen the engagement. Finland (in the framework of the Programme for Finland's Water Sector Support to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (FinWaterWEI II), WMO and UNDP were mentioned as emerging partners. More funding to support the bilateral cooperation process will come from Finland. In spite of relatively low levels of funding, bilateral cooperation activities have been intensive and informative so far and included joint expeditions, trainings and side events at major international conferences. UNECE is willing to contribute further to develop cooperation on water, hydrology and the environment.

7. Deputy Head of OSCE Dushanbe, Mr. Fabio PIANA, noted the long-standing partnerships between OSCE and the Committee for Environmental Protection. OSCE is tasked to facilitate cooperation between Afghanistan and other OSCE member states and such meetings provide a good platform that brings countries together for meaningful dialogue. Water-related problems start with difficulties in measuring water, especially in the Amu Darya River. Hydrological, glacier and climate monitoring coordination and improvements assist in decision-making and knowledge on water issues.

8. Mr. Emomidin ASOZODA, Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan thanked the organizers of the meeting and warmly welcomed guests from Afghanistan. For Tajikistan this cooperation is among the country's priorities since it contributes to strengthening stability and peace in the region. The October 2010 agreement aims to improve the use and monitoring of water resources. Tajikistan's Committee for Environmental Protection in cooperation with respective agencies is doing good job in starting the practical steps on cooperation, such as developing and signing the Memorandum of Understanding on hydrology data exchange. The Deputy Minister wished the participants successful outcomes and productive discussions during the meeting.

9. Mr. Fahumullah ZIAEE, Deputy Minister of Energy and Water of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, thanked UNECE, OSCE and Russia for providing support to the cooperation process and reconfirmed the will and commitment of Afghanistan on water and environment collaboration.

10. Mr. Ezatullah SEDIQI, National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, expressed high appreciation to Tajikistan's Committee for Environmental Protection and recalled that environmental protection is rooted in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Environmental Act (2007). NEPA is the competent state authority on environmental matters and supervises 13 multilateral agreements ratified by Afghanistan. Two national nature parks have been established in Afghanistan, the Wakhan National Park is the largest and recently established park. Environmental monitoring and inspections are focusing on the urban environment, environmental impact assessment, and drafting and review of policies and regulations. There are seven ongoing GEF projects and seven more in the GEF pipeline.

C. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

11. The following agenda of the meeting was approved:

- Opening statements and introduction of participants
- Session # 1: Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on hydrology and other joint work and practical cooperation

- Session # 2: Development of environmental cooperation
- Session # 3: Projects, synergies and information from international partners
- Session # 4: Next steps and priorities for bilateral cooperation and meeting closure

D. PROCEEDINGS

12. Mr. Anvar KHOMIDOV, Tajikistan's Committee on Environmental Protection, reported on the observations and main findings of the joint Afghan-Tajik expedition in August 2015 to the upper Panj River basin. The expedition visited all hydrological stations on the Tajik side (right bank) of the Panj River and one automated station on the Afghan side. The expedition observed sites and practices of soil and water conservation and botanical gardens, and visited nature reserves, pilot climate change adaptation sites, medical water springs and other sites with great potential for ecotourism. All the members of expedition appreciated the good work of the Khorog Aarhus Centre that cooperates with the Afghan Badakhshan province. Climate change impacts on the environment and glaciers are visible and adaptation is priority, especially in such remote areas as Wakhan. Cooperation at the local level is growing and the neighbouring areas of Afghan Badakhshan show interest in knowledge-sharing. Local meetings raised the question of climate change: people are concerned about what is happening with local water sources and glaciers. The members of expedition explained how climate change is affecting glaciers and what may happen with water availability. One of the dangerous impacts is the rapid glacier melting in summer, as was observed in 2015, with the formation of devastating glacial floods. Protected areas, migratory species, ecotourism and sustainable development potential in the border region are high priorities and should be covered in the upcoming joint activities and environmental MoU. Expedition notes are available at the Committee on Environmental Protection.

13. Mr. Abdurashid TAGOIBEKOV, Glacier survey unit, Tajik Hydrometeorological Service, reported on the international glacier expedition to the large Fedchenko Glacier in the Pamirs in August 2015. The glacier was first mapped and studied in 1928. The current activities attempt to map long-term changes and drill ice cores. Satellite data show that Pamir glaciers shrunk since the 1980s by 3-11 per cent. High-altitude and large glaciers melt slowly, while low-altitude and smaller glaciers are most vulnerable to climate change. In relative terms, the Fedchenko Glacier front/terminus have been marginally reduced, but its surface subsided substantially. The Bivachny Glacier, part of the Fedchenko Glacier system, surged 1 km this year. Next year expeditions to the Fedchenko Glacier are planned with a team of international explorers from the U.S., Japan and Italy. Afghanistan is welcome to express interest and join these expeditions. The Ministry of Energy and Water Resources of Tajikistan commented that knowing glacier reserves and predicting what will happen to them and how fast under a changing climate is important for water security of both countries.

14. Mr. Karimjon ABDUALIMOV, Tajik Hydrometeorological Service, explained that following the signature of the MoU on hydrology in 2014, Tajikistan initiated data exchange in March 2015, but received little data in return from Afghanistan. The MoU identifies the list of five stations/locations per country with basic parameters for hydrology data exchange. Several hydrometric stations will be modernized under the ongoing World Bank Tajik Hydromet support project. For flood and water forecasting in the Panj/Amu Darya River it is essential to know water levels and discharges, historical data, weather forecasts and data on snow, temperature and precipitation in the mountains. One recommendation is to make further efforts in ensuring water discharge measurements at a minimum of three locations. Both sides need to communicate data on the local hydrology observers/station personnel to the border guards and Ministries of Foreign Affairs. All observations should be aligned with WMO guidelines and standards. After joint training and consultations in summer 2015, Afghan and Tajik hydrology experts revised data exchange formats. Tajikistan is ready to provide historical hydrology data on the Panj River to Afghanistan, if it receives the request in writing with an explanation of the intended use of the historical data. The delegation of Afghanistan took note of the proposals and information from Tajikistan, and will rectify what is missing and make efforts to improve the regularity of data exchange. WMO commented that it is willing to provide trainings and technical assistance if the written request is received from either or both of the countries. One WMO

staff member will be stationed in Kabul in 2016 and can assist both sides in the continuation of hydrology data exchange and other areas of cooperation.

15. Mr. Vohid KHAMIDOV, Tajik Hydrometeorological Service, elaborated on the current state of the Tajik hydrometric observations network: it covers 90 river stations and 6 lake and reservoir stations. The Panj River basin has 43 hydrometric stations. On all of them, water level and water temperatures are recorded daily. Water discharge is measured three times a month or more often. The World Bank Tajik Hydromet project is helping to improve 42 hydrological stations, including 15 in the Panj River basin. Overall, 14 automated stations will be installed and equipped with water level radar in different parts of the country. The Panj River is a special case: it's a river and a national border and any work on it requires permission from the national security authorities. Timing for the work of hydrology observers is slightly different from other rivers: manual observations here can be conducted at 08.00 and 17.00 with border guards escorting observers. Water discharge measurements are complicated since they require both permission and good security on both sides of the river.

16. The new Aivaj hydrological station was built by Tajikistan (with ADB support) on the Amu Darya River in 2014: the original design is based on a cable with ferryboat. If a speedy motorboat is used, its high-speed movement prevents reliable water discharge recording. The width of the river at station's location is large – about 500 metres (8-10 metres deep in places). The station site is windy and large waves are possible. High waves and summer flooding in 2015 damaged the cable and ferryboat. National experts suggest re-equipping this station with Doppler radar and a slow-speed, stable motorboat instead of the cable system. Tajikistan does not have access to good practices and guidance on suitable equipment and modern hydrology methods in mountain rivers, and will appreciate WMO support on this matter, including expert advice and training.

17. Mr. Rahmatullo KHAIRULLOEV, Tajikistan's Committee on Environmental Protection elaborated on the system of environmental monitoring of Tajikistan, a set of environmental indicators and cooperation under the UNECE Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment. He stressed that comprehensive legislation on environmental monitoring is already in place and the key task is enforcement at all levels, where capacity-building is needed, especially at the local level.

18. Both countries shared experiences on the preparation and main themes of their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) for the climate change convention. Both countries are low greenhouse gas emitters. Still, they plan to take actions for reducing their carbon footprints, subject to their development circumstances. Adaptation, technology transfer and capacity-building are among the common priorities for both states. Their INDCs are available at the UNFCCC website and both countries show interest in experience exchange in climate adaptation planning and practices.

19. Mr. Neimatullo SAFAROV, Tajikistan CBD Focal Point, stressed the importance of the Panj River as a cross-border water ecosystem with valuable wetlands, Ramsar sites and near-border protected areas. Migratory and rare species living on both sides of the river also deserve attention since their effective protection in one country may not help, if the other country cannot protect these species adequately. Biosafety is another important matter for both countries since they face growing imports from China and Pakistan. Landscape planning was named among the tools for sustainable development, which needs to be introduced and promoted at different scales across the river basin.

20. Mr. Mirzohaidar ISOEV, UNDP, reported on the objectives, participants and results of the GEF-funded project on environmental monitoring and indicators in Tajikistan. The project is focusing on the Rio conventions' obligations and implementation monitoring, strengthening and improving legal, policy and institutional base for environmental data and information collection and use. He welcomed further links and synergies with the Afghan-Tajik environmental cooperation process.

21. Mr. Viktor NOVIKOV, Zoï Environment Network, shared with the participants details of the revised draft Concept/Road Map on the introduction and use of the shared/common environmental indicators in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. This concept was developed and presented, and the countries were consulted in 2014; it was discussed at a technical level in the summer of 2015. He recalled the European experience in introducing the shared environmental information system (SEIS), UNECE work on a Pan-European set of compatible environmental indicators and UNEP activities on global and national reporting. He also mentioned recently published national and regional environmental information products, and highlighted the good level of expertise demonstrated. Compatible and

comprehensive environmental information is essential for planning of economic development projects in the basin. It was suggested that countries study and finalize the Concept/Road Map and move forward with data sharing, practical cooperation and capacity-building on environmental issues.

22. Ms. Firuza ILLARIONOVA, Zoï Environment Network, recalled that the idea of developing a draft MoU on the environment was initiated by NEPA in 2013 and referred to the scope of the 2010 intergovernmental cooperation agreement on water resources of the Panj/Amu Darya River basin. Both countries agreed on the need to broaden environmental cooperation beyond water. The draft MoU was developed in 2014 and the countries consulted in 2015. The Tajik side cleared all domestic comments and submitted the draft MoU via diplomatic channels to Afghanistan in September 2015.

23. NEPA received the draft MoU submitted by Tajikistan's Committee on Environmental Protection via formal diplomatic channels. Experts from NEPA have already reviewed it, but other authorities need more time for review and final clearance with the Ministry of Justice. The final draft MoU will be further discussed with Tajikistan and can then be submitted to the Council of Ministers/Governments of both countries for final decision. While the scope of the current draft MoU is comprehensive, it is suggested that action areas on biodiversity, wildlife management, climate change and glaciers could be broadened. The updated preliminary programme on environmental cooperation, serving as an Annex to the draft MoU, could be used for possible revision of MoU provisions. The Afghan delegation raised the question of the geographic scope of the draft MoU: should it cover the Amu Darya River basin territories or be countrywide? For example, certain areas – such as two Badakhshans – have no problems with air pollution. Since both countries have indigenous mountain peoples, the Afghan delegation proposed to reflect this in the draft text of the MoU.

24. Mr. Bo LIBERT, UNECE, noted that Tajikistan is very active in water and environmental activities in the UNECE region, but has not acceded to UNECE conventions except for the Aarhus Convention. In November 2015, the UNECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) group of 10 international experts is planning to visit Tajikistan for in-depth study with the focus on green economy. UNECE would be ready for dialogue with Afghanistan on a possible EPR. UNECE has five multilateral environmental agreements: the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution; the (Espoo) Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context; the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (TEIA); the (Aarhus) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters; and the (Helsinki) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention). The Water Convention principles are already applied in the Afghan-Tajik cooperation process and this Convention is now open for signature globally. Its work programme includes climate change adaptation in transboundary river basins, water-energy-food-environment nexus studies, which in Central Asia's Syr Darya river basin identified complex interactions and win-win solutions for upstream use of water for energy and downstream use for water irrigation without risks to the environment and well-being.

25. UNECE has supported the Afghan-Tajik hydrology and environment cooperation process since 2012, and is prepared for a long-term engagement. In addition, UNECE works on strengthening cooperation in the Chu-Talas and Aral Sea basins, supports water quality monitoring and cross-border cooperation and contributes to dam safety legislation and institutional improvements.

26. Mr. Kuniyki SHIDA, World Meteorological Organization, provided an overview of the WMO flash flood guidance system and of the project funded by USAID in Afghanistan that enhances effectiveness of the competent national authorities in saving lives and property and reducing natural disaster risk. A WMO representative will be stationed in Afghanistan to support training, capacity enhancement and the use of a flash flood guidance system. Possible support of WMO to the Afghan-Tajik bilateral cooperation process may include training courses and expert services. The WMO Hydrology and Water Resources website contains technical documentation, including manuals on stream gauging, a guide to hydrological practice, etc. Tajikistan expressed interest in WMO support in student training in meteorology and hydrology. Tajikistan operates the Sarez Lake flood warning system, which may be linked with a (prospective) system for the Shiwa Lake in Afghanistan. Flash flood warnings are very important for both countries. The WMO representatives encouraged both countries to make individual or joint proposals and submit them to the WMO Secretariat.

27. Ms. Muhabbat KAMAROVA, OSCE Office in Tajikistan reported that OSCE has a mandate to work on the environment, water and energy, and to facilitate the participation of the Afghan officials and civil society in relevant events in Central Asia. OSCE in Tajikistan supports the revising and drafting of environmental legislation and regulations, promotes the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and contributes to regional cooperation on environmental matters. In 2015, OSCE supported training on the management of hazardous waste and helped to secure the perimeter of the Vakhsh obsolete pesticides storage site. OSCE was instrumental in supporting establishment of the seven Aarhus centres in Tajikistan. Khorog Aarhus Centre specializes in mountain ecosystems conservation and environmental cooperation with the neighboring Badakhshan of Afghanistan.

28. Khorog Aarhus centre has contributed to the work of commission of the two Badakhshan (Afghan and Tajik) provinces on environmental issues: in May 2015, up to 30 Afghan participants visited Khorog and discussed river bank reinforcement, flood protection and common environmental concerns. Currently, about 250 Afghan students are studying at the University of Central Asia in Khorog and the Khorog Aarhus centre is engaged environmental awareness activities and lectures.

29. Mr. Jamshed KHASANOV, Secretariat of the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience (PPCR), informed participants about project activities in the Panj River basin. Tajikistan joined PPCR in 2009, which is funded by several international donors via Climate Investment Funds (CIFs). Phase 1 (2009-2012) included feasibility studies and Phase 2 (ongoing) pilot projects worth US \$150 million. The current projects include institutional and technical enhancements for climate resilience, energy and land use sector resilience. The Panj River climate resiliency project focuses on improved flood protection, strengthening the reliability of irrigation and drinking water supply systems, micro-loans and community financing for climate-resilient agricultural practices and income diversification.

30. Ms. Nazokat ISAEVA, FinWater Wider European Initiative (WEI-II), recalled the history of development cooperation of Finland within Central Asia and the broader UNECE region and the new Tajik-Afghan-Panj (TAP) Finnish-funded project to support hydrology and environment cooperation activities. It will focus on enhancing cooperation between Afghanistan and Tajikistan on the Panj River through political dialogue on water and hydrology, awareness raising, capacity-building and joint environmental monitoring activities. The project will be coordinated by UNECE and implemented in partnership with authorities, OSCE and Zoï Environment Network. In addition, in September 2015, Finland signed an MoU with Tajikistan's Committee on Environmental Protection on surface water quality cooperation that covers capacity-building for the two national laboratories (in the Tajik Hydromet and CEP) and support in field work training, equipment and data processing.

31. Participants worked in two groups (hydrology and environment) and discussed the updated programmes of cooperation on hydrology and environment. Both updated cooperation programmes can be found in *Annex III*. After the discussions, the countries agreed to finalize their inputs in writing and exchange these by email. A draft concept for the introduction and use of common (shared) environmental indicators, a draft MoU on environment, Terms of Reference of the working group on the environment shall be reviewed by the countries by the end of 2015 and discussed further in 2016.

MEETING CLOSURE

32. Ms. Oikhon SHARIPOVA on behalf of Tajikistan offered thanks to the Russian Federation, to UNECE, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan and Zoï Environment Network for the support and inputs to the bilateral cooperation process. She thanked all participants for contributions to the discussions and expressed gratitude to the delegation of Afghanistan.

33. The Afghan delegation expressed thanks to UNECE, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan and other international partners for their support and interest in the bilateral cooperation process.

Outcome document
Decisions and Recommendations
of the Fifth Bilateral Meeting of Senior Officials and Experts

**Cooperation on the environment and hydrology in the Panj/Amu Darya River basin between
the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Tajikistan**

**Five years after the signing of the Afghanistan-Tajikistan Governmental
Agreement on cooperation in the development and management of water resources
of the Panj and Amu Darya Rivers**

22-23 October 2015, Dushanbe

Participants of the Fifth bilateral meeting on the environment and hydrology at the invitation of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, supported by the UNECE and OSCE:

Having discussed the progress of cooperation and collaboration on environment and hydrology in 2015 and over the past five years, acknowledging the common interests in these areas for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Tajikistan;

Having reviewed and discussed the following draft documents (version of 24.08.2015):

- "Memorandum of Understanding on the exchange of information and cooperation in the field of environmental protection in the Panj/Amu Darya River basin between the National Environmental Protection Agency of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan"
- "Terms of Reference for the Technical Working Group on Environmental Protection"
- "The concept of common (shared) environmental indicators and information exchange on the issues of environmental protection", cooperation prospects till 2020 and synergies with ongoing and planned projects and initiatives

Having analyzed materials, information reports, findings and recommendations of expeditions in the Panj/Amu Darya basin in 2015 and considering the suggestions of the bilateral meeting;

Referring to the provisions of the Governmental Agreement on the Panj/Amu Darya water sources signed on 25 October 2010 and to the decisions of the previous meetings between the two countries;¹

1. Underline:

- The usefulness of bilateral cooperation for the exchange of experience, developing interactions at technical and scientific levels and good-neighbourly relations
- The importance of comprehensive and timely exchange of data and information
- The significance of the hydrological and environmental cooperation for sustainable economic development of local communities and states of the Panj/Amu Darya River basin and for addressing common environmental threats such as climate change and depletion of water and other vital natural resources
- The necessity of involving a broad range of stakeholders and expanding areas of bilateral cooperation with the engagement and support of international partners and donors

¹Meetings in 2006-2007 and 2012-2014

2. Agree that:

Both countries will nominate points of contacts and members of the temporary (interim) working group on the environment to finalize the draft MoU on the environment and any related annexes, and will communicate affiliations and contact details to each other.

Both countries will apply domestic procedures as necessary in the finalization of the above-mentioned draft MoU and at the technical level will use such means of communication as phone and e-mail to discuss any open issues and add clarifications in a timely and expedited manner.

The countries will exchange the agreed version of the text of the final draft MoU and any related annexes through diplomatic channels of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan by the end of 2015 and will inform each other of their readiness and the steps forward to sign the documents in the first half of 2016;

The draft version of the updated programme on environmental cooperation (for details see Annex) will be used as reference material to enrich the scope and content of the draft MoU on environment.

The updated programme of cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020 on hydrology in the Panj/Amu Darya River basin is mutually accepted between the two parties (for details see Annex).

The countries will share these programmes for information purposes with international donors, projects and initiatives, and will encourage their inputs in implementation of the programmes.

3. Express appreciation to:

- The Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for the organization of the bilateral meeting, supporting expert meetings and expeditions, and readiness to cooperate with all interested stakeholders
- The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for inputs and proposals made during the meeting, participation in expeditions and the promotion of the hydrological and environmental cooperation
- The Russian Federation for its support to the cooperation process and willingness to contribute further, and the Government of Finland for the intention to provide future funding
- UNECE for technical support and advice in the organization of meetings and contribution to the preparation of documentation
- The OSCE Office in Tajikistan for financial and logistical support of the bilateral meetings, technical meetings and expeditions
- Zoï Environment Network for its contribution to the cooperation process

23 October 2015, Dushanbe

Committee on Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan

UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

The Fifth bilateral meeting of senior officials and experts

Environment and hydrology cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Tajikistan in the Panj/Amu Darya River basin

Five years from signing to implementing the Afghan-Tajik Agreement on water sources of the Amu Darya/Panj River basin (2010-2015)

22-23 October 2015, Dushanbe

Goals and objectives:

- Overview of the five years of collaboration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Republic of Tajikistan on implementation of the bilateral agreement and other ways of cooperation under multilateral processes, and the outlook for the next five years
- Summary of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on hydrology and the initial phase of hydrological data exchange (2014-2015)
- Briefing on the joint expedition in the Panj/Amu Darya River basin in summer 2015
- Review and agreement on the draft Memorandum of Understanding on the exchange of environmental information and cooperation in the field of environmental protection in the Panj/Amu Darya basin between the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Committee on Environmental Protection (CEP) under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan
- Review and agreement on the draft Concept of the common (shared) environmental indicators and information exchange on environmental issues
- Discussion of the prospects of cooperation and updating of the programme of priorities for joint work in 2016-2020, with focus on 2016 activities and synergies

Languages: Dari, Tajik, English and Russian – simultaneous interpretation will be provided

Venue: Lotus Hotel

Abbreviations: RT – The Republic of Tajikistan; IRA - The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

21-22 October 2015: arrival of the Afghanistan delegation and int. guests to Dushanbe

22-23 October 2015: core meeting days

24 October 2015: departure of the Afghanistan delegation and int. guests from Dushanbe

AGENDA

Day 1, 22 October 2015

10.30-11.00 Registration of participants

11.00-12.00 Opening of the meeting and statements

- Committee on Environment Protection under the Government, Ms. *O. Sharipova* on behalf of the Chairman *H. Ibodzoda*
- UNECE, *B. Libert*, Regional Adviser on Environment
- OSCE Office in Dushanbe, *F. Piana*, Deputy Head
- Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, RT, Mr *Emomiddin Asozoda*, Deputy Minister
- Ministry of Energy and Water, IRA, Mr *Fahumullah Ziaee*, Deputy Minister
- National Environmental Protection Agency, IRA, Mr *Ezattullah Sediqi*, Chief of Staff
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IRA, Mr. *Sayed Nader Pajohesh*

12.00-13.00 Session # 1: Implementation of the MOU on hydrology and other joint work

- The 3rd Pamir International Expedition on the Fedchenko Glacier, August 2015, Mr *Abdurashid Tagoybekov*, Head of Glaciology Department, Agency for Hydrometeorology
- Briefing on the joint Tajik-Afghan expedition to the upper reaches of the Panj/Amu Darya River basin, 1-10 August 2015, *Anvar Khomidov CEP (RT) and G. Amiry, NEPA (IRA)*
- Current and prospective systems of environmental data, indicators, reporting and information systems, Mr. *Rahmatullo Khairulloev*, Head of environmental policy and monitoring unit
- Specificities of the hydrological monitoring in the state border zone along the Panj/Amu Darya River; status of the Ayvaj station on the Amu Darya, *Vohid Khamidov*, Head of Hydrology Department, Agency for Hydrometeorology RT

13.00-14.00 Lunch and family photo

14.00-15.00 Session # 1: Implementation of the MOU on hydrology and other joint work (cont.)

- Progress in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on hydrology and data exchange (2014-2015); *Karimjon Abdualimov*, Deputy Director, Agency for Hydrometeorology RT and comments from representatives of MEW IRA
- Key global and regional environmental challenges and responses: climate change and biodiversity; adaptation to climate change and INDCs: Mr. *Anwar Khomidov (RT) and Mr. Amiry (IRA)*, and Mr. *N. Safarov (RT)* on biodiversity

15.00-15.30 Coffee break

15.30-17.00 Session #2: Points of departure for the development of environmental cooperation

- Support in the development of environmental monitoring system in Tajikistan: UNDP, Mr. *Mirzohaidar Isoev*, Project manager
- Draft Concept of the common (shared) environmental indicators and information exchange between Afghanistan and Tajikistan; *Viktor Novikov*, Zoï Environment Network

17.00-17.30 Summary of Day 1

Day 2, 23 October 2015

09.00-10.30 Session # 3: Documents for development of environmental cooperation

Lead facilitator: *Ms. Oikhon Sharipova, Deputy Chairman of the CEP RT*

- Draft Memorandum of Understanding on the exchange of environmental information and cooperation in environmental protection in the Panj/Amu basin between NEPA and CEP;
- ToR on the Technical Working Group / Task Force on Environmental Protection
- Draft Concept on indicators as Annex to the Draft MoU

Discussion, questions, comments

10.30-11.00 Coffee break

11.00-12.30 Session # 4: Prospects and synergies - information from the international partners on projects and activities in line with the priorities of bilateral cooperation

- Transboundary water cooperation, UNECE conventions and cooperation prospects: UNECE
- Development of hydrology cooperation, services and flashflood warning systems: WMO
- Public access to environmental information, risk reduction, Afghan and Tajik Badakhshan provinces cooperation: OSCE Office in Tajikistan and the Khorog Aarhus Centre

12.30-13.30 Lunch

13.30-15.00 Session # 4 (continuation)

- Pilot Program on Climate Resilience (PPCR) in Tajikistan – current activities and priorities in the Panj River basin: PPCR TJK Secretariat
- Finland's support to the water sector of Tajikistan, FinWaterWEI II
- Inputs by organizations and initiatives

15.00-15.30 Coffee break

15.30-16.30 Session # 5: Next steps for the implementation of the bilateral agreement on the Panj/Amu Darya River basin and 2016-2020 five-year prospects

- Programmes of cooperation hydrology and the environment between the IRA and the RT for the period 2016-2020, updates and revisions by members of the working groups and other participants (discussion in the groups)
- Discussion of the new priorities, mechanisms for implementation, funding needs, synergies

17.00-17.30 Conclusions and closure of the meeting

18.00 Dinner

**List of Participants: 5th Afghanistan-Tajikistan environment/hydrology cooperation meeting
22-23 October 2015, Dushanbe**

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Updated programme of cooperation between Afghanistan and Tajikistan 2016-2020 on the **HYDROLOGY** in the Panj/Amu Darya River basinVersion 23-OCT-2015, reviewed and discussed at the 5th Bilateral meeting in Dushanbe

Activity	Timing	Lead responsible	Links and synergies with ongoing and planned projects
1. Bilateral meetings, exchange of experience, technical meetings, field visits	<i>In line with decisions</i>	CEP, NEPA, MEW, MFAs	UNECE, OSCE, Finland, Russia
2. Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on the exchange of hydrological data and information, and related decisions and recommendations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Define/nominate members of the technical working group on hydrology in Afghanistan and inform Tajikistan b. Compile information on selected hydrological stations on the Panj River (covered under the scope of MoU on hydrology), their current status, challenges and possible solutions c. Improve regularity of data exchange (each month); confirm the data exchange format d. Discuss and decide on the issues of archival data and forecast exchange e. Follow-up on logistical matters: access to the border zone, visas for observers, etc. f. Exchange information on plans for stations modernization and relocations g. Express request to WMO to provide support in hydrological training and capacity-building, including modern data exchange methods and tools 	<i>In line with decisions</i>	AF MEW, TJ Hydromet	<i>Internal resources</i>
3. Support the modernization of hydrological stations on the Panj and Amu Darya on the Tajik side in line with site-specific priorities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Aivaj: automated sensors for measuring water level and velocity, reliable energy source b. Panji Poyon (Nijny Panj): provision of water quality equipment, boat with water velocity meter, installation of an automated water level gauge c. Khirmanjo: carry out bank protection works and replace the cradle crossing; provide the site with a reliable power source; install automated sensors to measure water velocity and level or relocate station to the new bridge; provide training for local hydrology technician; provide water quality equipment d. Shidz: carry out repair of the cradle crossing; provide the hydrological station with reliable power source; install automated sensors to measure water velocity and level e. Ishkoshim: repair the cradle crossing; provide the hydrological station with reliable power source; install automated sensors to measure water velocity and level; 	2016-2017	TJ Hydromet	WB TJ modernization, WMO (technical advice)

4. Consideration of the option of installation of an automated hydrological station on Sherkhan-Bandar bridge on the Panj River (joint station of Afghanistan and Tajikistan)	2016-2017	AF MEW, TJ Hydromet	GIZ, ADB, WMO, WB TJ modernization
5. Collaboration on snow cover data collection and exchange, especially for mountain areas 2 000-4 500 m above sea level	2016-2017	AF MEW, TJ Hydromet	WB TJ modernization, JICA AFG hydrology
6. Training and exchange of experience using WMO and national guidelines for planning and carrying out hydrological monitoring, including in a transboundary context; staff training and capacity-building of the personnel/observers at hydrological stations	2015-2020	AF MEW, TJ Hydromet	WB TJ modernization, JICA AFG hydrology, WMO, Russia
7. Preparation and publication of a hydrological bulletin/yearbook on the Panj River (joint edition and individual for each country: GBAO TJK and Badakhshan AFG)	2017	AF MEW, TJ Hydromet	WB TJ modernization, JICA AFG hydrology
8. Joint activities and coordination on natural disaster risk reduction and informing the local population; coordination in the installation and use of flash flood and flood warning systems	2016-2020	Emergency management authorities in both countries	UNDP, AKN, WMO
9. Preparation and dissemination of public awareness materials on the Afghan-Tajik hydrology and environment cooperation among local residents in the border zone, local authorities and others	2016-2020	TJ Hydromet, CEP, NEPA, AF MEW	UNECE, OSCE, WMO, Finland
10. Mutual informing and cooperation in planning of river bank strengthening and river channel regulation on the Panj River to reduce the impact of flooding and increase the efficiency of river bank protection on both sides	2016-2020	TJ Agency on land melioration, AF MEW	WB, ADB
11. Improving sediment management, including experience exchange and joint measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention of excessive sediment load at the water intakes, in irrigation canals and water pumping stations • Construction of river sediment catchments/sediment tanks • Afforestation, creation of green belts along the river banks and eco-DRR 	2016-2020	TJ Agency on land melioration, AF MEW, local authorities and communities	WB, ADB

Updated programme of cooperation between Afghanistan and Tajikistan 2016-2020 on the **ENVIRONMENT** in the Panj/Amu Darya River basin

Version 23-OCT-2015, reviewed and discussed at the 5th Bilateral meeting in Dushanbe

Activity	Timing	Lead responsible	Links and synergies with ongoing and planned projects
1. Bilateral meetings, exchange of experience, technical meetings, expeditions, field visits	<i>In line with decisions</i>	CEP, NEPA, MEW, MFAs	UNECE, OSCE, Finland, Russia
2. Strengthening cooperation on the exchange of environmental information: a. Decisions on the composition of the (interim) working groups for environmental cooperation b. Finalization and signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), associated annexes and the Terms of Reference for the working group on the environment c. Coordination and participation in international environmental processes	<i>In line with decisions</i>	CEP, NEPA	<i>Internal resources</i>
3. Preparation of information and educational materials on the environment and working with local authorities and the population in the border areas along the Panj River on awareness and education on environmental matters; reusing/reprinting and application of the Atlas (2013) materials and making them available in local languages	2016-2017	CEP, NEPA, Aarhus Centres, Zoi Environment Network	UNECE, OSCE, UNEP, Finland
4. Capacity-building and training in environmental indicators, shared environmental information systems, preparation of environment reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial data collection for preparation of the joint environmental assessments, road-testing of the set of common (shared) environmental indicators; field visits to adjust the set of indicators to the local demands and realities • Increased cooperation with local organizations: local departments of nature protection, the Khorog Aarhus Centre and others 	2016-2017	CEP, NEPA, Aarhus Centres, Zoi Environment Network	UNECE, UNEP, UNDP, OSCE
5. Training, experience exchange and joint activities on climate change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate vulnerability mapping and development of adaptation measures, study of international and local practices and approaches, exchange of climate strategies • Climate change scenarios and greenhouse gas emission data and experience exchange, cooperation in preparing UNFCCC National Communications and post-Paris 2015 (UNFCCC CoP-21 and the Paris Agreement) activities • Joint assessment and elaboration of climate, flood and flash flood risk reduction measures and building climate resilience the Panj River basin communities • Planning and implementation of joint local projects and small grants on climate change adaptation and resilience and local sustainable development 	2016-2020	CEP, NEPA	PPCR, UNECE, UNDP, WMO, UNEP, Finland

<p>6. Training, experience exchange and joint activities on forest, soil and nature conservation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding mobilization and capacity-building to assist in preparing project proposals on forests and biodiversity; demonstration of the role of forests and biodiversity in conservation and ecosystem services of the upstream river basin • Forest protection and rehabilitation, horticultural methods, greenhouse maintenance, preparation of dried fruits, fruit tree saplings exchange, etc. • Exchange of forest and biodiversity conservation strategies • Cooperation under the international processes as a group of countries with low forest cover and valuable genetic resources • Conservation of genetic resources of domestic and wild species and varieties, mapping of traditional methods of crop growing in Badakhshan (WOCAT sites), etc. • Community conservation resilience (CCR) and conservation approaches and nature restoration based on landscape approaches: international and local techniques • Discussion and assessment of biosafety issues of the common interest 	2016-2017	CEP, NEPA, MAIL, forest authorities	UNDP, UNEP, GIZ, GEF, UNFF, ADB, JICA
<p>7. Collaboration and coordination on the protection and monitoring of rare and endangered species, ecosystems, and wildlife in the border areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetlands and water ecosystems of the Panj/Amu Darya River • Habitats and migration of rare species: snow leopard, markhor, Bukhara deer, etc. • Rare and endangered species of plants, mitigation and restoration measures • Exchange of information on the number of species, common threats and joint approaches to the assessment and monitoring of ungulates and other species 	2016-2020	CEP, NEPA	UNEP, UNDP, GIZ, Ramsar Convention, CBD, WWF, CAREC
<p>8. Coordination of the development plans for a network of protected areas (PAs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inputs (to be agreed on) for the establishment of the Wakhan National Park in Afghanistan and further consultations on establishing the Wakhan Peace Park • Development of contacts between the management of the protected areas in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, study tours and exchange of experience 	2016-2020	CEP, NEPA, MAIL, forest authorities	UNEP, UNDP, WWF
<p>9. Promotion of the sustainable development of local communities, including indigenous mountain people, by assessing and building capacity for ecotourism, production and marketing of local eco-products, improving the state of natural resources and developing local monitoring and assessment capacities for better environmental management</p>	2016-2020	CEP, NEPA, Zoï Environment Network	UNDP GEF SGP, UNEP, UNECE, GSF
<p>10. Cooperation between the staff of protected areas, forest units and environmental services with border controls and law enforcement units and coordination between the countries (joint training, seminars, joint patrols and raids against poachers) in prevention of illegal activities and environmental crimes in the near-border area</p>	2016-2020	CEP, NEPA, MAIL, forest authorities, local authorities, border control service	UNDP, OSCE, UNEP

11. Restoration of irrigation and water supply systems to secure and improve the reliability of water provision to local farmers and population, including under the climate change impacts	2016-2020	Agency on land melioration, MEW	WB, ADB, PPCR, EU
12. Field studies of glaciers, exchange of data on glacier status and trends. Participation in international expeditions and studies of glaciers. Synergies with Hindukush-Himalaya studies	2016-2020	AF MEW and NEPA, TJ Hydromet	USAID, GFZ, WMO, UNEP, ICIMOD
13. Cooperation in the improvement of monitoring/reporting systems and management of household waste in cities and near-border areas (e.g., waste collection, disposal, recycling)	2016-2020	CEP, NEPA, local authorities	UNDP, UNEP, OSCE, UNECE, EBRD
14. Cooperation and exchange of experience in assessing and solving problems related to hazardous waste: approaches on the inventory of POPs-containing waste, management of obsolete pesticides and other hazardous waste, (potential visit to the Vakhsh landfill, TJK)	2016-2020	CEP, NEPA, local authorities	UNDP, UNEP, OSCE, Green Cross, EBRD