

**Eighth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference**  
(8–10 June 2016, Batumi, Georgia, Sheraton Hotel)

*High-level meeting of Education and Environment Ministries*

*Wednesday, 8 June 2016, 4.30–6 p.m.*  
*Batumi, Georgia, Sheraton Hotel*

**Agenda item 3. Towards a new society: 10 years of education for sustainable development**

*Intervention of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC):*

**EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP AND CAPACITY BUILDING FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA**

In the period from 2011 to 2016, passed after the Astana Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", CAREC, in cooperation with the Central Asian countries, partners and donors, has implemented several bright flagship initiatives on education for sustainable development (ESD). Particular attention was paid to the promotion of CAREC tools such as Leadership and Capacity Building for Sustainable Development.

**I. Annual CA Leadership Program on Environment for Sustainable Development.**

*"Who will be taking environmentally friendly decisions tomorrow? How can we preserve the unique eco-systems of our region for future generations? Who will be promoting Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the Agenda 2030 in Central Asia? What should we do now for that today?" – Answers to these and many other questions depend on all of us, and our actions today!*

Since 2006, CAREC annually conducts the Central Leadership Program (CALP) to train young environmental leaders and professionals from Central Asia, and starting from 2013 - including Afghanistan. For these 10 years, the Leadership Program has trained **more than 200 leaders of Central Asia**. The Program is dynamically developing year by year, improving and adapting to the needs of countries and target groups that is why it is staying very interesting, recognized and demanded by everybody - by national partners, by donors and by the public.

Up to the present time, this is **the only regular Program on Environmental Capacity Building for Sustainable development in Central Asia** for the governments, private sector, academia and NGOs, which helps to ensure comprehensive understanding of sustainable development issues. The Leadership Program focuses on the issues of regional water cooperation, climate change and green growth, food security and promotion of green development issues in everyday life, behavior and acceptance of environmentally - friendly solutions throughout Central Asia.

Today, **graduates of Central Asian Leadership programs** are actively involved in environmental protection activities, working in government agencies, international organizations, NGOs, and in projects in the field of environment and development in all countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan. Donors and partners of the project are UNEP, Government of Norway and the OSCE Program Office in Astana and from 2016, USAID and the European Commission support it.

It is expected that **by 2020 CALP network will consist of more than 350 graduates**, future leaders in the field of environment and sustainable development of the region.

**II. Innovative Approaches to Knowledge and Education**

CAREC in cooperation with partners in the CA countries pays a special attention **to development and promotion of innovative knowledge and approaches to learning**. To this end, CAREC developed and put into practice innovative training programs, modules and tools:

- **Training courses for bachelors and masters** in ecology, integrated water resources management (IWRM), energy efficiency and sustainable development, which were introduced into the higher and secondary education systems of several Central Asian countries;
- **Unique innovative educational resources for secondary education developed in cooperation with REC (2010-2016):**
  - "Green Pack for Central Asia - Glaciers Edition" and "Caspian Green Pack" were created,
  - More than 2 000 teachers, experts and trainers of Central Asia, and more than 50 000 school and college students have been trained on how to using the "Green Packs". Currently a concept of the "Aral Sea Green Package" was prepared and is under discussion with partners.
- CAREC among the first in the Central Asian region began a process of capacity building and awareness raising of civil servants and employees of educational institutions **on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, and is currently developing a new Course and a Training Module at the SDGs module for decision-makers in Central Asia (2015 -2016).

### **III. Outlook and Challenges**

The CAREC Strategic plan until 2020 includes not only the expansion of thematic areas, but also building methodological, instrumental and institutional bases for establishing a knowledge hub. To date, CAREC has created a knowledge portal, the system of website-learning and other tools for knowledge disseminating. Regular educational trainings, CAREC Leadership Program and publications are the examples of transition from traditional CAREC activities to innovative approaches. *At this stage of societal development, successful partnership should be based on the principles of mutually beneficial exchange of information and knowledge.*

The main directions of CAREC as the knowledge hub are building new knowledge, using modern approaches in systematization and transmitting data and information, promoting innovative approaches of using knowledge. Being a platform of cooperation among different societal sectors, CAREC will also contribute to the mutual exchange of knowledge among different sectors. Particular attention will also be paid to the management of knowledge: both national and international, built in the framework of programs and projects. Using modern tools, such as modeling, use of information technologies, remote sensing and GIS will become mandatory part of each CAREC activity. *Knowledge will be the key in solving serious problems of sustainability and environmental protection in Central Asia.*

As a part of the new mega-project implemented by CAREC with the support of USAID «Smart Waters», CAREC will support the Central Asian countries and Afghanistan in 2016-2020: in capacity building for new generation of leaders and trainers through thematic workshops; students' competition for scientific research on water-related issues; Master studies on integrated water resources management and demonstration tours.

CAREC will continue support and implementation of the Central Asian Leadership Program on Environment for Sustainable Development as one of the best examples of capacity building for young leaders, strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia, promoting youth with environmental values based on ESD principles, and **is open for cooperation with all stakeholders!**