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Meeting of the Heads of Emergency Authorities of  
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Tashkent (Uzbekistan)*

**STRATEGY**  
**FOR DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATION OF COUNTRIES OF CENTRAL ASIA**  
**IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION**  
**FOR 2022 - 2030**  
*(hereinafter - the Strategy)*

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>CA</b>	Central Asia
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster risk reduction
<b>CCA</b>	Climate change adaptation
<b>ES</b>	Emergency situation

## KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Disaster** - serious disruption to the life of local households, communities, or society, causing loss of lives and health of people, large-scale material, economic or environmental damage and consequences.

**Preparedness** - the knowledge and capacity of governments, response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from, the impacts of likely, imminent or ongoing disasters.

**National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction** is a generic term for national coordination and governance mechanisms for DRR that are multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary in nature and involve all stakeholders in the country, including government agencies, the private sector and civil society.

**Disaster risk assessment** - a qualitative or quantitative methodology for determining the nature and extend of disaster risk by analyzing potential hazards and assessing existing degree of exposure and vulnerability, which together could harm people and cause damage to property, services, means of existence and the environment.

**Exposure (exposure to hazards)** - people, property, systems and other elements located in the area of possible impact of disaster hazards.

**Disaster resilience capacity** - the ability of people, organizations and systems to withstand and manage adverse conditions, emergencies or natural disasters using available skills and resources.

**Disaster resilience capability** - the sum of the capacities and resources available in a society/community or organization to manage and reduce disaster risks and build resilience to potential threats.

**Forecasting** - a specific statement or statistical estimate of the likelihood of a future event or conditions for a specific geographic area.

**Response** - a set of actions during or immediately after a disaster to save lives, reduce harm to their health, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs of the people affected.

**Central Asia Region (region)** – geographic area comprising the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

**Disaster risk** - combination of the likelihood of a hazardous event and its negative consequences as a result of natural and man-made hazards, vulnerability to such threats and capacities to impact and withstand them.

**Disaster risk reduction**- a set of institutional actions and measures aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risks, and managing residual risks, which contributes to building resilience and, therefore, achieving sustainable development. The actions are formulated in Disaster Risk Reduction Strategies.

**A transboundary emergency** - an emergency situation, the adverse effects of which go beyond the boundaries of a single state.

**Disaster risk management** – application of disaster risk reduction policies and strategies aimed at prevention of new and reduction of existing disaster risks as well as managing residual risk to help build resilience and minimize disaster losses.

**Vulnerability** - conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes that increase the susceptibility of an individual, community, property or systems to the impacts of threats.

**An emergency situation** - a crisis or a dangerous situation requiring immediate action to prevent possible negative consequences that can cause loss of life and health of people, material, economic and environmental damage and losses.

**Prevention of emergency situations** - a set of measures taken in advance and aimed at minimizing the risk of an emergency situation as much as possible, as well as preserving human health, reducing the amount of damage to the environment and material losses in case of its occurrence.

**Elimination of an emergency situation** - rescue and other urgent work carried out in the event of an emergency and aimed at saving lives and preserving people's health, reducing the amount of damage to the environment and material losses, as well as localizing the emergency zone, stopping the action of its characteristic hazardous factors.

## **CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND**

The Central Asia region covers an area of about 4 million square kilometers, with total population of over 75 million.

Geographically, Central Asia is very diverse, it includes vast, relatively young mountain systems, such as the Tien Shan, Pamir, many eternal glaciers, large deserts and semi-deserts, endless steppe zones, thousands of small and dozens of large rivers and lakes, including the Amu Darya and Syr Darya, the Caspian and Aral Seas, Balkhash, Issyk-Kul, large reservoirs, densely populated valleys such as Fergana, as well as some of the most sparsely populated areas in the world.

Due to its location Central Asia is defined by an extreme continental climate with a small amount of unevenly distributed precipitation. The CA region is characterized by a large amplitude of daily and seasonal temperatures, with high solar radiation and relatively low humidity. Large differences in geographic location and elevations from 0 to 7,500 m above sea level explain the diversity of the microclimate.

The average temperature in summer months at low altitudes, in valleys and deserts, varies from 26 ° C in the north to 40 ° C in the south, with a maximum temperature of 45-50 ° C. The average winter temperature varies from 0 ° C in the south to - 20 ° C in the north with an absolute minimum down to -40 ° C.

The amount of precipitation in lowlands and valleys is 80-200 mm per year, precipitation falls mainly in winter and spring. At the same time, 300-400 mm of precipitation falls in the foothills, and 600-800 mm on the southern and southwestern slopes of the mountain ranges. The climate of the region changes with geographic and geomorphological conditions, which determines the difference in demand for water.

Rapid population growth and the development of irrigation, especially over the past 40 years, have significantly increased the demand for land and water in the region. At the same time, more than 48% of residents live in cities, including 7 cities with a population of over a million, the region is also one of the youngest in the world.

## **CHAPTER 2. OVERVIEW OF DISASTER RISKS IN CENTRAL ASIA**

The Central Asian region is prone to almost all types of disaster risk (with a few exceptions such as tsunamis, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions and some others) of a natural (geological, geophysical, meteorological, agrometeorological, hydrological), man-made, ecological, biological and social origin.

The region is most characterized by vast territories with high seismic activity, with probable strong earthquakes of 7-8-9 and more points according to MSK-64 and the Richter scale, mudflows, floods, flash

runoffs, landslides, snow avalanches, waterlogging, rising groundwater levels, strong , hurricane winds and even tornadoes, desertification, dusty, sandstorms, prolonged and heavy rains, hail, heavy snowfalls and blizzards, droughts, frosts, rockslides and rockfalls, steppe, forest and mountain fires, extreme temperatures, environmental, man-made industrial and transport accidents, explosions, large fires, epidemics, mass infectious diseases of people and animals, damage to agricultural plants by diseases, weeds and pests, as well as the presence of artificial reservoirs and breakthrough reservoirs, nuclear and chemical waste storage facilities, enterprises with toxic and highly toxic substances, hazardous waste and technological processes.

Research results and statistics confirm significant economic and human losses, environmental damage and disruption to countries' long-term development plans as a result of disasters and emergencies caused by the above threats and hazards.

Throughout their history, the countries of Central Asia have repeatedly been subjected to destructive disasters accompanied by serious human and economic losses (mudflows in Kazakhstan, Almaty, in 1887, 1889 and 1911; earthquakes in Kyrgyzstan; Suusamy, in 1992, Nura-Alai, 2008; earthquakes in Tajikistan: Khoyeet, in 1949, Hissor in 1989, floods in 1993; Turkmenistan: Ashgabat earthquake in 1948; Uzbekistan: Tashkent earthquake in 1966; CA region: drought in 2000, floods in the Amudarya and Syrdarya basins in 2005).

### **CHAPTER 3. OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL COOPERATION IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION BETWEEN CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES**

Central Asian governments play a key role in disaster prevention, response and recovery. Taking into account that there is high risk of large-scale and transboundary emergencies that could bring adverse effects exceeding capacity of any one country to overcome, as well as the need for coordinated actions in their prevention and management, the governments of the Central Asian states seek to combine their efforts in the field of DRR, emergency prevention and response through further strengthening of bilateral, multilateral and regional cooperation and global partnership.

The countries of Central Asia have now stepped-up coordination of joint actions to create sustainable mechanisms for the implementation of bilateral and multilateral interstate and / or interagency agreements, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the priorities of the Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030, the UN Framework Convention on climate change, the Paris Climate Agreement and other international policy documents.

Currently, the dialogue between the governments of the countries in DRR and emergency situations at the regional level has intensified through the implementation of Framework for strengthening regional cooperation in DRR and within the established a permanent regional consultative platform in the format of the Regional Forum - the Meeting of the Heads of emergency authorities of Central Asian countries.

Based on the decisions of the Regional Forums - the Meetings of the Heads of emergency authorities of the Central Asian countries, interstate (intergovernmental) councils on emergencies, joint bilateral and multilateral panels of emergency authorities, technical working groups and individual experts have been set up/assigned and within the framework of the established Regional Scientific and Technical Council, measures are being taken to strengthen regional scientific and technical cooperation.

As part of regional programs, projects and action plans, it is planned to implement practical measures aimed at the creation and further development of regional systems for early warning and alert, sharing of information on disaster risks, monitoring, forecasting and assessment of emergency risks based on the capacity of existing national crisis management centers and early warning systems.

At the regional level, joint actions have also been stepped up to build the capacity of emergency authorities within the region in DRR and emergency situations, research and exchange of experience, introduction of innovative information and communication technologies, improvement of coordination mechanisms, interaction and response to emergency situations.

At present, in order to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks, the emergency authorities of the CA countries are taking joint measures aimed at identification, assessment, mapping and modeling of disaster risks, improving systems for monitoring, forecasting, early warning and response, strengthening of regional and national capacities in order to implement the Sendai Framework for DRR for 2015-2030, as well as measures to adapt to climate change, mitigate its consequences.

DRR policy documents of the CA countries prioritize the development and improvement of regional cooperation to promote joint coordinated risk reduction activities.

This Strategy is based and informed by the final documents adopted at the following high-level regional events:

◆ Regional Ministerial Conference of the Central Asian countries on prevention and response to emergencies and disasters, held on November 24-25, 2015 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan (*Ashgabat Declaration*);

◆ Regional Meeting of the Heads of emergency authorities of Central Asian countries on Disaster Risk Reduction, held on March 31, 2017 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (00);

◆ Regional Forum - Meeting of the Heads of emergency authorities of Central Asian countries, held on April 26-27, 2018 in Almaty, Kazakhstan (*Protocol of the Regional Forum*);

◆ Regional Conference on DRR and Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 in Central Asia, held on August 21, 2019 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan (*Dushanbe Resolution*);

◆ Regional Forum - Meeting of the Heads of emergency authorities of Central Asian countries, held on July 11-12, 2019 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (*Protocol of the Regional Forum*);

◆ Regional Consultative Meeting on Strengthening Regional Cooperation in DRR and implementation of the Sendai Framework on DRR in CA, held online on December 10-11, 2020 (*Protocol of the Regional Consultative Meeting, including the decision on the development and adoption of CA Strategy for DRR for 2022-2030*).

## **CHAPTER 4. GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

**The goal of the Strategy** is to increase efficiency of cooperation between Central Asian countries in disaster risk reduction and interaction in emergency situations to prevent human, economic and environmental losses and create conditions for sustainable development of the countries in the region.

### **Key objectives of the Strategy:**

1. Strengthen the institutional framework for regional and cross-border cooperation between countries in DRR.
2. Develop shared information space to assess and forecast the risks of disasters and emergencies.
3. Support the development of human resources in the countries of the region in DRR.
4. Support the development of National Platforms for DRR in CA countries to develop and implement disaster risk reduction strategies at the national and local levels.
5. Support and promote investments in DRR, with the involvement of the private sector, international and regional organizations and partners.

## **CHAPTER 5. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

Priorities for action to achieve the goals and objectives of the Strategy are as follows:

1. Strengthening the regional institutional and legal framework for disaster risk management.

2. Improving knowledge and understanding of disaster risk, with a particular focus on transboundary risks.
3. Investing in disaster risk reduction at the regional level.
4. Strengthening preparedness to respond to emergencies.

## **CHAPTER 6.**

### **MEASURES TOWARDS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

#### **6.1. STRENGTHENING THE REGIONAL LEGAL ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1.1. Improvement of regional mechanisms of coordination and close interaction of the CA countries in DRR, CCA and ES on the basis of the implementation of bilateral and multilateral interstate agreements on prevention and elimination of emergency situations.
- 6.1.2. Establishment and strengthening of coordination mechanisms and close interaction with donor agencies, international and non-governmental organizations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, educational, academic, scientific and research institutions working in DRR, CCA and ES to combine efforts and implement joint activities to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the priorities of the Sendai Framework for DRR, the UNO Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Climate Agreement and other international policy documents.
- 6.1.3. Implementation of joint measures to harmonize regulatory legal acts to increase efficiency in the implementation of international obligations, bilateral and multilateral interstate and inter-agency agreements of the Central Asian countries to bring them in line with the requirements of international law, bridge gaps in existing arrangements and mechanisms for their practical implementation.
- 6.1.4. Improvement of national and regional emergency risk management systems based on the introduction of modern innovative information and communication technologies, upgrading and digitalization of automated control systems, improvement of communication and warning systems.
- 6.1.5. Improvement of the legal framework for institutional mechanisms in disaster risk management, including issues of joint disaster risk assessment, especially earthquakes, outbursts of high-mountain glacial lakes, tailings dams, dams of large reservoirs and others that could potentially become the cause of transboundary disasters.
- 6.1.6. Capacity development support to national platforms for DRR in the field of their inter-agency and intersectoral coordination to be provided by emergency authorities and international organizations in the form of organizational and technical support.
- 6.1.7. Facilitating improvement of mechanisms, procedures, and methods used by government agencies to evaluate socio-economic consequences of emergencies by bringing them in line with international best practices in assessing damage, losses and needs for reconstruction and recovery in compliance with the Build Back Better approach.

#### **6.2. IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF DISASTER RISKS, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON TRANSBOUNDARY RISKS**

- 6.2.1. Development and improvement of interstate standardized rules and procedures, tools, techniques collection, reception, processing, systematization, accumulation, storage, centralized banks (databases) of databases and internet resources, automated distribution systems, transmission and timely delivery of information in DRR and ES to all interested parties, taking into account the needs of different categories of users, as appropriate.

- 6.2.2. Building regional capacity for monitoring and forecasting of hazardous natural processes and phenomena, detection, assessing, mapping, identifying and modeling of disaster risks, particularly of a transboundary nature.
- 6.2.3. Updating forecasts of changes in regional risks and hazards, including those associated with climate change, urban development and population growth, economic infrastructure in close cooperation and using the potential of specialized national, regional and international scientific institutions working in DRR, CCA and ES.
- 6.2.4. Raising awareness of all stakeholders about regional disaster risks, sharing of latest information on the imminent and ongoing emergencies, the course of their development, possible consequences, and recovery measures taken;
- 6.2.5. Implementation of measures to integrate automated early warning and alert systems about the threat and occurrence of emergencies, in particular earthquakes, outbursts of high-mountain glacial lakes, tailing dumps, dams of large reservoirs and others that may lead to transboundary disasters.
- 6.2.6. Joint planning, development and implementation of regional research projects, sharing of scientific and methodological papers and publications, video and photographic materials, analytical reports and scientific and technical literature, research results and innovative information and communication technologies.
- 6.2.7. Implementation of measures aimed at improving knowledge and professional training of civil defense/civil protection authorities, skills upgrading of specialists and experts from Central Asian countries in DRR and ES, through trainings, workshops, demonstration classes, special exercises and other relevant activities.

### **6.3. INVESTING IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL**

- 6.3.1. Consolidation of efforts of all stakeholders in the planning and implementation of measures in disaster risk reduction and emergency prevention, through the initiation, development, attraction of investments, promotion and engagement in the implementation of national, interstate and international programs and projects in DRR and ES.
- 6.3.2. Strengthening cooperation with donor agencies, international financial institutions, international organizations at the national and regional levels to identify and attract investments to accelerate the process of transition from response to early reduction, prevention and building of the resilience to disaster risks, taking into account the need to ensure the civil rights to a healthy and safe natural environment, protection from emergency situations, especially the most vulnerable population, including women, children and the elderly.
- 6.3.3. Facilitating the attraction of public and private investments, funds from donor agencies, financial institutions, international and non-profit organizations at the regional level to implement the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, interagency and international, global policy documents in DRR and disaster prevention, sustainable development, CCA, ensuring environmental safety.
- 6.3.4. Enhanced action to attract public and external investments to support scientific and technical programs and projects aimed at introducing innovative information and communication technologies, strengthening prevention, assessment and analysis of disaster risks and research into the causes and consequences of emergencies especially those of a transboundary nature, with a focus on the most vulnerable groups of the population;
- 6.3.5. Improving involvement and providing all-round organizational support for regional and national programs and projects implemented in CA countries with technical and financial support from donor agencies, international and non-governmental organizations.
- 6.3.6. Develop mutually beneficial partnerships between the private sector, governments and other stakeholders to enhance resilience to disaster risk.

- 6.3.7. Enhanced action to attract investment in the promotion of measures to put in place the legal, economic and organizational frameworks regulating compulsory and voluntary insurance to cover disaster and emergency related risks.

#### **6.4. STRENGTHENING PREPAREDNESS FOR EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

- 6.4.1. Enhanced action to establish and operationalize the Regional Coordination Mechanism for emergency response, reconstruction and recovery in compliance with the Build Back Better approach, with a special focus on disasters that could bring adverse effects exceeding capacity of any one country to overcome. The mechanism will be designed to provide support and assistance in strengthening interaction, cooperation and coordination between emergency authorities of the CA, UN agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and other key actors in the field of emergency response and international humanitarian aid;
- 6.4.2. Organizational support to international and non-governmental organizations, members of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, other stakeholders involved in DRR, CCA and ES at the regional level, in the implementation of measures to strengthen emergency preparedness for humanitarian response to emergencies.
- 6.4.3. Establishing an effective system of interstate and international exchange of information in cases of threat or emergencies.
- 6.4.4. Carrying out organizational and technical activities at the regional level to strengthen preparedness of emergency rescue units of the CA countries (*training, exercises, etc.*) included in the newly established Regional CA Register of manpower and resources so that they can implement emergency rescue operations on their territory in the event of an emergency exceeding capacity of any one country to overcome and requiring joint coordinated actions.
- 6.4.5. Facilitating the establishment and expansion of national and regional emergency reserves of material and financial resources in order to enhance the preparedness capacity for effective response, rescue and humanitarian operations in the event of imminent or ongoing emergencies, including the stages of reconstruction and recovery.
- 6.4.6. Implementation of measures to develop and communicate to stakeholders methodological recommendations and operational guidelines on coordination of activities of government agencies, manpower and resources provided by national governments and the international community to respond to emergency situations, implement rescue and relief operations, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction based on international standards, global experience and best practices.

### **CHAPTER 7. EXPECTED RESULTS**

1. Significant reduction of human losses incurred by the countries of the region as a result of disasters, including those of a transboundary nature;
2. Significant reduction of economic losses from disasters, possibility of developing sustainable infrastructure and the smooth functioning of cross-border economic ties.
3. Significant improvement of the investment climate in countries and in the region.
4. Reducing environmental risks and potential losses, successful response to climate change.
5. Countries fulfill their international commitments in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sendai Framework for DRR.

Specific targets and indicators for the implementation of this Strategy and the timescale for their achievement shall be determined and approved by the Regional Forum in accordance with the Action Plan for each stage taking into account the implementation capacity at the country and regional levels.

The adoption of this Strategy will allow for further development and transition to a new, higher quality level of regional cooperation between the CA countries in DRR and ES, which meets the vital interests of the countries in the region to ensure further sustainable development.

## **CHAPTER 8.**

### **MECHANISMS AND MAIN STAGES OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION**

The implementation of the Strategy is carried out by the emergency authorities of the Central Asian countries and the Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction - the Secretariat of the Regional Forum - the Meeting of the Heads of emergency authorities of the Central Asian countries based on the Practical Action Plans (Road Maps).

The Strategy will be pursued through the initiation, development, promotion and implementation of joint interstate and international programs and projects in disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, prevention and elimination of emergencies with the technical and financial support of the countries participating in the Regional Forum, donor agencies, international and nongovernmental organizations, academic and research organizations, and the private sector.

The Strategy will be put into practice on the basis of Action plans (Roadmaps) for the implementation of the Strategy, approved by the decisions of the Regional Forum-Meeting of the Heads of emergency authorities of the CA countries in three stages:

**Stage 1:** 2022 - 2023.

**Stage 2:** 2024 - 2026.

**Stage 3:** 2027 - 2030.

This Strategy shall be amended as necessary based on Decisions of the Regional Forum – the Meeting of the Heads of Disaster Management Authorities of the Central Asian countries.