

UN MULTI-PARTNER HUMAN  
SECURITY TRUST FUND  
FOR THE ARAL SEA REGION  
IN UZBEKISTAN



UN Multi-Partner Human  
Security Trust Fund  
for the Aral Sea Region  
in Uzbekistan

The Official Fund's Newsletter

# NEWSLETTER

November 2021, Issue 01



## CONTENTS

I	Fund at a Glance	2
II	Sustainable Results	4
III	Featured News	5
IV	Resource Mobilization and Partnerships	8
V	Programmatic Results and Updates	10
IV	Human Stories	16

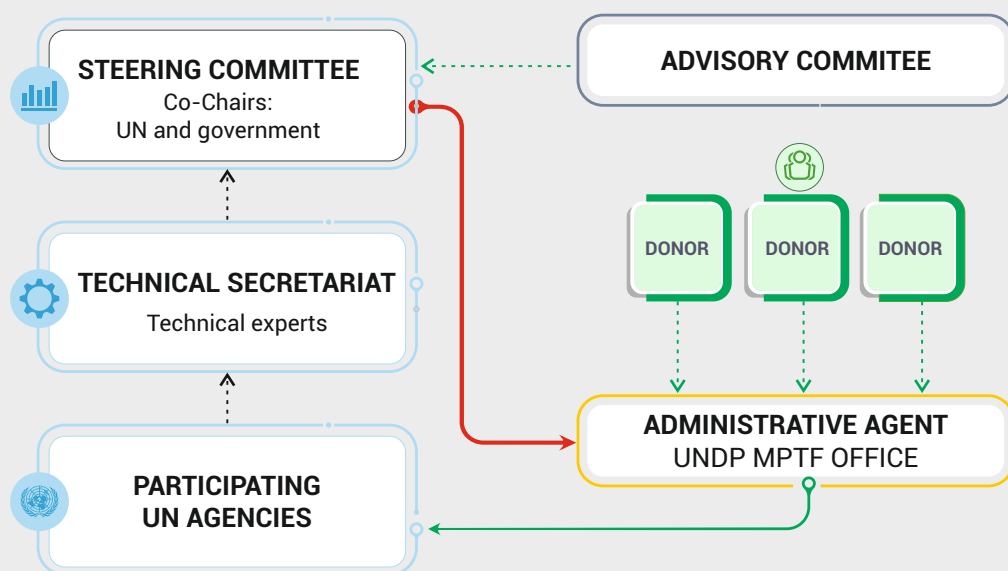
**MPHSTF:**

The UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund (MPHSTF) for the Aral Sea Region in Uzbekistan established in November 2018 on the margins of the 73rd Session of the UN General Assembly at the initiative of the Government of Uzbekistan.

**Chaired by:**

The UN Resident Coordinator and the Government of Uzbekistan

**Governance Structure:**



**Programmatic Approach:**

Human Security Concept

**Strategic Focus:**

1. Environmental security.
2. Economic security.
3. Health security.
4. Food security.
5. Social security.



**Support to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**



SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (Targets 3.4, 3.8, 3.C).



SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all (Targets 8.2, 8.4, 8.5).



SDG11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable (Targets 11.2, 11.5, 11.A).

**Resources mobilized:**

USD 15.5 million (as of November 2021)

**Programs/projects funded:**

Five (as of November 2021)

**Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs):**



1



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

United Nations  
Development Programme  
(UNDP)

2



**UNODC**

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

United Nations  
Office for Drugs and Crime  
(UNODC)

3



United Nations  
Population Fund  
(UNFPA)

4



for every child

United Nations  
Children's Fund  
(UNICEF)

5



United Nations Educational,  
Scientific and Cultural  
Organization (UNESCO)

6



Food and Agriculture  
Organization  
(FAO)

7



World Health  
Organization  
(WHO)








**Partnerships  
(over 20):**



- Ministry of Investments and Foreign Trade
- The Government of Karakalpakstan
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Makhalla and Family Affairs
- Youth Affairs Agency
- International Center of Innovational Development
- local authorities-khakimiats
- non-government organizations
- civil society organizations and others

Now on the third year of a multi-year plan to improve human security and sustainable development in the Aral Sea region following the desiccation of the Aral Sea, the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region in Uzbekistan (MPHSTF) expanded on its previous achievements. To date, the Fund contributed to sustainable development through:

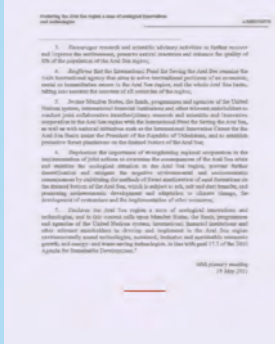
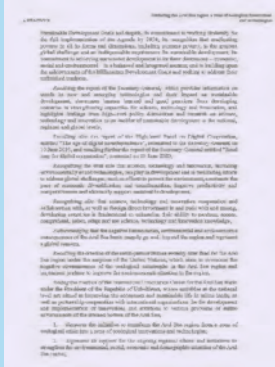
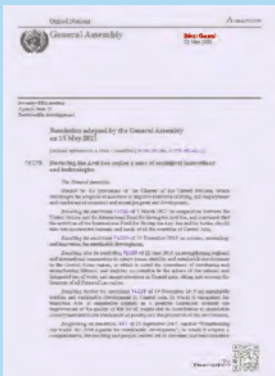
	<i>Result:</i>	<i>Total beneficiaries impacted:</i>
	Increased access to perinatal services through improved infrastructure and trainings of medical personnel that enhanced the quality of mother and newborn healthcare services.	<b>24 956</b>
	Increased access to clean drinking water in five rural communities.	<b>3 491</b>
	Enhanced income generation and employment opportunities.	<b>363</b>
	Enhanced knowledge on home-based entrepreneurship and in business facilitation skills.	<b>128</b>
	Addressed the immediate needs of vulnerable populations, strengthened human capital, and increased the resilience of youth by expanding opportunities for social innovation skills development.	<b>88</b>
<b>Overall beneficiaries impacted:</b>		<b>29 026</b>





# SECTION III

## United Nations General Assembly adopts resolution, "Declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of ecological innovations and technologies"



# Featured News



The Resolution reaffirms the UNGA's Resolution 70/1, dated 25 September 2015 entitled, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," in which the body adopted a "comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centered set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions—economic, social, and environmental—in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business."

The Resolution likewise recognizes that "science, technology, and innovation cooperation and collaboration, as well as foreign direct investment in and trade with and among developing countries, is fundamental to enhancing their ability to produce, access, comprehend, select, adapt, and use science, technology, and innovation knowledge."

It encourages the following, among others:

- Research and scientific advisory activities to further recover and improve the environment, preserve natural resources, and enhance the quality of life of the population of the Aral Sea region.
- Member States, the funds, programs, and agencies of the United Nations system, international financial institutions (IFIs), and other relevant stakeholders to conduct joint collaborative interdisciplinary research and scientific and innovative cooperation in the Aral Sea region.
- Strengthen regional cooperation in the implementation of joint actions to overcome the consequences of the Aral Sea crisis and stabilize the ecological situation in the Aral Sea region, prevent further desertification, and mitigate the negative environmental and socioeconomic consequences.
- Develop and implement environmentally sound technologies, sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and energy- and water-saving technologies, in line with goal 17.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

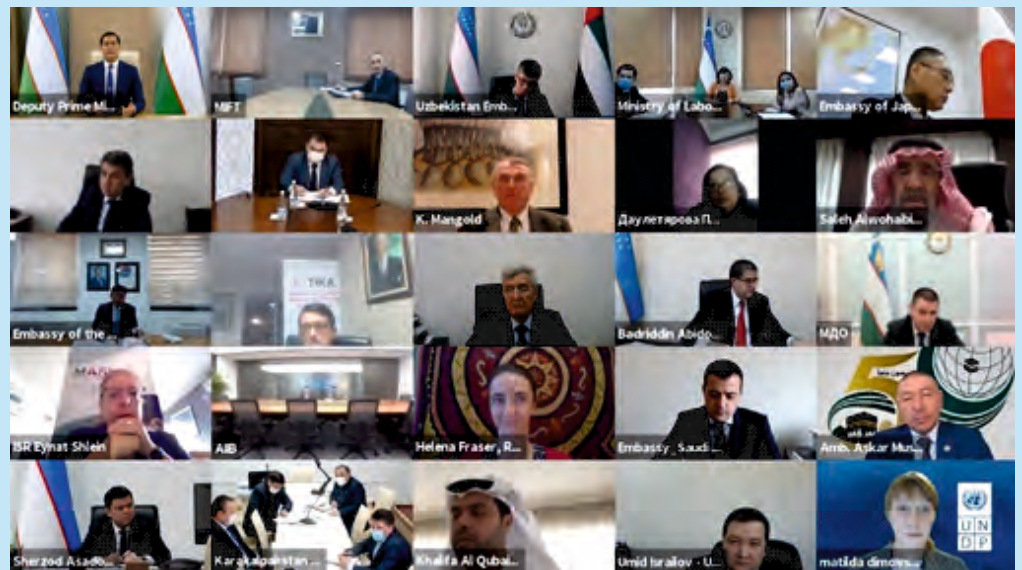
**The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan # Pp5202**

The Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was issued (PP-5202, as of 29 July 2021) to support the implementation of the UNGA resolution. A Roadmap (Appendix I) was approved, as well as the list of priority innovative projects (Appendix II), to transform the Aral Sea region from a zone of ecological and humanitarian crisis to a zone of ecological innovations and technologies.

The Decree focuses on the creation of favorable environment and development of the institutional framework for structural and transformational changes in the Aral Sea region through political and legal innovations; ensuring environmental sustainability, digitalization and implementation of innovative approaches for the rational use of natural resources in the Aral Sea region; piloting innovative technologies and mechanisms for the development of the social area and support of the population in the Aral Sea region; development of science, providing legal protection for the creation of intellectual property, as well as supporting local and international cooperation in the implementation of scientific and innovative developments in the Aral Sea region among others.

The Interdepartmental Commission was created to implement the Decree (Appendix III). The composition of the interdepartmental working groups to ensure timely and high-quality execution, monitoring, and control of activities identified in the "Roadmap" and innovative projects was also determined (Appendix IV).

**Advisory Committee - a single platform for sustainable development of the Aral Sea region**



The Advisory Committee for sustainable development in the Aral Sea Region was established on 1 December 2020 under the auspices of MPHSTF. The Committee is chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade, on behalf of the Government of Uzbekistan. To date, over 80 representatives from IFIs, UN agencies, international NGOs, the private sector, and civil society organizations comprise the members of the Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee (AC) aims to support a coherent sustainable development approach for the region towards accelerating sustainable development and support the concept of the "Aral Sea as a zone of ecological innovation and green technologies."

During its inaugural meeting, participants agreed to establish two working groups and a technical-level working group, comprised of the members of the AC working groups will:

*\* focus on sustainable investments and guide and oversee the systems innovation approach for sustainable development of the Aral Sea region, building on Uzbekistan's sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, as well as other relevant national and regional development priorities.*

*\* strengthen the visibility of the Aral Sea region to raise awareness of the international community about the situation in the Aral Sea region as well as effectively communicate the results of joint initiatives.*

The technical group will focus on data and assessments to provide evidence and rationale for portfolio analysis and investments.

The Working Group on Sustainable Investments developed the Integrated Roadmap to combine all the interventions into a coherent action plan of sustainable development of the region. Data repository is one of the key outputs of the Technical Group on Data and Assessments. The Visibility Working Group endorsed the Terms of Reference and adopted the Work Plan for 2021.

The United Nations in Uzbekistan and the Government of Uzbekistan jointly held a Side Event on the Sustainable Development of the Aral Sea Region on the margins of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) on 9 November 2021. It aimed to encourage Member States, programs, and agencies of the UN system, international financial institutions, and development partners to enhance institutional cooperation on the Aral Sea, including but not limited to the promotion of the Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund, a unified platform to ensure resource flow transparency and accountability in the Aral Sea Region. The side event also provided an opportunity to call for effective cooperation and strategic vision among development partners towards innovative development in the Aral Sea Region. It likewise advocated support towards the Advisory Committee for sustainable development of the Aral Sea Region, which is a panel of stakeholders supporting sustainable investment development, data assessment, and awareness-raising in the Aral Sea.

On 22 November 2021 an international conference was held in Tashkent. The Conference brought together representatives of government departments, international organizations, institutions, the United Nations. It focused on reducing the impact of the drought of the Aral Sea on the lifestyle of the communities of the Aral Sea region, the natural environment and the conservation of biodiversity. It also provided a platform for an academic and intercultural exchange.

In light of a recently adopted UN GA resolution, participants highlighted the world experience, the introduction of innovations and environmentally friendly technologies in the Aral Sea region, introduction of energy and water saving technologies, prevention of desertification and the development of ecotourism as a key in the transformation of the Aral Sea region into zone of environmental innovations and technologies.

Source: <https://www.uzdaily.uz/en/post/69693>

**Uzbekistan commits to strengthening joint efforts to tackle the Aral Sea crisis, a global environmental problem**

**Let's turn the Aral Sea region into a zone of environmental innovations and technologies."- International Conference**

# Resource Mobilization and Partnerships



The MPHSTF for the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan is supported by the following esteemed donors:

*Contributing partner:*

*Amount Committed:*

	Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan	USD 6 500 000
	European Union	USD 5 565 610
	Government of Finland	USD 1 123 237
	Government of Norway	USD 1 117 765
	Government of the Republic of Korea	USD 1 000 000
	Alwaleed Philanthropies	USD 200 000
<b>Total funding:</b>		<b>USD 15 506 642</b>

Source: <https://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/ARL00>





## Update:



In February 2021, the first contributing partner of MPHSTF – the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan – provided its third tranche in the amount of USD 1.5 million to the MPHSTF under the Standard Administrative Arrangement (SAA). This, as well as previous contributions from the Governments of Norway, Finland, the European Union, and the Republic of Korea, will be used to finance development programs under the Third Call for Proposals.

It is important to note that the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan became the first donor of the MPHSTF and continues to support the activities of the Fund. From 2019 to date, the Government has allocated USD 5 million for the development programs of the MPHSTF.



Alwaleed Philanthropies, a philanthropic organization chaired by HRH Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Al Saud and based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, made a generous contribution of USD 200,000 to the Fund in May 2021. Alwaleed Philanthropies made history as the first private philanthropic organization to extend financial contributions to the MPHSTF.

This generous gesture is a testament to Alwaleed's unfaltering support to overcoming the world's gravest problems and illustrates that the greatest threats can only be achieved through unified human involvement and responsibility. The new strategy of Alwaleed Philanthropies focuses on environment and innovations, which is consistent with the MPHSTF's priority areas and fully supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Aral Sea Region.

The UN in Uzbekistan recognizes the trailblazing and benevolent initiative of Alwaleed Philanthropies towards sustainable development in the Aral Sea Region. With Alwaleed Philanthropies' partnership with the MPHSTF, the UN is confident that broader sets of solutions will reach vulnerable groups in the Aral Sea Region including women, youth, children, and the elderly.

The support from Alwaleed, combined with contributions from the Governments of Uzbekistan, Norway, Finland, Republic of Korea, and the European Union, will allow the MPHSTF to support more programs that are responsive to the needs of the people of the Aral Sea Region. It will also enable the MPHSTF to sharpen its focus on the impacts of and solutions to the triple planetary crisis – climate, nature, pollution – in the Aral Sea Region.



## 1

### Improvement the quality of perinatal care service to most vulnerable mothers and newborns

unicef   
for every child



**Duration:** August 2019 – April 2021

**Budget:** USD 1 619 666

**Participating UN Organizations:** UNICEF, UNFPA



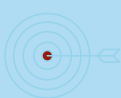
#### Objectives:

- Ensure the population's access to perinatal services through infrastructure improvement.
- Increase the quality of mother and newborn healthcare services.
- Increase families' awareness on health and nutrition.



#### Expected Results:

- Secondary level perinatal care facilities have improved their infrastructure and are equipped with modern equipment to ensure access of the population to evidence-based and equity-perinatal health services.
- Health care providers at second level perinatal care facilities have increased capacity to provide quality of care, counselling, and support to pregnant women and newborns.



#### Joint Programme Achievements:

##### 1. Infrastructure improvement:

- 150 units of modern medical equipment to improve mothers' and newborns' care were supplied to the target facilities.
- Renovation and upgrade of the obsolete infrastructure were completed in three target districts.

##### 2. Capacity building:

- 730 healthcare providers were trained on evidence-based maternal and newborn survival practices.
- A total of 60% of all cases of perinatal deaths and 30% of all near-miss maternal cases were reviewed and a plan to prevent future occurrences was developed.



### 3. Impact on Beneficiaries

- 70% of Karakalpakstan's population is served with modernized target inter-district perinatal centers in Kungrad and Beruniy districts and Nukus city;
- 12,159 mothers and 12,067 newborns benefited from the upgraded infrastructure and improved quality of care at the target perinatal centers.
- The survival rate of newborns in the 1,000 to 2,499-gram weight category increased significantly from 76% in 2018 to 91% in 2020.
- The implementation of family-centered and evidence-based practices raised satisfaction among mothers from 66% to 84%.
- The antenatal mortality rate decreased by almost 40% (five cases in 2019 vs. three cases in 2020) in the Nukus perinatal center.
- Early neonatal deaths decreased by nearly 30% (35 cases in 2019 vs. 25 in 2020) in the Beruniy perinatal center.
- Early neonatal deaths decreased by 17% (12 cases in 2019 vs. 10 cases in 2020) in the Kungrad perinatal center.
- Two facilities (the Kungrad and Nukus City Perinatal Centers) reached the target of 100% of post-partum women covered by standard obstetric monitoring in the early post-partum period to prevent near-miss and maternal death cases.
- Initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour of life among stable newborns born by caesarean section in two facilities (Beruniy and the Regional Perinatal Centers) increased from 10% to 60-70%.

## 2

### Addressing the urgent human insecurities in the Aral Sea region through promoting sustainable rural development

**Duration:** September 2019 – August 2021

**Budget:** USD 1 463 900

**Participating UN Organizations:** UNDP, UNESCO



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.



#### Objectives:

- Provide access to clean drinking water.
- Empower the rural population in creating sources of income and promote the sustainable development of tourism in Karakalpakstan.
- Promote afforestation initiatives, including by collecting data and studying the dried bed of the Aral Sea.

## Expected Results:

### 1. Access to clean drinking water

### 2. Creation of sources of income and promotion of sustainable tourism

### 3. Promotion of climate change adaptation actions through evidence based afforestation initiatives

- Installation and repair of water treatment facility at the water treatment and distribution station in Tazakonys as well as installation of water pipe networks in the Beltau and Mulik communities (Takhtakupir district).
- Increased capacity of the community in managing water treatment and distribution stations through the creation of the "Drinking Water Association," dissemination of knowledge, and recognition of best practices for subsequent adaptation and replication.
- Creation of six small and medium-sized enterprises to produce marketable products for local and regional markets.
- Improvement of the infrastructure in the Forestry Department and pasture cooperatives of the Takhtakupir district.

## Joint Programme Achievements:

- Five infrastructure projects on water purification and supply of drinking water implemented in Takhtakupir district, with total beneficiaries reaching 3,491 people in five rural communities
- Development of training module and brochures on Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) for the population were developed. A total of 150 people were trained in WASH rules.
- 13 business projects were supported (milk processing, soap production, forage processing, production of reed slabs, dental services, and production of halva). Over 50 rural people employed. A total of 45 women and youth were trained on entrepreneurship development. Over 70 farmers were trained on animal husbandry and value chain management.
- 198 specialized staff were trained on the development of sustainable tourism, hospitality sector, ecotourism, community-based tourism, as well as entrepreneurship approach on building sustainable tourism. A study on the coverage of the tourist potential was conducted.
- Two research expeditions were conducted on the dried seabed of the Aral Sea, covering 1.2 million ha of land. As a result, more than 30 plant species from 1,500 different points were identified and were recommended for planting on the dried seabed. The book "Monitoring of dried bed of Aral Sea" was developed in Russian and English.
- A Needs Assessment of the Takhtakupir Forestry Department was conducted to define their institutional, material-technical, and human resources capacity and needs. As a result, 17 types of machinery and equipment were supplied to Forestry Department. A nursery on 49 hectares of land to grow seedlings of drought resistant plants was established. Three cooperatives received technical support for the establishment of nurseries. These measures helped increase the capacity of planting saxaul on the dried bottom of the Aral Sea six times, as they were planted on 450–500 hectares per year before interventions, and on 3,000 hectares after Joint Programme interventions.

# 3

## Investing in a resilient future of Karakalpakstan by improving health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene, and well-being of adolescents and by harnessing the talents of youth during and after COVID-19

unicef  
for every child



**Duration:** January 2021 – December 2022

**Budget:** USD 3 498 784

**Participating UN Organizations:** UNICEF, UNFPA, UNODC



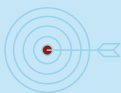
### Objectives:

- Address the immediate needs of vulnerable populations, including adolescents, in terms of safe and clean schools and health care facilities, and other health and nutrition needs.
- Strengthen human capital and the resilience of youth by expanding opportunities for social innovation skills development in three districts (Muynak, Kungrad, and Bozatau).



### Expected Results:

- WASH infrastructure in selected 15 schools and in 20 medical facilities in three target districts (Muynak, Bozatau, and Kungrad) will be improved.
- 700 health and education workers will be trained on WASH.
- 26,000 children will be dewormed and 10,000 girls will be protected from anemia.
- 1,500 families will be trained on healthy lifestyles.
- 280 teachers and trainers will be trained on medical and entrepreneurial skills.
- Distance learning systems in 35 medical institutions will be installed.
- Distance education for 1,300 medical workers be provided.
- 20 medical institutions labs for sexually transmitted infections (STI) diagnostics will be equipped.
- 200 medical workers will be trained.
- 400 young people will be trained in social innovation and social entrepreneurship.
- 40 social innovation projects will be implemented.



### Programme Achievements as of November 2021:

- UNODC trained 30 facilitators to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Public Education in Karakalpakstan to deliver family skills training programs.
- UNFPA trained 50 schoolteachers and adolescent leaders to use peer to peer methodology, and 24 peer educators to increase capacity to develop and deliver life/transferrable, health, and soft skills programs of the secondary school staff and adolescents. Moreover, 20 youth workers and psychologists were trained to equip young people with socio-emotional skills.
- UNICEF is in the process of developing a knowledge hub (<https://bilim.tma.uz/>), which will serve as a one-stop digital platform for communication, information sharing, and a repository of all training materials and resources on health topics for healthcare workers (HCWs) in the country to support telemedicine and distance learning systems between primary, secondary, and tertiary level facilities.
- UNICEF equipped 88 young people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, with social innovation and life skills, and supported 15 youth-led projects with seed funding and mentoring in incubation.

# 4

## Unleashing young people's and vulnerable citizens' creativity and innovation by strengthening their adaptive capacity to address the economic and food insecurities in the exposed communities of the Aral Sea region

**Duration:** January 2021 – June 2023

**Budget:** USD 2,100,000

**Participating UN Organizations:** UNDP, UNFPA, FAO



### Objectives:

- Reduce the vulnerabilities of unemployed, unskilled youth and women, and returning migrants through the empowerment and promotion of essential entrepreneurial skills, and youth-led innovations in the region.
- Create an enabling environment for income generation for rural populations by promoting innovative agriculture practices.
- Enable the development of smart communities through digitalization, better access to social infrastructure, and community engagement.



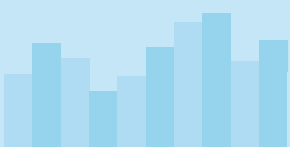
### Expected Results:

- Three mono-vocational training centers will be supported, 90 youth and women will be trained on jobs most in demand in the market; training for 360 women in home-based entrepreneurship will be facilitated, and 10 family and individual entrepreneurs will be supported.
- Evidence-based research on environmental protection of Aral Sea region fostering innovative solutions to rehabilitate and upgrade the existing irrigation system and agricultural land restoration will be conducted.
- 795 farmers and young people in the application of new agricultural practices, and creation and support of nine demonstration plots (three fruit tree nurseries, three fishery farms and three veterinary points) will be trained.
- Three social infrastructure projects will be supported by ensuring access of the population to clean drinking water and electricity, repair of schools and medical institutions, and training of 18 specialists and 200 schoolchildren.



### Programme Achievements as of November 2021:

- UNDP trained 30 vulnerable unemployed women and girls from target districts on cooking. A total of 30 young people from marginalized and vulnerable communities were trained on plumber skills.
- 18 women leaders from three districts were trained to become facilitators to promote gender equality in their communities and strengthened in teamwork skills, social skills, family planning, family budget planning, entrepreneurial skills, and business plan development to empower other women in their communities. These leaders further trained 110 women in their communities (45 in Kungrad district, 34 in Muynak, and 31 in Bozatau districts) and transferred the skills and knowledge to help create new entrepreneurship and income-generating family or individual business opportunities.
- Nine workshops on community mobilization and the development of Community Development Plans (CDP) were held. A total of 279 people took part in workshops with majority of participants consisting of women included in the "iron notebook" and "women's notebook," and young people included in the "youth notebook." Nine CDPs were developed covering 45 projects of which 40 are social projects while five are agricultural and economic projects, to strengthen social cohesion through youth engagement in community planning, decision-making, and rehabilitation process.



# 5

## Towards universal health coverage and security in Karakalpakstan (UHC+S)



**Duration:** January 2021 – September 2023

**Budget:** USD 425 379

**Participating UN Organizations:** WHO

### Objectives:

- Assess the health system of the Republic of Karakalpakstan for universal health coverage.

### Expected Results:

- The needs and financial capabilities of the population and the potential of the health sector will be studied.
- The report on various service delivery models, including a proposal for a multidisciplinary hospital in Muynak and recommendations on options for a public-private partnership model, will be developed.
- A total of 150 health workers will be trained according to the recommended service delivery and financing model.

- The local population has been consulted on its health needs and vision for health sector investment. The gender and community engagement experts interviewed representatives of khakimyat (local government) of Muynaq district and met with makhalla leaders and their deputies responsible for health work.

- A refined proposal for health sector investment in Muynaq and surrounding region was developed. This proposal is based on a comprehensive and integrated network of primary health care and secondary care services, with a more fit-for-purpose hospital in Muynaq and an upgraded referral hospital in Kungrad. It would increase the number of beneficiaries as well as the scope and quality of the benefits they receive. It would invest not only in new fixed facility infrastructure and equipment, but also in mobile teams, telemedicine and human resources, including family doctors, nurses and community volunteers. Although smaller than originally envisaged, a new 60-bed Muynaq hospital could be developed as a model of green, blue and resilient health infrastructure.

**Programme Achievements as of November 2021:**



## Gulnara's Life

Gulnara was born on December 2, 2020 after only 30 weeks of gestation. She weighed just 1,000 grams. After two months in an incubator at the Neonatal Intensive Care ward of the Nukus City Perinatal Center, she now weighs 2.450 kilograms.

Gulnara's mother was admitted with a history of miscarriage. She suffered from multiple health conditions, including jaundice, arterial hypertension, and intoxication, which led to premature labor. The head of the department, Dr. Kahramon Kabulov, who performed an emergency caesarean section to assist with Gulnara's birth, explained that Gulnara would have had slim chances for survival just a few years before. Due to up-to-date, evidence-based, and advanced newborn care resuscitation protocols developed by the American Academy of Paediatrics and recommended by WHO and UNICEF, as well as the latest equipment and upgraded infrastructure, maternity staff can now save preterm babies like Gulnara.



Photo 1. Newborn baby girl Gulnara after two months in the incubator, Nukus perinatal center.



Photo 2. After birth care, Nukus perinatal center

*"We fight every day to help babies survive, even the ones weighing 1,000 grams,"* said Dr. Jeyran Sherieva, the neonatologist doctor trained during the recent 'Helping Babies Breathe' training held by UNICEF, who oversaw Gulnara's care. *"Before, babies weighing less than 1.1 kilograms had minimal chances of surviving. We thought they were too small to have a chance of survival. We didn't have the equipment, skills, or knowledge we needed,"* concluded Dr. Sherieva.

Within the framework of UNICEF and UNFPA work, the JP assisted three perinatal facilities in Karakalpakstan (in Nukus City, Kungrad, and Beruniy) to enhance the capacity of neonatologists, obstetricians, and resuscitation specialists to strengthen staff capacities through comprehensive training and support. UNICEF and UNFPA also equipped the perinatal centre's new Neonatal Intensive Care Unit with the latest medical equipment (ventilators, oxygenators, laryngoscopes, and others) and training equipment. Today many more premature babies that come through the perinatal centre have a real chance of survival.

*"The new equipment and technologies help more children survive and prevent complications through their proper application,"* said Dr. Kabulov. *"Leading national experts have helped us utilize the new equipment and practices to the greatest level. I am so happy with our accomplishments."*

At the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, little Gulnara is getting better every day. She can now see light and hear sounds and uses her own strength to drink her mother's breast milk. Once she reaches 2.5 kilograms, she will be released to go home. Her parents have been trained on how to best care for her and are looking forward to her arrival at home. They say everything is ready for her, and that she will know nothing but love. It is expected that once the target perinatal centres receive the status of second level referral facilities in 2021, they will extend their specialized service to mothers and newborns from neighboring districts as well.



Photo 3. Gulnara's mother at Nukus perinatal center.



## "Khurliman-Aru Takhta" - business of cleanness and health

*"Due to the pandemic outbreak, we lost our incomes"* remembers Arukhan Seitmuratova from the Takhtakupir district of Karakalpakstan as she looked back to 2020. A challenging year, by all means, 2020 was the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and forced many young people and their parents to show economic ingenuity and entrepreneurial initiative. Supporting such ambitions while promoting the principles of gender equality with the use of economic instruments of the concept of human security is the basis of the UN Development Programme in Karakalpakstan.

Guided by this concept, the UNDP-UNESCO Joint project "Addressing the urgent human insecurities in the Aral Sea region by promoting sustainable rural development" supported the initiative of the Khurliman-Aru Takhta Family Enterprise in soap production. The Joint Project Selection Committee reviewed and approved co-financing for the project.

In December 2020, the necessary equipment was delivered to the workshop. Together with the head of this project Arukhan Seitmuratova, the initiative enabled the employment of three young people.

According to Arukhan, the idea to start making soap came up at a family gathering.

"We had some trading experience. We decided to organize a family business and start a small production. We called it "Khurliman-Aru Takhta," after the name of our daughter Khurliman, my abbreviated name Aru and my place of residence, since for my fellow countrymen Takhtakupir is simply "Takhta." The pandemic encouraged us to determine the choice of the project. When it started, we realized that laundry soap would be in high demand. It is necessary to keep your hands clean and use disinfectant, that was proven over the years during the pandemic. Secondly, the use of laundry soap for washing and cleaning is an established habit of local residents," said Arukhan.

At the moment, the daily production capacity of the family enterprise "Khurliman-Aru-Takhta" is over 600 units of laundry soap for residents of the Takhtakupir district. Before launching the new initiative, though, there was a lot to learn. In relating her story, Khurliman often used the words "for the first time." Indeed, in many issues, aspiring entrepreneurs did not have the experience, but, as people say, the right desire and ingenuity is half of the battle!

*"When we and other entrepreneurs were invited to a meeting at the khokimiyat, we learned about the call for bids of the UNDP-UNESCO Joint project, which is carried out with the financial support of the MPTF. We quickly developed our own business plan and submitted an application. At the same time, we studied the production and technological process - where to get raw materials, in what conditions it should be stored and processed, etc. On the day of bids assessment, for the first time in our life, we spoke with the Selection Committee online! We successfully passed the qualifying round, and then carried out preparatory work for the acceptance of the equipment,"* said Khurliman.

The official unemployment rate in the Takhtakupir district is 6.3%. At the same time, more than 32.7% of economically active people receive unstable income by performing seasonal work. In its activities, the UNDP-UNESCO project funded by the United Nations Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan focuses on strengthening economic security for vulnerable communities. The project's initiatives are aimed at creating new conditions and opportunities for running and developing business and providing support to women and youth living in target communities.



Photo 4. Beneficiary of a small business project on soap production



UN Multi-Partner Human  
Security Trust Fund  
for the Aral Sea Region  
in Uzbekistan

## UN MULTI-PARTNER HUMAN SECURITY TRUST FUND FOR THE ARAL SEA REGION IN UZBEKISTAN

Resident Coordinator Office  
4, Taras Shevchenko Street  
Tashkent 100029 Uzbekistan  
Tel: +998 78 120 34 50  
Fax: +998 78 120 34 85

 @un\_uzbekistan

 UN.Uzbekistan

 un.uzbekistan

 [www.uzbekistan.un.org/en](http://www.uzbekistan.un.org/en)

 [www.aral.mptf.uz](http://www.aral.mptf.uz)

Funded by the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan



The Government  
of the Republic  
of Uzbekistan



The Government  
of Norway



European  
Union



The Government  
of Finland



The Government  
of the Republic  
of Korea



Alwaleed  
Philanthropies

© All rights reserved.

UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan, 2021.