



Aral Sea: Past and Future

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ARAL SEA PROBLEM

- Aral Sea- worlds 4th largest Lake **dried up**:
 - Area of sea decreased from 100 000 ha in 1960 to 15 000 in 1990
 - *Fish varieties* reduced to 6 from being 32 in 1960
 - *Water birds*: from 319 to 160
 - *Wildlife* from 70 to 32
- 5 million hectare of **new desert** in Central Asia with sand and salt storms, desertification
- Ecosystems are destroyed: tugai forests and **delta ecosystem**

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF ARAL SEA PROBLEM

- Human **health** problems and living conditions
- Degradation of **local economy and livelihood opportunities**: fishing, hunting, short term tourism
- Lost of **cultural heritage** for local population
- Increased **environmental migration** (internal and external)



<https://cont.ws/@vitimbabi4ev/1116531>

COOPERATION ON ARAL SEA PROBLEM

○ **Institutional measures:**

- Regional institutions were set up: IFAS, ICSD and CAREC
- Agreement on cooperation in Aral Sea Basin, Ashgabat Declaration, Nukus and Kzyl-Orda declarations: political will and support
- Aral Sea Basin programmes 1,2 and 3

○ **Technical and technological measures:**

- restoration and protection of delta lakes (Uzbekistan)
- Kokaral Dam, river banks protection (Kazakhstan)

COOPERATION ON ARAL SEA PROBLEM

- **Measures to support population (Social measures):**
 - Access to drinking water
 - Improving infrastructure
 - Credit provision for creation of local jobs
 - Small scale initiatives

COOPERATION ON ARAL SEA PROBLEM

- Institutional set up: International Fund for Saving Aral Sea (IFAS)- high level **policy fora and coordination efforts**
- **No consolidated** institutional position have been established. IFAS is still nationalized
- Instruments of cooperation: Aral Sea Basin programmes from 1st until 4th- **prioritization of the needs**
- Strong focus on **technical and social interventions**, with less focus on preventing of the causes
- Mainly focusing on humanitarian and technical help from outside: **international support**
- No or **limited vision** of the Aral Sea future

ASSESSMENT OF THE COOPERATION ON ARAL SEA PROBLEM

- Aral Sea problem brought **institutional cooperation** at the regional level
- Focus- **attracting maximum of international support** for environment and water problems in Central Asia region
- Real work- **country based**, more of social and technical in nature
- Regional institution are **weakened and mandates are outdated**
- Political environment for cooperation is **improved and multitude of approaches** are emerging
- Countries will develop and propose more of **pragmatic and implementable approaches**
- **Regional institutions** on Aral Sea will: (i) continue weaken or (ii) re-established in different formats or (iii) more of bi-lateral efforts will prevail.

FUTURE OF COOPERATION ON ARAL SEA PROBLEM

- **Science and research** aspects:
 - Continuous **monitoring and assessment** of “new situation” in Aral Sea and delta
 - Systematization of **“lessons”** from Aral Sea for prevention of new emerging problems
 - Understanding **adaptation strategies and capacities** of both human and environment
 - Trying to create **synergies between countries** efforts in Aral Sea area

FUTURE OF COOPERATION ON ARAL SEA PROBLEM

- Setting up “Aral Sea Observatory”:
- **Provide policy analysis and recommendations** for the decision making on long-term environmental, socio-economic interventions in the Aral -Kum
- Regular and systematic knowledge exchange, expertise development among academic network within and outside Central Asia on Aral-Kum- conducting **bi-annual Aral Sea International Forums**
- **Economic planning and investment guidance for new enterprises and production systems** for the Aral-Kum region, providing forecasting and investment insurance schemes for the business and investors
- **Development of Aral Sea scenarios for the next 50-100 years**
- **Trigger innovative ideas and solutions** to the problem by involving business and other stakeholders

CENTRAL ASIA REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (CAREC) INSTITUTE

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