

**Seventh meeting of the Aarhus Convention and PRTR Protocol Capacity Building
Coordination**

the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC)

Tatiana Shakirova, CAREC manager of ESD Programme
Veronica Yudina, CAREC stakeholder relations manager
Ludmila Kiktenko, CAREC resource mobilization coordinator

15 June 2013

10:45-11:30 Current and planned activities carried out by the Secretariat and partner organizations

Tour de table – participants will be invited to present briefly on-going and planned activities related to the implementation of the Convention focusing on updates for the years 2011-2014. The intention is to focus on specific aspects of projects and activities, such as geographical scope, target groups, available and required funding, challenges encountered in relation to the provisions of the Convention that they address, including issues of:

1. INTRODUCTION: Tatiana Shakirova, CAREC:

Despite of the fact that for the last three years CAREC does not have a special “Public Initiatives support programme” because of financial reasons, we continue our work in assisting Central Asian countries in implementation of the Aarhus Convention in general, and its pillars on access to information and public participation in decision-making on environmental issues, specifically.

Based on the previous experience and in cooperation with our partners in Central Asia - NGO “EcoIdea”, CARNet and EcoIS networks, we facilitate the process of environmental information collection, adaptation and dissemination widely among stakeholders in Central Asia and outside.

All CAREC projects contribute to improving the capacity of local stakeholders through awareness (AWARE), “Green Pack for Central Asia”, thematic seminars (ESD, NAMA, IWRM, reused waters, etc.), involvement in decision-making process (IWRM Plan for Ili-Balkhash, Aral-Syrdaria, PES schemes), transboundary cooperation on local level IWRM on small basins Isfara, Aspara and Ugam, etc.).

CAREC considers capacity-development activities in close relation with the second pillar of the Aarhus Convention - public participation in decision-making on environmental issues, because advanced capacity helps to change the way of thinking, change our behaviour, develop our skills and competences and make more sustainable decisions today and in future.

In order to equip Central Asian people with knowledge of and skills in sustainable development, making them more competent and confident and increasing their opportunities for acting for a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature and with concern for social values, gender equity and cultural diversity, CAREC promotes SD principles, methodologies and SD key themes by means of:

- raising awareness and practical experience on SD;
- facilitating sub-regional inter- government, -sector and -agency cooperation for SD;
- supporting sub-regional dialogues and networking for SD;
- developing capacity on ESD for different target groups.

One of the good examples is the **project “Central Asian Leadership Programme on Environment and Sustainable Development” – CALPESD**, designed for emerging leaders and professionals from government, and private sector and aimed to provide a comprehensive assessment of sustainability issues in the context of global challenges and CA needs and priorities.

It was started by UNEP and Regional Resource Centre of Asian Pacific (RRC.AP) in 2010 in cooperation and with support of Nazarbayev University, AIT, Kazakh Business Council for SD (KBCSD) and CAREC in parallel with the 6-th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development of the Asian-Pacific region (MCED-6) in Astana in September 2010.

The 2-nd CALPESD was conducted on the eve of the 7-th Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” in Astana-2011, in cooperation with UNEP, OSCE Centre in Astana, RRC.AP and Kazakh Business Council for SD in CAREC, Almaty. Participants from CA governments, NGOs, universities, and business society interested in environmental protection, SD and green economy issues and resource persons from CAREC, NGOs, international organizations and business sector took part in the 2nd CALPESD. **We plan to conduct the 3-rd CALPESD in September 2012 in cooperation and with support of UNEP and Government of Norway and would like to invite all interested partners for cooperation.**

CAREC in cooperation and with support of UNEP, Government of Norway, AIT, RRC.AP UNEP and Kazakhstani Business Council for Sustainable Development (KBCSD) are in process of preparation of the 3rd **CALPESD in Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, during 17-28 September 2012**. The 9-day Programme is designed for emerging leaders and professionals from government, private sector and civil society across Central Asia. The programme aims to provide a comprehensive assessment of sustainability issues in the context of global challenges and Central Asian needs and priorities.

The Programme is intended to:

- Stimulate all-round thinking and decision making abilities for emerging and mid-career leaders from the government, civil society and private enterprises in Central Asia;
- Promote integration of environment and sustainable development issues for effective decision making;
- Networking on the issues of the Green Economy, Climate Change, Water and Water related issues between emerging leaders in Central Asia representing Government, civil society and the private sector.

Participants: 25 leaders and promising professionals from governments, NGOs and business society across Central Asia, and more than 15 resource persons from CAREC, NGOs, KBASD, and international organizations and business sector are invited to take part in this Leadership Programme. The Leadership Programme will be convened at CAREC's headquarters in Almaty.

2. Access to information, including electronic information tools – Veronica Yudina, CAREC

- At present a key measure for facilitating the process of active information dissemination and awareness raising in Central Asia is establishment of an efficient reporting system through the key international initiatives and mechanisms, such as EIONET, SEIS, etc.
- The new “AWARE” project, started by CAREC in 2012 and will be implemented till 2014, will provide awareness for public not only about the most important and key environmental issues of immediate concern, but also provide information on how those issues can be addressed. For example, information about the gaps within existing environmental reporting practices in Central Asian countries will be completed by information about possible solutions to organize a vast array of already collected environmental data and information in a coherent and integrated system for environmental information based on access, sharing and interoperability – Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS).
- This activity aims to improve the accessibility of environmental information in Central Asia, in a form of coherent and integrated SEIS. Promotion of understanding for and motivation of Central Asian relevant authorities that the quality, timeliness and availability of environmental information are the critical factors of success for making progress in implementation of any environmental strategy. Providing information about SEIS, CAREC assists to Central Asian countries to put a regular reporting process in the right frames accepted by the most of the UNECE members' countries.

3. Access to funds – Ludmila Kiktenko, CAREC resource mobilization coordinator

Unfortunately financial resources and opportunities for NGOs to promote the Aarhus Convention in Central Asian countries, to participate in the process, to have networking opportunities even on the regional level are extremely limited in our region.

There are no state orders in Kazakhstan (the only country that apply this financial instrument). There are no thematic programmes of donors...

Not only activities related Aarhus Convention are in very difficult financial situation, the independent NGO sector in hardly exists in our states.

CAREC is a rare exclusion of the rule when NGO become organization of one leader... and that leader because an expert who is working in international projects.

Even we contribute to better implementation of certain aims of the Aarhus Convention, we do realise the need in more direct activities.

We regularly implement efforts to attract money for supporting and developing environmental NGOs in Central Asia, and even being an organization experienced in winning grants, we are still in process of writing proposals.

Dear partners, we are very open to discuss any opportunity to cooperate, to implement joint resource mobilization efforts, to lead or be a partner in consortia on calls related to the Aarhus Convention, supporting and developing NGOs that cover our Central Asian region.