



## **REPORT**

### **United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA)**

#### **23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment**

(2 October 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

#### **Organization**

1. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Working Group (WG) on Water, Energy and Environment of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) (hereinafter referred to as SPECA WG or WG) was held on 2 October 2019 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
2. Thirty-eight participants attended the meeting, including delegations of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Working Group regretted that the delegation of Afghanistan did not attend the meeting. Representatives of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC), the German Society for International cooperation (GIZ), the Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation of the Asian Development Bank, the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (ICSD), the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC IFAS), the Scientific Information Centre, Inter-State Commission for Water Coordination (SIC ICWC), the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy (UNRCCA) and the GEF IFAS Agency also attended the meeting (see List of participants in Annex 3).
3. Mr. Vadim Sokolov, the Head of the GEF IFAS Agency, Uzbekistan was elected as Chair of the session. The Director of the UNECE Environment Division, Mr. Marco Keiner, welcomed the delegates.

#### **Background and Expectations**

In 2015, the UN member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address crucial issues facing the global community. It became clear that it was important to define a limited number of achievable SDG targets, which would need cross-border collaboration in the SPECA setting. To this end, at the 10th session of the SPECA Governing Council (Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 11 November 2015) representatives of SPECA participating countries adopted a Declaration reiterating their commitment to the Programme as a platform for promoting cooperation in the SPECA subregion and achieving sustainable development. To reflect these changes and its support to the implementation of the SDGs, the WG agreed at its twenty-second session (held on 9 October 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan,) to finalize the ToR of the Group. Also, the Working Group requested at its 22nd session to explore opportunities to develop a new SPECA Strategy on water, energy and environment mainstreaming SDGs and reflecting new development challenges in the SPECA region.

To this end, the main objectives of this Session of the Working Group were to finalize and agree on its draft ToR and to discuss the Concept of the SPECA Strategy on Water, Energy and Environment that can be used as a basis for development of the Strategy.

## Meeting proceedings

### **Agenda item 3: Programme of the Working Group implementation in the area of water-energy-environment in 2018-2019**

Representatives of UNECE (Batyr Hajiyeu and Viktor Badaker) reported on activities and progress made during last year on the projects implemented under the umbrella of SPECA, in particular on the sub-regional cooperation in the sphere of dam safety in Central Asia, the project on water quality funded by Finland and several energy projects aimed at SDG7 implementation executed during the reporting period. Batyr Hajiyeu informed participants on the results of the Regional meeting on dam safety (1-3 May 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan), including on the agreement concluded with the Slovak Agency on Dams Management to host a training-workshop for Central Asian experts that took place in October 2019 in Bratislava, and on the willingness of Central Asian countries to develop a regional agreement on dam safety. Meeting participants were also informed on the visit to Uzbekistan organized for the specialists of national hydrometeorological departments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to study hydrobiological analysis. Mr. Viktor Badaker elaborated on the projects focused on assistance to countries in implementing their national sustainable energy action plans; bringing together UNECE internationally applicable framework for the classification, management and reporting of energy and mineral reserves and resources – the United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Reserves and Resources 2009 (UNFC); development of methodology for assessing wind and solar energy potential including requirements for information on wind and solar energy potentials and key principles for development of regional wind and solar energy programmes; and development of the energy efficiency standards in buildings. In his presentation via skype, Mr. Arun Jacob, representative of UNESCAP reported on the regional perspectives on improving water use and limiting water pollution in key industrial sectors in Asia, highlighting the current progress on implementing the water related SDGs in Asia, and pointing out the key challenges as well as emerging solutions in the sphere of the industrial water use policy in the region. The presentation invited SPECA countries to pay attention to the issue of water pollution and water use in the context of industrialisation and to learn from policy experience of countries such as China in dealing with these issues.

### **Agenda item 4: Strengthening the implementation of the mandate of the WG**

The Working Group recalled its decision adopted at its 22nd session held in Astana, Kazakhstan to revise its Terms of Reference in accordance with the SPECA reform to better serve participating countries by providing a platform for promoting cooperation in the SPECA sub-region and achieving sustainable development. Mr. Bo Libert, UNECE Consultant, made a presentation on the Terms of Reference of the SPECA Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment and strengthening its mandate. He briefly outlined the history of SPECA after the signing of the Tashkent declaration in 1998, highlighting the decision made at the 10th session of the SPECA Governing Council in Dushanbe in 2015 to reinvigorate SPECA as a platform for achieving the SDGs and corresponding targets which necessitate regional cooperation. He also referred to the latest developments, main documents and conclusions made at the previous session of the SPECA Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment and presented the Draft Terms of Reference of the Working Group. The delegates elaborated on and provided comments on the Terms of Reference and recommended to consider the amended document at the end of the session. The agreed Terms of Reference was endorsed by the Group (Annex I).

### **Agenda item 5: Transboundary cooperation in the area water, energy and environment management in SPECA region**

This agenda item focused on the transboundary activities in the area of water, energy and the environment implemented by key stakeholders in the region. Mr. Batyr Mammedov, ICSD, and Mr. Serik Bekmaganbet, EC IFAS reported on the progress made in the development of the Regional Environment Programme for Sustainable Development and the Aral Sea Basin Programme 4 as effective instruments of regional cooperation. Both documents are crucial for Central Asian countries to jointly address transboundary water and environmental challenges. The delegates were informed that thirty-four project proposals were agreed on in all four areas of ASBP-4. The final list of proposals for improving the Fund's functional capacity is expected to be considered at the third meeting of the Working Group on improving the organizational structure of the Fund, scheduled to take place on 25-26 November 2019 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. Ms. Ekaterina Strikeleva, representative of the CAREC, made a report on CAREC efforts and approaches to promote regional cooperation in the field of water resources, energy and environmental protection providing details on ongoing projects implemented by CAREC in cooperation with the USAID, World Bank, EU and the Swiss Agency on Development Cooperation (SDC). Ms. Strikeleva outlined the need of improving the existing legal framework and to establish new institutions (such as Basin Councils and Small Basin Councils) to promote integrated water resources management and basin planning in the region.

Mr. Matthew Griffith, Senior Programme Manager in the Green Growth and Global Relations Division at the OECD made a thorough overview of recent OECD activities within the SPECA region. He mentioned that work on environmental policy reform conducted within the region was delivered within the frame of the GREEN Action Task Force, and that the countries of the region had been invited to nominate representatives from both environment and economy ministries to participate in Task Force meetings. Interested OECD member countries also participated in the Task Force to exchange experience, knowledge and good practices. He noted that national water policy reforms are typically supported by National Policy Dialogues facilitated in partnership with UNECE. The most recent NPD meeting was held in Azerbaijan in July 2019 under the EUWI+ project and amongst other items, discussed adoption of the new national water resources strategy. The OECD informed on its plans to work with UNECE on upcoming NPDs in Central Asia in the near future under a new project. Recent substantive projects conducted in the region included work on multi-purpose water infrastructure in Kazakhstan, work on water security, economic instruments and improving rural water supply and sanitation in Kyrgyzstan and on irrigation reform in Tajikistan. The OECD also supported UNECE in the recent Environmental Performance Review of Uzbekistan, preparing the chapter on water management.

Mr. Paluaniyaz Pirniyazov, Deputy Programme Manager of the Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia Programme, GIZ, made a presentation on the GIZ contribution to the regional water management and environmental governance in Central Asia. He provided an overview of the Berlin Process - Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia Programme initiated by the German Federal Foreign Office to support water management in the countries of Central Asia and to make water a subject of intensified transboundary cooperation. He also elaborated on the current "Sustainable management of water resources in rural areas in Uzbekistan" project (2016-2020), developed with the aim to contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth in the rural sector in Uzbekistan in the context of a changing climate, and to improve the water supply and the efficiency of water resources management at national, basin and farm level. Other GIZ projects were related to the strengthening of monitoring of the technical condition and of the safety of hydraulic structures in the Republic of Uzbekistan (2018-2019), and to the development of ecosystem-based approaches of land use and biodiversity protection along the lower reaches of the Amu Darya in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Prof. V.A. Dukhovny, Director of the SIC ICWC, made a presentation on the results of work of ICWC bodies in addressing issues of water supply in Central Asia. He informed participants of the meeting on the Portal of Knowledge on Water Resources and Environment of Central Asia,

developed by SIC ICWC, and on the plans for the further implementation in the main areas of its activities.

#### **Agenda item 6: SPECA Water, Energy, Environment– Way Forward**

The Working Group recalled that at its 22nd session the WEE WG requested to explore opportunities to develop a new SPECA Strategy on water, energy and environment with the aim to support participating countries: i) in addressing regional and transboundary water, energy and linked environmental issues, ii) in facilitating the achievement of related national development objectives and SDGs, iii) in promoting intersectoral analysis of energy and water issues, vi) in improving water, energy and environment sector cooperation nationally and between countries, v) in considering emerging challenges such as the Belt and Road Initiative, and emerging problems related to the environment such as sand and dust storms and climate change.

Mr. Bo Libert, UNECE Consultant, made a presentation of a proposed Concept for the SPECA Water, Energy and Environment Strategy. In his presentation, among other things, he outlined main aspects for the Strategy development, approval and implementation, and informed on the four possible specific objectives of the Strategy, such as: (i) to improve information availability and exchange of national practises and experiences on SDG 6 and 7 implementation; (ii) to build capacity to understand water-energy-environment (nexus) interlinkages relevant to SDGs 6 and 7; (iii) Joint policy development; and (iv) support of specific win-win actions relevant to SDGs 6 and 7. He also informed participants on the possible further steps for the institutional strengthening of the WG on WEE and presented options of organization of work under the WG on WEE. Ms. Annukka Lipponen, UNECE, reported on the potential opportunities for regional projects in support of SPECA work. In her presentation, she mentioned that a flexible and scalable approach was necessary that could be also adjustable to the available financial resources. She also presented themes with possibilities for financing and potential sources of funding.

#### **Agenda item 7: Establishment of the Central Asian Dam Safety Platform**

Mr. Shuhrat Talipov, Head of hydrotechnical installation department, “UzbekHydroEnergy” JSC, Uzbekistan, delivered a presentation on the progress made under the project “Capacity Building for Cooperation on Dam Safety in Central Asia” and the need for the establishment of a designated, official Platform for this work. He elaborated on the main challenges related to the dam safety provision in the region and their possible solutions based on the improvement, implementation and enforcement of national legislation, institutional strengthening of each of the Central Asia countries; as well as on the support provided to bilateral cooperation to ensure the safety of individual dams or dam systems on transboundary rivers. Mr. Talipov also informed about the interest expressed by participants during the May 2019 dam safety regional meeting on the preparation of the regional agreement on cooperation in the field of safety of hydrotechnical installations on the transboundary watercourses.



**UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROGRAMME**  
**FOR THE ECONOMIES OF CENTRAL ASIA (SPECA)**

**DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**  
**OF THE SPECA WORKING GROUP ON WATER, ENERGY AND**  
**ENVIRONMENT**

**I. PREAMBLE**

1. The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was established by the Tashkent Declaration on 26 March 1998. The SPECA participating countries are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) provide overall support to the Programme.

2. The Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment<sup>1</sup> (further referred to as Working Group) is a subsidiary body of the Governing Council of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia.

3. The Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment was set up in compliance with the Tashkent Declaration on 26 March 1998. The Declaration recognized the rational and efficient use of energy and water resources in Central Asia as a priority area for cooperation under SPECA.

4. At the 10th session of the SPECA Governing Council (Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 11 November 2015) representatives of the SPECA participating countries adopted a Declaration reiterating their commitment to the Programme as a platform for promoting cooperation in the SPECA subregion and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**II. OBJECTIVES**

5. In line with the overall objectives of SPECA to facilitate economic cooperation in the SPECA subregion as well as integration of the SPECA participating countries into the world economy for their attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and previous decisions of the Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment the Working Group shall, within its area of purview:

- (a) Provide a platform for supporting progress on strategic issues related to water, energy and environment, and towards achieving the respective SDGs with a focus

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<sup>1</sup> The SPECA Governing Council at its 10<sup>th</sup> session on 11 November 2015 decided to rename the SPECA Project Working Group on Water, and Energy Resources into the SPECA Working Group on Water, Energy, and Environment.

on the SDGs (including, but not limited to SDG 6 on Clean Water and Sanitation and SDG 7 on Affordable and Clean Energy);

- (b) Aim at improving awareness of SPECA countries on the water-, energy- and environment-related SDGs, provide information and share best practice experiences with regard to the implementation of these SDGs, taking into account interlinkages between the SDGs. Promote consideration of energy and water cooperation opportunities and intersectoral and transboundary impacts in the SDG implementation and related action plans;
- (c) Promote compliance with relevant international legal instruments (to which the countries are Parties), norms, guidelines, standards and recommendations in the fields of competence of the Working Group;
- (d) Act as a platform for identification, development, support and coordination of technical programmes and projects within the scope of Working Group competence thereby building capacity, promoting best practices and strengthening mutual trust at political level among the SPECA participating countries;
- (e) Identify, in consultation with its participating countries, their priorities and emerging issues, and consult on regional approaches, taking into consideration subregional aspects;
- (f) Promote dialogue among its participating countries, including subregional synergies, and an exchange of experiences on policies and programmes;
- (g) Monitor the implementation of the decisions of the Governing Council; and
- (h) Promote a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges of the SPECA subregion, where appropriate, between Governments and civil society, the private sector, as well as the United Nations and other international organizations.

### **III. PARTICIPANTS**

6. The Working Group shall comprise National Representatives from the water management, energy and environment sectors, as well as Focal points<sup>2</sup>, nominated by the Governments of the SPECA participating countries. The two United Nations Regional Commissions shall nominate the Secretaries to the Working Group to provide support to the activities of the Group. Each participating country shall nominate, on a permanent or on an ad hoc basis, experts on various aspects of water, energy and environment management as required.

7. The National Representatives shall be senior officials involved in or aware of the formulation and implementation of national policies and programmes, which affect national policies related to water management, energy and environment sectors in their respective countries and able to effectively follow up the recommendations and decisions of the Working Group.

8. Governments of the SPECA countries shall nominate a Focal point for the Working Group to ensure successful delivery of programmes of work of the Working Group. The focal point is responsible for coordinating work at the national level within the Terms of Reference of the Working Group and for providing assistance to the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats.

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<sup>2</sup> Countries may decide to nominate Focal points from the nominated National Representatives or an additional official from any government entity.

9. Relevant subregional organizations implementing programmes on water and energy resources management and environment are invited to nominate their representatives to participate as observers in the work of the Working Group.

10. Representatives of neighbouring countries may be invited to nominate their representatives to participate as observers in the work of the Working Group, especially when issues concerning cooperation with neighbouring regions are discussed.

11. Other United Nations bodies as well as international and regional organizations, international financial institutions, and donors operating in the water management, energy and environment sectors in SPECA countries are invited to participate in the work of the Working Group as observers and to nominate liaison officers on matters related to its work.

#### **IV. MODALITIES OF OPERATION**

12. The Working Group is chaired by at least one SPECA country.

13. The Working Group develops and agrees upon its Terms of Reference and submits them to the Governing Council for adoption.

14. The two United Nations Regional Commissions shall provide substantive support to the Working Group by:

- (i) Providing expertise as well as assistance to activities implemented by the Working Group; and
- (ii) Providing secretariat support to the preparation and organization of sessions and meetings of the Working Group, including preparation of documents and studies as well as maintenance of records.

15. The Working Group shall hold annual sessions at a date and venue agreed by the participating countries any time before or concurrent to the annual sessions of the SPECA Governing Council. There are also the options to hold additional meetings with a specific focus and with the possibility to hold them as virtual meetings.

16. The Working Group shall draw important policy issues to the attention of the SPECA Governing Council.

17. The working languages of SPECA are Russian and English.

#### **V. FUNDING**

18. The UNECE and the ESCAP shall support, within their available resources, the functioning of the Working Group.

19. The operational costs of the Working Group including the costs of participation of its members in the Working Group's sessions and meetings shall be borne, if possible, by the Governments of the SPECA participating countries.

20. The Working Group shall also seek funds and technical assistance for its operations from multilateral and bilateral donors for the implementation of projects falling within the scope of the approved work programmes.

## **VI. PROGRAMME OF WORK AND ACTIVITIES**

21. The Working Group shall develop, agree upon and after adoption by the Governing Council implement its biennial work programmes which are integrated into SPECA work plans.

22. The Working Group shall prepare its annual reports to the Governing Council sessions on progress made in their implementation.

23. The Working Group with support of the UNECE and ESCAP shall formulate and agree upon specific projects and programmes and seek extrabudgetary resources for their implementation.

## **VII. OTHER MATTERS**

24. The current Terms of Reference shall be reviewed in 5 years or sooner if the SPECA Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment so decides.

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Annex II

UNESCAP  
United Nations Economic and Social  
Commission for Asia and the Pacific



UNECE  
United Nations Economic  
Commission for Europe

**UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ECONOMIES OF  
CENTRAL ASIA (SPECA)**

**23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment**

(2 October 2019, Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

**Programme**

<b>09:00–09:30</b>	<b>1. Opening of the session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Welcome remarks by Vadim Sokolov, Director, GEF IFAS Agency, Uzbekistan</li><li>- Welcome remarks by Marco Keiner, Director, Environment Division, UNECE</li></ul>
<b>09:30–09:40</b>	<b>2. Adoption of the agenda</b> <i>Brief information on the programme and expected outcomes – UNECE</i>
<b>09:40–10:30</b>	<b>3. Programme of the WG implementation in the area of water-energy-environment in 2018-2019</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Presentations of ESCAP activities – Arun Jacob, ESCAP</li><li>- UNECE activities and projects in SPECA region – Viktor Badaker and Batyr Hajiyev, UNECE</li></ul> <b>Q&amp;A session</b>
<b>10:30–11:00</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>11:00–11:45</b>	<b>4. Strengthening the implementation of the mandate of the WG</b> <i>The SPECA is undergoing reform to better serve participating countries by providing a platform for promoting cooperation in the SPECA sub-region and achieving sustainable development. Following this, the WG on WEE initiated a process of revising its Terms of Reference.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Terms of Reference of the SPECA WG on WEE and strengthening its mandate – Bo Libert, UNECE Consultant</li></ul> <b>Interventions by countries, discussion and approval of the ToR.</b>
<b>11:45 – 13:00</b>	<b>5. Transboundary cooperation in the area water, energy and environment management in SPECA region</b> <i>Regional and development partner organizations are requested to provide an overview of their ongoing and planned activities in the area of water, energy and environment and partnership opportunities</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Updates on the development of the Regional Environment Programme for Sustainable Development and the Aral Sea Basin Programme 4 - Batyr Mammedov, ICSD, Serik Bekmaganbet, EC IFAS</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CAREC efforts and approaches to promote regional cooperation in the field of water resources, energy and environmental protection - Ekaterina Strikeleva, Central Asia Regional Environmental Centre</li> <li>- Overview of recent OECD activities in the region - Matthew Griffith, Senior Programme Manager, Green Growth and Global Relations Division, OECD</li> <li>- GIZ contribution to regional water management and environmental governance in Central Asia - Paluaniyaz Pirniyazov, Deputy Programme Manager, Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia Programme, GIZ</li> <li>- Results of the work of ICWC bodies in addressing issues of water supply in Central Asia - Prof. V.A. Dukhovny, Director, SIC ICWC</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A session</b></p>
<b>13:00–14:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>14:30–16:00</b>	<p><b>6. SPECA Water, Energy, Environment– Way Forward</b></p> <p><i>At its 22nd session the WEE WG requested to explore opportunities to develop a new SPECA Strategy on water, energy and environment with the aim to support participating countries: i) address regional and transboundary water, energy and linked environmental issues, ii) facilitate the achievement of related national development objectives and SDGs, iii) promote intersectoral analysis of energy and water issues, vi) improve water, energy and environment sector cooperation nationally and between countries, v) take into account emerging challenges such as the Belt and Road Initiative, problems related to the environment such as sand and dust storms and climate change.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation of the SPECA Water, Energy and Environment Strategy Concept – Bo Libert, UNECE Consultant</li> <li>- Potential opportunities for regional projects in support of SPECA areas - Annukka Lipponen, UNECE, OECD</li> </ul> <p><b>Country representatives are requested to provide short statements, feedback and/or comments to the draft Concept that was shared with meeting participants in advance of the meeting. Interventions by other international, regional organizations and partners</b></p>
<b>16:00–16:30</b>	<b>Coffee break</b>
<b>16:30-17:00</b>	<p><b>7. Establishment of the Central Asian Dam Safety Platform</b></p> <p><i>The project “Capacity Building for Cooperation on Dam Safety in Central Asia”, supported by UNECE, is implemented under the auspices of the SPECA Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment. The project aims to improve national legislation and regulation in the field of dam safety in the countries and strengthen regional cooperation in this area. Detailed information about the project can be obtained by clicking on the link: <a href="https://www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety_third_phase.html">https://www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety_third_phase.html</a></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brief information on the progress under the project and the need for the establishment of the Platform – Shuhrat Talipov, Head of hydrotechnical installation department, “UzbekHydroEnergy” JSC, Uzbekistan</li> </ul> <p><b>Q&amp;A session</b></p>
<b>17:00–18:00</b>	<b>8. Discussions and decisions of the meeting.</b>

## **23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the SPECA Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment Decisions**

1. Terms of Reference of the WG
  - a. The Working Group discussed and endorsed the revised Terms of Reference of the Group. The Group notes its relevance to the needs of member states to effectively and collectively address water, energy and environmental challenges in the region and attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Group requests the ESCAP/UNECE Secretariat to submit the Terms of Reference to the Governing Council for consideration and approval
2. Draft Concept of the SPECA Strategy on Water, Energy and Environment
  - a. The Working Group discussed the draft Concept and endorsed it as a basis for development of the Strategy. The Group further concluded that comments provided by the members of the group during the meeting shall be submitted to the Secretariat in writing within a time period of 30 days after the meeting. The comments submitted should be taken into account during the development of the Strategy.
  - b. The Working Group recommends the following priority areas<sup>3</sup> for inclusion in the Strategy: identify economic, investment and policy development opportunities in the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus to coherently achieve SDGs 6 and 7 targets (e.g. in application of renewable energy technologies, agro-sector resilience measures); capacity building for sustainable management of natural resources (water, energy, agro/forestry sectors) at national and regional level; feasibility study of water-energy consortium; improved availability of information and exchange of experience on inter-sectoral solutions.;
  - c. It was agreed that a separate task force with officially nominated representatives of sectors and countries should be set up to develop the Strategy.
  - d. The Working Group requested ESCAP and UNECE to raise funds for the development of the Strategy.
3. Cooperation with UN agencies
  - a. Country participants noted the need to explore opportunities for utilizing expertise and mandates of various UN agencies active in the area water, energy and environment with the aim to develop a coherent approach in support of national priorities and to better address regional and transboundary challenges;
4. Partnership with regional and development organizations
  - a. The Group acknowledges the need to develop cooperation with regional and development organizations in order to find synergies with efforts made by the Working Group.
5. Establishment of the Central Asian Platform for Dam Safety
  - a. The Working Group emphasizes the importance and relevance of issues related to dam safety in the region and considers this topic as a priority in its work. With the aim of improving coordination of activities in this area in the region the Working Group decides to establish a Central Asian Platform for Dam Safety within the framework of the WG. The Working Group requests the Secretariat to develop the Terms of Reference of the Platform

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<sup>3</sup> These areas are based on recommended technical and policy actions related to water, energy and environment relevant for sustainable development of the Central Asian countries that were shared at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of Group

and upon its endorsement by the national project coordinators submit it to the SPECA Governing Council for approval.

## List of participants

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### 23rd Session of the SPECA Working Group on Water, Energy and Environment

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Date: Wednesday, October 2, 2019

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#### *Countries*

##### *Azerbaijan*

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**Executive Committee of International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea**

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