**Agenda of the webinar**

**“Outlining the economic foundations of regional cooperation on water in Central Asia”**

**Organized in the framework of the Programme “Water as a driver of sustainable recovery: economic, institutional and strategic aspects of water resources management in Central Asia” 25 February 2021, 14.00 Almaty time**

**Session: opening remarks**

Time and date: 15.04.2021 – 10h10-10h20 CEST

Format: online

1. **Welcome (Guy Bonvin; 10’ 14h-14h10 )**

**Excellency**

**Honored professors,**

**Distinguished speakers,**

**Distinguished experts**

**Estimated Colleagues**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**I wish you a good morning or a good afternoon and a warm welcome to the third webinar within the frame of Programme “Water as a driver of sustainable recovery: economic, institutional and strategic aspects of water resources management in Central Asia”**

**This program is conducted and supported by, the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), the Center for Central Asia Research of Corvinus University Budapest (CUB) and the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC), Blue Peace of Central Asia (BPCA) of SDC.**

**In the background paper, you could read several statements issued during the last 2 months by the head of states and ministers of the region illustrating the will to cooperate water and energy issues.**

**Not surprisingly, they spoke about mid to long term vision, mitigating the risks associated with climate change.**

**Indeed, at the time of translating this political will into investment of key water-energy infrastructures, they and their administration are fully aware of the capital intensive nature of such infrastructure and of the necessity of stable agreements between trustful parties.**

**As it was repeated in several occasions, water and energy are key for the sustainable socio-economic and stability of the region. This nexus deserve full attention to develop concrete projects and robust agreements to ensure food, water, energy security in a context of changing climate, increasing variation of the water cycle.**

**The low-water periods of recent years increased the vulnerability of the water sector of Central Asia to the crisis caused by the pandemic. Floods and landslides represent an increased risks for key infrastructures and agriculture, particularly in upstream states, but not only. Since key systemic infrastructures are also located upstream.**

**The topic of the day is to outline the economic foundations of regional cooperation on water in Central Asia and identify existing and future avenues to translate the political will expressed by the head of states into concrete operation and projects..**

**Please allow me to say that it is an extremely ambitious mission! But absolutely necessary.**

**Especially if we understand that the water sector…is not only depending on the water sector.**

**We are talking of mobilizing large financial resources to secure a robust socio-economic development, while mastering the environmental challenges. The involvement of economist, financier, engineers, technicians, environmentalists is requested. It is actually a team work of different professions, ministries, countries. One alone cannot win with his own forces.**

**Allow me a share with you a concrete example illustrating the importance and the relevance of a systemic, multipurpose investment, making the best use of already existing infrastructures.**



**More than 10 years to reach an agreement (the 50 MUSD investment). Irrigation guaranteed in the second part of the growing seasons for 4% of the production cost – RE/hydropower is produced.**

**Let me express I would like to take out of this webinar:**

* to **invest as much as necessary to secure** mid-term and long term **water and economic resilience**, as **little as necessary to finance only productive, systemic and resilient assets** in respect of sustainable natural resource management and climate change
* to **blend** mid-term and long-term socio-economic and environmental benefits,
* to **reduce the exposure of the water sector**, the economy and the stability of the region to the effects of climate change
* an incentive for cross-sector and cross-country cooperation on economic and strategic issues
* LAST BUT NOT LEAST: IDENTIFY and SPEAK about CONCRETE PROJECTS, SUCCESS AND FAILURES

**Welcome to our key-note speakers of the day**

**Sulton Rakhimzoda, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea**

**Mr. Philippe Saprykin, Deputy Head of the United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, couldn’t participate today due to a last minute commitment.**

**Ms. Caroline Milow, Programme Director, GiZ**

**Mr. Johannes Stenbaek Madsen, Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation in Kazakhstan**

**Welcome to our distinguished panelists**

**Welcome to the dear estimated colleagues of Central Asia**

**We all have the responsibility to develop concrete solutions!**

**It is a long journey which has to start NOW – which already started indeed.**

**I wish you an excellent webinar**

**Session: closing remarks**

Time and date: 25.02.2020 – 12h30-12h40 CET

Format: online

**Let me first thank you very much for your time and dedication.**

**We heard already today some encouraging reflexion beyond the water sector and within the water sector.**

**As I said in my opening remarks, water sector sustainability does not depend only on water sector itself.**

**#Valuewater, the motto of the 2021 World Water day, is the duty of the water sector and beyond, since water is the substance of the sustainable socio-economic development. However, the #Value (of) water is at risk because of Climate Change, its impact on the water cycle and the exposure of key assets for the wealth of our societies – let’s remember the Word Economic Forum on systemic risks. #Valuewater means also respect it and protect this resource.**

**Today, the very comprehensive address of Sultan Rohimzoda gave us a very concrete and detailed pictures of the water-energy nexus. Figures were impressive and illustrated the economic importance of these two sectors. Disruption in energy supply have huge consequences – also in the irrigation season, when it is necessary to pump water for irrigation.**

**The very positive note: moving on renewable energy is not only a contribution to the environment and the global health – it is also a contribution to the stability of the energy supply in the region. The call of cooperation was vibrant and urgent.**

**Looking then at the large financial figures related to the necessary investments provided by Iskandar Abdulayev, the challenge of designing efficient and informed (joint) investments has to be addressed without delay. There is an opportunity today, with the expressed political will, to secure the wealth of tomorrow.**

**We heard about the necessity, or the urgency, to integrate all parameters of the water-energy-food nexus in existing agreements. Just talking on water allocations is not sufficient. Therefore modernization of agreements is key, with concrete and pragmatic agreements, with an economic approach, reflecting the close interdependence between countries and sectors.**

**The presentation of Dr Barbara Janusz-Pawletta illustrated the potential of development of IWRM, of international cooperation. She also insisted very much on the links between IWRM and the economic approach. Last time, we had similar reflexion looking at the Blue Peace Index. Integration drivers are economics and source of stability – Just reminder the story of EU foundation, with the coal and iron community.**

**Allow me also to remind my concrete example which I introduced at the beginning, illustrating the importance of integrating all aspects of the water value creation, with all stakeholders, on site or more distant (electricity power). The 100 CHF banknote is kind a reminder of the importance of water to create wealth – but also of the need of investment. It was and is possible between stable and predictable rule of the game.**

**Indeed, Iskandar Abdullaev strongly insisted on clear rules of the game to attract investors, to attract funding in a competitive context created by effort to cope with the covid-19 crisis. Rules of the game are another word for governance, underlined by Caroline Milow.**

**Allow me to repeat – it is our responsibility to invest efficiency the available funding.**

* to **invest as much as necessary to secure** mid-term and long term **water and economic resilience**, as **little as necessary to finance only productive, systemic and resilient assets** in respect of sustainable natural resource management and climate change
* to **reduce the exposure of the water sector**, the economy and the stability of the region to the effects of climate change
* It is the responsibility of all to secure water resources for all stakeholders. It is the responsbility of each stakeholders to use it effectively.
* LAST BUT NOT LEAST: IDENTIFY and SPEAK about CONCRETE PROJECTS, SUCCESS AND FAILURES

**Allow me to repeat:**

**The BPCA motto: water knows no border, be political, sectorial, or generational. Rivers are bridges.**

**Water is a challenge and a solution.**

**Water is an enabling factor for sustainable socio-economic development.**

**Water is a strategic asset – no question on this. This why the heads of states expressed willingness to cooperate.**

**This strategic discussion will be conducted during our next webinar in May.**

**It is a journey – I am looking forward to face meetings in which discussion, peer exchange are key.**

**I wish that you can also bring back the content of this exchange at “home”.**

**Once a again a big thank you and stay in good health.**

**Looking for fruitful cooperation**