United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security

Uzbekistan

Building the Resilience of Communities Affected by the Aral Sea Disaster through a Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund

Background information

Once the world's fourth largest lake, the drying of the Aral Sea is considered one of the worst environmental disasters, causing a cascade of environmental, socioeconomic, health and humanitarian challenges for the governments and communities in the region. To reduce the destructive impact of the Aral Sea crisis, Governments, the UN system, bilateral and multilateral donors, and others have been raising awareness of the issue and responding to mitigate its human, ecological, and economic consequences. Despite these efforts, more cooperation and increased resources are necessary to address the scope and severity of challenges, reduce vulnerability and build the resilience of local communities to continue to advance the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the region.

Among these efforts, in 2012, the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS) supported the first comprehensive UN joint programme to improve livelihoods, strengthen community development and reduce health and environmental risks. Building on the successes and lessons learned from this initial programme, the UNTFHS approved additional seed funding for a second programme to ensure sustained focus on improving the human security of communities impacted by the Aral Sea disaster and to establish the Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region (MPHSTF). Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, the MPHSTF will serve as a single platform for uniting efforts and resources within an integrated human security response framework for the Aral Sea region.

Goals and objectives

Based on the characteristics of the region, the programme focuses on ensuring environmental, economic, food, social and health security for affected communities, with the aim to reduce poverty, enhance resilience, and achieve sustainable development across the SDGs. Specifically, the programme: **(i)** advances the integration of the human security approach as a methodology for assessing the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of the affected communities, **(ii)** provides concrete and sustainable benefits to vulnerable people and communities by promoting protection and empowerment strategies based on human security principles, and **(iii)** establishes a well-coordinated mechanism to expand the reach of the programme activities and promote greater support and replication of the human security approach for the achievement of the SDGs in the region.

Toshkent (Tashkent)

DURATION
May 2016 – December 2019

UN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES
UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, WHO, UNV, UNICEF

OTHER KEY PARTNERS
Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Ministries of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction, Health, and Finance, International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, Charity Fund for Aral Gene Pool Protection, local NGOs and community-based organizations
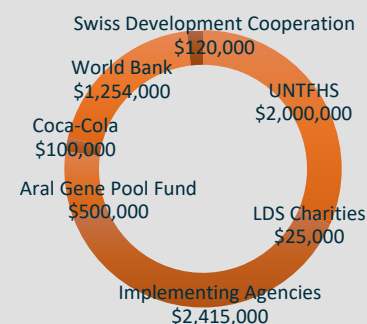
BENEFICIARIES
767,200

TOTAL BUDGET
US$ 6,414,000

POOLING OF RESOURCES

Swiss Development Cooperation $120,000
World Bank $1,254,000
Coca-Cola $100,000
Aral Gene Pool Fund $500,000
UNTFHS $2,000,000
LDS Charities $25,000
Implementing Agencies $2,415,000

Beneficiaries

The programme directly benefits 150,000 residents of vulnerable communities in the target districts of Karakalpakstan, with a particular focus on those most vulnerable. In addition, the entire population of the 10 northern districts, approximately 767,200 people, indirectly benefit from enhanced access to alternative livelihoods and economic opportunities, improved healthcare, and strengthened governance and community development.

Applying the Human Security approach

To advance a better understanding of the multidimensional threats to people's everyday lives in the Aral Sea region, adopting a sector-specific or group-specific approach in the Karakalpakstan region will not be sufficient. What is needed is a comprehensive and holistic approach that seeks to address the root causes of the risks and problems facing the area, while at the same time mitigating their undesired consequences. The human security approach by creating positive linkages between multiple sectors (i.e., economic, social, health, and environmental,) builds on the capacities and aspirations of local communities and combines these with macro-level policies, practices and regulations that protect vulnerable populations against threats to their daily lives. Based on catalytic and transformative initiatives, the advancement of human security creates synergies between empowerment and resilience building at the local level with long term policy interventions by government and decision makers at the regional (districts/rayons) and national levels.

Achievements

(i)   The programme worked together with regional and district-level partners and conducted capacity-building workshops in the most vulnerable communities by assisting local stakeholders to develop people-centered 'Community Development Plans' intended to expand access to social services and economic opportunities.

(ii)   Using Community Development Plans, the programme subsequently provided support to improve basic social services through funding and implementing community-based infrastructure projects in remote and vulnerable communities. These projects helped improve the communities' access to basic services including drinking water, electricity, healthcare, school and preschool facilities.

(iii) In addition, by enhancing income generation through capacity-building activities, the programme focused on improving the economic, food and environmental security of remote and rural communities in Karakalpakstan. As a result, it supported the creation of inclusive business projects and demonstration plots and created new jobs in sectors including beekeeping, sewing and crafts, food and milk processing, baking and others.

(iv)   Capitalizing on the successes and lessons learned from the programme, additional support for the region continues through the MPHSTF.