Minutes
of the Second Meeting of the Steering Committee
of the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region
in Uzbekistan

Tashkent
Time: 16:30 – 18:30

3 June 2019

Agenda:
- Updates on joint Government and UN measures taken to mobilize resources to MPHSTF;
- Presentation of the MPHSTF Funding Framework (last update on financial commitments and resources allocated);
- Review and Decisions on the proposals submitted to MPHSTF by Participating UN Organizations within the First Call for Proposals;
- Decision on membership arrangements in the MPHSTF Steering Committee;
- Approving the changes to the MPHSTF Operation Manual and the MPHSTF Results Matrix;
- Decision on the date of the next Steering Committee meeting and identification of the possible priority directions for the next Call for proposals.

I. Opening remarks
Opening the second Steering Committee meeting, Mr. Elyor Ganiev, Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan, greeted participants and expressed his sincere appreciation to the UN for its constant support of the Government in addressing the Aral Sea catastrophe through the MPHSTF.

Mr. Ganiev informed participants about measures taken by the Government to mitigate the negative consequences of the Aral Sea crisis on population and environment - in particular, the “Actions Strategy on Five Priority Directions for Development of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021”, as well as the State Programme on Development of the Aral Sea Region endorsed in 2017 by Government resolution with the total budget of 8.4 bln soums. He also noted that at the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan it was decided to declare the Aral Sea region "a zone of environmental innovation and technologies”.

Mr. Ganiev said that the Government believed the MPHSTF would become a unified and effective platform for international cooperation and resource mobilization.

At the end of his speech he noted that the Government of Uzbekistan was the first to donate USD 2 mln to the Fund. In February 2019, the Government of Norway became the first external donor by contributing USD 1.1 mln and called upon other donors to follow Norway.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Helena Fraser noted that the UN was very committed to the MPHSTF and thanked the Government of Uzbekistan for its great support to the Trust Fund. She noted that USD 3 bln invested in the region by the international donor community from the mid-90s had not yielded the results the Government had expected due to, among others, lack of unified assistance strategy and poor coordination among development actors. In this context, she expressed hopes that the MPHSTF would become a unique platform to harness
national and international capacities to ensure effective measures were taken to resolve multifaceted problems faced by the communities living in the Aral Sea region in Uzbekistan – measures which would complement significant actions already taken by the Government.

II. Update on the resource mobilization by Mr. Abidov, Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Mr. Abidov informed participants about recent measures taken by Government and UN in Uzbekistan. In this regard, he thanked the UN RCO for the great assistance provided to the Government’s resource mobilization efforts.

He noted that the Inter-agency working group (IAWG) was established by decision of the Government to assist the Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) in development of project proposals to be submitted to the MPHSTF for funding. As a result, 19 project proposals were developed for the total amount of USD 41 mln. These projects are regularly presented during the bilateral and multilateral meetings with the potential donors.

Mr. Abidov thanked the European Union for its decision to contribute EUR 5 mln to the Trust Fund. He also reported about cooperation plans with the European Investment Bank to mobilize blended financial resources to Aral Sea Region.

In January 2019, the Government sent official appeal letters to more than 80 heads of states, and big corporations with the cooperation proposals on the MPHSTF. A pool of 17 most active potential donors was created and separate cooperation roadmaps were developed and agreed with these donors. Through the different multilateral international platforms and bilateral negotiations positive results were achieved to attract donors’ interest (i.e., USA, EU, China, Japan, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Australia, Turkey, Israel, Germany, GIZ and KfW, European Investment Bank and others). Respective actions were being planned to mobilize financial and technical resources to MPTF.

III. Presentation of the MPHSTF Funding Framework

Ms. Mari Matsumoto, UNDP MPTF Office Portfolio Manager, briefly introduced the participants of the meeting about the role of UN MPTF Office with regards to establishing and administering the MPHSTF. She also presented MPHSTF Funding Framework, indicating that two donors – Governments of Uzbekistan and Norway – contributed to the MPHSTF to the total amount of USD 3,117,765. From this amount, 1% had been charged by UN MPTF Office as the Administrative Agent, which resulted in USD 3,086,588 balance of the MPHSTF, available for the First Call for Proposals.

IV. Overview of the results of the evaluation of the proposals submitted within the first Call for Proposals

Opening the session on overview of the results of the evaluation of proposals, Ms. Helena Fraser conveyed concerns raised by the PUNOs regarding the Call for Proposals process to the members of the Steering Committee, in particular, the lack of sufficient time to respond to the feedback received from the Technical Secretariat and the independent evaluators. She asked participants to consider the first call for proposals as a learning process both for Steering Committee members and Technical Secretariat, and that in the future PUNOs submitting proposals would be provided an opportunity to respond to the comments and feedback of the initial technical evaluation of proposals.
She also noted that the Technical Review panel was comprised of 5 independent experts (2 from UN agencies not involved in proposals development, 1 from a national research institute, 1 from the Legislative body of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and 1 from the MPHSTF Technical Secretariat). The evaluations were made based on the set criteria approved by the MPHSTF Steering Committee.

Mr. Uktam Abdurakhmanov, Head of the MPHSTF Technical Secretariat, presented the results of the technical review of proposals submitted by the PUNOs (brief summary of the evaluation results for each of the proposals is attached to the minutes as Annex 2).

VI. Discussion and decisions on the proposals

Then, Ms. Helena Fraser gave the floor to the SC members to share their perspectives on the received proposals.

Mr. Kazbekov, Deputy Chairman of the Karakalpakstan Council of Ministers, noted that all proposals were in line with the projects developed by the members of government’s Interagency Working Group, as well as the priorities of the First Call. Nevertheless, particularly he supported proposals by UNDP/UNESCO and UNFPA/UNICEF as they responded to concrete basic needs of the Karakalpakstan population. However, he asked to strengthen the innovative aspects of the UNFPA/UNICEF proposal to ensure that the services become also accessible by women in remote areas of the Aral Sea region.

Speaking about the two UNESCO projects, he emphasized that the proposals duplicated some of the elements of the project submitted jointly with UNDP. He recommended to incorporate them into the joint UNDP/UNESCO proposal.

Mr. Kazbekov expressed that the UNODC proposal did not meet the priorities of MPTF for the First Call, and he recommended to consider refocusing the the proposal to enhancing law-enforcement in protection of flora and fauna of Aral Sea region with respective educational programmes for youth.

Mr. Stiprais, Head of the EU Delegation in Uzbekistan, emphasized the rational use of the MPHSTF’s limited resources. In this context, he recommended concentrating on one or two systemic problems or implement projects within select geographic areas with a comprehensive approach.

He supported the UNDP/UNESCO proposal, but noted his view that it lacked interlinkages between components of the project, and raised questions about the sustainability of the measures. He pointed out that the project would be more successful if the problems were addressed in a comprehensive manner.

He also pointed out that infrastructure projects were very important both for peoples’ livelihood and private sector development. However, employment and income generation should also be prioritized in those areas to ensure that people can cover the maintenance and service costs of the water infrastructure planned to be created with the help of the Fund.

It was also noted that the grant resources of the MPHSTF should not be used for commercial purposes of private business – grants should be used to assist businesses, rather than for doing business. Also, mechanisms of blended financing should be considered to ensure more effective and targeted use of technical assistance.

He supported the UNFPA/UNICEF project, but suggested that technical support and depreciation of the medical equipment purchased should be addressed. He recommended that the applicants should work closely with the Ministry of Health on achieving the sustainability of the projects results after the completion of the project.
He briefly spoke out about the remaining proposals indicating that they were not aligned with the MPHSTF priorities under the first Call for Proposals.

**Ms. Yamoto**, the representative of the Embassy of Japan in Uzbekistan, agreeing with the position of Mr. Stiprais proposed to give more time for PUNOs to work on the proposals based on findings of the Technical Secretariat and Mr. Kazbekov's remarks.

**Ms. Sholpan Asanova**, the representative of the Association of Support to Children and Families, supported the UNDP/UNESCO and UNFPA/UNICEF projects as they met the human security needs of Karakalpakstan population.

Speaking about the UNODC proposal she noted it should be redeveloped focusing on the ecological aspects.

The other two UNESCO projects, according to her, needed substantial improvement.

**Ms. Natalya Abdullaeva**, the representative of the Public Information Center “Istiqlolli Avlod”, fully agreed with Mr. Sholpan Asanova on her position with regard to the proposals. However, she also requested support with addressing the needs for recreational facilities, especially for children, as well as promoting healthy lifestyle and educational programmes under the MPHSTF supported initiatives in future.

**Mr. Ganiev** agreed with Mr. Stiprais' remark that the Fund's grant resources should not be spent on business and the focus should be on human securities. He also recommended to pay special attention to the provision of potable water. Regarding the UNFPA and UNICEF proposal, having the maternity and childhood protection as a high priority for the Government, he suggested to implement the project in close cooperation with the Ministry of Healthcare to ensure sustainability and more targeted and effective use of resources.

Summing up the comments made by the members of the Steering Committee and taking into account the findings of the Technical Secretariat **Mr. Helena Fraser** announced the following decisions for approval by the Steering Committee:

**VI-1. UNFPA/UNICEF proposal: Improvement of Quality in Perinatal Care Service to Most Vulnerable Mothers and Newborns**

**Approve conditionally:**

1. Build on the created capacities and sunk costs of the UN JP in Aral Sea region of the trained community health volunteers.

2. Co-locate project implementation staff with the team of the JP to ensure synergies and better coordination with the UN JP existing health focus.

3. In consultations with the MPHSTF Technical Secretariat, revise the budget in a greater detail to seek opportunities for cost optimization, where applicable. Also, review indirect costs and remove 1% levy.

4. Ensure sustainability of the hard component of the project jointly with the Ministry of Healthcare.

5. Within a month, develop a full-fledged project document taking into account the above and submit it to the SC for review and onward to Co-chairs for signing.

**Decision:** The recommended decision was unanimously approved.


**Approve conditionally:**
1. Seek opportunities for strengthening the programmatic interlinkages between the three outcomes of the project.

2. Review the choice of the output indicators, baselines and targets. Ensure their alignment with the programme outcomes.

3. Revise budget in line with TS recommendations.

4. Within one month develop a full-fledged project document taking into account the above and submit it to the SC for review and onward to Co-chairs for signing.

**Decision:** The recommended decision was unanimously approved.

VI-3. UNODC proposal: Promoting Healthy Life Styles and a Culture of Lawfulness Among Youth Through Evidence-Based Education Programmes In the Aral Sea Region

*Defer the proposal* and consider submitting it under the next Call for Proposals, whose thematic focus will be on youth and innovations.

**Decision:** The recommended decision was unanimously approved.

VI-4. UNESCO proposal: Scientific Platform addressing the Ecosystem Recreation around the Western Part of the Aral Sea and Prefeasibility Study for Promotion of Eco-tourism in this Zone

1. **Reject the proposal,** with the exception of the component on promotion of eco-tourism, which could be incorporated into the UNDP/UNESCO project proposal above.

2. Reduce the budgets of the UNDP/UNESCO and UNFPA/UNICEF projects in order to free up additional USD 30,000 for the eco-tourism component of the UNDP/UNESCO proposal.

**Decision:** The recommended decision was unanimously approved.

VI-5. UNESCO proposal: Monitoring of the Dried Bed of the Aral Sea

*Reject* the proposal because it is not aligned with the MPHSTF Programmatic Framework and is not built on Human Security Concept approach.

**Decision:** The recommended decision was unanimously adopted.

Ms. Helena Fraser informed the members of the Steering Committee that a decision was also needed on the format of the next meeting to ensure the quality control of the project documents developed by the PUNOs and to sign the project documents by the Co-chairs.

**Decision.** The decision was taken to coordinate remotely (via e-mail and/or correspondence) ideally within a one-month period.

VII. Discussion and decisions on other issues.

VII-1. Evolution of the Membership of the Steering Committee

Ms. Helena Fraser noted that the membership of the MPHSTF Steering Committee at this stage required changes to its composition, due to the following reasons:

- It was important to maintain the principle of balance between national and international partners;
WHO and FAO decided to join the MPHSTF and FAO have signed MoU between the Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs) and UN MPTF Office;

- Additional bilateral donors were expressing strong interest in joining the MPHSTF.

In this context the following recommendations were proposed by her:

- Increase number of government representatives from the current 2 members (Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade and Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan are permanent members) to 3 members and include at the request of the Government Ministry of Healthcare as the first third member which will be rotated annually;

- Increase the number of donor seats from the current 2 members to 3 members rotated annually in a staggered way. Note that the EU would be sitting in SC longest before rotating out. The next donor seat would go to the next donor to the Fund;

- Reduce the number of PUNOs representatives from the current 5 (plus 1 new) members to 3 members rotated every year in a staggered way. Membership would rotate in the order that PUNOs join the Fund, starting with the first three signatories (UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA), with UNODC, UNESCO, FAO being next in line to take up seats. Given the significant efforts put by the UNDP in establishing the Fund it will stay the longest before rotating out;

- Leave the current representation of the NGOs in the Steering Committee unchanged with the regards to organizations and membership, but consider option to rotate membership annually when number of NGOs expressing interest in joining the MPHSTF increases.

Decision: The decision was taken to endorse the changes to the composition of the Steering Committee.

VII-2. Changes to the MPHSTF Operation Manual

Mr. Uktam Abdurakhmanov, informed the participants of the meeting that the MPHSTF Operational Manual was developed based on best MPHSTF practices and inputs from the UN MPTF Office in New-York. However, the specifics of the MPHSTF operations caused slight changes to the Operation Manual. In particular, project submission template of the Annex 4 was changed to ensure qualitative development of the proposals by the PUNOs. The following below changes were made to the Proposal Submission and Assessment Form:

- More detailed explanations and definitions were developed into General criteria used for the “Project proposal development and submission template”;

- The table describing outcomes, outputs, activities and inputs at project/programme level and Risk ranking matrix were added;

- Detailed instructions to each budget components were developed and included into Expenses categories;

- Detailed Evaluation Criteria / Checklist were developed for “Review of Proposals” on the basis of detailed criteria for the “Project proposal development and submission template”.

The amended version of the Proposal Submission and Assessment Form is attached to the minutes of the meeting (Annex 3).

Mr. Abdurakhmanov asked the members of the Steering Committee to endorse the changed made.
**Decision:** The decision was taken to endorse the proposed revision of the Proposal Submission and Assessment Form (Annex 4 of the Operational Manual).

**VII-3.** Changes to the MPHSTF Results Matrix.

As per the decision of the MPHSTF Steering Committee as of 24 January 2019, the MPHSTF Results Matrix, which is an integral part of the MPHSTF Terms of Reference, was updated based on baseline data received from the PUNOs. The changed version is attached to the minutes of the meeting as Annex 4.

Nevertheless, the new PUNO (FAO) should provide its baseline data once it fully involves in the activity of the MPHSTF.

**Decision:** The decision was taken to approve the changed version of the MPHSTF Results Matrix with the condition that by the next meeting the new PUNOs would provide their baseline data.

**VII-4.** The date of the next Steering Committee meeting and identification of the possible priority directions for the next call for proposals

Ms. Fraser proposed to have the next Steering Committee meeting in September 2019 and to announce the youth and innovation issues as the possible priority area for the second Call for Proposals within the MPHSTF. This recommendation was agreed by the Steering Committee.

**VIII.** Closing remarks

Mr. Ganiev thanked Ms. Fraser for organizing and facilitating a very constructive meeting. He also thanked members of the Steering Committee for the fruitful work during the meeting and PUNOs for development of project proposals.

Ms. Fraser thanked the participants of the meeting and hoped that the next meeting would be held in September 2019.

For the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan

E.Ganiev
Deputy Prime-Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan

For the United Nations

H.Fraser
UN Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Uzbekistan
### MPHSTF Steering Committee members at attendance

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<tr>
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mr. Elyor Ganiev</td>
<td>Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Co-chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ms. Helena Fraser</td>
<td>UN Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Uzbekistan, Co-chair</td>
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#### Members

**Government**

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mr. Badriddin Abidov</td>
<td>Deputy Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mr. Jusipbek Kazbekov</td>
<td>First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan</td>
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**Donors**

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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>H.E. Mr. Eduards Stiprais</td>
<td>Head of the EU Delegation to Uzbekistan</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ms. Yoko Yamoto</td>
<td>First Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Uzbekistan</td>
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**Participating UN Organizations**

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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ms. Ashita Mittal</td>
<td>UNODC Regional Representative in Central Asia</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mr. Hurshid Rustamov</td>
<td>Head of the Sustainable Development Cluster, UNDP in Uzbekistan</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mr. Pedro Pablo Villanueva</td>
<td>UNFPA Representative in Uzbekistan</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Mr. Fuad Pashayev</td>
<td>UNESCO Representative a.i. in Uzbekistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ms. Sufang Guo</td>
<td>Head of Health and Wellbeing Section, UNICEF in Uzbekistan</td>
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**Civil Society Representatives**

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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Ms. Sholpan Asanova</td>
<td>Regional department for the Republic of Karakalpakstan of the Association of Support to Children and Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Ms. Natalya Abdullaeva</td>
<td>Karakalpakstan branch of the Public Information Center “Istiqloli Avlod”</td>
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**Ex-Officio members**

Mari Matsumoto, Portfolio Manager, UNDP MPTF Office (remotely off-line)

**Other Participants:**

- Mr. Kim Je U, Advisor, Embassy of Korea
• Mr. François Begeot, Head of Cooperation Section, EU Delegation to Uzbekistan
• Mr. Kamolkhon Inomkhodjaev, Assistant Representative UNFPA in Uzbekistan
• Mr. Zarif Jumaev, Coordination Analyst, UN RCO
• Ms. Elena Tsay, Programme Specialist on Natural Science/Social and Human Sciences, UNESCO
• Mr. Sherdod Umarov, Programme Associate, FAO Representation in Uzbekistan
• Mr. Azizbek Aminjonov, UNICEF Operations Officer
• Mr. Bekhzod Teshabaev, Head of Department on Coordination of IFIs, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan
• Jamshid Rakhmanov, Head of Department of Investment Projects and Humanitarian Aid Management, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan
• Mr. Uktam Abdurakhmanov, Head of MPHSTF Technical Secretariat
• Mr. Tulkun Karimov, Fund Establishment and Coordination Specialist, MPHSTF Technical Secretariat
• Mr. Shukhrat Umarkhojaev, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, MPHSTF Technical Secretariat