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2025 Annual Narrative Report Technical Secretariat of the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund



UN Multi-Partner Human
Security Trust Fund
for the Aral Sea Region
in Uzbekistan

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FUND INFORMATION

Fund Name: UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region in Uzbekistan (MPHSTF)

Operational Period: November 12, 2018 - December 30, 2030

Goals: To address environmental, economic, health, food, and social insecurities in the most vulnerable areas of the Aral Sea region by providing innovative solutions to address environmental issues, improving the access of affected rural populations to basic services, and contributing to poverty reduction.

Expected Outcomes: Outcome 1: Stress on local communities due to the deteriorating environmental situation is reduced
Outcome 2: Employment and income generation opportunities for local communities are increased.
Outcome 3: Local Community access to affordable and healthy food and clean drinking water is secured
Outcome 4: The overall health of the local population is improved, and healthy lifestyle promoted
Outcome 5: The living conditions of local populations are improved, with particular focus on vulnerable groups such as women, children, and youth.

Reporting Period: January-December 2025

Participating UN Organizations : UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNODC, FAO, WHO, UNOPS

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Summary

During the reporting period, the **Technical Secretariat of the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund (MPHSTF) for the Aral Sea Region** operated under the **UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in Uzbekistan**, in accordance with the Fund's approved governance arrangements and Terms of Reference.

The Secretariat supported the effective functioning of the Fund by facilitating coordination between the **Steering Committee, Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs)**, national counterparts, donors, and the **MPTF Office**. Its work focused on ensuring timely implementation of Steering Committee decisions, coherence across Fund-financed activities, and the advancement of resource mobilization efforts for the Fund.

The Secretariat operated under the leadership of **Ms. Sabine Machl, UN Resident Coordinator in Uzbekistan and Co-Chair of the MPHSTF Steering Committee**, with coordination and day-to-day execution led by **Ms. Selbi Hanova, Partnerships and Development Finance Officer, RCO**, serving as the Fund focal point.

Support to Fund Governance and Implementation

Throughout 2025, the Technical Secretariat provided structured support to the governance and operational management of the MPHSTF, including:

- **Servicing of the MPHSTF Steering Committee**, including preparation of agenda items, background documentation, draft decisions, and follow-up actions.
- **Facilitation of coordination among Participating UN Organizations**, notably UNDP, UNICEF, and FAO, to support alignment of agency-implemented activities with the Fund's approved human security results framework.
- **Support to programme adjustments and amendments**, including preparation and processing of no-cost extensions, budget reallocations, and additional activities approved by the Steering Committee.
- **Oversight of implementation follow-up**, including coordination of joint monitoring visits to Karakalpakstan with national counterparts, donors, and development partners.
- **Preparation and consolidation of fund-level reporting materials**, ensuring consistency of information submitted to the MPTF Office and alignment with MPTFO reporting requirements.

Through these functions, the Secretariat supported continuity of implementation during periods of adjusted timelines and ensured that approved Fund activities were delivered in line with Steering Committee guidance.

Support to Steering Committee Decisions on Programme Scope

During the reporting period, the Secretariat supported the operationalization of several key Steering Committee decisions, including:

- **Expansion of Automatic Air Quality Monitoring Systems (AQMS)**, including preparation of technical justification and coordination of required documentation following approval of additional stations in September 2025.
- **Introduction of a Small Grants Initiative**, enabling engagement of local civil society organizations in Fund-financed activities.

With regard to the Small Grants Initiative, the Secretariat supported:

- preparation of call-for-proposals documentation;
- coordination of selection and approval processes as per Steering Committee decisions;
- administrative follow-up related to grant agreements and fund transfers;
- coordination of monitoring actions in collaboration with implementing partners.

As a result, **four local civil society organizations** were awarded **USD 10,000 each** to implement community-level initiatives in Karakalpakstan, covering areas such as community infrastructure, youth engagement, energy efficiency in social facilities, and access to safe drinking water.

Support to Resource Mobilization and Donor Engagement

Resource mobilization was pursued as a dedicated stream of work by the Technical Secretariat, implemented in close coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator and aligned with the Fund's strategic priorities. Between September 2025 and February 2026, the Secretariat supported and facilitated a series of bilateral and multilateral engagements with existing and prospective partners to explore opportunities for additional financing and cooperation.

This process began in September 2025 with a multilateral meeting convened with the Government of Uzbekistan and representatives of the Republic of Korea, Germany (through GIZ), and the European Union, during which the future financing outlook of the Fund was discussed. This was followed in October by consultations with representatives of Qatar, Kuwait, and Oman on priorities for subsequent phases of the Fund, as well as a bilateral discussion with Finland, which confirmed limited scope for new contributions due to existing budget commitments.

Engagements continued in November 2025 through meetings with international financial institutions, including consultations with the Islamic Development Bank, which indicated readiness to explore internal co-financing modalities, as well as discussions with KazAid, which did not result in a funding decision during the reporting period. During November and December, the Secretariat also supported online bilateral consultations with Belgium and Norway, aimed at broadening the Fund's donor base.

In December 2025, a bilateral meeting between the UN Resident Coordinator and the Ambassador of Qatar led to the submission of an official request for a USD 5 million matching contribution, which remains under consideration. Donor consultations continued into early 2026, including meetings with Italy, which confirmed continued review of possible participation in the Fund, and with Spain, where agreement was reached to explore potential engagement through the Spanish Sustainable Development Fund (FEDES). While several partners cited budgetary constraints, these engagements contributed to sustained visibility of the Fund and supported its positioning as a viable financing mechanism for integrated human security interventions in the Aral Sea region.

Secretariat Contribution to Fund Effectiveness

In line with MPTFO expectations for fund governance, the Technical Secretariat contributed to the MPHSTF's effectiveness by:

- ensuring coordinated follow-up on Steering Committee decisions;
- supporting transparency and consistency in documentation and reporting;
- facilitating linkages between programme implementation and donor engagement;
- maintaining alignment between Fund results, national priorities, and donor interests.

The Secretariat's work supported continuity of operations and provided a common platform for coordination among UN entities, national counterparts, and external partners.

During the reporting period, the Technical Secretariat fulfilled its mandated functions by supporting Fund governance, enabling implementation adjustments approved by the Steering Committee, and facilitating systematic donor engagement. These actions contributed to stable operation of the MPHSTF and supported the Fund's preparedness for continued implementation and potential future resource mobilization.