**Inputs of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

**to the questionnaire by the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change**

1. On October 12, 2022, the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, Ian Fry, sent a call to all UN Permanent Missions in Geneva to contribute “Consideration of the impact of climate change on human rights, including legal protection of persons displaced across international borders” to the report of the Special Rapporteur to be submitted at the 53rd session of the UN Human Rights Council in 2023, focusing on the human rights implications of climate change displacement, including legal protection of people displaced across international borders.
2. The Government of Uzbekistan appreciates the opportunity to respond to this communication. This information was prepared by the National Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights on the basis of information provided by the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Agency for External Labor Migration under the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Authorized Person of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman).
3. Uzbekistan, as a member of the UN Human Rights Council, maintains constructive interaction with special mandate holders and provides the following information in response to the questionnaire of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate Change.

***Examples of the impact of climate change on the movement of people and communities***

1. The key environmental problem of the Central Asian region is the Aral Sea disaster. Uzbekistan is directly facing the negative impacts of climate change, water depletion, soil degradation, desertification, loss of biodiversity and air pollution.
2. A third of the total population lives in areas of natural hydro meteorological disasters (droughts, mudslides, landslides, floods, avalanches, frosts, dust storms, heat waves), where the situation may worsen due to increased иprecipitation, temperature and evaporation.
3. These problems annually lead to serious socio-economic consequences, internal migration of people, destroy infrastructure and reduce the availability of water for agriculture (90% of agricultural land is irrigated artificially).
4. At the same time, the country has not recorded massive cases of displacement of individuals and communities as a result of climate change. People do not migrate from places affected by climate change, but work together with the State to correct such consequences and adapt to them.

***About laws, policies and practices that protect the rights of individuals and communities displaced by climate change***

1. The Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan pays great attention to climate change issues. Climate change issues are included in most national strategic documents, including the State Program for the Implementation of the Action Strategy for Five priority areas of Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021, the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for 2022-2026.
2. In recent years, a solid legislative framework has been formed in the field of environmental protection, in particular, more than 30 laws and over 350 regulatory documents have been adopted.
3. The Government has adopted a number of documents related to regulating actions and implementing measures in the field of climate change, including. the Law “On the Use of Renewable Energy Sources” of 21.05.2019, “Program of measures for further development of renewable energy, improving energy efficiency in economic and social sectors for 2017-2021”, etc.
4. The Presidential Decree of 04.10.2019 approved the Strategy for the transition of the Republic of Uzbekistan to a “green” economy for the period 2019-2030 years, and established an Interdepartmental Council for the Promotion and implementation of this Strategy.
5. National Sustainable Development Goals have been approved, which include targets and indicators aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
6. As part of the ongoing institutional reform, a number of new specialized ministries and departments have been established to implement measures to improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
7. Measures and actions aimed at combating climate change are integrated into sectoral development strategies: the Strategy for Innovative Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2019-2021, the Strategy for Solid Waste Management in the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period 2019-2028, the Strategy for the Conservation of Biological Diversity in the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2028, the Concept of environmental protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, the Concept of providing the Republic of Uzbekistan with electric energy for 2020-2030.
8. One of the objectives of the Environmental Protection Concept of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period up to 2030 is to mitigate the consequences of the Aral disaster by increasing the area of forest plantations on the Uzbek part of the dried bottom of the Aral Sea, creating a “green belt” around the cities of Nukus, Urgench and Khiva from local woody and shrubby plants.
9. In order to improve the ecological situation on the drained bottom of the Aral Sea, large-scale forest planting is being carried out. The Government decree of February 15, 2019 “On measures to accelerate the creation of “green areas” — protective forest stands on the drained bottom of the Aral Sea” provides for planting 500 thousand hectares in 2019.
10. The Laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On environmental audit”, “On hydrometeorological activities”, as well as “On Forest” in a new version and many others were adopted.
11. Currently, a draft Environmental Code of Uzbekistan has been prepared, which embodies all aspects of the legislative framework for climate adaptation and change in one legal act.
12. A new draft of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan is being developed, which includes norms on climate change.

***Examples of policies, practices, remedies, and concepts on how States, businesses, civil society, and intergovernmental organizations can protect people and communities displaced by climate change***

1. The Government of Uzbekistan has radically changed its approach to solving environmental problems. First, work in this area is carried out on the basis of involving all social groups, including business and civil society. Secondly, all of them act not only as executors, but also as direct initiators, developers and supervisors of environmental policy.
2. The state policy of Uzbekistan in relation to climate-dependent and environmentally disadvantaged areas also provides for comprehensive measures aimed at their socio-economic support in the form of the creation of special assistance funds and the development of entrepreneurship**[[1]](#footnote-1);** - attracting investment, environmental innovations and technologies[[2]](#footnote-2); reducing the tax burden, applying tax incentives and preferences, issuing subsidies for the development of entrepreneurship, social support for the population, as well as measures to restore soils[[3]](#footnote-3); ecological balance, providing the population with clean drinking water[[4]](#footnote-4), and others[[5]](#footnote-5).
3. In order to strengthen parliamentary control over the implementation of adopted programs and plans, a Committee on the Development of the Aral Sea region and Ecology was established in the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan in October.
4. Civil society (mahalla gatherings) helps with the employment of residents of climate-dependent regions, especially young people, attracting unemployed young people to paid public and seasonal work, personalized financial assistance within the framework of the “Iron Notebook”, “Women’s Notebook”, “Youth Notebook” systems.
5. Mahallacitizens assemblies have introduced the positions of assistant khokim for entrepreneurship development, employment and poverty reduction and deputy chairman of the citizens' assembly for youth issues, whose tasks are to provide comprehensive assistance to the young generation in learning a profession, employment, assistance in organizing cultural leisure, etc.
6. State standards for environmental education have been developed in schools in Uzbekistan. They are included in the program of lessons for 34 hours a year, and programs for conducting these lessons have been developed. In grades 1-2, they teach “The world around us”, in grades 3-4 – “Natural Science”. Ecological five-minute sessions are held.
7. Local authorities, as well as international organizations and NGOs operating in the country, are actively involved in initiatives and campaigns to raise awareness and improve education and awareness of citizens on climate change-related issues, with most of these activities funded through projects.
8. Intergovernmental organizations ensure the attraction of foreign direct investment and advanced technologies, grants, concessional loans and technical assistance to implement priority programs and projects for the development and modernization of basic sectors of the economy and infrastructure of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as solving issues of rational and equitable use of resources of transboundary watercourses.

***International, regional and national policies and legal approaches, needed to protect people and communities displaced by climate change***

1. Uzbekistan, which has been a party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement since 2018, implements international obligations in the implemented strategies for the development of economic sectors, as well as in the Sustainable Development Goals, which are aimed at improving energy efficiency and resource conservation, developing a “green economy” increasing forest plantations and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Moreover, since 2018, as part of the “Bonn Challenge”, Uzbekistan has been working on planting forests and planted forests throughout the country. So, at the moment, 1.7 million hectares have been planted, which is more than three times higher than the previously assumed obligations (500 thousand hectares) for the restoration of forest areas.
3. At the same time, since 2021, Uzbekistan has been implementing the national program “Yashil Makon”, aimed at increasing the area of green areas and parks from the current 8% to 30% by 2026. It is planned to plant 1 billion trees within 5 years.
4. Today, environmental initiatives announced by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev from the highest rostrums of the world have received the support of the international community.
5. The initiative of the President of Uzbekistan to establish the SCO Climate Council will increase the effectiveness of cooperation in the field of climate adaptation, combating desertification and land degradation, and introducing water-saving technologies. The UN Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region was established, and the Aral Sea region was declared a zone of environmental innovation and technology.
6. CA strategy for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 is being developed jointly with the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
7. Renewable energy sources are being actively introduced. The goals are set to increase their share to 25% of the total electricity generation by 2026, and to 30% by 2030.
8. All this will significantly reduce the burden on the environment, ensure the rational use of natural resources and their conservation for future generations, which is fully consistent with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.
9. Despite the fact that the development of Uzbekistan is already significantly affected by such climate changes as increasing overall aridity of the climate; increasing risks of water scarcity; increasing frequency, severity and scale of droughts; intensification of desertification processes; increasing risks to public health (increase in cardiovascular, vector-borne and infectious diseases); increasing risks to food security and food security. While there are other countries’ security concerns, **at the moment these factors do not cause migration for the majority of the population.**
10. This is due to the fact that the state has committed itself in the field of combating land degradation processes, which include the construction of catchment areas in mountainous and foothill areas, the expansion of forest-covered areas; reducing the emission of harmful waste by installing modern systems for cleaning harmful vapors, dust and toxic waste from industrial enterprises; creating a new environment around the city; activation of anti-erosion plantings on mountain slopes, in ravines, on abandoned lands (Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to create an effective system for combating land degradation” dated 10.06.2022 No. PP-277).

***Selected considerations for people and communities displaced within the country and those displaced abroad***

1. Not only the territories surrounding the Aral Sea, but also the entire Central Asian region are at constant environmental risk, which negatively affects the quality of life, health and, most importantly, the human gene pool.
2. For example, due to the above-mentioned factors, residents of the Republic of Karakalpakstan annually receive sanatorium treatment, there is a high risk of congenital anomalies, and there is insufficient access to fresh water.
3. Measures have been taken to create a “Green Cover” - protective forests on the dried-up bottom of the Aral Sea and in the Aral Sea region.
4. In the absence of additional resource-saving measures, the country may face water scarcity, increased droughts and hazards that lead to instability of agricultural production and threaten food and environmental security.
5. For this reason, it is proposed to strengthen international cooperation in the field of protection of displaced lime trees due to climate change, taking into account the possibility of resettlement of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan due to climate change, as well as participation in the efforts of the international community to maintain a safe environment and combat climate change.

***Defining the concepts of “climate change refugee”. Opinion on the feasibility of including a separate category for refugees due to climate change in the UN Refugee Convention***

1. We consider it appropriate to use the term “climate refugees”, since we are talking about people who are forced to leave the territory of their country of citizenship due to climate change, namely natural disasters (natural hazards to human life).
2. Climate refugees are people who are forced to leave their country of citizenship due to the well-established risks of becoming victims of natural disasters that pose a real threat to human life.
3. A climate change refugee is a citizen who is forced to leave their country of permanent residence as a result of natural and other disasters that pose a threat to life. At the same time, climate change as a result of the use of chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear weapons should not be qualified as a natural or other cataclysm.
4. We also consider it appropriate to include this category in the UN Refugee Convention, but taking into account the following factors:

- the temporary nature of the stay of this category of citizens in the territory of the host state;

- financing the creation of rehabilitation centers for climate change refugees and providing them with material support at the expense of those who send them;

- construction of rehabilitation centers in remote parts of the country, isolated from the local population;

- without the right to continue obtaining citizenship of the country of temporary stay.

1. See: Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-264 dated 30.05.2022 “On additional measures for the development of entrepreneurship in the northern regions of the Republic of Karakalpakstan”. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See: Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-5202 dated 07/29/2021 “On measures to implement the special resolution of the United Nations General Assembly” of May 18, 2021 “On declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of environmental innovations and technologies”. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See: Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-277 dated 10.06.2022 “On measures to create an effective system to combat land degradation”. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See: Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 27.09.2022, No. PP381 “On measures for the implementation of the project” “Water resources management in the Aral Sea basin taking into account adaptation to climate change” with the participation of the Asian Development Bank, dated 27.09.2022. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See: Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 31.08.2022 No. UP-213 “On additional measures to improve the welfare of the population of the Republic of Karakalpakstan through accelerated development of entrepreneurship, innovative technologies and infrastructures”; Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 11.11.2020, No. PP-4889 “On measures for integrated socio-economic development of the Republic of Karakalpakstan in 2020 – 2023”; Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 11/23/2021 No. DP-25 “On additional measures to accelerate the development of entrepreneurship in the Aral Sea region”. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)