

**JOINT STATEMENT  
BY THE HEAD OF FOUNDER-STATES OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND  
FOR THE ARAL SEA SAVING**

A meeting of the Presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan was held in the city of Almaty on 28 April 2009.

In the course of negotiations conducted in a mutual understanding, trust, friendly and constructive cooperation climate, the Head of Central Asian States have discussed issues related to activities of the International Fund for the Aral Sea Saving (IFAS), which was established in 1993 with the aim of implementing joint practical measures and long-term programs to overcome consequences of the Aral disaster, improve environmental and socio-economic conditions in the Aral Sea basin.

The Head of Founder-States of IFAS, hereinafter referred to as the "Parties",

being governed by the centuries-old good-neighbor relations built upon the community of history, culture and traditions, the mutual support and strategic partnership between the countries to meet vital interests of the region's nations,

based on rich experience of fruitful cooperation and showing mutual intention to bring up the interstate relations to higher level,

aiming at mutual help and support to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, at improved socio-economic and environmental conditions in the Aral Sea basin,

noting that the development of mutually beneficial cooperation among the Central Asian states is of significant importance for ensuring sustainable development and regional security,

considering the climate change, the intensive regional glacier and snowfield degradation, as well as the water use increase due to population growth and national economic development in the region,

emphasizing significance of the region's country efforts in integrated use and protection of water resources, in combating of desertification and land degradation in order to solve the Aral Sea basin problems,

placing importance on the projects as implemented under umbrella of IFAS, with account of country interests in the region,

keeping in mind that the use of water resources in the Central Asian region is to the benefit of all founder-states of IFAS and in compliance with widely recognized international law principles,

taking into account activities of IFAS and its structural bodies aimed at enhanced regional cooperation in socio-economic and environmental improvement in the Aral Sea basin,

showing content with the adoption of the UN General Assembly's Resolution of 11 December 2008 on giving the International Fund for the Aral Sea Saving a status of observer in the UN General Assembly,

expressing appreciation to UN structures, international financing institutions, donor-countries and other development partners for assistance and support rendered to the region's countries in solving the Aral Sea basin problems,

and based on common endeavor to make a feasible contribution in order to overcome consequences of the crisis in the Aral Sea basin,

have stated the following:

1. The Parties, acknowledging a positive role of IFAS, activity of which allows coordinating and solving crucial matters of cooperation in overcoming consequences of the crisis in the Aral Sea basin, will promote activities and cooperation with UN organization, including the UN Regional Center of preventive diplomacy for Central Asian countries, and with other international organizations.

2. The Parties express their willingness to improve further the institutional and contractual legal frameworks of IFAS in order to make its activity more efficient and develop more active cooperation with financial institutions and donors within the framework of projects and programs related with the Aral Sea basin problem solution.

3. The Parties assign the Executive Council together with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development of IFAS, with involvement of national experts and donors, to develop a Program of Actions for support of the Aral Sea basin countries for 2011-2015 (ASBP-3), with following examination and approval by the founder-states of IFAS.

4. The Parties will continue cooperation aimed at the improvement of environmental and socio-economic conditions in the Aral Sea basin.

5. The Parties reaffirm their interests in the development of mutually acceptable mechanism for integrated water use and environment protection in Central Asia to the benefit of all the states in the region.

6. The Parties emphasize that the constructive negotiations conducted in openness and mutual understanding climate in Almaty have made a weighty contribution to further development of traditional good-neighbor relations and mutually beneficial cooperation between founder-states of IFAS in the Aral Sea basin problem solution.

7. The Head of States express their gratitude for warm and open-armed welcome by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A.Nazarbayev on the hospitable Kazakh land.

Almaty, 28 April 2009

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan **N.A. Nazarbayev**

President of the Kyrgyz Republic **K.S. Bakiyev**

President of the Republic of Tajikistan **E. Rakhmon**

President of Turkmenistan **G.M. Berdymukhamedov**

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan **I.A. Karimov**