

# JOINT STATEMENT OF THE HEADS OF IFAS STATES - FOUNDERS

## **Joint Statement of the Heads of the states - founders of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea**

The meeting of the Presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan took place in Almaty on April 28, 2009.

During negotiations which took place in the atmosphere of mutual understanding, trust, friendship, and structural cooperation, the Heads of the States of Central Asia discussed issues related to the activities of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, which was established in 1993, with the objective of to implement joint practical activities and programs to address the Aral Sea crises and to improve environmental and socio-economic conditions within the Aral Sea basin.

Heads of the States - Founders of the IFAS, further named "Parties",

guided by centuries-old good neighborly relationships and common history, culture and traditions, good brotherhood and strategic partnership between countries that are responsible for the utmost interests of the people of the region,

based on rich experience of fruitful collaboration and expressing mutual interest to bring inter-government relationships to the higher level,

striving towards mutual assistance and support for achieving Millennium Development Goals and improving socio-economic and environmental conditions within the Aral Sea basin,

emphasizing that the development of mutual collaboration of the states of Central Asia has high importance for ensuring sustainable development and regional safety,

taking into account climate change, intensive degradation of glaciers and snowfields of the Region and water consumption related to the population growth and the development of economies of the countries of the Region,

emphasizing importance of the efforts by the countries of the Region on integrated use and conservation of water resources, combating desertification and land degradation for solving problems of the Aral Sea basin,

giving high priority to project implementation within the framework of the IFAS and taking into consideration interests of the Region,

taking into account that use of water resources of the Central Asian Region is implemented within the interests of all the states-stakeholders of the IFAS by following generally acknowledged principles of the international law,

taking into account activities of the IFAS and its structural organizations oriented towards strengthening regional collaboration on improvement of socio-economic and environmental conditions within the Aral Sea basin,

expressing satisfaction with the accepted General Assembly Resolution of the UN of December 11, 2008 on giving the International Fund for Saving Aral Sea the status of observer in the UN General Assembly,

expressing gratitude to the specialized structural organizations of the UN, international financial institutions, donor countries, other partners in development of assistance and support provided for the countries of the Region,

based on the common endeavor to make contributions for overcoming consequences of the crisis in the Aral Sea basin,

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## **make the following statement:**

1. Parties emphasize the importance of IFAS, activities which provide the possibility to coordinate and solve principal issues through collaboration to overcome the consequences of the crisis of the Aral Sea basin. IFAS will enhance and strengthen the collaboration with the institutions of the UN system including UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy and other international organizations.

2. The Parties express their readiness to further improve the organizational structure and the legal framework of IFAS to improve its efficiency and better interaction with financial institutions and donors to implement projects and programs related to the addressing the Aral Sea basin crisis.

3. Parties task the Executive Committee jointly with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development of the IFAS with participation of national experts and donors to develop a Program of actions for the period 2011-2015 (Aral Sea Basin Program - 3) to provide assistance to the countries of the Aral Sea basin and submit it for consideration and approval by the States - Founders of the IFAS.

4. Parties will continue collaboration targeted to the improvement of the environmental and socio-economic situation in the Aral Sea basin.

5. Parties once again confirm their interest in the development of mutually acceptable mechanism on integrated use of water resources and environmental protection in Central Asia taking into account the interests of all states in the region.

6. Parties stressed that constructive negotiations which took place in Almaty in the atmosphere of openness and mutual understanding contributed significantly to the further development of the traditionally known good relationships and mutually beneficial collaboration of the states- founders of the IFAS in solving the problems of the Aral Sea.

7. Heads of the States express their gratitude for the warm reception and welcome by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbaev in the hospitable land of Kazakhstan.

*Almaty, April 28, 2009*

**President**

**of the Republic of Kazakhstan**

**N.A. Nazarbaev**

**President**

**of the Kyrgyz Republic**

**K.S. Bakiev**

**President**

**of the Republic of Tajikistan**

**E. Rakhmon**

**President**

**of Turkmenistan**

**G.M. Berdymukhamedov**

**President**

**of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

**I.A. Karimov**