

## KAZAKHSTAN



### Progress Towards Environmental Sustainability

Ten years after independence, Kazakhstan still suffers from poor environmental practices, and in some respects the situation has worsened. According to the National Environmental Action Plan of Kazakhstan, the most pressing issues that require urgent action include: degradation of pastures and arable land; shortage of water resources; shortage of forests and specially protected natural territories; air pollution in urban areas; increasing environmental degradation related to oil and mining activities; environmental pollution due to industrial and municipal solid waste; and pollution of water bodies with wastewater.

About 66% of Kazakhstan's territory is exposed to desertification processes due to the country's geographical location and its dry climate, as well as the impact of anthropogenic factors. Every year, 10-15% of the arable land in Kyzyl Orda Oblast turns to wasteland due to dysfunctional irrigation systems. For the same reason, 20-25% of pastures to the south of the Aral Sea have been destroyed. Affected by secondary salinisation, there is a decline in the productivity of arable lands in many oblasts of Kazakhstan and especially in the South-Kazakhstan and Zhambyl Oblasts.

While the country's total volume of water resources reaches 100 cubic kilometers per annum, the existing supply does not even reach 35% of that. Water supply per capita in Kazakhstan is the lowest among the Commonwealth of Independent States countries. Annually, more than 200 million cubic meters of polluted wastewater are discharged into surface reservoirs. The natural ability of most watersheds to self-clean and self-recover seems to have been exhausted. Finding viable solutions to Kazakhstan's water problems is therefore particularly difficult.

## QUICK FACTS

<b>Total UNDP-GEF and Co-Finance:</b>	\$128,039,310
<b>Total UNDP and Co-Finance:</b>	\$1,745,000
<b>Total:</b>	\$129,784,310
<b>Cumulative Total ODS Phased-Out:</b>	618 ODP tonnes

Forests occupy only 4% of the vast territory of the country. They are, however, the habitat of the most valuable and rare species of animals and of 90% of the plants known in Kazakhstan.

Challenges to ensuring environmental sustainability in Kazakhstan include the creation of an effective system of environmental management and protection as well as the establishment of a basis for balanced use of natural resources.<sup>1</sup>

## SPOTLIGHT

### Harnessing wind power to provide energy services to people in need and put the country on a path toward achieving a sustainable energy system<sup>2</sup>

Kazakhstan is a country in need of more energy services, since a substantial part of the population lacks access to basic energy services for education, cooking and heating. Wind energy provides a clean energy alternative, which does not pollute the environment or contribute to global climate change.

With its vast unimpeded steppes, few countries are better positioned to expand their use of wind energy than Kazakhstan. In 2004, with support from the GEF, a US\$ 2.6 million project began to promote the development of a private wind energy market in the country. By collaborating with the national government and the private sector, which is providing more than \$4.5 million in co-financing, the project has four main objectives. First, to assist the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources in formulating a national policy on the development of wind energy, including the creation of financial incentives for renewable power development; second, strengthen national capacity – in both the government and the private sector – to develop and obtain financing for wind energy projects; facilitate the construction of the country's first 5-megawatt 'wind farm' (located in a mountainous area with natural wind tunnels) to demonstrate the feasibility of wind power projects and to increase awareness and support for them; provide lessons and experiences that can be applied to other renewable energy projects in Kazakhstan and other countries.

Multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral consultations have successfully led to a political commitment to invest in wind energy development to provide more people with basic energy services and put the country on a path toward achieving a sustainable energy system that protects both the local and global environment.

"In recent years, a considerable amount of attention has been given to environmental issues here, both at the national and international levels. The environmental disasters related to the disappearance of the Aral Sea, the nuclear devastation in the Semipalatinsk polygon over several decades, and the rapid decline of the many plant and animal species from Kazakhstan's vast land should remind us all that our actions today can have serious negative consequences for generations to come. Although we have taken some initial steps in improving the health of the country's environment, much remains to be done. We, at the UNDP, are committed to continuing to do our part. Working together, we can create a better world for the benefit of generations to come."- Environment and Development Nexus in Kazakhstan – UNDP publication, 2004<sup>3</sup>



**Yuriko Skuratowicz, Resident Representative**

## PORTFOLIO

**FSSD\*** UNDP's assistance in Environmental Management provides capacity building support to the Ministry of Environment in responding to environmental management challenges in Kazakhstan. The country is also carrying out the NCSA project to determine the priority needs, and a plan of action, for developing Kazakhstan's capacity to meet its commitments to global environmental management.

**WATER** To address Effective Water governance, UNDP, in partnership with Norway and DFID, is assisting the Government in a water resources management project. The project aims at strengthening the water management organizations through institutionalizing the practice of Integrated Water Management (IWRM). This is done through assisting the Committee for Water Resources to prepare the first National IWRM and Efficiency Plan and eight Basin IWRM Plans for River Basin Organizations, as well as establishing Basin Councils representing the water users.

**ENERGY** Kazakhstan has embarked on a number of initiatives to provide alternative and sustainable sources of energy that would enhance sustainable livelihood of local communities and reduce GHG emissions. The wind energy for water supply project is presented in the project spotlight. UNDP in partnership with CIDA is also assisting in the preparatory phase of the Energy Efficiency programme to develop a full scale project to implement selected energy efficiency measures at a demonstration site. Kazakhstan preparing its Second National Communication under UNFCCC.

**BIODIVERSITY** UNDP with funding from the GEF is supporting the Government to address sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity through a number of interventions. One project demonstrates improved agro-biodiversity conservation at two mountain fruit forest sites which harbour globally significant wild plant varieties. A second project is implemented on three wetlands that are globally significant habitats for water birds and aims to improve policy and regulatory framework to support wetland conservation and sustainable use. Finally, a set of projects demonstrate the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

**CHEMICALS** GEF is assisting Kazakhstan in its efforts to maintain compliance with the Montreal Protocol targeting priority ODS phase-out activities in the refrigeration sector. The initiative includes a refrigerants recovery and recycling sub-project aimed to eliminate ODS in the rigid and flexible foam sectors, eliminate CFC-113 in a solvent production facility, develop a national halon management project, as well as five technical assistance and training components. Capacity development assistance is being provided to government institutions and national enterprises. The GEF is also funding an enabling activity that will result in development of a NIP that will establish the basis for further programmes in POPs management.

### CONTACTS

Ms. Olga Klimanova – [olga.klimanova@undp.org](mailto:olga.klimanova@undp.org)  
 Ms. Zhanar Sagimbayeva – [zhanara.sagimbaeva@undp.org](mailto:zhanara.sagimbaeva@undp.org)  
 Tel. 7-3172-326-360  
 Fax 7-3172-327-847  
[http://www.undp.kz/script\\_site.html?id=183](http://www.undp.kz/script_site.html?id=183)

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<sup>1</sup>MDGR 2002 [http://www.undg.org/documents/269-Kazakhstan\\_MDG\\_Report\\_-\\_Goal\\_7\\_\\_Part\\_1\\_\\_English.pdf](http://www.undg.org/documents/269-Kazakhstan_MDG_Report_-_Goal_7__Part_1__English.pdf); <sup>2</sup>UNDP-GEF, 'Meeting the Climate Change Challenge, Sustaining Livelihoods', 2004: [http://www.undp.org/gef/undp-gef\\_publications/publications/climate\\_change\\_brochure2004.pdf](http://www.undp.org/gef/undp-gef_publications/publications/climate_change_brochure2004.pdf) and GEF Online database: <http://www.gefonline.org/projectDetails.cfm?projID=783>; <sup>3</sup>From RR quote section in the questionnaire; <sup>4</sup>Frameworks and Strategies for Sustainable Development