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Resilient nations.*



United Nations
Development Programme
Wind of Change
in Kazakhstan

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Wind of Change

The United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, established its country office in Kazakhstan 20 years ago, in 1993. The mission then was stated:

“To serve the best interests of the Kazakhstani people to take their rightful place in the community of nations

The history of the past twenty years is captured in this archive-style report as success stories. These are stories of how partnership and a drive for human development have created history and shaped a promising development landscape for the future.

Twenty years ago, the newly independent and freshly minted UN member-state Kazakhstan sought partnership with a UN Country Team in its transition and development. The country was undergoing a complex transitional crisis including rampant unemployment, a widening gap between rich and poor, regional disparities, crumbling infrastructure, and environmental problems. Many Kazakhstanis simply wished at that time for stability and basic social and economic opportunities. The first UNDP projects accordingly were to help meet those basic needs.

Over the next few years, the situation did not really improve. The 1995 GDP amounted to a mere 64 percent of the 1990 level and Kazakhstan's Human Development rating had dropped from 54th to 79th place. More than half the population struggled to live below a subsistence income level.

The country then embarked on an intensive development agenda, and the rest is history, as they say.

The UNDP office in Kazakhstan has helped through the hard times and the successes of this history. That is why we thought to present this year's Annual Report as a 20-year retrospective.

On the pages of this report we offer 20 success stories that exemplify the results of UNDP-Kazakhstan collaboration in development. The stories talk of the country's first anti-poverty programs, the improving livelihoods of disabled persons, more efficient government-services delivery, and the turn toward sustainable development. UNDP has made a positive impact on governance and policy here, which in turn has improved the everyday life of the people.

UNDP has carried out more than 170 projects in these 20 years, partnering not only with the government but also with civil society organizations, businesspeople, and many development agencies and supporters. Through these projects we have demonstrated good ideas, and this has made UNDP a more effective advocate for policy development to enable profound, transformational change.

The stories in this report, however, are about the starting points of change. Some of those are small things such as:

- A woman who was able to support her family from a biodiversity project. (See our story from 2003)

- Schoolchildren who could reclaim their school's gym in the winter because of an energy-efficiency retrofit. (See our story from 2006)
- Sixty-two businesses that opened in Semey through the joint local-development program there. (See our story from 1999)
- A disabled person appointed as advisor to the Minister of Labor and Social Protection. (See our story from 2005)

Other stories are, right from the start, evidently the beginning of something much bigger. For example:

- The first government-UN joint program in East Kazakhstan led to a new model for local development just as we were looking at how to combat inequalities in the country. The "Semey model" is now being adopted in two other regions – Kyzylorda and Mangystau. (See our story from 1998)
- A collaboration with the Ministry of Environment helped Kazakhstan place its Green Bridge Partnership Program in the outcome document at the Rio+20 Sustainable Development summit, and kicked off a national greening campaign. (See our story from 2012)
- Early support to civil service reforms in Kazakhstan led eventually to establishment of a Regional Civil Service Hub that facilitates exchanges of expertise and the



advancement of reform far beyond these borders. (See our story from 2001)

The first 20 years are the history of the growing UNDP-Kazakhstan partnership. We now, together, are looking ahead and seeing more opportunities for collaboration. Kazakhstan is a middle-income country that enjoys social and economic dynamism. The new national strategy, Kazakhstan 2050, calls for ever more focus on ensuring well-rounded human development.

Kazakhstan is ambitious in its domestic development and it joins and advocates for initiatives of regional and global cooperation to support peace, human security, and sustainable development everywhere. UNDP is committed to working with Kazakhstan well into the future.

Stephen Tull
UNDP Resident Representative in Kazakhstan





1993

In January 1993, thirteen months after the Declaration of Independence, Kazakhstan adopts its first Constitution in post-Soviet times. The Constitution proclaims the country a parliamentary republic.

Kazakh becomes the official state language.

In February, the UNDP establishes a presence in Kazakhstan. Its first interim office begins to operate from a hotel in Almaty.

Floods affect thousands of people living in the Caspian Sea region. President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan requests assistance from the United Nations.



Humanitarian Aid to Flood Victims in the Caspian Region

In the spring of 1993, thousands of people living on the shores of the Caspian Sea suffered major damage from floods as a result of swiftly melting snow, coupled with heavy rainfall. The surging sea levels submerged nearby villages, causing the loss of human life and rendering thirty thousand people homeless.

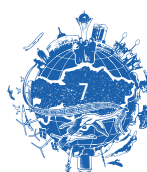
In response to a government request, the UN acting representative in Kazakhstan participated in the damage assessment missions, working closely with the Office of the Prime Minister and the Agency of Emergency Situations. The UN team coordinated the distribution of emergency humanitarian aid, provided by the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs to flood victims in the Caspian region. It also managed to raise an additional \$150,000 in donations from oil companies operating in the region.

The UN-led needs assessment mission identified the lack of housing as one of the most urgent issues. The UNDP purchased from a Russian company thirty pre-fabricated houses and, with the help of regional authorities, transported and installed them to shelter flood victims. The UN team also coordinated the reconstruction of damaged houses and roads in the affected areas.



Flooding in the Caspian Sea area left thousands of people homeless.

These joint activities of the UNDP with the central government and the local authorities strengthened mutual trust and prepared the ground for a future long term interaction. A year later, the UNDP signed its first official cooperation agreement with Kazakhstan, thus paving the way towards a full-fledged and comprehensive partnership with the Government and the people of Kazakhstan.



1994



Kazakhstan successfully demarcates the borders with all of its neighbors, and, in particular, signs a border agreement with China.

As the first mobile phones appear on the market their price skyrockets to over \$2,000 a piece.

Annual GDP drops down to 25 percent below the level of 1991. Inflation reaches 1900 percent. The country experiences a nationwide decline of living standards.

The Aral region, one of the most impoverished areas of Kazakhstan, registers the highest unemployment rate – 17.5 percent – and experiences a devastating environmental disaster. Acting jointly with the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Kyzylorda provincial administration, the UNDP launches a programme to encourage citizen participation in local development.

Helping People Help Themselves: the Case of the Aral Sea Region

The environmental degradation of the Aral Sea exacerbated the already precarious socio-economic conditions of the region, causing even greater insecurity of its population.

In 1994, UNDP dispatched its first needs assessment mission to the Aral Sea region. Water management, health care and economic recovery were identified as key areas where external assistance could make a difference. Several international organizations were already working in the field. The UNDP, in consultation with the environment-protection authorities and the provincial administration, designed a programme to empower the citizens of the province and encourage their participation in the search for local development solutions.

The “Aral Seashore Rehabilitation and Capacity Building” Programme kicked-off in 1995 and became known as the initiative “Help the people of Aral help themselves”. The opening of Support Centers in Kyzylorda, Aralsk and Kazalinsk were milestone benchmarks. The Centers spread among the local people the knowledge about the set-up of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and businesses as precursors and drivers of socio-economic recovery and progress.

More than a thousand and a half individuals attended training workshops and seminars to improve their skills in business planning, project applications and fund raising. Subsequently, many of them managed to prepare high quality projects: 83, out of 183 applications submitted to the Centers, received funding that amounted to more than \$1.5 million.

Twenty-three new NGOs came into being with the purpose to address socio-economic and environmental issues in their communities. UNDP aided the newcomers to benefit from the good practices and expertise of visiting international NGOs. Later, the local NGOs applied the accumulated knowledge in the implementation of



The Aral Sea region, views of significant desertification and environmental degradation in the region.

their own projects and initiatives. One example was organic farming and the construction of greenhouses.

The UN Volunteers (UNVs) stood also ready to lend support. Eighteen UNV specialists worked on a microcredit project providing funding to local women to set-up small businesses.

The UNDP carried out a review of external assistance to the Aral Sea region to facilitate greater degree of coordination among donors and development partners. The Government of Kazakhstan adopted a three-year special development programme for the Aral Sea region. It was based on a needs assessment report, prepared by UNDP at a request from the Kyzylorda provincial administration. While on an official visit to Kazakhstan in 1995, the UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth paid special attention to the Aral Sea region, getting a first-hand impression of the scale of the ecological disaster but also acknowledging the progress made in the recovery effort.

“The project met the expectations of the local communities. It alleviated people’s concerns about being helpless and unable to change the situation they faced. The project invigorated citizens’ actions and upheld their morale”, stated the project’s 1997 evaluation report.

The initiative attained its main goal: local people received an opportunity and encouragement to improve their everyday lives and to build-up their own future.



1995

A new Constitution, declaring Kazakhstan presidential republic, is adopted by national referendum.

The last remaining nuclear munitions of the world's fourth biggest nuclear arsenal are destroyed at the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site.

The first national broadcasting company – “Khabar” – is established.

The economy of Kazakhstan remains in decline. The government spending on education and health is reduced by half.

The first General Human Development Report is published in Kazakhstan.

As the Government of Kazakhstan sets out to boost major macroeconomic reforms in the country, the UNDP pledges support to the reform efforts.

Nationwide Public Support to Social and Economic Transition

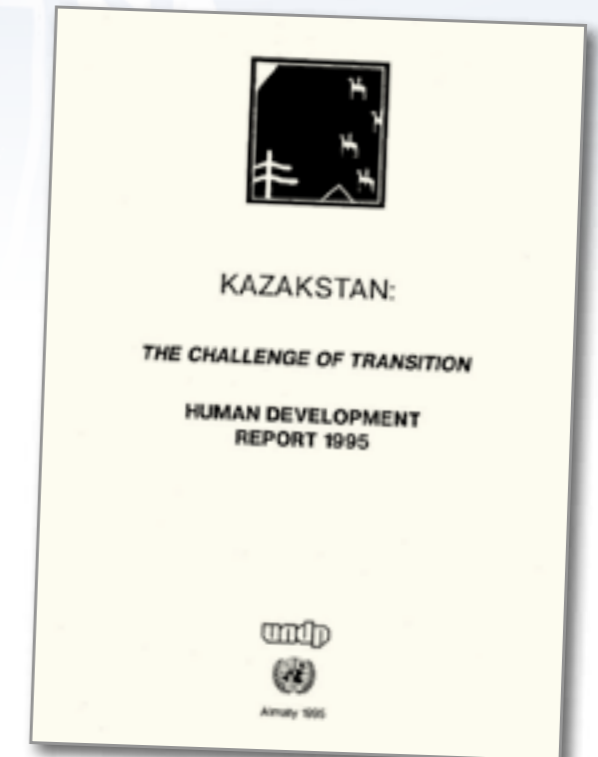
The Government of Kazakhstan requested UNDP to assess and provide a second opinion on the macroeconomic policies implemented in the country.

Drawing on its extensive knowledge networks, the UNDP invited top-notch experts from other transition countries – Poland, Russia and Vietnam – to provide advice relevant to Kazakhstan's situation. They worked closely with the economic advisors of the President, sharing recommendations that often contrasted the usual standard policy advice. The proposed reforms included innovative approaches towards privatisation, foreign direct investment (FDI), and financial and banking sector reform.

These policy consultations triggered the elaboration of the National Programme on Privatisation. The UNDP, alongside with the US Agency on International Development (USAID), the World Bank, the State Property Committee of Kazakhstan, and the State Privatisation Committee assisted the implementation of this programme through support to small-scale privatization projects, and technical advice on privatisation of large state enterprises.

One specific issue that emerged was the reform of the “single-industry towns”, i.e. towns that depend on a single major company for the employment of the population, the development of the infrastructure and the overall local economy. The closure of such big enterprises affected 27 mono-economy towns across the country and caused higher unemployment rates and deteriorating social conditions.

An UNDP-supported study identified common problems and solutions for these towns. It helped shape



Kazakhstan's first National Human Development Report.

government efforts to promote small and medium-size businesses in those areas to revitalize affected economies.

In addition to its support to the macroeconomic reforms, UNDP in Kazakhstan prepared the first National Human Development Report. It defined three priority areas of action to advance human development: raising people's incomes, providing better access to education, and increasing life expectancy. The report urged the Government to insert social and human development dimensions in the profound macroeconomic reforms, implemented in the country. The Government-UNDP collaboration then evolved to cover a number of initiatives in the field of civil service reform, FDI promotion, foreign aid coordination, as well as an array of projects on social and human development issues.



1996

Kazakhstan's GDP registers a positive growth for the first time since independence, rising to 0.5 percent from a downfall of 8.2 percent in 1995.

Inflation levels drop to below 40 percent from 246.5 percent in the previous year.

An unique institution – the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan – comes into existence to strengthen the social stability and ethnic accord.

A nationwide referendum prolongs the presidential mandate until December 2000.

The first Kazakh TV series – “Perekrestok” – is broadcasted. It depicts the everyday life of ordinary Almaty families and scores high popularity rates.

Kazakhstan is proud of the statistical data on the educational levels of women. Women with higher education (12.9 percent) surpass the holders of higher diploma amongst men (11.7 percent). Women's participation in decision-making, however, remains limited. They account for mere 9.6 percent of the civil servants in managerial positions. The Government and the UNDP join efforts to further empower Kazakhstani women and ensure they enjoy equal opportunities to contribute to their country's social and economic development.

New Approaches to Gender Issues

A recent survey by the national news platform “Vlast” (vlast.kz) included Aigul Solovyeva among the fifty most influential women in Kazakhstan. She started her career as the laboratory assistant in the Academy of Science, then was promoted to an academic secretary position at the research institution. During “perestroika” (“restructuring”) times she became an entrepreneur and opened her own business. She also headed, until 2013, the Civil Alliance, a network of nearly 400 non-governmental organizations. Today she is an active member of the Lower Chamber (Majilis) of the Parliament of Kazakhstan. Her achievements in all her endeavors – in science, business, civil society and politics – make her a role model for many active women in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan received international recognition for promoting gender equality and empowering women. Working hand in hand with the Government, UNDP contributed to this success.

The break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 exposed women in Kazakhstan to many hardships. They accounted for 60 percent of the surging unemployment trend. According to anecdotal evidence, female job seekers needed three times longer than men to be hired, and they earned a lesser pay than their male colleagues. The absence of adequate preschool or kindergarten care centers, limited the possibilities for mothers of young children to be professionally employed.

In terms of proportion, the indicators were slightly better for women employed by the government than by the private sector. However, few women participated in policy-formulating or decision-making, and only 9.6 percent of the civil servants in managerial positions were women.



“ In various walks of life I could sense the untapped social and economic potential of women in Kazakhstan

Aigul Solovyeva

The Government and the UNDP acknowledged that inequality in employment opportunities is an obstacle to development and undertook measures to remedy the situation.

Kazakhstan decided to join several relevant international agreements on gender equality. Notably, in 1998 it signed and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

In 1998, the National Commission on Women's Affairs and Family-Demographic Policy was established within the Presidential Administration, indicating that the commitment to gender equality is a national priority.

The UNDP supported Kazakhstan's initiatives on gender issues by sharing expertise and best practices, and offering gender equality trainings for government employees, national lawmakers and civil society representatives.



UNDP Administrator, Helen Clark and keynote speakers of the panel discussion on “Women Leaders in Today's World and in Kazakhstan”.





This partnership laid out the ground for education and empowerment of creative women of Kazakhstan.

In 2009, with the help of UNDP, two landmark pieces of legislation were enacted – the Law on Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women, and the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence. The Equal Rights Act introduces a gender mainstreaming approach and requires every government agency to apply gender equality indicators in planning and budgeting.

The National Women's Commission with UNDP assistance elaborated a National Strategy for Gender Equality (2006-2016) and prepared a National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women. With UNDP support, the Commission conducted a number of relevant studies on the economic, labour and political situation of women in Kazakhstan. Many of the research findings led to recommendations for new legislation or amendments to existing laws. For instance, the Commission successfully lobbied for amendment to Kazakhstan's Labour Code, enabling women with young children to work from home.

The new legislation provided conditions for results-oriented programmes, such as the programme on encouraging women's entrepreneurship. The Government allocated one million dollars to this end and the number of businesses, owned and managed by women, increased substantially.

The UNDP partnered with the Government in a widespread awareness raising campaign to change the public perceptions of women's role in society and to encourage women to become active in the nation's public, social and political life. Through seminars on leadership skills, exhibitions, publications and video programmes, and visits to rural regions, the campaign reached out directly to more than 24,000 women.

During one of the seminars, Aigul Solovyeva acquainted herself with the basics of business and learned how to turn an idea into an enterprise. With the help of the UNDP-supported programme on economic and agricultural development, Solovyeva founded and led for many years



the Milk Union of Kazakhstan – the association of milk producers in the country. She quickly earned recognition as a savvy business leader and soon after became Chair of the Women Business Association of Atyrau Oblast. Her career was crowned by a seat in Parliament. "In various walks of life I could sense the untapped social and economic potential of women in Kazakhstan, and the way women were detached from the many important processes of the society", she said. "This capital has a transformative potential to create an equitable and advanced society with smart policies both for men and women".

Individual success stories like Solovyeva's helped Kazakhstan receive international recognition for its gender equality efforts. For example, Social Watch – an international network of citizens organizations – ranked Kazakhstan as the 33rd out of 200 countries on its 2012 Gender Equity Index.

In 2012 the Government has increased to \$20 million the annual amount of money, allocated to encourage women's entrepreneurship. At present, women contribute 40 percent of the national GDP, up from 36.3 percent in 2005.

Solovyeva summed up her own experience, "We live in times of change. Maybe I could never get a seat in the Parliament, if not the political will of the President to render a clear policy on gender equality in the country. As a chemist, I had to deal with industrial tests at the metallurgical plant, where I shoveled slag in blistering heat and worked with acid, phosphate and fluorine – dangerous chemicals that can affect your health, and that was a part of my everyday job. With the independence, however, I got a chance to forge my own path. I started in business, and then went into politics. On this path I realized that there are plenty of opportunities for development, and we need to utilize them for the good of society".



Aigul Solovyeva today is an active Member of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan.



1997

Astana replaces Almaty as the capital of Kazakhstan.

On the initiative of the President, the strategy “Kazakhstan 2030” outlining the country’s long-term development goals is adopted.

In response to a government request, the UNDP and other UN agencies offer the best expertise at their disposal, for the elaboration of the Strategy.

Shaping the Strategy “Kazakhstan 2030”

“ If we look back we could see that our today’s achievements did not come out of the blue, but they demanded hard work, persistence, tireless strive and risk

President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev

When Kazakhstan proclaimed its independence, the country inherited a declining economy, non-performing enterprises, and lack of technological research. Crisis and stagnation permeated all spheres of life. There was an urgent need to break this deadlock and come up with a new vision that would change the course of history and shape the future of the country.

On the initiative of the President, Kazakhstan embarked on developing the ambitious strategy “Kazakhstan 2030”, which contains the master plan for the country’s future development. To implement it, the country had to change old stereotypes, introduce market economy, and pursue modern policies.

In 1997, the Government of Kazakhstan requested the UNDP and other UN agencies to assist in formulating the “Strategy 2013”. At the outset, high-level experts in strategic planning from China, South Korea, and Malaysia, alongside with Harvard University professors and UN representatives worked together to formulate and prioritise the strategic goals.

Later, the Government assembled a coalition under UNDP coordination, comprising of international organizations – the World Bank, the European Commission, and the UN Country team, as well as bilateral partners – the US, UK, and Germany, to promote the goals of the Strategy. Government officials made presentations on various aspects of the Strategy. This enabled the donor community to plan accordingly the external assistance.

The support for the elaboration of “Kazakhstan 2030” became one of the most significant endeavors in the first decade of collaboration between the UNDP and Kazakhstan.

Launched by the President in 1997, the Strategy articulated seven broad goals, framing the implementation of short term and mid-term programmes by relevant line ministries.

“The task, set out by the President, came in the right time. Throughout the 1990s, there appeared a myriad of laws and policy documents. It was important, however, to adopt a longer perspective for the next 25–30 years”, recalls Vladimir Klyakin from the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies who participated in the working group on the Strategy.

Kazakhstan achieved most of the goals set in the Strategy. It was ranked among the top five most dynamically developing economies of the world between 2000 and 2010, which is an ample proof of the country’s overall success.

The work of the UN agencies in Kazakhstan was guided by “Kazakhstan 2030” priorities, reflected in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the key document for the UN operations in Kazakhstan. The UN assistance included support to democratic governance and economic reforms, social development and poverty alleviation, and environmental management and sustainable development. An array of projects on the political engagement of the youth, the mobilization of rural communities, the protection of the environment, the support to civil service reform and many more were implemented during the last decade. The synchronisation of the priorities of the Government and the UN agencies was beneficial to the overall national development.

“Today everyone can say that the “Strategy 2030” worked out; modern Kazakhstan has been established. This is a result of our unity, persistent and tireless work, our hopes and aspirations”, noted President Nazarbayev in his address to the nation in December 2012. As he delivered this address, he identified new goals in a new strategy.

The “Kazakhstan 2050” strategy outlines new challenges for the future. The UNDP stands ready to support Kazakhstan on its future development path.



1998

Kazakhstan introduces reforms of its pension system. Retirement age for women is increased from 55 to 58 years, and for men, from 60 to 63 years respectively.

In Astana, a new monument is erected, dedicated to three renowned rulers – Kazybek Bi, Tole Bi and Aiteke Bi – founding fathers of the Kazakh law. The monument seems to imply that present-day Kazakhstan is governed by the rule of law, mindful of the wisdom of the past and confident in its future.

The Government launches an appeal to the international community to assist in the rehabilitation of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing site. The UNDP establishes a global trust fund to facilitate the process.

Revitalizing the Semipalatinsk Region

The population of the Semipalatinsk region became a victim of the nuclear arms race between the West and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. A sizable chunk of the Kazakh steppe ended up being the site of a horrific experiment. From 1949 to 1991, a total of 468 nuclear weapons were tested in the Semipalatinsk region, including the first fusion device and the Soviet Union's first hydrogen bomb. The blasts affected an estimated 1.5 million people in Kazakhstan.

The nightmare ended on 29 August 1991, when the President of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic, Nursultan Nazarbayev, imposed a ban on nuclear testing at Semipalatinsk. The test area fell silent but the consequences of the blasts are still omnipresent in the greater part of East Kazakhstan. In 1997, the Government appealed to the international community to help alleviate the plight of the population of the region affected by the nuclear tests. By establishing a global trust fund for the purpose, the UNDP became the major facilitator of international assistance. It was also the first international organization to come to the Semipalatinsk region to provide hands-on assistance.

In September 1999, the Government of Japan and UNDP convened an international conference in Tokyo to coordinate the joint rehabilitation effort of Kazakhstan and the international community. More than 200 participants from 24 countries discussed 38 proposals dealing with health problems, environmental degradation, and challenges to the regional economy. The Conference brought about a greater awareness of the problem domestically and world-wide.

UNDP operations in the region started in the 1990s with initiatives on reducing poverty and improving the quality of life. The forms of assistance included access to microcredit for women, fostering small businesses and supporting the non-governmental sector.

In early 2000, the first citizens' groups emerged and engaged in the revitalization quest. Many of them



Children support centre, where children with disabilities learned and developed important life-skills. The project was a part of wider programme on enhancing human security in Semipalatinsk region.

evolved later into non-governmental organizations. These were the first steps of the nascent civil society in the Semipalatinsk area. Moreover, the bulk of the rehabilitation projects focused on social needs, such as procurement of equipment for health centers, pre-schools, schools and orphanages, and construction of playgrounds. Sixty-nine UNDP-supported projects, with an overall value of \$169,000, helped overcome social and economic problems in many villages and cities throughout the region.

“Today, with Kazakhstan having banished nuclear weapons, Semipalatinsk has become a powerful symbol of hope

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

The introduction of microcredits and other financial services, never practiced earlier, made a difference. They helped invigorate the revitalization of the region, which, at the turn of the century, still remained in dire straits. Access to credit and favorable lending terms enabled many women to develop their own businesses. Five million dollars worth of credit was extended to more than 4,500 clients. These efforts led to an emerging entrepreneurial class in the region. They also stimulated the establishment of small and medium-size businesses, the

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visits Ground Zero of Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site in 2010



Olzhas Suleimenov, poet, diplomat, initiator of the "Semipalatinsk-Nevada" movement, speaking at the "Semipalatinsk – from Rehabilitation to Development" international conference in 2010.

creation of new jobs and, ultimately, led to decrease of the unemployment and the poverty levels. In 2002, the UNDP began sponsoring training in entrepreneurship and consultancy services to start-up businesses. It also organized employment fairs and initiated a microcredit programme.

Each year the Government and the UNDP adjusted their activities to the region's changing needs. Many initiatives were comprehensive and multidimensional by scope and actors. Since 2008, four UN agencies – UNDP, UNV, UNICEF and UNFPA – have all been working on the Semipalatinsk rehabilitation. Between 2008 and 2010, the first joint UN programme in support to regional development was implemented in East Kazakhstan. The programme expanded economic opportunities for socially vulnerable segments of the population, through the continuation of microcrediting schemes. The programme also helped develop social infrastructure, sought ways to form a friendly environment for the youth, and helped implement new approaches to prenatal and maternity care.

On August 26, 2010, an international conference "Semipalatinsk – from Rehabilitation to Development"

was held in Astana. The timing coincided with the first commemoration of the International Day against Nuclear Testing on 29 August, which was initiated by the Republic of Kazakhstan. The discussions at the conference informed the second joint UN programme for East Kazakhstan, which aims to sustain the development momentum.

What happened in the Semipalatinsk region became a model for comprehensive local socio-economic development. Today the region continues to implement innovative social services, to expand access to economic opportunities to more people, and to foster self-governance. Good practices are boosting the region's economic development and improving the quality of social services. For example, the region has established the first center in Kazakhstan to train social workers and care providers to serve the elderly and disabled in their homes. It has already trained more than 180 people. The training center also trained social workers on the basics of gesture language so that they could provide services to the people with hearing disabilities. In 2013 Day Care Centre for people disabled and elderly people was established in Semey, it caters up to 350 people a year. In addition, the region has integrated over 12,000 ethnic Kazakhs, who immigrated from other countries. Nineteen development projects were implemented in seven areas of the region in partnership with local community groups.

The Semipalatinsk model is now being replicated in two other regions. It serves as a blueprint for the comprehensive socio-economic development of Kyzylorda and Mangystau regions.



Secretary-General at the Ground Zero of Semipalatinsk Atom Bomb Testing site in 2010.

1999

President Nazarbayev is re-elected by 80 percent of the casted vote for a new, seven-year, presidential term in office.

The first population census is conducted. It shows a decrease in the country's population from 16.4 million to 14.9 million inhabitants. One of the reasons for this decline is the massive emigration of Germans and other ethnic groups to their historical homelands.

The President opens in Almaty the first shopping mall of Kazakhstan, which attracts visitors as a sightseeing spot.

The Government and the UNDP engage in partnership to promote rural development in the Semey region. The new initiative boosts micro and small enterprises across the Semey rural areas.

Boosting Entrepreneurship and Microfinance in Semipalatinsk Region

Martina Shaiza, a resident of Karaul village in East Kazakhstan Oblast, started her business during the perestroika period in 1992. The former post office accountant opened a grocery store. Her business took hold gradually, gaining her permanent customers and a stable income. However, Shaiza didn't stop searching for ideas and financing to expand her business. Today, 21 years later, she owns a grocery store, a café, a small cattle farm, and a bakery. Each day she supplies Karaul and the neighboring villages with 200 loaves of bread and 800 pastries. Now Shaiza wants to expand her farm. "The financial support of the UNDP gave us confidence and an incentive to develop further. At present, we are considering breeding highly productive Auekol cattle, and producing pasta", explains Shaiza.

Shaiza's story is not the only example of success. Her neighbors Ryazhan Zhumazhanova and Kairat Nurtazin were also successful small scale entrepreneurs, as well as the whole of the Hursha businesswomen group. Their dream of a better life materialized thanks to the UNDP microcredit programme.

In the late 1990s the region was the most economically distressed area of the country. In 2001, about 22 percent

of the overall population in the region and, as much as 30 percent in its rural areas, lived below the subsistence level. The official unemployment rate was 7.3 percent. More than half of the 56,000 unemployed were women. About 279,000 of the 704,000 working people in the area were self-employed.

To reduce poverty and unemployment, and to foster rural development, UNDP initiated a microcredit programme of collateral-free loans for women to start-up businesses. Although the maximum credit a borrower could obtain was only \$50, and the programme was limited to those living in Semipalatinsk and the neighboring areas, the project revitalised the region's economy by providing credit to more than 4,500 clients. Five million dollars worth of credit was extended in total, and the repayment rate was 97 percent.

"Microcredits were a valuable help for small-scale businesses. I'm glad that your project helped me start working independently and feel confident in my own abilities", says Eleonora Adylkhanova, a member of the Nurika women group who obtained credit in the early 2000s.

“ I am glad that I started to work independently and feel confident in my abilities

Eleonora Adylkhanova, a woman who started her own business with the microcredit programme.





The microcredit model proved to be a flexible, efficient and effective tool. In 2002, the Government used the model to create the first regional microcrediting organization, known as Bereke. Established with UNDP support, Bereke mostly served vulnerable people who lacked access to commercial bank loans. The Bereke microcredit scheme is still operational and used by approximately ten thousand customers per year.



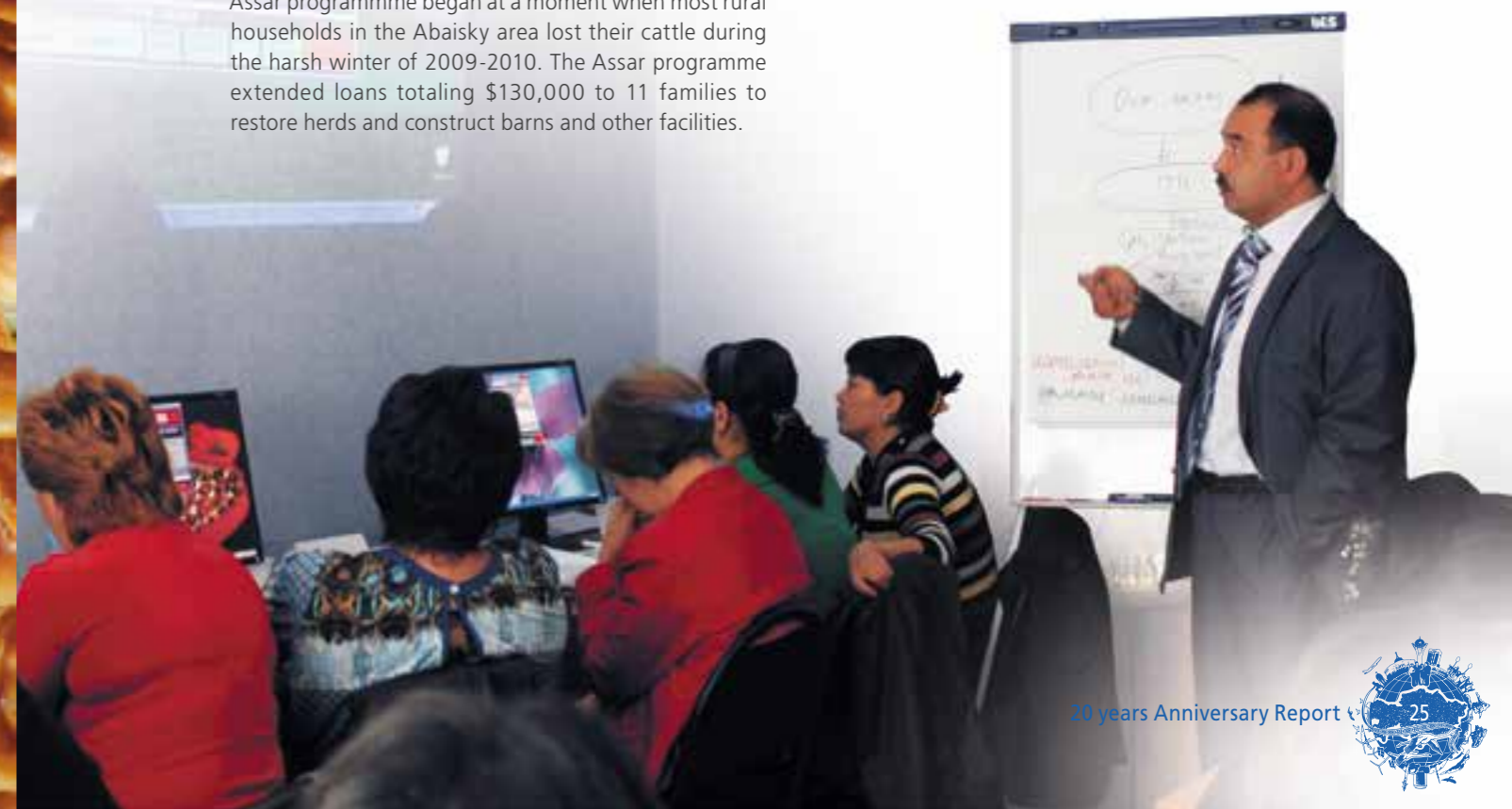
Shaiza Martina and her home-made bread.

In addition, starting from 2008 until 2010, the UNDP, in tandem with the local administration, offered training and consulting services to entrepreneurs in East Kazakhstan Oblast. For the purpose, it established a business center that provided free consultations on how to set up and run a business, how to develop a feasibility study and a business plan, and how to market the produce. The UNDP, the local government and private companies jointly convened the first municipal employment fair. Over 30 companies listed their vacancies to the attention of over one thousand jobless visitors.

Since then the support for entrepreneurs continues to develop on a broader scope. The current joint UN programme in the region, which started in 2011 and runs through 2015, set up a network of business consulting offices in 13 areas and established online consulting centers in 32 villages. In the past year alone, UNDP supported 18 business development projects with 19 million tenges worth of microcredits as well as the start-up of 62 newly registered businesses.

From 2008 to 2010, the first joint UN programme in East Kazakhstan Oblast continued to provide incentives to keep the entrepreneurial spirit alive. Funding was provided by the UN Human Security Trust Fund with major contribution from the Government of Japan, and parallel funding from the Government of Finland. During this period, the Assar microfinance programme provided loans ranging from \$5,000 to \$15,000 to encourage new processing technologies in the agricultural sector. The Assar programme began at a moment when most rural households in the Abaisky area lost their cattle during the harsh winter of 2009-2010. The Assar programme extended loans totaling \$130,000 to 11 families to restore herds and construct barns and other facilities.

Thanks to the efforts of the Government and the UNDP, positive changes took place in the Semipalatinsk region in terms of revived economic activities and regained self-confidence of the working people.





2000

The last shaft for nuclear tests at the former Semipalatinsk Test Site is closed down.

Kazakhstan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan establish the Eurasian Economic Community, designed to foster regional integration, facilitate trade through a Customs Union of its members and encourage them to join the World Trade Organization (WTO).

President Nazarbayev tasks the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to develop a national poverty reduction programme.

UNDP partners with the Government to address the poverty issue in a comprehensive manner.

Fostering Comprehensive Approach to Human Development

Kazakhstan's poverty reduction strategy evolved from provision of assistance to the needy to a comprehensive mix of programmes, allowing people to unleash their full personal potential. In the first few years of independence, poverty reduction measures were limited to distribution of benefits to the people in need so that they can reach the minimum income level. Regardless of the category they fell into, all beneficiaries were treated in the same way.

At present, Kazakhstan directs social benefits to specific groups, such as disabled, unemployed and residents of depressed regions. Assistance no longer consists of cash payments alone. A holistic social-security system, that is unique in the post-Soviet space, includes job creation, access to education, and special services to persons in hardship. Kazakhstan has demonstrated leadership in addressing poverty issues over the past two decades and UNDP, among others, has been a trusted partner in this process.

In the first years of independence the rates of poverty were high and widespread. Uncompetitive industries inherited from the Soviet Union were shut down, putting many people out of work. Those who did have jobs were sometimes paid in food or clothes. Gross domestic product per capita plummeted to 40 percent below what it used to be in the late Soviet period. The surge in unemployment and the plunge in national income exacerbated hyperinflation. By late 1990s, UNDP experts calculated that more than a third of the Kazakhstanis lived in poverty. Nevertheless, a comprehensive study of the root causes of poverty was not on top of Government's priorities. Instead, to urgently alleviate the problem, poverty reduction in those days was limited to paying small compensations that the national budget could afford.

It should be noted that during Soviet times the concept of "poverty" didn't exist so the issue was never studied. UNDP conducted the first survey of poverty in Kazakhstan between 1997 and 2000.

The findings were reflected in the National Human Development Report for Kazakhstan in 2000, which stressed the importance of understanding the various dimensions of poverty. The report noted that in addition to income sufficiency, it was important to monitor and take into account the development of human capital through greater access to education and quality health care. The report advocated for a comprehensive approach to poverty reduction in Kazakhstan.

The government embraced the human development approach to address poverty. In 1999, Kazakhstan officially recognized the existence of poverty. President

Nursultan Nazarbayev reacted to that recognition by assigning the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to develop a comprehensive poverty reduction programme.

It was a timely move. Kazakhstan's economic success allowed to allocate greater resources to poverty reduction. The economy grew by 9 to 10 percent per year, propelled by the oil and gas sectors and the extractive industries. The first national poverty and unemployment reduction programme (2000-2002) was developed with inputs from international organizations.

The Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning developed the second national programme (2003-2005), with substantive support from UNDP and the Asian Development Bank. It contained the first comprehensive definition of poverty. The definition included such components as lack of access to education, quality health care, social services infrastructure, etc. Such a definition implied that the government is embarking on the ambitious goal to improve radically the nation's standard of living.

“ We are fully aware that economic success must be felt by every citizen of our nation

Imangali Tasmagambetov, then the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan

As part of its comprehensive effort, the Government added poverty reduction components to its existing programmes for education, health care and rural development. As a result, the percentage of the population with an income below the subsistence level fell from 34.5 percent in 1998 to 9.8 percent by 2005 – a threefold reduction.

The public perception and understanding of poverty has changed. Government officials recognized the need to mainstream poverty reduction and include relevant actions in all national policies and programmes.

Today, Kazakhstan is focusing its poverty reduction efforts on unemployment compensation, jobs creation and vocational education. Specific poverty reduction measures target, firstly, poverty stricken areas and secondly, the resettlement of the Kazakh ethnic returnees that immigrated into independent Kazakhstan.

The commitment of the Government to address poverty comprehensively, and, most importantly, with specific focus on human capital, led to improved living standards of a large proportion of the population of Kazakhstan.





2001

Kazakhstan celebrates the tenth anniversary of its independence.

A special train – “My Kazakhstan” – makes a tour of the country. Its passengers – civil servants, artists, writers, doctors, teachers, journalists – meet ordinary people and discuss with them the progress Kazakhstan made during the first decade of its independence.

Pope John Paul II visits Kazakhstan.

The Government starts a broad civil service reform. It aims to modernize the civil service in line with the best international standards. The UNDP becomes a partner in many of the civil service reform initiatives of the Government.

Kazakhstan making Progress in Civil Service Reform

Kazakhstan has been reforming its civil service system for almost two decades. It has done such a good job that other countries from the former Soviet Union have adopted many of its approaches. That has prompted Kazakhstan to establish a Regional Hub for Civil Service whose main functions are to be a resource center and catalyst for reforms in Central Asia and beyond. UNDP has partnered in many of Kazakhstan's reform initiatives, including in the creation of the civil service hub.

Although the civil service reform started in the mid-1990s, it picked up steam at the turn of the century. Hallmarks of achievements include the adoption of the specialized laws on Public Service, on Civil Service, and on Administrative Procedures, and the creation of a Code of Ethics for Public Servants. This legal framework allowed for a number of important changes: the decentralization empowered regional and local officials and increased their participation in decision-making; the transaction simplification reduced the number of actions needed to provide administrative services to citizens.

Independent Kazakhstan inherited a Soviet-style civil service system. Democratically-minded officials conceived plans to gradually dismantle it and overcome its shortcomings, in particular, the top-down policy-setting and lack of public inputs, as well as the culture of unaccountability for wrong decision-making.

In the mid-1990s, the first civil service reform in Kazakhstan introduced structural and functional changes. It reduced the number of government agencies and civil servants at the national and regional levels and defined the scope of work each agency performed. The next step was to induce a greater degree of professionalism in the civil service. This government priority featured prominently in the “Kazakhstan – 2030” Strategy and other policy documents.

The restructuring of the civil service was a daunting task. To do it successfully, Kazakhstan welcomed UNDP's brokerage of international expertise in the elaboration of jobs description and the development of performance standards for civil servants. The introduction of a Quality Management System allowed to evaluate the effectiveness of both public agencies and civil servants. UNDP also helped acquaint local civil service reformers with international standards and practices. A milestone was the creation of an Agency for Civil Service Affairs in 1998.

The major thrust in the civil service reform process outpoured with the opening in 2005 of several Centers for Public Service across Kazakhstan to provide the public with a “one-stop service”. The conceptualization of the centers' structure and activities was based on a UNDP-sponsored report that identified problems and challenges in the delivery of public services and described best international practices.

With the adoption of a Code of Ethics for Public Servants in 2005, the modernization of the civil service legislation took a stride forward.

“Kazakhstan continues to embrace the best international practices in civil service and is enthusiastic about sharing its successes with others

Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's reform efforts attracted followers in Central Asia and in several CIS countries. That has led to the establishment in 2012 of the Regional Hub for Civil Service by the Agency for Civil Service Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan as a resource center for government officials, scholars and other stakeholders involved in reforming the civil service sector. The Hub kicked-off with three working groups on training and research; information management and expert networking, and partnership-formation and experience exchange. The Hub's prospective activities include the preparation of a report on improving the public service in the region, the launch of a public service web portal and the publication of a specialized magazine.



2002

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan visits Kazakhstan. With President Nazarbayev he discusses relations between Kazakhstan and the United Nations and a number of international security issues.

The presidents of Kazakhstan and Russia sign a treaty on the northern boundaries of the Caspian Sea.

Turkey offers visa-free travel to the citizens of Kazakhstan. Turkey becomes one of the most popular destinations for Kazakhstani tourists.

Kazakhstan works on making the Government more accountable to the public. The initial concept for public access to information is elaborated with UNDP support.

The Right to Know

Kazakhstan is preparing a law that guarantees the public access to information the government holds. The UNDP engaged in an advocacy campaign for a right to know law, a standard feature of all democracies. The law, drafted in 2012, will grant the public access to the information that government agencies generate in performing their duties.

As in many countries, journalists have been at the forefront of the efforts to achieve a freedom of information law in Kazakhstan.

An access to information law will be another milestone in Kazakhstan's quest to make government accountable to the public. By monitoring official documentation, individuals and civil society organizations will be able to assess whether officials are using resources properly and in the public interest.

Surveys conducted in early 2000 indicated that many agencies were refusing to publicly disclose a lot of the information they held. Journalists had a particular problem with many officials rejecting their requests for information and other officials providing it very reluctantly. Rozlana Taukina, head of the Journalists in Trouble organization, referred to the difficulty of obtaining government information,

"It is extremely challenging to get complete information about the impact of Proton rocket launches on the environment. There has been no comprehensive information available about the labor conflicts and protest movements at Arcelor Mittal and Kazakhmys. Information about revenues collected, and not collected, from oil production and exports of minerals is kept confidential. The income of top officials in Kazakhstan is not known. And there are lots of other examples".

The UNDP decided to advocate the introduction of a single right to know law as the best way of obtaining public information.

A number of countries have embraced this approach in the past decades, namely, the UK, Japan, South Korea, South Africa, most Eastern and Central European countries, Thailand, Mexico, and others. The UNDP supported study tours of government officials, MPs and civil society leaders to



“Access to information is the basic right of the person. Everyone should have it to feel secure and protected

Marzhan Elshibayeva, Director of the Internews Network Representative Office in Kazakhstan

the UK and Norway to get first hand impression from the local practices there. It also facilitated the elaboration of and the open public discussions on the 2012 draft of the access to information law. The draft was assessed also by UNESCO and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. In the review process since its release in early 2012, the draft has been a hot topic at human rights-related conferences and on the internet. Participants in the debate included organizations that champion free speech, such as Internews and AdilSoz.

Zhakyp Assanov, then a MP at the Lower House (Majilis), led the effort to draft the law. Assanov is now the country's deputy prosecutor general.

The involvement of all stakeholders – the Government, MPs, media, and civil society – led to the emergence for the first time in the history of Kazakhstan of an inclusive legislation-making model. It reflected public concerns and proved the effect of civil society mobilization.

Although the adoption of an access to information law is taking longer than some would like, the process has reached a point of no return.

2003

The first Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions is convened in Astana.

A 10,000 tenge banknote appears, becoming the biggest national currency legal tender.

Kazakhstan proclaims a moratorium on death penalty.

An earthquake in the south of the country destroys more than 80 percent of the infrastructure of two villages in Zhambyl region. People from across the country donate money, clothes, and food to support the victims in the affected area.

The Government of Kazakhstan partners with UNDP to manage the country's abundant natural resources, with equal attention to protecting the environment, benefitting rural people, and boosting local economies.

Preserving the Wetlands, Protecting the Environment

Valentina Zhakupbekova depended upon Kazakhstan's vast wetlands, a patchwork of thousands of kilometres of rich soil and abundant lakes, with caviar-bearing fish, unique birds and aquatic flora. Her husband was an illegal poacher, supporting their four children with the fish he caught – until he drowned in a nearby lake.

Unemployed, with a family to feed, Zhakupbekova participated in a UNDP-supported workshop that taught her how to make products from felt, a commodity in abundant supply. She has since opened her own shop, where she sells popular handmade slippers, boots and decorations. She supports herself and her children, and has trained seven other mothers in her trade, including people with disabilities. Making the transition from housewife to entrepreneur, Zhakupbekova embodies the changes occurring across the wetlands. Slowly, people are moving from exploitative livelihoods to environmentally friendly occupations. The Government of Kazakhstan is spearheading the change with support from the UN Development Programme and the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

After the break-up of the Soviet Union, the wetlands area economy declined sharply; for many there was no alternative to poaching. The population of migrating birds and fish began to decrease, and the area's ecological balance and precious natural resources faced serious disruption. Even more damaging to the wetlands was the unsustainable water usage for industrial agriculture.

In 2003, a joint initiative between the UNDP, the Global Environment Facility and the Government was



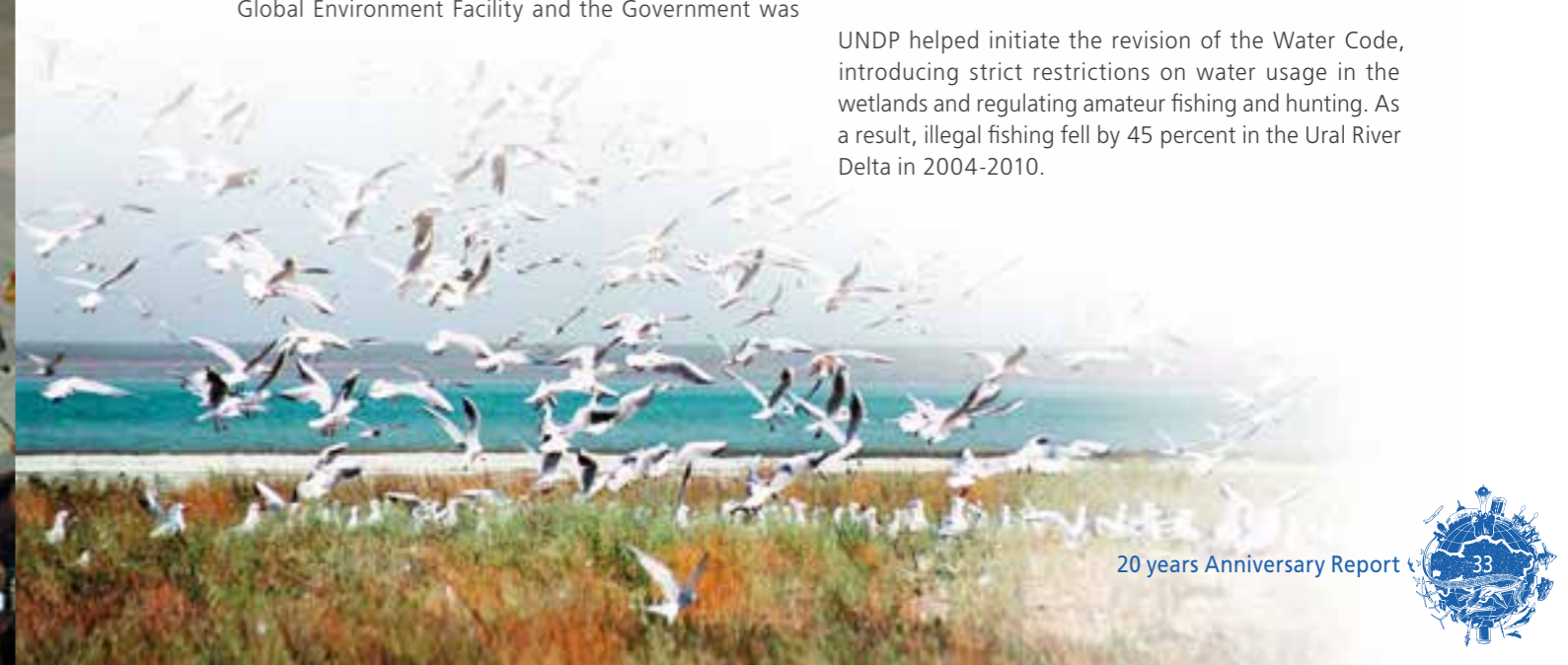
First eco-tourists at the Korgalzhyn reserve site.

launched to salvage and protect the wetlands, and, more generally, to effectively and sustainably manage the country's natural resources. Kazakhstan ratified the Ramsar Convention, a global environmental treaty for the preservation of wetlands. Seven sites, covering more than 1,626,700 hectares, became protected areas, while two nature reserves were the first from Central Asia to appear on the UNESCO Natural Heritage list.

“Wetlands are important indicator of the environmental situation, and are a key and priority subject of research

*Igor Koval
Then the Deputy Chairman of the Forestry and Hunting
Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic
of Kazakhstan*

UNDP helped initiate the revision of the Water Code, introducing strict restrictions on water usage in the wetlands and regulating amateur fishing and hunting. As a result, illegal fishing fell by 45 percent in the Ural River Delta in 2004-2010.





School children visiting Korgalzhyn reserve site as part of their curriculum on environmental education. The course was developed with UNDP support.

To encourage tourism, UNDP introduced an entrepreneurship programme that took into consideration the high unemployment in rural wetlands areas. A relevant survey found that while there was a steady influx of visitors, there were no accommodations available. There was a need, and an opportunity, for developing businesses that support eco-friendly tourism.

Within the three pilot territories in Alakol, Tengiz-Korgalzhyn and the Ural River Delta, more than \$1 million for microcredit programmes were allocated to aid community business start-ups. Supported by the Government's country-wide microcredit programme, the initiative eventually expanded into 25 protected areas, launching more than 34 projects and creating 150 new jobs. Residents from 500 villages developed business ventures, such as building greenhouses, manufacturing clothes and souvenirs, bottling "kumys", (national drink), and establishing fisheries, etc.

The project supplied equipment, trucks and motorboats for eco-friendly tourist visits to the wetlands. Over the course of a year and a half, more than 6,000 tourists visited the Korgalzhyn reserve, yielding \$40,000 of income and investment in further development of the infrastructure.

Notwithstanding the project's achievements, there remains a need for additional funding to ensure the comprehensive management of the wetlands. For these purposes, the UNDP raised more than \$3.2 million through a special Biodiversity Trust Fund. Large Kazakhstani businesses, such as Air Astana and Kazakhmys, the natural resource company, made initial installments in it, to the tune of \$450,000. Fundraising continues to the benefit of these protected areas.

Wetlands management is just one example of the broader approach to natural resources preservation in Kazakhstan. Other activities to ensure natural resource sustainability are directed towards biodiversity conservation, water resources management and disaster response preparedness.

Successful cooperation amongst various stakeholders in the course of the project indicates that in the future, the wetlands will be protected in a sustainable manner. The UNDP/GEF-led effort attained the twin goals of environmental protection and economic viability of the wetlands in Kazakhstan.



2004

The 15th million citizen of Kazakhstan is born.

Kazakhstan invites a world's famous cinema professional, Milosh Forman, to work on the country's first historical movie.

Kazakhstan starts its first moves towards renewable energy development. Partnering with UNDP, the Government embarks on developing wind-power production in Kazakhstan.

Wind of Change: Developing Wind Energy Production in an Oil-Rich Country

What would make an energy-rich country – one with abundant natural resources and cheap electricity prices – shift towards renewable energy development?

It's simple: A wind of change.

Developing environmentally-friendly wind energy in the world's ninth largest country – a country rich in coal, oil, gas and uranium resources – has not been a simple task. Yet through "The Kazakhstan – Wind Power Market Development Initiative", the UNDP has been working with the Government of Kazakhstan, over the course of 11 years, to transform the country's carbon-heavy economy to a green one. One of the longest-running UNDP efforts, this project has proven to be very efficient.

Before the initiative began in December 2004, the notion of renewable energy was not widespread in Kazakhstan, and there was little incentive to design projects in this area. This was in part predicated by more urgent country priorities: sustaining bold economic reforms, stabilizing the levels of inflation (6.7 percent in 2004) and reducing the unemployment rate (8.4 percent as of 2004).

Kazakhstan's oil, gas, and mineral resources can meet the country's own needs and make up the country's exports. The Soviet-era power plants allowed the production of low-cost electricity, at least in the short term. However, there were still strong incentives and reasons to develop wind energy, especially in the long term.

Kazakhstan is the biggest producer of greenhouse gases in Central Asia, and leads the global rankings in emissions per unit of GDP. The energy sector contributes about 80 percent of total emissions, with 45 percent due to electricity and heat production. Furthermore, Kazakhstan's landscape

is uniquely suited for wind energy production as it is one of the least densely populated countries. These factors make Kazakhstan extremely suited to develop wind energy. Nevertheless, the wind energy potential remained largely untapped until UNDP and the Global Environment Facility, together with the Government of Kazakhstan, launched a large-scale Wind Energy project.

The primary goals were to spotlight the need for renewable energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, diversify the energy sector and pave the way for a renewable energy market in the country. With a total budget of \$2,550,000 and \$2,379,800 of co-financing, the project supported the elaboration of a legal framework and regulatory structures to foster wind energy development. Assisted by the UNDP and other partners, Parliament adopted the National Wind Power Development Programme for Kazakhstan to 2015 (2008), the Law on Fostering Renewable Energy Sources (The RES Law) (2009), and a number of other rules and regulations.

The National Wind Energy Programme, which aims to produce 750 million kWh of electricity from wind by 2015, and 5 billion kWh by 2030, is focused on developing and implementing legal and technical documentation; supporting small wind power production; advancing the scientific, technical and industrial foundation for the sector; and fostering international cooperation.

In accordance with the relevant legislation, the government will offer to wind energy developers a fixed feed-in tariff, valid for a set period, to stimulate growth and offset the existing low cost of electricity. Additionally, the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies has begun to introduce a more transparent tariff system.



The wind atlas of Kazakhstan, developed by UNDP project.

Before the UNDP-assisted project ended in 2011, it was clear that interest was growing among investors. That year, the first commercial wind energy facility opened in the region of Korday Crossing, an initiative of the company Izen Su, in partnership with a proactive regional government. Two additional small-scale wind farms have begun operating in Karaganda and Kyzylorda – the latter being the site of the maternity hospital generator.

Former national project manager Ainur Sospanova predicts enthusiastically, “The eagerness of key actors of renewable energy development makes me believe that in the nearest future wind parks will become a common site in Kazakhstan. Every school child will be aware of renewable energy and the share of green energy will reach world levels”.

Kazakhstan does still face some barriers to transforming wind into power. While it ranks relatively high on World Bank measurements on ease of doing business, it does not do well on some areas key to wind energy development, such as construction permits that remain overly complex. Steady progress and high levels of

political commitment suggest that these hindrances will at some point diminish, however, because even in a country long focused on coal and oil, the value of the wind is now obvious.

Stephan Gsanger, Secretary-General of the World Wind Energy Association, goes beyond the strong possibility that Kazakhstan may be able to both cover its own energy needs and become exporter of clean, inexhaustible power. He predicts, “The country could become an Eurasian hub for energy intensive industries and for environmentally-friendly production of energy intensive products”.

More entrepreneurs, having measured risk and rewards, are starting to vote “yes” for wind. Plans call for installing an additional 13 commercial wind farms from 2013 to 2020, for a total generation capacity of 807 megawatts. In July 2013, Samruk-Energy, a Kazakh national company, secured a \$94 million loan from the Eurasian Development Bank to build a facility where 22 turbines will churn out 45 megawatts of electricity – it will be the largest wind farm constructed so far.





2005

Kazakhstan celebrates the 60th anniversary of the Victory in Second World War.

President Nazarbayev is re-elected for a next term with a 91.1 percent majority.

Kazakhstan consolidates its efforts with UNDP to prove that Kazakhstan could be a country where inclusiveness becomes a standard, and people with disabilities enjoy access to wide range social and economic opportunities.

A Champion for the Disabled

Since the age of five, when Ali Amanbayev was diagnosed with a serious spinal injury, life has been a constant struggle. "As a schoolboy, I began using crutches and had to do my homework lying on my back", he recalls. "As the years passed, I realized that life would only become more difficult. It is not easy being disabled in a society with limited social support systems".

But attitudes and mindsets are slowly changing in Kazakhstan. Today, at 65, Amanbayev leads the Kazakhstani Union for the Organization of People with Disabilities. In the summer of 2012, when he was appointed adviser to the Minister for Labour and Social Protection, he became the first person with a disability to hold such high position in Kazakhstan.

This flagship appointment came as no surprise for Amanbayev, who has watched the rights of the disabled flourish recently in Kazakhstan. Since 2008, UNDP has been working closely with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to support the rights of people living with disabilities. As a result, the country's social protection system has been extended to include 500,000 disabled people. With UNDP support, a number of NGOs also stepped up their lobbying efforts to provide people with disabilities a greater access to the job market.

UNDP, in partnership with the Government, produced a National Human Development Report that, for the first time globally advocated an end to exclusion and the promotion of equal rights for those with disabilities. The Report triggered a lot of publicity and media attention. Partially due to UNDP's advocacy, Kazakhstan signed the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol in 2008. More recently, the Government expanded its national disability policies to include distance learning in addition to jobs training and rehabilitation services.

Kazakhstan has amended key laws to improve social services for vulnerable groups, with special attention given to those with disabilities. As a result, \$143 million of government funding has been allocated, allowing every year over 80,000 people with disabilities to receive special social services. Amanbayev now has his own personal assistant who helps him in his wheelchair. More than 7,000 disabled people in Kazakhstan receive these critical services. "It's made such a difference",

Amanbayev says of his assistant. "He's the extra oomph to help me face the challenges of each day".

Amanbayev and other civil society leaders are busy lobbying the Ministry of Transport and Communication to revise standards for providing the disabled access to public spaces and public transportation. During several hearings and meetings at the Ministry, Amanbayev convincingly pointed out the urgent need for change in the country. The Ministry has pledged to make all railway platforms and trains accessible for wheelchair users within the next two years.

"You can't imagine how vital this is", Amanbayev says. Improving transport infrastructure is just one part of a wider national campaign to provide inclusive access to public spaces. Governmental surveys of the accessibility of public buildings and services and cost estimates for necessary upgrades are carried out. This is bringing fundamental change to Kazakhstan, where more than 70 percent of the public infrastructure is inaccessible to the disabled.

Since its inception, the UNDP programme has successfully raised public awareness and fostered a culture of inclusion for those with disabilities. In addition to a short film, photo exhibitions, and national and international conferences, over 5,000 copies of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have been distributed to major public institutions, libraries and universities.

“ Sometimes I forget that I am different

Ali Amanbayev, advisor to the Minister for Labour and Social Protection



2006

Kazakhstan's national anthem is changed to an old, popular song from 1956.

A massive energy loss occurs in millions of buildings across Kazakhstan. The old Soviet-era buildings have some of the most energy-inefficient heating systems, resulting in an annual heat loss of up to 30 percent.

The Government and UNDP coordinate their efforts to promote energy efficiency in Kazakhstan.

Unlocking Energy Efficiency in Kazakhstan

A student at Public School Number 9 in Astana, 14 year old Arman said that a few years ago, the gymnasium in his 63 year old school was so cold in the winter that he and his classmates could see their breath. "We hated going to gym classes", he said.

Colds and the flu are rampant in winter times when Astana's temperature can plunge to minus 50°C.

Unfortunately, massive energy loss occurs in millions of buildings across Kazakhstan. The old Soviet-era buildings have some of the least energy-efficient heating systems, resulting in an annual heat loss of up to 30 percent.

An initial \$15,000 investment from UNDP and the Global Environment Facility allowed School Number 9 to purchase and install modern heat regulating equipment from Denmark. The school also insulated the walls, put in energy efficient windows, and improved the ventilation system. Now all rooms are comfortable, even in the worst of winter.

Today Kazakhstan has a burgeoning energy efficiency market. Until recently, contractors only installed energy efficiency equipment in new buildings. UNDP installed heat-regulating equipment in older buildings to show that this also resulted in energy savings.

Soon after, an energy efficiency service company, Ergonomika, was established in Karaganda. Five more competitors have sprung up to meet the demand for installation of heat-regulating equipment in older buildings. Some of those companies, Enkom and Danfoss, donated \$14,500 to retrofit School Number 15, buying new equipment and installing it for free.

"The message resonated with me", said Alexandr Entin, head of Enkom. "I grew up in this city, and I see how



School kids at the public outreach campaigns dedicated to "green" energy.

many problems we have with the heating and energy efficiency. I want children to be comfortable at school. And I'm very committed to making my city – and the country – more energy efficient".

Savings from new heat regulators in older buildings have benefited apartment owners, who, not surprisingly, are enthusiastic supporters of the effort.

“Energy-efficiency is our nationwide goal and it should be implemented in all spheres of economy and life

Serik Akhmetov, Prime-minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The principal of Astana Public School Number 15, Baurzhan Zharkenov, said he's been delighted with the results of the pilot project in his building, "We've achieved a 25 percent savings in our heating bill".

The retrofitted schools are part of a UNDP/GEF project (2007-2012) in Kazakhstan's three largest cities – Almaty, Astana, and Karaganda. In addition to the schools, the project also retrofitted 13 older apartment buildings. In 2011, a high-level visit to one of the project sites by the President and the Prime Minister, reinforced Government's intention to support energy efficient initiatives.

A national initiative launched in 2011 to modernize utilities will continue project's activities and starting from 2014 will be integrated to the national programme on the development of the regions.

Public outreach campaign on energy efficiency in the public places of Astana.

2007

Seven political parties participate in the 2007 Parliamentary elections in Kazakhstan. The “Nur Otan” party wins 88.05 percent of the votes.

The first ever jury trial takes place in Kazakhstan. To educate Kazakhstani citizens, a mock jury trial, using real judges and attorneys with a full complement of citizen jurors and court staff, is broadcast on the national TV channel “Channel 31”.

Water resources management in Kazakhstan is in decline. Much of the infrastructure is broken; water is used inefficiently in many of the rural areas. To address this environmental stall, Kazakhstan joins its forces with the UNDP, the European Union and other partners to develop new national capacities for water resources management.

Managing Water Resources

Global warming and water scarcity issues are not only the issues of interest for the scientists, but are also the issues of major concern for the people living in the rural areas of southern Kazakhstan. Every year farmers in Kazakhstan suffer from water scarcity and land degradation. This means that effective water management is crucial, as well as knowledge and experience that allows farmers to grow crops, sustain farms and improve welfare of the families.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and several agrarian reforms shifted country's approach from the collective farms (kolkhoz and sovkhos) to private farming changing water management and distribution infrastructure. Problems in the water distribution progressed with the privatization of farmlands, which allowed upstream farmers to have better access to water than those in the downstream. Many rural communities located downstream experienced significant challenges in accessing the water, since the private farms had their priority in the system of water distribution.

In 2005 the Government of Kazakhstan jointly with the UNDP, the European Union and other partners decided to address the issue of water resources in Kazakhstan focusing on developing an integrated approach in water resources management. Partnership has already brought benefits to the country. These include first steps toward building Integrated Water Resources Management

(IWRM) in Kazakhstan and developing IWRM Plan for a number of pilot territories, Balkhash Alakol Basin being one of them. The project also made steps towards amending key normative legal documents on water management and developing water management action plan. In addition project supported eight Basin Committees, serving as a platform for managing water resources in the country.

“ Prior to the project start, local residents told that water was not a problem for the region, the problem was the management and equitable delivery of the water. They claimed that since they grew soya, which has a high value and does not require a lot of water, they earned enough money. However, it was a different story the next year, when residents witnessed less precipitation, lower water level in the rivers and as a result lost most of their crops. These motivated them for partnership, and readiness to learn about water saving technologies

Dariga Makhashova, UNDP ex-expert on water management

The project also started its partnership with local farmers by introducing new approaches to water management and irrigation technologies. It helped farmers of the local NGO “Alakol Kamkor” to shift to more advanced irrigation technologies. Small Grants Programme of the Global Environment Facility provided grant for new water-saving equipment. The introduction of new equipment allowed to reduce the erosion of the soil in the farmland.

In addition to this work, project also managed an educational campaign for the farmers, conducting more than 200 workshops on water use efficiency, sustainable water management and equitable water delivery practices. They also informed local officials about the best practices on water resource management and the international conventions on water savings. The experts worked with the local authorities and informed

Project experts and local villagers observing farm irrigation systems of Almaty oblast.



Farmer showing his crop, which has increased after the use of efficient water management practices, introduced by a UNDP project.

their decision on developing action plans and identifying national funds for improving water management. In particular this initiative allowed the Balkhash Alakol Basin Committee to rehabilitate partly water-distribution infrastructure and reduce the loss of water resources.

The partners in the Balkhash Alakol project promoted adoption of their IWRM principles at the nationwide scale. They conducted several international conferences dedicated to water management issues, showcasing project's best practices and advocating for IWRM Plan for Kazakhstan. Conference gathered representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, National Water Committee, Ministry of Environmental protection, regional and local authorities, and farmers. Following these forums, there was an apparent change in the attitudes of regional and local authorities showing an increased interest in water management issues. As evidence, under the auspices of Almaty Oblast Administration meetings of Balkhash Alakol Basin Committee are conducted on a regular basis, the results of these discussions are considered in further decision making.

The results of the project received high appreciation from the Government of Kazakhstan, following the decision to develop water resources management strategy for Kazakhstan. The strategy will allocate considerable funds within the State Programme on Water Resource Management with the main goal to resolve Kazakhstan's water issues in the next decades.

In the address to the nation "Strategy Kazakhstan-2050" delivered by Nursultan Nazarbayev in 2012, water shortages in the region were identified as one of ten global challenges of the 21st century. This presents potential for new programme directions in the area of water management, which will also allow to utilize successful experience of the project.

Taking in to account that water resources are under pressure globally, Kazakhstan is also in the need of developing its National IWRM Plan and strengthen transboundary dialogue and cooperation to face the challenges of the 21st century.

2008

Kazakhstan is elected Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation for the year 2012.

A number of laws regarding political parties, elections, mass media and local governance, are drafted and widely discussed. Subsequently, 2008 is dubbed “the year of democratic reforms”.

Partnering with UNDP, Kazakhstan develops a Human Rights Action Plan, which becomes the first document in Central Asia listing recommended initiatives that the state should accept in order to advance the protection of human rights.

Promotion and Protection of Human Rights

Tapping on international expertise, the Commission on Human Rights under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan produced for the first time in the history of the country an ambitious National Human Rights Action Plan (2009-2012). Civil society organizations and the responsible government agencies monitored the implementation and assessed the progress achieved. One notable outcome was that Kazakhstan ratified over 40 multilateral international treaties on human rights. Today the conclusions serve as a reference, as Kazakhstan embarked on the preparation of its second Human Rights Action Plan, based on the accumulated experience and international standards.

In previous Soviet times, statements calling for protection of human rights were perceived unacceptable and had no place in public life. Human rights defenders could not even imagine themselves discussing human rights topics with government officials.

However, Kazakhstan’s modernization process brought about addressing human rights issues in a more open way. UNDP advocated the introduction of these reforms.

A special task force produced the 2006 “Baseline Human Rights Report for the Republic of Kazakhstan” that became the springboard to further progress.

The report was based largely on information provided by government agencies, human rights groups and Kazakhstan-based international organizations. It also included task force members’ observations from visits to health, educational, social service and detention facilities. An evaluation of Kazakhstan’s human rights legislation and an assessment of how government agencies address human rights issues made a separate section of the report. In addition, the document included the results of a survey called “Public Opinion about Human Rights in Kazakhstan”, commissioned by UNDP to the Association of Sociologists of Kazakhstan.

The report attempted to offer an unbiased reflection of the human rights situation in Kazakhstan, and provide an overview of the entire spectrum of the rights of citizens and also the rights of migrant population, workers’ rights, inmates’ rights and the rights of other vulnerable groups.



First National Human Rights Action Plan of Kazakhstan developed with UNDP support.

The report presented well substantiated conclusions and useful practical recommendations. To comply with

“ The first article of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan stipulates that the highest values of our state are “an individual, his life, rights and freedoms”. Therefore, all our efforts during these years of independence have been directed toward the realization of the fundamental rights of the individual and society as a whole

Kanat Saudabayev, then the Secretary of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan

international standards, Kazakhstan should in the first place accede to a several international human rights



conventions to which it had not been a party hitherto. Secondly, Kazakhstan had to harmonize its national legislation with its international commitments in the field of human rights.

These two voluminous tasks defined both the process of elaboration and the content of the first National Human Rights Action Plan (2009-2012). The authors of the Plan made use of similar programmes, implemented in Sweden, often quoted as paragon of excellence in human rights protection.

For the first time anywhere in Central Asia, the Government of Kazakhstan undertook to fulfill a set of obligations, designed with the participation of civil society and international partners. A presidential decree from May 2009 enacted the implementation of the Plan.

The Action Plan provided guidelines on various aspects of the human rights paradigm: national human rights protection system, legal framework, compliance with the rule of law, and raising public awareness of human rights and protective mechanisms. The upcoming Kazakhstan chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010 served as additional incentive to expeditiously proceed with harmonization of the domestic laws and regulations with the universal human rights norms and values.

The Action Plan tried to address specifically the safeguard of basic human rights. For instance, Kazakhstan opted to adopt the broader interpretation of the right to life as provided by the UN Human Rights Committee, the one where the right to life implies also infant mortality reduction, higher life expectancy rates and eradication of poverty and disease.

The Plan aimed to enhance better coordination between the various branches of power – legislative, executive and judicial – as a prerequisite for the set-up of an effective human rights protection mechanism.

The National Plan expired in 2012. It influenced to a certain degree Kazakhstan's human rights landscape. The country focused on improving certain human rights protection mechanisms in such areas as labour rights, human trafficking, transparent judicial processes, and the rights of prison populations.

In 2012, some human rights groups provided initial evaluation of the implementation of the first National Action Plan. The UNDP will soon carry out its own analysis to inform the process of elaboration of the second National Human Rights Action Plan.



Discussions with civil society on the issues of human rights in Kazakhstan.



2009

The national currency, tenge, is devalued by 25 percent against the US dollar.

A new law bans smoking in public places.

The second national census is conducted. Kazakhstan's population has increased by another million, totaling 16 million people.

By experts' estimations, more than a third of the country's pasturelands is degraded. The Government partners with UNDP and the Global Environment Facility to recover its historical heritage – the pasturelands – and improve the lives of thousands of people depending on them.

Pasturelands of Kazakhstan

"Our lands are rooted in us. Since ancient times they have been our home, shelter and food".

Steppes cover more than 70 percent of Kazakhstan.

In the world's ninth largest country, the prairie is a huge agricultural asset but, unfortunately, more than a third of the land is degraded. Jointly, with the Government of Kazakhstan and the Global Environment Facility, the UNDP piloted an initiative to improve the quality of the land.

In Soviet times, pasture management was assigned to the officials of collective farms, who had a systematic approach and good planning. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the agriculture and livestock situation worsened. Due to lack of resources, the Kazakhstan's irrigation network fell into disrepair. Some lands suffered from desertification, other lands became waterlogged and choked with salt.

"Our lands know about our past and future. They retain our memories and our spirit".

Most of the land was privatized, thus preventing the access to collective pasture of those who had grazed livestock. Most ponds and wells also became private, robbing many herders of that life giving resource. In ancient times, nomads moved their herds from pasture that had been grazed to fresher prairie some distance away. A series of wells between the stretches of pastureland sustained the herds as they moved. When the land became private property, a herder couldn't move his livestock to an ungrazed location because the herds would have no water during their journey.

The herders, therefore, were able to use only the pastureland closest to their villages. It was a double whammy. Nearby land was overused while far-flung pasture wasn't used at all. Without grazing animals to keep weeds in check, a lot of distant pastureland became more weeds than grass.

The outcome was predictable. The number of cattle – the main source of villagers' livelihood – plummeted. Erosion of grazing land near villages increased, making it even more difficult for herders to keep livestock.

"If you go deep into the pastureland, leaving all the buzz behind, it's like finding your mother's heart. I love these lands, from the very smallest mouse in the grass to every flying sparrow".

In the days of the nomads, herders worked together to sustain their families, for instance, deciding as groups when to move their animals to distant pastures. This tradition ended during the collectivization of agriculture in Soviet times.

In 2009, the UNDP, the Government of Kazakhstan and the GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) financed by the Global Environment Facility started a pilot project in southern Kazakhstan to revive the nomads' tradition of teamwork.

Under the Sustainable Pasture Management Programme, four settlements are working together to get more out of the land and to reclaim eroded land. The locals already had the know-how – they just needed to be organized.

"In the worst of the turmoil after the collapse of the Soviet Union, our lands were turning into a piece of dry bread, topped with a heavy layer of salt. It was painful to watch".

Under the initiative, local communities developed plans for regulating pasture use. Each of the four villages nominated a Zhailym Committee whose main task is to find ways to address the most pressing pastureland issues. ("Zhailym" is a Kazakh word for "distant pastureland"). Herders had been unable to get their livestock to distant pastureland because they had no access to water along the way or tents to live in at their destination. The Zhailym Committees asked the Sustainable Pasture Management



project for money to restore dried-up wells and buy yurts for distant pastures. The project also provided villagers with satellite phones and solar batteries.

Four years after the launch of the initiative, the size of eroded land has decreased by 23 percent, and the amount of weed-infested land by 8 percent.

“For our ancestors the steppe was a philosophy of everything – it represented time, the heart, the cosmos, the entire universe”.

The improvement in the land has translated into better lives. Average income in the area has jumped 32 percent. New infrastructure, such as rejuvenated wells, helped increase cattle production and also improved the quality of the beef. Community members said the sense of ownership the project has given them has been particularly satisfying.

“Protecting our lands is a noble calling, and I’m glad our communities supported it so enthusiastically”, said Tyrsybai Baishelekov, chair of the Zhailym Committee in the Maktybulak district. “Now all who are involved in the protection of steppeland can see the results; everyone should be proud of this work”, said Baishelekov.

“The lands are our heritage by birthright. They are inside us, just as we are inside them. We are responsible to preserve the lands, leaving them to our descendants as we found them”.

The Sustainable Pasture Management project has experimented with other steppe-preservation approaches elsewhere in southern Kazakhstan. For example, it helped start an agricultural extension type programme to acquaint locals with the most productive crop- and livestock-growing techniques. One component of this effort was identifying forage crops that could withstand climate extremes and lack of water. At first only a few farmers and ranchers would try the crops. When the crops thrived, growers across the area joined in.

The success of the Sustainable Pasture Management project prompted journalists to trumpet it.

Members of Parliament also became smitten with the project, visiting the pilot villages for a firsthand look.

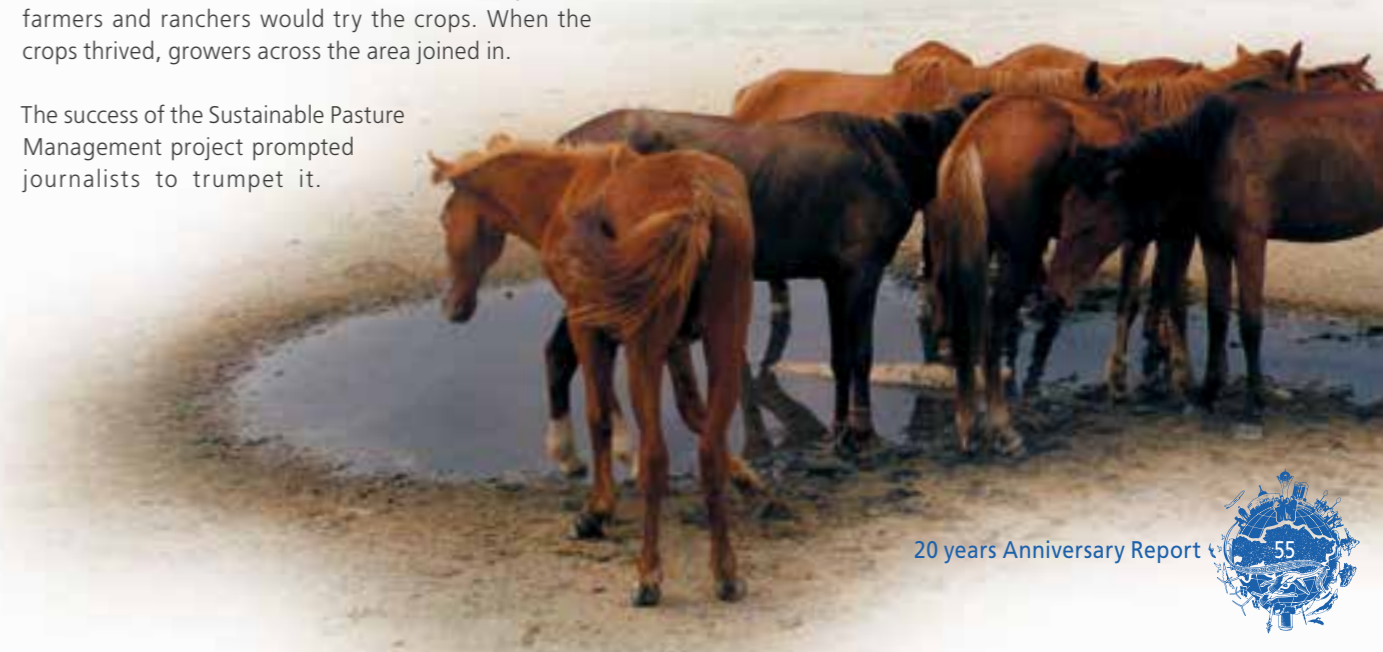
The lawmakers then traveled to Kyrgyzstan to learn about its pasture-management law. Convinced in its value and credibility, the parliamentarians decided Kazakhstan ought to have similar legislation. The effort started small, with the tweaking of existing animal husbandry laws. Lawmakers then drafted a full pasture management law. It is now wending its way through the legislative process.

UNDP collaborated with the Parliament on both the amending of existing legislation and the creation of the new law. Meanwhile, the government has demonstrated its support for the pastureland management concept by doling out cold, hard cash for the effort. It has allotted a total of \$142 million over the next seven years for pastureland reclamation and development under the Agro Business 2020 Programme. This includes money to create 4,000 wells that farmers can use to water their stock.

The enthusiasm that the project has generated for preserving Kazakhstan’s pastureland suggests that the steppes will become an even greater asset in the future.

“These efforts have revived our traditional pasture management system”, Baishelekov said. “The work has been successful because it has been rooted in the land and our traditions. Because of this approach, all stakeholders have embraced the project – government, rural communities and non-governmental organizations”.

“Pastureland is wild. And things that are wild stand next to kindness as among our greatest blessings. All our efforts to save this wilderness are therefore noble and one of the most important things that we can do in life”.



2010

UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon visits Kazakhstan. He meets President Nazarbayev to discuss UN-Kazakhstan cooperation and visits Semey region to promote the idea of a nuclear weapon free world.

Kazakhstan assumes the Chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and hosts the OSCE Summit in Astana.

New amendments to the Constitution declare the President as the Leader of the Nation.

Five Kazakhstan citizens get on the Forbes List of billionaires.

The Government launches a programme to support “oralmans”, ethnic Kazakhs who immigrated to their ancestral homeland. Most of them are concentrated in East Kazakhstan. The UNDP, UN Volunteers and the local authorities help oralman to integrate into their new environment.

Integration of Ethnic Kazakh Returnees to their Homeland

Nurbakyt Atan brought his family from China to the Ulansky region of East Kazakhstan Oblast in 2006. The Atans thus joined a million other ethnic Kazakhs in immigrating to their ancestral homeland over the past two decades after living abroad for generations.

After declaring its independence in 1991, Kazakhstan decided to make it a national policy to welcome ethnic Kazakhs who grew up elsewhere. Unsurprisingly, the settlement of the immigrants – whom Kazakhs call oralmans – has been a challenge. To help them rebuild their lives, UNDP in partnership with the UN Volunteers (UNV) Programme, central and local authorities and the oralman themselves tested a participatory integration model that yielded some promising results.

It took Nurbakyt four years to adapt to his new environment in East Kazakhstan, learn Russian, learn written Kazakh – previously he had written only in Chinese – and find work.

The UNDP and UNV founded the Center for the Integration of Semey Oralman in 2009. It was a huge help to Nurbakyt and 12,000 oralman in the area, and in 2010 he became one of its volunteers. Who would know better about the hurdles oralman faced, Nurbakyt felt, than someone who “had been there”?

He not only offered advice about oralman integration, but he also helped organize language and computer-literacy classes. Some of his integration advice came at seminars he conducted for non-governmental organizations in villages in his region.

Nurbakyt’s example led to the creation of more grassroots organizations that could address the issues that oralman faced. Rural activists developed 20 integration projects. For example they helped clear a clogged 5 kilometer long canal to irrigate crops in the villages of Sagyr and Mamai.

It didn’t take long for Nurbakyt, the volunteer, to become an adviser to the regional mayor. And when the first village for oralman – Shygys – was built in East Kazakhstan Oblast, he was chosen its mayor.

Nurbakyt’s story exemplifies the effort to integrate oralman, who now account for 5.8 percent of Kazakhstan’s population. The number of oralman in East Kazakhstan Oblast – both inside and outside the region where Nurbakyt lives – is now at 25,000. Most have chosen to make their homes in the remote areas where other oralman have settled.

“ Could I ever have dreamed that after coming to Kazakhstan I would become the mayor of a new village? I was like everyone: I didn’t know the language or the laws, and I was afraid of the future. But when someone points you in the right direction, it is easy to keep walking

Nurbakyt Atan (oralman) Mayor of the Novoyavlenska village, East-Kazakhstan Oblast





One of the first challenges that oralmans face is language. Lack of Russian and written Kazakh makes integration much harder. Back in their countries, they use Arabic writing systems, whereas in Kazakhstan they have to shift to Cyrillic. Oralman also have difficulty negotiating with the bureaucracy. It's daunting for them to obtain citizenship and obtain benefits such as pensions, for example.

Shariv Tabiltai, who overcame those challenges, is now a consultant to the Center for Integration of Oralman. "When I came to Semey, I couldn't communicate well, and I could find no help with various issues. Many oralman found themselves in similar conditions. We needed quality legal advice, Russian language skills and written Kazakh skills", comments Tabiltai Shariv.

The center has played a major role in filling the gap. In 2012 it organized more than 20 language courses and computer-literacy courses for 400 oralman in the Zaissansky, Urdzharsky and Ulansky regions. Altogether, more than 2,000 immigrants have taken the courses since the center began offering them in 2009. Today 90 percent of oralman in the area have the language skills necessary to fill out documents required for citizenship and public benefits.

The center also offers immigrants advice on a range of other topics, such as how to find jobs or how to obtain access to housing, social services, health care and education. While the main purpose of the center is to facilitate the integration of oralman, it has been pursuing a bigger goal too – reducing poverty



Documents submitted to the Center for the integration of Oralman. Since 2012 Center helped to more than 10,000 oralman.

in the immigrants' communities. Free consulting to existing businesses, entrepreneurship seminars and a microcredit programme have contributed to this goal and seed-finance helped businesses in agriculture, livestock, domestic services and trade to jump-start. Overall, the UNDP/UNV projects helped half of the oralman in East Kazakhstan Oblast adjust to their new lives in Kazakhstan and feel full-fledged members of their new society.

Mayor Nurbakyt Atan recalls, "My life changed when I became acquainted with the Center for Integration of Oralman in Semey. Could I ever have dreamed that after coming to Kazakhstan I would become the mayor of a new village? I was like everyone: I didn't know the language or the laws, and I was afraid of the future. But when someone points you in the right direction, it is easy to keep walking, relying on your trustworthy adviser. For me this reliable pillar was the UNDP. It gave me everything: confidence plus the chance to engage in valuable social work that would create hopes of a bright future among those of us coming to our new motherland".

Building on the oralman integration model in East Kazakhstan Oblast, Kazakhstan considers applying it to other regions in the country.



Consultants of the Center for the Integration of Oralman working with the submitted documents. During the years of programme consultants provided support to more than 1 800 oralman.

2011

UNDP Administrator Helen Clark visits Kazakhstan. She meets the President, the Prime Minister and other officials to discuss UNDP-Government relationships and Kazakhstan's progress in human development.

Kazakhstan hosts the Seventh Asian Winter Games.

Kazakhstan's first subway is opened.

Pensions and teachers' salaries are increased by 30 percent.

Riots erupt in Zhanaozen.

Kazakhstan decides to take action to improve the delivery of its public services. To this end, the UNDP supports the Government's efforts in implementing a step by step reform.

Kazakhstan Champions Efficient Delivery of Public Services

A key measure of effective government is how well it provides services to the people. Kazakhstan has made major strides in that direction. Recent evidence is the new Public Service Law that assigns to non-governmental organizations a new role – independent evaluator of public services.

Non-profit organizations have been evaluating government agencies' services on an unofficial basis for some time. The assessments aimed at informing the public about the quality of services, and perhaps shaming agencies with mediocre ratings into doing better. As these ratings were informal, agencies could ignore them and continue business as usual. This practice of disregarding accountability will no longer exist under the new law. The evaluations by civil society organizations will now become formal, compulsory and part of the public record.

Kazakhstan made first attempts to improve the delivery of public services only a few years after independence in 1991. By Presidential order, government officials were tasked to study public service models and approaches in countries with reputation for public service excellence. Good practices from the United States, several European nations, Japan, South Korea and Singapore were distilled to inform the initial reform of service delivery in 1999.

The reform process continued with introduction of performance-evaluation system for government agencies to make them more accountable to the public. As the Office of the President initiated this move, it had to review and compare several national models and chose on their merits which one meets Kazakhstan's needs. Requested to assist with know-how and expertise, UNDP invited international experts to discuss six alternative approaches to performance-evaluation and helped organize a study tour to Ottawa for a Kazakhstani delegation to learn firsthand from best practices there.

Canada's comprehensive evaluation system monitors and assesses the quality of services that a government agency delivers to the public, to businesses and to other government agencies. Yardsticks to measure quality include how well an agency does strategic planning and how wisely it spends public money. Evaluation responsibilities are shared amongst individual agencies; hence the performance evaluation process is decentralized. After thorough considerations, Kazakhstan decided to adopt and adapt the Canadian model.

In 2010, the Presidential Administration instructed the responsible central government officials to commence a pilot evaluation of the public service delivery performance of 39 agencies, including 16 governor's offices. A set of



“When I started reading the draft of the new legislation it got me excited. The document broadens the definition, classification and quality control of the public services. It renders officially “public monitoring” process. There is still some work needed, but it's very happy news

Sabina Dyusekeeva
Then the Expert of Civil Alliance NGO

assessment criteria was designed to measure the agencies' proper compliance with standards and procedures, as well as the quality of services they deliver.

Kazakhstan took an important step toward improving service delivery when it adopted a new civil service development strategy (2011–2015), which envisages a professional civil service that is efficient, transparent and accountable to the public. While the strategy's ultimate goal is to ensure “an effective system of public governance”, it puts a special emphasis on improving the quality of public services. “The idea is to get away from one-sided power-based approaches in interactions between government agencies and the public to the efficient and timely provision of services to citizens”, sets the plan.

With the new Public Service Delivery Law, passed by Parliament in 2012, Kazakhstan closed an important chapter in the development of its public policy on service delivery. Based on public consultations, some of which facilitated by UNDP, the new piece of legislation bolsters civil society role in monitoring and assessing the performance of civil servants and the quality of their services. The non-governmental organizations and civil society groups have now a power that they had never before – the power to participate in the evaluation of the delivery of public services in Kazakhstan.



Kazakhstan and Russia agree on the gradual withdrawal of Russia's assets from Baikonur.

Astana wins the bid to host EXPO 2017.

At the Global Summit on Sustainable Development Rio+20, the delegation of Kazakhstan presents its Green Bridge Initiative. It becomes the only contribution from Central Asia that makes it into the Rio+20 outcome document.

Kazakhstani and UNDP experts work closely to define and advocate the "green development" concept.

Bridging the Way: Kazakhstan's Transition to a Green Economy

In the past few years, the "green economy" concept is making headway into the mainstream of policy discussions in Kazakhstan. The President embraced the "green economy" notion, all ministries are adjusting their development programmes in the new direction, and a shift in public perceptions and attitudes mirrors the Government's commitment to pursue green and sustainable development path.

Since its independence in 1991, Kazakhstan's environmental profile has been characterized by a heavy dependence on its rich natural resources. Short-term economic interests prevailed over environmental and social concerns. Gaps in the legal and institutional frameworks and in the economic mechanisms hampered a green development approach. The environmental balance of the country was put at stake, with deteriorating water and land resources, inefficient energy use, poor waste management and other problems. The need for a turn in the country's environmental agenda became urgent.

The Government has been already working to find solutions to major environmental and associated social challenges. It developed national environmental action plans and programmes; adopted 24 international relevant conventions, and expanded the territories of natural parks and reserves. However, the real momentum began in 2009, when the Government, assisted by UNDP and other partners, started determining the parameters of the "green economy" and "green growth" concepts. This effort has later evolved into the Astana "Green Bridge Initiative".

The initiative seeks to create a platform for dialogue and cooperation on sustainable development policies across Europe, Asia and the Pacific. By launching this rather ambitious idea, the Government demonstrated to the international community that it is a strong promoter of green growth and green development approaches. It underscored its commitment by hosting in Astana the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific (2010) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe Seventh Environment Ministerial Conference (2011). At these fora, the country officially announced its determination to "greening" the economy.

A joint UNDP-Ministry of Environmental Protection initiative followed soon. The project "Assistance to Kazakhstan in Improving Interregional Cooperation for Green Growth Promotion" was designed to support the Government's effort to promote a "green development"

approach especially in the lead-up to the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development Rio+20.

Over the course of several thematic consultations and workshops, UNDP aided the governmental committee on Rio +20 to elaborate the conceptual basis for a special initiative and to prepare the national delegation for the international conference. Kazakhstan's "Green Bridge Partnership" initiative was included in the Rio +20 final document, heightening Kazakhstan's profile as advocate of green sustainable development.

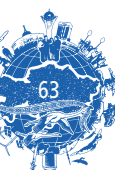
At the country level, the process of "greening the economy" comprised of designing and introducing respective institutional, financial and partnership mechanisms. The UNDP offered international expertise on how to devise financial mechanisms for stimulating green development. A special environmental fund was deemed appropriate, as it could disburse government subsidies and provide incentives for the private sector to partake in the process with business solutions.

“Green economy is the only option, that is out there for further sustainable economic growth

*Nurlan Kapparov
Minister of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan*

Kazakhstan has successfully designed a National Concept for transition to Green Economy and related policy documents to make it work. The Government has used support from UNDP and other partners – expert advice, policy recommendations, applied research, and thematic reports – and created corresponding action plans for sustainable agriculture, water management, industrial and municipal waste management, energy efficiency and in other fields. As a result of this work, the goal of developing a green economy has assumed higher priority, both in the minds of public officials and citizens alike. A recent Presidential decree in May 2013 asserted firmly the course towards green development.

As Kazakhstan prepares to host the International Exposition – EXPO – in 2017, which will be dedicated to the theme of "future energy", it conceives the event as an opportunity to "look at energy from a common, global viewpoint that takes into account the challenges and concerns facing humanity, safeguarding our health and the environment while boosting economic and social development".



SHAPING THE WAY FORWARD



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

UNDP in Kazakhstan

work in 2013



Supported the development of KAZAID concept. The future Kazakhstan agency for international development.



SUPPORTING KAZAKHSTAN IN MULTILATERAL COOPERATION



Supported Kazakhstan's delegation in preparing to RIO+20 global conference. Kazakhstan's "Green Bridge Initiative" was featured in the Rio +20 outcome document.



Helped to establish in Astana Regional Hub for Civil Service – a center of experience exchange – to improve civil service delivery and accountability across the Central Asian Region.



Assisted in institutionalizing of regional disaster risk reduction center in Almaty.



Facilitated the development of "green economy" concept.



PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT



Supported the development of National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan.



Completed the construction of the first energy-efficient apartment house in Karaganda city.



Contributed to the development of national programme on energy efficiency until 2020.



Prepared Third National Communication to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.



Helped to develop mechanisms for practical realization of "Green Bridge" Initiative in Kazakhstan.



PROMOTING EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT



Facilitated the upgrade of the public administration performance measurement system and assisted the Government in expanding the list of public services to more than 600 services.



Gathered representatives from 11 countries within the newly established Regional Hub for Civil Services to facilitate cooperation on civil services in the region.



Conducted more than 50 gatherings of rural people in Semey region to discuss local problems and promote self-governance. As a result, 90 development projects were initiated by local activist groups.



Developed mobile application that enables people with hearing disabilities to access emergency services in one click.



Assisted in formation of mediation institute in Kazakhstan through training of 271 professional and 148 non-professional mediators and conducting public awareness campaigns on mediation. Provided recommendations to improve national law on mediation.



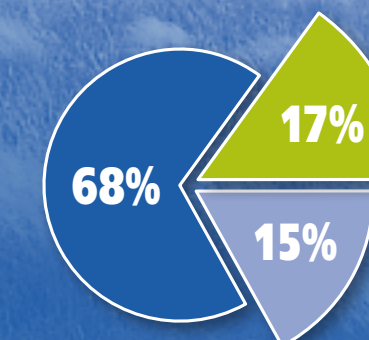
Opened 32 on-line centers in Semey region's remote rural areas. The centers provide people with access to Internet, offer consultations on economic opportunities, legal consultations and more.

Programme Delivery for UNDP in Kazakhstan 1993–2013



UNDP in Kazakhstan programme expenditures distribution by programme area 1993–2013

- Energy and Environment
- Effective Governance
- Local Development



Major sources of funding 1993–2013

Donor	Contribution 1993–2013	Donor	Contribution 1993–2013	Donor	Contribution 1993–2013	Donor	Contribution 1993–2013
gef Global Environmental Facility (GEF)	\$ 54,396,511	United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security	\$ 1,513,137	UNAIDS UNAIDS (Programme Acceleration Funds (PAF))	\$ 767,057	Coca-Cola Coca Cola	\$ 340,292
Government of Kazakhstan	\$ 11,889,985	USAID U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)	\$ 1,000,000	Japanese Trust Fund	\$ 750,000	Shell Shell	\$ 315,000
European Union (EU)	\$ 7,710,874	Chevron Chevron	\$ 943,000	Finland Finland	\$ 574,010	The Global Fund The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM)	\$ 293,000
World Bank	\$ 2,885,307	Demographic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF)	\$ 913,975	UN Volunteers UN Volunteers	\$ 542,000	saicm Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)	\$ 228,280
Germany Germany	\$ 2,466,067	Sida Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)	\$ 877,552	UNDEF United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF)	\$ 424,000	European Bank European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)	\$ 204,023
Norway Norway	\$ 1,700,246	United Kingdom United Kingdom	\$ 857,103	UNDP Regular Resources	\$ 18,500,000		

Have you seen our National Human Development Reports?

The *Human Development Report* is UNDP's flagship product. First report was launched in 1990 with the goal of putting people at the center of development, going beyond income to assess people's long-term well-being.

National Human Development Reports are autonomous locally led publications, that advocate for change. These reports contribute significantly to national capacities to gather and analyze data relevant to human development. The reports make recommendations for change that generate attention and debate among stakeholders and policy makers, and they raise public awareness of ideas about human development. They promote resource mobilization in key areas of development and trigger responses to the needs of the most vulnerable in society.

Since 1993 UNDP office in Kazakhstan published 12 National Human Development reports. They pioneered innovative methodological approaches and spurred development thinking on the most challenging issues faced by the country.

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Kazakhstan – 1995



General Human Development Report

The report finds that Kazakhstan's human development indicators have been damaged by the problems of transition. The authors suggest direct interventions in support of human development in the three main components of the human development index, namely, raising living standards by restoring and raising incomes through creation of a market economy, secondly, an expansion of skills and capacities of the population through the protection of basic education services and finally, increasing life expectancy by enabling most citizens to lead healthy and productive lives.

Kazakhstan – 1996



General Human Development Report

The aim of the report is to show from a human perspective both the results and the problems of Kazakhstan's socio-economic development. The human development issues covered include, the demographic situation, health care, education, standard of living and the environmental impact. The report also contains an in-depth discussion of the problems of poverty in the transition period, including its causes, how to measure it and regional inequalities.

Kazakhstan – 1997



Human Development Report 1997

This report gives information about identification and assessment of the human development index (HDI) and its component development trends in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan – 1998



Social Integration and the Role of the State in the transition period

This report assembles and analyses information about the realities of 1998 and future trends; offers suggestions and raises options for actions in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan – 1999



Challenges for 2000

The report draws heavily upon the earlier country reports as well as the longer series of global Human Development Reports in order to place the current information in perspective and to provide a retrospective view of the breadth and depth of the economic and social transition underway in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan 2002



Rural development in Kazakhstan

Challenges and Prospects

The NHDR 2002 focuses on the issue of rural development, as over 40% of the country's population currently lives in rural areas. The Report thus provides a detailed comparative analysis of human development for the second largest population group in the country.

Kazakhstan – 2003



Water as a Key Factor of Human Development in Kazakhstan

The NHDR 2003 provides a comprehensive analysis of the water situation in Kazakhstan and will serve as a foundation of Government as well as NGOs and private sector's actions. Regional development studies and MDGRs have revealed that water plays a key role in Kazakhstan's human development.

Kazakhstan – 2004



Education for All

The Key Goal for a New Millennium

The 2004 report is devoted to the education sector in Kazakhstan. The authors of this document have tried to show the problems faced by the education system and to provide a comprehensive set of recommendations for future development of the education system for the benefit of public discussion.

Kazakhstan – 2005



The Great Generation of Kazakhstan

Insights into the Future

The 2005 Human Development Report presents the first in-depth research into the role and needs of older people from the perspective of human development in Kazakhstan. It analyzes the country's social and economic performance indicators, focuses attention on the growing number of older people and discusses the implications of this trend for the economy, healthcare system, pension schemes, and family relations.

Kazakhstan – 2006



New Technologies for Human Development in Kazakhstan

The report throws light on new, previously overlooked challenges related to technological development in Kazakhstan. It is a review of the development and introduction of new technology through the prism of human development, allowing analysis and drawing attention to current challenges, and calling for a selective and informed approach to the use of technologies.

Kazakhstan – 2008



Climate change and its impact on Kazakhstan's human development

This report is a first endeavor to analyze the impact of climate change on the Kazakhstan economy, and the influence of Kazakhstan on the global problem of climate change.

Kazakhstan – 2009



From Exclusion to Equality

Realising the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Kazakhstan

The overall goal of the 2009 National Human Development Report is to study Kazakhstan's legislation and socio-economic infrastructure concerning persons with disabilities and identify political, legislative, institutional and socio-economic measures enabling implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by Kazakhstan.

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PUBLISHED BY
United Nations Development Programme
in Kazakhstan



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UNDP in the Republic
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