

## **Intended interventions in different sessions of the meeting**

**SHENG Fulai, Senior Economist, UN Environment**

**During SESSION 2, Under Item 1, Open discussion (Current needs and plans for infrastructure investment in Central Asia in water/heating and waste management systems at municipal level – which technologies are the most suitable for Central Asia?)**

SHENG: In addressing this issue, it is useful to also engage the key actors involved in the One Belt One Road Initiative. They include, for example, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which often co-finance with some of the banks represented here, as well as investors and contractors operating on the ground. In this regard, UN Environment is currently working in establishing an International Coalition for Green Development on the Belt and Road, aiming at engaging investors and financiers to direct investments towards green projects.

**Under Item 2, Open Discussion (Access to international funds – how to set up the national framework for accessing the GCF, and to elaborate successful proposals to maximise access to funds. Learning from existing experience in CA countries and feedback from the Green Climate Fund. Discussion on the Countries' priorities for the GCF Regional Pipeline.)**

SHENG: UN Environment is beginning to work with Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on readiness. But my question is on the respective roles of GCF and GEF. I understand GEF also supports the climate convention, apart from the conventions on biodiversity and desertification. Has GEF ever been involved in the discussion of this working group in the past. I am also interested to know the extent to which biodiversity and ecosystem management have been linked to climate proposals in the region. At the UN Environment, we are assisting Central Asian countries in revising and implementing their National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans. We are also assessing the implementation of existing biodiversity projects and GEF6 programme in the region. In addition, we are working with GIZ on mountain ecosystems and wildlife in Central Asia., We hope that linkages between these activities and climate adaptation can be established or strengthened.

**Under Item 3, Open discussion (The main cross-cutting policy issue in CA countries)**

SHENG: (depending on the list issues already presented) From UN Environment perspective, we would like to highlight a number of cross-cutting issues, such as :

1) public procurement in infrastructure projects;

2) Poverty-Environment Nexus, i.e. how infrastructure projects can be designed and implemented in a way that contributes to improved living environment and job opportunities for the poor; this can be built on, for example, ongoing work by UNDP-UN Environment joint Poverty-Environment Initiative in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan;

3) the Environment-Health nexus, how infrastructure projects can be designed and implemented in a way that reduces all forms of pollution for the benefit of improved health for all people; by the way, as some of you might be aware, the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi this December has a focus in dealing with all forms of pollution;

4) Environment and Security nexus, how to design and implement infrastructure projects that contributes to both environmental improvement and strengthened regional security. Most of these reflect our emphasis on dealing with multi-faceted challenges.

**Under Day 2, SESSION 3, Key directions for further strengthening of CA regional organisations and capacity building/training needs in CA countries. Item 1 (Strengthening of regional cooperation in Central Asia in environmental governance and climate change)**

SHENG: I am glad I am speaking after the interventions by colleagues from IFAS, ICSD, and CAREC, because UN Environment has been working closely with them in recent years. It is important that future cooperation are built upon past, ongoing, and planned work. Here, I would like to focus on our cooperation with ICSD.

Our cooperation with ICSD focuses on at least five areas:

1) institutional and legal support, including, for example, review of the ratification for the regional framework convention on Environment for Sustainable Development, in partnership with UNECE, OSCE, and EU;

2) revision to the Regional Environmental Action Plan, with WWF;

3) climate adaptation in mountain ecosystems, together with ICSD's Regional Mountain Center in Central Asia, and 3 Central Asian countries, including the completion of the regional outlook mapping as well as regional dialogues; this is an example of UN Environment's strength in supporting regional/sub-regional initiatives;

4) regional approach to waste management, including a regional outlook, development of national and urban waste management strategy with ICSD's Scientific Information Center (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan); and ratification and implementation of related Multilateral Environmental Agreements;

5) green economy, including the implementation of the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E) in Central Asia (commitments by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan); BUG-E covers the 10 Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production, including issues such as sustainable public procurement, eco-innovation; in addition, there is the UN inter-agency support to Kyrgyzstan on green economy in the name of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy;

6) Environmental information and monitoring, supporting the Scientific Information Center, together with UNECE and EEA.

**Under Day 2, Item 2, Open discussion (Participants are invited to give their views on capacity building/training needs and modalities of its implementation. Participants in particular CA countries and IFIs are invited to give their views about the establishment of a Regional Center of Excellence on project design, financing, and PPP).**

SHENG: From UN Environment's perspective, we would suggest that future capacity building take into account the following existing or planned mechanisms:

- 1) Central Asian Leadership Programme on Education for Sustainable Development;
- 2) Policy Framework for Promotion of Low Carbon Emission Societies, which is a network of climate change focal points and experts as well as mechanisms for the exchange of information and experiences to enhance institutional capacity and awareness; and a mechanism also for national implementation of cleaner technologies and improved energy performance standards;
- 3) Shared Environmental Information System and environmental statistics for the SDGs, partnership between UN Environment and UNECE in Central Asia, with, two projects, one funded by the UN Development Account and other the European Union.