

The Aral Sea once again becomes a symbol of hope and renewal

Uzbekistan delegation took part in the historic UN conference

On 22-24 March, the Water Conference of this structure was held at the UN Headquarters, in New York. All member countries and specialized agencies of the UN, with the participation of authoritative speakers, are considering the issues of uniting the world on the way to the Sustainable Development Goals until 2030 through the conservation of water resources, the importance of the seas and oceans in the well-being of our planet and global initiatives in this direction.

The international community gathered for such a conference for the first time after a 45-year break. After all, the issue is extremely relevant: by 2050, water shortages may affect 5 billion people on the planet.

Uzbekistan also has something to say and offer on this issue. In this regard, the country has accumulated considerable experience. The Aral Sea, once the fourth largest in the world, is located on the territory of Uzbekistan, and its current fate is a matter that concerns not only us, but the entire international community.

Moreover, in recent years, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, every time participating in high-level meetings of the United Nations, certainly raised the problem of the Aral Sea and put forward important initiatives.

Among the 193 member countries of the Organization, Uzbekistan delegation also took part in the conference.

On March 23, at the high-level plenary session of the conference, a member of Uzbekistan delegation, Saida Mirziyoyeva, addressed the UN conference and delivered a speech about the consequences of the Aral tragedy, the large-scale work carried out by Uzbekistan to mitigate them, as well as the leadership of the country in uniting international efforts in this direction.

Noting that Muynak was once a



Saida Mirziyoyeva, Uzbekistan's delegate to the UN 2033 Water Conference, addresses at the United Nations in New York on March 23.

Courtesy of the Uzbekistan government

prosperous port city with large production capacities, and after the balance was disturbed, a ship graveyard appeared on the dead seashores, she recited an extract from the elegy of a famous Karakalpak poet Ibrahim Yusupov, describing the tragedy of a sea turning into a desert in a blink of an eye.

"The crisis of the Aral Sea is a devastating reminder of the consequences of human environmental neglect. However, thanks to the efforts of caring people, it is now becoming a symbol of hope and renewal", Saida Mirziyoyeva said.

It was emphasized that the initiatives put forward by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev received wide support at the international level, and in 2021 a UN Resolution was adopted declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of environmental innovations and technologies, and a little earlier, in 2018, the UN Multi-Partner Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea region was established.

Speaking about the measures implemented by the state, the speaker noted that more than \$14 million were allocated for the implementation of projects aimed at reviving the

region.

The resilience, diligence and creativity of Karakalpakstan people, who are directly experiencing the consequences of the tragedy, were noted. Attention was drawn to the fact that in the difficult conditions of the region, women need special care and support, it is necessary to expand opportunities for them.

Following her speech, Saida Mirziyoyeva called on the international community to continue supporting Uzbekistan's efforts to mitigate the consequences of the Aral Sea tragedy, which is inextricably

linked to global water problems.

On March 22, within the framework of the UN Water Conference, the presentation of the Aral Culture Summit project, initiated by the Art and Culture Development Foundation under the Cabinet of Ministers of Uzbekistan, took place. This is a new institution that will bring together the local and international community, leading scientists, architects, artists and designers.

As part of the Aral Culture Summit, educational and exchange programs, scholarships and intern-

ships will be created that will motivate the younger generation to develop skills that contribute to the improvement of the situation in the region.

As part of the summit, a biodesign farm laboratory will be created. Various technologies will be studied and developed to supply the region with water, create new types of crops, and reduce soil salinity in the region.

The Summit will bring creative people together with local farmers to build sustainable relations in biodesign, grow new plants and thereby develop a strategic plan for the next 10 years. This will set the stage for huge changes in the local community.

The essence and significance of the upcoming summit were discussed in detail during the interactive dialogues held on the sidelines of the conference "Water for Cooperation: Transboundary and International Water Cooperation, Cross-Sectoral Cooperation, including Scientific Cooperation, and Water Across the 2030 Agenda" and a panel discussion "From Art to Action: Transforming Desert to Forest for the Revival of the Aral Sea Region" organized by the Foundation with the participation of international experts.

A meeting was held with our compatriots in the United States. Mayor of New York City Eric Adams also attended the event.

Saida Mirziyoyeva congratulated the audience on the Navruz holiday and spoke about the grandiose reforms being carried out in Uzbekistan.

During the warm conversation, it was noted that compatriots do not break ties with their historical homeland, they are keenly interested in the changes taking place in the country, and through the implementation of various projects they are trying to strengthen cultural, political and economic ties between the United States and Uzbekistan.