

## “The Cryosphere of Central Asia: from Scientifically Based Assessments to Joint Climate Change Adaptation Actions” at the Regional Environmental Summit (RES) 2026

**Date:** 23 April 2026, 9:00-10:45

**Venue:** Congress Center, Burabay (2nd floor)

**Location:** Astana, Kazakhstan

### Background

The GEF-UNDP-UNESCO project “Strengthening the Resilience of Central Asian Countries by Enabling Regional Cooperation to Assess Glacio-nival Systems to Develop Integrated Methods for Sustainable Development and Adaptation to Climate Change” brings together five Central Asian (CA) countries - Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - to jointly develop harmonized approaches to monitoring and researching the cryosphere, including glaciers, snow cover and permafrost.

The key objective of the project is to facilitate collaboration among CA countries in creating a technical analytical basis that clearly establishes the causal chain behind major cryospheric challenges. This process led to the development of a Joint Sub-Regional Action Programme (JSAP) and National Action Plans (NAPs) for the cryosphere in each participating country, applying the GEF International Waters methodology.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout 2024–2025, stakeholders - represented by nominated specialists from responsible state authorities in environmental protection, science, education and innovation, water resources management, emergency situations, agriculture, and hydrometeorological services, alongside research institutions, academia, NGOs, and the private sector - worked together with the support of UNESCO, the University of Fribourg (Switzerland), and international consultants to develop the *JSAP and NAPs for the cryosphere*.

In developing the JSAP, the joint working group was led by an in-depth grasp of the cryosphere's significance in forming water resources, sustaining ecosystems, and supporting the socio-economic development of CA countries. Consequently, it emphasized the vital importance of a comprehensive understanding of climate change's impact on the cryosphere to ensure timely response measures. The group also acknowledged the need to address challenges identified during the causal-chain analysis that limit the capacity of CA countries to understand the depth of these changes and make informed decisions on adapting various sectors to climate impacts on the cryosphere.

The development of the JSAP is backed up by UN Resolutions, including those initiated by the Republic of Tajikistan, namely the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Dushanbe Declaration on Glaciers<sup>2</sup> and the proclaimed “Decade of Action for Cryosphere Sciences 2025-2034”.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Methodology SAP/NAP - <https://iwlearn.net/manuals/tda-sap-methodology>

<sup>2</sup> <https://docs.un.org/en/A/79/977>; [https://digitallibrary.un.org/A\\_RES\\_77\\_158-RU](https://digitallibrary.un.org/A_RES_77_158-RU)

<sup>3</sup> <https://mfa.tj/ru/main/view/15529/generalnaya-assambleya-oon-prinyala-rezolyutsiyu-pod-nazvaniem-desyatiletie-deistvii-v-podderzhku-kriosfernykh-nauk-20252034-gody>

Furthermore, the programme supports the efforts of CA countries in meeting their commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

### **Objective**

To contribute to the goals of the RES 2026, initiated by the Republic of Kazakhstan, and to present the JSAP on the cryosphere as one of the specific joint action initiatives and platforms, aimed at launching environmental research to serve the basis for enhancing subregional cooperation and harmonizing a common approach to implementing environmental solutions at the regional level, while also proposing specific tools for assessing the impact of climate change on the cryosphere and water resources in CA.

### **Expected Results**

Following the presentation of innovative cryosphere research tools and the discussion of the developed JSAP, it is expected that the heads of the responsible environmental state authorities of CA countries will make a Joint Statement in support of the JSAP on the cryosphere. This statement will secure the political will of the CA countries for its implementation.

The document will serve as a toolkit for coordinating the actions of countries and partners in monitoring and preserving the cryosphere. It will outline key directions, cooperation priorities, and a commitment to the joint promotion of adaptation measures in the CA region.

The Joint Statement will act as a call for donors, international financial institutions, national budget funding, and the private sector to support the implementation of the JSAP.

### **Participants**

The session will gather representatives from the responsible authorities of CA countries, higher education and science, water resources, and emergency situations, as well as hydrometeorological services. The event will also bring together experts from academic and research institutions, universities, and regional organizations.

## Agenda

### Session: “Cryosphere of Central Asia: from Scientific Assessment to Joint Action for Climate Change Adaptation”

ZOOM Link: <https://unesco-org.zoom.us/j/85633168856?pwd=ygGbKv4Gch9GaH2xQE78AdRyIwHtCw.1>

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Moderator: Ms. Elena Osipova, Programme Specialist, Natural Sciences Unit, UNESCO Regional Office in Almaty.

Time	Agenda Items and Speakers
09:00 - 09:15	<p>Opening Session: Ms. E. Osipova</p> <p>Welcome Remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Mansur Oshurbayev, Vice Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan</li> <li>• Ms. Sarangoo Radnaaragchaa, UN Resident Coordinator in Kazakhstan</li> <li>• Mr Amir Piric, UNESCO Regional office in Almaty, Director</li> <li>• Prof. Martin Hoelzle, University of Fribourg, Scientific Advisor to the World Glacier Monitoring Service</li> </ul>
09:15 - 09:30	<p><b>Keynote Speech:</b></p> <p>Existing and future challenges of climate change impact on water resources and cryosphere in Central Asia: the use of innovative research approaches - Dr. Tomas Saks, senior researcher, University of Fribourg (Switzerland)</p>
09:30 - 10:15	<p><b>Panel Discussion:</b></p> <p>Joint Sub-Regional Action Programme (JSAP) – Central Asian countries’ response to climate challenges impacting the cryosphere and water resources.</p> <p><i>The Chair will read the "Cryosphere Vision 2050" and its Goals, followed by one question to each panelist.</i></p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Daniyoy Turgunov, Director of the Research Hydrometeorological Institute (NIGMI)</li> <li>• Mr Aset Kaliev, First Deputy General Director of Kazhydromet</li> <li>• Dr. Bolot Moldobekov, Co-Director of the Central Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences (CAIAG)</li> <li>• Dr. Mahmasharif Haqdod, Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the RT</li> <li>• Dr. Makhtumkuli Akmuradov, Advisor – Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the MFA of Turkmenistan</li> <li>• Dr. Takir Balykbayev, Director of the Central Asian Regional Glaciological Center under the auspices of UNESCO category II</li> </ul>

	Summary: Ms. E. Osipova
10:15 - 10:30	<p><b>Countries Feedback:</b> Brief feedback from Central Asian delegations and international organizations toward the JSAP (max 3 min per intervention)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kazakhstan – Mr. Mansur Oshurbayev, Vice Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan</li> <li>• Kyrgyzstan – Ministry of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision of the Kyrgyz Republic</li> <li>• Tajikistan – Committee for Environmental Protection under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan</li> <li>• Turkmenistan – Ms. Chinar Rustamova, Executive Secretary of the National Commission of Turkmenistan for UNESCO</li> <li>• Uzbekistan – Ms. Sayyora Abdullaeva, National Center for Climate Change under the Committee on Ecology and Climate Change of the Republic of Uzbekistan</li> </ul>
10:30 - 10:40	<p><b>Joint Statement</b> on the JSAP on behalf of the Environmental Authorities of Central Asian countries - Dr. Yerlan Nyssanbayev, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan (TBC)</p>
10:40 - 10:45	<p><b>Closing Remarks</b> - Ms. E. Osipova</p>