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Institute for a Community
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人类命运共同体研究院



Tajikistan's Water Governance and Management Strategies: An Appraisal of Robust Initiatives



By Ms. Maryam Raza, Deputy Director,
Pakistan Research Center for a Community with
Shared Future, jointly established with
Communication University of China (CUC),
Beijing, China

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Water sustains life, economic prosperity, ecological security, and human civilization.

Globally, the pressure on water resources is increasing from rapidly growing demands and climate change. Sustainable management and water use could reduce some of that pressure, but actions towards improving existing practices are



lagging. Meeting the water needs of a growing population is largely associated with the need for water to grow food, alongside access to safe water supply and sanitation being increasingly recognized as an essential element of human capital contributing to public health, which became even more evident in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. The shortage of clean drinking water - a current challenge for population across the globe, is not a pure function of the physical scarcity of water, as a combination of factors, such as “business as usual” practices in the use and management of water and water pollution undermine the achievement of poverty eradication, posing a threat to human well-being, economic growth and national security.

Today, per capita freshwater availability is diminishing. Over the past four decades, it dropped by one-third. According to UN-Water’s World Water Development Report (2018), by 2050, between 4.8 billion and 5.7 billion people out of 9 billion will live in areas that are water-scarce for at least one month each year, up from 3.6 billion today while the number of people at risk of floods will increase to 1.6 billion, up from 1.2 billion today. Depletion and degradation of freshwater supplies, driven by population

growth and mobility, impacts of economic development, lifestyle changes and unsustainable production and consumption patterns can only be reversed by deliberate and comprehensive interventions.

Water is a powerful tool for cooperation and dialogue in support of sustainable development and safer and resilient societies. However, there is a need for more effective, integrated and coordinated actions, coupled with strong political will. All stakeholders, including those in government, international organizations, civil society, the private sector and academia, should be engaged, paying special attention to the livelihoods of poor and vulnerable people, leaving no one behind.

Water Action Decade and the Dushanbe Water Process:

On the great initiative of President Emomali Rahmon, in December 2016, the United Nations General Assembly declared the period 2018-2028 as the International Decade for Action “Water for Sustainable Development”



(hereinafter Water Action Decade), which aims at supporting sustainable development and integrated management of water resources, while promoting cooperation and partnerships to support achieving internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

On 22 March 2018, the United Nations Secretary General’s Plan for the Water Action



Decade was released during a High-Level Launch Event, convened by the President of the 73rd United Nations General Assembly. The plan outlines current activities and capabilities of the UN system and international organizations and the operational setup envisaged to support Member States in the implementation of the Water Action Decade.

In this connection, the Government of Tajikistan is committed to continue providing a platform for policy dialogue, partnership and action at the global, regional and national level. It is pertinent to highlight that Tajikistan with the support of the United Nations and other partners, is organizing high-level international conferences throughout the Water Action Decade. This series of events constitutes the so-called “Dushanbe Water Process” . As part of this process, the First High-level International Conference on the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development” , 2018 – 2028 (First Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference), was held in Dushanbe in June 2018. The outcomes of the conference included recommendations to the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that took place in 2018, for its in-depth review of the implementation of SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation). The Final Declaration of the First Dushanbe Conference confirmed the focus of the next conference to be on “Catalyzing water action and partnership at the local, national, regional and global levels” to achieve the goals of the Water Action Decade and other water-related SDGs and targets.

The Importance of Second Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference and

Proactive Role of Tajikistan:

The Second Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference is co-organized by the Government of Tajikistan and the United Nations and planned to be held from 6th to 9th June 2022. The Conference will be co-chaired by the Prime Minister of the Republic of



Tajikistan and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. These activities and conferences clearly manifest that Tajikistan is actively pursuing SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation) and taking significant steps for water conservation and management.

The Republic of Tajikistan has made and continues to make a substantial contribution to this process. From 2000 to 2016, at the initiative of Tajikistan, the United Nations General Assembly adopted several resolutions on water:

- i. International Year of Freshwater (2003)
- ii. International Decade for Action, “Water for Life” (2005-2015)
- iii. International Year of Water Cooperation (2013)
- iv. International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development” (2018-2028), which deserve special attention.

Throughout this period, Tajikistan has repeatedly provided a platform for discussing global water issues. The country moves towards this course by actively promoting water issues identified in the 2030 Agenda. As a member of the High-level Panel on Water, Tajikistan, in cooperation with other panel members, has proposed a number of initiatives and is advancing them by demonstrating political leadership and commitment.

Furthermore, Tajikistan has also been an important player in solving water problems at the regional level. About 60 per cent of the water resources of the rivers in Central Asia (the Aral Sea basin) are formed in Tajikistan. The visionary government under the leadership of President Emomali Rahmon generously shares this vital resource with its neighbors. Tajikistan is a co-founder of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea and its two commissions, the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) and the Interstate Commission on Sustainable Development (ICSD), which provide platforms for discussing urgent transboundary water issues in the region. The country is working on the aspects for effective water governance and management strategies, i.e., grand financing, investment & modernization of existing infrastructure, transition to green growth, active involvement of all stakeholders, construction of new dams, rehabilitating water reservoirs capacity, and resolving transboundary water disputes.



WATER
ACTION DECADE
2018-2028



In Tajikistan, where over 95 per cent of electricity is generated by hydroelectric power stations, water and energy are closely interrelated. The development of agriculture sector is also primarily based on the use of water resources since more than 80 per cent of agricultural products are produced through irrigation. Thus, these vital initiatives by the dynamic leadership of Tajikistan would pave the way for achieving the water-related goals and objectives of sustainable development.