



"Conservation and Sustainable Management of Land Resources and High Nature Value Ecosystems in the Aral Sea Basin for Multiple Benefits"

Concept Note

Roundtable on Coordinating and Showcasing the Contributions of National and International Partners to the Climate Agenda and Sustainable Land Management, dedicated to the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

Summary

The roundtable is organized within the framework of the UNDP-GEF project "Conservation and Sustainable Management of Land Resources and High Nature Value Ecosystems in the Aral Sea Basin for Multiple Benefits" implemented jointly with the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, in partnership with the Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development (SIC ICSD). Timed to coincide with the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, the event aims to create a unified discussion platform for coordinating efforts, sharing best practices, and showcasing the contributions of key national and international partners to the climate agenda and the implementation of Sustainable Land Management (SLM) practices.

The roundtable program is designed to synchronize the actions of Turkmenistan's government institutions and major international organizations (UNDP, FAO, GIZ, CAREC) to achieve national strategic goals in preventing land degradation and adapting to climate change. Participants will focus on both global methodological approaches and specific local solutions that have been successfully tested in practice.

The meeting will review Turkmenistan's strategic environmental initiatives aimed at strengthening multilateral partnerships in the region, as well as the current status of establishing the Regional Center to Combat Desertification. Participants will pay special attention to the synergy of these efforts, which is designed to consolidate international support and systematize regional cooperation under the auspices of the UN. In this regard, the agenda includes discussions on integrating the UNCCD methodology for achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) into national land-use planning systems, ensuring a consistent transition from global indicators to local tools.

The meeting will also feature a brief presentation of the pilot "Peace Forest Initiative" (PFI) in Central Asia, supported by the UNCCD and the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub. The initiative aims to demonstrate how nature-based solutions, combined with community engagement and regional coordination, can effectively address the interconnected challenges of land degradation, drought risk, and socio-economic instability. During the implementation of this initiative, a comprehensive set of targeted

activities will be carried out, including ecosystem restoration, the development of climate-resilient livelihoods, as well as participatory planning and consultations.

The final element of the discussion will focus on regional climate programs and their contribution to the development of national strategies for preventing land degradation. Participants will examine in detail the opportunities for scaling up best practices in sustainable land management in the context of current climate challenges.

Specialists from the land resources, forestry, and water management services, nature reserve staff, as well as representatives from velayat/city administrations (hyakimliks), key ministries, international organizations, and regional environmental programs are invited to participate. The roundtable will strengthen institutional ties, attract international assistance, and lay a solid methodological and practical foundation for effective interagency cooperation in achieving LDN and the sustainable development of the Aral Sea region.

Roundtable Program

Date: June 17, 2026

Time: 09:00 – 14:00

Venue: Ashgabat, UN building, room 111 (hybrid format)

Time	Scheduled Activities	Expected Participants / Presenters
09:00– 09:10	Registration of participants	Representatives of Aral project
09:10 - 09:20	Opening of the Session. Objectives and tasks of the roundtable.	Moderator: Muhammet Durikov, UNCCD National Coordinator in Turkmenistan, Director of the Scientific Information Center of the ICSD IFAS
09:20 - 09:40	Welcome Remarks	Rustem Nuryev, Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, National Project Coordinator. Makhtumkuli Akmuradov, Environmental Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan. Muhammet Durikov, Director of the Scientific Information Center of the ICSD IFAS, UNCCD National Coordinator in Turkmenistan.
09:40 – 09:55	Establishment of the Regional Center to Combat Desertification	Makhtumkuli Akmuradov, Environmental Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan
09:55 – 10:10	The Problem of Desertification in Turkmenistan.	Muhammet Durikov, UNCCD National Coordinator in Turkmenistan, Director of the Scientific Information Center of the ICSD IFAS
10:10 – 10:25	Implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification: The experience of the UNDP-GEF project in implementing SLM mechanisms in Lebap and Dashoguz velayats.	Gulbahar Ahmedyarova, Analyst on Land Resources Management of the Aral Project
10:25 – 10:40	Prospects and Opportunities for Joint Actions of Central Asian Countries and Russia for the Effective Implementation of UNCCD Strategic Goals.	German Kust (online), Chair of the Bureau of the UNCCD Interregional Group "Central Asia - Russia", Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS)

10:40 – 11:00	Discussion. Q&A.	All participants
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee Break	All participants
11:15 – 11:30	Synergy of FAO International Initiatives in Turkmenistan: Scaling up best practices in sustainable land management in the context of climate challenges.	Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
11:30 – 11:45	GIZ Regional Experience on Climate Change Adaptation and Terrestrial Ecosystem Conservation: Coordinating approaches to prevent land degradation.	Representative of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
11:45 – 12:00	CAREC Programs and Plans as a contribution to the national strategy for preventing land degradation.	Representative of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC)
12:00 – 12:15	Interagency Cooperation as the Foundation of the National Climate Agenda: Joining efforts of the state and international partners to achieve LDN.	Representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Turkmenistan, National Institute of Deserts, Flora, and Fauna
12:15 – 12:30	The Role of Civil Society in promoting the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification.	Representative of the Aarhus Center in Turkmenistan
12:30 – 12:45	Forest as a Common Heritage: Forest conservation for community unity and drought protection measures.	National Consultant of the "Peace Forest Initiative" (PFI)
12:45 – 13:00	Discussion. Q&A.	All participants
13:00 – 13:10	Review of Results and Closing of the Session. Closing remarks.	Moderator: Muhammet Durikov, UNCCD National Coordinator in Turkmenistan, Director of the Scientific Information Center of the ICSD IFAS
13:10 -14:00	Lunch	All participants