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MINUTES
OF THE LOCAL PROJECT APPRAISAL COMMITTEE (LPAC) MEETING
“Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods”

January 13, 2017

UN House,
UNDP Conference Hall, 2nd floor

Participants: List of participants is enclosed.

Agenda:

1. Meeting opening and welcome speech.
2. Presentation of UNDP-GEF Project “Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods”.
3. General discussion.
4. Summing up and closing of the meeting

Rustamov A.A. in his welcome speech highlighted the following:

State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry (State Agency) is working with UNDP for many years. This Project “Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods” represents one more assistance for our country. UNDP is providing all possible support to the State Agency and is one of the leading partners in the country. As GEF Focal Point he expressed sincere gratitude for people in UNDP who work for the benefit of our country. UNDP together with the State Agency is doing everything possible and impossible to implement this project and deliver positive results. The project budget is not small and equals to 4 million USD, it is directed towards the ecosystem of the Western Tien Shan and at the same time aimed at supporting the newly established parks in the project’s pilot areas. It is a very good project and UNDP jointly with the State Agency have to work together to bring this Project to its logical conclusion. At the same time, Project provides assistance to the Kyrgyz delegation to travel to the international conference in Nepal and conduction of the International Summit on Snow Leopard Conservation in Bishkek in 2017. State Agency will constantly work in close partnership with UNDP. It expresses its gratitude to Daniyar Ibragimov and his team for their sincere assistance to the State Agency in any area when necessary. It is possible to solve existing problems together, maybe not all issues, but up to a certain extent. He also expressed gratitude to Mr Avanesov A.N., because

he always sees what support is necessary for the State Agency. During his directorship at the Agency he never received a refusal from Mr Avanessov. Let there be more of such people in UNDP, who would help not only to the the Agency but also to all the people in Kyrgyzstan. Let there be more donor fundraising for supporting our people, our nature and our biodiversity. Good results will be achieved through joint efforts.

Ibragimov D.T. thanked the Director of the State Agency for his words of gratitude and trust, explained the goals and aims of the meeting, and **presented the project “Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods”**

Statements of national partners on project implementation. General discussion.

Rustamov A.A. asked for clarification on the content of the agreements between hunting ground users and PA mentioned in the presentation.

Ibragimov D.T. responded that firstly these will be on joint management and patrolling through establishment of joint groups for conservation of biodiversity in the border territories.

Temirbekov A. added that during project development stage the team focused on the activities of the Department of the Rational Use of the Natural Resources of the State Agency in the area of license issuance. Everyone understands that a wild animal is under the protection inside the park, but becomes the subject of hunting once out. Those hunting grounds bordering with new PA should have an agreement on monitoring, joint patrolling and carrying out activities aimed at preserving the population. Of course, snow leopard feeds on other animals too besides ungulates, but still the project focuses on ungulates due to the fact that they are easier to monitor and the data on them is relatively available. But this does not mean that the project should ignore other species that serve as a food source for snow leopards.

Rustamov A.A. shared that there is international practice, which allows you to calculate how much and what snow leopard eats per season. And whether forage protection will increase the population of the snow leopard.

Ibragimov D.T. stressed that specifically for this kind of purposes the project foresees conduction of research and creation of a database by collecting animal population data and status of land degradation and provision of this data to the general public and relevant state bodies.

Mambetaliev K.A. noted that the zones adjacent to PAs should be zones of reproduction and labeled as a "buffer quiet zone" for hunting.

Rustamov A.A. asked whether there are any results of research or monitoring showing that the pilot areas have degraded soils.

Grebnev V.V. informed that in order to have official data UNDP attracted Giprozem experts who went on the expedition to the surrounding areas of these two PAs for the

provision of official opinions on the extent of land degradation and recommendations for activities to be carried out during the implementation of the project. Project development involved the work not only with individual experts but also directly with authorized organizations responsible for this or that matter. This is what makes this project different from other UNDP projects. Speaking about biodiversity inventory, Biology and Soils and Forest Research Institute has been an active partner on the basis of an agreement concluded with the State Agency. UNDP has supported expeditions. Department on the Rational Use of the Natural Resources has also become an active participant in the development of the project document at an early stage.

Rustamov A.A. stressed the need to always keep in mind that specifically such kind of data became the basis for the creation of two new national parks. The primary objective of the project is to work with the public in order to avoid conflicts. People must understand the reason and purpose of works.

Ibragimov D.T. said the project meets the priorities set by the State Agency. These two parks are included in the National Sustainable Development Strategy as PAs, which were set to be established, and they have been created, and should be further developed. The rationale behind is the fact that the Western Tien Shan is one of the 200 eco-regions in the world. This is one of the snow leopard's habitat areas. The forests of the Western Tien Shan include wild relatives of walnut species. This is a good rationale for why these areas were chosen because their flora and fauna exist in the endemic form and they are threatened with extinction.

Bekkulova Zh.E. asked whether adaptation measures will be carried out and whether climate indicators will be met, because these aspects were not reflected in the presentation. She also noted that the component #3 includes support to the Secretariat of the Global Snow Leopard Conservation; and it is very good that the project will provide assistance to the Secretariat. She suggested to consider the possibility of preparing a project proposal for the conservation of the snow leopard in the 12 countries of the range, thereby to show the global work of the Secretariat. This is important not only for the State Agency, but for Kyrgyzstan in general.

Ibragimov D.T. confirmed that there are funds allocated from STAR in line with the project with focus on climate and within this activity there will be an emphasis on climate component. He supported the proposal to develop a large-scale project proposal of a regional character. All completed work and the upcoming trip to Nepal - everything leads to the fact that the Summit in September this year will be a logical reason for the preparation of a package of project proposals. It makes sense for our country to prepare a good project proposal, UNDP is ready to join. Each country needs to report back on the implementation of the NSLEP Program and here there is a need to show what has been done by various organizations such as UNDP and others, and the country as a whole. It is time to unite the efforts of countries, GEF is a global organization and works in other countries, a good project can be put up jointly.

Temirbekov A. noted Ms. Bekkulova gave this comment on the first version of the project proposal. Current version of the project document fully takes this remark into account. There are many climate related activities in the project. Component #1.3

includes a study of the climate change impact on key species of the Western Tien Shan and in relation to land degradation the component #2 includes a study on the impact of climate change on forest pasture resources.

Grebnev V.V. added that the same comment on climate component was made by GEF, they positively noted the project includes not only research activity but also practical activity on forest-restoration and as a result the project received additional funding for this activity.

Chukumbaev S.Zh. asked how the poaching database will be managed.

Temirbekov A. said there was a lengthy discussion with the Department about this idea, they do receive this kind of information, and it was decided to combine the data of State Inspectorate for Environmental and Technical Safety with the data from forestries which locally collect the data. It is planned to install this database on the Department's server. It will be impossible to cover all areas, but the data on these two pilot areas will be provided. Project will provide equipment, training of relevant personnel for collection of the the necessary information.

Chukumbaev S.Zh. asked whether there is a database on snow leopards in the Secretariat.

Alygulova K. said that the database is only in the making stage. Work has already commenced, the Secretariat, together with the State Agency are working on the bid for the purchase of camera traps. There was no winning bidder after two bids, now the procurement criteria will be changed. The problem is that in order to have identical information all partners must have camera traps of one brand. Suppose, if all the international partners will have camera traps from "Rekoniks" brand, and the Agency will have "Bushnel", the data will be inconsistent because of the differences in response speed and other characteristics. All companies that participated in this bid offer proposed other Chinese brands, and in the future, our experts may challenge the data on the basis that it was collected by different cameras. Currently, the database will be drawn from the available camera traps, and this activity is coordinated with the State Agency.

Moldogazieva K.S. has thanked for presentation and noted the extensive work completed by UNDP and the State Agency. She also wondered on tree planting why silvicultural activities comprise 500 hectares and reforestation 5,000 hectares specifically where do these numbers come from. The second question was asked on the electronic pasture management - how it differs from the existing pasture management method.

Ibragimov D.T. noted that this product was made in the framework of the previous UNDP project "Pasture management in Suusamyr Valley". This product is very well-proven in the project with about 1 million budget. It was able to bring together all zhayyt committees. Now this system has been adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture, and its main purpose is inventory of pasture resource, reduction of the burden on pastures, issuances of pasture tickets, regulation of grazing, establishment of a transparent mechanism for receipt of funds to the budget from the use of pastures, reduction of the

burden on village pastures. Electronic management provides a complete picture of where you can make a proportional grazing, provides a mechanism to raise funds and reduces conflict potential.

Kylychev K. added that this program was created by Zhayyt Committee of Suusamyр Village Government and consists of an inventory of pastures, cattle grazing plan and economic assessment of grass stand of other pastures. As of today this program has been successfully replicated in another Village Government.

Temirbekov A. reported that the working group on the development of the project proposal included an expert on forestry with a long experience in forest management. Data were taken from the Department of Forestry and Hunting based on the silviculture fund which has forest enterprises, located in the pilot areas. The project also foresees support for two nurseries.

Moldogazieva K.S. informed that the NGO "Drevo Zhizni" is engaged in environmental monitoring and has 6 public offices in regions. NGO "Drevo Zhizni" and UNDP could cooperate on laying of roads and mining outlined in the project.

Temirbekov A. explained that the key word in the project activity is the migration corridor for wild animals and accordingly route of the snow leopard. The project collected data from State Agency of Geology on operation of the mining companies. Fortunately, they are not adjacent to PAs in the pilot region. Creating a natural park "Alatau" was 100% supported by the population, specifically in order to stop mining.

Ibragimov D.T. noted that each component has activity on promoting public awareness, which has not been reflected in detail in the presentation. Civil society participation in the elaborating and increasing the efficiency of information materials is undisputable. All information materials in the framework of the project will be coordinated with the State Agency as with the license issuing organization.

Summing up and closing of the meeting.

Rustamov A.A. summed up the results of the meeting by noting comments and suggestions and that they will be considered to the extent of compatibility with the project activities. The project is very necessary and it should be carried out in the Kyrgyz Republic and there is a hope the project will yield positive results. There is a necessity to build capacity of relevant workers in fields. He expressed gratitude to the entire UNDP staff for their constant assistance to the State Agency. State Agency, in turn, is always willing to work in close cooperation with UNDP and to provide all possible assistance.

Ibragimov D.T. emphasized that the preparation of the project proposal was a team work with the efforts and support from the employees of the State Agency, which stood at the origins of the revival of the project. UNDP is glad that the funding of the project has been approved. The project is multi-faceted and encompasses many areas of activity. Snow leopard besides being the pride of the country represents an indicator of the health of high mountain ecosystems. Probably there will be challenges during project implementation, but UNDP will address them in partnership with the State

Agency. This is the project State Agency desired to see in response to the sustainable development priorities. Sustainable development indicators are incorporated in the project. Apart from today's event there will be a project inception seminar where an updated version of the document including today's comments and additions will be presented. The project started on the eve of an international summit, so partnership is very important for UNDP. State Agency's trust represents a great honor for UNDP.

Participants of the meeting expressed their agreement to support the Project "Conservation of globally important biodiversity and associated land and forest resources of Western Tian Shan mountain ecosystems to support sustainable livelihoods".

MINUTES APPROVED BY:



Ibragimov D.T., UNDP Programme Officer, Environment and Disaster Risk Management, LPAC Chair a.i.