

*Welcome address by Mr Akhmetzhan Primkulov,
the Vice-Minister of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan,
at the 10th meeting of the EU-Central Asia Working Group on Environment and Climate Change*

“Green Recovery: new opportunities for cooperation”

4 October, 13:25, online

Distinguished Ms Schomaker!

Distinguished Mr Montanaro!

Dear ladies and gentlemen!

I welcome all participants and, on behalf of the Ministry of Ecology, Geology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Kazakhstan, would like to thank the EU Delegation to Kazakhstan and the WECOOP project for organising today's event. We highly value our cooperation with the EU on environmental issues and are grateful for the assistance in combating climate change.

Background: *The European Union – Central Asia Water, Environment and Climate Change Cooperation project (WECOOP) aims to enhance environment, climate change and water policies at national level in the countries of Central Asia through approximation to EU standards and to promote investments in relevant sectors with the aim of contributing to measurable reductions in man-made pollution, including CO₂ emissions.*

Over the past decades, most of developed and developing countries, including Kazakhstan, have prioritised sustainable economic growth, expanding the opportunities in the use of resources and reducing harmful environmental impacts. However, Central Asian countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change and are already experiencing the consequences caused by global warming, so combating climate change is a priority for Kazakhstan.

We were the first state in Central Asia to create an institutional and legal framework for the transition to green growth through the adoption of several legislative documents, including the new version of the Environmental Code and the Law on Support for the Use of Renewable Energy Sources. Legislation on the regulation of greenhouse gas emissions was improved, including the development of a new chapter of Environmental Code on climate change to encourage the introduction of the Best Available Techniques in enterprises and “green” financing.

The process of adaptation to climate change in Kazakhstan will start with a full assessment of vulnerability in the most vulnerable sectors (*water, agriculture, forestry and civil protection*). Based on the results of this assessment, national and local state programmes will be able to consider climate risks and develop necessary climate

change adaptation measures.

To form a long-term strategy with low greenhouse gas emissions, we developed a Carbon Neutrality Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2060 with the support of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany. The Doctrine is the first document on the long-term vision of the Kazakhstan's potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, additional investments and technological solutions needed.

We are also aware of the importance of a just transition in the decarbonised economy. A low-carbon policy will lead to a phase-out of fossil resources, which may cause economic and social difficulties for the country. We understand that planning and transition to green growth should include all aspects, such as social, gender, employment and education of the population, the future development of new professions and skills, including for people with disabilities. At the same time it is important to provide jobs, and the development of social protection measures. The principle of socially fair transition is one of the guiding principles of decarbonisation.

I would like to take this opportunity to point out that the transition to green growth transition in Central Asia is only possible through the joint efforts of the countries of the region to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, to adapt to climate change and to introduce the best available techniques.

I encourage all participants in today's event to take an active part in discussions and wish everyone fruitful work.

Thank you for your attention!

Now I would like to give the floor to Ms Astrid Schomaker!