

**Speech by a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of
Turkmenistan at the 10th meeting of the EU-Central Asia Working Group
on Environment and Climate Change
4 October 2021**

Dear participants!

Firstly, I would like to thank the organisers for this opportunity to participate in this important meeting of the Working Group.

Turkmenistan actively participates in international cooperation on climate change and the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Given the relevance of climate change issues for Turkmenistan's sustainable development, the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov approved the National Climate Change Strategy of Turkmenistan on June 15, 2012. In September 2019, this Strategy was updated in light of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement, and the new commitments arising from these instruments aimed at sustainable development of the global community. The Strategy is the basis for shaping and implementing state policy of Turkmenistan on issues related to climate change and its impact.

1. Priorities for climate change adaptation of Turkmenistan

According to the updated National Strategy of Turkmenistan, global climate change processes have a strong impact on the following economy sectors of Turkmenistan:

- agriculture and water management,
- healthcare,
- soil and land resources,
- ecosystems (flora and fauna) and forestry,

The Strategy therefore sets out specific adaptation measures for Turkmenistan's relevant agencies in these sectors.

2. Current and planned adaptation efforts

The country is implementing large-scale climate change adaptation strategies and projects. A good example is the approval of an updated National

Forestry Programme for 2021-2025, as well as its corresponding Action Plan. The Forestry Programme serves as a basis for research and practice in afforestation of natural, economic and recreational areas, supports forestry, is consistent with the Programme of the President of Turkmenistan for socio-economic development of the country for 2019-2025 and coordinates long-term greening practices. In 2021, 30 million seedlings of coniferous and deciduous trees will be planted in two stages (March and November) to celebrate the 30th anniversary of independence. Active planting is taking place in the Turkmen Aral Sea region – Lebap and Dashoguz provinces. The new document also envisages the expansion of the protected areas network. Turkmenistan is an active participant in the Trees in Cities Challenge – a global campaign launched by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to promote climate action in cities.

Modern, more environmentally friendly land improvement and water management technologies are being actively introduced in agriculture. In this context, the **Altyn Asyr Turkmen lake project**, designed to collect drainage water from the country's irrigated land, is of particular importance.

The **National Health Adaptation Plan for Climate Change and Its Adverse Effects for 2020-2025** is being successfully implemented. The document strengthens sanitary and epidemiological control over environmental objects and improves the laboratory system in the light of climate change. Sanitation and disease prevention services, primary health care for citizens, specialised medical care and emergency medical care in relation to climate change issues are strengthened. We are adopting innovative approaches to provide climate-resilient and safe sanitation services to support the achievement of the SDGs.

The country is also part of various technical assistance projects on climate change mitigation that are funded by the Global Environment Facility, the Adaptation Fund, UNDP, the European Union, the World Bank and other international organisations. A new UNDP project funded by the **Green Climate Fund** – Developing a National Adaptation Planning Process in Turkmenistan – has been launched. The project aims to improve the resilience and adaptive capacity of Turkmenistan through developing a national adaptation process with a focus on strengthening the institutional framework needed for implementing the Paris Agreement, as well as to enhance national adaptation planning capacity and to establish a sound evidence base for

adaptation planning in the water sector. Under the project, UNDP will work with national partners to strengthen the institutional coordination mechanism and governance processes to ensure multi-sectoral adaptation planning and implementation.

Other planned adaptation efforts:

The following adaptation projects are planned in Turkmenistan:

- UNDP/GEF project (over \$5 million): conservation and sustainable management of land resources and ecosystems of great global importance in the Aral Sea Basin to ensure multiple benefits;
- UNDP/Adaptation Fund project (over \$7 million): increasing the resilience of agricultural communities in Turkmenistan;
- Strengthening scientific analysis of hydrometeorological data for impact, vulnerability and adaptation assessment.

According to experts, Turkmenistan's main challenges in relation to climate change are diminishing water resources and desertification:

1. Reducing water resources are one of the most pressing problems for Turkmenistan and Central Asia as a whole. Water is vital for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. In addition to the negative effect, that desertification has on nature and biodiversity, its detrimental impact on human health must be highlighted. According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, land degradation affects one third of the Earth's surface and consequently affects over 1 billion people.

In this regard, we would like to express the wish that these areas be given special consideration and taken into account when preparing joint regional programmes in the future.

Thank you for your attention!