

## CONCEPT

### Innovative Online 11<sup>th</sup> Central Asian Leadership Programme on Environment for Sustainable Development (CALP)

#### “Building Collective Leadership and Strengthening Environmental Volunteering for Transboundary Water and Climate Challenges in Central Asia and Afghanistan in the Context of Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19”

*In support of “The Year of Volunteers in Kazakhstan”*

September 14-20, 2020, Almaty, Kazakhstan (online)

### 1. BACKGROUND: LEADERSHIP AND THE ROLE OF YOUTH IN TRANSFORMATIONS

CALP is a unique leadership programme of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia (CAREC) undertaken since 2010. It is designed to improve leadership capacity of young and mid-level managers of various environmental agencies and focuses on various sustainable development challenges of the region. It is organized annually and involves government, academic, private sectors and NGO representatives – an approach that helps to ensure a comprehensive understanding of environmental and sustainable development issues from a regional perspective.

According to the UN data<sup>1</sup>, today more than one billion people fall within the age bracket 18 to 35, the largest group ever to make the transition to adulthood. Their numbers are expected to grow—between 2015 and 2030 alone, about 1.9 billion young people are projected to turn 15 years old. This growth rate is very high especially in the region of Central Asia. Being home to almost 70 million people, the region’s youth population equals *approx.* 40% of the overall population.

Young people represent a key stakeholder group that CAREC engages to help drive environmental transformations through collective leadership across the borders of Central Asia. Collective leadership is “the capacity of a collective to catalyze change for the common good”<sup>2</sup>.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed a decree on August 27 declaring **2020 as the Year of the Volunteer**.

Speaking at the May 29 Kazakh-Russian Youth Cooperation Forum in Kostanai, Tokayev noted the volunteer movement is necessary for the country... *“I see that many civic initiatives, volunteer and social projects originate in social networks. Interested people with an active lifestyle offer socially significant ideas and projects. We must pay attention to them and strongly support them,”* he added. The state needs to develop education centres for volunteers, a better information policy and volunteer infrastructure within social networks. Tokayev noted the government and akims (governors) must offer their support to potential young volunteers by encouraging constructive youth initiatives and controlling problems of access to education, training, employment and quality leisure<sup>3</sup>.

### 2. CALP: A PLATFORM FOR LEADERSHIP CAPACITY BUILDING IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN REGION

CALP, being a flagship initiative of CAREC, is designed to equip young leaders of the region with cutting-edge knowledge and innovative leadership methodologies in responding to global, regional, and national

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/youth/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.collectiveleadership.de/blog/article/the-future-of-leadership/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://astanatimes.com/2019/08/tokayev-declares-2020-to-be-year-of-volunteer/>

environmental challenges. It also promotes the participation of young leaders in environmental decision making by using their leadership skills and increasing their knowledge<sup>4</sup>.

The implementation of the CALP in the *Year of Volunteers* is especially relevant for CAREC, as a regional organization working with youth since 2010. CALP is the only regular program to increase the potential among young people for sustainable development in Central Asia, having become a recognized platform for the development of regional youth cooperation. *Over 10 years, more than 280 young people from five countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan - representatives of state environmental, water and energy sectors, NGOs, universities, and the green business - have graduated from the CALP.* From year to year, CAREC receives more and more nominations from NGOs, state bodies of Central Asian countries, and regional organizations, which confirms recognition and relevance of the program by national partners.

### **3. IMPLEMENTING AND SUPPORTING PARTNERS**

To celebrate this special momentum, this year the organizing team of CALP invited national and international partners to co-create and support the programme of the Innovative Online 11th Central Asian Leadership Programme on Environment for Sustainable Development. The UN Environment Programme, the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, and UNDP are generous supporting partners. Along with CAREC, the Germany-based Collective Leadership Institute (CLI) and the Kazakh-German University (DKU) are implementing partners.

### **4. MEETING NEW CHALLENGES**

In 2020, humanity met a new challenge – the corona virus pandemic. In response, on April 27, 2020, the UN shared a draft Outline prepared on the basis of consultations with regional groups and written inputs from delegations on possible elements for a Ministerial Declaration-2020. **These new issues were put into the Global Agenda-2030<sup>5</sup>:**

- the role of UN in realizing the vision of the 2030 Agenda and supporting the response to COVID-19 for a sustainable recovery and accelerating the pace of progress;
- COVID-19 and its impact, need for a coordinated global response to the crisis and international solidarity;
- impact of COVID-19 to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, SDGs and the decade of action and delivery;
- leaving no one behind, human rights, addressing inequality and the needs of the most vulnerable, gender equality, social inclusion and the impact of COVID-19;
- countries at various levels of development, countries in special situations, and special emphasis on their recovery from COVID-19 and addressing their long-term needs;
- enhanced UN role in light of the World's new realities post COVID-19, including digital UN, feedback on UN system response;
- public engagement, regional and local mobilization and actions, involvement of communities, people, stakeholders, private sector, youth – partnerships.

**The theme “Human wellbeing and the SDGs: Recovering after the COVID-19 crisis” will be the main UN priority.** The draft Outline for the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) Ministerial Declaration-2020 is under development now, and Zero draft resolution proposed for adoption during the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. Most of the issues will be presented through the lens of the Covid-19 response, recovery, preparedness and cooperation.

*This document gives new food for thought and will be reflected in the 11<sup>th</sup> CALP agenda.*

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<sup>4</sup> <https://carececo.org/en/main/ckh/publications/otchet-o-10-y-yubileynoy-tsapl-2/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2020>

In the light of the global pandemic COVID-2019, there is an immediate need for an urgent recovery of economies, the environment, and adaptation to the new challenges in relation to the health and education systems, including the Central Asian region. In this regard, the 11<sup>th</sup> CALP is designed to demonstrate to the young people, participants in the Leadership Programme, not only the problems posed by the pandemic, but to jointly see and discuss the window of opportunities. COVID is a stress that made all of humanity look differently at the strategic documents, laws, reforms, priorities, behaviors, habits and some other issues. At the same time, today humanity has opened up new opportunities for development, especially in the field of environmental protection. Environmentalists today can act as agents of green change, and approaches such as green recovery, building back better and risk informed development are the important thematic areas that both governments of many countries and international organizations are working on.

## **5. 11<sup>th</sup> CALP: INNOVATIONS IN ACTION**

**The 11<sup>th</sup> CALP** will be mainly focused on environmental innovations and transboundary water and climate issues including disaster risk reduction, and the corona virus pandemic and its impact on the development of Central Asia and Afghanistan. The lectures will provide latest innovative solutions to environmental challenges on national, regional, and global levels.

In addition, in connection with the global COVID-2019 pandemic, the 11<sup>th</sup> CALP is expected to discuss a number of thematic areas related to green recovery, as well as green and risk-informed development.

**The overarching goals of the 11th CALP** are to build collective leadership capacity, strengthen environmental volunteering, expand participants' networks, increase the role of youth in transboundary water and climate cooperation in Central Asia and Afghanistan, and provide an innovative and action-oriented regional platform for youth dialogue.

### **The main objectives of the 11<sup>th</sup> CALP are:**

- Strengthen capacity of young people in transboundary water and climate change cooperation in Central Asia and Afghanistan;
- Build capacity for Collective Leadership at the individual, team, and stakeholder systems levels with the methodology of the Collective Leadership Compass<sup>6</sup> for analyzing and planning transformative decision-making processes, and concrete initiatives for sustainable development;
- Promote digital learning as a modern learning and teaching instrument demanded in Central Asia and Afghanistan, especially in the pandemic conditions;
- Underline the importance of environmental volunteering in Central Asia and Afghanistan,
- Highlight the role of young civil society leaders in disaster risk reduction (DRR). At the same time, the topic of DRR will be considered in the broader context of risk management and the introduction of risk-informed development, as well as green recovery and building back better,
- Demonstrate public engagement, regional and local mobilization and actions, and involvement of communities, civil society, public sector, private sector, and youth in multi-stakeholder partnerships in the COVID-19 and post-COVID activities,
- Highlight the role of young environmental leaders, civil society organizations, eco-activists, eco-volunteers, eco-ambassadors in the regional environmental cooperation in Central Asia and Afghanistan,
- Share success stories and best practices in the field of Collective Leadership and cooperation from among CALP alumni.

### **Thematic areas:**

- Collective Leadership and multi-stakeholder partnerships, with a focus on SDG 17;
- Innovations in the field of environment and sustainable development in Central Asia;

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.collectiveleadership.de/blog/article/the-collective-leadership-compass/>

- Volunteering, including environmental volunteering,
- The role of transboundary water cooperation,
- Climate change and sustainable energy,
- Disaster risk reduction, including the corona virus pandemic and opportunities for risk-informed development, green recovery and building back better,
- Nexus approach,
- Role and capabilities of youth in strengthening regional cooperation in Central Asia,
- Support the development of the policy-makers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and activists of tomorrow.

### Principles:

1. "Think globally, act locally, collaborate regionally!"
2. *Transparency* - an online system for registration, all countries are represented in the selection committee; the list of selected candidates is published publicly.
3. *Environmentally friendly* – CALP web application <http://calp.carececo.org/mobile/>
4. *Online learning* - greetings and key presentations by national, regional and international experts will be made remotely via Skype, video presentations or on the ZOOM online platform.
5. *Openness* – partners from international organizations and programs, financial institutions, civil society organizations and private sector will be given the opportunity to moderate CALP thematic sessions.

### Programme Overview:

*An innovative online approach will bring together a series of the following trainings and modules:*

- A 5-day series of seminars and interaction led by CAREC with reputable international partners, including the UN Environment, the OSCE Programme Office in Nur Sultan, UNDP, USAID and the World Bank,
- regional leaders and CALP alumni that will inform and inspire participants, especially on topics of transboundary water cooperation, climate change adaptation,
- Disaster risk management and integrating environmental and social initiatives into crisis recovery programs and COVID-19 response strategies, and
- A following 3-day training on IWRM at the Kazakh-German University (DKU) that will equip participants with the knowledge and skills to understand the complexities and opportunities of IWRM, especially regarding the importance of stakeholder engagement for building strong partnerships.

### 6. TARGET GROUPS

According to a request from the EcoForum of Kazakhstan's NGOs, CAREC plans to conduct the 11<sup>th</sup> CALP for representatives of environmental youth and civil society organizations of Central Asia and Afghanistan, with a *thematic focus on environmental volunteering, transboundary water cooperation, adaptation to climate change, collective leadership, emergency situations, disaster risk management, recovery after COVID-19, and etc.* **In 2020, 50% of participants in the 11<sup>th</sup> CALP will be civil society representatives, including:**

- young environmental leaders from governments,
- civil society organizations of Kazakhstan and Central Asia,
- eco-activists,
- eco-volunteers,
- eco-ambassadors.

### 7. EXPECTED RESULTS:

- Strengthened regional cooperation between the five countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan on the issues of rational use of water resources, mitigation and adaptation measures to climate change, and environmental volunteering;
- Increased collective leadership capacity among participants, with a focus on personal development, systems analysis, and concrete planning of sustainability initiatives within the context of strategic COVID-19 responses;
- Increased potential of young environmental leaders from civil society for effective disaster risk reduction in Central Asia and Afghanistan, including increased understanding of the corona virus pandemic and its impact on the economy and environmental situations of countries in the region:
  - rational use of water resources, volunteering in the field of the environment, collective leadership, etc.;
  - involvement and interaction of young environmental leaders of civil society on disaster risk reduction in Central Asia and Afghanistan;
  - Raising awareness and environmental education of young leaders with cutting-edge knowledge, skills and competencies on the following themes as green recovery, building back better and risk informed development;
  - Engagement and networking of civil society organizations of Kazakhstan and Central Asia, eco-activists, volunteers, eco-ambassadors;
- Highlighted a role of Collective Leadership as an approach for cooperation, innovation and change;
- The international community, national partners and representatives of the private sector are interested in the CALP as a regional youth platform in the field of environment and sustainable development;
- The prospects for effective, environmental-friendly decision-making in the field of climate change, energy efficiency, water resources and sustainable development are improved: CALP helps to ensure a comprehensive understanding of environmental and sustainable development issues for future decision makers on environmental issues in the region;
- Success stories, achievements, best practices as well as innovative ideas for existing and prospective regional projects and initiatives through available international expertise and the CALP alumni network are presented, discussed, and shared in the region.