

# The World Bank

## Europe and Central Asia Region



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### **Syrdarya Control and Northern Aral Sea Project – Phase 1 is Successfully Reaching Its Final Stage**

**ASTANA, May 17, 2005** — Today, the World Bank Country Office and the Committee for Water Resource of the Ministry of Agriculture of the RK briefed mass media on the Syrdarya and Northern Aral Sea Project. The Project goals are to preserve the Northern Aral Sea and improve environmental conditions in Syrdarya delta and in the area adjacent to Northern Aral Sea that eventually would contribute to health improvement of the population and natural habitats, conservation of biodiversity, and increase in agricultural production including that of livestock and fisheries sectors.

*“This project will have a very beneficial economic and social impact. The rehabilitation of some of the most important water control structures of the lower Syr Darya will not only reduce the costs and human disruptions that have been caused by recurrent flooding these past few years, but will also help revitalize irrigated agriculture in this relatively poor region of Kazakhstan. Similarly, the restoration of the Northern Aral Sea is not only a major undertaking of the Government of Kazakhstan in favor of the environment, but a source of new hope in a better future for the local communities. Indeed, these investments in infrastructure will create new opportunities for employment and sustainable economic activities and contribute to the objective of economic diversification through the development of dynamic and competitive agro-business clusters,”* said Loup Brefort, World Bank Country Manager for Kazakhstan.

The Project covers the territory of Syrdarya River basin from Shardara reservoir to the Aral Sea.

The Project totaling \$85.79 million USD, including \$64.5 million of the World Bank loan, became effective on June 22, 2002. Project implementing agency is the Committee for Water Resources of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

*“One of the main Project facilities is new hydro facility Aitec with the capacity of 700m<sup>3</sup>/s, the construction of which cost \$11.6 million USD. On April 18 its operation was demonstrated to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Aitec facility significantly enlarged the capacity of discharge of the Syrdarya River and lowered the risk of flooding settlements and agricultural fields, while raising the water supply volume for 16,000 ha of the irrigated lands,”* noted Anatoly Ryabtsev, Chairman to the Water Resource Committee.

Construction of a new dam separating the Northern Aral Sea with the length of 13 km, spillway dam with the capacity of 295 m<sup>3</sup>/s, hydroscheme Aklak with the capacity of 515 m<sup>3</sup>/s, as well as other eight headworks on the channels feeding the Northern Aral Sea lakes shall be completed this fall. Around 120 special construction machines and 430 people are employed at those facilities. Over the next three years the Aral Sea level will increase by 3 meters and cover additional 1,000 square km of the dried seabed. It is expected that enlarged water surface will lead to the increase in precipitation level throughout the region, reduce dust storms, conservation of biodiversity and improved conditions for agricultural and fishery production (fish production would rise up to 10,000 tons per year compared to present 700 tons). Salt content in the NAS presently makes 23 g/l and would be reduced to 10g/l or almost the level prior to drying.

The following Project facilities are next in a line for completion: repair works at Shardara dam, protection dams on Syrdarya River, riverbed improvement and rehabilitation works at Kazalinsk and Kyzylorda hydro facilities. The planned date for overall Project completion is February 28, 2007.

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