

News Briefs

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help design specific development programs for pilot oblasts.

Regional Technical Assistance on Shared Water Resources

From 28 February to 4 March, an inception mission for the project visited Kazakhstan. Implementation arrangements for individual components of the regional technical assistance were discussed and a monitoring schedule with the Committee on Water Resources (CWR) was set. The mission also met with representatives of World Bank, Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe, and United Nations in Almaty to discuss donor coordination issues related to technical assistance.

Senior Officials Meeting Set

On 9–10 March, Adrian Ruthenberg, Director, Operations Coordination Division of ADB's East and Central Asia Department, met with Kazakhstan's senior officials and development partners to discuss preparations for the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) on 15–16 April in Almaty. The SOM is in preparation for the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation in October in Almaty. The SOM is expected to discuss the following issues on regional cooperation: (i) broader institutional concerns related to the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Mechanism; (ii) work plan, including key actions and milestones leading to the 3rd Ministerial Conference, and (iii) logistical arrangements.✉

Conference Discusses Education Sector Development Strategy for Kazakhstan



ADDRESSING EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS Zhaksybek Kulekeyev, Minister of Education and Science (center), Kazuhiko Higuchi, Country Director, Kazakhstan Resident Mission (right), and Brajesh Panth, Senior Education Specialist, Social Sectors Division, ECRD (ECSS) (left), at the conference on education reforms

The Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) of Kazakhstan held a conference on the Education Sector Development Strategy on 26–27 March in Alatau Health Center in Almaty, aimed at improving the quality of education.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided support to the conference, which discussed education sector reform strategies, presented findings on the technical assistance on the Education Sector Development Strategy, and identified priorities to be undertaken by MOES in the education sector reform process.

The conference was attended by representatives of the Presidential Administration; members of Parliament; MOES; Ministry of Economy and Budget Planning; Ministry of Finance; oblast administrations; research, training, and academic institutions; and nongovernment organizations. Representatives of British Council, European Union, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Develop-

ment Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, World Bank, foreign embassies, and mass media also attended.

At the opening, Zhaksybek Kulekeyev, Minister of Education and Science, presented the education system development concept approved by the Government. This was followed by individual presentations and discussions on pre-school education, curriculum and textbook development, teacher development, technical and vocational education and training, higher and post-graduate education, rural school development and financing, education management decentralization and education financing, and sector development strategies and priorities.

Minister Kulekeyev described as useful the work produced under the technical assistance. He stressed the need for greater collaboration between the Ministry and broad stakeholders' group to implement education reforms.✉

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NEWS FROM

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IMPROVING WATER SUPPLY Kazuhiko Higuchi, Country Director, Kazakhstan Resident Mission (center, left) and Yerbolat Dossayev, Kazakhstan Finance Minister and ADB Governor (center, right) at the signing ceremony for the Rural Area Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project in Astana

The Government of Kazakhstan and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed on 9 February a loan agreement to help improve living and health conditions for more than half a million people in rural Kazakhstan by providing basic water supply and sanitation infrastructure and services.

The agreement for the Rural Area Water Supply and Sanitation Sector Project was signed by Yerbolat Dossayev, Minister of Finance and ADB Governor; and Kazuhiko Higuchi, ADB Country Director for Kazakhstan.

The Project, which focuses on poverty reduction, will complement the Government's priority programs such as

the Sector Poverty Reduction Program and the State Rural Development Program.

The Project will cover 500 rural communities with populations ranging from 200 to 6,000 people in four oblasts: Akmola, Karaghandy, North-Kazakhstan, and South-Kazakhstan.

Subproject work includes developing and rehabilitating piped water systems and wastewater facilities, such as intakes, pumping stations, treatment facilities, storage reservoirs, and pipelines. Technology suitable for local conditions will be used.

The Project also includes a \$350,000 technical assistance, financed by the Government of Japan under ADB's

Japan Special Fund, to support institutional development and capacity building.

The Project also includes public education programs on hygiene and sanitation to promote better understanding of public health. Teacher training will help disseminate the program among rural communities.

The Project is estimated to cost \$65 million and will be implemented over 6 years. The Government will provide \$20.9 million from the national and oblast budgets; ADB, a \$34.6 million loan; and Islamic Development Bank, a \$9.5 million loan.

ADB's loan is from its ordinary capital resources with a 25-year repayment period, including a 5-year grace period, and an interest rate in accordance with ADB's London interbank offered rate (LIBOR)-based lending facility.

The Water Resources Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture is the executing agency for the Project.✉

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In this publication, \$ refers to US dollar.

ADB NEWS FROM Kazakhstan

The quarterly newsletter of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Kazakhstan Resident Mission (KARM) aims to enhance communications between ADB and its client groups. *News from Kazakhstan* disseminates information on ADB activities and provides a forum on development issues in Kazakhstan. Articles in the newsletter, however, do not necessarily reflect the official ADB view. We welcome readers' comments and suggestions.

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Poverty Partnership Agreement Highlights KARM Report in 2003

In 2003, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) together with the Government of Kazakhstan, moved forward economic and social development programs, including the signing of the poverty partnership agreement in July. This was reported by Kazuhiko Higuchi, Country Director of ADB Kazakhstan Resident Mission at the year-end conference held in Almaty on 14 January.

ADB completed implementation of 10 technical assistance projects totaling \$2.4 million and approved 6 new technical assistance projects amounting to \$1.8 million. ADB also processed a \$34.6 million loan to improve rural water supply and sanitation (see page 1).

Another major output was the new ADB country strategy and program for Kazakhstan, to be updated annually. The

main focus is to support Kazakhstan's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). ADB will work on (i) private sector development, (ii) human development, (iii) sustainable environment management, and (iv) regional cooperation activities.

ADB worked closely with the Government in addressing rural poverty under the Years of Rural Revival 2003–2005, and started to help implement the poverty reduction program. To support rural development, ADB (i) completed the technical assistance to help assess rural development potential in various regions, contributing to the development of the State Rural Development Program; (ii) provided a follow-on technical assistance to prepare specific investments for rural infrastruc-

ture and services; and (iii) approved a technical assistance to study a rural roads development strategy.

ADB also assisted in preparing and implementing the initial work on industrial development, including (i) ground-work for the Industrial Development and Innovation Program; and (ii) study on a technology park, machine building industries, and accession to the World Trade Organization as areas of potential impact.

In the social sector, ADB assisted in (i) a social expenditure study, focusing on investments in education and health; (ii) an education development strategy, responding to the need for education reform; and (iii) a project on improving nutrition for women and children by promoting universal salt iodization.

Kazakhstan and ADB Strengthen Partnership

Kazakhstan and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) further strengthened partnership during the visit of Mazhit Yessenbayev, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to ADB's headquarters on 3–4 March.

Mr. Yessenbayev met with ADB President Tadao Chino to exchange views on strengthening cooperation between Kazakhstan and ADB and discussed the forthcoming Central Asia Ministerial Conference in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Yessenbayev provided a briefing on recent economic achievements and the Government's efforts to diversify the economy. He said the industrial-innovation strategy to 2015 was adopted and several development institutions were set up to implement the strategy.

Kazakhstan is keen to promote regional cooperation in Central Asia and is currently working with neighboring countries to establish international consortia on water, energy, transport, and food security, he said.

He thanked ADB for providing assistance in developing concept papers for the consortia and expressed Kazakhstan's support for ADB's Central Asia Regional Eco-

nomic Cooperation Program.

Mr. Yessenbayev met with Geert van der Linden, ADB Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, to seek ADB assistance in knowledge transfer. He also met with Muhammad E. Tusneem, Director General of ADB's East and Central Asia Department (ECRD) and directors of ECRD to discuss operational issues.

In his meeting with Robert Bestani, Director General of ADB's Private Sector Operations Department, he stressed the importance of ADB in private sector development in Kazakhstan.

On the way to Manila, Mr. Yessenbayev visited Beijing to meet with officials of the People's Republic of China to discuss matters related to regional cooperation.



STRONGER PARTNERSHIP ADB President Tadao Chino (right) welcomes Mazhit Yessenbayev, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, at ADB headquarters

ADB Helps Improve Land Management in Central Asia

Seventy participants representing governments and civil society of five Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, participated in a workshop in Almaty on 21–22 February to define a mechanism to promote coordinated and country-driven interventions to support sustainable land management in Central Asia known as the Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM).

Other countries represented were Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Country delegations included representatives from finance, economy, environment, land management, agriculture, forestry, water resources, hydrometeorology, and other agencies, and nongovernment organizations.

Before the workshop, individual country consultations were held to discuss the key elements of the proposed CACILM framework.

The workshop received support from the donor community, represented by members of the Strategic Partnership Agreement for Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in the Central Asian Countries, US State Department, Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe, Global Environment Facility,

United Nations Development Programme, Islamic Development Bank, UNCCD Secretariat, the Central Asian Regional Environmental Centre, and other international organizations.

The workshop was chaired by Bulat Bekniyazov, Head of the Kazakh Country Delegation/Focal Point for CCD Working Group; and Katsuji Matsunami, Director, Division of Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources of ADB's East and Central Asia Department. "This should be a country-driven initiative building on existing projects and programs and countries' potential. The focus of this 10-year program will be on countries, not the region," said Mr. Matsunami in his address to the participants.

Country delegations presented recent policy and institutional changes that addressed issues related to mitigation of land degradation and poverty reduction in the context of the proposed CACILM. They also offered suggestions on how to improve the CACILM framework. The participants supported the CACILM concept and discussed the need to accelerate the preparation and implementation of country programs.

The next phase of the CACILM design is a 7-month technical assistance, expected to take place between July and September 2004.



WORKING TOGETHER Walter Lusigi, Senior Advisor, Global Environment Facility (GEF) (center) and (from left to right) Bulat Bekniyazov, Kazakhstan Focal Point for CCD Working Group; Katsuji Matsunami, Director, ECAE; John Whittle, Principal Project Economist, ECAE; and Daniele Ponzi, Principal Environment Specialist, Pacific Operations Division, Pacific Department (PAHQ), discuss operational programs on sustainable land management

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Improving External and Internal Control of Wheat Fortified Flour Quality

A National Workshop on Monitoring of External and Internal Control of Wheat Fortified Flour Quality was held on 26–27 February in Almaty to train participants on methods for quality internal and external control of wheat fortified flour (WFF).

The workshop was organized by the Country Project Office, Ministry of Health, Kazakh Academy of Nutrition, Union of Grain Processors and Bakers of Kazakhstan within the framework of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) assisted project on "Improving Nutrition of Poor Mothers and Children in Asian Countries in Transition", financed by the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction.

More than 80 people participated in the workshop, including representatives from sanitary and epidemiological services from all regions, laboratory workers of flourmills, bread plants, state standard organizations, and medical universities.

Participants expressed interest in reports on WFF control, vitamins and minerals norms in WFF, certification of WFF, storage terms of WFF, samples selection, safety issues, premix control, and storage terms of premix.

A practical session was held on methods of determining vitamins and microelements in WFF, followed by discussions, conclusion of workshop results, and presentation of certificates.

Contract Negotiations for Regional Rural Development

Contract negotiations for a technical assistance to Kazakhstan on Regional Rural Development were held in ADB's headquarters on 10–13 March, attended by Dulat Aitzhanov, Vice-Minister of Agriculture. The technical assistance, to be implemented in two phases, will prepare the proposed Regional Rural Development Project feasibility study over 8 months starting April.

Phase I will review the framework and institutional capacity for regional planning in Kazakhstan and examine regional plans at oblast and rayon level. Phase II will

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