

REPORT

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND RESILIENCE IN CENTRAL ASIA



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FORERWORD

Nowadays, the global problems of our time have affected almost all countries and peoples, and, perhaps, there is no a sphere of human life that they had not touch and mainly negatively. In many respects, it was expected, since for more than a one millennium the humankind has been carrying out economic activities, often of a barbaric nature in relation to ecology and the natural environment.

At the moment, the resources of nature are significantly depleted, and the environment itself is on the verge of disaster. Desertification, drought, soil salinization, deforestation, melting glaciers and hundreds and thousands of other dangerous processes and phenomena are taking place everywhere. Land degradation as a result of climate change, agricultural expansion, urbanization and infrastructure construction undermine the well-being of more than 3.2 billion people.¹

Further continuation of irrational activities without taking into account the consequences for nature and humankind is fraught with an increase in natural disasters, accidents and catastrophes of a natural, man-made, ecological, biological and social nature.²

Evidence shows that the exposure of populations and assets across all countries is increasing faster than vulnerability is decreasing. This leads to new hazards and increased disaster losses with significant socio-economic impacts, especially at the local, community level and on the vulnerable population particularly in countries with (least) developing economies, which explained by the lack of economic resources to solve emerging social problems. In addition, the problems are exacerbated by the fact that in countries with developing economies there is a population explosion and overpopulation, and in countries with developed economies, natural decline and aging of the population.³

The deterioration of the ecological situation and especially life in the modern world cause many problems with the health of the population. For many diseases, cures have been found to prevent their spread, but new types of mass and severe diseases are emerging, and the state of health systems, especially in many developing countries, leaves much to be desired.

Disaster risks of a natural, man-made, ecological and biological-social nature are becoming more complex and interrelated, a multitude of dangerous phenomena, fast and slow onset events increase the risk of cascading and cumulative disasters.

The main factors that increase the risk of disasters include: the growing frequency of both recurring and large-scale emergencies, accidents and disasters, the widespread accumulation of climatic deviations, intensive demographic processes, the development of industry, transport and energy, the physical aging of previously built facilities, the presence of radioactive tailings and mountain dumps.

Changes in climate, demography and ecosystems and the growth of infectious diseases, have transformed the profiles of the existing risks and created new threats and challenges. In addition, the growing globalization and regionalization of the economy has increased dependence on environmental and food security, technology, transport, energy and communication systems.

Climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic have highlighted the challenges in management and decision-making systems in dealing with existing, emerging and future disaster risks. Natural disasters, accidents and catastrophes, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change and the complexity of existing, emerging and future risks have a negative impact on the path to sustainable development in almost all states.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated socio-economic problems and pushed already some 124 million more people into extreme poverty. The surge in poverty caused by the pandemic will also exacerbate gender differentiation, meaning that women are more likely to become extremely poor than men. The number of undernourished people reached 2.37 billion in 2020 (almost one in three people in the world), an increase of 320 million in just one year.⁴

¹ <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2021/06/1404832>

² <https://www.un.org/sg/ru/content/secretary-generals-message-world-meteorological-day-scroll-down-for-french-version>

³ https://www.dkkv.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Veroeffentlichungen/Publikationen/Publication_Russian_version_Final.pdf

⁴ https://www.un.org/ru/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/our_common_agenda_part1.pdf

According to preliminary estimates, the lack of health care and reduced access to food causing and increase of the child mortality by up to 45 percent. Total hours worked fell by 8.8 percent in 2020, equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs. Limited movement, social exclusion and economic insecurity increase the exposure of women around the world to violence at home.⁵

In view of the fact that disaster risks entail threats not only to the population and territories of each individual country, which they often cannot cope on their own, there is a need to strengthen bilateral, multilateral, regional and international interaction and cooperation, global partnership for the implementation of joint coordinated actions to reduce their risk based on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the implementation of the Sendai Framework, the Paris and other global and regional agreements and treaties.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is primarily a health crisis, its socio-economic impact has severely affected the lives of the entire population of the world, causing significant socio-economic losses and exacerbating the security situation. The COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, natural disasters and other cataclysms are testing the resilience and ability of systems at all levels to manage the situation.

The OSCE, which unites 57 member states from North America, Europe and Asia, is the world's largest regional organization, deals with security issues, implements measures to ensure peace, democracy and stability in an area with a population of more than a billion people. Working in partnership with international organizations, national governments and civil society, the OSCE addresses environmental and security issues and operates in many other areas, including the areas of sustainable management of natural resources, disaster risk reduction, climate change, safe management of hazardous waste, migration, promotion of gender equality and, of course, counteracting the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶

OSCE emphasizes the need for solidarity, unity, transparency and enhanced effective international and multilateral cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, and calls on participating States and other relevant stakeholders to take bold, concerted action to overcome its immediate and long-term impacts in accordance with the norms and principles enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent commitments within the OSCE, as well as the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.⁷

Due to the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has created and continues to cause serious socio-economic and environmental problems for the countries of Central Asia, the OSCE-OCEEA, together with UNDRR, continues to support and increase efforts to increase the resilience of the countries of the region, strengthen their capacity to counteract and recovery, accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and climate resilience.

This report on **“Assessment of COVID-19 Impact on Disaster Risk Management and Resilience Building in Central Asia”**:

- is developed on the initiative, support and under the guidance of the OSCE Secretariat and reflects the views of its authors - consultants on DRR, which do not necessarily reflect the views of the OSCE;
- provides a detailed assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on disaster risk management and resilience in Central Asia, including implications for national and sub-regional institutions, relevant legislative changes, donor coordination and climate change action in the region;
- based on the results of relevant activities of national, regional and international stakeholders, including relevant UN agencies, international financial institutions and donor organizations;
- is the result of the work of experts from Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan in coordination with the OSCE - OCEEA and UNDRR, in order to support efforts to increase the resilience and recovery of the countries of Central Asia in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, as well as to accelerate the implementation of

⁵ https://www.un.org/ru/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/our_common_agenda_part1.pdf

⁶ <https://www.osce.org/ru/environmental-activities>

⁷ <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/6/1/481009.pdf>

the Sendai Framework in countries and support achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and climate resilience.

- The report provides an overall assessment of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and its implications for disaster risk management, including implications for national and sub-regional institutions, relevant legislative developments, donor coordination, and climate action in the region, in a gender-responsive manner.

CHAPTER 1: What is COVID-19? *Global context.*

31 December 2019. WHO for the first time was informed about this new virus when a cluster of cases of "viral pneumonia" was reported in Wuhan, People's Republic of China.

On January 30, 2020, WHO declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

February 11, 2020, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus has been named COVID-19.

On March 11, 2020, WHO declared this coronavirus outbreak a COVID-19 pandemic.

December 30, 2021 With over 285 million cases worldwide and over 5.42 million confirmed deaths, the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the deadliest in human history. More than 8.81 billion vaccination doses have been introduced, 3.77 billion people have been fully vaccinated (about 48.3% of the population).⁸

Omicron: On November 26, 2021, following the advice of the SARS-CoV-2 Virus Evolution Technical Advisory Group (TSAG), WHO declared variant B.1.1.529 causing concern and named it "omicron".

Omicron is a SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus strain with the scientific name B.1.1.529, first identified on November 9, 2021 in Botswana, South Africa, and has 32 mutations. By December 30, Omicron has been identified in at least 90 countries around the world. This number is expected to rise as Omicron has a high resistance to vaccines, an increased ability to spread from human to human.

UN and OSCE Data: COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis: Implications. Current status as of 12/30/2022.

In 2020, the world economy shrank by 4.3 per cent, over two and half times more than during the global financial crisis of 2009. A modest recovery of 4.7 percent expected in 2021 is unlikely to offset losses from the previous year, according to the UN World Economic Report. Forecasts indicate that by the end of 2021, global GDP will decrease by more than \$4 trillion. For developed countries, this is a major shock, but for developing countries, it is an emergency.⁹

The COVID-19 pandemic sweeping the world has reversed decades of progress in the fight against poverty and extreme poverty. The crisis has pushed between 88 million and 115 million people into poverty, according to the World Bank, with the majority of those people living in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty levels are already high.¹⁰

The number of people trapped in poverty is expected to rise to 143-163 million in 2021. These new poor will join the 1.3 billion people already living in multidimensional and persistent poverty, whose pre-existing problems have been exacerbated during the pandemic.¹¹

In fact, the measures taken to contain the spread of the pandemic have often driven them further into poverty — as the informal economy that keeps many people living in poverty largely non-functional in many countries.

⁸ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>

⁹ <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2021/01/1395082>

¹⁰ <https://www.un.org/ru/observances/day-for-eradicating-poverty>

¹¹ <https://www.un.org/ru/observances/day-for-eradicating-poverty>

Nowadays, nearly 40 percent of the world's population—three billion people—cannot afford a healthy diet. The number of hungry people is growing. As is the number of people suffering from malnutrition and obesity. The economic impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated an already difficult situation. Another 140 million people have lost access to essential food due to the pandemic.¹²

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, cases of violence against women and girls, especially domestic violence, have continued to increase. Due to COVID-19, the pressure on medical and first aid services for victims of domestic violence has increased tremendously.¹³

The COVID-19 pandemic has lifted the veil on a glaring injustice: the lack of compensation for the work of raising children and caring for people who are unable to take care of themselves, a job that is mostly done by women.

By pushing such work out of the formal economy and into households, the pandemic has exacerbated the gender pay gap. Many women struggle to maintain a paid job while raising children, studying remotely in educational institutions, and caring for sick or vulnerable family members without financial compensation. Investing in caregiving activities helps bridge the pay gap by creating new, sustainable jobs and giving women opportunities to participate in paid work.

At the same time, women make up the majority of healthcare workers on the front lines of the fight against the pandemic. They often earn less than men, lack the power to make policy decisions, and are more likely to experience violence and harassment.¹⁴

Migrants are heavily affected by COVID-19 as a result of job loss and discrimination. Millions of migrants find themselves in a difficult situation, having lost their sources of income and unable to return home due to restrictions on movement due to the pandemic. During this difficult period, migrants can become victims of human trafficking and exploitation.¹⁵

Around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic is taking a terrible toll on mental health. Millions of people experience grief due to the loss of loved ones. More people are anxious about unemployment and afraid of the future. Elderly people can suffer from isolation and loneliness, while children and adolescents can suffer from maladaptation and stress.¹⁶

The tourism sector continues to suffer huge losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with international tourist flows down by as much as 95 percent in some parts of the world in the first five months of this year.¹⁷

Land degradation as a result of climate change, agricultural expansion, urbanization and infrastructure construction undermines the well-being of 3.2 billion people. Globally, a third of all land soils have already been degraded. In arid regions, this process turns into desertification. Landsoils provide more than 97 percent of food, as well as drinking water. But every year the land becomes less fertile. In addition, its ability to absorb carbon is significantly reduced, which accelerates climate change.

One example of an environmental catastrophe is the drying up of the Aral Sea, once the fourth largest closed sea in the world. This tragedy led to a change in the way of life of millions of people, destroyed the social and ecological systems of the region - valuable species of commercial fish disappeared, as well as wild animals that lived there. Huge salt deserts appeared on the exposed part of the Aral Sea.

“Humanity is waging a relentless, self-destructive war on nature. Biodiversity is declining, greenhouse gas concentrations are rising, and our pollution can be found from the remotest islands to the highest peaks” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres on the occasion of World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought.¹⁸

¹² <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2021/10/1411932>

¹³ <https://www.un.org/ru/observances/ending-violence-against-women>

¹⁴ <https://www.un.org/sg/ru/node/259109>

¹⁵ https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/final-wmr_2020-ru.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.un.org/sg/ru/node/259991>

¹⁷ <https://www.un.org/ru/observances/tourism-day/messages>

¹⁸ <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2021/06/1404832>

Due to the economic downturn caused by the pandemic, new emissions decreased by 5.6% in 2020, but according to the World Meteorological Organization, a specialized agency of the United this has had no measurable impact on the atmospheric concentration of a long-lived greenhouse gas or on its growth rate.

As the economy recovers, they will increase again if the principle of “build back better” does not translate into practical actions. In this regard, one of the indicators of the success of the green recovery will be the monitoring of CO₂ emissions. The pandemic should not delay action to reduce emissions because the climate crisis has already begun.

Chapter 2: Central Asia: regional disaster risks profile,

key indicators (CESDRR, <https://cesdrr.org>)¹⁹

The Central Asian region is subject to almost all types of emergency situations of a natural, man-made, environmental, biological and social nature.

According to the INFORM 2021 subnational risk index for CA countries, Tajikistan is in the high risk class, followed by Kyrgyzstan in the medium risk class, Uzbekistan in the low risk class, and Kazakhstan with Turkmenistan in the very low risk class.

The INFORM-2021 subnational risk index for this region combines 62 different indicators that measure three dimensions of risk: hazard and impact, vulnerability, and lack of coping capacity.

Natural risks

1. Earthquakes are the predominant risk factor for disasters in Central Asia by almost all main indicators, especially for cities and densely populated areas. The housing sector, services, finance, industry and trade are the most affected by earthquakes, and they are primarily concentrated in cities and large population centers.

Seismological services of most countries in the region annually register about 3,000 earth tremors of varying intensity. The secondary effects of earthquakes can be quite devastating. Seismic activity can cause or accelerate other hazards, including landslides, rock slides, mudflows, soil liquefaction, glacial lake formation and flooding. Most of them (floods and mudflows due to dam failures, outbursts of high mountain lakes and spills of toxic substances) can have serious transboundary consequences.

There is a lot of convincing evidence of the destructive power of earthquakes and the secondary factors provoked by them, for example: landslides, mud flows and mudflows became the main cause of death during earthquakes that occurred in Kazakhstan (Almaty, 1887, 1889 and 1911), Kyrgyzstan (Jalalabad, 1992), Tajikistan (Hayit, 1949, Gissar, 1989), Turkmenistan (1948) and Uzbekistan (Tashkent, 1966).

2. Floods, floods and mudflows. The threat of mudflows, floods and floods is the second most important threat in the CA region. The region has a mountainous relief and its territory is crossed by several hundred large and small rivers and their tributaries. Floods on these rivers are often accompanied by large mudflows.

Floods and mudflows are the most frequent natural disasters in Central Asia, especially in the basins of the largest rivers in the region - the Amudarya and Syrdarya, and they cause significant damage to housing, infrastructure and agriculture, mainly in rural areas.

Although the total volume of water resources remains fairly stable, the annual and seasonal hydrological variability in these river basins has become more pronounced. Since 2005, the number of years with high water levels has increased by 1.2-1.4 times, and with excessively high water levels - by 2.0-2.5 times. In recent decades, there has been an increase in the number of mudflows, the frequency of their repetition is directly related to the cycles of rainy and dry years.

¹⁹ <https://cesdrr.org/региональный-форум>

There are thousands of lakes and artificial reservoirs in the mountains of Central Asia. When their dams are damaged, floods and mudflows occur, caused by intensive melting of snow cover, flooding of glacial lakes, which often leads to damage to settlements and infrastructure in the areas lying below. Due to the large volume of water released as a result of the bursting of dams and dams of glacial lakes and large reservoirs, floods and mudflows often lead to large-scale and transboundary emergencies.

3. Droughts are the next major threat in the CA region. Droughts of varying degrees occur almost every year. Severe meteorological drought (precipitation deficit of 50% or more) occurs in the foothills about three times per century, while moderate drought (seasonal precipitation deficit of 20-25%) occurs at intervals of three to four years. In desert and semi-desert regions, droughts are more frequent (precipitation deficit of 50% or more every 10 years; deficit of 20% every five years).

A severe meteorological drought hit Central Asia in 2000-2001, when most countries experienced rainfall deficits of 30-70% combined with above-average temperatures. As a result of the drought in 2000 in Central and Southeast Asia and the Caucasus, about 60 million people were affected and very large economic damage was caused.

4. Landslides are common in the mountainous regions of Central Asia and are one of the most common natural disaster risks. Moreover, the largest of them are often caused by earthquakes and floods. They are triggered by increasing slope steepness, seismic events, meteorological and hydrological anomalies, and various anthropogenic processes. Most often, landslides occur in foothill and mountainous areas at an altitude of 1000 to 2400 meters above sea level on slopes of 19 degrees or more.

Landslides mainly affect housing and infrastructure in rural areas. Landslides can lead to transboundary consequences due to the destruction of tailings, mountain dumps and the release of toxic substances contained in them, especially in the Ferghana Valley.

5. Snow avalanches are classified as especially dangerous hydrometeorological natural phenomena that pose a danger to humans, structures, transport communications, energy bridges and communication lines.

Modern mountain roads in the Central Asian region are generally poorly planned and poorly designed due to difficult terrain, sparsely populated areas, and scarce government budgets for road construction. This is especially true for the Tien Shan and Pamirs, which span much of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, an extremely rugged landscape where many of the local transport corridors are dirt roads, footpaths, animal trails, and motorcycle routes.

Technogenic risks

The region is home to many tailings and rock dumps, as well as poorly managed urban landfills, pesticide and hazardous chemical waste sites, mostly located in densely populated areas. Some of these facilities are located in border areas, thus presenting a risk of transboundary contamination of soil, air and water.

Central Asia's water management infrastructure consists of hundreds of reservoirs, dams, irrigation systems and pumping stations, many canals and dozens of complex-purpose hydroelectric facilities. Here are the world's highest rockfill dam - Nurek, 300 meters high on Vakhsh river located in Tajikistan, and one of the longest canals in the world - the Karakum River with a length of more than 1100 km, along which runs the transboundary river Amu Darya that supplies about half of the water used in Turkmenistan.

Of the more than 1,200 dams in the region, 110 are classified as large hydraulic structures. Many dams are located in the basins of transboundary rivers such as the Amudarya, Syrdarya, Ili and Irtysh that are of interstate importance. For the territories of the countries located downstream of the rivers, the breakthrough of any dam can have the most devastating consequences.

The presence of industrial enterprises in the region, including objects of the metallurgical, oil and coal mining, mining, as well as vehicles, in particular, a multiple increase in cars and trucks, has led to a sharp increase in man-made emergencies: transport accidents (catastrophes), fires and explosions, accidents with the release of hazardous chemical substances, sudden collapse of structures, accidents on electrical and energy systems or utility life support systems, accidents at industrial wastewater treatment plants, road transport accidents.

Environmental risks

The most serious environmental risks in the region are associated with inefficient use of water resources, problems of transboundary water resources management, high consumption of energy and natural resources, as well as extensive development of the industrial sector, water scarcity, as a direct consequence of climate change.

Climate change in the region has become a real threat to the life and economy of people, which is inevitably reflected in the social sphere - a decrease in living standards, loss of property, the need to leave their homes, etc.

The worsening degradation of biodiversity, natural habitats and ecosystems due to climate stressors increases the vulnerability of the poor and rural areas, which largely lack the financial or political capacity to cope with the growing challenges.

Over the past 50 years, rising temperatures have had a noticeable effect on the reduction of both snow cover in the mountains and the volume of glaciers. The climate in the region has become noticeably warmer. In all countries, the average annual temperature has risen from 0.10°C to 0.31°C every ten years. This is well above the global trend (0.06°C).

One of the largest global environmental disasters in recent history experienced by the countries and population of Central Asia is the tragedy of the Aral Sea, which, due to its environmental, climatic, socio-economic and humanitarian consequences, poses a direct threat to the sustainable development of the region, health, gene pool and future of those living in him people.

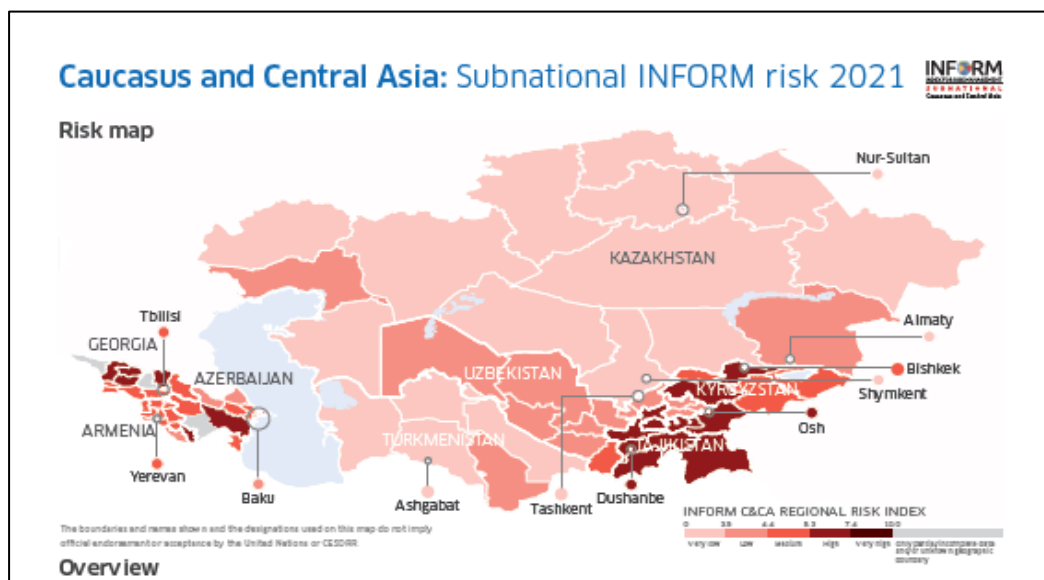
As a direct consequence of the drying up of the sea, dramatic climate change has been felt not only in Central Asia, but also in other regions. The Aral Sea crisis zone directly covers the territories of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and indirectly - Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Expected stressors associated with climate change include rising temperatures, extreme weather events and melting glaciers, while likely impacts include the continued expansion of deserts and drylands. Such impacts will increase pressure on already stressed and exploited natural resources such as grasslands, forests and wildlife, and may increase the spread of transboundary pests.

The worsening degradation of biodiversity, natural habitats and ecosystems due to climate stressors will increase the vulnerability of the poor and rural areas, which largely lack the financial or political capacity to deal with these growing challenges.

Biological and social risks

The region is prone to local and mass outbreaks and epidemics of infectious diseases in humans and animals, damage to agricultural plants by diseases, weeds and pests. In some countries of Central Asia, there are minor outbreaks of infectious diseases such as cholera, malaria, anthrax, meningococcal meningitis, measles and others.



Chapter 3: COVID-19 in Central Asia: timeline of the outbreak and dynamic of response

The first cases of COVID-19 were detected in CA region shortly after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the pandemic on March 11, 2020²⁰ see Chart 1: Newly detected cases of COVID-19 in CA countries.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is the first country of the region, where four cases of coronavirus infection were officially registered for the first time on March 13²¹. On March 16th, the State of Emergency (SoE) was declared in the country that introduced number of restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The SoE remained in force until 11th of May²².

The first case of coronavirus infection in the Republic of Uzbekistan was officially registered on March 15th²³. Starting from March 16th, the government introduced restrictive measures to prevent the importation and further spread of the COVID-19 infection^{24,25}. The SoE was not declared in the country.

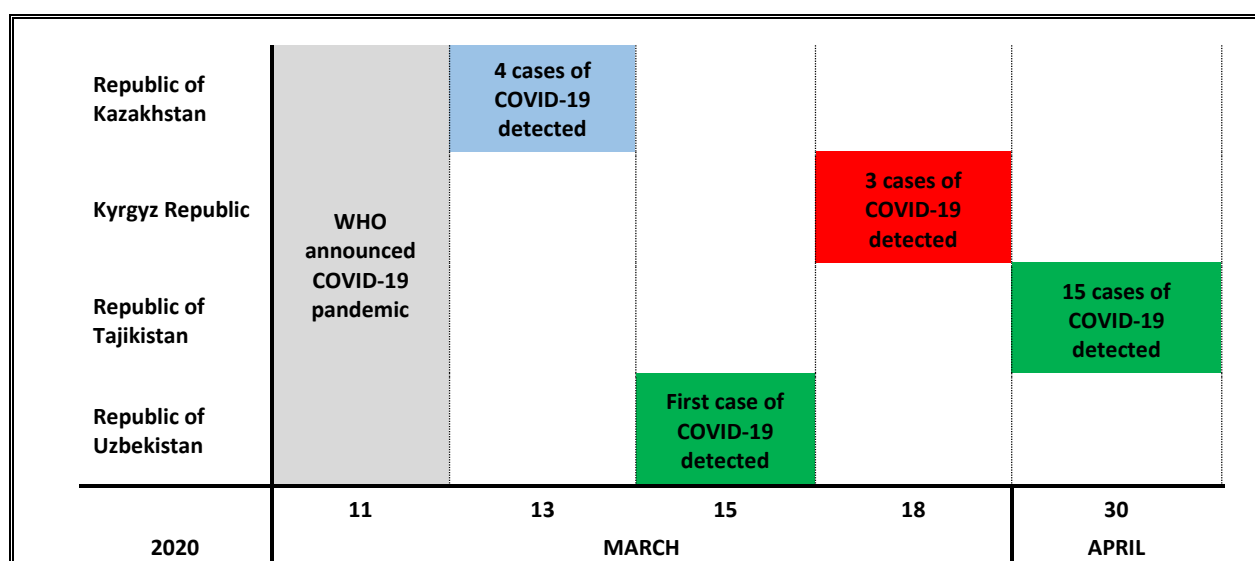


Chart 1: Newly detected cases of COVID-19 in CA countries

Kyrgyz Republic registered the first three cases of COVID-19 on March 18th²⁶. The SoE was initially introduced in Bishkek city and later covered other regions of the country until it was lifted on May 15th²⁷.

In Tajikistan the first fifteen cases of the disease were officially registered at the end of April 2020²⁸. Although the initial cases were detected only in April, earlier on March 20, the government banned air-flights with a number of countries with the aim to prevent the importation and the spread of COVID-19²⁹.

²⁰ WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020 [Internet]. [cited 2020 Dec 15]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>

²¹ Ситуация с коронавирусом официально, КЗ [Internet]. [cited 2021 Jan 10]. Available from: <https://www.coronavirus2020.kz/ru>

²² Заявление Главы государства Касым-Жомарта Токаева [Internet]. [cited 2021 Jan 3]. Available from: https://www.akorda.kz/ru/events/akorda_news/akorda_other_events/zayavlenie-glavy-gosudarstva-kasym-zhomarta-tokaeva-1

²³ MoH of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Коронавирусная инфекция (COVID-19) [Internet]. [cited 2021 Jan 22]. Available from: <https://coronavirus.uz/ru>

²⁴ Национальное информационное агентство Узбекистана. Узбекистан временно закрывает авиа- и автодорожное сообщение с другими странами [Internet]. [cited 2021 Feb 3]. Available from: <https://uza.uz/ru/posts/uzbekistan-vremennno-zakroet-avia-i-avtodorozhnoe-soobshcheni-15-03-2020>

²⁵ Национальное информационное агентство Узбекистана. С 16 марта все образовательные учреждения Узбекистана закроют на карантин [Internet]. [cited 2021 Feb 3]. Available from: <https://uza.uz/ru/posts/s-16-marta-vse-obrazovatelnye-uchrezhdeniyauzbekistana-zakro-15-03-2020>

²⁶ MoH of the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://med.kg/ru/informatsii/2077-so-dnya-pervykh-slucaev-registratsii-covid-19-v-kyrgyzstane-kolichestvo-zabolevshikh-rastet.html>

²⁷ http://www.president.kg/ru/sobytiya/ukazy/16382_podpisan_ukaz_ovvedeni_chrezvichaynogo_pologheniya_naterritorii_goroda_bishkek_kirgizskoy_respubliki

²⁸ MoH of the Republic of Tajikistan. COVID.TJ : <https://covid.tj/>

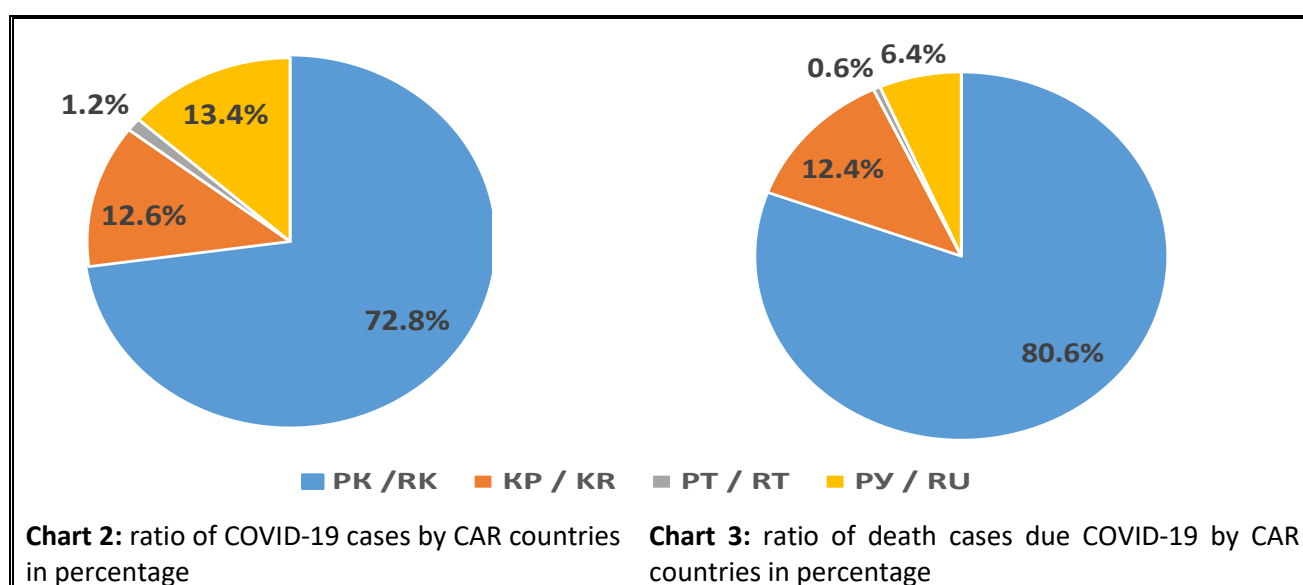
²⁹ Agency of the Civil aviation under the GoT <http://caa.tj/index.php?newsid=79>

According to official records, the Republic of Turkmenistan, remains the country where no cases of coronavirus infection have been registered³⁰.

However, a WHO multidisciplinary team of experts that visited the country in November 2021 highlighted the need to strengthen efforts to detect COVID-19. “Reporting cases in a timely manner is a must, as it enables the activation of additional arms of the response....”³¹

Data on COVID-19 morbidity and mortality in CA countries.

According to official data of the countries, from the beginning of the outbreak in March 2020 until the time of preparation of the current report in December 2021, a total of **1,416,025** cases of COVID-19 were detected in the CA region, as well as **22,403** cases of deaths were recorded³². The vast majority of cases of diseases, as well as deaths in the CA region were registered in the Republic of Kazakhstan (see the following charts for details).



If to review these data by CA countries and by quarter periods of 2020 and 2021, then the largest number of newly registered cases, as well as deaths associated with COVID-19, can be observed in quarter III of 2021. This include, total **600,748** new cases, or 41% of all cases over the entire period under review and **9,355** deaths, or 42% of all deaths occurred during the entire period under review³³. It was the period when the high and predominant spread of the “Delta” strain of coronavirus was reported in the countries of the region in comparison to the previous strains.³⁴³⁵³⁶ This strain of infection is considered to be two times more contagious than previous variants.³⁷

The indicated trend for new cases corresponds to the maximum quarterly country data for three countries of the region - the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan. While in the Republic of Tajikistan, the maximum number of cases was registered in the II quarter of 2020, 5,900 cases respectively, see below charts for details.

³⁰ MFA of Turkmenistan, <https://www.mfa.gov.tm/ru/news/2143>

³¹ WHO EURO <https://www.euro.who.int/ru/countries/turkmenistan/news/news/2021/12/who-europe-high-level-experts-complete-mission-in-turkmenistan-to-strengthen-health-system-preparedness>

³² CESDRR. CESDRR UPDATE INFORMATION № 247 COVID-19 Statistics for CA. 2021;1–7.

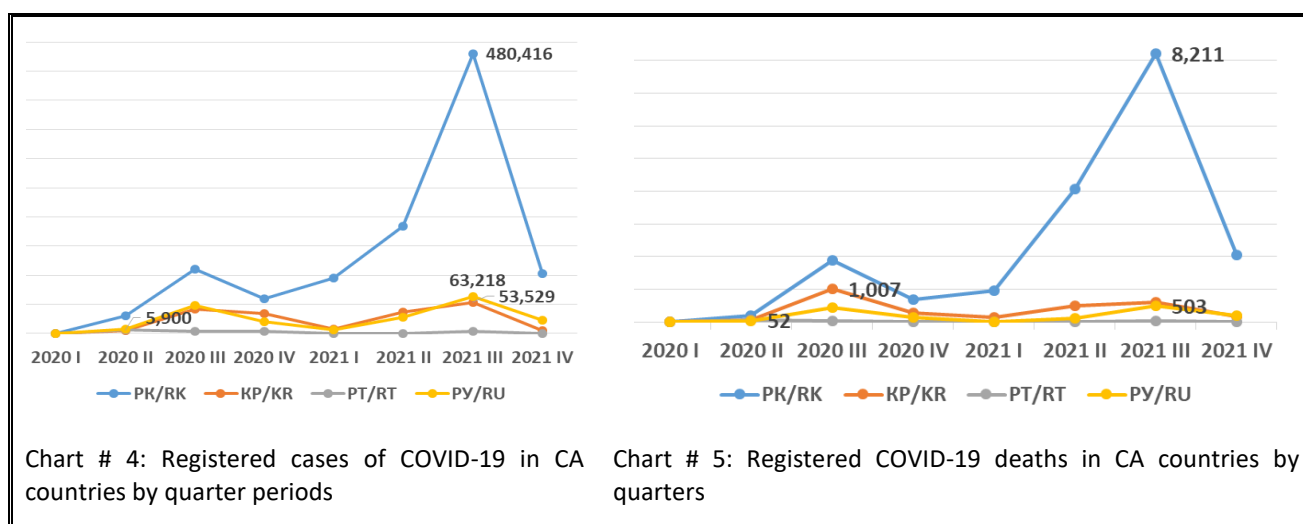
³³ CESDRR. CESDRR UPDATE INFORMATION № 247 COVID-19 Statistics for CA. 2021;1–7.

³⁴ CESDRR. COVID-19 Statistics for CA, 2021;3–4.

³⁵ Ministry of Innovative Development of the RUz. <https://t.me/vaksinauzb/812>

³⁶ WHO. WHO/Europe | Media centre - SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant now dominant in much of European region <https://www.euro.who.int/en/media-centre/sections/press-releases/2021/sars-cov-2-delta-variant-now-dominant-in-much-of-european-region-efforts-must-be-reinforced-to-prevent-transmission,-warns-who-regional-office-for-europe-and-ecdc>

³⁷ CDC. Delta Variant: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/delta-variant.html#print>



It should be noted that the data on diseases and deaths cases includes total number of positive and negative cases of COVID-19 in the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. Same time, in case of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, it includes only positive cases that is based on the official data reporting protocols approved in these countries. In reviewing the data on COVID-19 cases, this report includes PCR “+” and PCR “-” results where applicable and as per the country protocols that is also applied for tracking the global/regional data by WHO³⁸.

Response measures

In order to prevent the infiltration and the spread of the new COVID-19 cases, the governments of CA countries take number of measures that includes – restrictions on international flights and domestic movements, introduction of lockdown quarantine measures, transition to remote work and learning in educational institutions, and so on.

In order to track the response measures taken by the governments of countries, the Blavatnik School of Government of the University of Oxford has developed a Covid-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT) that collects systematic information on policy measures that governments have taken to tackle COVID-19. The methodology includes data on 23 indicators grouped according to the following four policies³⁹:

No	Policy	Examples
1	Containment and closure policies	School closures and restrictions in movement.
2	Economic policies	Income support to citizens or provision of foreign aid
3	Health system policies	COVID-19 testing regime, emergency investments into healthcare
4	Vaccine policies	Country's prioritization list, eligible groups, and the cost of vaccination to the individual.

The review of the indicated data subsequently used to prepare a severity index (maximum value of 100) of measures taken by the governments of the countries.

³⁸ Coronavirus (COVID-19) Cases and Deaths - Humanitarian Data Exchange [Internet]. [cited 2021 Jan 11]. Available from: <https://data.humdata.org/dataset/coronavirus-covid-19-cases-and-deaths>

³⁹ COVID-19 Government Response Tracker | Blavatnik School of Government [Internet]. [cited 2021 Dec 18]. Available from: <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/covid-19-government-response-tracker>

For more information refer to the following link on index methodology: <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/coronavirus-government-response-tracker>.

Thus, as of December 2021, the Oxford COVID-19 Stringency Index for CA countries looked as following:

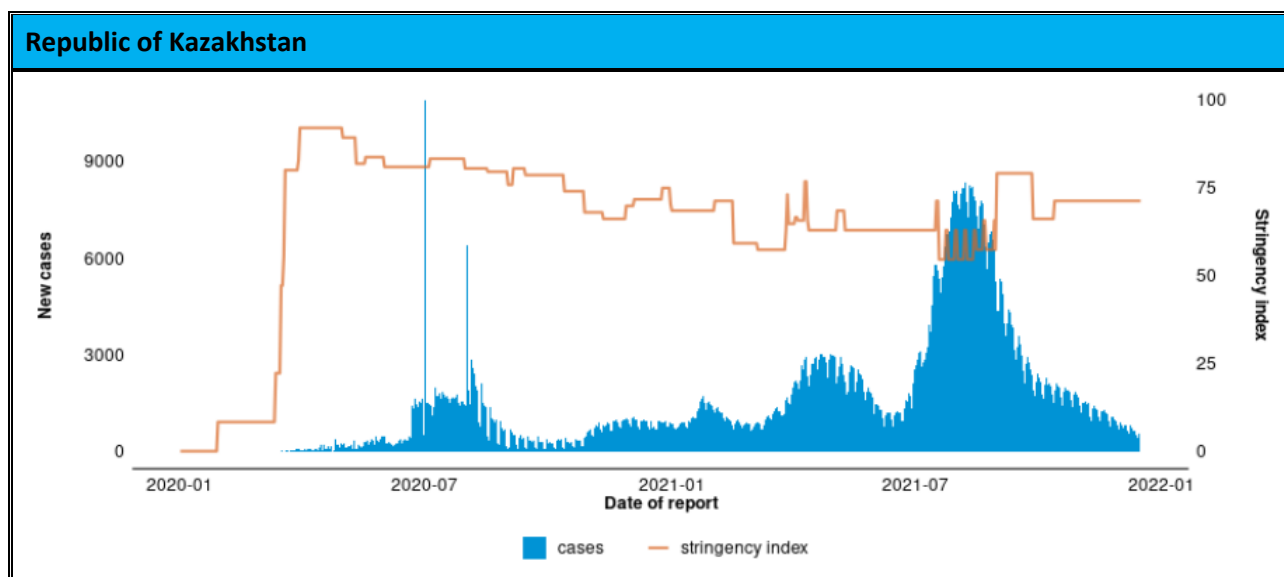
Countries	Stringency Index as of December 2021	Maximum index score for the entire period of outbreak
RK	71	92
KR	43	92
RT	30	69
RU	44	94
Turkmenistan	75	75

According to the indicated data, it can be noted that the most stringent measures for the entire period of the pandemic were introduced in three countries of Central Asia - Uzbekistan (94), Kazakhstan (92) and the Kyrgyz Republic (92), while in Tajikistan and Turkmenistan this index corresponded to 75 and 69 respectively.

Despite the absence of officially registered cases of COVID-19 in Turkmenistan, the government of the country is implementing measures to prevent the importation and spread of the disease in the country.

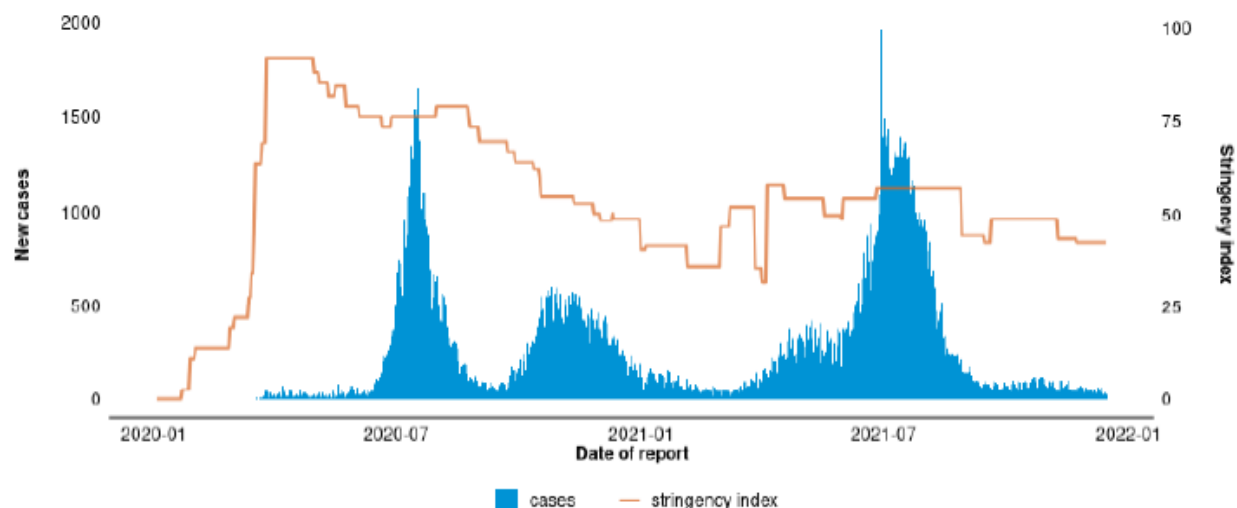
As of December 2021, Turkmenistan is the only country in the region that has not resumed international flights to other countries since the spring of 2020.⁴⁰

If to consider the stringency index in view of the new cases detection dynamics by country, then it looks as followings:

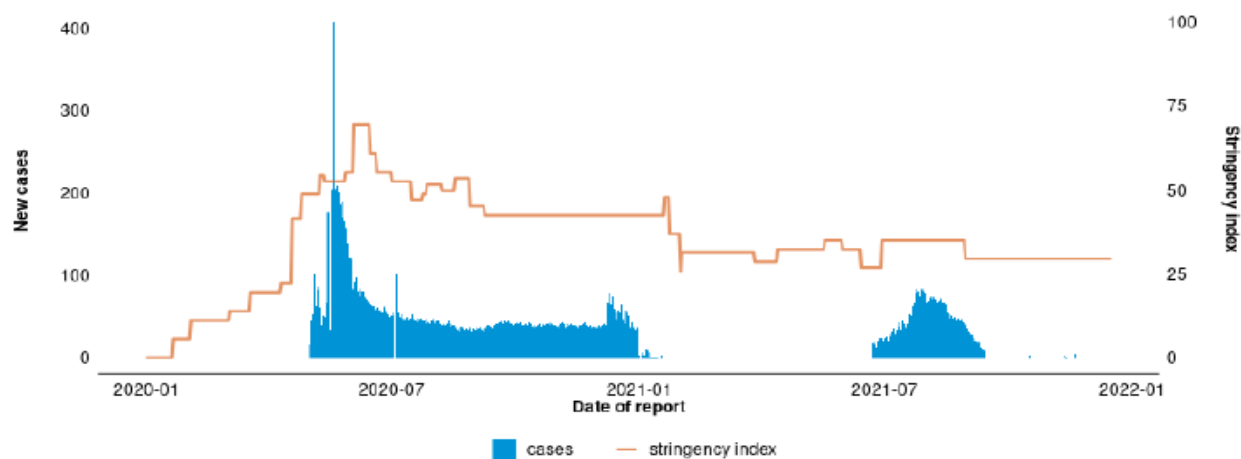


⁴⁰ Turkmenistan airlines [Internet]. [cited 2021 Dec 20]. Available from: <https://turkmenistanairlines.ru/news>

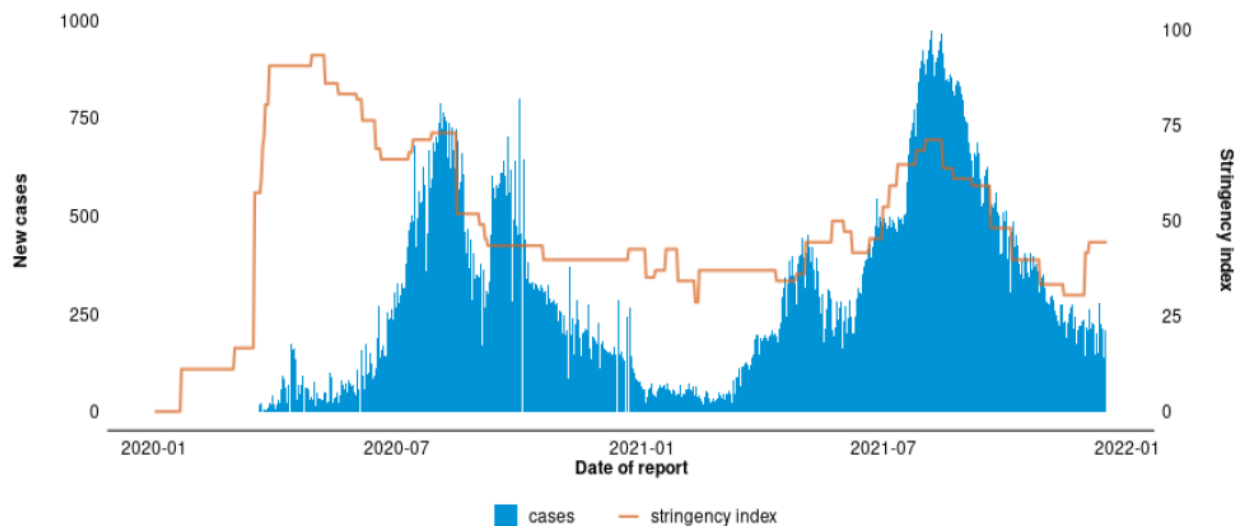
Kyrgyz Republic



Republic of Tajikistan



Republic of Uzbekistan



In all four Central Asian countries, where cases of COVID-19 are officially registered, measures to prevent the importation and further spread of the pandemic were taken before the first cases were detected in the country. In the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan, the severity of measures in accordance with the above data was quite high, while in the Republic of Tajikistan the adapted measures were less stringent compared to neighboring countries.

The difference in stringency of measures can be explained by the official data on morbidity and mortality, which are several times less registered in the Republic of Tajikistan compared to other countries of the Central Asian region, excluding Turkmenistan, where not a single case of COVID-19 infection and death has been officially registered.

The dynamics of the stringency measures during the period under review indicated that the severity of the measures was directly proportional to the course of the pandemic, i.e. with increase of new infections, the severity of measures to contain the importation and spread of the pandemic increased. Based on the data in the graphs, it can be assumed that the measures were effective, since after the introduction of strict measures, a decrease in the registration of new cases in countries can be observed.

Communication during the pandemic period

In CA countries where cases of COVID-19 are officially registered (RK, KR, RT and RU), discrete web pages dedicated to the topic are functioning⁴¹⁴²⁴³⁴⁴(2,4,9,21). In addition to data on key indicators, the indicated web sources contain some additional information and hotline contacts (call centers, helplines) for obtaining various kinds of information in regard to COVID-19, see details in the table of official data sources below.

The news feed of the official website of the Republic of Kazakhstan on COVID-19 is updated on an ongoing basis and includes complete information related to the development of the pandemic in the country.

Along with the web pages dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Central Asian region, the Telegram messenger is also widely used. Especially the news channels that are used to notify about the development of the situation with COVID-19 in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Uzbekistan. The messengers are available through both an application installed on a mobile device and via the internet browser.

Official data and substantive information available in a real-time mode via the messenger platform has proven to be an effective tool for obtaining operational information in practice during a pandemic and is one of the main sources for the preparation of the regional CESDRR bulletin.

	Republic of Kazakhstan	Kyrgyz Republic	Republic of Tajikistan	Republic of Uzbekistan	Comments
COVID-19 websites	https://www.coronavirus2020.kz/	https://covid.kg/ru	https://covid.tj/	https://coronavirus.uz/ru	In KR the official information (data) on Coronavirus is also reported on the main website of the MoH
Messengers of the Commissions / Headquarters to combat COVID-19	https://t.me/s/kkkbtu	https://t.me/s/RshkRCOV	-	-	
Messengers of the Ministry of Health containing information about COVID-19	https://t.me/s/DenMinPR			https://t.me/s/ssvuz	
Other official online resources		https://map.covid.kg/		https://t.me/s/koronavirusinfo.uz	The website in KR contains information about the hospital occupancies
Websites of the Central Asia Emergency Services bodies	https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/emergency/	http://ru.mes.kg/	https://khf.tj/	https://fvv.uz/ru	

Table 1: Sources of official data

⁴¹ KZ, COVID-19 Situation Official website: <https://www.coronavirus2020.kz/ru>

⁴² MoH of the Republic of Uzbekistan, <https://coronavirus.uz>

⁴³ MoH of the Republic of Tajikistan. COVID.TJ : <https://covid.tj/>

⁴⁴ COVID-19 Kyrgyzstan: <https://covid.kg/ru>

It is necessary to note the Telegram channels of the **Interinstitutional Commission (IIC)** under the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the non-proliferation of coronavirus in Kazakhstan, as well as the **Republican commission on the prevention of the spread of coronavirus in the Kyrgyz Republic**, which contain detailed information about the activities of the commission, as well as important decisions taken by them to contain the spread of coronavirus infection.^{45,46} In addition to being a tool for dissemination of information, these Telegram channels serve as a formal platform reflecting the activities of structures that usually consist of representatives of various ministries and departments.

In Uzbekistan, the Telegram channel “Rasmiy Xabarlar/Official News” is the official source of information, where the materials of the Press Services of all state bodies and organizations, as well as local government bodies are published in a single platform. This channel also regularly disseminates information about the activities and decisions of various government departments, including the socio-economic sector, regarding the quarantine measures and the COVID-19 pandemic. The identified Telegram channels dedicated to the topic of COVID-19 in Tajikistan have an unofficial status and were established by civil society.^{47,48}

CHAPTER 4: COVID-19 Pandemic in Central Asia: an overview of the international community action: *UN AGENCIES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PRIVATE SECTOR*

The countries of Central Asia, as well as around the world, are characterized by extensive cooperation and assistance from un organizations, other international and financial organizations that are working closely with national governments to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, investments that help the countries of the region to implement economic reforms considering environmental and climatic factors, preserve and strengthen their agricultural and natural potential, using it to increase preparedness for climate change, are a priority.

The main directions in which the international community aids the countries of Central Asia can be identified as follows:

- assisting in the implementation of priority emergency responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in the health sector.
- support for government measures to restructure the economy and create conditions for stable economic growth.
- supporting the accelerated implementation of sustainable and integrated approaches to the development of territories in relation to the principles of the "green" economy, as well as addressing the problem of vulnerability and inequality, so that these transformations do not leave anyone on the sidelines.
- promoting sustainable recovery of national economies and building a greener, more inclusive, and sustainable future.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN system has taken swift and comprehensive action. It has played a leading role in the global health response, provided life-saving humanitarian assistance to those most vulnerable, developed tools to respond rapidly to the socio-economic impact of the crisis, provided logistics, common services and operational support to Governments and other partners around the world, and set out a broad strategic agenda for action. across the board.

Up-to-date information on the COVID-19 situation is posted on the official website of the World Health Organization (WHO).⁴⁹ UN agencies also provide information on coronavirus infection on their websites.

⁴⁵ Telegram: Contact @kkkbtu, <https://t.me/kkkbtu>

⁴⁶ Telegram: Contact @RshKRCOV, <https://t.me/RshKRCOV>

⁴⁷ TajikiStation – Telegram, <https://t.me/s/koronavirusunetTAJIKISTAN>

⁴⁸ Telegram: Contact @coronavirusinfo_tjj, https://t.me/coronavirusinfo_tj

⁴⁹ <https://www.who.int/home>

Throughout 2021, UN entities continued to effectively support countries in their efforts to respond to the pandemic and its aftermath. The updated version of [UNITED NATIONS COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO COVID-19 \(Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better\)](#), published in 2021, outlines developments and actions taken by the UN system to further mobilize and support a successful global response to the pandemic and related socio-economic crises, and provides information on available data and resources to track all aspects of the response. on COVID-19 and recovery.⁵⁰

In **Kazakhstan**, the activity of the UN country team in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic focuses on assessing the social and economic consequences for the most vulnerable groups of the population to support further recovery measures after the crisis. In 2020, the Agreement on Cooperation for Sustainable Development for 2021-2025 between Kazakhstan and the UN was signed. [The Framework Program](#) of Cooperation will become the main document of joint activities of Kazakhstan and the UN for 5 years.

In August 2020, the UN Country Team's Socio-Economic Response Plan for COVID-19 in Kazakhstan⁵¹ was adopted in line with the United Nations global framework for an immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19.

To respond to the challenges of the new reality posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN country team conducted a series of rapid assessments (including a gender impact assessment of the crisis), identified urgent issues and adjusted programme and non-programme portfolios. As a result, about \$16 million was redirected and mobilized on the fight against COVID-19, a quarter of which went to the purchase of medical supplies and the training of health workers in the prevention and control of infection.⁵²

In 2020, the Asian Development Bank, together with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, allocated a total of \$1 billion to support the efforts of the Government of Kazakhstan in the areas of health, social protection, employment, and support for the economy. The European Union has allocated \$3.5 million to the WHO provided support to Kazakhstan in the field of public health. In August 2020, the Asian Development Bank approved a \$3 million grant, which is funded by the Japanese government and is designed to procure medicines and necessary medical equipment to fight COVID-19. The government of Kazakhstan has not applied to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for concessional financing during the pandemic.

Kyrgyz Republic. To support the progress made in the Kyrgyz Republic and continue to actively seek opportunities for more sustainable development, the UN provided continued support to this process in 2020 and continues to support the government in recovering from the crisis to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2020, more than half of the annual UN financial support in the amount of \$67.4 million was redirected to the implementation of the response to COVID-19 as part of the framework of the [Disaster response and early recovery plan for COVID-19](#) developed by the *Disaster response coordination unit (The Kyrgyz Republic) (DRCU)*⁵³. Additional long-term response measures were included in the Framework for a Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, for which US\$ 48 million was mobilized, including repurposed funds from UN agencies, and allocated an additional \$56 million.⁵⁴

The COVID-19 Response and Early Recovery Plan was approved by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in June 2020 and through this plan, the DRCU prioritized and used comprehensive support in six priority sectors: education, food security and logistics, health, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene, non-food items and

⁵⁰ UNITED NATIONS COMPREHENSIVE RESPONSE TO COVID-19 Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better. Previous versions were released in June 2020 and September 2020.

<https://unsdg.un.org/resources/united-nations-comprehensive-response-covid-19-saving-lives-protecting-societies-0>

<https://www.a.un.org/en/coronavirus/UN-response>

<https://www.une.org/sites/un2.une.org/files/un-comprehensive-response-covid-19-2021.pdf>

⁵¹ United Nations Kazakhstan Covid-19 Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Plan UNCT Kazakhstan August 2020

<https://unsdg.un.org/resources/united-nations-kazakhstan-covid-19-socio-economic-response-recovery-plan>

https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/KAZ_Socioeconomic-Response-Plan_2020.pdf

⁵² https://kazakhstan.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/Report_Kazakhstan_interactive_RU.pdf

⁵³ The DRCU was activated in March 2020 at the request of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic under the leadership of the Minister of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic and the UN Resident Coordinator. The DRCU is composed of heads of UN agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, international organizations and NGOs.

⁵⁴ https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_comprehensive_response_to_covid19_russian.pdf

early recovery. In February 2021, a meeting of the DRCU Council was held in Bishkek, at which the results of the implementation of the Plan for the period from March to December 2020 were presented.

The UN country team worked closely with various headquarters established by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to coordinate the health and socio-economic response and recovery from COVID-19. The DRCU was able to mobilize a coordinated humanitarian response to COVID-19, which led to the development of a COVID-19 Response and Early Recovery Plan in close coordination with the state civil protection system and key priorities for the immediate response to COVID-19. The COVID-19 Response and Early Recovery Plan was approved by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on June 20, 2020. Through this plan, DRCU has identified priorities and secured comprehensive support in six priority sectors, such as: early recovery, education, food security and logistics, health, protection and water, sanitation, hygiene and non-food items. During March-December 2020, humanitarian and development partners within the Emergency Response Coordination Team mobilized more than \$74 million (initially estimated at \$51 million) to respond rapidly and address the most urgent needs of vulnerable populations.⁵⁵

In November 2021, the first economic forum "European Union – Central Asia"⁵⁶ was held in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic. Within the framework of the forum, issues of transition to a green, sustainable, climate economy, digitalization issues, and the creation of a healthy business environment were discussed.

Tajikistan. The UN Country Team, led by the UNDP and supported by the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, has formulated intentions to directly support the Government of Tajikistan to assist vulnerable populations through the Comprehensive Socio-Economic Impact Response Programme, which is linked to the Prime Minister's Action Plan to Combat the Spread of COVID-19 and the National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. This document contains the UN's collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the socio-economic situation in Tajikistan.⁵⁷

The international community's external assistance to Tajikistan amounts to millions of dollars and euros in the form of concessional loans and grants and is aimed primarily at supporting the population, medical institutions and workers who should contribute to the effective fight against COVID-19. Thus, to support the economy in the context of the pandemic, in May 2020, the IMF allocated \$189 million to Tajikistan under the mechanism of accelerated concessional lending for 10 years with a 5-year grace period. Tajikistan was also among the 25 countries in the world (the only one in the post-Soviet space) to which the IMF facilitated the payment of debts by providing grants for two years. To carry out activities aimed at preventing possible risks, a grant in the amount of \$11.3 million was provided by the World Bank.

The European Union has allocated €78 million, of which a grant of €48 million and a loan from the European Investment Bank for €30 million for the implementation of the government's anti-crisis plan, as well as special targeted funds of €1.3 million for the purchase of overalls for medical workers and 780 thousand euros for sanitary products for educational institutions. Through the German Development Bank (KfW), Germany has allocated 1 million euros for the purchase of personal protective equipment, medical equipment and financing for the training of doctors and other specialists. The U.S. government, through USAID, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), has committed a total of \$5 million. To support the efforts of the republic in the fight against the pandemic and the implementation of programs aimed at control, prevention, food support, creation of new jobs for the most vulnerable segments of the population. This work involves, among others, USAID partners: the International Federation of the Red Cross, WHO through their offices in the Republic of Tajikistan.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ <https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/ru/>; <https://kyrgyzstan.un.org/en>

⁵⁶ <https://www.gov.kg/ru/post/s/20570-obnovleno-sovmestnoe-zayavlenie-po-itogam-foruma-evropeyskiy-soyuz-tsentrlnaya-aziya>
https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kyrgyz-republic/106801/eu-central-asia-economic-forum-joint-press-statement_en

⁵⁷ Integrated Socioeconomic Response Framework to Covid-19 (ISEF) for Tajikistan
<https://unsdg.un.org/resources/integrated-socio-economic-response-framework-covid-19-tajikistan>
https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-08/TAJ_Socioeconomic-Response-Plan_2020.pdf

⁵⁸ <https://cabar.asia/en/tajikistan-and-coronavirus-what-will-happen-to-economic-development>

Guidelines and best practices for MSMEs on sustainability and progress towards a circular economy in sustainable resource management and critical solutions for the raw materials supply chain. Consultant: Rahmonbek Bakhtdavatov, Dushanbe – 2021.

In October 2021, Tajikistan has received a grant from The Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development (EFSF)⁵⁹ to implement the project [Mobile diagnosis of COVID-19 \(Republic of Tajikistan\)](#). The project provides for the allocation of \$3 million for the purchase of five mobile sanitary and epidemiological laboratories, as well as about 20,000 tests to conduct free tests for COVID-19 among the population.

Turkmenistan. According to official data from the WHO, it has been reported that there are no cases of coronavirus in the country. The same information has been officially provided to other international organizations and partner countries of Turkmenistan. The authorities also reported a high degree of preparedness of the health system to combat a possible epidemic. Although the official authorities of Turkmenistan do not confirm the presence of cases of COVID-19 infection in the country to a mask regime is in place to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and foreign air traffic has been suspended.

The WHO has previously expressed concern about information about the increase in pneumonia cases in the country and recommended that the government take measures "as if COVID-19 was already spreading throughout the country." In 2021, Turkmenistan is carrying out mandatory vaccination against the coronavirus COVID-19 of the population over 18 years of age. However, the question of how exactly this will be achieved remains open.

The Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan has signed an agreement with the UNDP in the country on the implementation of the project [Response to COVID-19](#) (project budget is \$20 million). to strengthen the country's response and preparedness for the pandemic. In particular, the project is aimed at strengthening national capacity in the field of testing and treatment, improving the skills of medical workers, purchasing reagents, medicines, and medical equipment, and addressing the social and health risks associated with the pandemic. The project will support the implementation of digital solutions for the control of infectious diseases.⁶⁰

According to official data, in Turkmenistan there is not a single case of coronavirus infection has yet been identified, therefore international organizations do not see the need to organize assistance to overcome the pandemic.

At the same time, in August 2020, the Immediate Socio-Economic Response Plan in Turkmenistan to Counter the Pandemic of Acute Infectious Diseases⁶¹ was adopted, which contains the collective response of the United Nations in Turkmenistan to the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19. USAID in 2020 allocated \$920,000 to support health care, prepare laboratory systems, intensify case research, and support epidemiological surveillance in Turkmenistan.

In December 2021, the WHO Health Systems Preparedness Mission completed its work in Turkmenistan and called on the country's authorities to "intensify efforts to detect COVID-19." Meanwhile, the Turkmen authorities are concerned about the emergence of a new variant of the coronavirus called "omicron" and are considering strengthening measures to prevent possibly another wave of the disease.⁶²

Uzbekistan. In 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Resolution No. 299, which approved the Strategy for Achieving the Goals of the «Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction for 2015-2030» in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy.

In September 2020, the UN Country Team finalized the new [UN Framework for Sustainable Development \(2021-2025\)](#), which was approved and adopted by the Government of Uzbekistan. The Cooperation Framework formulates a collective UN response to Uzbekistan's support for achieving the national Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it is the main tool for planning and implementing all UN development activities in Uzbekistan in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In March 2021, the UN Country Team in Uzbekistan presented an updated Common Country Assessment⁶³, which considers the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020 and its continuing consequences in 2021, affecting not only public health and the economy, but also many other sectors and numerous socio-economic groups.

⁵⁹ <https://efsd.eabr.org/en/>

⁶⁰ <https://www.interfax.ru/world/792704>

⁶¹ <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/immediate-socio-economic-response-plan-acute-infectious-disease-pandemic-turkmenistan>

⁶² <https://rus.azathabar.com/a/31590297.html> <https://www.euro.who.int/ru/countries/turkmenistan/turkmenistan-response-to-covid-19-pandemic>

⁶³ <https://uzbekistan.un.org/en/126438-united-nations-common-country-analysis-uzbekistan>

This document should provide an analytical basis in the development of programs for the implementation of the Framework Program of Cooperation for 2021-2025.

The Government of Uzbekistan's response to the pandemic (including the creation of a \$1 billion Anti-Crisis Fund, temporary tax breaks, increased health funding, and others) have been praised by the international community.

The World Health Organization (WHO) continues its activities as a technical leader as called for in the Strategic Plan for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response and coordinates with partners through the Incident Management Support Group, the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network by health cluster partners.

In Central Asian countries, WHO supports governments to maximize opportunities to promote health and reduce health inequalities by adopting a multisectoral approach that considers all policy aspects and the need to improve overall governance for health.⁶⁴

In 2020, the Updated Strategy to Combat COVID-19⁶⁵ was adopted. This document serves as a guide for public health authorities to respond to COVID-19 at the national and regional levels and provides relevant updates to the global strategy for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The document also complements and refers to the technical guidelines on COVID-19 preparedness and response published by WHO since the start of the action.

The 2021 [Strategic Plan for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response](#) calls on governments to update national COVID-19 plans, taking into account the findings of 2020, and to anticipate and prepare for the challenges expected in 2021, including preparing all health systems for the safe and equitable use of new tools to combat COVID-19, including vaccines. It is also intended to be used by UN country teams and key partners to develop and update interagency plans to combat COVID-19, as well as to support national governments. The Strategic Plan also outlines regional and global technical and operational platforms that will assist countries throughout 2021 in implementing national action plans, accelerating access to new tools to combat COVID-19, and conducting research and innovation.

The WHO's strategy to ensure global vaccination against COVID-19 by mid-2022⁶⁶ was launched in October 2021 and aims to have 40 percent of people in all countries vaccinated by the end of the year and 70 percent by mid-2022.

In November 2021, the **European Union (EU)** and the UNDP in Kazakhstan announced the launch of a new knowledge-sharing platform on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for Central Asian countries.⁶⁷ The main objective of the Platform is to engage with governments and civil society in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan to achieve the SDGs. Integrating country-level efforts from a regional perspective will help governments and societies build response capacity, including to address the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region. Earlier in 2021, an agreement worth €1 million was signed between the EU and UNDP Kazakhstan to facilitate the process of knowledge exchange between the countries of the region.

Each of the Central Asian countries has its own specific development plans, however, there is also a regional agenda that requires joint efforts. The challenges of climate change, regional inequality, and overall sustainable interaction (these are just some of the important areas) that affect the well-being and prosperity of the entire region cannot be solved alone. Therefore, the SDG platform for Central Asia will promote mutual dialogue among all stakeholders and strengthen regional cooperation, facilitating the exchange of experience and knowledge to develop sustainable solutions.

⁶⁴ <https://www.euro.who.int/ru/health-topics/health-emergencies/coronavirus-covid-19>

⁶⁵ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/strategies-and-plans>

⁶⁶ The WHO's Strategy to Achieve Global COVID-19 Vaccination by mid-2022 https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/immunization/covid-19/strategy-to-achieve-global-covid-19-vaccination-by-mid-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=5a68433c_5

⁶⁷ <https://www.kz.undp.org/content/kazakhstan/ru/home/presscenter/announcements/2021/november/eu-and-undp-launch-regional-platform-on-sdgs-in-central-asia.html>

In July 2020, the European Union⁶⁸ launched a comprehensive solidarity package [Central Asia COVID-19 Crisis Response Programme \(CACCR\)](#), with a budget of €3 million, aimed at meeting the needs of Central Asian countries, where the focus is on Kazakhstan. The World Health Organization's CACCR program will support mitigation of the current outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme will also contribute to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the national health systems of Central Asian countries by building their capacity to respond to similar threats to public health if they arise in the future⁶⁹. The funds will be used to support Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries in the fight against the virus and effectively address the problems of the health system to meet the needs of the most vulnerable segments of the population. The CACCR program will provide 400,000 personal protective equipment kits and 1,000 COVID-19 test kits.

A total of 2 million PCR tests will be conducted in Kazakhstan during the implementation of the CACCR. 10 hospitals in Kazakhstan will be assessed for compliance with the requirements of prevention and control of infectious diseases (IPCR). The CACCR program will contribute to the modernization of 80% of hospital management plans, considering the results of the IPCR assessment, and will provide professional advice on the revision and modernization of national emergency preparedness and response plans, as well as national health safety action plans. Within the framework of the CACCR, trainings will be conducted for 5,000 health workers on the implementation of the requirements of prevention and control of infectious diseases (IPCR), as well as for 400 laboratory staff on the use of PCR tests and biosafety. The CACCR for Central Asian countries is being implemented as part of a €124 million "solidarity package" prepared by the European Union for the Central Asian region as part of the ["Team Europe"](#) global response to COVID-19 programme.

In March 2021, the EU allocated €2.2 million for a project by the WHO Country Office in Uzbekistan to support an effective, rapid, and coordinated response to COVID-19 in Uzbekistan.⁷⁰

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) is the UN focal point for disaster risk reduction. UNDRR oversees the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, supporting countries in its implementation, monitoring, and sharing information on what works to reduce existing risk and prevent the creation of new risk. UNDRR fully supports the WHO's call for global, regional, and national action to scale up investment in programmes and initiatives to protect people's health and well-being from emergencies and disasters, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNDRR is committed to active cooperation with the state emergency structures of the Central Asian countries in the context of disaster risk reduction⁷¹. Among the priorities of the UNDRR should be noted the analysis of disaster risk, the promotion of the development of national and regional strategies, the preparation of local populations for various forms of natural disasters, including the response to COVID-19, as well as the financing of projects in this area.

In turn, the countries of Central Asia continue to actively cooperate with the UNDRR in the development of a regional strategy for disaster risk reduction and national systems for accounting for disaster losses, disaster risk reduction at the population level, and also cooperate within the framework of the activities of the [Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction \(CESDRR\)](#) in Almaty.

During 2019-2023. UNDRR, with the financial support of the European Union, is implementing the Project [Building Resilience to Disasters and Accelerating the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Asia](#), which aims to support the countries of the region in implementing the priorities of the Sendai Framework. The project supports the strengthening of regional coordination, the development of a regional strategy for disaster risk reduction and national loss accounting systems for the Sendai Framework. disasters, population-based disaster risk reduction. The project also includes the development of

⁶⁸ The European Union has adopted the European Strategy for Central Asia, through which the EU plans to build a "stronger, more modern and non-exclusive partnership" with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

⁶⁹ https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kazakhstan/83138/node/83138_ru

https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/russia/97203/node/97203_en

⁷⁰ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/94276/node/94276_en

⁷¹ In June 2021, the UNDRR Brussels division, which covers 55 countries, was officially renamed the "UNDRR Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia". Such restructuring reflects the commitment of the countries of the region to disaster risk reduction as an effective and advanced approach to disaster management and ensuring the country's development.

a disaster resilience strategy for the capitals of the countries of the region. The European Union has provided €3,750,000 for the project over three years.

Central Asian countries have used the Sendai Framework to ensure a prevention- and risk-based approach that addresses disaster risks, including in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in the process of socio-economic recovery.

This initiative also supports the strengthening of the role of CESDRR as a regional coordination center and secretariat of the Regional Forum-Meeting of heads of emergency agencies of central Asian countries. Support at the national level includes recommendations for national disaster risk reduction (DRR) strategies, national disaster loss data systems, and the establishment of national DRR platforms.

Currently, the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Kazakhstan together with THE UNDRR is developing a system for recording data on damage because of natural and man-made emergencies "DesInventar-Sendai"⁷², which is already operating in more than 80 countries around the world.

In September 2021, the [Regional Forum - Meeting of heads of emergency departments of Central Asian countries](#) ended in Tashkent. The Regional Forum was attended by delegations of emergency agencies of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, representatives of UN agencies, donor, international and non-governmental organizations. As a result, the [Final Protocol of the Regional Forum - meeting of the heads of emergency departments of the Central Asian countries](#) was adopted in order to strengthen cooperation between the emergency departments of the Central Asian countries in reducing disaster risks and adapting to climate change.

In November 2021, the [European Forum on Disaster Risk Reduction](#) was held in Matosinhos, Portugal, which was attended by delegations of emergency agencies from Europe, Central Asia and the South Caucasus, as well as representatives of international organizations. The Forum focused on the need to address the systemic, growing, and composite nature of risks, especially in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate emergency. The forum discussed the implementation of the priority areas of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (Roadmap for 2021-2030), methods of disaster risk management considering the interests of people with disabilities, volunteer activities in the prevention of emergency situations, problems, and development of scientific research in the field of disaster risk reduction.

Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA).⁷³ The past 2020 and 2021 have shown that the OSCE's mandate to provide comprehensive security includes more than just responding to conflict, and that the health, safety and protection of people are and remain a priority for the OSCE and its field operations.

Water management, oil spill prevention and transparency of the extractive industry are the main topics of THE OSCE's environmental activities in Kazakhstan. **The OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan**⁷⁴ promotes regional cooperation on environmental issues, supports Kazakhstan's efforts in the transition to a green economy, and promotes the implementation of the Aarhus Convention on Public Access to Information and Participation in Environmental Decision-Making in the country.⁷⁵

In October 2021, the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, in collaboration with the Supreme Court and the Legal Policy Research Center in Kazakhstan, organized an online roundtable on access to justice during the

⁷²The DesInventar-Sendai system supports dialogue on risk management and disaster risk reduction planning among all stakeholders from the local to the regional level. This is especially important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has demonstrated the need to accelerate disaster risk reduction and improve the management and exchange of information. In addition, this program allows you to analyze trends and consequences of disasters in a wide range of sectoral and socio-economic indicators. The implementation of the DesInventar-Sendai programme is expected to help Central Asian countries develop a sustainable disaster information management system in line with the Monitoring System of the Sendai Framework.

⁷³ Kazakhstan chaired the OSCE in 2010, and the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are OSCE participating States. The Parliament of Kazakhstan made an official statement about the desire to obtain observer status at PACE, and Kyrgyzstan received the status of a "partner in democracy" of PACE.

⁷⁴<https://www.osce.org/programme-office-in-nur-sultan>

⁷⁵<https://www.un.org/ru/documents/declconv/conventions/orhus.shtml>
<https://aarhus.osce.org/ru/node/12>

COVID-19 pandemic, where representatives of official bodies, civil society, and local and international experts discussed current challenges faced in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. existing best practices online.⁷⁶

On October 29, 2021, the OSCE Regional Online Conference on the Protection of Human Rights in Central Asia during the COVID-19 Pandemic was held.⁷⁷ The event was organized by the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan in cooperation with the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe, the OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan and provided a platform for the exchange of experience and knowledge among the participants.

In October 2021, in Turkestan, Kazakhstan, with the support of the OSCE Programme Office in Nur-Sultan, a two-day round table was held on the implementation of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in Kazakhstan,⁷⁸ including the application of the Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers and amendments on genetically modified organisms in accordance with the new Environmental Code of Kazakhstan, which entered into force on July 1, 2021. Attendees also discussed the challenges faced by the public during the COVID-19 pandemic and highlighted the importance of broader teleconferencing tools.

In November 2021, a two-day XII Central Asian Internet Forum *Development of the Internet Sphere in Central Asia InternetCA-2022*⁷⁹ was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The event, which discussed issues related to national legislative practices of Internet regulation in Central Asia, international standards of Internet regulation, freedom of speech and opportunities for self-regulation, organized by the OSCE Program Office in Nur-Sultan

The work *of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek*⁸⁰ is aimed at assisting the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in addressing environmental safety and disaster risk reduction issues. The Office also works to ensure the proper competence of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Kyrgyz Republic in the field of information management, telecommunications and geoinformation technologies, supports interaction between the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan in the management of water resources and the use of the infrastructure of border rivers.

In order to promote regional dialogue in Central Asia on water resources management and dam safety, *the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe*⁸¹ promotes international conventions and organizes country representatives to discuss common challenges and opportunities. The Office is currently supporting Tajikistan in improving environmental policy, environmental education, and public participation in the context of the SDGs, as well as five Aarhus Centres located throughout the country, where the public could learn about public policies and legislation in the field of environmental protection. A new disaster risk reduction project developed by the OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe aims to increase community resilience and capacity to respond to emergencies and natural disasters on a national scale. Assistance to the Committee on Emergency Situations and Civil Defence of Tajikistan includes, inter alia, the mentoring of trainers and the development of teaching and learning materials to improve the quality and scale of training centrally and especially in the regions.

The main activities of the *OSCE Center in Ashgabat*⁸² are aimed at raising awareness of environmental problems and building capacity to address these problems. The Center is assisting the Aarhus Center in Turkmenistan to support the implementation of the country's international obligations under the Aarhus Convention and other international environmental instruments. In 2021, the OSCE Center in Ashgabat actively contributed to the development of national policies for the sustainable use of natural resources and environmental legislation. In addition, a platform was provided for discussions at the national level and the promotion of regional dialogue on environmental issues.

In order to stimulate the economy in rural areas and strengthen social stability, *the OSCE Project Coordinator in Uzbekistan* (PCUz)⁸³ cooperates with organizations such as the Farmers' Council and the Association of

⁷⁶<https://www.osce.org/ru/programme-office-in-nur-sultan/501490>

⁷⁷<https://www.osce.org/programme-office-in-nur-sultan/502900>

⁷⁸<https://www.osce.org/programme-office-in-nur-sultan/500137>

⁷⁹<https://www.osce.org/programme-office-in-nur-sultan/507929>

⁸⁰<https://www.osce.org/programme-office-in-bishkek>

⁸¹<https://www.osce.org/programme-office-in-dushanbe>

⁸²<https://www.osce.org/centre-in-ashgabat>

⁸³<https://www.osce.org/project-coordinator-in-uzbekistan>

Businesswomen, organizing trainings for farmers and representatives of small and medium-sized businesses. Other projects are aimed at amending the country's Land Code and preparing guidelines for improving the structure and mechanisms of governance in large state-owned companies. In fact, the PCUz has already begun work on a strategy to help, as part of the OSCE's commitment to mitigate the transnational threat of COVID-19 in Uzbekistan. First, the issues of organizing remote work to ensure the safety of personnel were resolved and the role in confronting the pandemic was defined as an OSCE field mission.

The World Bank (WB) is coordinating with partners to accelerate the global response and support countries in the global emergency, especially about the response to COVID-19.

Many of these initiatives have been made possible by European Union funding under the auspices of the programme "Strengthening Financial Resilience and Accelerating Risk Reduction in Central Asia". The programme is being implemented by the World Bank under the management of the Global Fund for Disaster Reduction and Recovery.⁸⁴

Tajikistan was among the first countries to receive emergency support from the World Bank to respond to the pandemic. In April 2020, the WB approved financial support of \$11.3 million to strengthen health care capacity, provide emergency cash assistance to poor households, and effectively inform the public about how to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. Since then, the WB has provided additional financing of \$21.2 million to further strengthen Tajikistan's response to COVID-19, first aid to vulnerable households, vaccine procurement and distribution, and scaling up earlier interventions.

Like Tajikistan, all countries in Europe and Central Asia have been severely affected by COVID-19. To help countries cope with the health, social, and economic impact of the pandemic, the WB has so far committed more than \$1.8 billion to help countries cope with the health, social, and economic impacts of the pandemic.⁸⁵

At the beginning of the pandemic in Tajikistan, [Emergency COVID-19 Project](#) helped provide about 100 new fully equipped beds in intensive care units in health facilities and strengthened the overall capacity of the health system to treat people infected with COVID-19. In addition, urgently needed materials for the detection and prevention of COVID-19 were purchased, including testing kits, laboratory reagents, and personal protective equipment for medical personnel. In February 2021, in addition to the \$8.63 million allocated for vaccine procurement, the WB helped Tajikistan in the form of a \$12.57 million grant under the project, to further strengthen the health system and protect vulnerable groups.⁸⁶

In Uzbekistan, the WB is supporting the government's efforts to strengthen the capacity of the national health system to treat COVID-19 patients through a project that has purchased more than 1115 pieces of modern medical equipment worth about \$21.5 million.

In April 2020, the WB approved the Uzbekistan COVID-19 Emergency Response Project (International Development Association, IDA loan: \$95 million with a maturity of 30 years and a delay of 5 years), which aims to strengthen the capacity of health and social protection systems to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in Uzbekistan.⁸⁷

The WB's assistance to the Europe and Central Asia region also includes supporting the incomes of the poorest and most vulnerable households, as well as the unemployed. This means working with national and local governments to improve and expand social protection initiatives. In Uzbekistan, the WB helped the government expand social protection coverage to support more people affected by the economic crisis. From November 2020 to February 2021, more than a million households received \$51.8 million in benefits to low-income families. In addition, from December 2020 to May 2021, citizens who lost their jobs were granted more than 75,000 unemployment benefits totaling \$ 3.7 million. In Tajikistan, the WB funded a program that

⁸⁴ The programme aims to improve financial sustainability and risk-based investment planning to build resilience to natural disasters and climate change in Central Asia. Activities are being implemented in five Central Asian countries including Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The budget of the Programme is EUR 4.6 million. The implementation period of the Program: from July 2019 to December 31, 2023. Resource: <https://www.gfdrr.org/en/program/UUUUSR-tsentrlnov-azii>

⁸⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/11/22/toward-a-resilient-recovery-battling-the-pandemic-in-europe-and-central-asia>

⁸⁶ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/02/22/tajikistan-receives-additional-financing-for-its-covid-19-response>

⁸⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/loans-credits/2020/04/24/uzbekistan-emergency-covid-19-response-project>
<https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P173827>
<https://www.adb.org/projects/documents/uzb-54282-001-rrp>

provided one-time emergency remittances to more than 65,000 poor families with young children. As many families have been forced to cut their meals because of the rapid rise in food prices, these emergency funds have helped them provide enough food. Thanks to the additional financing approved by the Bank in February 2021, an additional 70,000 people in Tajikistan will receive such assistance. In February 2021, the WB approved additional funding for the COVID-19 Emergency Project in Tajikistan, including \$8.63 million for the purchase and supply of related vaccines. With the support of other development partners and through COVAX, more than 5 million doses of the vaccine had been administered to Tajikistan by mid-November.

In the Kyrgyz Republic [Emergency Support for Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises](#) project provided financial assistance and rehabilitation support to up to 65,000 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the country that had suffered from closures, loss of income and lost trading opportunities. In addition, the project funds contributed to the timely payment of pensions and other social insurance benefits for up to six months.

The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group, the World Health Organization, and the World Trade Organization have joined forces to accelerate access to COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics through the use of multilateral financial and trade solutions, especially for low- and middle-income countries.⁸⁸ The Task Force will monitor and coordinate the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, working with governments and partners at the global and local levels to remove financial and trade barriers to ensure that vulnerable populations have access to these vital tools. These actions support the goals of ACT-Accelerator⁸⁹ and additional initiatives.

The Task Force tracks specific global and country gaps to support faster and more targeted solutions to accelerate access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments through a website⁹⁰ that includes a global database and country dashboards.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC/CAR) are actively involved in helping countries in Central Asia. In 2020, USAID allocated \$800,000 to prepare laboratory systems for large-scale trials and to inform the public about protections against COVID-19. This organization has helped all five Central Asian countries without exception, and also in early April 2020 sent a humanitarian cargo with personal protective equipment for medical personnel of the countries of the region. CDC/CAR has allocated \$1.6 million. to purchase laboratory supplies and equipment for COVID-19 testing, and to organize trainings for health workers. In 2020, USAID allocated \$866,000 to Tajikistan to help prepare laboratory systems, intensify case searches, and support epidemiological surveillance in general. CDC/CAR provided \$1.69 million to Tajikistan. for the purchase of laboratory supplies, the training of medical personnel, the provision of technical assistance for border health testing, and the development and implementation of clinical protocols. In the Kyrgyz Republic USAID in 2020 allocated \$913,000 for three organizations: WHO, Abt Associates and IFRC, which will trace contacts and identify cases in Kyrgyzstan. These funds will also be used to prepare laboratories for mass testing and to inform the public about COVID-19.

The German Federal Foreign Office, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe/UN ECE, the European Union, the Blue Peace Initiative of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia launched the Green Central Asia initiative in 2020. This initiative aims to address the challenges of the environment, climate change and water sustainability and is part of Germany's activities in the field of climate change and security within the framework of the UN, as well as within the framework of the EU-Central Asia Strategy adopted in June 2019.

The aim of GIZ's Green Central Asia programme is to improve access to climate change risk information and analysis so that participating countries can more accurately assess its impacts and take preventive measures.

⁸⁸ <https://www.covid19taskforce.com/en/programs/task-force-on-covid-19-vaccines>

⁸⁹ The ACT-Accelerator initiative was launched at the end of April 2020 at a joint event organized by the Director-General of the World Health Organization, the President of France, the President of the European Commission and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and brought together governments, health organizations, scientists, business, civil society and philanthropists to accelerate the process of ending the pandemic. Source: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator/funding-tracker>

⁹⁰ <https://www.covid19taskforce.com/en/programs/task-force-on-covid-19-vaccines>

This document was developed in accordance with the provisions of the Joint Declaration signed following the high-level conference on the launch of the Green Central Asia initiative held in Berlin in 2020 between the Federal Republic of Germany and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.⁹¹

The initiative is implemented by the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the Potsdam Helmholtz Center and the German-Kazakh University. As part of the initiative, a joint action plan will be developed in close cooperation with partner countries, which will serve as a roadmap for joint action, including cooperation with international partners, for the period from 2021 to 2024.

To strengthen the policy dialogue initiated and in order to raise public awareness of environmental, climate and water sustainability issues, the Green Central Asia programme will focus on working with the media, including social networks. In June 2021, the second online meeting of the working group on the adoption of a joint action plan within the framework of the Green Central Asia Initiative was held.⁹²

Based on the analysis of available open data, it can be noted that in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the largest international financial organizations that provided financing to overcome the challenges of the pandemic are the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the largest loan was provided the International Monetary Fund.

Measures of credit and financial support to the countries of Central Asia from global development banks and other foreign financial organizations in order to increase the viability of state institutions in confronting and overcoming the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are analyzed in sufficient detail and set out in *the publication prepared within the framework of the [Giving Voice, Driving Change – from the Borderland to the Steppes Project](#)*. This article examines assistance from international financial institutions in the form of cash financing, which includes concessional lending, grants, investments, and other forms of financial income in favor of these countries as of October 2020.

As of September 2021, the financing of international development banks in the countries of Central Asia has increased by one and a half times. Almost 85% of the volume falls on Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.⁹³

There is much evidence of the active involvement of national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, civil society organizations, other non-governmental organizations, citizens' initiatives and volunteers who have made a significant contribution to overcoming the current COVID-19 crisis by ensuring that no one is left behind. The activities of NGOs are largely determined by the grant policy of donor organizations. In the countries of Central Asia, more than 500 environmental non-governmental organizations are registered. Funding, and therefore the opportunity to operate, are given to those NGOs whose mission is consistent with the policy of the funds (this is more than a third of their total number).

The present report did not seek to analyze the activities of all these organizations. For this reason, this section provides selected facts of the most active NGOs in the region.

IFRC. National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.⁹⁴ The Red Crescent of Kazakhstan, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) with the financial support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), launched a nationwide project in May 2020⁹⁵ [to inform the population about coronavirus infection COVID-19](#)). The project will cover all regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan,

⁹¹ <http://greencentralasia.org/ru/doc/1603263016>

⁹² <http://greencentralasia.org/ru/posts/1603259067/1018>

⁹³ <http://ranking.kz/ru/a/infopovody/finansirovanie-mezhdunarodnyh-bankov-razvitiya-v-stranah-ca-vyroslo-za-god-v-poltora-raza-pochti-85-obyoma-prihoditsya-lish-na-uzbekistan-i-kazakhstan-prichyom-pervyi-lidruet-s-bolshim-otryvom>

⁹⁴ <https://redcrescent.kz/en/home/>

<http://www.redcrescent.kg/ru>

<http://www.redcrescent.tj/>

<https://www.tgymj.gov.tm/en/>

<https://redcrescent.uz/ru/>

⁹⁵ <https://www.icrc.org/ru/cto-delaem/koronavirus-pandemiya-koronavirusnoy-infekcii-covid-19>

including remote areas, in order to disseminate information on prevention and protection measures among the population as effectively as possible, as well as to increase the degree of confidence in official sources.

The project is planned to reach up to 3 million people, including remote areas of the country. For this project, the Kazakhstan Red Crescent is mobilizing more than 1,000 volunteers across the country, who will receive special training to work with the population and properly provide information about COVID-19. All volunteers will receive special training to work with the public and will receive the most accurate information about COVID-19.

Also, in order to further combat COVID-19, the IFRC is launching a project to train medical personnel of the health care system of Kazakhstan on algorithms and safety protocols when working with people diagnosed with COVID-19. About 350 trainers will be trained in all regions, who, in turn, will train their colleagues. Thus, it is planned to train more than 5,000 doctors, nurses and paramedics throughout the country.

The Red Crescent Society of Uzbekistan and UNICEF signed a cooperation agreement on the program for 2021-2025. The parties will cooperate in the field of disaster risk reduction, emergency preparedness and other programs.⁹⁶

The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Resolution No. 213-f of 22.04.2020) created the Kindness and Support Foundation, the funds of which are directed to provide large families, singles, the elderly and people with disabilities with cash, consumer goods, medicines and other essential products for the period of the coronavirus pandemic and quarantine of large families in need of social protection. various charity events are held.

The representative office of the German public association Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Kazakhstan⁹⁷ in 2021 carried out a study [Kazakhstan and COVID-19: media, culture, politics](#), which analyzed the content, discourse and rhetoric of Kazakhstani media during the COVID-19 pandemic. This publication shows how the media responded to government policies during quarantine, and explores media content and the role of the media in spreading domestic violence, culture and the arts.

Following the announcement of quarantine in Kazakhstan, the Board of Trustees of **the Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan⁹⁸** decided to allocate a special reserve of \$500,000 to help the most vulnerable groups of the population during the COVID-19 pandemic. The initiative of the Soros Foundation-Kazakhstan was aimed at helping the state to improve the effectiveness of the response to the pandemic and its consequences related to various spheres of our lives. The Foundation decided to announce the acceptance of applications to support the rights of socially vulnerable groups during COVID-19, including: the elderly, people with disabilities, patients of palliative services, children with special educational needs, prisoners, migrants, etc., as well as to counter misinformation, expand access to online education, monitor the spending of the state budget to combat the pandemic, protection and promotion of human rights and freedoms in a state of emergency.

In April 2020, the **Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan⁹⁹** initiated the Hotline 118 project in cooperation with the Office of the President, the Ministry of Health, the Bishkek City Hall, Kyrgyztelecom and the Swiss project "Reforms of Medical Education".

CHAPTER 5: Assessment and analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on disaster risk management and sustainable development.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which turned out to be a new and completely unexpected type of systemic risk of a biological and social nature in the world, led in the countries of Central Asia in 2020-2021 to an outbreak of a potentially severe acute respiratory disease of over 1.47 million people, the death of about 22.6 thousand people, disruption of normal life of almost the entire almost 75 million population of the region,

⁹⁶ <https://redcrescent.uz/ru/news/ru-obshchestvo-krasnogo-polumesyatsa-uzbekistana-i-yunisef-podpisali-soglashenie-o-sotrudnichestve/>

⁹⁷ <http://fes-dee.org/n/cms/13/>

⁹⁸ https://www.soros.kz/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/SFK_report_2020_ru.pdf

⁹⁹ <https://soros.kg/>

caused and continues to take a serious toll on the socio-psychological well-being and public health of the population, with a very negative impact on the quality and standard of living of tens of millions of people, in particular the most vulnerable segments of the population, including women and children, to a significant slowdown in economic growth and sustained economic growth. sustainable development, the emergence of numerous problems of political, socio-economic and environmental problems.

1. Brief Assessment of Disaster Risk Management in the Pre-Covid Period (January-March 2020)

It should be noted that despite the fact that this coronavirus appeared at the end of 2019 and began to spread "by leaps and bounds" around the world, and on January 30, 2020, the WHO can be said to have "raised the alarm" and declared this outbreak a public health emergency of international concern, the countries of Central Asia had enough time and opportunities. Until mid-March, no state (*except Turkmenistan*) gave it due attention, could not predict the possibility of the penetration of the epidemic and a massive infectious disease of people, with large human losses, did not introduce strict sanitary-epidemiological and quarantine measures and did not take other restrictive and emergency measures, including widespread public awareness.

Based on the foregoing, it can be stated that the state systems of disaster risk management and resilience of the countries of Central Asia (except Turkmenistan) did not work "to put it mildly" properly and failed to ensure the safety of their territories from the penetration of deadly infection, as well as to strengthen the preparedness of the public health system and in general. state governing bodies, forces and means, the population to counteract and the upcoming fight against the mass infectious disease of people.

2. Assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on public health and public health

The indicative morbidity and mortality rates from the COVID-19 pandemic per 100,000 people are clearly displayed in Table 5. 1 and 5.2.

Table 5.1: Indicative COVID-19 incidence rates per 100,000 people

No	Country	Population million people.	Number of cases thousand people.	Figures per 100,000 people
	Kazakhstan	18,5	1 070,6	5 787
	Kyrgyz Republic	6,5	184,6	2 886
	Republic of Tajikistan	9,5	17,0	180
	Turkmenistan	6,0	0,0	0
	Uzbekistan	33,5	198,5	593
Central Asia		74,0	1 470,7	1 987
World		7 500	285 000,0	3 800

Table 5.2. Indicative COVID-19 death rates per 100,000 people

No	Country	Population million people.	Number of deaths, thousands	Figures per 100,000 people
	Kazakhstan	18,5	18,2	98,4
	Kyrgyz Republic	6,5	2,8	43,0
	Republic of Tajikistan	9,5	0,12	1,3
	Turkmenistan	6	0	0,0
	Uzbekistan	33,5	1,5	4,5
Central Asia		74,0	22,7	30,6
World		7 500,0	5 420,0	72,2

On a regional scale, if we compare the consequences of COVID-19 pandemic in terms of morbidity and deaths, from an indicative calculation per 100,000 people, Kazakhstan suffered more than other countries in the region, further in descending direction Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. And least of all, where, according to official data, no cases of the disease and deaths were recorded, Turkmenistan.

Based on the indicators of mass infectious morbidity and mortality in the countries of Central Asia (except Turkmenistan), it can be concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to disruption of the normal functioning of tens of millions of people, has caused and continues to cause serious damage to the socio-psychological state and public health of the population, especially vulnerable segments of the population, including women and children.

At the same time, it should be noted that if we compare the average indicative data on morbidity and mortality from this dangerous infection per 100,000 people, then on a regional scale, the indicative indicators of the Central Asian countries are lower than the same indicators at the global level, except for Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁰

Stating that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the emergence in the countries of Central Asia in 2020-2021 of numerous economic, social, environmental problems, a large-scale emergency, it is also necessary to note that in all countries of the region there are no official quantitative and qualitative data on the total socio-economic damage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, losses, costs of eliminating their consequences, not to mention the needs in order to ensure readiness for future such risks, for example, for the possible spread of the "omicron strain", which has already penetrated into more than 90 countries of the world, taking with it new human lives.

3. Assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on economic growth and sustainable development

In the last decade, until 2020, the countries of Central Asia, according to national statistical offices, generally achieved sustainable rates of economic growth, from 4-5% to 7-7.5%.

This testifies that despite global, regional, and domestic political events, financial and economic crises, socio-economic processes, jumps in prices for energy and other goods, devaluation of national currencies, natural and other disasters, shocks and others. the countries of Central Asia, some at a faster pace, others at a slower pace, have been moving steadily along the path of economic growth and sustainable development.

Table 5.3.: GDP growth dynamics of Central Asian countries (%)¹⁰¹

	2017	2018	2019	2020s	2021 (**forecast)	2022 (**forecast)
Kazakhstan	4,1	4,1	4,5	-2,6	2,5	3,5
Uzbekistan	4,5	5,4	5,6	1,6	4,3	4,5
Turkmenistan*	6,5	6,2	6,3	1,8	-	-
Kyrgyzstan	4,5	3,8	4,5	-8,6	3,8	4,5
Tajikistan	7,1	7,3	7,5	4,5	3,5	5,5

Source: statistical agencies of central Asian countries; *knoema.ru/atlas ** World Bank Forecast

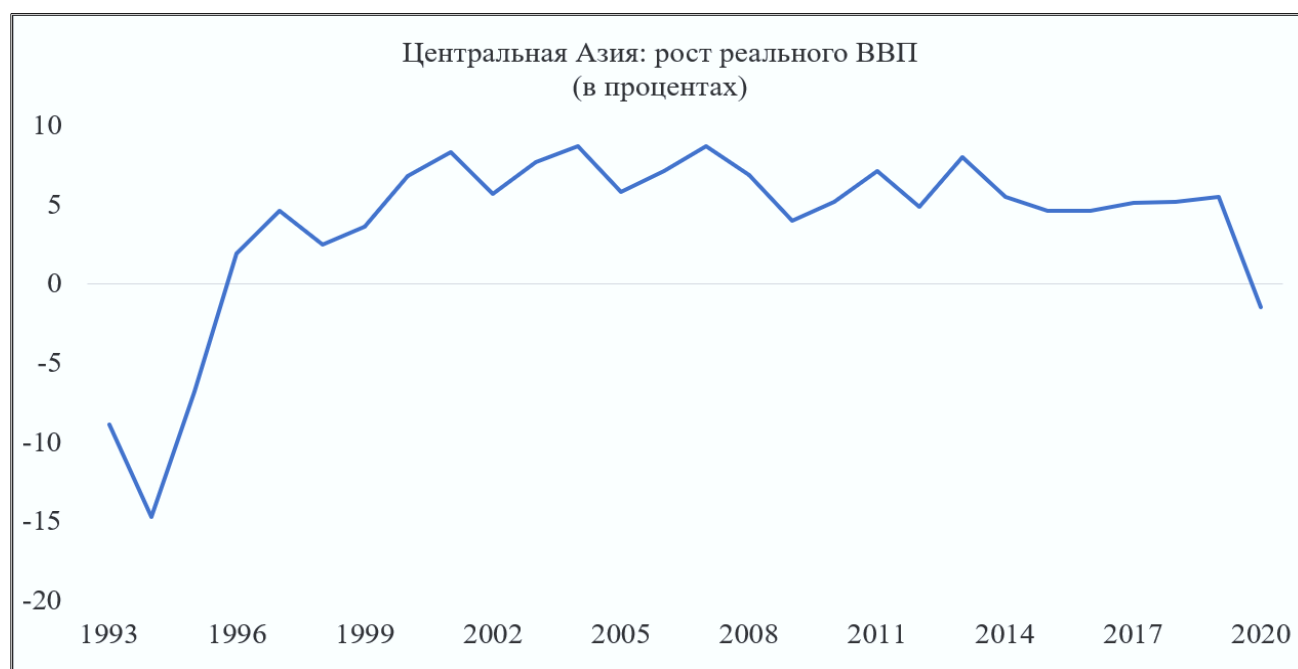
Among the countries of Central Asia, according to the data given in Table 5.3. , the growth rate of the economy decreased in Kazakhstan from 4.5 to -2.6 percent, and in Kyrgyzstan from 4.5 to -8.6 percent. Although in other economies of the region there was still positive growth, nevertheless its rate decreased significantly: in Uzbekistan - from 5.6 to 1.6 percent, in Turkmenistan - from 6.3 to 1.8 percent, and in Tajikistan - from 7.9 to 7.5 percent.

However, from March 2020 to the present (December 2021), during the fight against coronavirus infection, the governments of the Central Asian countries, depending on the evolving situation with the spread, disease and mortality, were forced to introduce state of emergency and implement a set of strict restrictive measures aimed at preventing the spread of infection, carrying out large-scale quarantine and sanitary-epidemiological measures, introducing social distancing, banning the free movement of people and transport, closing borders, enterprises, organizations and institutions, suspending and completely stopping the work of production, trade and catering facilities, small and medium-sized businesses and individual entrepreneurship, preventing mass gatherings of people in public places.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

¹⁰¹ https://cis.minsk.by/news/19563/sostojanie_i_perspektivy_ekonomicheskogo_sotrudnichestva_stran_centralnoj_i_juzhnoj_azii

Table 5.4.: Central Asia, real GDP growth (percentage) from 1993 to 2020¹⁰²



The COVID-19 pandemic has led not only to a health crisis, but also to a significant decline in economic activity in all Central Asian countries in 2020-2021, a decline in productivity, exports and imports, tax revenues, external and domestic revenues, payments, remittances, lower incomes, investments, currency devaluation, increased spending, higher prices for energy, industrial and other goods, food, the growth of unemployment and poverty and other negative processes, and in aggregate to a decrease in the rate of economic growth, and hence progressive sustainable development, with all the ensuing negative consequences both for States and for the entire population, especially its poorest and most vulnerable part, including the elderly, women and children.

The World Bank estimates that the economic turmoil of 2020 will push between 1.4 million and 1.9 million Central Asians below the poverty line of \$3.2 a day.¹⁰³

At the same time, it should be noted that the sharpest drop in key economic indicators was noted in 2020, precisely during the most difficult period of large-scale spread of coronavirus infection and the introduction of state of emergency and strict restrictive measures.

And in 2021, central Asian governments have already been able to take control of the COVID-19 case, improve economic governance, gradually ease restrictions, and revive economic activity, including by stimulating, establishing, and restoring trade and industrial ties, importing and export goods, attracting investments, supporting entrepreneurs, introducing relaxations in taxation, partial debt cancellation, providing social support to the most vulnerable segments of the population and other socio-economic measures.

Ultimately, a sustainable and long-term recovery from the crisis will depend on governments being able to create the necessary environment for private sector development and to transform education and health systems not only to offset the damage caused by the pandemic, but also to guarantee quality development. The Central Asian region could fully recover from the worst economic downturn in 25 years if it followed this course.¹⁰⁴

4. Emergency impact assessment and disaster risk management while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic

¹⁰² <https://blogs.worldbank.org/ru/europeandcentralasia/central-asia-first-economic-contraction-quarter-century>

¹⁰³ <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34518/9781464816437.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/ru/europeandcentralasia/central-asia-first-economic-contraction-quarter-century>

In total, in 2020 and 2021, about 30,000 emergency situations occurred in the region, according to emergency agencies, including fires, from which hundreds of thousands of people suffered in varying degrees of severity, more than 3,300 people died.

Table 5.5.: Emergency statistics for Central Asian countries for 2020 and nine months of 2021 (for the period of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic)

No	Country	Number of Emergencies	Pryrody	Echnogenic	Damage million dollars.	Chelovech sacrifices
	Kazakhstan	24 395	2 824	21 571	30,2	3 515
	Kyrgyzstan	74	47	27	18,9	2 698
	Tajikistan	4 600	75	4 525	17,8	773
	Turkmenistan	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
	Uzbekistan	160	56	104	11,8	No data
	Central Asia	29 229	3 002	26 227	78 710 578	6 986

It should be noted that in each country the accounting of emergency situations, victims and economic damage is carried out in its own way, indicators and indicators are applied differently, sometimes taking into account fires, in others without, and so on. As for Turkmenistan, it is not possible to find data on emergencies in the public domain, probably due to the fact that the emergency department of this country is one of the structural units of the Ministry of Defense.

In our expert opinion, the available data on the consequences of emergency situations do not fully reflect the number of emergencies, deaths, injured, as well as the actual size of the socio-economic consequences. In addition, the size of losses is not taken into account at all, which of course negatively affects the effective planning and implementation of measures for disaster risk reduction, as well as reconstruction and rehabilitation, taking into account the principle of "make better, more sustainable than it was".

For example, almost all the countries of Central Asia, in 2020 and more in 2021, suffered from earthquakes, floods and gray hair, as well as from the effects of climate change, record high temperatures, low precipitation, lack of irrigation water and low crop yields. The upstream countries of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have experienced a lack of water for agricultural production, as well as for filling reservoirs and generating electricity. The downstream countries, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, which are more in need of water in the summer, were subjected to a shortage of irrigation water, severe drought, loss of crop yields, and livestock deaths.

According to estimates of the Global Fund for Disaster Risk Reduction and Elimination in Central Asia, natural disasters lead to staggering economic losses – according to experts, they amount to an average of 10 billion US dollars annually.

Up to 3 million people in the region suffer from natural disasters every year; more than half of them live in Uzbekistan. It's not just statistics – it's people who die, lose their loved ones, get seriously injured and suffer heavy losses.¹⁰⁵

The data given in Table 5.6. show the average annual economic losses and the number of victims of floods and earthquakes in Central Asian countries alone.

Table 5.6.: Consequences of floods and earthquakes in Central Asia¹⁰⁶

Estimates are calculated in absolute terms of a country's population or GDP.

Source: [Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management](#) (GFDRR)

Country	Number of victims (person, per year)	Economic losses (per year)
Central Asia	2 850 000	\$10,170 million

¹⁰⁵ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/ru/europeandcentralasia/natural-disasters-cost-central-asia-10-billion-year-are-we-doing-enough>

¹⁰⁶ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/ru/europeandcentralasia/natural-disasters-cost-central-asia-10-billion-year-are-we-doing-enough>

<i>Kazakhstan</i>	<i>500 000</i>	<i>\$4,000 million</i>
<i>Kyrgyz Republic</i>	<i>280 000</i>	<i>\$270 million</i>
<i>Republic of Tajikistan</i>	<i>500 000</i>	<i>\$400 million</i>
<i>Turkmenistan</i>	<i>170 000</i>	<i>\$2,700 million</i>
<i>Uzbekistan</i>	<i>1 400 000</i>	<i>\$2,800 million</i>

Based on the foregoing, it can be stated that at the height of the outbreak and control of COVID-19, the countries of Central Asia experienced emergencies of a natural and man-made nature, which led to human casualties, significant material damage and disruption of normal life of the population in the affected areas.

At the same time, it should be noted that due to the efforts undertaken by Governments to combat the pandemic, which require significant financial and material resources, of course, to varying degrees, measures to reduce disaster risk, prevent and adequately respond to natural and man-made emergencies have been weakened.

For example, there is plenty of evidence that the governing bodies, forces and means of emergency agencies of the Central Asian countries, as a matter of priority and in an emergency mode, were involved in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, not to mention other departmental and territorial structures of state civil defense / protection systems.

5. Assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the environment and the environment.

COVID-19 as a potentially severe acute respiratory infection has a negative impact on people and does not directly affect the environment and the environment in any way.

But the fact that the pandemic of all Central Asian countries in 2020-2021 led to mass infectious morbidity and mortality, disruption of the normal functioning of tens of millions of people, a significant decrease in economic activity, of course, had an ambiguous, but still significant impact on the environment and the environment.

The introduction of strict restrictive measures during the fight against COVID-19, a ban on the free movement of transport, the closure of borders, enterprises, especially large, polluting organizations and institutions, the suspension or complete cessation of the work of production, trade and catering facilities, small and medium-sized businesses and individual entrepreneurship, contributed *to the "some improvement"* of ecology and the environment at the expense of *"some reduction"* in the emission of harmful substances and the improvement of air quality, especially in large cities, industrial centers, locations of fuel and energy facilities, chemical, oil refining industries and other industries that are sources of pollution.

However, it can be stated that *"some improvement" in* ecology and the environment due to *"some reduction"* in the emission of harmful substances and an increase in air quality had only a short-term positive impact and could not reverse the existing negative trends associated with greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, ecology and the environment.

In 2021, although the "victory" over the COVID-19 pandemic has not yet been achieved and the threat of penetration of the new coronavirus "omicron strain" has appeared, economic activity has revived in the countries of Central Asia and has practically resumed to the "pre-Covid" scope, which certainly leads to an increase in the production, use of oil, gas, coal, as well as industrial, household and other harmful waste, which contributes to an increase in air quality pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and pressures on the environment and ecosystems.

For example, the southern capital of Kazakhstan, Almaty, for many years the air of the city is characterized by a "high level of pollution".¹⁰⁷ In 2020 the capital of Kyrgyzstan, the city of Bishkek is often in the top three in the ranking for air pollution.¹⁰⁸ Tajikistan, Dushanbe is among the twenty cities with the worst air quality in

¹⁰⁷ <http://airofcentralasia.tilda.ws/kazakhstan>

¹⁰⁸ <http://airofcentralasia.tilda.ws/kyrgyzstan>

the Asia-Pacific region.¹⁰⁹ Uzbekistan in 2019 ranks 9th out of 98 in the ranking of countries in the world with the most polluted air.¹¹⁰

In addition, on the other hand, in recent decades, and especially during the fight against the pandemic, in the countries of Central Asia there has been a sharp increase in the amount of plastic waste, mainly due to the widespread use of plastic packaging.

Almost all central Asian countries in 2020 and 2021, having redirected the main efforts and resources to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, were forced to freeze budget allocations for many activities related to ecology and environmental protection, and this despite the fact that in addition to emissions of harmful substances and air pollution, problems associated with the reduction of glaciers and a decrease in atmospheric precipitation are growing in the region. surface water, shortage of irrigation and drinking water. The region also faces such environmental threats as the drying up of the Aral Sea, the disappearance of biodiversity, local flora and fauna, ecosystem degradation, desertification, drought, extreme temperatures.

Without the adoption by the governments of the Central Asian countries, simultaneously with the fight against COVID-19, of decisive actions to reduce emissions of harmful substances, air pollution, improve the environment and ecosystems, and combat climate change, in the near future the states of the region will face even more serious socio-economic and environmental problems and new challenges.

6. Gender-sensitive assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the quality and standard of living of the population

Most likely, there is no such family or person who themselves, or their relatives and friends, colleagues or acquaintances in one way or another would not be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. There is no doubt that during this period someone himself or someone from his relatives or friends fell ill or suffered a bereavement, someone lost his job, incomes decreased, expenses increased, students and schoolchildren could not study normally, and so on.

The pandemic has increased the number of new poor and unemployed people in all countries. This is one of the main indicators of the quality and standard of living of the population.

For example, in Kyrgyzstan, the poverty rate reached 25.3% (+5.2% from 2019), extreme poverty was 0.9% (+0.4% from 2019) without dividing into women and men, the overall unemployment rate is 5.8% (+0.3% of 2019), including men 5.2 (+0.2% of 2019), women 6.7 (+0.5% of 2019), the population with cash incomes below the poverty line 1,678.3 thousand people (+363, 3 thousand people from 2019).¹¹¹

Tajikistan's poverty rate is 26.3%, Tajikistan's Economy and Trade Minister said.¹¹² However, according to experts, in reality this figure is at least twice as high. But according to the WFP survey, Tajikistan is the poorest country in the CIS, where 47% of the population lives on less than \$ 1.33 per day, and 17% live on less than \$ 0.85.¹¹³

The President of the Republic in 2020 said that according to preliminary calculations, 12-15% or 4-5 million of the population of our country is in a state of poverty.¹¹⁴

The average poverty rate in Kazakhstan in 2020 was 5.3% against 4.3% in 2019. It is reported by the Bureau of National Statistics of the Republic.¹¹⁵

However, in fact, people, citizens of each of the countries of Central Asia know, feel and understand that the statistical and other quantitative and qualitative data on morbidity, mortality, quality and standard of living of the population given at all levels sometimes do not fully reflect the real situation on the ground, since the true data are sometimes not attractive to some politicians, who can sometimes interfere with the management of this data.

¹⁰⁹ <http://airofcentralasia.tilda.ws/tajikistan>

¹¹⁰ <http://airofcentralasia.tilda.ws/uzbekistan>

¹¹¹ <http://www.stat.kg/ru/publications/sbornik-kyrgyzstan-v-cifrah/>

¹¹² <https://tj.sputniknews.ru/20210803/uroven-bednost-tajikistan-1041374016.html>

¹¹³ <https://cabar.asia/ru/tadzhikistan-za-porogom-bednosti>

¹¹⁴ <https://review.uz/post/bednost-v-uzbekistane>

¹¹⁵ <https://kursiv.kz/news/obschestvo/2021-06/v-kazakhstane-uvelichilsya-uroven-bednosti>

What is the real situation? It's obvious! Of course, the closure of state borders, the suspension of the movement of all modes of transport, the transportation of goods, the suspension or complete cessation of the work of production, trade and catering facilities, small and medium-sized businesses and individual entrepreneurship, educational, school and preschool institutions and other restrictive and emergency measures taken to prevent the spread of the pandemic could not but lead to negative consequences in all spheres of life of almost 75 million people of the region.

Almost all segments of the population have suffered from the pandemic to varying degrees. Who has been hit harder and harder by the pandemic?

Women. Mortality rates in Central Asia (and elsewhere in the world) were higher among men, but data indicate that it is women who are bearing the higher socio-economic costs of the pandemic, including rising levels of domestic violence, job loss, increased unpaid care work, and deteriorating working conditions.¹¹⁶

Some sectors with a higher share of female employment have been particularly hard hit by disruptions in supply chains, trade and displacement caused by the pandemic, including textiles, rental housing and catering services, family farm work and, more generally, part-time and informal employment.¹¹⁷

Childcare, which usually rested on the shoulders of the older generation of the family, has become unavailable due to health risks. With the closure of schools, the already disproportionate burden of domestic work on women had increased; In Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, 80% of women reported an increase in household chores compared to 58% of men. As a result, women faced a larger reduction in paid working hours and a more massive loss of jobs: 26% of women in Kazakhstan reported losing their jobs, while among men this figure was 22%. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that women tend to have fewer personal savings and more limited access to bank accounts, and they are more likely to suffer from loss of income due to reduced international remittances (a decrease reported by 88% of women compared to 47% of men).¹¹⁸

Migrants: Lack of skilled jobs in much of Central Asia causes still high levels of labor migration, especially to Russia and Kazakhstan. For labor migrants working in Russia, home to between 2.7 and 4.2 million Central Asian workers, the social and economic consequences of restricting mobility and reducing demand have been disastrous.¹¹⁹ A survey of Central Asian migrants in Russia found that 40% of respondents lost their jobs and 75% were forced to go on unpaid leave, while for the local population these figures were kept at 23% and 48%, respectively.¹²⁰

Children: The closure of higher education institutions, schools has led to a sharp reduction in the number of school days for students and schoolchildren, the risks of long-term negative impact on learning outcomes, human capital development and equality. In many places, teachers and students have switched to distance learning to mitigate this impact. However, many Central Asian countries do not have the necessary resources to implement digital solutions in the field of education due to varying availability. technology and the Internet in the region.

Today, after almost two years of struggle against coronavirus infection, **it can be stated with confidence that the covid-19 pandemic, together with other disasters and problems, has dealt a severe blow to the socio-psychological state, public health, quality and standard of living of the population. , which has had a truly disastrous impact on tens of millions of Central Asian citizens, greatly exacerbating the already dire situation of the most vulnerable segments of the population, especially women and children.**

¹¹⁶ OECD (2021), *Gender Gaps in Eurasia: The Daunting Effects of COVID-19*, OECD, Paris,

<https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/Gender%20gaps%20in%20Eurasia%20The%20Daunting%20effects%20of%20COVID%2019.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ OECD (2021), *Informality and COVID-19 in Eurasia: The Sudden Loss of a Social Buffer*, OECD, Paris, <https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/COVID-19-informality-Eurasia.pdf>.

¹¹⁸ OECD (2021), *Gender Gaps in Eurasia: The Daunting Effects of COVID-19*, OECD, Paris,

<https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/Gender%20gaps%20in%20Eurasia%20The%20Daunting%20effects%20of%20COVID%2019.pdf>.

¹¹⁹ OECD (2021), *Informality and COVID-19 in Eurasia: The Sudden Loss of a Social Buffer*, OECD, Paris, <https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/COVID-19-informality-Eurasia.pdf>.

¹²⁰ Gurevich, V. and A. Kolesnikov (eds.) (2020), "Monitoring of the Economic Situation in Russia: Tendencies and Challenges of Socio-Economic Development", No. 22, Institute of Political Economy, Moscow, <https://www.iep.ru/ru/publikacii/publication/monitoring-ekonomicheskoy-situatsii-v-rossii-20-122-iyul-2020-g.html> (accessed on 28 August 2020).

CHAPTER 6: CENTRAL ASIA: Strengthening the effectiveness of the response to COVID-19 pandemic: *CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, PROPOSALS*

For the Central Asian region, the following can be identified as the main consequences of the global COVID-19 pandemic:

- closure of national borders;
- introduction of emergency situations and states of emergency;
- suspension of air and rail transport;
- quarantine in large cities / isolation of the population;
- ban on holding mass events (sports and cultural);
- closure of educational institutions and small shops;
- lower demand and falling trade volumes;
- interruption or suspension of activities of large, small and medium-sized businesses, individual entrepreneurship;
- a ban on the export of basic food products;
- social and economic instability;
- rising unemployment;
- cessation of immigration and restrictions on movement;
- economic and financial crisis;
- crisis of leadership and management;
- the growth of e-commerce.

This list may not be exhaustive, but it clearly shows that central Asian countries, like the rest of the world, are facing an acute health and economic crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19. However, their preparedness for a crisis of this magnitude remains untested and unexplored.

It should be noted that as the problems of COVID-19 go beyond the borders of the states, the countries of Central Asia began to coordinate regional efforts. Numerous initiatives in the region are under way in the region to respond effectively to such crises.

In Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, specialized state action plans or funds have been established to collect and distribute financial assistance. Most countries in the region have adopted special measures to support business activities by increasing liquidity and lending to business entities through specialized funds and commercial banks.

One of the few positive aspects is the clear desire of national Governments in the region to enhance synergies, especially at a high political level, and their willingness to integrate into regional or subregional and other national programmes (see Section 4.).

The spread of COVID-19 has been a test of response mechanisms in the countries of the region, as well as the limitations associated with an overly centralized decision-making process.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the governments of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan have prepared many bills and resolutions that require a rapid response (see Appendix 1.). Draft laws are usually posted online for public discussion, but mechanisms for online public participation in such discussions are still not effective enough, and sometimes simply absent.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the relationship between the environment and public health into the spotlight. As noted in the OSCE Chairman's report on the response of the Parliamentary Assembly to the COVID-19 crisis, "development can only be sustainable if economic, social, environmental and public health factors are properly balanced and given equal attention by political leadership."¹²¹

Given the uncertainty about the timing, duration, and final impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, various factors and assumptions have been used in preparing the recommendations and proposals in this report.

¹²¹ <https://www.oscepa.org/en/documents/president/reports-22/4067-covid-19-13-2020/file>

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The countries of Central Asia have each followed their own path for more than two decades, and many problems remain unresolved throughout the region.

Among the priority areas for developing and strengthening regional cooperation, advancing disaster risk reduction, supporting efforts to increase country resilience and recovery in the face of the COVID-19 crisis, accelerating the implementation of the Sendai Framework in countries, as well as supporting work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and climate resilience in the region for central Asian countries, the following recommendations can be identified:

1. In the Central Asian region, there is a need to strengthen the disaster risk management system to address the risk of pandemics/biological threats by including these aspects in the relevant strategic documents aimed at achieving goal "E" of the Sendai Framework, as well as in the provisions on operational planning, in order to capture the systemic nature of the risk and ensure a higher level of preparedness of national risk management systems to work on the prevention of complex disasters. and responding to them.
2. National disaster management authorities in central Asian States, speaking on behalf of national and local authorities, should play a leading role in the process of implementing multisectoral multi-hazard and risk assessment methodologies and disaster response plans.
3. The development of scenarios, contingency plans at all levels, based on multiple threat risk mapping, risk assessment (including climate change), gender and vulnerability analysis, and training activities to test the capacity and preparedness of national systems, and to improve their preparedness and response to pandemics are critical. Such activities should be fully integrated into the work of national disaster management authorities.
4. There is a need for a proactive approach and greater coordination, collaboration and information-sharing among those responsible for disaster management and humanitarian assistance in the response to the pandemic crisis, making full use of available capacities and resources.
5. Existing subregional mechanisms and initiatives for disaster risk reduction should be used and transboundary and regional cooperation should be further promoted and strengthened to ensure sustainability.
6. Partnership opportunities must be harnessed to respond to and recover from the pandemic crisis, while ensuring that the principles of gender equality and inclusion are respected.
7. It is highly desirable to strengthen the capacity and expertise of national disaster management authorities with regard to pandemic/biological threat risk through staff development and specialized training in accordance with the Sendai DRR programme, and to support research and development in partnership with the scientific community and the private sector to create innovative solutions aimed at preventing such threats and adequate response to them.
8. The most vulnerable populations, especially those living in conflict zones or refugee camps, as well as women and minorities, must be protected. At the same time, promote greater participation and equal opportunities for people of all genders, ages and backgrounds.
9. And, of course, we must seriously focus on the most pressing issue of our time: climate change.
10. Strategic thinking is especially important now that we are entering the post-coronavirus era into a new reality, and what it will be very difficult to predict now. Creative and unconventional thinking will have to be done through more efficient use of new communication technologies and the lean, consistent and responsible use of resources, especially in the coming period of economic difficulties.
11. States (in accordance with OSCE recommendations) should:
 - refrain from excessively protectionist and isolationist policies. In particular, one should not succumb to political rhetoric that surges the psychological pressure generated by the emergency and promotes national self-sufficiency in the provision of essential goods, nor should one seek to gain anything from the asymmetric consequences of this emergency in order to change the

structure of transnational production and trade networks in their favour. There is a need for effective business continuity planning for critical infrastructure and the private sector;

- Introduce stricter regulations to ensure cleaner air, which would help minimize the number of deaths from COVID-19 and related hospitalizations. Governments should ensure better air quality by greening and electrifying transport and reducing greenhouse gas emissions;
- strengthen its commitment to environmental protection, health care and a green economy. The pandemic should give impetus to the development and implementation of plans for environmentally responsible economic recovery throughout the Central Asian region;
- to show solidarity in the reconstruction process. Security corridors should be established to overcome sudden supply disruptions due to the delocalization of production, as well as the resulting shortages;
- Implement sustainable recovery plans by prioritizing green investments, promoting the use of clean energy sources (e.g., through carbon pricing) and low-carbon technologies, promoting green finance, and ensuring a just transition to a greener way of life by providing the necessary support;
- To work purposefully at the local and global levels, including through cross-border cooperation. Transboundary ecosystem management measures should be strengthened by combating the transmission of zoonotic diseases, improving support for ecosystem functions and promoting the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements;
- Establish emergency communication channels to better coordinate responses to similar crises in the future, thereby contributing to a safer and brighter future for all citizens.

The main recommendations and suggestions in this report are based on the 2020 OSCE Activity Report, OSCE 2021¹²², the publication "An Assessment Study of the Role of National Disaster Management Organizations in the Response to the COVID-19 Crisis and Its Impact on the Activities of the NSSB. Summary". Author: Wasko Popovski M. A., UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, February 2021¹²³, as well as publications of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):

- [OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) COVID-19 crisis response in Central Asia. Updated 16 November 2020](#)
- [After the COVID-19 pandemic. Prospects for economic recovery in Central Asia, OECD. 2021](#)

In the preparation of these recommendations and proposals, materials and publications WHO, OCHA, UNDP, UNSDRR, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNECE, UN-HABITAT, WFP, EU, OSCE-OCEEA were also used and other international organizations available in open sources and/or on the Internet websites of those organizations.

It is hoped that the **Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction in Almaty (CESDRR)**, as a permanent interstate body in the Central Asian region, will be able to take a leading and decisive role in the above initiatives.

CONCLUSION

This Report is intended to provide information on the issues under consideration to all interested parties, state bodies authorized in the field of disaster risk reduction, prevention and elimination of emergency situations in the countries of Central Asia, UN Agencies, international and non-governmental organizations and to make a certain contribution to the dialogue on regional cooperation.

This Report and the data presented in it are likely to be the subject of further research and improvement of the analysis carried out in the coming years in order to ensure support and development of regional

¹²² <https://www.osce.org/ru/node/502071>

¹²³ <https://www.undrr.org/media/72498/download>

cooperation between state bodies, international and non-governmental organizations carrying out humanitarian activities in the countries of Central Asia.

The findings, recommendations and proposals outlined in the Report are intended to help national disaster risk reduction authorities, UN country teams and international organizations, and other stakeholders in the Central Asian region learn from the experience of implementing the COVID-19 response and develop recommendations for preventing, mitigating, preparedness and responding to pandemics and threats in the future.

An electronic version of the report (for review) is available on the website of The Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction (CESDRR) in the city. Almaty <http://cesdrr.org/> and on the website of The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) <https://www.osce.org/oceea>.

Annex 1. Regulations related to restrictive measures to contain the spread of COVID-19

Kazakhstan¹²⁴

- Decrees of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 15, 2020 No. 285 "On the introduction of a state of emergency in the Republic of Kazakhstan", dated April 14, 2020 No. 306, dated April 29, 2020 No. 310 "On the extension of the state of emergency in the Republic of Kazakhstan";
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 16, 2020 No. 286 "On measures to ensure socio-economic stability";
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 16, 2020 No. 287 "On further measures to stabilize the economy";
- Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 20, 2020 No. 126 "On measures to implement the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 16, 2020 No. 287 "On further measures to stabilize the economy";
- Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 20, 2020 No. 127 "On Determining the Special Procedure for Public Procurement";
- Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated April 20, 2020 No. 224 "On further measures to implement the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 16, 2020 No. 287 "On further measures to stabilize the economy" on taxation issues" (as amended on 30.10.2020);
- Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated July 30, 2020 No. 489 "On Approval of the National Plan for the Protection of the Life and Health of Kazakhstanis in the Context of the Pandemic";
- Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 27, 2020 No. 141 "On measures to implement the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated March 16, 2020 No. 287 "On further measures to stabilize the economy" on tax policy issues";
- Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated December 31, 2013 No. 1489 "On Approval of the Rules for the Provision of Networks and Means of Communication by Telecom Operators in a State of Emergency";
- Order of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated January 27, 2020 No. 10-r. On measures to prevent the emergence and spread of coronavirus infection in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan" (as amended on February 14, 2020);
- Order of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated January 29, 2020 No. 14-r "On measures to prevent the emergence and spread of coronavirus infection in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan";
- The procedure for crossing the State border of the Republic of Kazakhstan for the period of the state of emergency in the country (approved by the Chairman of the State Commission for Ensuring the State of Emergency Under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan - the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan on March 27, 2020 No. 12-12 / 11-21).

Kyrgyz Republic¹²⁵

¹²⁴ The most complete list of regulatory legal acts regarding quarantine and the state of emergency in the Republic of Kazakhstan, including resolutions of the Chief Sanitary Doctor, decisions of the Operational Headquarters to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection, recommendations / guidelines of the World Health Organization, orders of ministries and other acts is available on the website of the https://kkassiyet.wordpress.com/laws/kazakhstan/lawskz_quarantine/

¹²⁵ The most complete information is available in the Centralized Database of Legal Information of the Kyrgyz Republic on the website of the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic: <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/>

- Law of the Kyrgyz Republic dated May 7, 2020 No. 52 "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (to the Laws of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Public Health", "On Civil Protection");
- Resolution of the Jogorku Kenesh of April 1, 2020 No. 3659-VI "On measures to reduce the negative socio-economic consequences in connection with currency inflation and the spread of coronavirus infection COVID-19";
- Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated March 17, 2020 No. 163 "On measures to prevent the threat of the emergence and spread of coronavirus infection (COVID-19) in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic" (As amended by the Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated May 22, 2020 No. 271);
- Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated March 23, 2020 No. 178 "On Measures to Provide the Population with Medicines and Medical Devices in Connection with the Coronavirus Pandemic" (as amended by Resolutions No. 381 of July 14, 2020, January 27, 2021 No. 25, July 1, 2021 No. 57);
- Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated May 8, 2020 No. 241 On measures to implement the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic on the Stabilization of the Socio-Economic Situation in Connection with Force Majeure Circumstances";
- Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated May 11, 2020 No. 224 "On additional measures to reduce the risks of the spread of coronavirus infection (COVID-19)";
- Orders of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated May 10, 2020 No. 166-r, dated May 10, 2020 No. 166-r, dated March 17, 2020 No. 84-r (As amended by orders of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated March 22, 2020 No. 95-r, March 28, 2020 No. 111-r, April 17, 2020 No. 135-r, May 14, 2020 No. 173-r, June 9, 2020 No. 210-r, August 14, 2020 No. 274-r September 7, 2020 No. 316-r December 4, 2020 No. 390-r, April 14, 2021 No. 89-r).

Tajikistan

- Order of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan dated March 18, 2020 No. 1365 "On the National Commission to Combat COVID-19";
- Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan dated March 22, 2021 No. 83 "On immunization against the infectious disease COVID-19 in the Republic of Tajikistan".

Turkmenistan

Since in Turkmenistan, according to official data, no cases of coronavirus infection were detected , regulations related to restrictive measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 were not adopted.

Uzbekistan¹²⁶

- Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated June 4, 2021 No UP-6241 "On additional measures aimed at further improving the system of social support of the population";
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated March 19, 2020 NoUP-5969 "On priority measures to mitigate the negative impact on the sectors of the economy of the coronavirus pandemic and global crisis phenomena";
- Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated April 3, 2020 NoUP-5978 "On additional measures to support the population, sectors of the economy and business entities during the coronavirus pandemic";

¹²⁶ Resources:
<https://www.lex.uz/en/>
<https://iiv.uz/en/pages/interfaol-xizmatlar-royxati>
<https://www.lex.uz/en/>
<https://www.unicef.org/uzbekistan/media/4586/file/CRIA%20full%20-%20rus.pdf>;

- Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated April 22, 2020 No UP-5984 "On measures to reform the procedure for permanent registration and accounting at the place of stay";
- Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, dated April 22, 2020 No PP-4691 "On measures to attract external assistance funds to support the population, budget, basic infrastructure and business entities during the coronavirus pandemic";
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated March 23, 2020 No. 176 "On additional measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus infection".

Annex 2: Foreign monetary support to Central Asian countries to combat COVID-19.

Resource: <https://cabar.asia/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Statistika-Zarubezhnaya-denezhno-kreditnaya-pomoshh-TSA.pdf>

The application uses data prepared within the framework of the project "Giving Voice, Driving Change – from the Borderland to the Steppes Project" by the Central Asian Bureau for Analytical Reporting (CABAR.asia), which ¹²⁷operates at the IWPR (International Non-Governmental Organization Institute for War and Peace Reporting) in Central Asia in order to analytical support of social processes in the countries of the region.

Analytical article, which deals with assistance from international organizations in the form of cash financing (investments, concessional lending, grants, etc.) and published on the website of [the](https://cabar.asia/en/how-much-money-did-the-central-asian-countries-receive-to-fight-covid-19) <https://cabar.asia/en/how-much-money-did-the-central-asian-countries-receive-to-fight-covid-19>

¹²⁷ <https://cabar.asia/en/about-us>

List of abbreviations

AKAH	Aga Khan Agency for Habitat
CDC/CAR	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention CDC/CAR
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CESDRR	Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction
DREF	Disaster Relief Emergency Fund
DRCU	Disaster response coordination unit (The Kyrgyz Republic)
DRMP	Disaster Risk Management Programme of UNDP in Tajikistan
EU	European Union
EFSD	Eurasian Fund for Stabilization and Development
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IOM	International Organization for Migration
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCEEA	Office of the Coordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
REACT	Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (Tajikistan)
REC	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction/UNDRR
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRD	The United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
