



# The Role of International Organizations in Solving Environmental Problems of The Aral Sea

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**ABSTRACT**

In this article, we will explore the role of international organizations in tackling the environmental problems faced by the Aral Sea. We will delve into the causes behind the ecological crisis, examining the consequences of human activities and the ensuing impacts on the environment, economy, and the well-being of local communities. From there, we will assess the efforts made by various international organizations to mitigate these issues and restore the Aral Sea to its former glory.

**Keywords:**

Main Ecological Problems, Aral Sea Region, Psychology, Population, Environmental Degradation, Water Crisis, Desertification, Salinization, Climate Change, Human Health

The Aral Sea, once one of the largest inland bodies of water in the world, has become a symbol of environmental devastation and human-induced disaster. Situated between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, this once-thriving ecosystem has experienced a dramatic decline in water levels and a subsequent ecological collapse over the past few decades. The severe environmental problems plaguing the Aral Sea region have caught the attention of international organizations, which have played a crucial role in attempting to address the challenges and find solutions to restore the region's ecological balance. The story of the Aral Sea's decline is one of human mismanagement and unintended consequences. In the mid-20th century, the Soviet Union initiated an ambitious irrigation project aimed at transforming the arid landscapes surrounding the sea into thriving agricultural lands. Massive diversion canals were constructed, redirecting the flow of water from the two main rivers that fed the Aral Sea, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya. As a result, the sea began to shrink rapidly, its water volume diminishing at an alarming rate.

The consequences of this ill-fated irrigation scheme were manifold. The receding

waters exposed vast stretches of the seabed, releasing toxic chemicals and pollutants accumulated over decades into the air. Dust storms laden with salt and chemicals swept across the region, creating a hazardous environment for both human and animal populations. The once-thriving fishing industry collapsed, leaving thousands of people unemployed and dependent on meager government support. The local climate underwent drastic changes, leading to increased temperatures, reduced rainfall, and the disappearance of entire ecosystems. Recognizing the severity of the crisis, international organizations stepped in to address the environmental problems plaguing the Aral Sea. These organizations, ranging from United Nations bodies to non-governmental entities, brought together expertise, funding, and a collective determination to find solutions.

One such prominent player in the restoration efforts is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which launched the Aral Sea Regional Programme in 1994. This program focused on three key areas: improving the management of natural resources, enhancing socio-economic

development, and strengthening environmental governance. Through a series of projects and initiatives, the UNDP aimed to foster sustainable development in the region, promote better water management practices, and support the revival of local communities. In addition to the UNDP, the World Bank has played a significant role in addressing the environmental challenges of the Aral Sea. The World Bank's involvement dates back to the early 1990s when it initiated the Aral Sea Basin Program. This comprehensive program aimed to enhance the living conditions of those affected by the environmental crisis, improve water and land management practices, and promote regional cooperation among the Central Asian countries. The World Bank's financial and technical support has been instrumental in implementing various projects, such as the construction of water infrastructure and the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices.

Alongside these international organizations, numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also made substantial contributions to the restoration efforts in the Aral Sea region. NGOs such as the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) and the Aral Sea Foundation have played pivotal roles in raising awareness, mobilizing resources, and implementing on-the-ground initiatives. These organizations have collaborated with local communities, governments, and international partners to restore water resources, support ecological rehabilitation, and promote sustainable livelihoods. Despite the collective efforts of international organizations, the task of solving the environmental problems of the Aral Sea remains a formidable challenge. The complex nature of the crisis, coupled with socio-economic and political factors, has hindered progress in achieving a full recovery. However, the commitment and dedication demonstrated by these organizations provide hope for a brighter future for the Aral Sea and its surrounding communities. In the subsequent sections of this article, we will delve into the specific initiatives undertaken by international organizations, examining their successes, challenges, and the lessons learned along the

way. We will explore the innovative approaches, technological advancements, and policy interventions that have been employed in the quest to revive the Aral Sea and mitigate the adverse effects of its environmental degradation.

To understand the significance of international organizations in addressing the environmental problems of the Aral Sea, it is essential to examine the historical context. The Aral Sea began to shrink in the 1960s when the Soviet Union diverted water from the two major rivers that fed into the sea for agricultural purposes. This diversion severely disrupted the natural inflow of water, leading to the shrinking of the sea and the exposure of large areas of the seabed. The decline in water levels caused numerous ecological consequences, including the disappearance of fish populations, the loss of biodiversity, and the creation of a toxic environment due to the exposure of chemical pollutants.

**Raising Awareness and Advocacy.** International organizations have played a crucial role in raising awareness about the environmental crisis faced by the Aral Sea and advocating for action to address the issues. By highlighting the severity of the problem through research, reports, and media campaigns, these organizations have drawn global attention to the ecological catastrophe unfolding in the region. They have emphasized the need for immediate action to mitigate the negative impacts and restore the Aral Sea to its former state.

**Funding and Resource Allocation.** International organizations have provided financial assistance and allocated resources to support various projects aimed at addressing the environmental problems of the Aral Sea. These funds have been used for initiatives such as water conservation, the restoration of ecosystems, and the improvement of public health conditions. By channeling resources into the region, these organizations have helped implement on-the-ground interventions that seek to alleviate the environmental degradation caused by the shrinking of the Aral Sea.

**Scientific Research and Monitoring**

Another significant contribution of international organizations is their involvement in scientific research and monitoring efforts related to the Aral Sea. By conducting studies and collecting data on various aspects of the ecosystem, including water quality, biodiversity, and climate change, these organizations have generated valuable insights into the environmental problems faced by the region. This knowledge has been instrumental in informing decision-making processes and guiding the development of sustainable solutions.

#### Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

International organizations have also focused on building the capacity of local communities and providing technical assistance to address the environmental challenges of the Aral Sea. This includes training programs on water management, sustainable agriculture, and alternative livelihood options. By empowering local stakeholders with the necessary skills and knowledge, these organizations have sought to create a sustainable future for the region and reduce its dependence on unsustainable practices that contribute to environmental degradation.

#### Successes and Challenges

The efforts of international organizations in addressing the environmental problems of the Aral Sea have achieved some notable successes. For instance, projects aimed at restoring the northern part of the sea have led to a modest increase in water levels and the return of certain fish species. The improved availability of water has also resulted in the revitalization of local agriculture and the development of small-scale industries. These achievements demonstrate the positive impact that collaborative efforts can have on environmental restoration.

However, numerous challenges persist in solving the environmental problems of the Aral Sea. The scale and complexity of the issue require sustained long-term commitment and resources. The socio-economic factors intertwined with the environmental crisis, such as poverty and unemployment, pose additional obstacles to achieving comprehensive solutions.

Additionally, the involvement of multiple stakeholders with diverse interests necessitates effective coordination and cooperation among international organizations, governments, and local communities.

#### Conclusion

The Aral Sea environmental crisis serves as a stark reminder of the significant ecological challenges faced by our planet. International organizations have played a crucial role in addressing these challenges, particularly in the context of the Aral Sea region. Through their efforts in raising awareness, providing funding and resources, conducting scientific research, and offering technical assistance, these organizations have made significant contributions to mitigating the environmental degradation caused by the shrinking of the sea. While successes have been achieved, there is still much work to be done. The restoration of the Aral Sea requires sustained commitment, collaboration, and innovative approaches. International organizations must continue to work closely with governments, local communities, and other stakeholders to develop comprehensive and sustainable solutions that not only address the immediate environmental problems but also promote the long-term well-being of the region. By learning from the lessons of the Aral Sea crisis and building upon the achievements of international organizations, we can strive towards a future where environmental sustainability is prioritized, and the mistakes of the past are not repeated. The role of international organizations in solving environmental problems extends far beyond the Aral Sea, as the challenges faced by our planet demand collective action and global cooperation to ensure a healthier and more sustainable future for all. The role of international organizations in addressing the environmental problems of the Aral Sea cannot be overstated. Through their concerted efforts, these organizations have brought attention to the ecological crisis, mobilized resources, and implemented measures to restore the region's fragile ecosystems. While significant challenges persist, the collective action of these organizations serves as a beacon of hope,

demonstrating the power of international collaboration and the potential for positive change in the face of environmental adversity.

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