Reducing Central Asiaâ€™s vulnerability to glaciers melting

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The UNESCO Office in Almaty, in cooperation with UNESCO's International Hydrological Programme (IHP) and in coordination with the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, held a meeting to develop activities related to climate change impacts on melting glaciers, and particularly to strengthen the resilience by reducing vulnerabilities of Central Asian countries in response to glaciers melting. The discussions focused on two UNESCO project proposals, approved for funding by the Adaptation fund and GEF-UNDP: Reducing vulnerabilities of populations in the Central Asia region from glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) in a changing climate (Adaptation Fund); Strengthening the resilience of Central Asian countries by enabling regional cooperation to assess high-altitude glacio-nival systems to develop integrated methods for sustainable development and adaptation to climate change (GEF-UNDP).

The meeting, organized on 24-26 July 2019 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, brought together representatives of GEF national focal points and designated authorities for the Adaptation Fund in Central Asian countries, relevant governmental entities in the region as well as scientific institutions, international organizations and partners. They focused on the GLOFs project funded by the Adaptation fund during the first day, to present the key project components, the outcomes of the national and community consultations undertaken during the project preparation phase, next steps and the project implementation mechanisms. The second day was dedicated to discussing the main elements of the GEF-UNDP-UNESCO project among the representatives of Central Asian countries, scientists, GEF project focal points, and other stakeholders, to define an outline and timeline of the full-scale project document.Â A field trip took place, following the two-day workshop, in cooperation with the Kazakhstan national agency on mudflow protection and the Institute of Geography of Kazakhstan. During the field trip the participants acquainted with the consequences of mudflows in vicinities of Almaty, visit a mudflow protection dam and get familiar with the work of Kazakh authorities as well as scientific institutions in addressing risks from mudflows, including those that originate from GLOFs.

Glacier Nr 354, Kyrgyzstan. Photo Kristine Tovmasyan.

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