

**MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER  
KAZAKHSTAN**

*Ref N° 2008-03*

**Aral Sea Archival Fonds**

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**PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION**

**1. Resume**

The main criteria for selection of the Aral Sea Archival Fonds were the uniqueness and its importance within the context of the world ecological situation.

The ecological consequences on the Aral sea and the vast region of the Central Asia and Kazakhstan adjacent to them is one of the biggest man-made catastrophes in the world.

The falling of the sea level and its gradual disappearance due to the intensive use for irrigation of the vast areas of cotton and rice cultivation, of the Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya rivers that drain into the Aral sea led to the sudden climatic changes in the region and the appearance of the salt wind storms. As a result, the disappearance of local flora and fauna, the worsened fishing industry, the impact on health and social-economic condition of the people of the region were the outcomes.

It is now conclusively shown that the change of climatic conditions in the Aral region and appearance of the salt storms had a negative influence upon the ecological situation of the world.

Since it is not a problem of one region or country, but is an international problem, scientists from different spheres and public figures of world communities are engaged in finding solutions for the revival of the sea.

The available documents are the sole source for traditional and applied research and for implementing activities dedicated to the revival of the ecological and social economic development of the region. They consequently are of world significance.

**2      *DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR***

2.1      Name: The Central State Archives (CSA) of the Committee of Information and Archives of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan

2.2      Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated: Custodian

2.3      Contact person (s)

- Director of CSA Baymaganbetova V.A.
- Deputy director of CSA Kropivnitskii N.P.
- Head of the department of scientific-informational and reference work Karatayeva G.M.

2.4      Information about the contact person:

Address: The Central State Archives (CSA) of the Committee of Information and Archives of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Tel.: 7-727-2671462; 267 14 35 ; 2671446

fax : 7-727-2671447,

E-mail : [Cga\\_rk@mail.ru](mailto:Cga_rk@mail.ru)

**3      *IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE***

3.1      Name and full address/ place of storage of the nominated material:

The Central State Archives (CSA) of the Committee of Information and Archives of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Republic of Kazakhstan, 050000, Almaty city, Abai av., 39.

3.2      Description

Fond 1137. The Council of Ministers of the Kazakh SSR.

Description 25,26,27,28.  
Number of files - 22. The dates of the documents – 1965-1990.  
Depositary: #15, shelving #6,7,8,10,13, number of shelves: 14.

Fond 1130. The Ministry of fishing industry of the Kazakh SSR.  
Description 1.  
Number of files - 9. The dates of the documents – 1970-1983.  
Depositary: #4, 5, shelving #14,15, number of shelves: 5.

Fond 1626. The Ministry of melioration and water economy of the Kazakh SSR.  
Description 3.  
Number of files - 11. The dates of the documents – 1972-1975.  
Depositary: #10a, shelving #8,9, number of shelves: 2.  
Ministry of melioration and water economy

Fond 2108. The Forestry Ministry of the Kazakh SSR.  
Description 4 pr.  
Number of files - 7. The dates of the documents – 1990-1991.  
Depositary: #12, shelving #17, number of shelves: 1.  
Forestry Ministry

Fond 2199. The State agro-industrial committee of the Kazakh SSR.  
Description 1.  
Number of files - 7. The dates of the documents – 1986-1990.  
Depositary: #4, shelving #1, number of shelves: 11.  
State agro-industrial committee

#### History:

The documents of the given organizations were handed over for the constant storage to the Central State Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan in accordance with the rules and terms defined by the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Most of the documents came during the 70-80-ss of the XX-th century.

All the documents are on paper carriers. They are formed and united into files (storage units) and from the moment of coming for storage were placed into the special cardboard boxes.

The degree of information contained in the documents differs. But as a rule they contain multi-aspect information that reflects in this or that degree the causes and consequences of the Aral tragedy, the attempts to save the Aral Sea, the activities for the improvement of the ecological and sanitary situation in the region.

## **4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION/ ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA**

### **4.1 Is authenticity established?**

This is a complex of documents created in the course of work of different departments that by fulfilling their functions caused “the Aral tragedy” and also organizations that participated in the liquidation of the consequences and the recuperation of the normal ecological and sanitary situation in the region.

The complex of documents from different fonds present the decrees, circular letters and letters between departments and organizations, plans and reports, references, different information, tables with figures, conclusions of different commissions, feasibility studies and different conceptions of the rescue of the Aral sea., schemes by different aspects etc.

Not all of them are originals. There are also certified copies that still have their scientific and practical value.

The availability in the archival fonds of documents that make it possible to study the problem of the Aral sea in complex and from every angle, taking into account its worldwide significance, comes as the main argument to propose the given documents for the nomination.

It must be noted that “The archival fond of the Aral Sea” is nominated for the first time for the inclusion in the Memory of the World Register which must also fix this tragic page in the history of our planet.

4.2 Is its world significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability established?

The presented heritage has the world significance in that it was created at a certain historical epoch. Its uniqueness and irreplaceability is also defined by the fact that in was formed during the period of socialist development of Kazakhstan as part of the USSR, by its state structures of the highest order (The Ministry of fishing industry of the Kazakh SSR, The Ministry of melioration and water economy of the Kazakh SSR,

The Forestry Ministry of the Kazakh SSR, The State agro-industrial committee of the Kazakh SSR.), which do not exist any more.

The given documentary heritage characterizes to a certain degree the merits and demerits of the socialist system in the sphere of use of natural resources, which makes it possible to take into account the mistakes and in future to avoid the appearance of such cataclysms that have the global significance for the ecology of the planet Earth.

4.3 Is one or more of the criteria of time, place, people, subject and theme, form and style satisfied?

**Criteria b- place**

The Aral ecological catastrophe is part of the global ecological-social-economic crisis not only of the Aral basin and the territories adjacent to it but also led to the ecological problems of the territories beyond the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Up to 1960 the level of the Aral Sea remained almost the same. The stable mark of 53 metres was somehow preserved.

In the subsequent years the sea went catastrophically shallow, went dry and gradually left the shores, the testimony of which is the fond. The main reason of the drying was the project for the cultivation of the desert lands which was done one-sidedly and did not take into account the natural complex of the region.

All the projects, schemes and feasibility studies were elaborated from the point of view of the river influx and water consumption, aiming at the possible accrual of the irrigable areas of the Aral Sea basin. The Aral Sea was not treated as part of the ecological complex or geographical object.

The scale of irrigation in one or another place was determined by the availability of land, the technical possibility to deliver water from the source of irrigation, the economic efficacy of the irrigated land and the production capacity of the organizations engaged in water supply.

As result of the irrigation the water balance of the Aral Sea changed which led to the lowering of the sea level and reduced its area.

The specialists who made the projects saw only the irrigational and water objects, they didn't spare water, they didn't understand the needs of the fishing industry, the subsequent ecological changes of nature, the threat to the Aral Sea, the threat of loss of the fauna and flora of the region.

The imperfection of the collector-drainage networks, the irrigation objects led to the deluge of the fields, the silting and salting of vast areas and their dropping from the agricultural circulation. The rice and cotton growers had to cultivate more and more new areas to implement the plan given from above.

From 1960 there for the irrigation purposes was consumed annually 63,9 cubic kilometres of water, in 1985 - 117,4, i.e. 2 times more. During this time there sharply increased the use of mineral fertilizers and chemicals.

From 1967 to 1987 in 20 years' time the norm of mineral fertilizers grew from 315 to 435 kg per hectare, i.e. by 120 kg, the use of chemicals also grew sharply, i.e. 52 kg per hectare. The growth of the mineral fertilizers led to the consumption of water. This water contained the mineral salts, fertilizers, herbicides and chemicals washed out from the irrigated lands.

The climate in the region sharply changed, the winters became colder, the summers became drier and hotter.

The ecological catastrophe was approaching, as a result of which the fishing at the sea ceased – the traditional branch of the part of the Kzyl-Orda region adjoining the Aral Sea, because the loss of the water worsened the biological regime of the Aral, the salinity of water grew and the fodder base was ruined.

If prior to 1970 the catch of fish in the basin was 440 thousand of metric centners, including the catch in the Northern part of 220 thousand of metric centners, then by 1977 the catch in the Northern part went down to 11,3 thousand of metric centners. The complete blockage of the Syr-Darya and Amur-Darya by the dam and the lowering of the sea level led to the disappearance of all the spawning grounds in the Northern part of the sea, their natural spawning ceased since 1974.

According to the data of the Ministry of the fishing industry of the Kazakh SSR, by the end of the 1970-ss the delta of the river Syr-Darya and most of the lake systems were totally depleted. The fish catch was reduced by two. Especially there was reduced the catch of the bream and barbell whose reproduction depends upon the state of the rivers.

The insufficient amount of water in the rivers led to the reduction and deserting of the floodlands which led to the perdition of the musk-rat.

### **Criterion c - people**

In the conditions of the Aral tragedy the population, mainly the Kazakhs and the relative Karakalpaks who reside within the Aral basin and the territories adjacent to it (the Kzyl-Orda region, the Atyrau region, the Republic Uzbekistan) found themselves in a deplorable condition.

The fishermen lost their jobs, more than 100 thousand people left their native places. The unemployment was caused mainly by the cessation of the fishing industries, the seafaring industry and the reduction of the canning industry in the region.

The retreat of the sea disrupted the transportation network which was effected through the sea transportation. The populated points found themselves 50-80 km away from the sea and isolated in the desert.

The ecological crisis led to the impoverishment of the protein ration by demolishing the main food source of the local population – the fish. According to different sources by the end of the 80-s the consumption of meat was from 7-10 kg to 25-27 kg per annum per capita, which is three times below the norm.

The distribution of the waters of the Syr-Darya and Amur-Darya for the irrigation purposes in the upper and medium sections of these rivers and the excessive use of the chemicals in agriculture led to the tragic consequences in the Aral region.

The water that comes to the lower reaches is not potable due to the high mineralization, the high degree of content of chemicals, heavy metals and other stuffs.

Because of the consumption of this bad-quality water and also the agricultural production that used this water, the health of the population sharply deteriorated. There spread the gastric-intestinal illnesses, the illnesses of the kidneys, the liver, different allergies, the mass anaemia of pregnant women, the inborn deformities. All this especially in future can lead to serious changes at the gene level.

The health of the population was also afflicted by the salt and dust that drifted into the atmosphere from the dry bottom of the sea which irritate the mucous tissues of the nasopharynx, cause the burning and irritation in the eyes. According to scientists, the poisonous salts from the bottom of Aral threaten the atmosphere of the Earth.

### Criterion 2 – Subject and theme.

As for the scale of the catastrophe of the Aral Sea upon the ecology, climate and also the hard-prognosticated consequences see in Article 4.3.

## **5 LEGAL INFORMATION**

### 5.1. Owner of the documentary heritage

The Central State Archives (CSA) of the Committee of Information and Archives of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Contact person :

Director of the Central State Archives Baimaganbetova V.A.

Abai av., 39, Almaty, 050000, Republic of Kazakhstan

Tel.: 7-727-2671462

Fax : 7-727-2671447

E-mail : [Cga\\_rk@mail.ru](mailto:Cga_rk@mail.ru)

5.2 Custodian of the documentary heritage:

The Central State Archives (CSA) of the Committee of Information and Archives of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan

5.3 Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership - state

(b) Accessibility: Access is granted only to those people who have a permit for the perusal of the documents.

(c) Copyright status:

Copyright status: Based on the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the national archive fond and archives” Astana, December 22, 1998, N 326-1 RK and «The instruction on the centralized state registration of documents of the National archive fond of the Republic of Kazakhstan” of the Committee on the management of archives and documentation of the Ministry of culture, information and public concord of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Almaty, 2000 (the registration N1240 dated 10.09.2000)

(d) The organ responsible for administration:

Committee of Information and Archives of the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan

## 7 **CONSULTATION**

7.1 The consultation by this nomination was given by the following experts:

- Chief expert of the National Council on the Aral problems, academician of the “Ecology” National academy Salykov K. (Tel.: +7 (717) 2323350

- Prof. Guy Petherbridge Chairman Heritage Central Asia

1 Amir Temur Street, Tashkent 70000

Uzbekistan

Tel. + 998 71 132 1870/71

Fax + 998 71 132 1872

[office@heritagecentralasia.org](mailto:office@heritagecentralasia.org)

- Aslitdinova Alla A., director of the Central Scientific library of the Academy of sciences of Tadjikistan,

734025, Tadjikistan, Dushanbe, 33 av.Rudaki,

Tel.: (+992372) 214302, (+992372) 214270

[allaasl@lenta.ru](mailto:allaasl@lenta.ru)

## Part C. Additional information

## 8 **ASSESSMENT OF RISK**

8.1 The building of the archives is situated in the district ecologically not good, where the admixtures in the air of sulphureous gas, nitric oxides, silicon dust exceed the allowable concentration. The documents are kept in simple cardboard boxes which after a long period of storage exude hydrogen peroxide that accelerates the process of aging of the documents. The sharply continental climate of the region, the higher irradiation level in the city, the seismic and avalanche danger pose a certain threat.

There was made the reconstruction of the building with the installation of the new system of air conditioning and ventilation and power supply.

**9.1 The managerial plan for the preservation of the given nomination:**

1. At the present time the regime of the documents storage (the temperature, humidity, lighting) conforms to the established norms for the given climatic region (15-18 degrees Centigrade, 50+ - 5%).
2. Once a month there is carried out the sanitary-hygienic treatment of the given fond.
3. The visual inspection of the given fond makes it possible to detect the mechanical and biochemical damages to carry out the proper kinds of activities.
4. There are planned to be carried out the scientific researches for the determination of the state of the paper carrier and the texts jointly by the scientific-research organizations and the National library of the RK.
5. There is planned the replacement of the boxes by acid-free containers.
6. There has been elaborated and approved the plan of actions in case of emergencies.
7. The process of microfilming and the transference to another archival depositary is proceeding as planned before.
8. Instead of the original there is given out for readers' use the positive with the purpose to restrict access to the original.
9. From 2010 there is planned the start of the work for the digitization of this fond (if possible from the microfilms).
10. As soon as the digital copies are ready there is planned their placement at the site of the Central state archives of the RK as part of the global Internet network.
11. There are installed in the archival depositaries the new systems of video-control and also the systems of fire and theft alert.
12. The professional instruction and the qualifications upgrading of the specialists whose duty it is to provide the preservation of the nominated documents.

**PART C - Presentation**

The given nomination is presented by:

Baimaganbetova V.A.  
Director of the CSA



Date: 15.10.2009

The documents on the problem of the Aral Sea :

The documents (the correspondence, the conclusions, the feasibility studies) for the planning of water-economy erections, exploitation of irrigation systems, irrigation and cultivation of lands, the complex use of the water resources of the Syr-Darya.

Fond 1137. Description 25. Files 554, 557

Description 26. Files 670

Description 27. Files 251, 252, 254 File 1626

Description 3. Files 1330, 1331, 1751, 1762; File 1130

Description 1. Files 2066

The feasibility studies, proposals, schemes, conclusions on the problem of the transfer of part of the flow of the Siberian rivers into the Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

Fond 1137. Description 26. Files 1540

Description 27. Files 1558, 1568, 1569

Description 28. Files 1868, 3619

Description 29. Files 1122

Fond 2199. Description 1. File 105

Fond 1130. Description 1. File 843, 936, 1324, 1350, 1991, 1994, 2029, 2361

The annual reports of the Aral-Syr-Darya basin inspection for the registration and complex use of water resources.

Fond 1626. Description 3. Files 1069, 1312, 1520, 1535, 1738, 1739, 1752

The documents (the letters of the residents, the newspaper articles, the conclusions of the commission) on the poor state of the population of the territory adjacent to the Aral basin, on the activities for the salvation of the Aral Sea, the improvement of the economic and sanitary situation in the region.

Fond 1137. Description 28. Files 7643

Description 28. Files 461, 5555, 6954, 6955, 6861, 7643

Fond 2108 Description 4 pr. Files 1659, 1660, 1661, 1773, 1774, 1775, 1776

Fond 2199 Description 1. Files 2991, 2992, 3694, 3696, 3701, 3702

The evaluation of the physical state

1. The complex of documents on paper carriers is the type-written texts, and also print editions (newspaper articles, monographs, books). Some typewritten texts are characterized by the fading of the texts, superimposition of color and lines which sufficiently hinders their readability.

On the whole, the state of preservation of the originals of the nominated documents can be said to be satisfactory. There have been created the insurance copies on microfilms which constitutes 25% from the total fond. The negative is given over for safe-keeping to the archival depositary which is situated in another city.