

## **The St. Petersburg Statement on the Aral Sea**

The Second International Conference on the problems of the Aral Sea was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, from November 15 to 18, 2019. The Conference was attended by scientists from nine countries: Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, the United Kingdom, France, USA, Japan, Poland and Spain. The Statement below is based on the presentations, discussions, suggestions and comments of conference participants and other experts:

1. The human and environmental problems of the Aral Sea have destroyed the local economy and caused social and cultural disconnection.
2. The modern era regression of the Aral Sea must be considered in historical context.
3. The modern regression of the Aral Sea has a different genesis to that in historical events.
4. Redirecting major rivers is not feasible in solving the Aral Sea problems.
5. The flow of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers is a key factor determining the size of the lake and its ecological state and it must be managed cooperatively.
6. The Aral Sea has been studied by experts in eminent institutions since the mid-19th century.
7. Reports of the death of the Aral Sea are premature.
8. The status of the Aral Sea and its basin needs to be updated using new scientific approaches.
9. We will create the International Committee of Intellectual Solidarity with the Aral Sea.
10. Scientists, artists and cultural experts all have important roles in the preservation and rehabilitation of the Aral Sea and its region.