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## MAIN AREAS OF ACTIVITY OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA

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### ABSTRACT

The most important task on the way to building a democratic state governed by the rule of law in the countries of the Central Asian region is the creation and development of independent, sustainable civil society institutions supported by broad sections of the population, including non-governmental non-profit organizations. Republic of Kazakhstan.

### KEYWORDS

Population, non-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations.

### INTRODUCTION

The most important task on the way to building a democratic state governed by the rule of law in the countries of the Central Asian region is the creation and development of independent, sustainable civil society institutions supported by broad sections of the population, including non-governmental non-profit organizations. Republic of Kazakhstan. Analysis of the activities of the NGO sector in the republic shows their active development in the direction of implementing public initiatives. In the regional context, NGOs operating in the country are distributed unevenly

across its territory: the process of formation and development of the non-governmental sector is currently taking place only in the economic and cultural centers of the republic, mainly in Almaty and Astana, as well as in the industrially developed Karaganda, East Kazakhstan and South Kazakhstan regions. The activities of NGOs are characterized by a certain "contrast" with a bias towards solving, first of all, social problems. The division by sectors of operation demonstrates the demand for socially oriented structures, which indicates the severity of social



problems. Approximately 42% of NGOs specialize in organizing services in the public sphere: in education, healthcare, culture, 24% ensure the protection of the interests of socially vulnerable groups of the population, 34% are involved in human rights activities, ecology and gender policy.

The non-governmental sector employs over 200 thousand people, and the services of the domestic third sector cover about 2 million citizens<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, it should be noted that today in the republic only about 1,000 NGOs actually operate (according to sustainability criteria), which is considered a relatively low figure. Based on the general republican, regional and sectoral characteristics, the subjects of the non-governmental sector are grouped by the degree and nature of their corporate status. For example, such associations as the Association of Independent Non-Governmental Organizations of Kazakhstan (ANNOK), the Confederation of Non-Governmental Organizations of Kazakhstan (KNOK), the Association of NGOs of Kostanay Region, the Association of NGOs of Kyzyl-Orda Region, the Forum of Environmental NGOs, and in addition, the so-called "NGO networks", for example, the Asian Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Disabled "Zhan", which unites similar organizations in the region, etc. have been created and operate in the country<sup>1</sup>.<sup>49</sup> It can be stated with a certain degree of certainty that the non-governmental sector of the Republic of Kazakhstan has already come a long way in its development and the following groups have formed among the NGOs of the republic: 1) socially significant (women's, for the protection of the vulnerable part of the population, providing citizens with social charities, working in the field of health care); 2) socio-political (human rights, services, environmental, youth, analytical, associations of non-governmental organizations, etc.); 3) reformist (industry associations

working in the field of education and culture)<sup>2</sup>. Currently, about 5,000 NGOs are registered in the Republic of Kazakhstan, in total, about 200 thousand people are involved. About 40 thousand people work on a permanent basis, up to 50 thousand people on a temporary basis, and more than 100 thousand people on a voluntary (volunteer) basis. About 2 million people receive various types of services from NGOs. The Law of January 16, 2001 "On Non-Commercial Organizations" is of an exclusively permissive and regulatory nature and is aimed primarily at ensuring state control over the activities of NGOs. Civil society institutions are developing, but do not have a specific influence on the policy pursued by the government of Kazakhstan. Thus, an analysis of the activities of NGOs in the republic as a whole shows that elements of civil society in Kazakhstan are developing, and the state is helping in this process, realizing the importance of supporting NGOs to solve the socio-political problems of society. The Republic of Kyrgyzstan. An analysis of available materials shows that Kyrgyz NGOs have reached their maximum quantitative indicators. Currently, there are more than 5,000 NGOs in the republic. According to the law "on non-commercial organizations", the state guarantees them conditions for normal functioning and prohibits interference by state bodies in their activities. Nevertheless, in 2007, the head of the Ministry of Justice M. Kaipov instructed the registration department of his department to conduct an inspection of all NGOs receiving foreign funding, justifying this by the need to find out which NGOs threaten the national security of Kyrgyzstan. The activities of a number of NGOs entail negative consequences, since the degree of influence on the formation of public opinion in the republic is much less than abroad. At best, society ignores this impact, at worst, it becomes an ideological basis for destabilizing the situation and creating tension between citizens and the government. As previously indicated, the most



well-known NGOs have been subject to politicization and have transferred their main field of activity to the political space, thereby beginning to influence the decisions of the state authorities. Given the unconsciousness of the actions of the masses and the lack of responsibility for the consequences, NGOs artificially and quite noticeably destabilize the socio-political situation and provoke the population to sometimes unconscious protests against the government. In the absence of their own administrative and financial resources, NGOs, as a rule, become the object of manipulation by third political forces and are used by them as a handy tool in the struggle for power. In general, today it is possible to predict the future scenario of the further development of the civil movement in Kyrgyzstan.

Civil society representatives will strive to obtain a share of state power. At the same time, attempts to keep all NGOs within their orbit will be impossible without pouring large resources into them. This situation will not last long, since the leaders will quickly exhaust their resources, and their political activity will quickly come to naught, greatly discrediting the civil movement both within the republic and beyond. For this reason, NGO leaders will lose international support and funding, and many organizations will simply cease to exist. At the same time, the non-governmental sector will seriously undermine the state's trust in international institutions for the support and democratization of civil society. The state will be forced to reconsider its loyal attitude towards NGOs. As a result, the prestige of the state will suffer, as well as society, since an insignificant percentage of NGOs that create tangible social benefits for individual target groups will still continue their "quiet" existence in the new conditions. Thus, NGOs can become working not against the state, but together with it, on a partnership basis, solving social, political and economic problems. At the same time, the

level of efficiency of using both budget and investment funds will increase. This path of development of civil society, according to minimum estimates, will take at least 10 years, but it seems to be the most favorable for the country as a whole. Republic of Tajikistan. According to preliminary data of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2008, the number of NGOs registered in the republic is decreasing threefold. However, experts believe that it is not the number of public organizations that is important, but the quality of their work. Up to January 1, 2008, almost 3,200 NGOs were registered with the MoJ of Tajikistan. By the beginning of this year, the MoJ had registered 1,040 organizations since the adoption of the new law "On Public Associations" last spring. Some NGOs are focused on solving the problems of local communities. The priorities in their activities are the implementation of socio-economic projects. According to the coordinator of the project "Development of Civil Society in Tajikistan" Yu. Yusufbekov, government agencies are interested in monitoring the activities of NGOs. At the same time, all the surveyed representatives of government agencies recognized the usefulness of the activities of public organizations, assessing cooperation with them as

"satisfactory". There is no sponsorship of civil society organizations (CSOs) by government agencies at the local level in Tajikistan. At the same time, CSOs are well aware that poor relations with local authorities may lead to problems in implementing their projects. There are also representative offices of about 20 international NGOs in Tajikistan. In particular, the representative office of the Aga Khan Foundation, TF OSI (Tajik branch of the Open Society Institute - Soros Foundation), Mercy Corps, Save the Children, ACTED, the American Bar Association and others. However, according to a survey conducted at the end of last year as part of a study of public opinion about civil society



organizations, people, including government officials and business representatives, are little familiar with the work of NGOs and have a poor understanding of their role and importance. Hence the ambiguous attitude of citizens towards their activities. 42% of respondents are satisfied with the activities of public organizations in their region, but 32% expressed dissatisfaction with the work of local NGOs.

Respondents from Dushanbe noted that most of these organizations

53 work with a limited circle of people - with their target group and not

solve real problems. Thus, according to the head of the training programs of the National Association of Independent Mass Media of the Republic of Tatarstan N. Rakhmonberdyev, there are signs of corruption in the activities of some organizations and NGOs often appropriate the grants they receive. Respondents from the city of Kulyab are of the opinion that there are practically no organizations involved in human rights activities, civil liberties, consumer protection, and that for the most part NGO projects are random and contribute to solving society's problems.

In general, to improve the situation in Tajikistan with an understanding of the role

NGOs in society and to increase the effectiveness of their activities, they need to become more open and accessible to citizens. In addition, they need to have their own printed publication and airtime on television, and also to popularize their activities more often through holding all kinds of forums and exhibitions. But first, it is necessary for these activities to have results, and not just exist in statutory documents. The Republic of Turkmenistan. Analysis of the activities of

NGOs in Turkmenistan indicates a difficult situation in this area.

Last year, only two local community group projects were implemented in

Turkmenistan received a certificate of registration from the Ministry

economy and finance. Meanwhile, dozens of projects from the 2007 non-governmental (public) sector have still not been registered. And since the "Law on Public Associations" prohibits the implementation of unregistered projects, local communities and public organizations have been unable to begin their activities on projects for almost a year. The registration procedure was changed with the arrival of the new president of the country. The State Service for Foreign Investments under the President of Turkmenistan, where grants received by local communities or NGOs were previously registered, was closed. Now, those who win grant competitions submit documents to the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and receive (if they receive one) certificates of project registration at the State Institute of Manuscripts of Turkmenistan. Projects have not been registered for almost a year. Perhaps this is a polite form of refusal, believe public activists participating in the Counterpart - Turkmenistan "Local Initiatives for Development" (MID) Program, which was launched in 2006. The international organization's four-year public initiative is aimed at rural activists who are able to stir up the civic activity of local residents with the help of grant support. The program has received accreditation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, but as practice shows, this is not enough to implement it. For two years, there has not been a single project implemented on the ground, that is, in rural areas. Although, according to members of the Counterpart - Turkmenistan grant committee, dozens of projects



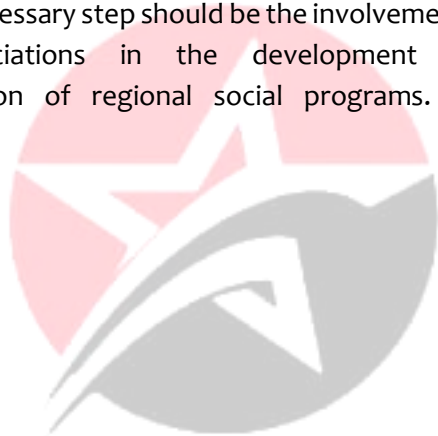
have been approved. The special services of Turkmenistan constantly put pressure on public activists and representatives of local authorities participating in the MIR Program, but due to the fact that projects continue to appear, they come up with other means of combating public activity. Now the special services are slowing down activity through the Ministry of Economy. In general, the difficult situation in this area in the republic will persist, thus the development of the public sector in the medium term will have a regressive tendency.

Thus, in the regional context, it can be stated that the development of NGO activities in the CAR countries is uneven. A necessary step should be the involvement of public associations in the development and implementation of regional social programs. The

shortest way to this is through the mechanism of social order. In these conditions, it is considered appropriate to consolidate the activities of NGOs within regional organizations for their joint solutions to problems of various natures and, in particular, in the area of ensuring national security.

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