Almaty Declaration
By Central Asian Countries and Afghanistan Non-Profit Organizations
“Civic Asia”

Preamble

The “Development through Regional Cooperation” program is a unique platform and infrastructure for Central Asian countries’ non-profit organizations (NPOs). The program is being implemented by “ARGO” Civil Society Association and key partners in the Central Asian countries, with the financial support of USAID CAR. The program addresses issues of regional development and creates favorable long-term perspectives for regional cooperation by civil society organizations. It achieves these goals via networking interaction, promotion and introduction of social innovations, transfer of fundamental, applied knowledge and skills in the area of democracy, and creation of contemporary development paradigms in civil society.

Three previous conferences for Central Asian countries' NPOs were designed to develop regional dialogue and cooperation. Over the course of these conferences, NPOs proposed strategic approaches and recommendations on issues including NPOs’ institutional capacity strengthening, mechanisms of networking interaction between CA countries' NPOs, social partnership, and building a constructive dialogue with the state.

The 2014 conference included the participation of delegates representing Afghanistan and Pakistan NPOs. Participants discussed building a regional bridge between Central and South Asian countries' NPOs to expand regional cooperation, subject to current geopolitical and political trends. Delegates considered a broad view on regional challenges from a long-term perspective.

NPOs representatives from Central Asian countries and Afghanistan participated in the International Conference “Insights into Regional Development” from June 2-3, 2015 in Almaty, where the Almaty Declaration “Civic Asia” was adopted.

The Almaty Declaration “Civic Asia” is a significant milestone for the 150 participants of the 2015 “Insights into Regional Development” conference. It acknowledges a commitment to common goals, determines a role and importance for civil society organizations’ input into regional development and, therefore, into elaboration of new concepts and guiding principles, innovative approaches and instruments in the areas of regional development and cooperation.

We offer the text of the Almaty Declaration “Civic Asia” for your attention.
Almaty Declaration of Non-Profit Organizations on Regional Cooperation in the Context of Civil Society Development in the Central Asian Countries and Afghanistan: “Civic Asia”

Adopted on June 3, 2015; Almaty, Kazakhstan.

We, 150 representatives of Central Asian countries' non-profit organizations, including a delegation of NPOs from Afghanistan, participants of the International Conference “Insights into Regional Development”, taking into consideration the importance and role of civil society for sustainable development of the Central and South Asian countries,

In the interests of regional cooperation and promotion of regional security, especially considering global financial problems, lack of political and economic stability in many regions of the world, and a growing concern about challenges of a regional character,

Taking into consideration that at the 2014 Conference the delegations from Afghanistan and Pakistan offered to create a ‘bridge’ between Central and South Asian NPOs, with the aim of promoting regional cooperation and a dialogue between NPOs of these countries,

Recognizing NPOs’ contribution and recommendations from previous regional and national conferences and Forums held in Central Asian countries in 2013-2014,

Expressing our gratitude and appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, ARGO, USAID and other regional and international organizations that contributed to the preparatory process and are taking part in the Conference,

We acknowledge that regional cooperation between NPOs is one of the most important aspects of development, as it facilitates long-term perspectives and proactive initiatives regarding challenges for all Central and South Asian countries;

We also acknowledge that the potential for large-scale cooperation in the area of regional development has not yet been fully realized, despite the fact that development programs by international organizations and partners have been implemented for more than 20 years in the region, the NPO sector has developed, and that there are multilateral and bilateral agreements in effect between the countries in the areas of energy, water, health, trade and the environment;

We also note attention to the role of civil society in the Central Asian region where non-profit, public organizations were and unfortunately, remain, insignificant participants in regional dialogue. NPOs are still unable to contribute fully to the countries' development in a region that is dependent upon regional cooperation, and where development is not possible without full civil consensus in the region.

We, participants of the conference held on June 2-3, 2015 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, acknowledging the principles of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration on the Environment and Sustainable Development¹, referring to a final document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development entitled “The Future that We Want”², Sustainable Development Goals - Post 2015³,
Firmly resolve to enhance our regional and sub-regional cooperation and coordination in order to:

- Establish and develop the Regional Hub (Center) for NPO Social Innovation in Almaty for promotion and introduction of innovative social technologies, and sharing experiences and best practices in the Central and South Asian region;
- Create contemporary development paradigms in civil society through the transfer of state-of-the-art, fundamental, applied knowledge and skills in the area of democracy; and
- Build and promote civil society’s interests at international forums and active involvement in regional and global decision-making processes aimed at overcoming global problems faced by humankind in general, and in our region in particular.

We acknowledge that without mastering state-of-the-art, fundamental knowledge and development paradigms, and social innovations in the area of civil society, we will not be successful in achieving the goals of sustainable development or make progress in implementing the Agenda of the United Nations Organization in the area of development for the post-2015 period.

We call upon all stakeholders to actively promote and support NPOs' initiatives in the development of regional cooperation in Central and South Asia, which will be implemented as part of the Almaty Declaration “Civic Asia”.

We are firmly resolved to make maximum effort to improve the level and quality of regional cooperation and civic participation in Central and South Asian countries.

We are also firmly resolved to achieve a greater contribution by NPOs into the socio-economic development of the countries, and into social partnership between NPOs and government for more transparent and balanced political decisions, and to promote regional security.

*Almaty Declaration «Civic Asia» is open for NPOs from other countries and other interested stakeholders to join.*