

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL LEGAL NORMS TO REGULATE INTERNATIONAL WATER RESOURCES AND THEIR IMPACT ON UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: *International water resources management is one of the most pressing global issues due to the growing demand for water and the potential for conflicts between states. This paper examines the role of international legal norms in regulating transboundary water resources and analyzes their implications for Uzbekistan. It explores key international legal frameworks, treaties, and conventions that govern water distribution and dispute resolution. The study also discusses Uzbekistan's geopolitical position, the significance of water security for its economy and environment, and how international legal mechanisms influence national water policies.*

Keywords: *International water law, transboundary water resources, Uzbekistan, international treaties, water governance, environmental law.*

Introduction Water is a fundamental resource for human survival, economic development, and environmental sustainability. With increasing global population and climate change impacts, managing water resources—especially transboundary water bodies—has become an urgent concern. Many rivers and lakes cross international borders, making their governance complex and often contentious. Legal norms and frameworks play a crucial role in preventing disputes and ensuring equitable distribution of water.

Uzbekistan, a landlocked country in Central Asia, is highly dependent on transboundary water resources, primarily from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya

rivers. These rivers flow through multiple countries, including Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan, making international cooperation essential. This article examines the role of international legal norms in regulating these water resources and their impact on Uzbekistan's water security.

Main Body

1. Overview of International Legal Frameworks Governing Water Resources The regulation of international water resources is primarily governed by various international treaties, conventions, and customary international law. The most notable frameworks include:

- **The 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses:** This treaty establishes principles for equitable and reasonable utilization, the obligation to prevent harm, and the duty to cooperate between states sharing water resources.
- **The Helsinki Rules (1966) and Berlin Rules (2004) on Water Resources:** These non-binding legal instruments provide guidelines for equitable water use and environmental protection.
- **Bilateral and Regional Agreements:** Many countries, including those in Central Asia, have established agreements for managing shared water resources.

2. Transboundary Water Issues in Central Asia Central Asia faces significant challenges in transboundary water management due to its geography, historical water usage patterns, and political dynamics. The major sources of water—Amu Darya and Syr Darya—originate in the upstream countries (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), while downstream countries (Uzbekistan,

Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan) heavily rely on them for agriculture and domestic use.

Key challenges include:

- Disputes over water allocation, especially in dry seasons.
- Conflicts between hydro-energy projects in upstream countries and irrigation needs in downstream countries.
- Lack of an effective regional enforcement mechanism for water agreements.

3. The Role of International Legal Norms in Addressing These Issues

International legal norms provide Uzbekistan and its neighbors with guidelines to regulate water use fairly and sustainably. These include:

- **Principles of Equitable and Reasonable Utilization:** Ensuring all riparian states receive fair access to water resources.
- **Obligation Not to Cause Significant Harm:** Preventing actions that would negatively impact other countries.
- **Cooperation and Notification Obligations:** Requiring upstream countries to inform and consult downstream states before implementing major water projects.

International legal frameworks encourage negotiations and arbitration for resolving disputes. Uzbekistan has actively participated in regional and global initiatives to advocate for its water rights under international law.

4. Uzbekistan's Approach to International Water Law

Uzbekistan's national water policies are shaped by its reliance on international legal frameworks. Key strategies include:

- Advocating for stronger regional agreements on transboundary water management.
- Engaging in diplomatic efforts to ensure fair water distribution.
- Implementing water conservation and modernization projects to optimize resource usage.
- Collaborating with international organizations like the UN and World Bank to enhance legal and technical water governance.

Conclusion International legal norms play a crucial role in managing transboundary water resources and mitigating disputes. For Uzbekistan, adherence to these norms is vital for ensuring sustainable water access, economic stability, and environmental protection. While challenges remain, cooperation among Central Asian states and adherence to established legal frameworks can enhance water security in the region. Strengthening regional agreements and implementing effective dispute resolution mechanisms will be essential for the future stability of water management in Uzbekistan and beyond.

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