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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY  
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Item 4 (h) of the provisional agenda

**ACTIVITIES OF THE REGIONAL ADVISER AND  
HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMITTEE'S PROGRAMME OF WORK**

1. The "Future UNECE strategic directions for the environment" (CEP/2003/25, para. 35), which the Committee endorsed at its tenth session, stated that the Regional Adviser's work would be further linked to, and integrated in, the key priority areas of work on environment in UNECE and that the Committee should assess, in the context of overall technical assistance, the impact of the Regional Adviser's activities. This paper gives an overview of the Regional Adviser's previous and planned activities.

**A. Support to the implementation of the EECCA Environment Strategy and  
the EU Initiative on Water**

2. Background and previous work: UNECE is responsible for facilitating work on transboundary waters in the Environment Strategy for the countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) as well as the European Union's Initiative on Water. The Regional Adviser is involved in developing and implementing an action programme with the secretariat of the UNECE Water Convention. This Action Programme was presented at the EU Water Initiative's high-level meeting in Moscow on 26-27 February 2004.

3. Planned activities:

(a) Further development of the Action Programme for the integrated management of transboundary waters in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia;

(b) Fund-raising and organization of a series of capacity-building and networking meetings in 2004-2006 as part of the "Capacity-building for transboundary water cooperation in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia" project;

(c) Finalization of a publication in the Water Series on "Transboundary Water Cooperation in EECCA."

**B. Support to the development of the initiative**  
**"Water, Environment and Security in Central Asia"**

4. Background and previous work: The Central Asian States launched this initiative during the Kiev Conference. The Regional Adviser was involved in its development before the Kiev Conference. One important objective is to improve cooperation on the use and management of water resources among the countries in Central Asia.

5. Planned activities:

(a) Provision of advice to Environment Ministries in the subregion and to the Regional Environmental Centre for Central Asia in the development of the initiative;

(b) Development and fund-raising for individual projects, mainly related to UNECE Conventions.

**C. Development, fund-raising and implementation**  
**of a project on dam safety in Central Asia**

6. Background and previous work: The Central Asian States have requested support from UNECE and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) to improve the safety of major dams in Central Asia and to develop inter-State cooperation on dam safety. As dam safety interests all five States, this project is an opportunity to develop cooperation and build confidence in the subregion. The project will focus on supporting the development of institutions dealing with dam safety. A first regional expert meeting took place in

Almaty (Kazakhstan) on 24-25 March 2004. Fund-raising for a regional project is ongoing.

7. Planned activity: Fund-raising and project development.

**D. Establishment of a bilateral Kazakh-Kyrgyz water commission on the rivers Chu and Talas**

8. Background and previous work: The Governments of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan requested support from UNECE and UNESCAP to make an agreement on the rivers Chu and Talas operational. A project was developed and funds were raised (donors: United Kingdom, Sweden and Estonia). The project has introduced major new approaches to water cooperation in Central Asia, and is seen as an important pilot project for the subregion. Recently, the two countries made the decision to institute the joint water commission and draw up statutes for it.

9. Planned activity: Finalization of the project in autumn 2004.

**E. Improved information exchange on water issues between Central Asian countries and donors**

10. Background and previous work. To improve the exchange of information on water issues between countries in Central Asia and donors, UNECE is implementing a project in 2004-2006 with funding from the Swiss Government. The project's partners are the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/GRID-Arendal and the Scientific Information Centre of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Tashkent. The objective is to establish a portal on the Internet to improve the provision of information on projects and programmes, to decision makers and other stakeholders, and to the public, thereby developing better opportunities for public participation in decision-making processes. The Regional Adviser has been involved in the project's development and fund-raising, and since the beginning of the year in its implementation. See [www.cawater-info.net](http://www.cawater-info.net).

11. Planned activity: Continued project implementation.

**F. Capacity-building for air quality management and the application of clean coal combustion technologies in Central Asia**

12. Background and previous work: The United Nations Development Account has approved funding (US\$ 560,000) for a project to strengthen the capacity of the air quality management institutions in Central Asia to ratify and implement the UNECE Convention on Long-range

Transboundary Air Pollution Convention and its Protocols, and to promote the deployment of appropriate clean coal combustion technologies for heat and power generation from solid fuels. The Regional Adviser has been involved in all phases of the project's development and fund-raising.

13. Planned activity: Start of the project's implementation in summer 2004.

**G. Strengthening peace and fighting poverty in the Southern Caucasus:  
modernizing governance systems in health, water and waste management**

14. Background and previous work: Italy funds this project, which will be finalized in 2004. One remaining component is to support the development of a law on hazardous waste in Azerbaijan according to recommendations in the recent environmental performance review carried out by UNECE.

15. Planned activity: Project administration and implementation of the remaining components.

**H. Sustainable use, management and protection of internationally  
shared groundwater in the Mediterranean region**

16. Background and previous work: A project has been developed with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) as the lead party to strengthen the capacity of water management institutions in the Mediterranean region to sustainably use, manage and protect internationally shared groundwater. The United Nations Development Account funds the project, which builds on experiences from the UNECE Water Convention.

17. Planned activity: Coordination of UNECE participation in the project.