

UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Report of the national seminar

**STRENGTHENING INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES
MANAGEMENT AND TRANSBOUNDARY WATER
COOPERATION: THE ROLE OF UNECE CONVENTIONS
AND OF THE EU WATER INITIATIVE NATIONAL
POLICY DIALOGUE**

Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, 6-7 December 2010

This report has been issued without formal editing by the Environment Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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Confederaziun svizra



A. ORGANIZATION OF THE SEMINAR

1. The national seminar “Strengthening integrated water resources management and transboundary water cooperation: The role of the UNECE conventions and of the EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogue” took place in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on 6-7 December 2010. The seminar was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Ministry of Water Economy of Turkmenistan, in the framework of the programme “Regional Dialogue and Cooperation on Water Resources Management in Central Asia”. The programme is financed by the Government of Germany through *Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ) as part of the Berlin Water Process. The seminar was also organised in the framework of the European Union Water Initiative which is implemented in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia through the National Policy Dialogues. Additional financial support was provided by Switzerland. UNDP-Turkmenistan assisted in organizational and logistical matters.

2. The national seminar was attended by over 35 participants from Turkmenistan, including representatives from the Cabinet of Ministers, Medjlis (Parliament), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Water Economy, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Nature Protection, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Construction, State Border Service, State Sea and River Transport Service, State Geological Enterprise, Committee of Hydrology and other agencies. Also, the Academy of Sciences, Association of Animal Farming Societies, and the Agricultural University participated in the meeting. GTZ, UNDP-Turkmenistan and the United Nations Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia also attended. The UNECE secretariat, as well as international experts from Austria and the University of Dundee (United Kingdom) provided substantive inputs during the meeting. The list of participants is attached in Annex 2.

3. The programme of the national seminar (Annex 1) was developed together with the Ministry of Water Economy of Turkmenistan to make sure that it responded to the needs and interests of the country.

4. Mr. Akhmed Mukhammedov, Deputy Minister of Water Economy of Turkmenistan, and Mr. Bo Libert, UNECE Regional Adviser on Environment, co-chaired the meeting.

B. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION



Opening session

5. The meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Annageldy Yazmuradov, Minister of Water Economy, who stressed the importance of the theme of the seminar for the country. Turkmenistan relies on its own production of food for its 6 mln inhabitants. 90 percent of water use is for irrigated agriculture. Turkmenistan pays special attention to water supply and sanitation to the whole country and welcomes international efforts in this area. Mr. Yazmuradov emphasized that water policy issues are highly relevant for the country and wished the participants to have a fruitful discussion. H.E. Mr. Djumamurat Saparmuradov, Deputy Minister of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan, stressed the close links between the protection and use of water resources. He emphasized the special role played by international organizations in environmental cooperation and the leading position of UNECE in developing and servicing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). According to Mr. Saparmuradov, the five UNECE Conventions¹ form a strong and effective framework for international cooperation in environmental protection. Mr.

¹ Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP Convention, 1979 <http://www.unece.org/env/lrtap/>), Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention, 1991 <http://www.unece.org/env/eia/>), Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention, 1992 <http://www.unece.org/env/water/>), Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention, 1992 <http://www.unece.org/env/teia/>), Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention, 1998 <http://www.unece.org/env/pp/>).

Saparmuradov stressed that Turkmenistan had strengthened its international cooperation on the environment in the past years and is looking forward to cooperation on the development of an Environmental Performance Review (EPR) for Turkmenistan.

6. Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, Environment, Housing and Land Management Division, UNECE, thanked the Cabinet of Ministers and the Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Rashid Meredov for recognising the importance of the issues of water management and transboundary water cooperation. Also, Mr. Keiner expressed his gratitude to the Minister of Water Economy Mr. Yazmuradov for co-organising the seminar with UNECE. Mr. Keiner emphasized that UNECE as a custodian of several MEAs, including the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), is actively engaged in promoting cooperation and dialogue on the management and protection of water resources in Central Asia. As Turkmenistan has several times announced that it is considering accession to the Water Convention, the seminar offers opportunities to discuss the benefits and obligations under the Convention. Drawing the attention to two other UNECE conventions – the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and the Convention on Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents – Mr. Keiner emphasized that all UNECE conventions function as an integral system. He also highlighted the opportunities for cooperation provided by the upcoming Seventh Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Astana, 21-23 September 2011) where water and water-related ecosystems is one of the two major themes on the agenda.

7. Mr. Alexander Nikolayenko, Regional Advisor, GTZ, briefed the participants about the Berlin Water Process – the framework initiative by the Government of Germany for support of the Central Asian countries in the area of water resources management. He described the Programme “Transboundary Water Resources Management in Central Asia”, which consists of several components: (i) a regional component, including the UNECE Programme “Regional Dialogue and Cooperation in Water Resources Management in Central Asia”, (ii) transboundary cooperation for small rivers, (iii) pilot projects at the national level. Mr. Nikolayenko stressed the importance of the dialogue as a starting point for strengthening cooperation at both national and regional levels.

Session 1: Integrated water resources management and the National Policy Dialogue under the EU Water Initiative

8. Ms. Gulnara Roll, Regional Coordinator of the EU Water Initiative at UNECE, focused her presentation on the concept, major principles and examples of **integrated water resources management** (IWRM). Ms. Roll described the holistic approach to water resources management, which takes into account the issues of protection and rational use of surface and ground waters, water quantity and quality, environmental, social and economic aspects. She emphasized the importance of structuring water management based on the basin approach and described basic steps in the development of a basin management plan. The presentation also addressed such key concepts as strategic planning for IWRM, multi-sector coordination, basin organisations, stakeholder participation, and financing of IWRM. When asked why IWRM is not moving easily in the countries of former Soviet Union, Ms. Roll emphasized the importance of each country’s political commitment towards IWRM at the highest level. During the discussion, the example of Soviet schemes for the complex use and protection of water resources and their compatibility with IWRM concept were discussed. Mr. Nikolayenko described the experience of Kazakhstan in progressing towards IWRM, in particular through the development of an IWRM Programme and the adoption in 2008-2009 of new schemes of complex use and protection for all river basins. He

stressed that Central Asian countries have a good potential to implement IWRM but a lot depends on their national priorities.

9. Current **European practices of IWRM at national and transboundary levels** were presented to the participants by Mr. Wolfgang Stalzer, international expert from Austria. Mr. Stalzer, the first President of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), described the experience in the application of IWRM in the most international river basin – the Danube. He stressed economic and other disparities between basin countries and described the role of the Danube River Protection Convention (1994) and of the ICPDR in strengthening cooperation mechanisms. Mr. Stalzer also addressed the application of IWRM in connection with the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and its requirement to develop river basin management plans. When addressing collaboration mechanisms, Mr. Stalzer emphasized the role of bilateral agreements and of sub-basin cooperation. IWRM at the national level was illustrated through the example of Austria, where water is managed separately in the Elbe, Rhine and Danube river basins. Mr. Stalzer described the efforts of Austria to achieve "good status" for its water bodies in accordance with the EU WFD, and addressed new challenges such as the reduction of diffuse sources of pollution, the improvement of the ecological status potential, and flood risk management.

10. A discussion on the issues of state responsibility and compensation for transboundary pollution followed the presentation. Participants were interested in the response by the Danube countries to the recent accident at the alumina refinery in Hungary, and were explained that the accident had no transboundary impact. Another case – the Baia-Mare accident on the Tisza River in 2000 – had a large transboundary impact and pushed the international community to negotiate and adopt in 2003 the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters to two UNECE instruments – the Water Convention and the Convention on Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents. Mr. Sergei Vinogradov, University of Dundee/Legal Board of the Water Convention, explained that States have an obligation to ensure in their legal systems the possibility of a legal claim by a person from another state. The practice of compensation for transboundary environmental damage by a State to another State is rather limited.

11. In response to a question on the relationship between cooperation under the Danube River Protection Convention and cooperation of Black Sea countries, Mr. Stalzer explained that only a few countries (Romania, Bulgaria, and Ukraine) are Parties to both the Danube River Protection Convention and the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution. However there is a close cooperation between ICPDR and the International Commission for the Protection of the Black Sea (ICPBS), and good results have been achieved during the past 20 years in the reduction of pollution loads from the Danube into the Black Sea, in particular the reduction of phosphorus and nitrogen. Since 2001, a Memorandum of Understanding between ICPBS and ICPDR governs cooperation between these bodies. Another discussion – on water allocation principles – took place in connection with the presentation of Mr. Stalzer, who emphasized that the ICPDR does not decide on water allocation; however water allocation is addressed in the bilateral agreements between the Danubian countries.

12. Ms. Gulnara Roll described the **Program of National Policy Dialogues** (NPDs) on IWRM in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). The dialogues are facilitated by UNECE and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development in the framework of the EU Water Initiative. Ms. Roll explained the objective of NPDs, i.e. support to the implementation of IWRM principles, including the basin approach to water management, at local,

national and international levels, in accordance with the principles of the Water Convention, its Protocol on Water and Health, the EU WFD and other instruments. Since 2007 NPDs are ongoing in the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. In 2010, Georgia and Azerbaijan started their NPDs. Preparatory activities to launch the dialogue process are taking place in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Kazakhstan has recently requested to initiate an NPD. During the discussion, participants focused on the possible links between the NPD process in Turkmenistan and the process of accession to the Water Convention. On the issue of involvement of the Global Water Partnership into the NPD process, Ms. Roll emphasized the openness of NPDs to all organizations, including the GWP. Ms. Roll also clarified that Iran and Afghanistan do not participate in the NPD Program.



Session 2: UNECE Water Convention

13. Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Secretary to the UNECE Water Convention, opened the session with an **introductory presentation on the UNECE Water Convention**. The Convention currently has 38 Parties: 37 countries and the European Union. In Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are Parties, and Turkmenistan is preparing for accession. Ms. Bernardini introduced main obligations under the Convention and the holistic approach of this legal instrument, which includes in the notion of transboundary impact the effects on human health and safety, flora, fauna, soil, air, water, climate, landscape and socio-economic conditions, addresses both surface and groundwaters, and builds on the notion of cooperation over the catchment area. Ms. Bernardini

emphasized that the Convention covers cooperation on water quality as well as water quantity. She described the crucial role played by the Convention in supporting transboundary water cooperation in the UNECE region and emphasized the support to implementation provided through the Convention. Ms. Bernardini introduced the Guide to Implementing the Water Convention adopted by the Meeting of the Parties in 2009 and other guidance documents under the Convention. She explained the role of the amendments to Articles 25 and 26, which open the Convention to non-UNECE countries and encouraged accession by Turkmenistan to the Convention as amended. In case Turkmenistan becomes a Party, the amendments to Articles 25 and 26 could be particularly relevant for cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran and with Afghanistan. Ms. Bernardini also encouraged Turkmenistan to participate in the preparation of the Second Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters in the UNECE region, which will be presented to the Seventh Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Astana, 21-23 September 2011).

14. Ms. Bernardini responded to questions on the opportunities for enhancing the influence of the Water Convention as a regional legal framework in Central Asia. She stressed that there are many upstream countries among the Parties to this legal instrument since participation in the Convention brings short term as well as long term benefits to both upstream and downstream countries. Ms. Bernardini acknowledged that the Convention is often misinterpreted in Central Asian subregion, so it is important to continue the work to explain its provisions. As emphasized during the discussion by Mr. Vinogradov, non-participation in the Water Convention does not relieve a State from such obligations as reasonable and equitable use, the obligation to take all necessary measures to prevent significant harm, the obligation of cooperation, the obligation to notify on planned measures and the obligation to have in place a system of environmental impact assessment – as all these obligations are part of international customary law; while participation in the Convention strengthens the "moral" position of a State and its opportunities to use the cooperation potential under the umbrella of the Convention.

15. Mr. Sergey Vinogradov delivered a presentation **on obligations “for all Parties”** as included in Part I of the Convention. He described the three pillars in the normative framework of the Convention: (1) the obligation to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact, (2) the principle of equitable and reasonable utilization, and (3) the obligation of cooperation. He also addressed the polluter pays principle and explained that the principle is to be applied within countries and reflected in the national legislation of a Party. The polluter pays principle cannot be invoked as a basis for compensation between countries. The discussion focused on whether accession to the Convention would require changes in the national legislation, in particular the Water Code of Turkmenistan. As explained by Mr. Vinogradov, in case national legislation does not correspond to the provisions of the Convention (as is the case for participation in any international legal instrument), it would need to be revised. Also, the discussion clarified that the Water Convention does not require Riparian Parties to immediately harmonise standards for discharges – rather it requires the Riparian Parties to cooperate in view of harmonising the policy and achieving better water quality.

16. Ms. Iulia Trombitcaia, UNECE, followed with a presentation on the obligations **“for Riparian Parties”** as included in Part II of the Convention. The Convention requires the Riparian Parties to conclude specific agreements where these do not yet exist. The Convention further obliges the Riparian Parties to adapt existing agreements, “where necessary to eliminate the contradictions with the basic principles of this Convention”. Ms. Trombitcaia devoted attention to three requirements on the content of agreements under the Convention, such as (i) to define waters to which they apply, (ii) to cover the issues provided for under the Convention and the possibility to include other issues, and (iii) to establish joint bodies. She explained in detail other obligations

under Part II, such as to enter into consultations, to perform joint monitoring and assessment, to exchange information, to establish warning and alarm systems, to provide mutual assistance upon request and to settle disputes in a peaceful way. In response to a question on financial obligations under the Convention, Ms. Trombitcaia explained that Parties make voluntary contributions to the Convention's trust fund and some Parties can benefit from the use of the trust fund. At the same time, certain obligations under the Convention do require financial resources (e.g. to participate in the meetings of and sustain the activity of a joint body). Mr. Stalzer described the example of the ICPDR's budget and costs distribution to illustrate the financial commitments to support the activity of this joint body.

17. Mr. Bo Libert, UNECE, addressed the concept and practice of **joint bodies for transboundary water cooperation** – the key cooperation mechanism provided for in the Water Convention. He explained the provisions of Article 9(2) and outlined the scope, competence, functions, tasks and organizational structure of joint bodies, as well as such issues as financing and public participation. Mr. Libert described common problems of joint bodies in EECCA region, such as the lack of adequate powers to implement IWRM; lack of financial means for implementation of joint programs; poor implementation of joint body's decisions; and underperformance of some functions by joint bodies, most commonly, the functions related to water quality and environmental protection.

18. During the discussion, Mr. Libert gave several examples how UNECE facilitates the establishment or strengthening of joint bodies in EECCA region. He described the project to enhance transboundary water cooperation in the Dniester River through negotiation of a new agreement by the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. The agreement would provide for a new river basin commission as a joint body. Also, he described the current activities in the Kura basin which help Azerbaijan and Georgia to develop a transboundary water agreement. Mr. Nikolayenko further briefed the participants on the ongoing activities under the GTZ Programme "Transboundary Water Resources Management in Central Asia" to strengthen cooperation on small rivers between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which aim to establish a bilateral commission for the rivers Isfara and Khodzha-Bakirgan. Mr. Vinogradov described the current activities to implement the Joint Statement of the Heads of States-Founders of the International Fund for saving the Aral Sea (IFAS) of 2009, aimed at strengthening institutional and legal frameworks of cooperation under IFAS and emphasized the important mediatory role of UNECE in facilitating these activities. Mr. Kurbangeldy Ballyev, the representative of Turkmenistan in the Executive Committee of IFAS, stressed that Turkmenistan shares waters of other basins than Amudarya, and emphasized the need to consider attracting UNECE experience in the future.

Discussion: Challenges and advantages in the accession to the Water Convention by Turkmenistan

19. In his introductory remarks, Mr. Ahmet Muhammedov, Deputy Minister of Water Economy, emphasized the importance of the interest from UNECE and EU towards water cooperation in Central Asia, in particular in the framework of the water and environmental pillar of the EU Strategy for Central Asia, and highlighted the need of regular high-level meetings. Mr. Muhammedov announced that **Turkmenistan launches the National Policy Dialogue** on IWRM, and expressed the hope that UNECE and the European Commission will support the dialogue process.

20. Mr. Bo Libert invited participants to discuss the needs of Turkmenistan in the accession process to the UNECE Water Convention. The following issues and considerations were raised during the discussion:

- Participants stressed that consideration of the issue of accession to the Water Convention is included in the National Environmental Protection Action Programme; it is therefore important to undertake the necessary procedures in due time. The Ministry of Water Economy is the appropriate agency to consider the issue.
- Participants emphasized the importance that the Water Convention did not involve financial commitments, other than voluntary contributions to the trust fund.
- It was clarified that accession to the Water Convention and accession to its two protocols are different procedures, and the accession to the mother convention does not automatically involve accession to its protocols.
- Participants stressed that accession to the Water Convention could be beneficial for the country in achieving sustainable management of water resources and the protection of the environment. Accession to the Convention would also be an important step towards addressing and settling differences between countries in the management of transboundary water resources. In addition, it would open the way to strengthen cooperation on such issues as protection of water ecosystems and biodiversity, water quality, and the minimum environmental flow.
- Many speakers emphasized that Turkmenistan has a certain experience in applying the basin approach and has a significant experience in participation in joint bodies (such as the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia and the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development in Central Asia (ICSD)). Turkmenistan further hosts the Scientific and Information Center of the ICSD. Accession could facilitate the strengthening of existing joint bodies and the creation of new joint commissions with neighbouring states.
- Participants underlined that the country has recently acceded to several MEAs, including the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention, 2003) and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention, 1972), and also signed the 2006 Framework Convention for the protection of the environment for sustainable development in Central Asia (Ashgabat Convention, 2006). This demonstrates the openness of Turkmenistan towards participation in international cooperation in the framework of MEAs.

Session 3: UNECE legal instruments – a comprehensive framework to manage and protect our waters, environment and health

21. The session aimed at showing a broader picture of the UNECE legal framework related to water resources management and demonstrating the linkages and synergies between UNECE environmental instruments in the water sector. The session focused on the Protocol on Water and Health to the Water Convention, the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the Espoo Convention, as well as projects and specific activities under the umbrella of UNECE Conventions in Central Asia.

22. Ms. Francesca Bernardini, Co-Secretary to the **Protocol on Water and Health**, explained the obligations under the Protocol that brings together environmental and health policies. She referred to the obligations to establish targets and target dates and to create systems for

surveillance and early warning of water related diseases. She also described measures to be taken in the areas of public awareness and education under the Protocol. Ms. Bernardini explained the functioning of different bodies under the Protocol, in particular the role of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism, and described the implementation of the Protocol by providing the example of target setting in the Republic of Moldova.



23. Participants were interested to find out whether the Protocol supports the traditional (local) methods for collection and distribution of water. Such methods are widespread in the rural and desert areas of the country. As explained by Ms. Bernardini, the Protocol leaves it up to the country to find the best ways to achieve access to water and sanitation for all, provided that the methods of water supply and sanitation are safe and ensure rational and sustainable use of resources. In response to the question on major potential difficulties in the implementation of the Protocol by countries of Central Asia, Ms. Bernardini named (i) lack of awareness on the Protocol and (ii) challenges in establishing intersectoral cooperation within a country. Participants were also interested in the application of the Protocol to the area of sanitation, where the Co-Secretary stressed the importance of measures for prevention of water-related diseases. As for the question on assistance in the accession process to the Protocol, Ms. Bernardini explained that such assistance includes capacity building activities as well as possible use of the Ad Hoc Project Facilitation Mechanism. The latter has already been used by some countries to develop and implement projects on target setting under the Protocol.

24. The session further introduced the **UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents**, presented by Mr. Lukasz Wyrowski, Officer-in-Charge of the Convention.

The Convention promotes cooperation between States on ensuring safety at industrial hazardous facilities through application of relevant measures for prevention, preparedness and response. Mr. Wyrowski described various opportunities for cooperation under the Convention and explained linkages with the water sector. He presented the Assistance Programme launched in 2004 to help countries of Eastern and South Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in strengthening the implementation of the Convention and, ultimately, enhancing the industrial safety. Various activities undertaken in the framework of the Assistance Programme in different countries were also presented. The Programme is also open for Turkmenistan and Mr. Wyrowski invited the country to join it by expressing interests in the Convention and commitment to work on industrial safety. He stressed that the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties would welcome the expression of commitment by Turkmenistan to participate in the Assistance Programme. The discussion focused on synergies and cooperation between the three UNECE Conventions, i.e. Water, Espoo and Industrial Accidents Conventions. Mr. Wyrowski, answering questions on links between the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the Espoo Convention, indicated that the process of identification of industrial facilities falling under the scope of the Convention can include the procedure of environmental impact assessment in accordance with the Espoo Convention.

25. Mr. Nicholas Bonvoisin, Secretary to the **Espoo Convention**, delivered a presentation on the obligations and procedures of this Convention and its application to transboundary water projects. The Espoo Convention has 45 Parties, including two countries in Central Asia – Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. A recently negotiated Protocol on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, to be adopted by the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, will become another relevant platform for international cooperation on environmental impact assessment. Mr. Bonvoisin explained the procedure under the Espoo Convention both from the perspective of a Party planning an activity that may have a transboundary impact and from the perspective of an affected Party. He emphasized that sovereignty in the Espoo Convention procedure is fully retained since the decision-making power remains in the country where the development is planned. In the water sector, the Espoo Convention is most frequently applied to the cases of hydropower stations, navigation channels and inland ports. However, there are also cases of application in many other sectors indirectly affecting transboundary waters. Mr. Bonvoisin described the example of Espoo Convention's application to the planned hydroelectric power plant on the Neman River in Belarus, 11 km from the border with Lithuania, to illustrate the Espoo procedure. During the discussion, Mr. Bonvoisin clarified some additional aspects of the Espoo Convention procedure. In particular, he explained that the lack of a response by an affected Party to an offer to take part in the procedure does not prevent the Party of origin from undertaking the procedure in relation to other affected Parties and ultimately, from progressing with the planned activity. In case of objections by an affected Party, the Convention only requires that, in the final decision on the proposed activity, due account is taken of the outcome of the procedure, including all comments received.

26. Participants appreciated the clarification on the linkages between Industrial Accidents and other UNECE Conventions, in particular Espoo and Water Conventions. They stressed that there is a lack of information on the Conventions, and proposed to organise a national seminar on the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the Espoo Convention.

27. The last presentation of the seminar, by Mr. Bo Libert, was devoted to specific **projects in the water sector in Central Asia** implemented by UNECE. Mr. Libert described the components of the UNECE-GTZ programme "Regional dialogue and understanding on water resources

management", current state of affairs in the project "Capacity-building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia" (dam safety project) and activities in the project "Water Quality in Central Asia". He encouraged Turkmenistan to continue and further strengthen its participation in these projects. Mr. Libert also addressed the project to support cooperation of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on the rivers Chu and Talas, as a possible example of establishing modern legal and institutional mechanisms for bilateral water cooperation. He confirmed the readiness of UNECE to assist Turkmenistan in establishing mechanisms for transboundary water cooperation with its neighbours. Mr. Libert also described the current state of the Central Asia Regional Water Information Base (CAREWIB) project.

28. Participants raised several questions with regard to the dam safety project. In particular, some were interested in how the project addresses dam safety in the pre-construction phase. As explained by Mr. Libert, the project assists countries in developing national legislation on the safety of hydrotechnical installations. While Uzbekistan has a separate law on the safety of dams already since many years, new national legislation on dam safety has recently been passed by Tajikistan. In Kazakhstan, dam safety has been part of the Water Code but the country now progresses towards the adoption of a separate law on this issue. Mr. Libert confirmed the readiness of the project to facilitate the development of national legislation on dam safety in Turkmenistan. Mr. Kurbangeldy Ballyev stressed that analyses of national legislation on dam safety in Turkmenistan has already been developed in the framework of the dam safety project. In addition, the project resulted in the elaboration of a model law on dam safety. He emphasized the need to organise in Turkmenistan a seminar for developers and engineers on methodological and technical aspects of the safety of hydrotechnical installations.

Discussion: Priorities, needs and interests of Turkmenistan in the context of UNECE legal environmental instruments and the National Policy Dialogue

29. The discussion on priorities, needs and interests of Turkmenistan in the context of UNECE environmental instruments and in light of the future National Policy Dialogue was co-moderated by Mr. Kurbangeldy Ballyev and Mr. Bo Libert, and highlighted the following needs and priority issues:

- Strengthening water management by the broader application of IWRM principles is an urgent priority in Turkmenistan. This can include further development of the legal frameworks and of the capacity of institutions, and could be done through advisory services, involvement of donors, and support by UN and other organisations. The Water Code and the recently adopted Law on Drinking Water require the development of subsidiary legislation, which is an opportunity to strengthen IWRM. Projects to implement IWRM, e.g. development of IWRM plans, could also be initiated with the support of the National Policy Dialogue process. In developing subsidiary legislation for the Law on Drinking Water, there are opportunities to build synergies with the Protocol on Water and Health.
- Enhancing the knowledge about international legal instruments and processes is needed. The organisation of a national seminar on the Espoo and Industrial Accidents Conventions would serve this purpose. A regional event for Central Asian States and Azerbaijan could focus on approaches to environmental impact assessment. At the same time, it is also important to raise awareness at international level about the efforts of Turkmenistan in the

implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, environmental protection and other issues on international agenda.

- A few thematic issues are particularly relevant for Turkmenistan and should be given further consideration both from the perspective of country's participation in MEAs, in particular the Water Convention, and as topics that could be addressed during the National Policy Dialogue. These specific issues include:
 - a) Management and protection of groundwater, and collector and drainage waters;
 - b) Wastewater treatment technologies and equipment;
 - c) Water resources restoration projects (such as green belts);
 - d) Seasonal watercourses and mud flows;
 - e) The management of complex hydrotechnical and collector installations;
 - f) Methodology for determining the minimum stream flow, measures to ensure the minimum stream flow;
 - g) Protection of ecosystems (including migratory ways for bird species) and protection of water biodiversity;
 - h) Strengthening water efficiency through improvement of irrigation technologies and reuse of water.

C. CONCLUSIONS

30. During the concluding session, the Co-Chairs – Mr. Akhmed Mukhammedov, Deputy Minister of Water Economy of Turkmenistan, and Mr. Bo Libert, UNECE, – made the following summary of the meeting outcomes:

- The seminar has resulted in better understanding of the UNECE Water Convention among various ministries, agencies and institutions in Turkmenistan, which should facilitate the process of accession by Turkmenistan.
- Turkmenistan will start the process of the National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management in the framework of the EU Water Initiative, to be facilitated by UNECE. Priorities and needs of Turkmenistan as highlighted during the seminar are an important input to be further explored during the National Policy Dialogue process.
- The seminar is a step forward in the strengthening of cooperation between Turkmenistan and UNECE in the area of water management and environmental protection, and both sides are looking forward to continue active cooperation. Participation of Turkmenistan in the EPR process is another important part of this process.
- UNECE will follow-up on the proposal made by the participants to organise in 2011 a national seminar on the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context.
- As the Protocol on Water and Health generated significant interest, Turkmenistan should consider strengthening its participation in the Protocol's events. There is a significant potential for synergies between the Protocol and the new legislation of Turkmenistan on drinking water.
- Turkmen participants thanked UNECE and international experts for the organization of the useful meeting, which strengthened the knowledge of UNECE Conventions and deepened the understanding of UNECE activities.
- Turkmenistan and UNECE gratefully thanked the Government of Germany and GTZ, Switzerland and the European Commission for their generous support to the meeting.

Venue: conference hall, Hotel “President”

Co-chaired by: Mr. Akhmed Mukhammedov, Deputy Minister of Water Economy of Turkmenistan
Mr. Bo Libert, Regional Adviser on Environment, UNECE

1st Day	6 December 2010
9.00-9.30	Registration of participants
9.30 -10.20	<p>Opening</p> <p>Mr. Annageldy Yazmuradov, Minister of Water Economy of Turkmenistan</p> <p>Mr. Babageldi Annabayramov, Minister of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan</p> <p>Mr. Marco Keiner, Director, Environment, Housing and Land Management, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)</p> <p>Mr. Alexander Nikolayenko, Regional Advisor, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH</p>
10:20-12.30	Session 1: Integrated water resources management and National Policy Dialogue under the EU Water Initiative
11.00-11.30	<p>Integrated water resources management: concept, major principles and examples (Gulnara Roll, Regional Coordinator on EU Water Initiative, UNECE)</p> <p>Coffee break</p> <p>Current European practices of IWRM at national and transboundary levels (Wolfgang Stalzer, Austria)</p> <p>National Policy Dialogues on IWRM under the EU Water Initiative in countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (Gulnara Roll, Regional Coordinator of the EU Water Initiative, UNECE)</p>
12.30-18.00	Session 2: UNECE Water Convention
12.30-13.00	Water Convention: a sound framework for promoting IWRM and transboundary water cooperation (Francesca Bernardini, Secretary to Water Convention, UNECE)
13.00 -14.00	Lunch break
14.00-16.00	<p>Water Convention: “provisions for all Parties” (Sergei Vinogradov, University of Dundee/Legal Board of the Water Convention)</p> <p>Water Convention: “provisions for Riparian Parties” (Iulia Trombitcaia, UNECE)</p>

	Secretariat) Joint bodies: international experience and best practice (Bo Libert, UNECE Regional Adviser on the Environment)
16.00-16.30	Coffee break
16.30-18.00	<u>Discussion</u> (Moderated by Bo Libert): <u>Challenges and advantages in the accession to the Water Convention by Turkmenistan</u> Introduction by Mr. Ahmet Muhammedov, Deputy Minister of Water Economy Discussion
18.30	Reception

2nd Day	7 December 2010
9.00-17.00	Session 3: UNECE legal instruments – a comprehensive framework to manage and protect our waters, environment and health
9.00-11.00	Protocol on Water and Health: integrating water, health and the environment (Francesca Bernardini, Co-Secretary to the Protocol) UNECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Lukasz Wyrowski, Officer-in-Charge, Industrial Accidents Convention, UNECE)
11.00-11.30	Coffee break
11.30-13.00	UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention): obligations, procedures, application to transboundary water projects (Nicholas Bonvoisin, Secretary, Espoo Convention, UNECE)
13.00-14.00	Lunch break
14.00-15.30	Projects and activities of UNECE Conventions in Central Asia (Bo Libert, UNECE Regional Adviser on Environment)
15.30-16.00	Coffee break
16.00-17.00	<u>Discussion</u> : Priorities, needs and interests of Turkmenistan in the context of UNECE legal environmental instruments and the National Policy Dialogue (Co-moderated by Kurbangeldy Ballyev, Representative of Turkmenistan in EC IFAS, and Bo Libert, UNECE)
17.00-17.30	Summing up and conclusions

List of participants

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**Укрепление интегрированного управления водными ресурсами и
 трансграничного водного сотрудничества: роль конвенций ЕЭК ООН
 и Национального диалога по водной политике в рамках Водной инициативы ЕС**
 Ашхабад, 6-7 декабря 2010 г

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