



UNECE United Nations Economic Commission for Europe



Auswärtiges Amt



EC-IFAS



Water Unites – Strengthening Regional Cooperation on Water Management in Central Asia

International Conference

**Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan
17 - 18 November 2008**

Introduction

The Conference is organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Government of Germany, the Executive Committee for the International Fund for the Saving of the Aral Sea (EC-IFAS) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is hosted by the Kazakh Executive Board of IFAS and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The main objective of the Conference is to assess short- and long-term challenges in the field of cooperative water management in Central Asia with the participation of high-level representatives of the countries of the region, the UN, the European Union, regional organizations and other members of the international development community, in order to generate more coherent, efficient and better targeted action to address these challenges.

Participants will discuss environmentally and water-related aspects of the Joint UN Agency Central Asia Regional Risk Assessment, prepared by the Regional Bureau for Europe and CIS of the UNDP.

A key element of the Conference will be the presentation of a Modular Project, developed by GTZ with the support of the Federal Foreign Ministry of Germany and UNECE under the „Berlin Water Conference process“, launched on 1 April 2008 by Federal Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Representatives of Central Asian states as well as decision-makers and experts of regional organizations responsible for water management (IFAS and ICWC) will be invited to comment on the Project and signal their willingness to participate in its implementation. Representatives of the European Union (the Italian Coordinator of the water and environment pillar

of the Central Asia Strategy of the EU and the Commission) will present the water and environment pillar of the EU Central Asia Strategy and the EU approach to water cooperation in Central Asia.

The inauguration of the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea will take place on the second day, followed by the launching of the East Caspian Assessment and its follow up by the Environment and Security Partnership, and the presentation of the Cooperation Framework for IWRM by the European Commission and international organizations. The final session will discuss a number of legal and institutional issues, raised by participants of the Berlin Conference „Water Unites“, including the need to modernize the legal and institutional basis of cooperative water management in Central Asia.

Programme

First day (17 November)

09.00 Opening statements

- Mr. Paolo Garonna, Acting Executive Secretary of UNECE
- Representative of the host country Mr. Akylbek Kurishbaev, Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan
- Ms. Hedi Wegener, Member of Parliament, Head of the German Central Asian Parliamentary Group in the Bundestag

09.30 First session: Report of the Regional Risk Assessment of the Water/Food/Energy Situation in Central Asia

Chair: Mr Johannes Linn, Executive Director of the Wolfensohn Center for Development and Special Advisor of CAREC

Keynote address by Ms. Kori Udovicki, Assistant Secretary General and Director, Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, UNDP

Presentation of the Report – Mr. Ben Slay, Senior Economist, UNDP

Discussion moderated by the Chair, calling on

- Independent Experts
- Representatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan
- Mr. Bo Libert, UNECE, “The UNECE Water Convention: A framework for long-term regional cooperation on water management”
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- USAID, DFID, EurAsEC and other representatives of the International Development Community

11.0 Coffee break

11.30 Continuation of the first session

12.30 Second Session: The Berlin Water Process: an Integral Part of the Central Asia Strategy of the EU

Chair: Mr. Marco Keiner, Director Environment, Housing and Land Management Division, UNECE

Keynote address by Mr. Rainer Schlageter, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Kazakhstan, followed by a presentation of the trans-boundary water management project by a representative of GTZ

14.00 Lunch break

15.00 Continuation of the Second Session

- **Ambassador Pierre Morel, Special Representative of the European Union**
- **Mr. Norbert Jousten, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.**
- **Mr. Massimo Cozzone, Ministry of Environment of Italy, Italian Coordinator of the Environment and Water Pillar of the Central Asian Strategy of the EU**
- **Representatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**

16.30 Coffee break

17.00 Continuation of the Discussion

17.30 End of the session

Second day (18 November)

09.00 Inauguration of the Executive Committee of IFAS

Chair: Mr. Paolo Garonna, Acting Executive Secretary, UNECE

- **Representative of the Host Country**
- **Mr. Sulton Rahimov, previous Chairman of the Executive Committee of IFAS – “IFAS: Achievements and gaps”**

- Mr. Saghit Ibatullin, Chairman of the Executive Committee of IFAS

10.00 First session: Presentation of the Cooperation Frameworks in Central Asia and launch of the ENVSEC East Caspian Assessment

Chair: Ms. Nara Luvsan, UNEP

- Ms. Delphine Marie, European Commission and Mr. Juerg Staudenmann, UNDP – “Cooperation framework for addressing water issues in Central Asia”
- Mr. Luigi DiMartino, “Presentation of the ENVSEC East Caspian Assessment” with an introduction by Nara Luvsan, UNEP
- Mr. Alexei Stukalo, OSCE/OCEEA
- Mr. Talaibek Makeev, Regional Environmental Centre of Central Asia - “Central Asian Initiative for Sustainable Development”

Representatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

11.00 Coffee break

11.30 Continuation of the first session

12.30 Second session: Modernizing the Legal Basis and Strengthening the Institutions for Regional Water Management in Central Asia

Chair: Mr. Saghit Ibatullin, Chairman of the Executive Committee of IFAS

- Mr. Marton Krasznai, UNECE – “Strengthening the Institutions for Regional Water Management in Central Asia”
- Mr. Arstanbek Davletkeldiev, Director and Chair of the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development
- Representatives of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, SIC-ICWC

14.00 End of the Conference and lunch