



**Convention on Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and  
International Lakes**

**SEMINAR ON THE ROLE OF ECOSYSTEMS  
AS WATER SUPPLIERS**  
(Geneva, 13-14 December 2004)

**Integrated approach to the decision of  
water problems:  
public participation.  
The Russian experience and offers**  
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**INTEGRATED APPROACH TO THE DECISION OF WATER PROBLEMS:  
PUBLICS PARTICIPATION.  
THE RUSSIAN EXPERIENCE AND OFFERS.**

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Water problems don't know borders. Ural - is located in the center of Russia, on border between Europe and Asia. At all seen remoteness from the Western Europe, environmental problems of Ural are much closer, than can seem. The matter is that in Ural the watershed is located and basin of the rivers which run into Caspian sea and in Arctic Ocean are formed. Several years ago scientists were surprised with a situation when chrome from one of the Ural factories has been found out in Caspian sea, and Urals radioactivity - at Arctic ocean ... Now becomes obvious, that the condition of the river in any region is capable to influence not only local ecological conditions, but also to form a situation of a world scale...

Today Russia is on a threshold of the next ecological crisis: the industry connected to rise. The enterprises which have renewed work with use of former, old technologies. The slogan predominates - to lift economy by all means! Frequently - due to a heavy use of natural resources and to the detriment of measures on preservation of the environment. These processes aggravate and without that a critical condition of the Russian ecological situation - today water problems in Russia are not priorities of the government level. It is possible to ascertain, that in Russia today there is no water policy - the state water services about 10 years are in process of constant transformation.

In such situation non-governmental organizations (NGO) are a powerful reserve for the decision of water problems. While the state has no consecutive water policy, NGO frequently act in a role of initiators of managerial process as water resources. So, for example, at a federal level public examination of the new Water Code of the Russian Federation is registered: NGOs (members of the Russian Rivers Network) prepare for the offers and comments for the new water document... At regional and local levels frequently NGO are the force initiating new directions and actions on water resources management. So the regional NGO «Ural Ecological Union» has acted in Sverdlovsk region the initiator of the law on water objects, and also - the initiator of creation of natural park «Sources of the Iset-river» for protection of a biodiversity and rivers ecosystem. The ecological public is borrowed with revealing of the most vulnerable natural ecosystem and the control over their protection. And such examples in the Russian regions set ... (the Author of this report is ready to result concrete examples of public projects and programs on revealing and the control over the most vulnerable water ecosystem, legislative water initiatives of a regional level, water projects on education of the population and so on).

It would be desirable to recommend for the international conventions on water objects the below-mentioned conclusions based on the analysis of problems and experience of Russia.

*The analysis of the reasons* of infringement rivers and lakes ecosystem has allowed to allocate three basic:

1. Wrong and excessive operation of reservoirs
2. The wrong organization of managerial process by water resources (absence of water management)

3. Absence of coordination between the organizations and the persons involved in managerial process by water resources.

The combination of all these reasons is typical of Russia. Elimination of all these reasons probably only under condition of active involving the public.

In opinion of authors the most important *directions of participation of the public* in the decision of water problems are:

1. Development of mechanisms of participation of the public in management of water
2. Formation of ecological culture of the population and environmental education

Let's consider more in detail each of directions.

### **1. Development of mechanisms of participation of the public in management of water**

#### ***Possible forms and mechanisms:***

- Fastening an opportunity of participation of the public in legislative initiatives at local, regional, national and international levels
- Maintenance of open access of the public to the water information
- Creation of public councils on management of water objects (an opportunity of cross-sectoral cooperation) on "basins principle" irrespective of administrative and political division of territory
- Maintenance of mechanisms of the account of public opinion at the decision of water problems (for example - carrying out of referenda, public discussions)
- A possibility of public control over water problems (for example, public expertising).

#### ***Requirements ??? to the organizations involved in water problems:***

- To achieve the decision of water problems within the framework of uniform ecosystems space which unessentially coincides with administrative and political borders.
- To apply at planning long «Time horizon» - the greater, than now the time period of influence of results of activity on ecological systems
- Creation of favorable conditions for restoration ecosystems, degrading as a result of activity of the person
- To protect watersheds and the top reservoirs of reservoirs from negative influence of human activity
- To warn pollution in a source
- To provide preservation of a biological variety and genetic resources of water systems
- To coordinate used methods of a water policy between all involved parties
- To inform the population "waters" knowledge and to provide participation of the public in planning a choice of decisions on water questions
- To make an estimation of influence on an environment a part of all economic plans and actions
- To researches water systems from within, to stimulate movement on returning to a natural condition and restoration of water objects
- To initiate revealing and protection of the most vulnerable water systems
- Planning should have universal and predicting character
- To support and lobby the international agreements directed on the decision of water problems

### **2. Formation of ecological culture of the population and environmental education**

#### ***Possible forms and mechanisms:***

- Development of accessible and clear information resources for the population
- Formation of culture of the careful relation to water and water education
- Involving youth in practical activities on rational water resources management and restoration of water systems (in Russia there is a wide experience on involving youth and children in this process)
- Introduction of a basis of a water policy and the water legislation through an education system at all levels - from younger school age up to students and experts in the organizations and the

enterprises

- Development of active (practical) forms of ecological education on the nature (it is proved, that distance of the “modern person” by nature negatively influences a level of the relation to an environment)
- Development of social and ecological advertising (the popular and mass information forming habits in relation to an environment, to economy of water)

By separate point in documents on a water policy of local, regional national and international levels ***questions of financing of public participation in actions under the decision of water problems*** should be considered.

***Possible forms:***

- The announcement of open competitions, tenders for the public on projects under the decision of water problems.
- Deductions from water funds of a different level on development of mechanisms of participation of the public
- Encouragement, granting of privileges to the organizations which are carrying out charitable support of initiatives under the decision of water problems and restoration water ecosystems.

Besides for the consecutive and effective decision of water problems we consider necessary a recognition at all levels (from public local up to government and international) the following principles:

- *We should recognize water as criterion (indicator) of the steady development combining economic, ecological, social - aesthetic aspects.*
- *Water, the rivers, lakes is a complex system (not less complex), than technical mechanisms and machines) and the inept relation with parts can cause negative consequences and destroy fragile balance on the Earth.*
- *We should understand, that the person - a part uniform ecosystems, instead of an essence resisting to an environment*
- *In a basis of all activity should lay “ecosystems approach” with the following characteristics:*
- Integration of various spheres of knowledge (complete understanding of a problem and the account of all factors, achievements of all sciences)
- Orientation to concrete precautionary measures on impossibility negative influence on water ecosystems
- - ecosystem - this biological community, and ecological, economic interests - internal elements ecosystems. Planning of economic ecological and social transformations should occur in view of all connections inside biological system

Creation of the new theory of the management based on understanding of stability of set of cooperating ecological systems.