



UNECE Weekly

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It's just happened ...

UNECE Seminar on Flood Prevention

Floods have become the most common and costly "water-quantity problem" in the Mediterranean region as well as in parts of Western and Central Europe. Examples include the events in south-eastern France last autumn and the flooding in Austria, Czech Republic and Germany in 2002, which caused €15 billion worth of damage, 80% uninsured. There is a need for a shift from defensive action to the management of risks. Flood protection cannot only rely on dams and reservoirs. It calls for action in the entire river basin, such as the recovery of flood retention areas, nature conservation and alternative practices in agriculture and forestry. The public at large should be made aware of the need to cover risk by insurance and to observe limitations on land use. The media has a vital role to play in providing flood warnings and weather information while avoiding sensationalist reporting.



A Seminar on flood protection, prevention and mitigation was held in Berlin on 21-22 June with the participation of representatives of Parties to the UNECE Water Convention and non-Parties,

including UN organizations and NGOs. The Seminar agreed on a common pan-European framework on flood prevention, protection and mitigation: a capacity building component will provide training for local and national authorities as well as joint bodies responsible for

transboundary water cooperation; a "soft-law" component will present recommendations to policy makers, governmental authorities as well as municipal and local authorities; and a legal component will offer model provisions for countries riparian to the same transboundary waters, to establish, update and render compatible legal, administrative, economic, financial and technical provisions of bilateral and multilateral flood agreements. Under the leadership of Hungary, Germany and Greece, the work on the three pillars will proceed in parallel and be presented at the Convention's working group meeting in December this year.

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Water and energy in Central Asia

UNECE and UNESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) have recently published the results of a project on the links between water and energy in Central Asia.* In the first major project of its kind in a subregion where water is scarce and cooperation often an uphill struggle, the two regional commissions have brought together local water and energy decision



makers and experts and produced up-to-date *diagnostic studies* and a *cooperation strategy* that four of the Central Asian countries have endorsed. One of the findings of the study is that if present trends continue, the Aral Sea will disappear altogether in the not-so-distant future – as much as 90% of the

water of the two rivers that feed the Aral Sea, the Syr Darya and the Amu Darya, is used up before reaching it. Owing to economic and social problems, there is not enough money to maintain and rehabilitate the water infrastructure that is essential

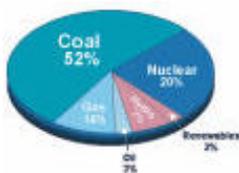
* *Strengthening cooperation for rational and efficient use of water and energy resources in Central Asia*. SPECA. UN Sales N° GV. E. 04.04. ISBN 92-1-101070-5. 106 p. Also available on http://www.unece.org/speca/energy/energ_he.htm.

for the subregion's agriculture, on which many people rely for their livelihoods and their food. The deteriorating dams, canals, pumping stations and drainage systems make irrigation even less efficient, waste more water and degrade productive agricultural land, the study also notes. Central Asia's energy resources are unevenly distributed, the energy industry is underdeveloped and its facilities run down. The extremely inefficient use of energy resources means that conservation and energy efficiency are a priority. The *cooperation strategy*

contained in the study proposes a recipe for future water and energy policies and cooperation in the region.

For more information about this project or the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), visit <http://www.unece.org/speca/> or contact the Regional Advisers: Bo Libert (bo.libert@unece.org) and Evgeniy Nadezhdin (evgeniy.nadezhdin@unece.org)

New ...



A web site has been created to promote the UNECE UN Development Account Project on "Capacity Building for Air Quality Management and the Application of Clean Coal Combustion Technologies in Central Asia". This project is being jointly implemented over the period mid-2004 to mid-2007 by the UNECE Industrial Restructuring, Energy and Enterprise Development Division and the Environment and Human Settlements Division. The web site address is: <http://www.unece.org/ie/aircct>. Full information on the Project is now available on this site and new material will be posted regularly as the Project develops.

Coming up soon ...

- 28-29 June Legal Board under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Verona, Italy)
- 28-29 June FAO/ECE Meeting on Eastern European Policy Issues: Investments in the Forest Sector (Budapest, Hungary)
- 1-2 July Task Force on Electronic Information Tools

Facts and figures:

Millennium Development Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development					
Net official development assistance as percentage of OECD/DAC ¹ donors' gross national income					
Country	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Austria	0.24	0.23	0.34	0.26	0.20
Belgium	0.30	0.36	0.37	0.43	0.61
Canada	0.28	0.25	0.22	0.28	0.26
Denmark	1.01	1.06	1.03	0.96	0.84
Finland	0.33	0.31	0.32	0.35	0.34
France	0.39	0.32	0.32	0.38	0.41
Germany	0.26	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.28
Greece	0.15	0.20	0.17	0.21	0.21
Ireland	0.31	0.29	0.33	0.40	0.41
Italy	0.15	0.13	0.15	0.20	0.16
Luxembourg	0.66	0.71	0.76	0.77	0.80
Netherlands	0.79	0.84	0.82	0.81	0.81
Norway	0.88	0.76	0.80	0.89	0.92
Portugal	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.27	0.21
Spain	0.23	0.22	0.30	0.26	0.25
Sweden	0.70	0.80	0.77	0.83	0.70
Switzerland	0.35	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.38
United Kingdom	0.24	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.34
United States	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.13	0.14

Source: United Nations Statistics Division, Millennium Development Indicators Database (based on data from OECD)

¹ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development/Development Assistance Committee.

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