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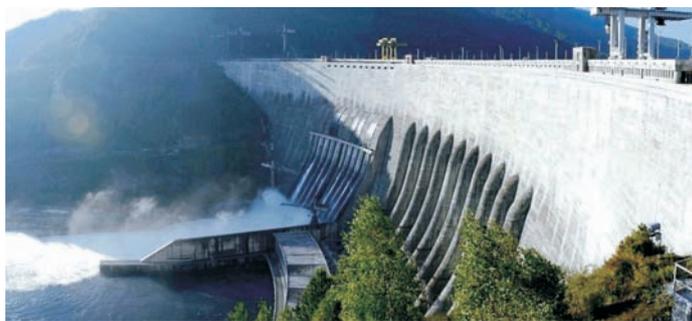
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CENTRAL ASIAN EXPERTS UNDERTAKE TRAINING IN MOSCOW UNDER UNECE PROJECT ON DAM SAFETY

An international training course for high-level officials and experts from Central Asia opened on 16 August in Moscow. In a week-long training, delegations from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan will have the opportunity to find out about the experience of the Russian Federation with regard to the maintenance and management of hydro-technical installations in that country, as well as to hear about recent scientific developments in this area. The training course is organized in the framework of the UNECE project "Capacity-building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia", with financial support from the Russian Federation and additional support from the Eurasian Development Bank. The training programme was developed in close cooperation with the Russian Research Centre on the Safety of Hydro-technical Installations under the Scientific and Research Institute of Energy Facilities.



water uses, irrigation and hydropower. It also serves as an efficient means to address floods and droughts. However, ageing dams and lack of funding for their adequate maintenance, coupled with population growth in flood plains downstream from the dams, represent increased risks to life, health, property and the environment. The eventual failure of a dam could have disastrous consequences in downstream regions and countries.

The UNECE dam safety project, which is implemented in cooperation with the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, assists Central Asian countries in establishing effective national legislation and technical regulatory frameworks as well as in strengthening regional cooperation on dam safety. The project has already resulted in the development of a model law on dam safety and a draft regional agreement to facilitate cooperation in this area. The training course in Moscow complements these efforts by strengthening cooperation between the Russian Federation and Central Asian countries and promoting exchange of knowledge and expertise. □

The course is a timely response to the need to ensure safe exploitation of large hydro-technical facilities in Central Asia, in particular large dams. Countries of Central Asia have a developed water infrastructure which includes hundreds of dams and reservoirs built 40 to 50 years ago. This infrastructure is of great importance for the economy of the region — it contributes to seasonal and long-term regulation of river flows for drinking water supply, industrial

For further information please visit:
<http://www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety.htm>
or contact Bo Libert at: bo.libert@unece.org.



THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH IS A KEY TOOL TO DELIVER ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION TO ALL

28 July 2010 will mark an important milestone in international efforts aimed at improving the global situation in water supply and sanitation with the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a resolution recognizing access to clean water and sanitation as a human right. The resolution is calling on

States and international organizations to provide financial resources, build capacity and transfer technology, particularly to developing countries, in scaling up efforts to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all.

Contrary to general perception, this objective, which is closely linked to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, is still to be achieved in the pan-European region. At present, nearly 140 million people – 16 per cent of Europe's population – still live in homes that are not connected to a drinking-water supply, and about 85 million people do not have access to

adequate sanitation. According to the best estimates of the World Health Organization (WHO), more than 13,000 children under the age of 14 die every year from water related diarrhoea, mostly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In 2006, more than 170,000 cases of water-related disease were reported.

"International agreements are crucial to support the actual implementation of this resolution", declared Ján Kubiš, UNECE Executive Secretary. "In this respect, the UNECE region possesses a unique tool: the UNECE/WHO-EURO Protocol on Water and Health to the UNECE Water Convention".

The Protocol on Water and Health, which entered into force in 2005, is the first major international legal mechanism for the prevention, control and reduction of water-related diseases. Its main aim is to protect human health and well being by

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better water management, including the protection of water ecosystems, and by preventing, controlling and reducing water-related diseases. To meet these goals, Parties are obliged to establish national and local targets in areas covering the entire water cycle and to report on the implementation of the targets.

The upcoming second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, to be held on 23-25 November 2010 in Bucharest, will present an excellent opportunity to discuss the implementation of the General Assembly resolution in the pan-European context. □

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENT 7 SEPTEMBER 2010

The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section is organizing a seminar on "Developing an effective international legal instrument: Learning from the experience of the ECE Conventions and beyond" to be held at the Palais des Nations (Room XXVII) on 7 September 2010. The seminar is being organized in partnership with and at the request of Forest Europe (the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe or MCPFE).



countries and UNECE Member States to implement these commitments, building on its expertise in forest product markets, forest resources and policies for sustainable forest management.

At the 5th Ministerial conference in Warsaw, countries proposed to review the MCPFE process and examine the potential of a legally binding agreement in the pan-European region. Since then, a Working Group is in the process of exploring the value added of and potential options for a legally binding agreement on forests in the pan-European region.

Since 1990, countries in the pan-European region have signed up to ministerial commitments and strategies under the MCPFE covering different sustainable forest management issues. These range from the conservation of biodiversity and other ecosystem services to wood energy and adaptation to climate change. UNECE/FAO has been working in partnership with the MCPFE, its signatory

Organized in support of this effort, the seminar will give an overview of the mechanisms of different Conventions hosted by UNECE and UNEP as well as ongoing negotiation processes and provide for an opportunity to discuss. Sessions will cover experiences from the pre-negotiation and negotiation phases, mechanisms for stakeholders and public participation as well as compliance. □

The agenda is available at:
http://timber.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/meetings/Seminar_Conventions_7September2010_Agenda.pdf
To register for the seminar, please write to:
malgorzata.briggs@foresteurope.org.

FACTS AND FIGURES

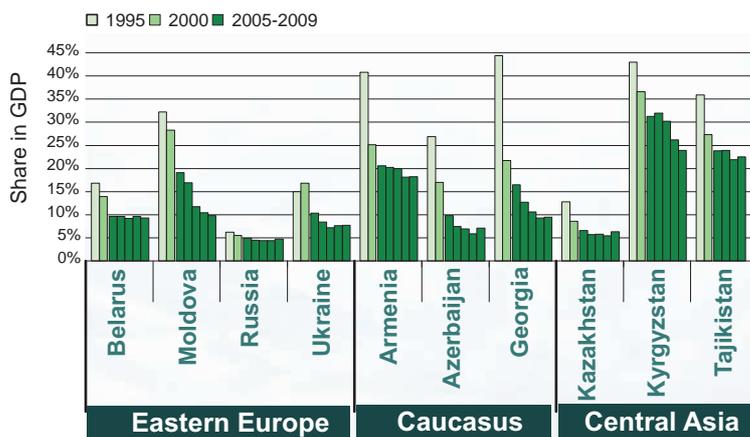
AGRICULTURE IS STILL AN IMPORTANT SECTOR IN EASTERN EUROPE, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

Since the early 1990s the share of the agricultural sector in gross domestic product (GDP) has declined significantly in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Despite this decline, the share of agriculture in GDP is still well above the EU average in these countries.

The drop has been most visible in the Caucasus. Sharp declines, approximately 20 percentage points from 1995 to 2009, have also been experienced in Kyrgyzstan and Moldova. In 1995 agriculture production accounted for more than 25 per cent of GDP in half of these countries, up to more than 40 per cent in Armenia, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. In 2008 and 2009 the largest GDP shares were recorded in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with 20-25 per cent, followed by Armenia with 18 per cent. For the remaining countries, the share of agriculture in GDP lies between 5 and 10 per cent. This remains well above the EU average, which in 2009 amounted to less than 2 per cent of GDP.

Irrespective of the decline of the share in GDP, the share of agricultural employment has remained stable or even risen in the region. In Tajikistan, for example, the agricultural sector represents one fifth of GDP but two thirds of the employed population. □

Share of agriculture in GDP in the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asian countries in 1995, 2000 and 2005 - 2009



Data for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are not available.
Data for Tajikistan are not available for 2009.

Source: UNECE Statistical Database (www.unece.org/stats/data).

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