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Water Resources



UNECE supports improved management of water information in Central Asia

Participants in a knowledge exchange workshop, "Strengthening Analysis for Integrated and Adaptive Water Resources Management", held from 4 to 6 July in Almaty, adopted the principles and directions for a medium-term (three-to-five year) road map to develop water data management, as well as modelling of water flow, use and other aspects in the Aral Sea Basin. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) — building on its numerous multilateral environmental agreements applicable in the region in the areas of water, public participation and access to information, industrial accidents and environmental impact assessment — will play an active role in the implementation of relevant parts of the road map.

The workshop, organized by the World Bank, the Swiss Development Corporation and UNECE, brought together some 50 Government representatives and experts from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as regional organizations and donors.

At the workshop, participants underlined the importance of reliable information for the integrated management of water resources in Central Asia. For the future it was a challenge to combine available data, such as publicly available satellite imagery, with national and local data. Improved exchange of comparable data between the countries in Central Asia, dependent on each other for their shared waters, was also highlighted. It was also agreed to develop a set of linked models for the Aral Sea Basin for the analysis on different levels: Aral Sea Basin, individual rivers, sub-basins and countries. Those models should serve both short-term operational purposes, like flood control and agreement of water release regimes, and long-term planning, including on economic and social issues. Participants moreover emphasized the need for further analysis and modelling in the development of national and regional strategies for climate change adaptation.

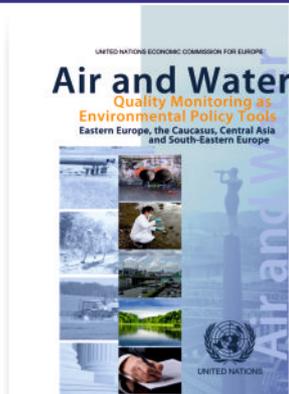
When discussing institutional and legal aspects, participants highlighted the importance of easy-to-interpret information for efficient decision-making and for the public, as well as the necessity to develop a coherent legal basis for regional cooperation in information management.

Results of the project, Regional Dialogue and Cooperation on Water Resources Management in Central Asia, which is implemented by UNECE, in particular proposals on the modernization and strengthening of regional institutions and legal frameworks, as well as water monitoring and data exchange, also served as a background to the discussions. The meeting also built on experiences from the UNECE participation in the Central Asian Regional Water Information Base (CAREWIB) project. □

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Environment



Making air and water monitoring a practical tool for environmental policy

Environmental monitoring systems are crucial for environmental policy: they are the eyes and ears for policymakers, researchers and the public seeking to understand and improve the environment. A well-developed monitoring system is a basic precondition for effective environmental management. UNECE has just published the Guidelines for Developing National Strategies to Use Air and Water Quality Monitoring as Environmental Policy Tools. The Guidelines were prepared by the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment in cooperation with the European Environment Agency, governing bodies of relevant multilateral environmental agreements and international organizations. They are addressed to

government officials and experts in countries of the Caucasus, Central Asia, Eastern Europe and South-Eastern Europe, and offer advice on how to link air and water quality monitoring to environmental policy development; modernize and upgrade air and water quality monitoring networks and information systems; and improve coordination of national air and water quality monitoring programmes. In a broader sense, the guidelines can also benefit those working in the private sector, the scientific community and civil society associations active in the environmental and health fields. □

For further information, please contact: monitoring.wgem@unece.org.

Statistics

Exciting field of statistics: innovation and experiments in bringing data closer to people



Innovations, creativity and the spirit of camaraderie ruled at the latest Work Session on the Communication of Statistics conducted at the end of June in Geneva. Communication professionals from 27 countries got together to share experiences in making statistics accessible and interesting to various audiences in different corners of the world.

Many statistical organizations deal with similar issues in the ever-changing field of data dissemination that moves at the light speed along with exploding technological innovations across the whole spectrum of society.

It was difficult not to get excited about all innovations and experimental projects happening in different statistical offices.

Interactive infographics presented by Statistics Finland and OECD make the numbers easy to understand even for someone who has never worked with statistics. Social media and open collaboration platforms like wikies bring the fascinating universe of numbers closer to everyone as shown by the experiences of Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the U.S. Census Bureau.

The acceleration growth of mobile devices presents additional opportunities for statistical organizations. Statistics Sweden, for example, discovered that creating interactive applications instead of printed yearbooks provided more opportunities for hundreds of thousands of users to analyse and compare the data.

To explain trends behind numbers, some organizations opt for using short videos transmitted through old and new media channels. The United Kingdom's Office for National Statistics regularly produces short explanatory videos using moving graphs. Statistics Denmark even created Web TV for increasing the appeal and reach of statistics.

The future will certainly bring new exciting tools and projects that people will share at the work session in 2013. □

The papers and presentations from the work session in 2012 can be downloaded at: <http://www.unece.org/stats/documents/2012.06.dissemination.html>.

Off the Press

Road map for Mainstreaming Ageing: Republic of Moldova

The second of UNECE's Road Maps on Mainstreaming Ageing is looking into the case of the Republic of Moldova. Based on a thorough analysis of the country's situation, including a desk review and several field visits with in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, recommendations were developed on how the country can enhance implementation of the international policy-framework set out in the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and its Regional Implementation Strategy (MIPAA/RIS). Mainstreaming Ageing as a concept maintains that to achieve a society for all ages it is important to consider ageing in all policy-areas, including social protection, health care, the labour market, education as well as migration and sustainable economic growth and development. A well-functioning integrated ageing-framework will have to be based on good research and data collection systems, complemented with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Road Maps are prepared in UNECE member States upon request of their governments. They are developed as a joint endeavour between national governments and stakeholders and the UNECE and international experts. □

For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=30030>.

