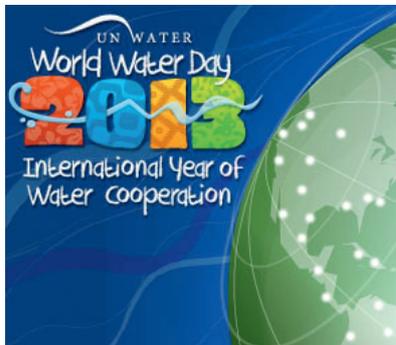


Water



Bert Diphorn (UN-Habitat), Yoka Brandt (Unicef) and Sven Alkalaj (UN-ECE) reported the key findings of the thematic consultations on water. On the right is moderator Paul Hohnen.
(All photos: Marco Baiwir)

On World Water Day, UNECE's Water Convention makes a difference on the ground

UNECE actively participated in the celebrations of World Water Day on 22 March 2013, which was held in the framework of the International Year of Water Cooperation.

In the lead up to the celebrations, UNECE Executive Secretary Sven Alkalaj was one of the high-level speakers at a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Water, organized by the Dutch Government in The Hague on 21 March, alongside H.R.H. the Prince of Orange, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia, chairwoman of the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, and Melanie Schultz van Haegen, Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment of the Netherlands.

The dialogue brought together leaders from governments, business, civil society and religious groups to debate water issues, concluding the Global Thematic Consultation on the role of water in the Post-2015 development agenda. Since January 2013, UNECE has led sub-consultations on water resources management within the Global Thematic Consultation, including five weeks of online consultations on different topics and a consultation meeting held in Geneva on 27 and 28 February 2013.

In his address in The Hague, Sven Alkalaj stressed that "what emerged clearly from the consultations is that water is a key determinant in all aspects of social, economic and environmental development". As water provides economic opportunities with the potential to reduce poverty, and safeguard environmental integrity, "it should feature prominently in the Post-2015 Development Agenda", he concluded.

A key instrument in fostering transboundary water cooperation in the past 20 years, the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) is gaining new momentum after the entry into force on 6 February 2013 of amendments which turned the Convention into a global legal framework.

In his address on World Water Day, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon emphasised: "World Water Day 2013 is dedicated to highlighting the joint efforts necessary to ensuring a fair share for people and planet. UNECE's Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes will soon be available to all UN Member States. I urge countries outside the UNECE region to join the Convention and further develop it."

One successful example of the Water Convention's ability to foster cooperation is the step-by-step development of cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan in the upper Amu Darya River Basin. A bilateral meeting supported by UNECE will be held from 25 to 28 March in Dushanbe to establish a framework for cooperation on environment and hydrology.

Other recent examples of cooperation facilitated by UNECE include the new treaty between Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova on the Dniester River Basin, signed in November 2012 and negotiations of a bilateral agreement on the management of the Kura River between Azerbaijan and Georgia. □

Land Management



Europe and Central Asia to increase cooperation for better land management

Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) came together at the 8th session of the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration (WPLA) on 18 March in Bishkek to decide on the next steps in the cooperation between land administration and cadaster agencies in the UNECE region.

Hosted by the Government of Kyrgyzstan, the session was also attended by partner organizations of the Working Party, including the World Bank, EuroGeographics, the European Land Information Service and the International Federation of Surveyors.

The session was followed by a two-day workshop entitled "Land Administration in Central Asia: Building Systems for 21st Century Challenges". This event was also hosted by the Government, in cooperation with the Working Party and the World Bank.

The workshop focused on the challenges and opportunities related to land management in the countries of Central Asia. This was the first time that land administration experts of all five Central Asian countries came together to exchange experience and practices in land administration with leading European experts. The participants emphasized the importance of organizing such regular events for specialists from Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to meet.

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In closing the workshop, the Head of Department of Cadaster and Registration of Kyrgyzstan, Narynbek Isabekov, said that although the workshop had clearly demonstrated that Central Asian countries had made achievements in developing their land administration systems, "many challenges remain in building national capacities for land administration. To address these challenges, international cooperation needs to be strengthened".

The thematic workshops, which the Working Party holds at least twice a year, in cooperation with its partners, offer an effective platform for regularly exchanging experience and best practices in land administration.

The next such workshop, on e-governance, entitled "Collaborating for Secured Ownership", will take place in Uppsala, Sweden, from 29 to 31 May and is being hosted in cooperation with the Swedish Mapping, Cadastre and Land Registry Agency. □

More information on Working Party sessions and workshops can be found at www.unece.org/hlm/welcome.html.

For any queries or additional information, please contact: Email: Michael.Milligan@unece.org

Trade

UNECE and the Eurasian Economic Commission call for increased international cooperation in technical regulations and standards

The need for greater international cooperation in the field of technical regulations and standards was stressed at the "International Conference on Industry's Role in the formation of the system of technical regulation of the economy", on 19 March, in Moscow, by both Minister Koreshkov, Member of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) Board for Technical Cooperation and Vice-Chair of the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (Working Party 6), and Lorenza Jachia of the UNECE Working Party 6 secretariat.

Minister Valery Koreshkov further said that establishing a barrier-free trade zone among the countries of the CIS, based on a system of common standards and common ways of establishing conformity, would boost industry's competitiveness and help address concerns over poor product quality and the proliferation of counterfeit goods.

The Conference took place as part of the Russian Business Week, organized by the Russian Union of Industrialists (RSPP) in Moscow from 18 to 22 March.

At the Conference, the RSPP officially presented its recommendations for the approximation of the regulatory systems of the EU and of Russia, which focused on 16 main clusters of work on a wide range of issues. In addition, it was announced that UNECE and RSPP will jointly organize a conference on "Standards and Regulations" in November at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

At a follow up meeting between Minister Koreshkov and the UNECE secretariat in Moscow later during the same week, the Minister reiterated that UNECE member States could learn from each other's experience in the domain of standards and technical regulations using the meetings of the Working Party 6 as a forum. He suggested that the Working Party's activities on the topics of accreditation and market surveillance be strengthened so as to support national efforts to monitor and improve the quality and reliability of goods on their markets.

Minister Koreshkov commended UNECE for its work in developing education on standards and standards-related issues and suggested that a practical toolbox be developed. He also said that UNECE recommendations, including Recommendation D on reference to standards, formed the basis of the EEC regulatory work and, therefore, it was important for them to continue to be maintained and developed. □

Population

New wiki helps explore and compare the active status of older people in UNECE member States

A new interactive online platform developed by UNECE provides comprehensive information on the Active Ageing Index. This Index measures and compares the untapped potential of older people for more active participation in employment, in social life and for healthy and independent living.

The wiki, which has just been launched, allows you to compare data across 27 countries. It is part of a collaborative project of the UNECE's Population Unit, the European Commission Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion and the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research in Vienna, Austria.

You can access it at:

www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home

For further information, please contact: pau@unece.org

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Active Ageing Index Home

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DOMAINS

INDICATORS	Employment	Participation in society	Independent, Healthy and Secure living	Capacity and Enabling Environment for active ageing
Employment rate 55-59	Voluntary activities	Physical exercise	Remaining life expectancy at age 55	
Employment rate 60-64	Care to children and grand children	Access to health services	Share of healthy life expectancy at age 55	
Employment rate 65-69	Care to older adults	Independent living	Mental well-being	
Employment rate 70-74	Political participation	Financial security (three indicators)*	Use of ICT	
		Physical safety	Social connectedness	
		Lifelong learning	Educational attainment	

Actual experiences of active ageing

Capacity to actively age