

PPP

### UNECE signs Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of a Specialist Centre for PPPs in Roads, Highways and Related Structures



On 13 February, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the establishment of a Specialist Centre for PPPs in Roads, Highways and Related Structures with the Construction Industry Development Council of India on the occasion of the 8<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on Economic Cooperation and Integration in Geneva.

The Memorandum of Understanding will provide a framework for cooperation between the two organizations in the field of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). The Specialist Centre for PPPs in Roads, Highways and related structures will be an integral part of the Construction Industry Development Council of India, and is being established by the Planning Commission, the Government of India, and the construction industry.

The Specialist Centre will be in charge of developing and promoting international PPP best-practices in roads, highways and related structures in cooperation with the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence.

Priya Rankan Swarup, Director General of the Construction Industry Development Council of India, said: "We recognize that the roads and highways sector plays a crucial role in a country's economic and social development and believe that this could only be done through increasing cooperation and partnerships between the public and private sector with PPPs playing an ever increasing role in the future. The task of the Centre in New Delhi is to identify the best models for these partnerships and I am personally very proud that India will not only benefit itself from this Centre but will also provide assistance and support to the region and to the global community".

Geoffrey Hamilton, Chief, Partnerships and Cooperation Section at UNECE remarked: "UNECE is pleased that India has joined the countries that are hosting PPP Specialist Centres as part of the UNECE International PPP Centre of Excellence. India has demonstrated a tremendous capacity to develop high value PPP programmes, and its experience across many sectors has attracted global attention".

#### Other categories of roads, 1991 to 2011 in kilometres

India's highway and total road network, including rural roads, has more than doubled in the last 20 years, as the expansion of the country's infrastructure has been one of the government's top priorities. Much of this expansion has been due to the use of PPPs, thus giving India important experience in the use of PPPs in this sector. □

Road Category	1991	2001	2011	2012
National Highways	33,650	57,737	70,934	76,818
State Highways	127,311	132,100	163,898	
Other categories	2,166,401	3,183,683	4,455,510	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,327,362</b>	<b>3,373,520</b>	<b>4,690,342</b>	

Source: Indian Ministry of road transport and highways.

Water

### UNECE supports transboundary water cooperation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan with new knowledge on climate change and a new water management project



On 27 and 28 February in Bishkek UNECE, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bishkek Office and the national Kyrgyz authorities organized two meetings in support of the development of transboundary water cooperation between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on the Chu and Talas Rivers.

The first day was devoted to presentations of the findings of the project, "Promoting Cooperation to Adapt to Climate Change in the Chu and Talas Transboundary Basins" and discussions with national officials of the two countries as well as experts on the findings. This project, which is now ending, has been implemented jointly by UNECE and UNDP in the framework of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC), and has been financed by Finland.

The workshop made a link to the latest developments in climate policies in Kazakhstan and  
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Kyrgyzstan, and to the work of the Chu Talas Commission. Assessment of the vulnerability of the agricultural sector, which is the key water user in the basin, led to identification of potential adaptation measures, ranging from technical measures — such as rehabilitation of irrigation systems to reduce water losses, changing land use and crop diversification — to policy and financial measures, including review of subsidy policy. The need to improve water use efficiency and modernize agriculture in both countries necessitates measures similar to those supporting adaptation.

On the first day of the meeting, representatives of UNECE underlined the importance of the countries' coordinating their water management measures, as the impacts propagate across borders. The value of checking the robustness of water management practices and of long-term investments in infrastructure, against changing conditions — “climate-proofing” — was also highlighted.

On the second day, the project document of a future \$1 million project, “Enabling transboundary cooperation and integrated water resources management in the Chu and Talas River Basins”, to be funded by Global Environmental Facility (GEF), was discussed. This project will provide an opportunity to deepen the cooperation between the two countries, in particular with regard to the protection of water ecosystems and water monitoring, and also to follow up on the recommendation of the climate change adaptation project concluded the previous day. It is anticipated that the project will start early autumn 2014.

Kazakhstan's and Kyrgyzstan's cooperation on the Chu and Talas Rivers is managed by a joint bilateral commission. It is a good example of transboundary water cooperation built on a solid institutional and legal basis. By working with the Commission and national Kyrgyz and Kazakh authorities, the two projects contribute to the further development of water cooperation between the two countries, making it possible to better take into account risks and uncertainties as well as environmental concerns. □

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Gender

## Lunchtime Seminar on Gender Mainstreaming in Environmental Policy Making

Gender mainstreaming in environmental policy making was at the heart of the lunchtime seminar organized by the Environment Division, in cooperation with the Gender Focal Point, on 27 February. The seminar highlighted core mandates on gender mainstreaming as well as persistent social, economic and political gender differences in the region. Raising inequalities, including gender related, were pointed out as the main rationale to mainstream gender in the work of the UNECE sub-programmes.

Following the opening by Marco Keiner, Director of the Environment Division, and an introduction by Malinka Koparanova, UNECE Gender Focal Point, Anke Stock, Senior Specialist on Gender and Rights at the NGO Women in Europe for a Common Future presented key challenges and success stories on gender mainstreaming with regard to energy, water and land rights. The examples from Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, based on field work and case studies, illustrated that gender sensitive solutions are often more innovative and sustainable. In Kyrgyzstan, active women influenced water management choices to improve water quality and the distribution of water points, enabling them to access safer water in closer proximity to their homes. Women's discomfort with the lack of warm water in houses in Ukraine led to the construction of solar collectors, which increased the availability of renewable energy choices, and improved human health.

Franziska Ilg-Hirsch, Gender Focal Point for the Environment Division, and Simone Hofner, responsible for Education on Sustainable Development, gave an overview of the major mandates for gender mainstreaming with regard to the environment, such as Agenda 21, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and Rio+20, and explained that donor requirements on gender mainstreaming are increasingly being implemented (For example, the Global Environment Facility (GEF)). They presented data on the persisting economic gender gaps in the UNECE region, for instance the pay gap, in top decision-making positions and access to land and credit: in 20 UNECE countries the share of women in parliament is less than 20 per cent; out of the 56 UNECE member states, only 15 currently have female Environment Ministers. Moreover, in six out of 30 UNECE countries women have limited rights or face discriminatory practices regarding access to credit. The importance to include gender-sensitive policies based on impact analysis on both women and men in the development and implementation of environmental policies subsequently was discussed.

In order to support UNECE colleagues in developing programmes and convention specific strategies on gender mainstreaming in environmental policy making and implementation, some guiding questions and pertinent examples were identified. These questions will be further examined and developed. □

The presentations can be accessed at: <http://www.unece.org/gender/welcome.html>.

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