www.unece.org/index.php?id=34607

On Thursday, 16 January 2014, representatives of Azerbaijan and Georgia met in Baku to negotiate the text of a draft bilateral agreement on the shared water resources of the Kura River Basin as part of a joint United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) - Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) project under the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC). The consultations were constructive, and the draft text will now be the basis of final negotiations between the two countries.

Azerbaijan and Georgia rely on the water in the Kura Basin as a key source of drinking water, as well as for sanitation, municipal and industrial water use, hydropower and irrigated agriculture, among other uses. Increased variation in and reduction of water flow, deterioration of water quality, ecosystem degradation, flooding and bank erosion are some of the issues that need to be addressed jointly by the two Riparian States.

The draft agreement provides a framework for cooperation between the two countries on water pollution prevention and control, conservation of biodiversity, emergency situations, data and information sharing and public participation. The agreement also envisages the establishment of a joint commission for the protection and rational use of water resources of the Kura River Basin.

The project to develop the agreement is being funded by the Government of Finland.

For further information please visit: http://www.unece.org/env/water/caucasus.html or contact:

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Note to Editors:

ENVSEC (www.envsec.org) was established in 2003 and includes OSCE, the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, the United Nations Development Programme, UNECE and the United Nations Environment Programme. ENVSEC works to assess and address environmental problems that threaten or are perceived to threaten security, societal stability and peace, human health and/or sustainable livelihoods, within and across national borders in conflict-prone regions.