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PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEVENTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
“ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE”

SELECTION OF THEMES FOR THE CONFERENCE

COMPILATION OF SUMMARIES OF ASSESSMENTS AND STATISTICAL
REPORTS ON ENVIRONMENT^{1 2}

Note by the secretariat

“ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE” PARTNERS

A. Fuel Quality and Vehicle Emission Standards Overview for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

Keywords

1. REC Caucasus with the support from the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) developed the publication on Fuel Quality and Vehicle Emission Standards Overview for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, the Republic of Moldova, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Objective and scope

2. This report summarizes the result of data collection on fuel quality and vehicle emission standards and technology used at the national level in nine countries within the Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) region.

3. The overview is based on the information gathered for and discussions during the first Conference on Clean Fuels and Vehicles for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia hosted by REC Caucasus on January 24-25, 2008 in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Main findings and/or major concerns

4. Road transport emissions substantially determine the deteriorated air quality in the cities of the EECCA region. Despite the fact that legally the quality of ambient air in human settlements is legally established there are no adequate mechanisms in place to ensure that transport emissions does not result

¹ This paper is complimentary to the official document with the compilation of summaries (ECE/CEP/2009/5). It presents summaries of environmental assessments submitted by the Regional Environmental Centre for Caucasus (REC-Caucasus).

² The information in this document is presented in the way as received from the respective authors.

in exceeding those legal limits. In some cities (Almaty, Moscow) local government tries to develop and implement some local policies to reduce transport-born air pollution but the results are usually quite moderate revealing that the problem of road transport emissions need national-wide efforts and could not be solved at a level of any separate municipal entity.

5. High volume of transport emissions in the EECCA are determined by several factors. The most important from them are: 1) the low quality of automotive fuel, 2) the aging of car fleet; and partly determined by the previous two: 3) insufficient use of modern technologies for control of exhaustive gazes of automobiles.

6. The undertaken overview showed that there is some progress already: All described countries of the EECCA region are gradually upgrading their standards for produced and used automotive fuel and introducing more stringent emission requirements for vehicles. Almost in all countries leaded petrol is banned. Equally important is that allowed content of lead in unleaded petrol is also gradually decreasing. Though the content of sulphur in diesel fuel still remains high in many countries and more efforts are necessary to foster further improvements.

7. Although low quality of fuel objectively impedes wider introduction of modern emission controlling equipment for the car fleet it is important that once the better fuel quality allows introduction of such equipment the legal instruments are there to ensure their stable and widening use. Use of different types of incentives in transition stage would be useful.

8. Another good development is a substantial trend towards use of liquefied gas as an automotive fuel - partly induced by high prices of petrol and diesel but in some countries also encouraged by the government as more environmentally friendly fuel. It is useful to keep those trends from inverting due to changes in fuel prices.

9. The main impediment for reduction of vehicle-born air pollution in the EECCA countries and the most difficult one to deal with is the aging car fleet. The problem is that its grounds are of social-economic nature: low income rates does not allow the consumers to buy new cars and result in preference of the second-hand, mostly from the EU. Emission control equipment is usually removed from those vehicles and the old age of engine and other parts cause the high level of pollutants in the emitted gases. This problem can not be solved in one day or even one year. Comprehensive policies are to be elaborated in each of the countries to overcome it step by step. Use of different types of economic incentives is to be considered as a tool to increase share of new vehicles in the fleet.

B. Strengthening Environmental Governance in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia through Local Environmental Action Programmes

Keywords

10. The publication was developed and submitted by the Regional Environmental Centres for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia through the Ad Hoc Working Group of Senior Officials to the Sixth Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, Serbia, 2007).

Objective and scope

11. The Report presented progress and perspectives in implementation of the environment strategy for countries of the Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and of the Central Asia initiative for sustainable development through Local Environmental Action Programmes.

Main findings and/or major concerns

12. Regional Environmental Centres' (RECs) in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (EECCA) have promoted local environmental action programs (LEAPs) the last five years as a means of strengthening environmental governance at the local level. Environmental governance is about environmental decisions and how we make them. Our experience has found that LEAPs are effective tools for addressing environmental problems, raising public awareness, expanding public access to information, and increasing public involvement in local environmental issues. Further, LEAPs have shown themselves to be effective approaches to improving local decision-making by involving key stakeholders at the local level. In addition, LEAPs improve accountability and transparency of local government by forming partnerships between local government and civil society and providing a mechanism for direct public input into governmental decisions. EECCA RECs' experience to date has focused on implementing pilot projects in selected communities, disseminating information about local approaches to environmental management, and building the capacity of organizations in each country to assist in LEAP development and implementation. Further support is needed to broaden and deepen the impact of LEAPs by institutionalizing LEAPs at the national level, increasing the number of communities implementing LEAPs, and establishing a network of LEAP communities throughout the region. EECCA RECs can play important roles working with national governments to develop LEAP requirements, train professionals in the LEAP methodology, disseminate LEAP information to the general public, promote sharing of experiences among local governments, and manage LEAP pilot projects for trans-boundary and other special situations. This report contributes to the session on "Environment Strategy for EECCA".

C. Local Agenda 21 in the Caucasus: Problems and Challenges

Keywords

13. The Publication was developed within Project Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus – Local Agenda 21 and describes the whole process of development of Local Agendas in the eight pilot communities of the four countries of the Caucasus.

Objective and scope

14. The present document describes the whole process of development of Local Agendas in the four countries of the Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russian Federation). The publication outlines main problems and opportunities at the local level on Local Agendas development, starting from decision to do so till the document approval.

Main findings and/or major concerns

In all the four countries, major obstacles on the way towards development of Local Agenda 21s included:

- (a) changing legislative framework;
- (b) changes in or lack of current governmental programmes for development of mountain regions;
- (c) changes in personnel at different levels of the executive power;
- (d) different systems of local self-governance in the four countries;
- (e) different conditions for implementation of the Project, and therefore the need for adapting general methodology to the country's and/or community's needs and conditions,
- (f) lack of understanding of objectives of LA 21; or
- (g) inconsistency of selection of pilot villages with the selection criteria developed in advance.

D. Analysis of land related legislation in the South Caucasus countries

Keywords

15. The assessment will be developed within the REC Caucasus Regional Project Sustainable Land Management for Mitigating Land Degradation and Reducing Poverty in the South Caucasus Region.

Objective and scope

The document will contain:

- (a) review of main land management related strategic documents, relevant laws and regulations in the field of integrated land management in all three countries and development trends in the sector;
- (b) analysis of the institutional set-up and legal framework concerning implementation of the land degradation measures and integrated land management practices in South Caucasus countries;
- (c) comparative analysis of land management related national legislation and institutional set-ups in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia with regard the requirement of EU regulations and guidelines in land management;
- (d) description and analysis of gaps and barriers in legislation and institutional set-ups in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to meet EU regulations and guidelines
- (e) review of the provisions of EU legislation on sustainable land management, as well as international best practices for transboundary watershed management focusing on land degradation and the feasibility of adoption of certain cases in the South Caucasus countries;
- (f) recommendations to improve land management system institutional set-ups and legislation in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

E. Summary Report on implementation of the project Creation of Enabling Environment for Integrated Management of the Kura-Aras Transboundary Rivers

Keywords

16. The Report will include brief report of the process of the project Creation of Enabling Environment for Integrated Management of the Kura-Aras Transboundary Rivers implementation, as well as products of the project such as National (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) and Regional (South Caucasus) Road Maps Map on Sustainable Management of the Kura-Aras river Basin through Introduction of the EU Water Directives.

Objective and scope

17. The document will be working document in Sustainable Management of the Kura-Aras river Basin and Introduction of the EU Water Directives in particular river basin for all stakeholders and especially for target groups of the project: State authorities (MoEs, water agencies, etc.), relevant international organisations working in water sector, NGOs.

**F. Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus.
A Case for Intergovernmental Cooperation³**

Keywords

18. The publication was produced on the basis of the Ministerial Statement adopted during the High Level meeting in Vaduz, the Principality of Liechtenstein, in November of 2007. Taking into account the abovementioned recommendations to strengthen partnerships for sustainable development of the Caucasus Region and considering all components of the concept of sustainable development, as well as the experience of other mountain regions, such as the Alps and the Carpathians, the 'Caucasus Convention' Project Team, with assistance of leading experts of the region, had developed twelve topical reports for the discussion and consideration during the Working Meeting of Governmental Representatives in Georgia. Below find analysis of existing situation in the Caucasus and recommendations on the following twelve topics:

- (a) Conservation and sustainable use of biological and landscape diversity in the Caucasus region
- (b) Spatial planning and the Caucasus region
- (c) Integrated water resource management and improvement of water use efficiency in the countries of the Caucasus
- (d) Conservation and development of the Caucasus forests
- (e) Sustainable agriculture and mountain farming in the Caucasus region
- (f) Challenges of sustainable transport development in the Caucasus region
- (g) Development of sustainable tourism in the Caucasus region
- (h) Energy sector toward sustainable development of the Caucasus
- (i) Cultural heritage and traditional knowledge of the Caucasus region
- (j) Environmental assessment, information systems, monitoring and early warning in the Caucasus region
- (k) Awareness raising, education and public participation in the context of the transboundary cooperation in the Caucasus region
- (l) Climate Change: possible trends and solutions within the process of sustainable development of the mountain regions of the Caucasus.

Objective and scope

19. Discussion background papers for the governmental representatives under the Intergovernmental process on Protection and Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus, former Caucasus Convention project.

³ Full version of Background Paper for the High level Meeting under the Intergovernmental process on Protection and Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus.

G. Guideline on Local Agenda Implementation

Keywords

20. The present document (methodology of Local Agenda 21 elaboration) describes how the interested stakeholders should elaborate Local Agenda 21 in the communities of the Caucasus countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russian Federation). The document is elaborated on the basis of experience generated under the Project “Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus – Local Agenda 21” implemented by REC Caucasus and Russian REC and supported by The German Federal Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the Ministry of Environmental Affairs, Land Use Planning, Agriculture and Forestry of the Principality of Liechtenstein and European Commission.

Objective and scope

21. The document will serve as methodology to any stakeholder interested in development of Local Agenda 21 in the Caucasus countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Russian Federation) at local level.

H. Institutionalization of a mountain region: the case of the Caucasus Convention⁴

Keywords

22. Publication will present historical outline of the Caucasus Convention process starting from end 80's till today. Publication will cover but not be limited by analysis of needs and constrains, opportunities and challenges, as well as risk-analysis of cooperation in sustainable development and environmental protection at the governmental level among 6 countries of the Caucasus region (Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey), role of internal and external actors in the process. The publication will also brief on how the cooperation process will continue.

Objective and scope

23. The publication will be one of the most important outcomes of the project “Caucasus Convention for Sustainable Development” supported by European Commission as will give complete picture of the whole process and will serve as study in the framework of the project which will cover all the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the process and will give its possible future outline.⁵

⁴ Working title. Analytical Report on the Caucasus Convention process.

⁵ To incorporate into the publication all the details, meeting results of the project/process the text should be elaborated within two months after the finalization of the project.