

EECCA NWO CONFERENCE RESOLUTION

CHALLENGES OF RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT IN CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The participants of the International Conference “Challenges of River Basin Management in the context of Climate Change” gathered in Moscow on 18-19 May 2017 within the framework of the Network of Water-Management Organizations from Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia (EECCA),

having discussed urgent issues in the following focus areas:

- National strategies for adaptation to climate change, river basin management plans, transboundary basins;
- Practical measures for adaptation to CC in basins including in line with the concept of water-food-hydropower-environment nexus;
- Supporting the development of operational Basin Organisations and efficient networking;
- Monitoring for sustainable water management and implementation of data flow management using , information-communication technologies (ICT) at basin, national and transboundary levels to develop operational Water Information Systems (WIS) for decision making;
- Role of economic analysis and financial mechanisms for sustainable basin planning;
- Land reclamation issues in river basins; protection and restoration of wetlands and aquatic ecosystems.
- Control of water demands and strengthening efficient uses of water.

have agreed that:

- The challenges related to climate change and its consequences (floods, droughts, aquatic ecosystem destruction, etc.) become more acute for the water sector. In this context, the Paris Pact on water and adaptation to climate change in the basins of rivers, lakes and aquifers, promoted by INBO and UNECE at UNFCCC COP21 in December 2015, offers practical measures through:
 - enhanced work for capacity building and knowledge generation among the staff of water-management organizations and the general public;
 - adaptation of the water sector to climate change, mainly at river basin level;
 - strengthened governance;
 - adequate financing.
- Of particular note is the role the UNECE Water Convention and its task-force on water and climate play in the development of adaptation strategy for transboundary river basins by preparing guidelines, implementing projects, and exchanging experience.

- There is a considerable value and potential of engaging economic development sectors into a dialogue about management and use of resources. In this respect the efforts by UNECE in developing dialogues and assessments on water-food-hydropower-environment nexus in transboundary basins thus facilitating cooperation among concerned parties in various sectors were highlighted.
- Particular measures for adaptation to climate change include the following:
 - the need for better application of long-term flow forecasts and the long-term planning of multi-year regulation on the basis of more accurate forecasts and IWRM.
 - In line with IWRM, it is necessary to enhance participatory governance and involve energy, Inland transport, agriculture, tourism fishery, hydrometeorological, and environmental organizations in the activities of basin organizations.
 - Moreover, it is necessary facilitate the creation and strengthening of basin councils or committees and to develop a network of basin councils representing the interests of all water using and water supply sectors that would be able to assume coordination and supervision over management;
 - the river basin water management to be sustainable requires that the long-term strategic tools be implemented on the basis of prospective assessment for 15-20 years and a set of measures be developed to overcome potential demographic and climate challenges;
 - water conservation is the most powerful adaptation mechanism. The tools that could be used include:
 - selection of appropriate crop patterns;
 - full use of irrigation area;
 - revision of hydromodule zoning and irrigation regimes;
 - reduction of productivity losses by using programming methodology;
 - reduction of salinized areas and, consequently, leaching requirements;
 - selection of appropriate irrigation techniques, including drip irrigation;
 - IWRM as a whole;
 - improvement of water accounting;
 - use of treated wastewater and saline water;
 - agricultural extension services;
 - production of less water intensive crops.
 - Implementation of all kind of Natural Water Retention Measure.

While underlining the importance of professional unity, information exchange and best practices dissemination maintained within EECCA NWO, the participants *stressed the Network's achievements* in 2016-2017 including:

- organization of the conference of “Cultural and Educational Issues related to Water Management in the EECCA Countries” in Almaty on the 9th of February 2016 and the round-table for discussion of the ways to improve activities of the Network (February 10, 2016);
- events dedicated to 50 years since initiation of the ambitious program “Large-scale reclamation of land for higher and sustainable yields of grain and other crops” (Moscow, June 2016);
- XIV International scientific-practical symposium “Clean water of Russia – 2017” (Yekaterinburg, April, 2017);
- issue of Network’s information collections and scientific publications, including the collection of scientific papers “Cultural and educational issues related to water management in the EECCA countries”;
- further development of the Central Asian knowledge portal - CAWater-Info (cawater-info.net) - as part of the system of uniform tools for implementation of IWRM that are adapted to specific conditions of water management in river basins with different water stresses in arid and semi-arid zones of EECCA countries.

The participants *agreed on the necessity* to strengthen activities on:

- Increasing availability of water information;
- exchange of information on best practices and effective technologies for rational water use and decreased water pollution and exhaustion;
- development of (regional and national) knowledge hubs with the task to assist water users at different levels of water hierarchy;
- involvement of basin organizations in the Network’s activity;
- training workshops and study tours to learn best practices and exchange experience and knowledge on water management.

They expressed a strong interest in the European Union Water Initiative plus for the Eastern Partnership in 6 EECCA Countries and wished to be informed of the results of this project.

In the context of the above mentioned, the participants *deemed it necessary* to deepen joint activities of the Network by:

- keeping submitting on a regular basis information on national events in the area of water management and information on new publications, software, methodologies and training materials in order to raise awareness among water professionals and encourage water sector development in EECCA;

- enhancing cooperation with national focal points of international networks and organizations, such as Global Water Partnership (GWP), International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), Europe-INBO and CEENBO and others.

The participants *proposed* to organize the next Network’s conference in 2018 on the theme “Land reclamation in the EECCA countries in XXI: problems and solutions” and discuss the following:

- new approaches and technology for reclamation of land, more effective use of water, and prevention of soil salinization;
- prospects of irrigated agriculture development through innovations;
- application of up-to-date information technologies for monitoring and assessment of irrigated land.

The participants expressed high interest in the participation of representatives of EECCA basin organizations and national authorities in next international events such as Europe-INBO international conferences in Dublin (Ireland) in September 2017 and in Sevilla (Spain) in October 2018 and in the 8th World Water Forum in March 2018 in Brasilia (Brazil) and asked for financial support in traveling from organizers and donors.

The participants *thanked* the Government of Russia, UNECE and the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) for assistance provided to the Network, including in organization of this Conference, and seek for the continuance of financial support to core activities of the Network.

The participants also *appreciated very much* the assistance rendered by the A.N.Kostyakov Russian Research Institute of Hydraulic Engineering and Land Reclamation in preparation and organization of the Conference.