

*13 September 2013*

UNITED NATIONS  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

**Report**

**National Seminar on International Water Law**

**Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan  
12-13 September 2013**

## **A. ORGANIZATION OF THE SEMINAR**

1. The National Seminar on International Water Law took place in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyz Republic, on 12-13 September 2013. The meeting was organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in cooperation with the Department of Water Management and Melioration of the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic.

2. The seminar was held in the framework of UNECE-GIZ Programme “Regional Dialogue and Understanding on Water Resources Management in Central Asia”, Phase II, and with support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

### **1. Objectives of the seminar**

3. The National Seminar aimed at acquainting experts of the Kyrgyz institutions and organizations engaged in monitoring, management and utilization of water resources, with elements of international water law. The theme of the seminar aimed to cover customary and treaty law on international freshwater, basic obligations under international water law, and peculiarities of cooperation in the framework of specific agreements and joint bodies. Furthermore, the event aimed at sharing relevant experiences among participants.

### **2. Participants**

4. The National Seminar was attended by 20 representatives from various ministries and governmental agencies of Kyrgyzstan. The Department of Water Management and Melioration also invited representatives of Tajikistan. The presentations were made by the representatives of UNECE, consultants from the Dundee University (UK), National University of Ireland, and the Finnish-Swedish Commission on transboundary rivers. In total, 32 participants, listed in Appendix 1 to this report, took part in the seminar.

### **3. Opening of the seminar**

5. On behalf of the host country, the participants were welcomed by Mr. Abdybai Dzhaloobaev, First Deputy Director General of the Department of Water Management and Melioration. In his speech, he stressed the importance of understanding the international water law in Kyrgyzstan in view of the needs to develop cooperation on shared water resources in Central Asia. He expressed his appreciation of the UNECE support in the arrangement of the seminar and wished the participants successful and fruitful work.

6. Mr. Bo Libert, UNECE Regional Adviser, also addressed the participants of the seminar with a welcoming speech. He noted that the seminar was held in the framework of a long-term cooperation between UNECE and Kyrgyzstan on rational and efficient use of water resources and assured further assistance in this area. Mr. Alexander Nikolaenko, Regional Advisor of the GIZ programme on Transboundary Water Management in Central Asia, outlined the main goals and objectives of the programme and reported on its main focus areas. Both wished the participants of the seminar fruitful discussions.

### **4. The programme of the regional seminar**

7. The programme of the National Seminar on International Water Law is presented in the Appendix 2.

## **B. PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS**

8. The participants of the seminar heard 11 presentations on various issues of international water law. The basic principles of the 1992 UNECE Water Convention and 1997 UN Watercourses Convention were analyzed; examples of cross-border cooperation in practice were presented. The programme included practical components with application of interactive teaching methods. During the seminar group exercises on “Balancing different uses of water resources in a transboundary basin” and on “Notification on planned measures” were held.

9. During the discussions participants exchanged views on the agenda issues.

10. Every participant received a set of materials presented at the seminar.

## **C. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

11. Participants of the seminar

(a) Having heard and discussed the presentations, emphasized their rich and thorough content, as well as the undeniable importance and usefulness of raising awareness on international water law and transboundary water cooperation.

(b) Noted that the seminar was important for professional development and education of representatives of the concerned ministries and governmental agencies of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and recommended strengthening such education by holding similar events in future.

(c) Expressed satisfaction with the support in informing on the issues of rational and efficient use of water resources, both at the national and regional levels, and requested the UNECE secretariat to consider the possibility of further continuation and development of such support.

(d) Thanked the UNECE, the GIZ Programme and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as the staff of the Research Institute "Vodavtomatika i Metrologia" for the good organization of the seminar.

**СПИСОК УЧАСТНИКОВ**

**Национального семинара по международному водному праву  
Иссык-Куль, Кыргызстан, 12-13 сентября 2013 г.**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
National seminar on international water law  
Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, September 12-13, 2013**

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**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MELIORATION OF THE  
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER MANAGEMENT AND MELIORATION**

**UNECE-GIZ PROGRAMME “REGIONAL DIALOGUE AND  
UNDERSTANDING ON WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN  
CENTRAL ASIA”, PHASE II**

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NORWAY**

**National seminar on international water law  
Issyk-Kul, 12-13 September 2013**

**Agenda**

**11 September 2013, Wednesday**

12.00, departure from Bishkek by bus

**12 September 2013, Thursday**

**Chair:** Mr. Abdybai Dzhailoobaev, Deputy Director, Department of Water Management and Melioration of the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic

**09.00-09.15 *Opening***

Opening remarks, Mr. Abdybai Dzhailoobaev, Deputy Director, Department of Water Management and Melioration of the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of the Kyrgyz Republic

Opening remarks, Mr. Bo Libert, Regional Adviser, UNECE

Opening remarks, Mr. Alexandr Nikolayenko, GIZ

**09.15 – 11.00 *Session 1: Introduction to the international water law***

International water law: historic development and sources. International custom. International treaties (Sergei Vinogradov)

1992 UNECE Water Convention and 1997 UN Watercourses Convention – the current debate (Bo Libert)

Questions and answers

**11.00 – 11.15 *Coffee break***

**11.15 – 13.00 *Session 2: Key principles (equitable and reasonable utilization, no significant harm, duty to cooperate)***

1992 UNECE Water Convention: Part I (Sergei Vinogradov)

1997 UN Watercourses Convention: Arts. 5-7, 8, 10 (Owen McIntyre)

Questions and answers

**13.00 – 14.15 *Lunch***

**14.15 – 15.45 *Exercise in small groups on balancing different uses in a transboundary basin***

Introduction to the group exercise (Sergei Vinogradov and Owen McIntyre)

Small groups

Reports back from the small groups

**15.45 – 16.00 Coffee break**

**16.00 – 17.30 *Session 3: Transboundary water cooperation in practice***

Transboundary water cooperation of Finland (Kari Kinnunen)

Transboundary water cooperation of Kyrgyzstan

Questions and answers

**17.30 Closing of the first day**

**13 September 2013, Friday**

**09.15 – 11.00 *Session 4: Procedural norms***

1992 UNECE Water Convention (Part II) and 1991 UNECE Espoo Convention (Sergei Vinogradov)

1997 UN Watercourses Convention – Part III and beyond (Owen McIntyre)

Questions and answers

**11.00 – 11.15 Coffee break**

**11.15 – 12.45 *Exercise in small groups on notification on planned measures***

Introduction to the group exercise (Sergei Vinogradov and Owen McIntyre)

Small groups

Reports back from small groups

**12.45 – 14.15 Lunch**

**14.15 – 15.45 *Session 5: Dispute settlement in international water law***

Dispute settlement – 1992 UNECE Water Convention and 1997 UN Watercourses Convention. Latest significant cases (Sergei Vinogradov)

New Implementation Committee under UNECE Water Convention (Kari Kinnunen)

Questions and answers

**15.45 – 16.00 Coffee break**

**16.00 – 16.45 *Session 6: Basic rules in international negotiations***

Introduction to international negotiations (Sergei Vinogradov)

Questions and answers

**16.45 – 17.00 Conclusions**

*Mr. Tilek Isabekov, Head of Chu-Talas Commission Secretariat for Kyrgyzstan, and Mr. Bo Libert, UNECE*