

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF IWRM PRINCIPLES AT NATIONAL LEVEL THROUGH THE EU WATER INITIATIVE NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUES AND OTHER PROGRAMMES**

**Side event at the Seventh Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe”, 23  
September 2011, 13.00 – 15.00**

### **Report of the meeting**

The NPD side event was organized by the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests, European Commission, UNECE and OECD. The meeting participants discussed the ongoing water sector reforms and experiences of implementation of NPDs in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

*H.E. Mr. Laszlo BORBELY, the Chair*, opened the meeting. He stressed the importance of having a clear vision of how water policies are developed and implemented inside the European Union (EU) and also to share experience with other countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). National policy dialogues on integrated water resources management (NPD/IWRM) of the EU Water Initiative (EUWI) promote an integrated approach. There are solid results of implementation of the EUWI NPD programme. Today NPDs are implemented in nine countries; in addition, the Government of Kazakhstan has requested initiation of NPDs.

*Mr. Ján KUBIŠ, Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe - Highlights of implementation of the EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues on IWRM*

NPD is an excellent example of cooperation between United Nation Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and EU. It serves as a strategic instrument of cooperation and harmonization. Outcome of NPD discussions on expert level are further taken to the high political level; thanks to that governments commit to proposed in the framework of NPDs reforms in water sector. Examples of the NPD/IWRM process in the countries of the region:

- Armenia: support to comprehensive water sector management reforms (economic instruments);
- Georgia: development of the Water Code and support to the development of the national policy for transboundary water management;
- Kyrgyzstan: promotion of the river basin management approach through development of Chu River basin management plan;
- Republic of Moldova: establishing targets under the Protocol on Water and Health to UNECE Convention on Protection of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention);
- Azerbaijan and Tajikistan: development of the national water strategies;
- Turkmenistan: accession to the UNECE Water Convention through the work of a national expert group.

Future of NPD/IWRM in EECCA region:

- NPDs are tailored to the countries needs;
- Exchange of the information is important, involvement of stakeholders;
- Cooperation between donors and international organizations.

*Mr. Brendan GILLESPIE, OECD - Highlights of implementation of the EU Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues on Water Supply and Sanitation and IWRM financing*

OECD has more than 12 years of work in the region. NPDs are very powerful tools when they work and are fully implemented. The scope of OECD work:

- Involves the dialogue between the key stakeholders and involves full ownership of these stakeholders;
- Aims at reaching the consensus on a few issues;
- Includes full integration of the conclusions into national legislations → funding.

NPD/IWRM can be an important instrument in unbending of certain aspects of the water agenda. This process mobilizes funding.

Results of OECD work on water supply and sanitation (WSS) are integration of the financial strategies into medium-term expenditure frameworks of governments; redefinition of relations between donors and other stakeholders, etc.

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in Russian Federation: private sector provides of 90% of water supply in Russian Federation. The process of NPD/IWRM can serve as a way of overcoming disintegration of the WSS.

*Mr. Anvar ZOIROV, Deputy Minister of Melioration and Water Resources of the Republic of Tajikistan – Water Sector Reform and activities of the NPD IWRM in Tajikistan*

Government of the Republic of Tajikistan attracted the best experts and international organizations for the reformation of institutional system of water management. These reforms aim on implementation of IWRM. They are based on IWRM principles, aimed on balanced management and collective responsibility sharing; new methods and approaches on behalf of economic development and environment. Public participation (especially, in irrigation) is important (through the associations of water users). Reformation of water sector is on the final stage in Tajikistan.

*Mr. Kurbangeldy BALLYEV, Turkmenistan Representative at IFAS Executive Committee - National Policy Dialogue in Turkmenistan; synergies with regional water cooperation in Central Asia*

The process of NPD in Turkmenistan is in the beginning. Turkmenistan is preparing to accession to UNECE Water Convention; working group is assuring compliance of the national legislation to the provisions of Water Convention. An assessment of the

conventions' correspondence with Turkmenistan national interests is carried out with the support of the UNECE main specialists.

It is important to pay attention to climate change; environmental education. NPD can serve as an instrument for achieving these goals.

*Mr. Edgar PIRUMYAN, Chief of Staff, Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia – Second wave of reforms of the water sector: issues of changing the legislation, IWRM financing, including ecosystems services' payments*

Armenia has one of the most advanced water legislations in the region. Soviet heritage: highly centralized water management, lack of financial support in the sector, disintegration of the information.

First wave of the reforms was initiated in 2001:

- Reform of the legal base → 2002 new Water Code (i.e., decentralization of the water supply, IWRM, basin management approach, funding of the water sector);
- 6 river basin management authorities and river management plans have been established and developed;
- 120 new pieces of legislation;
- Data base on water sector.

Each basin management authority collects information about the water use etc. and then sends it to the ministry. This information is transparent and available online.

*H.E. Mr. Gheorghe SALARU, Minister, Ministry of Environment of Republic of Moldova – National Policy Dialogue on water supply and sanitation. Implementation of requirements of the UNECE/WHO-Europe Protocol on Water and Health – Development of an Investment/Action Plan for water supply and sanitation*

NPD/IWRM serves as a channel of communication and an instrument of harmonization of the national legislation with international in the Republic of Moldova. Main problems: IWRM and strengthening of the legislation; developing the Water Code; planning water supply and sanitation strategy (in close cooperation with OECD).

*Mr. Volker FROBARTH, GIZ - German assistance for water sector in Central Asia and its coordination with the EUWI-EECCA*

GIZ initiative supports cooperation on transboundary water management in Central Asia. A 3-level approach was implemented:

- Regional: strengthening institutions and mechanisms on regional level;
- Bilateral: supporting transboundary water management;
- National: policies in the areas of priority.

2009-2011, 2011-2013 – Phases of the Programme.

*Mr. Philip MIKOS, Head of Unit "Regional Programmes Neighbourhood East" – DEVCO, European Commission – Provisional Framework for a Second Generation EU Water Initiative. Reflections on recent experience in EECCA and further refinement of the EUWI*

To be effective NPDs need to:

- Reach all areas related to water;
- Work across sectors;
- Build the capacity (analyzing trade-offs);
- Look into financial sustainability;
- Political process, strong political backing;
- National ownership;
- Integration and budget formulation;
- Data, analysis and etc.;
- Trust building with stakeholders;
- Environment performance reviews.

Renewed EU Water Initiative:

- Extend the life span till 2025 because these reforms require time to be fully implemented;
- Renewed EU institutions;
- Renewed and reformulated objectives;
- Communication;
- Refocusing EUWI on its comparative advantage;
- Focusing on water for growth and development;
- Emphasis on increasing water as a priority;
- It creates a substance for financing;
- Respond to different priorities in different regions (flexibility).

*Comments*

*Representative of Georgia:* NPD process just started in the country; working group and Steering Committee were established. The country is willing to implement dialogues to the highest extend. NPD is a good instrument to support transboundary water management.

*The Chair conclusions.* The dialogue is very important. It is essential to put all experience and practices in a puzzle and not to focus on huge projects but to make the best on a small-scale.