



**Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes**

MEETING OF THE PARTIES

**Working Group on Integrated Water
Resources Management**

Seventh meeting*

Geneva, 3 and 4 July 2012

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**CAPACITY FOR WATER COOPERATION WORKSHOP ON TRANSBOUNDARY
GROUNDWATERS (2012): MAJOR OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Note by the secretariat

1. The Workshop on Legal, Institutional and Technical Aspects of Managing Transboundary Groundwaters took place in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 29 to 31 May 2012. The workshop was organized in the framework of the Capacity for Water Cooperation (CWC) project¹ as part of the programme of work for 2010-2012 of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention).
2. The workshop was organized jointly by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Centre in Astana, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the non-governmental Center “Cooperation for Sustainable Development” (Almaty, Kazakhstan). Financial support to organization of the workshop was provided by the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment and the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
3. The workshop aimed at building capacity of government officials and other experts in the countries of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) on the legal and

* Joint meeting of the two Working Groups.

¹ The CWC project aims to strengthen the capacity of transboundary water management in the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). The objective of the project is to create a framework for exchange of experience between river basins and countries on regulatory, institutional, methodological and other aspects of integrated management of transboundary waters. The workshop on transboundary groundwaters was the sixth event conducted in the framework of the project. See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/cwc.htm>

technical aspects of management and protection of groundwaters, with a focus on transboundary groundwaters.

4. The workshop brought together 56 participants, representing national administrations, academia, international and non-governmental organizations.

5. Participants were from Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. They presented on the management of groundwaters and transboundary groundwaters in their countries. Experts from Greece, Switzerland, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, the International Water Management Institute, the Global Environment Facility Project "Groundwater Governance", UNECE and UNESCO described international legal frameworks and experience on the management and protection of transboundary groundwaters, as well as their assessment and characterization.

6. The workshop initiated dialogue and exchange of information on legal and institutional frameworks and management practices with regard to transboundary groundwaters in EECCA subregion. Participants developed recommendations on the management and protection of transboundary groundwaters, including improvement of legal and institutional frameworks for cooperation in EECCA subregion. The recommendations are presented in annex I.

7. Presentations, recommendations and other materials from the workshop are available at the Water Convention website².

² <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=29751>

Annex

Recommendations

Participants from the countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia stressed the need to improve institutional frameworks for water management, including the management of groundwater, at the national level, and emphasized the importance of developing cooperation between States on the management, use and protection of transboundary groundwaters.

Participants noted the importance of the following activities at the national level:

- (a) Improve coordination, communication and exchange of information between governmental authorities responsible for the management of groundwaters and surface waters, as well as other areas of regulation (state of transboundary water resources, public health, environmental protection, etc.);
- (b) Develop monitoring networks and methodologies for groundwater monitoring (status monitoring) at national level and organize, as necessary, a reassessment of groundwater resources;
- (c) Increase attention to the status of groundwater-dependent ecosystems;
- (d) Raise awareness among both governmental authorities and other stakeholders and the general public on the importance of groundwater, particularly for drinking water supply;
- (e) Ensure the basic and advanced training of experts in hydrogeology and implement other measures to strengthen human capacity;
- (f) Strengthen material (laboratory equipment, etc.) and methodological basis for hydrogeological activities;
- (g) Ensure participation of groundwater experts in the development and revision of national water policies and legislation;
- (h) Implement comprehensive research of transboundary aquifers, including the impacts on groundwater of anthropogenic and technical factors, as well as of global climate change and adaptation measures.

Participants stressed that cooperation of States in the area of groundwater is needed in order to avoid excessive exploitation and pollution of groundwaters. They emphasized the importance of the following activities at transboundary level:

- (a) Develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the use and protection of transboundary groundwaters, including exchange of data and information on status and pressures;
- (b) Organize joint delineation and status assessment for transboundary groundwaters and develop methodologies and programmes for joint monitoring;

(c) Analyze transboundary water cooperation agreements in force in order to clarify their scope and existing obligations of States in relation to transboundary groundwaters, as well as assess the needs for entering into new agreements or revising existing agreements to ensure the regulation of use and protection of transboundary groundwaters;

(d) Encourage existing joint bodies on transboundary waters to work on transboundary groundwaters, in particular by ensuring the representation of governmental authorities responsible for groundwater in the national delegations participating in the activities of the joint bodies;

(e) Involve international organizations in facilitating the initial dialogue between States on transboundary groundwaters, as necessary.

In the context of cooperation on transboundary groundwaters, as supported by international organizations active in the region of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, participants recommended the following measures:

(a) Facilitate the development and adoption by countries of the region of common frameworks for use and protection of transboundary groundwaters, including the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes;

(b) Promote awareness in the region on the Draft Articles on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers (2008) of the International Law Commission commended to the United Nations Member States by the General Assembly in resolutions 63/124 and 66/104;

(c) Finalize the Model Provisions on Transboundary Groundwaters for adoption at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes in 2012 and for their further application by the countries, as well as develop mechanisms for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in this area;

(d) Continue capacity building, analysis and dissemination of good practices and strengthen inter-State cooperation on transboundary groundwaters in the region.