

Global Water Partnership strengthens inter-regional cooperation

THE FIRST GWP INTER-REGIONAL CONSULTING PARTNERS MEETING WAS HELD ON OCTOBER 5-7, 2007 IN VARNA, BULGARIA.

The meeting gathered GWP consulting partners from Central Asia and the Caucasus (CA-CENA), Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the Mediterranean (MED) to discuss common and priority water resource issues, with a special emphasis on the emerging framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy. It was organized in the context of the co-operation of two significant blocs of countries - European Union members and their neighbors - that are striving for the same goal of sustainable water management.

More than 90 participants from over 30 countries took part in the meeting including regional council members, water partnerships, observers from Croatia and Iran and several partner organizations from all regions. "The

adoption and implementation of IWRM principles lies at the heart of the mission of GWP in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean", says Liviu Nicolae Popescu, GWP CEE Chair "and consulting partners are the key to making IWRM work on the national level".

During inter-regional breakout sessions, the participants exchanged experiences on IWRM plans, public participation and transboundary rivers. The regional sessions then helped in positioning the partnerships for the next long-term period and especially in the formulation of a new GWP Strategy for 2009-2013.

As one outcome of the meeting, the recommendations will be used to support national government efforts in applying the principles of IWRM planning in practice. ■

For more information, please visit www.gwpceeforum.org

Calendar of Events

International Roundtable: Stakeholder Participation for the Integrated Management of Shared Water Resources

March 22, 2008

Sofia, Bulgaria

GWP CEE Regional Council meeting

April 4-5, 2008

Bratislava, Slovakia

Danube Day

June 29, 2008

Countries of the Danube River basin

The International Water Association (IWA) 11th International Specialised Conference on Watershed and River Basin Conference

September 4-5, 2008

Budapest, Hungary



Participants of the first Inter-regional Consulting Partners meeting

ICPDR Wins International Thuess Riverprize for Excellence in Water Management of Danube River Basin

THE VIENNA-BASED INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE DANUBE RIVER BASIN (ICPDR) HAS WON THE AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL THIESS RIVERPRIZE 2007 FOR EXCELLENCE IN WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE DANUBE RIVER BASIN.



The announcement was made on 4 September, in Brisbane, Australia, during a special award ceremony at the 10th annual International Riversymposium held 3-6 September 2007.

The ICPDR's main goal is to implement the 'Danube River Protection Convention', signed by 13 Danube countries and the European Union (EU), by promoting and coordinating sustainable and equitable water management.

The world-renowned Danube River is 2,780 km long. The Danube Basin, including the Danube River and its many tributaries, covers 801,463 sq km. Home to some 81 million people, it includes parts of 19 countries making it the world's most international river basin – and a major challenge for transboundary cooperation.

"The 45-year long Soviet era left much of the Danube with terrible environmental legacies such as toxic waste and destructive farming practices," said ICPDR Executive Secretary Philip Weller. "That was preceded by over a century of river damming and channelling with negative impacts for water quality and quantity, and for valuable habitats and threatened species."

In response, the ICPDR, since its establishment in 1998, has catalyzed international cooperation for corrective action. Examples include the building of sewage treatment plants for municipal waste, changes to environmental policies and the restoration of floodplain habitat.

"Many Danube countries are not in the EU," said Mr. Weller. "However, all agreed to cooperate to meet strict EU water protection laws, showing their commitment to applying integrated river basin management."

This included joint efforts to develop the first-ever comprehensive report on the Danube environment by 2004, and current efforts to produce the first Danube River Basin Management Plan by 2009.

Other signs of excellence in water management include the development of optimal technologies to collect and assess information. This includes a network of water monitoring and sampling stations, research ships testing pollution and a transboundary warning system for accidents.

ICPDR efforts raise awareness of and celebrate the Danube through the coordination of 'Danube Day' (celebrated annually on 29 June), the popular 'Danube Watch' magazine and the 'Danube Box' educational toolkit for teachers.

Public participation in ICPDR activities is assured through the provision of observer status to key major stakeholders at ICPDR forums, from industry to NGOs. Partnerships have been developed with businesses to support ICPDR projects while improving the environmental management of business operations.

And all countries recently committed to implementing the ICPDR's action programme against the rising impacts from floods.

"The ICPDR is a worldwide model for cooperation in river basin management," said Romanian State Secretary for Water, and ICPDR President 2007 Lucia Ana Varga. "Through the forum created by the ICPDR, the Danube countries are restoring some of the Danube's lost treasures, preventing future plans from causing more damage and increasing international cooperation."

As recently as this February, they helped to get the EU and environment ministers from all of the 16 countries sharing the Danube and Black Sea region to adopt a new 'Declaration on the Enhancement of Cooperation' for water management."

Launched in 1999, the International Thuess Riverprize has evolved into one of the most highly regarded and richest international water management awards.

"The Riverprize identifies the world's best practices in water management, preservation and restoration," said Martin Albrecht, Chair of the International Riverfoundation. "It also offers winners the unique opportunity to put their river rescue ideas into action to save our most important waterways."

For more information, please visit www.icpdr.org.



Jasmine Bachmann, ICPDR Secretariat, Martin Albrecht, International Riverfoundation, Gyula Hollo, Head of the Hungarian Delegation to the ICPDR

CREDIT: GERHARD KOCH

Sava Commission meets to strengthen transboundary cooperation



First Meeting of the Parties to the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION WAS HELD IN ZAGREB, CROATIA IN JUNE 2007.



After the disintegration of Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990s, the Sava – once the longest national river – became an international river running through Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia. It flows eastwards for 946 km, before it meets the Danube.

The need for the regulation and sharing of water resources in the Sava basin has been recognized and acknowledged by the international community and organizations. As a result, the Sava Initiative was launched in the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo in November 2001. The Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin was signed in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia in December 2002 and entered into force two years later.

Among other goals, the Framework Agreement seeks to establish an international navigation regime on the Sava and its tributaries, introduce sustainable water management practices

and prevent flood risks, icing, droughts and accidental water pollution.

At the meeting, hosted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the parties adopted the report of the Sava Commission since 2004 and the Declaration of the First Meeting of the Parties. "The first meeting of the Sava Commission was a success", stated Aleksander Cicerov, Deputy Member of the International Sava River Basin Commission. He went on to say, "The next meeting, expected for

2009, will show that the Framework Agreement is playing an indisputable role in transboundary cooperation among the parties."

For more information, please visit www.savacommission.org

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Focus on flash floods



CREDIT: MILAN MATUSKA/GWP CEE

The floods workshop was held in Krakow city hall

THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP ENTITLED COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION FOR FLASH FLOOD MANAGEMENT IN EUROPE WAS HELD ON OCTOBER 29-30 IN KRAKOW, POLAND.

The workshop was held under the auspices of the Mayor of Krakow and organized by the World Meteorological Organization, Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe, the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management and GWP Poland. The event is a part of the long term cooperation between the WMO and GWP CEE in the framework of the Associated Programme on Flood Management.

Flash floods are the fastest moving types of floods, triggered by heavy rain and usually giving little warning time to local people. Flash floods occur in Central and Eastern Europe in areas with steep slopes, climate variability and low soil permeability.

The workshop facilitated dialogue between hydrological and meteorological forecasters and civil defence authorities involved in flash flood emergency response and provided access to good practices and lessons learnt in providing flash flood warnings to local communities. The participants presented their experiences gained from a historical assessment of flash floods in 8 CEE countries, followed by the main findings of 3 pilot projects from Poland, Slovakia and Romania.

Discussion was held on the opportunities and challenges in up-scaling good practices to the national level, the options and requirements for promoting community preparedness for flash floods, possible next steps in existing national and international frameworks including national government uptake and possibilities within the framework of the EU and other bi-lateral and multilateral collaboration.

Recommendations for reducing the impact of

flash floods Workshop participants adopted recommendations for reducing the devastating impact of flash floods which were addressed to decision makers in the national administrations, researchers and operational managers in the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, mayors and local decision makers.

The recommendations, which are based on experience gained during pilot projects in the CEE region, point out the high loss of human life from flash floods across Europe, and the likeliness of climate change resulting in an increase in intense short-duration precipitation in most of Europe and human alterations to the landscape that further increase the risk of flash floods.

Flash flood preparedness planning was delivered through the contributions of experts from countries with advanced stages in this field, namely Japan, France and Switzerland.

More than 40 participants from over 12 countries took part at the workshop. "We should propagate the results of our pilot projects", says Milan Matuska, Regional Coordinator of the GWP CEE Regional Water Partnership, "and make them attractive to the potential users - municipalities located in flash flood-prone areas".

A new flash flood book

As one outcome of the workshop, WMO will publish a book entitled 'Working towards Flash



CREDIT: MILAN MATUSKA/GWP CEE

Flood prone area in Klodzko valley, Poland

Flood Management Strategy Preparation! The book will include experiences from pilot flash flood projects and practical recommendations for reducing the devastating impact of flash floods. The book will target decision makers in

national administrations, researchers and operational managers in the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services, mayors and local decision makers. "The book is an excellent example of cooperation between the WMO

and GWP", says Avinash Tyagi, Head of Department of Hydrology and Water Resources of the WMO. ■

For more information, please visit www.apfm.info

Moldova Joins GWP CEE

THE MEETING TO ESTABLISH GWP MOLDOVA WAS HELD IN CHISINAU IN MARCH 2007.

Following a formal request by the Government of the Republic of Moldova to assist in IWRM planning, GWP organized a stakeholder meeting in late 2006 in the capital city of Chisinau, which later laid the foundations of GWP Moldova.

The Regional Center for Strategic Environmental Studies ECOS initiated the meeting in March 2007 and has been entrusted by local consulting partners to host GWP Moldova. "The Center for Strategic Environmental Studies is proud to provide a neutral platform for IWRM dialogue", says Tatiana Belous, Center President, "and to work with consulting partners towards more sustainable water resource development, management and use in the country".

GWP Moldova founding members include the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, the State Management Concern Apele Moldovei and the Acvaproject Institute, institutes of the Academy of Sciences, the Municipality of Chisinau, the National Commission for UNESCO and other state agencies and non-governmental organizations.

As one outcome of the meeting, the Center for Strategic Environmental Studies submitted 11 applications for consulting partners



Raut river near Butuceni, Moldova

from various institutions in Moldova, including the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, to the GWP CEE Regional Secretariat. In addition to working on accreditation as a full fledged water partnership, GWP Moldova organized a series of successful IWRM national dialogues in July 2007. ■

For more information, please visit www.gwpceeforum.org



Moldova is rich in cultural and natural heritage

GWP CEE launches a new book on sustainable sanitation



Constructed wetland in Gradisce, Slovenia

THE BOOK IS ENTITLED SUSTAINABLE SANITATION IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZE SETTLEMENTS.



Addressing the needs of rural settlements

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) accounts for approximately 16% of the territory of Europe and provides home for about 20% of the population. In spite of its similar past, CEE countries have different natural, social and economic conditions, as well different approaches to water management.

In comparison to the rest of Europe, approximately 20 million people are living in rural settlements of less than 2000 inhabitants. However, the primary focus of European Union waste

water legislation is on agglomerations over 2000 people while smaller, and usually the poorest communities, have not been addressed because of the effort to deal with larger sources of pollution first. Therefore, the book is focused on small settlements where sustainable sanitation can bring low cost, sustainable and effective solutions in dealing with waste water.

Currently, 30% to 80% of the population is connected to waste water treatment plants depending on the country. Future plans show that countries are going to increase the connection to waste water treatment plants up to 75 to 90%. This leaves a gap of 10-25% of the population, living without proper waste water treatment.

A proper time for sustainable sanitation

The book developed by CEE experts in cooperation with Swedish and German cutting edge sustainable sanitation experts, provides a comprehensive overview of the status of sanitation in CEE countries. It offers a set of case studies illustrating different workable solutions from Hungary, Ukraine and Slovenia, as well as from Germany and Sweden. Also, it gives an overview of legislation on sustainable sanitation in the European Union and some Central and Eastern European countries.

"The book recognizes that sanitation is the foundation of human health, dignity and development", says Roberto Lenton, Chair of the GWP Technical Expert Committee, "and it calls attention to a serious challenge - how to radically increase access to basic sanitation in ways that reflect the principles of economic efficiency, social equity and environmental sustainability - the 3 E's - on which the Integrated Water Resources Management approach is built."

The book targets decision makers in the national administrations, mayors and local decision makers. "It is also well timed to contribute to the International Year of Sanitation 2008, when we will have a unique opportunity to raise awareness and galvanize political will, especially on the national level", says Lenton.

To download the book, please visit www.gwpceeforum.org.



Constructed wetland in Gradisce, Slovenia

CREDIT: BOGDAN MACAROL

CREDIT: MILAN MATUSKA/GWP CEE

GWP Chair received Grand Prize for Water



CREDIT: KURT PETERSSON

MARGARET CATLEY-CARLSON, THE CHAIR OF THE GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP (GWP), RECEIVED THE 'GRAND PRIZE' FOR WATER AT THE LEADING LIGHTS OF WATER AWARDS CEREMONY HELD ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, JUNE 28, 2007 AT THE 9TH WATER SYMPOSIUM IN CANNES, FRANCE.

In accepting the award, Mrs Catley-Carlson said, "I am really accepting this award on behalf of the world-wide network of GWP partners who are working to change the way the world appreciates and values water."

The 'Grand Prize' is one of nine trophies awarded for the Leading Lights of Water, world personalities who have accomplished a major work in this field. Each trophy is a unique piece of art, sculpted from a mixture of bronze and blue resin by the artist P. Schumacher.

"Where we look to air emissions for climate change mitigation," Mrs Catley-Carlson emphasized, "we will be looking to water resource management for adaptation. And, with increased scarcity in many regions, the particular need for an integrated approach becomes more and more acute."

The GWP is a worldwide network created in 1996 to support countries in the sustainable management of their water resources. Though GWP recognizes that better water management requires political change, GWP believes this is a collective responsibility and promotes partnership as a means to achieve broad ownership of ideas and solutions. ■

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Slovenia bathing waters improve

SLOVENIA'S RIVERS, LAKES AND ADRIATIC SEA COAST OFFER VARIOUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR WATER-RELATED SPORTS, INCLUDING WHITE-WATER RAFTING AND KAYAKING.



CREDIT: MATEJA POJE

Bathing waters in Slovenia

ards because of diffuse pollution sources causing microbiological and other contamination.

In 2006, all Slovenian coastal bathing waters achieved compliance with bacterial quality standards for the first time. The compliance of fresh water bathing areas showed a significant improvement in 2006 with only three out of eighteen locations that failed regarding bacterial quality. As a result, the Ministry of the Environment and the Spatial Planning started a detailed analysis in non-complying bathing areas.

The results of the analysis show that appropriate treatment of urban waste water is one of

the crucial measures in assuring compliance with bathing water quality standards. In addition, the special requirements are needed in the sections of the surface water located upstream of the bathing areas. "In the future, more analysis is needed to assess the actual impact of the industrial point sources", says Mateja Poje, Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia, "as well as the impact of the diffuse sources of the pollution, especially those originating from agriculture". ■

For more information, please contact Mateja Poje, Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia, e-mail: mateja.poje@gov.si

Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC, transposed into Slovenian legislation in 2004, regulates bathing water in the European Union. According to the directive, Slovenia has defined 37 bathing waters. During the bathing season, water quality is checked at least two times per month for total and faecal coli-forms, transparency, color, mineral oil, detergents and phenols. Chemical and bacteriological analyses are carried out in laboratories accredited under Slovene Accreditation Service quality systems.

Across the European Union, Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 91/271/EEC has shown good results in improving surface water quality including bathing water. However, in some cases, the construction of waste water treatment plants and sewage networks has not resulted in 100 % compliance with bathing water quality stand-



CREDIT: MATEJA POJE

Bathing area Cezsoca, Slovenia



"IF ENERGY IS THE FOCUS FOR MITIGATION, ADAPTATION MUST FOCUS ON WATER"

A Policy Brief, Climate Change Adaptation and Integrated Water Resources Management, released in September by the Global Water Partnership

Policy Brief on Intelligent Water Strategies for Adapting to Climate Change

nership (GWP) suggests that the best approach to manage the impact of climate change on water is one guided by the philosophy and methodology of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). And it suggests that water will have to be placed at the centre of adaptation efforts.

"Better water management will be essential if communities are to adapt successfully to climate change," says primary author Mike Muller, former Director-General, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, South Africa and Global Water Partnership Technical Committee member.

The IWRM methodology seeks to identify, and then to achieve tradeoffs between different water management objectives including environmental sustainability, economic efficiency and social equity.

This approach encourages the structured en-

agement of communities and sectors impacted upon by water into its management, both to seek and promote 'win-win' solutions but also to ensure that a better understanding of water constraints and challenges is developed and diffused into the society.

"The 'IWRM' approach," adds Muller, "involves both 'hard' infrastructural and 'soft' institutional strategies." It is through the use of soft tools that complement infrastructure and help ensure that infrastructural investments work that offers countries the best chance of coping successfully with climate variability and change. "The systematic approach offered by IWRM," Muller concludes, "has already proved to be a useful first step. But if it is to make a difference, more work and more resources are needed." ■

For more information, please visit www.gwpforum.org

New Chair for the Global Water Partnership

LETITIA A. OBENG IS THE NEW CHAIR OF THE GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP (GWP) IT WAS ANNOUNCED ON AUGUST 14, 2007.

Ms Obeng, a Ghanaian holding a Ph.D. degree in public health and water resources engineering from Imperial College, University of London, has extensive experience in water and sanitation strategy development and service delivery across the African continent.

Dr. Obeng has held increasingly responsible positions since joining the Bank in 1982, most recently as Director for Environment, Water Resources, Rural and Social Development in the Middle East and North Africa Region; Strategy and Operations Director in the Office of the Vice President for Latin America

and the Caribbean; and Director, Office of the President, The World Bank.

In accepting the position as Chair of the GWP, Letitia Obeng said, "The work of the Partnership in supporting the development of sustainable water resource management is vital and much needed. I am truly honored to contribute in this way and look forward to working with the members of the GWP family."

Dr. Obeng will assume her duties as Chair of the GWP at the end of 2007. ■

For more information, please contact James Lenahan, Head of Communications, GWP Secretariat, e-mail: James.Lenahan@gwpforum.org



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