

GWP CACENA in March and April 2009

The big delegation representing 18 water professionals from eight CACENA countries attended the Fifth World Water Forum in Istanbul. It was possible due to financial support from MFA of Finland and organizational support from Government of Turkey. The half-day **CACENA side event** on 18th March with four themes; Climate Change, Transboundary Cooperation, Water Governance and Capacity building was a success in terms of excellent organization and active involvement of all organizers (GWP CACENA, the two Central Asian regional organizations EC IFAS and ICWC together with MFA of Finland, and Turkey), high participation (130 persons), a structured agenda with one key lecture per theme, a high-level panel, comments and discussion. The facilitation by GWP Senior Adviser Khalid Mohtadullah was very helpful. In particular in his closing speech he widened the perspective by taking examples from other GWP regions of *Shared Benefits* as a basis for transboundary cooperation. He also significantly pointed to the need for increased capacity building and training in more practical ways to strengthen IWRM by enhancing skills in the development of management instruments for raised institutional performance in the region. It was very important that the side event was opened by new Executive Secretary of the GWP Ania Grobicki, who in her welcome speech reconfirmed GWP's commitment to continue playing an important role in the CACENA region, promoting water as a key part of sustainable national development. The principal outcomes of the CACENA side event were as following:

- a. Climate Change
 - i. EC IFAS presented recently completed regional report on Climate Change in Central Asia, which shows the real picture of the challenging issues region will faced in coming few decades.
 - ii. Tajik Minister of Land & Water to look at less water consuming crops. This initiative was supported by other water leaders from CACENA countries
 - iii. Agreement of immediate need improved water efficiency among key actors
 - iv. Actions to be taken for improved water quality
- b. Transboundary Cooperation
 - i. Water leaders from the region confirmed their commitment for cooperation and looking to the GWP CACENA as a neutral platform for transboundary dialogues
 - ii. ADB is happy with progress and will support further efforts towards new agreements
- c. Water Governance
 - i. IWRM is a baseline for on-going reforms in water sector over the region
 - ii. Uzbek delegates called to build cooperation on the UN Convention 1997 principles. In response, Tajik delegates proposed Central Asian Convention on Water.
- d. Capacity Building
 - i. The need for joint regional capacity development umbrella was stressed to coordinate all actors involved (local, regional, international donors and agencies, etc)
 - ii. Build on achievements from Swiss financed IWRM project in Fergana Valley (lead by ICWC and IWMI) with involvement GWP CACENA, UNDP and CapNet

- iii. Universities of Helsinki and Montana ready to cooperate for growing new generation of water leaders.



During the side event two new books on IWRM practical experience from CACENA were presented to the world water society:

The first one was presented by Prof. Victor Dukhovny: *IWRM – From Theory to Real Practice: The Experience of Central Asia*, published by SIC ICWC/IWMI and SDC, available online at: www.cawater-info.net/library/books_e.htm

The second book presented by Muhammad Mizanur Rahman: *Central Asian Waters: Social, Economic, Environmental and Governance Puzzle*, published with support from Helsinki University of Technology and available online at: www.water.tkk.fi/global/publications

Finland will help to get GWP CACENA involved as a funded actor in its Wider Europe Initiative policy development, which will be finalised in April-May. On 31 March the GWP delegation (Martin Walshe, Bjorn Guterstam and Vadim Sokolov) met in Helsinki with the “Writing Group” of the Finland’s Wider European Initiative from SYKE (Finnish Institute of Environment), Erik Sjoberg, Kaj Barlund and Ari Makela. The Director General of SYKE, Ms. Lea Kauppi, participated in the briefing given by GWP about work in CACENA region. Helsinki University of technology (Olli Varis and Mizanur Rahaman) also participated in the meeting as they are partners in the GWP CACENA programme for the coming years.

The Wider Europe Initiative is a framework programme to be prepared for Finland’s development cooperation with countries in Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia in order to promote stability and well-being extensively both in our partner countries and in the whole region. The

framework programme is based on the Government Programme, which emphasises crisis prevention, support for peace processes and cooperation in environmental issues. One important substance element of the Wider Europe Initiative will be cooperation in environmental protection, particularly cooperation in water issues. This is justified by the policies and priority settings as formulated by majority, if not all, countries in question, synergies and value added that can be sought in multilateral cooperation frameworks and, not least by the experience and earlier involvement by Finland in water cooperation in Central Asia and South Caucasus.

The newly published by GWP TEC two issues of IWRM Policy Briefs (No 7 and 8) and TEC background paper No 13 were translated during March-April into Russian and recently are under preparation for publication of their Russian version for wide dissemination in the region. Also the new GWP Strategy 2009-2013 now is available in Russian.