

## **GWP CACENA in August-September 2008**

Since mid of the year the Regional Secretariat of the GWP CACENA observed some kind of crisis in activities of the regional network, which is resulted under impact of the following destabilising factors:

1. Turkmenistan stopped many of GWP activities at the country level because of change of political leadership and illness of the country coordinator Mr. Usman Saparov.
2. Central Asia faced with the very strong water scarcity in summer 2008 – the average water availability for irrigation over the region was about 70 % - varying in some areas and periods between 50...80% of actual requirements for water.
3. During the August 2008 the CACENA countries were stressed by conflict in the Southern Caucasus (Southern Osetia – Georgia – Russia). Military confrontation was led to fatal environmental consequences within the Georgia and possible further degradation of water infrastructure and water sector in the country.

Unluckily, the communications with partners of the GWP network from Georgia are still very limited. There were not any contacts with the GWP CACENA Chair Mrs. Nino Chkhobadze since beginning of August. Thus, there is not clear picture and scale of the problems related to water in this corner of the region. In September Georgia was stressed again by catastrophic precipitations and floods in many of settlements. The Georgian Government claimed the situation in the country close to humanitarian crisis.

Unfortunately, in such circumstances GWP network appears as a very in-efficient platform for communications and support the colleagues from Georgia. It is necessary to search certain mechanisms for new GWP Strategy 2009-2013, which will help the GWP network to behave properly in future when water problems are hidden in the shadow of the political conflict.

Life is going on, and delegation of six persons from CACENA took active participation in the CP meeting on 15-17 August in Stockholm contributing to discussions on new GWP Strategy for 2009-2013. The proper contributions were made for the TEC meeting and Regional Chairs and Coordinators meeting during 10-14 August.

Following to the Regional Work Program 2008 during September there were organized training seminars in six of eight CACENA countries (excluding Georgia and Turkmenistan) as element of the capacity development to facilitate National IWRM planning process. This activity is continuation of actions started in 2005 with special support from the Government of Finland. The target is capacity development for leaders of planning and IWRM implementation process, not only involving water specialists, but also water users and other stakeholders.

The Regional Council members under proper coordination from Regional Secretariat drafted GWP CACENA Work Plan for 2009, which was submitted to GWPO HQ on 15 September. The Work Plan includes four dimensions of activities in accordance with the goals of the GWP Strategy 2009-2013.

With occasion of meeting of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Central Asia, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 17-18 September there was launched new book "IWRM – from theory to real practice: experience of Central Asia", published in Russian (the electronic version of Russian book could be downloaded from the web-site: [www.cawater-info.net](http://www.cawater-info.net)). One of the ways for comprehensive improvements in the water and agricultural sector is IWRM. The first wide experience of putting IWRM into practice was gained in the Fergana Valley on territories

of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, where pilot projects were launched in 2002. Analysis and findings of pilot activity presented in this book were prepared by the think tank of the IWRM-Fergana Project, key specialists of the SIC ICWC and IWMI, as the first generalization of seven-year adaptation of IWRM principles to conditions of the arid zone in Central Asia. Along with describing the practical activity and case studies of improving the water sector, some theoretical provisions based on former and current studies of national specialists and scientists are given here. The key components of the IWRM concept that we have employed include water resources management based on hydro-geographical principles, broad involving the stakeholders and water users into the decision-making process by different ways and at different levels, using various sources of water resources, as well as the combination of institutional and technical instruments of IWRM introduction. Integrating these activities has allowed considerably reducing the total water withdrawal into all pilot irrigation systems and rising the efficiency and productivity of water use. However, the key achievement of this project consists in the fact that IWRM, as the integrated approach, was welcomed by the broad circle of stakeholders. Essentially, public participation, to a considerable degree, is the recovery of former, being existed prior to the colonization, management methods with employing water users' initiative, funds and self-discipline, as well as the traditional institutions such as "water resources management by mirabs (public irrigators)", "organizing of khoshars (voluntary public works),"etc. Such an approach facilitates the awareness rise of local population regarding suggested methods. Seminars, training courses, and conferences held at the regional and national level have shown the considerable interest in our experience of top and middle-ranged specialists in the water and agricultural sector. We have become aware of much more interest of direct water users, whose number exceeds tens of thousands in the frame of this project. Just their attention and aspiration for innovations inspire the optimism regarding the IWRM introduction into the water sector practice in Central Asia.

Secretariat of the GWP CACENA supported translation of this book into English and the electronic version of the English book will be available at web-site by the end of October 2008. The hard book will be published with support from GWP CACENA by the end of the year 2008.