

The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) is an inter-agency partnership which facilitates co-operation on critical environmental issues as a way to promote peace and security



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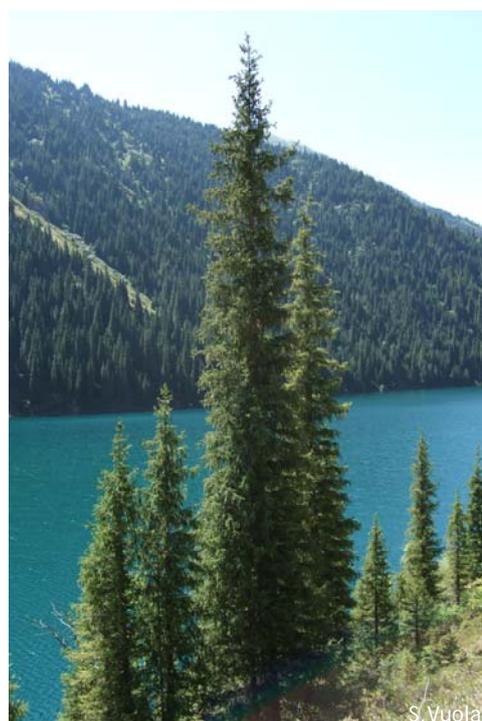
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ENVSEC in Central Asia expresses its gratitude to everyone supporting its work and welcomes new cooperation opportunities



S. Vuola



Introduction to ENVSEC Central Asia Work Programme 2009-2012

Following comments from countries and other stakeholders, ENVSEC partners decided to move away from the sub-regional approach and cluster the new Work Programme around themes. The main focus of ENVSEC projects will still be on the Ferghana Valley, the Eastern Caspian region and the Amu Darya river basin but projects will from now on need to fit under the thematic clusters.

The priority areas/clusters are:

1. Dialogue and cooperation on shared resources
2. Reduction of risks to security and stability from hazardous practices
3. Increased resilience to security impacts of climate change
4. Raising awareness and strengthening capacities and participatory mechanisms on environment and security issues

ENVSEC is already implementing projects under Clusters 1, 2 and 4. As far as 'increased resilience to security impacts of climate change' (Cluster 3) is concerned, concrete projects will yet have to be initiated. ENVSEC Senior Managers, however, identified climate change as one of ENVSEC's key focus areas, with the implication that future projects under Cluster 3 will receive a lot of attention. For a copy of the **ENVSEC Central Asia Work Programme 2009-2012** with more details on objectives and outcomes of each of the clusters, as well as on ongoing projects, please contact ajiniyaz.reimov@undp.org.

Summary of projects:

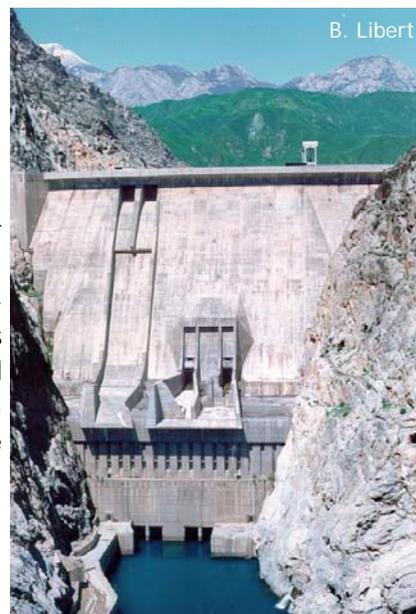
Dialogue and cooperation on shared resources

Capacity Building for Cooperation on Dam Safety in Central Asia

Partners: UNECE / Status: Ongoing, until Dec 2010

Central Asia has more than 100 major dams and other water control facilities, mostly on rivers shared by different countries. The dams are aging and are not adequately maintained. Meanwhile, the number of people living downstream from dams is growing. For example, the Fergana valley, which is divided among Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, has 9 million inhabitants. If a dam upstream from this valley were to break, the consequences could be disastrous.

Funded by the Finnish Government, Phase II of the UNECE Project "Dam Safety in Central Asia: Capacity Building and Regional Cooperation" started in the end of 2007. The project is aimed at the improvement of the national legislation and state regulation for dam safety in the participating countries and strengthening of the regional cooperation in this field. Participation of experts from Russia is funded by the Government of the Russian Federation. More information about the project and the meetings (including meeting reports) can be found on <http://www.unece.org/env/water/damsafety.htm>.





- Two regional meetings have been held with the participation of all five Central Asian states: In Tashkent 12-13 April and in Almaty 19-20 November 2008.
- National meetings have been held in Kazakhstan (15 June), Kyrgyzstan (14 November), Turkmenistan (12 June) and in Uzbekistan (14 March), 2008.
- The draft legislation to include the issue of Safety of Hydraulic Structures in the Water Code of Kazakhstan was reviewed.
- Draft changes in the Uzbek legislation were reviewed and recommendations were made for changes.
- Consecutive drafts of a regional agreement have been discussed and developed.
- Lists of technical documents and regulations for safety of dams and other large hydrotechnical facilities have been prepared for Central Asian countries as a starting point for a review of technical regulations.
- The first training course for dam safety specialists in Central Asia was held in Tashkent 11-14 May, 2009.

Enhancing regional exchange of water resource information (CAREWIB phase II)

Partners: UNEP & UNECE / Status:
Ongoing until June 2010

The Central Asian Regional Water Information Base Project CAREWIB, funded by Switzerland, improves the availability and exchange of information in water and environmental sectors in Central Asia. A regional Internet portal www.cawater-info.net provides access to up-to-date information on water and related issues in Central Asia. The portal is based on existing though not yet always easily accessible information maintained by the Scientific Information Centre of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination in Tashkent (SIC-ICWC) and other organizations. Publications in paper format are regularly produced and distributed to increase outreach towards policy-makers, NGOs and the general public. The project is implemented by SIC-ICWC, UNEP and UNECE.



An information system for water management is another component of the project. This system is a practical tool for integrated assessment of the water situation considering available water resources and their allocation among river reaches, provinces and water-management systems etc. The system includes GIS maps for each of the Central Asian countries. The Information System is currently a tool for management and cooperation within the framework of ICWC. However, part of the information will be provided through the CAWater-Info Portal for free use.

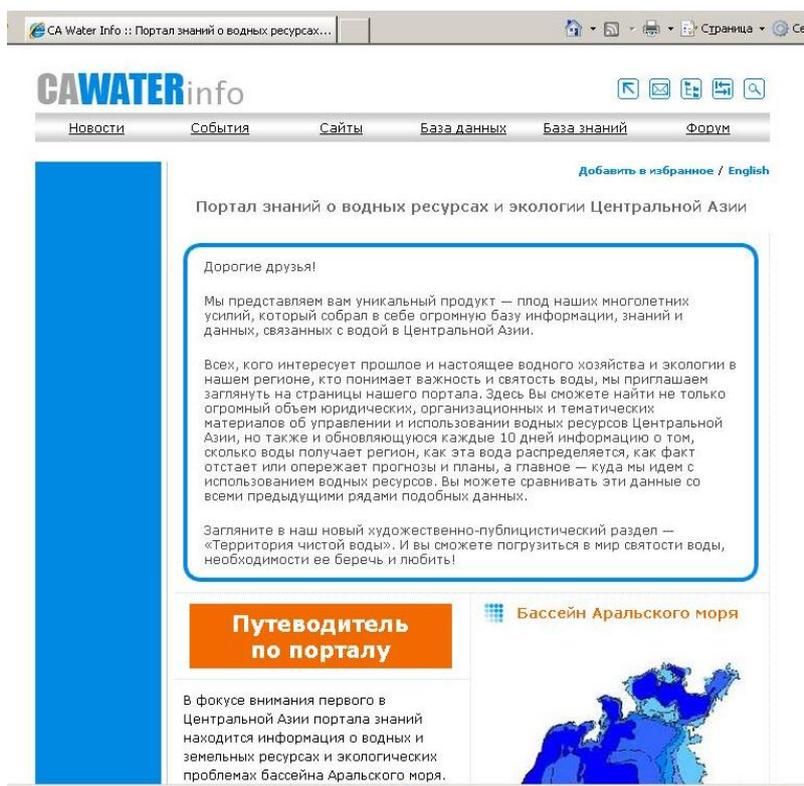
What started as an effort to improve information exchange and coordination between donors is now a much more ambitious project aiming to make information flow on water issues more efficient and transparent in Central Asia.

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A second phase of the project started in autumn 2007. Within Phase II, the project is planning to enhance the scope and scale of the CAREWIB portal (www.cawater-info.net) and Information System introducing more advanced methods of data collection and retrieval as well as promoting the maintenance of databases and information systems at the national level.



The main focus of Phase II will be the establishment of frameworks for and facilitation of National Information Systems development in the five Central Asian states. On 11-12 December 2008, a meeting was organized in Moscow to pass on the best practices of CAREWIB on the establishment of a Russian-speaking network of water management organizations. A special website has been set up for exchange of information between Russian-speaking countries. This latter direction of work is funded by the Russian Federation.

In-depth Assessment of Environment and Security Linkages and Impact in the Amu Darya River Basin

Partners: UNEP (GRID) & UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre / Status: Ongoing until September 2009

The project is undertaking a detailed assessment of water management and quality situation in the Amu-Darya river basin with a particular focus on the environment and security implications of projected developments as well as on identifying opportunities to strengthen basin-wide cooperation around common issues. It is expected that the assessment will result both in a clearer understanding of security aspects of water management and pollution issues in the basin, and in identification/ scoping of follow-up interventions where some of the risks as well as cooperation opportunities can be addressed in a practical manner.

An in-depth assessment report is undergoing final drafting after several meetings and consultations with regional stakeholders. The most recent consultations, with participation of Afghanistan, include field missions in Tajikistan (14-20 April 2008 and 5-9 July 2008), Turkmenistan (14-17 July 2008) and Uzbekistan (19-28 May 2008). The updated draft of the Assessment Report was shared with countries in December 2008, and comments received by March 2009 were incorporated into the report. At the moment the draft report is undergoing informal review by partners and countries.

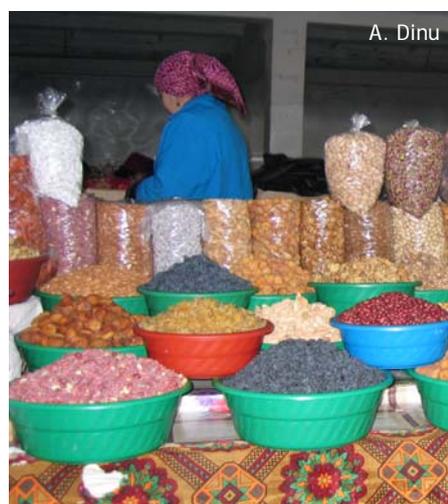
Microbiological Safety of Drinking Water in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyz Republic

Partners: NATO / Status: Ongoing until October 2010

The project seeks to enhance knowledge in Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan about the quality assurance methodology for microbiological analysis of drinking water adopted in European Union. This knowledge will be extremely useful for managing and securing drinking water supply and recreational waters thereby increasing environmental security and water resources management of the region. Furthermore, the technology transfer achieved during this project will allow Kyrgyz and Uzbek professionals to apply state-of-art methods in other regions of these countries to enhance knowledge of practitioners in centres of sanitary and epidemiological surveillance.

The project will achieve the following results:

- Comparative study of Central Asia drinking water microbiological monitoring regulations with International ISO/WHO standards;
- Central laboratory training of reference laboratories on microbiological ISO standards for drinking water and ISO 17025 quality control accreditation requirements;
- Transfer and implementation of these international standards in the 2 national reference laboratories;
- Evaluation of performance through proficiency testing (interlaboratory trial) between 2 national reference laboratories;
- Final intercomparison study on natural (drinking) water samples using in parallel national and ISO standards.



Transboundary cooperation of communities in the Ferghana Valley in an effort of sustainable development (phase 4)

Partners: UNDP Tajikistan / Status: Ongoing until December 2009

The main goals of the project are to collect and to disseminate information and analysis of potential conflicts arising from competition over natural resources or from potential natural hazards between communities of two states of Ferghana Valley (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan). It is also aimed at assessing the security environment more broadly and at placing environmental causes of conflict in the perspective of the wider security context. Such system of monitoring and early warning will produce substantial basis for adoption of responsible policies in maintaining secure environment. The international community would acquire an informed picture of the needs and priorities, and of capacity-building requirements which would be useful in planning practical interventions. Results and lessons learnt will also be communicated to relevant stakeholders in Uzbekistan. Efforts will also be made to ensure the participation of the communities from Uzbekistan in future endeavours in case of their interest. The project is implemented with financial support from Germany.

The project will achieve the following results:

- Mechanisms for regular information collection and analysis established;
- Conflicts mitigation processes enhanced through established working groups and supporting identified priorities by grants;
- Improved understanding of communities and proposals on institutionalizing cooperation and early warning frameworks in Ferghana Valley.



Reduction of risks to security and stability from hazardous practices

Environmental Security Issues Arising from the Legacy of Uranium Extraction in the Central Asia countries Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

Partners: NATO / Ongoing, extended until December 2009

The project aims to assess the radioactive pollution in areas such as Minkush and Kadji Sai in the Kyrgyz Republic and Chorkesar in Uzbekistan and to establish an effective management of the Uranium wastes with the overall goal to minimize the risk for the local population. The project is focusing in particular on drinking-water supplies used by the population living in the vicinity of uranium tailing and waste ore deposits. Recommendations will be developed for lowering exposure in general and for immediate actions to mitigate radiological hazards in areas identified as high risk.

The project will achieve the following results:

- Establishment (equipment) of environmental analytical laboratories in the Fergana Valley;
- Training of personnel for radioactivity measurements;
- Assessment of the radiological situation caused by the legacy of Uranium mining, including the dose/risk assessment for the population from external gamma-radiation, radon isotopes and from ingested/inhaled radio-nuclides;
- Establishment of the necessary equipment, survey methods and protocols, radiological protection;
- Support the education of special expertise;
- Identification of immediate and urgent measures for emergency management.
- Comparison with international standards and recommendations for lowering exposure in general.



A. Dinu

Study of Radioactive Waste Disposal Sites in Turkmenistan

Partners: NATO / Status: Ongoing until July 2009

The project is assisting Turkmenistan in the safe handling of radioactive waste, a side-product from iodine and bromine production facilities near by the Caspian Sea. The project includes the implementation of a radiochemical laboratory in Ashgabat, the installation and operation of radioprotection equipment and the training of Turkmen teams. This will enable Turkmenistan in gaining scientific and technical autonomy in waste characterisation and radio protection. Analysis requires a close collaboration with the ALGADE Company located in France, since for some of the measurements the required instrumentation is only available in their laboratory.

The project will achieve the following results:

- Basic radioprotection equipment has been procured to the site of Khazar. It consists of individual dosimeters; site dosimeters for permanent as well as for point measurements and laboratory equipment to carry out the first readings and interpretations of measurements.
- Procurement of a modern gamma spectrometer to start a radiochemistry laboratory in Ashgabad and training of operators.
- Training of Turkmen personnel to run radioprotection campaigns with suitable procedures for long term monitoring.



A. Dinu

To date, the studies carried out have highlighted two main factors.

The radioactivity doses to which personnel are subjected come from radon emitted by heavy nuclides initially contained in the water. For people working on the site or for the public outside the facility, the doses have remained under the internationally-recommended norms (maximum of 20 millisieverts in a period of five years for workers and of one millisievert per year for the public), ensuring that no damage to the health is to be expected as a result of the plant operations. However, the past measurements have only taken air inhalation or external exposures into account, but not dust inhalation; which needs to be completed.

Part of the radioactivity on the site stems from places which should be kept safe from radioactive material (such as coffee rooms), calling for a much stronger control of the work place. Further work is needed to make the Turkmen teams able to fully master the monitoring of radioactive doses connected with their activities. This implies developing the radiochemistry laboratory, which apart from bringing a general competence would make it possible to master the conception of future waste handling facilities with respect to international nuclear safety practices. To achieve this, a joint effort between the industry responsible for the waste handling and the scientific institutions in the country would have to be activated in Turkmenistan.



Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context: Pilot implementation project in Central Asia

Partners: OSCE & UNECE / Status: Activities completed in March 2009

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are Parties to the 'UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context' and they share the rivers Syr Darya, Chu and Talas. Activities upstream in Kyrgyzstan should be communicated at an early stage to Kazakhstan if the EIA Convention is to be adhered to and Kazakhstan should, according to the Convention, have the opportunity to present its point of view on any planned projects. Projects in Kazakhstan with a possible significant impact on the environment in Kyrgyzstan should similarly be communicated to Kyrgyzstan and other neighbouring countries.



In the project the procedures of the EIA Convention were applied on a planned gold- and copper- deposit mine in Kyrgyzstan, 2.5 km from the Kazakh border and close to the Karakol river, with possible adverse environmental effects in Kazakhstan and the Talas river. The company seeking a licence for its activities, leading to an EIA being conducted, was the Kyrgyz JSC "Andash Mining Company".

The project demonstrated, through the pilot application, the effective implementation of the EIA Convention in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, two Parties to the Convention.

Results include:

1. A feasibility study took place in accordance with Kyrgyz law and in order to establish a licence for Andash Mining Company. Within the feasibility study, there is an obligatory component of undertaking an EIA. Given the possible transboundary nature of the development, the Kyrgyz government contacted the Kazakh government to inform them of the possible transboundary effect of the development and invited them to participate in the EIA.
2. An assessment of the pilot EIA was also finalised by the two countries and the project partners, including the UNECE EIA Convention Secretariat, reviewed the assessment of the pilot EIA.
3. Public hearings have taken place in both countries and were assessed and agreed between the countries, to be appropriate.

A regional meeting took place in Bishkek on the 25-27 March 2009 and consolidated the project



results and findings. Two international experts, Mr. Terje Lind, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Environment in Norway and Mr. Nenad Mikulic, Head of Department, Ministry of Environmental Protection and Physical Planning, Croatia, presented their experiences with EIA in transboundary contexts. Of particular interest was the Norwegian experience with Russia, a non signatory of the EIA Convention as was the longstanding experience of Croatia with EIA and mines in particular.

In terms of the assessment, it found both strengths and gaps in the procedures. One example of a gap is that there was a lack of knowledge on the flora, fauna and historical/cultural monuments in the region.

On the level of contacts between the countries, the assessment found that it was positive that informal relations had been established between the national entities and focal points. It was also noted that knowing the relevant official contacts, between ministries and institutions in the countries is key to a smooth dialogue on EIA. The assessment also recommended that separate agreements could be useful with regard to specific questions and logistics in arranging transboundary hearings.

The implementing partner, the International Department of the State Agency on Environmental Protection of the Kyrgyz Republic is presently compiling all project information for a final report, to be published later this year.



Raising awareness and strengthening capacities and participatory mechanisms on environment and security issues

Promoting the implementation of the Aarhus Convention in Central Asia (follow-up)

Partners: OSCE / Status: Ongoing until December 2009

In 2008, the OSCE commissioned an Independent Evaluation of the Aarhus Centres. Overall objective of the evaluation exercise is to generate knowledge from the experience of the Aarhus Centres within the context of OSCE's efforts in raising awareness on environmental issues as well as in promoting participatory approaches in environmental decision-making and thus implementing the principles of the Aarhus Convention. The evaluation has been conducted by an independent expert who visited all seven countries that have OSCE-supported Aarhus Centres and met with relevant national and local stakeholders.

The Evaluation concluded that the Aarhus Centres form a wide network that can implement regional, national and local activities and can be an effective instrument in facilitation of the implementation of the Aarhus Convention at all levels, including in a transboundary context. In most of the countries, the Aarhus Centres are the major platforms for dialogue and co-operation between the governmental authorities and the civil society organizations and the public at large. The need for increased networking and information-sharing among Aarhus Centres, full utilization of Aarhus



Centres as a tool by the Governments in implementing the Convention and ensuring the financial and technical sustainability of the Aarhus Centres were among the major recommendations of the Evaluation.

In 2009, on 1 April, a meeting was conducted in Tajikistan which brought together the representatives of three Aarhus Centres (Dushanbe, Khujand and Kurgan Tube), Nature Protection Committee, NGOs, the National Aarhus Convention Focal Point, OSCE and the EC/TACIS project. The primary purpose of the meeting was to initiate networking among the three Aarhus Centres. The meeting concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding among the three Aarhus Centres which intends to maintain partnership and coordination among the Centres for effective implementation of the Aarhus Convention.

The Aarhus Centre in Kurgan Tube, Tajikistan, was officially opened on 10 April 2009 through a ceremony with the participation of OSCE, regional administration and NGOs.

On 8 April 2009, a meeting was held in Atyrau, Kazakhstan. There were over 70 participants, including representatives of the MfA, MoE, Akimat of Atyrau Oblast, several local and national NGOs, business representatives, the UNECE Aarhus Convention Secretariat as well as Aarhus Centre representative from Kyrgyzstan and Information Centre representative from Turkmenistan (EC/TACIS project). A detailed discussion was held on the institutional set-up and priorities of the Atyrau Aarhus Centre. The next step will be to reach an agreement with the regional authorities on the logistical arrangements for actual setting-up of the Centre.



The OSCE will continue to support the implementation of the Aarhus Convention and the strengthening of the Aarhus Centres in Central Asia through new and renewed partnerships and approaches.

Biotechnological Exploitation of Uzbek Saline Water Reserves Using Halotolerant Microalgae

Partners: NATO / Status: Ongoing until July 2009

The Aral Sea and other major saline water reserves in the region will be assessed for their potential use in the production of the algae *Dunaliella salina*. This algae is a rich source for bioactive compounds and therefore a candidate for commercial production with application in agriculture and medicine. In the framework of the project a pilot plant will be developed and a technical-economical viability study will be performed.

Since the beginning of the project, a special methodology for visualization of remotely sensed spatial data has been developed in GIS environment for the selection of potential water reserves and the assessment of their hydrological status. Using this methodology, specific sites in the Khorezm region were selected. A soil suitability analysis and the construction of GIS maps has been initiated and is ongoing. Several expeditions to the Aral Sea have been undertaken with the aim of collecting suitable samples from the water. The investigators have measured the growth of the microalgae *Dunaliella salina* and the production of added-value metabolites. Since the start of the project, the project participants have gathered data on potential water reserves and assessed the hydrological status of several saline lakes in the Khorezm region. An additional assessment of the hydrological status of selected water reservoirs has been performed, and different *Dunaliella* species characterized.



Using Stable Isotopes, Passive Organic Samplers And Modelling to Assess Environmental Security in Khorezm, Uzbekistan

Partners: NATO / Status: Ongoing until July 2009

The project aims to enhance knowledge about water resources in Uzbekistan for better management and control of water supplies in the region. The major objectives are to investigate the water quality and aquatic ecosystems of previously unstudied water resources (i.e., lakes impacted by irrigation runoff) in the Khorezm region of Uzbekistan; and to determine the potential utility of water resources in the region for aquaculture, water supplies, and water-related industries, such as fishing.

Young Uzbek scientists have been trained at Urgench State University and the State Committee for Nature Protection in innovative technologies for monitoring, modeling, and investigating the anthropogenic impacts on important water resources. Since the start of the project, several comprehensive sampling studies have been carried out on 13 irrigation lakes and three sites on the Amu Darya River. In addition, monthly samples for water quality have been taken from many of the lakes and the river sites, and in the coming months this sampling will continue. The researchers are analyzing the samples for stable radioisotope content and organic contaminants. In implementing the project results, the end-users in Uzbekistan include the State University of Urgench, the Institute of Water Problems, the Hydrometeorological Research Institute and the Center for Environmental Research of the German-Uzbek Khorezm Project, as well as local landowners.



Changes in the ENVSEC team

Mr. Turar Sadykbekov, the Head of the Department of ecological monitoring at the State Agency on Environmental Protection and Forestry, has been nominated as a new National Focal Point in Kyrgyzstan. ENVSEC welcomes Mr. Sadykbekov onboard and hopes that ENVSEC activities in Kyrgyzstan will develop further.

ENVSEC team thanks Mr. Omor Rustembekov for his invaluable support to ENVSEC during his tenure as a National Focal Point and looks forward to further cooperation. Mr. Rustembekov now manages the project of UNDP Kyrgyzstan "Assessment of Kyrgyz Republic's capabilities in tailings management in transboundary context".

Ms. Saija Vuola will be leaving ENVSEC (and the region) at the end of May. Saija's support was crucial in enhancing the coordination of ENVSEC in Central Asia and we wish her all the best in her future endeavors and hope for further cooperation in her new capacity.

Recent ENVSEC meetings

Regional meeting - 20 April 2009, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Last month, the annual regional meeting of ENVSEC Central Asia was held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Over forty people representing Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and international organisations gathered to discuss ENVSEC's past achievements and future directions in Central Asia.

The main goals of the meeting were to:

- update meeting participants on the status of project implementation
- discuss the ENVSEC Central Asia draft Work Programme for 2009-2012
- collect concrete project ideas from meeting participants



The meeting was a combination of plenary presentations and discussion. Participants were asked to give their comments on the ENVSEC Central Asia draft Work Programme for 2009-2012 and to come up with project ideas which would fit under the new priorities (see p. 2 of Newsletter for more information).

The meeting participants adopted the ENVSEC Central Asia Work Programme for 2009-2012 with minor comments. It was suggested that since the programme is for several years, ENVSEC partners should retain flexibility and allow for changes if needed. Several remarks were also voiced about the necessity to include more relevant projects under each cluster.

Overall, a very fruitful discussion was held in Bishkek despite the meeting taking only half a day. Old and new friends of ENVSEC agreed that the Central Asian draft Work Programme for 2009-2012



encompasses all necessary priority areas. The proposed clusters can thus be recommended to ENVSEC Secretariat and Management Board for approval. ENVSEC partner organizations should further encourage national stakeholders to share their project ideas for possible inclusion under the new Work Programme. All project proposals should be submitted following the guidelines presented at the meeting.



ENVSEC Conference - November 13, 2008, Brussels

In 2008, ENVSEC partner organizations decided to abolish the 'Advisory Board' and replace it with a yearly Donors' Forum and a biennial Conference. The first such conference was organized in Brussels in November 2008 by the Institute of Environmental Security.

In the opening session, speeches were delivered by the ENVSEC Chair and representatives of the European Parliament, the French Presidency of the European Union, Kazakhstan, OSCE, NATO and Canada.

Four parallel sessions followed:

- A. Environmental Cooperation and Conflict Prevention
- B. Climate Change Dimensions of Environment and Security
- C. Sustainable Management of Transboundary Natural Resources
- D. Environmental and Security Risks of Hazardous Waste



Session B. **Climate Change Dimensions of Environment and Security** focused on Central Asia.

Background presentations were made by Anna Kaplina (UNDP BRC) and Rano Baykhanova (CAREC). The session was chaired by Jens Wandel (UNDP BRC). The discussion was divided into two distinct sessions: one on **Issues & Obstacles** and another on **Solutions & Opportunities for Cooperation**. It was obvious from the discussion that issues and obstacles are easier to define than solutions and opportunities for cooperation. However, as can also be seen from the discussion, a number of organizations are engaged in processes but we should engage more in practical action. We need scientific, better data for decision-makers. It was also noted that security issues hardly feature in the climate change discussions. We should especially communicate 'climate change' to the military. If we had the R&D, planning skills and budgets of military operations, we would already get far in mitigation and adaptation. In the shorter term, adaptation is conflict prevention. In the longer term, mitigation is conflict prevention.



Upcoming Meetings of interest

High Level International Forum

Uranium Tailings in Central Asia: Local Problems, Regional Consequences, Global Solution – Geneva, Switzerland / June 29, 2009

ENVSEC partner organisations support the regional effort led by the Kyrgyz Republic and UNDP Kyrgyzstan at addressing the issue of uranium tailings in Central Asia (www.uranium.kg)



ENVSEC Contacts in Central Asia

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About ENVSEC

The Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) is an inter-agency partnership which facilitates co-operation on critical environmental issues as a way to promote peace and security in four regions: Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus, Central Asia, and South Eastern Europe. Recognizing that environmental problems do not stop at national borders, ENVSEC partners (OSCE, UNDP, UNEP, REC, UNECE, and associate partner NATO) have developed a platform that turns the potential for conflict between states into opportunities for confidence-building and co-operation. ENVSEC's primary objectives are: (i) To contribute to the reduction of environment and security risks and strengthen cooperation between and within countries; (ii) To provide multi-stakeholder-based analysis of environment and security risks; and (iii) To support a process whereby the identified risks are systematically addressed through strengthening policies, institutions and capacities.

ENVSEC has been active in Central Asia since 2002 when the initial assessment of environment and security risks was conducted. The assessment identified geographical hot spots where these risks and opportunities manifest themselves in growing environmental degradation and negative impact on human security. These hot spots are: the Ferghana valley, Eastern Caspian coast, Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground and the basin



and tributaries of the Aral Sea. ENVSEC activities in the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground have since ceased as Kazakhstan has taken a more active role in the area. ENVSEC partners are now implementing a work programme of projects and activities, in cooperation with national governments, to build inter-state cooperation to address priority issues in the other three hotspots and in the region as a whole.

We would be very grateful if you could notify us of any mistakes or inconsistencies so we could correct them for the next issue of the Newsletter. ajiniyaz.reimov@undp.org