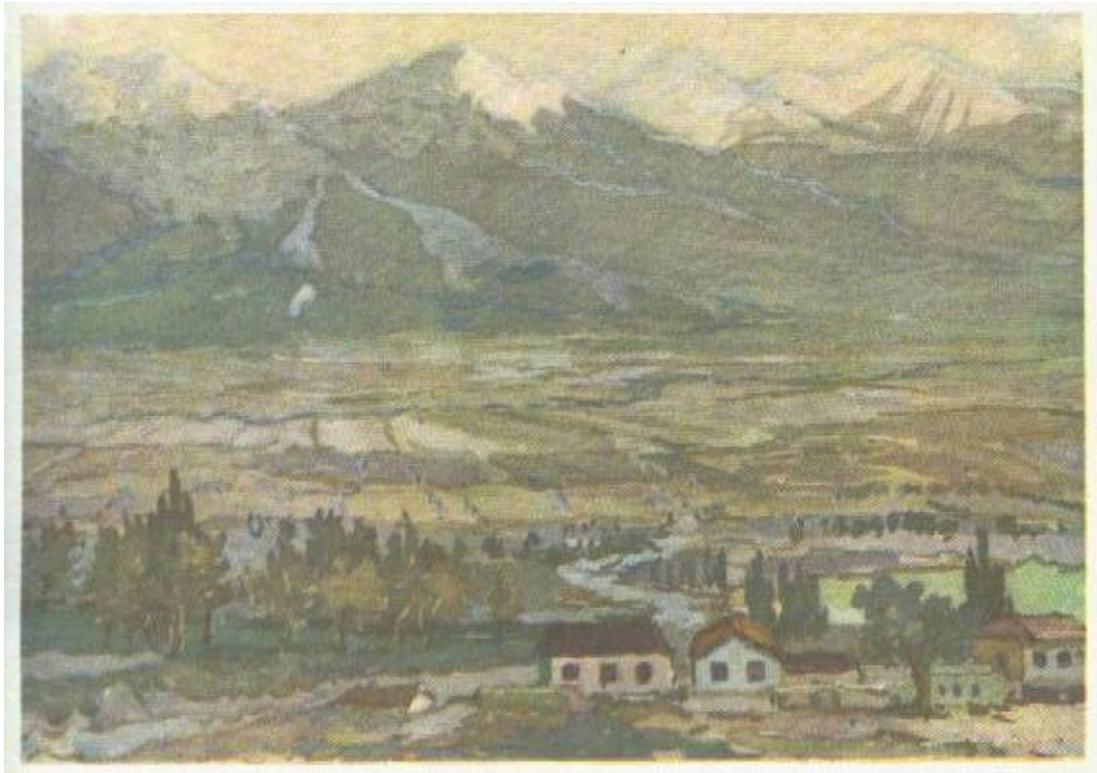

Water Management in the South Caucasus



The Alazan Valley by Vakhtang Japaridze

**OSCE/USAID REGIONAL WORKSHOP
Priority Issues in the Water Sector**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Tbilisi, Georgia

May 16, 2003



May 16, 2003

Dear Participant,

On behalf of the OSCE Missions in the South Caucasus and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), we were pleased with your participation at the Regional Workshop on Priority Issues in the Water Sector at the Hotel Marriott in Tbilisi, Georgia on May 7, 2003.

The cooperation for the sustainable use and the protection of water resources is a major concern in the South Caucasus as expressed by the participants at this Regional Workshop. There have been a series of international seminars and national workshops over the last several months that presented many issues related to water policy. This Regional Workshop focused on some of the water issues defined during the National Workshops conducted in Yerevan, Baku, and Tbilisi in February with the emphasis on a regional perspective.

A summary of the National Workshops conducted in February 2003 and the results from each Working Sessions are included in this Workshop Summary.

We are very pleased to continue the collaboration with you on these important issues in the region with your cooperation. Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Dreyer, PE
Representative
Development Alternatives, Inc.

D370LetterB

Water Management in the South Caucasus
REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE WATER SECTOR

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Georgia National Workshop	Malkhaz Adeishvili	Georgia

**OSCE/USAID REGIONAL WORKSHOP
Priority Issues in the Water Sector**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF REGIONAL WORKSHOP



Regional Workshop on Priority Issues in the Water Sector

OVERALL SUMMARY

Zaal Lomtadze

On May 7, 2003, the Regional Workshop on the Priority Issues in the Water Sector was conducted. The organizers were the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Representatives of the state organizations from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia dealing with the water policy and water resources management participated in the meeting. Representatives of the international organizations have taken part in the status of observers in the previous seminars and meetings.

At the end of the Regional Workshop, the Deputy Minister of Environment and Natural Resources Protection of Georgia, Mr. Zaal Lomtadze, summarized the discussions of the Workshop and the results provided by the working groups during the Workshops.

The positive results of the Regional Workshop was mentioned and that similar meetings have a powerful impact on increasing the cooperation in the field of water resources management within each country and for development of regional cooperation in water sector between countries in the South Caucasus.

Prior to the Regional Workshop, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia conducted similar national meetings at a local level for the purpose of identifying the priority issues in and which issues should be considered on a regional level by the three countries in the South Caucasus. Based on the analysis of the priority issues provided by each country, it was determined that approximately 80 per cent of the priorities identified are mutually beneficial and three working groups were identified. This result again emphasizes the need for joint consideration of these issues by each country in the region.

At the planning stage of water resources strategy, it is important that all three countries of the South Caucasus accept the international principles of cooperation and participate in the international conventions. In spite of this, the participants have agreed to the mutual cooperation not on regional, but on a bilateral level, due to the political situation at the present time in the region.

All three working groups participated extensively during the meeting and one of the most important issues identified was the introduction and development of water resources management using the river basin approach as is used in Europe and North America and other parts of the world.

The development of a comprehensive water resources policy demands the availability of the appropriate tools which include: the harmonized legislation, uniform standards, and mutually-approached methods. The working groups emphasized these necessities. These actions are also necessary to meet the requirements of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and water framework directives of the European Union (EU). At the present stage of policy development, the presence of the appropriate institutions is also significant. The given institutions should exist both inside the country and at the international level (e.g. for management of transboundary river basins).

The process of information exchange is not sufficient only in a bilateral approach alone. The engagement of the international organization is also necessary. At the initial stage, the creation of bilateral commissions at the technical expert level is possible. It is desirable to establish a Coordination Group which will carry out the coordination of the donor activities in water sector and participate in the design stage of the proposed projects in the region. Also, the Coordination Group can be responsible for information collection and exchange. In the framework of the given group, the creation of a common database would then be possible.

One very significant issue is the creation and development of a monitoring system for transboundary water resources. This is the reason that this issue was considered in recommendations of the working group for monitoring and information exchange.

The support of technical experts in this sector is necessary for the appropriate level of monitoring. Only highly-skilled experts have an opportunity to process the data and provide the confidence that the data would be used on the basis of political decisions. Therefore, a special emphasis is given to providing a uniform system of water cadastres in the region.

Public participation is also necessary for the acceptance of the significant decisions required in the water sector in the region. The population should be informed as much as possible and provided the opportunity for independent monitoring and opinion. In this direction, all three countries of South Caucasus accept the international principles in the water sector. The Aarhus Convention has been ratified by all three countries and there is an appropriate legislative base for implementation. The mechanism for the realization of these principles both inside each country and at a regional level should be developed.

During the discussions on water policy and water resources management, consideration of the social and economic issues was very significant and included such issues as tariffs and financing. This working group has addressed some of these issues and has presented significant recommendations for consideration.

In summary, the Deputy Minister once again emphasized the necessity of regional cooperation in the water sector in South Caucasus.

May 7, 2003
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**OSCE/USAID REGIONAL WORKSHOP
Priority Issues in the Water Sector**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

RESULTS OF WORKING SESSIONS



Regional Workshop on Priority Issues in the Water Sector
RESULTS OF THE WORKING SESSIONS

MONITORING AND DATA EXCHANGE ISSUES

Sahib Khalilov, Faciliatator

The following summarizes the issues discussed in detail at this working session:

1. Exchange of effective and operating information on quality and quantity of surface water, establishment of early warning system.
2. Organization of international trainings and seminars on monitoring and data exchange.
3. Establishment of international group of experts on monitoring of water pollution and establishing an inventory of contamination sources with local independent experts, with the aim of developing priority measures for environment protection.
4. Provision of close coordination between regional projects on water resources monitoring.
5. Implementing the single standards of operating procedures of water quality and quantity.
6. Optimization and Modernization of monitoring network of transboundary water resources.
7. Implementation of single simulation model of waters quality and quantity.
8. Improvement of water resource inventory taking into consideration the recommendations of World Meteorological Organization.
9. Exploring the possibilities of obtaining and reconstructing the historical hydrological and hydro chemical data from the data in the archives on Oblinsk, Russia for use in the historical database.
10. Organization and implementation of joint expeditionary researches during the emergency cases.

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Regional Workshop on Priority Issues in the Water Sector
RESULTS OF THE WORKING SESSIONS

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

Eduard Mesropyan, Facilitator

The following summarizes the issues discussed in detail at this working session:

Primary Priority Issues

1. Public Awareness
2. Tariffs and Payments System
3. Water Supply and Sewerage System
4. Water Resources Estimation
5. Basin Management
6. National Water Program
7. Reducing the Pollution of Water Resources
8. Strengthening the Healthcare Monitoring System
9. Norms and Standards
10. Eco-education and Training

Public Awareness

1. Rising Awareness
2. Involvement of Public in the Decision making Process

Tariffs and Payments System

1. Level of collection of payments in all three countries is about 15 per cent
2. Tariffs do not cover the operating expenses
3. Social conditions of the population do not allow for adequate payment for services
4. Government must participate in the costs through subsidy payments
5. Differentiated approach to the costs of water based on pricing and usage
6. Lack of economical mechanisms providing rational, purposeful use of water resources

Water Supply and Sewerage System

1. All countries have the Development Programs on Water Supply and Sewerage System
2. It is necessary to realize these programs with liable updating and to initiate given process with the projects having regional importance

Water Resources Estimation

1. Quantitative estimation of water resources
2. Classification of water resources through the quality

Basin Management

1. Developing relevant legislation
2. Institutional and organizational reforms
3. Establishment of basin management councils
4. Introduction of integrated management of water resources
5. Bilateral pilot projects on integrated management of transboundary resources

National Water Program

1. Assistance in developing the National Water Program, National Policy and Strategy
2. Development of bilateral policy and strategy
3. Coordination of Projects and Programs in Water Sector

Reducing the Pollution of Water Resources

1. Assessment of existing sewage disposal and treatment systems
2. Introduction of new lower power-consuming and ordinary at exploitation technologies
3. Regulation (control and training) of farmers at the usage of fertilizers and pesticides
4. Early warning system

Strengthening the Healthcare Monitoring System

1. Improvement of Healthcare Monitoring System carried out by the Ministry of Health upon the conditions of water resources on the basis of actions plans on environmental hygiene and London protocol “Water and Health”
2. Establishment of basic laboratories on san-bacteriological, can-chemical and san-toxicological researches in the system of Ministries of Health of three countries

Norms and Standards

1. Harmonization of norms and standards in whole complex: selection of the basic system of standards, methods preparation, training

Eco-education and Training

1. Organization of courses on staff’s training and professional development over the wide spectrum of specialties in the water sector
2. Eco-education and eco-training of the population

Suggestion

1. Summarizing the results of the workshop and submission results to the governmental and donor organizations

Regional Workshop on Priority Issues in the Water Sector
RESULTS OF THE WORKING SESSIONS

TRANSBOUNDARY AND LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Nana Gogitidze, Facilitator

The following summarize the issues discussed in detail at this working session:

1. Ratification of international agreements and conventions on transboundary water issues by Georgia and Armenia and acceleration of the ratification process
2. Introduction of basin management principles
3. Development of bilateral cooperation and establishment of appropriate commissions for basin management of transboundary rivers
4. Establishment of a regional scheme on project coordination under auspices of an international organization (e.g., OSCE)
5. Harmonization of legislation of water issues in the South Caucasus' countries
6. Initiate the establishment of the European standards on water quality and quantity monitoring, methodology, and sampling procedures
7. Establishing database and information exchange system on operating legislation under the auspices of an international organization (e.g., OSCE)
8. Establishing a web page or print version in Russian and English languages with reports on water issues conducted in the countries of the South Caucasus
9. Harmonization of compiling the water cadastres for each country using a common format (such as the framework used in Europe)
10. Increasing the level of public awareness in the sphere of water resource protection and use in the line with of international experiences

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OSCE/USAID REGIONAL WORKSHOP
Priority Issues in the Water Sector

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

REGIONAL WORKSHOP FORMAT



Water Management in the South Caucasus
REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE WATER SECTOR

WORKSHOP AGENDA

Tbilisi, Georgia – May 7, 2003
Hotel Marriott, Tbilisi, Georgia

Topic	Facilitator	Time
INTRODUCTION		9:30 am
Welcome	USAID	
Format of Discussions	Paul Dreyer	
SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS WORKSHOPS		9:45 am
Armenia National Workshop	Hosnik Kirakosyan	
Azerbaijan National Workshop	Magbet Mammadov	
Georgia National Workshop	Malkhaz Adeishvili	
Coffee Break		10:30 am
WORKING SESSIONS		11:00 am
Monitoring and Data Exchange Issues	Sahib Khalilov	
Social and Economic Issues	Georgi Arzu manian	
Transboundary and Legislative Issues	Nana Gogitidze	
Lunch at the Marriott		12:30 pm
WORKING SESSIONS		1:30 am
Monitoring and Data Exchange Issues	Sahib Khalilov	
Social and Economic Issues	Georgi Arzu manian	
Transboundary and Legislative Issues	Nana Gogitidze	
Coffee Break		3:30 am
SUMMARY OF WORKING SESSIONS		4:00 am
Monitoring and Data Exchange Issues	Sahib Khalilov	
Social and Economic Issues	Georgi Arzu manian	
Transboundary and Legislative Issues	Nana Gogitidze	
NEXT STEPS		5:00 pm
Overall Summary of Workshop	Zaal Lomatadze	
Proposed International Seminar	Paul Dreyer	
Closure		5:30 pm

Water Management in the South Caucasus

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE WATER SECTOR

Tbilisi, Georgia - May 7, 2003

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April 14, 2003
D370Arm

Water Management in the South Caucasus

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE WATER SECTOR

Tbilisi, Georgia – May 7, 2003

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April 11, 2003
D370Aze

Water Management in the South Caucasus

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE WATER SECTOR

Tbilisi, Georgia – May 7, 2003

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April 11, 2003
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Water Management in the South Caucasus
REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE WATER SECTOR

WORKSHOP SESSION ASSIGNMENTS

Tbilisi, Georgia – May 7, 2003

Name	Country
------	---------

1. MONITORING AND DATA EXCHANGE ISSUES

Mr. Sahib Khalilov, Coordinator	Azerbaijan
Mr. Gennadi Kojoyan	Armenia
Mr. Hosnik Kirakosyan	Armenia
Mr. Vilik Sargsyan	Armenia
Ms. Tamara Hovhannisyan	Armenia
Mr. Armen Saghatelyan	Armenia
Mr. Rauf Israfilov	Azerbaijan
Ms. Matanat Avazova	Azerbaijan
Mr. Rza Mahmudov	Azerbaijan
Mr. Tamaz Tcholakava	Georgia
Mr. Nikoloz Beradze	Georgia
Mr. Gia Kordzakhia	Georgia
Mr. Givi Gigineishvili	Georgia

2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

Mr. Georgi Arzumanyan, Coordinator	Armenia
Ms. Nune Bakunts	Armenia
Mr. Vardan Sahradyan	Armenia
Mr. Gagik Ayvazyan	Armenia
Mr. Magbet Mammadov	Azerbaijan
Mr. Suhay Safarov	Azerbaijan
Ms. Leyla Tagizade	Azerbaijan
Mr. Ahmad Mamedov	Azerbaijan
Mr. Levan Kiknadze	Georgia
Mr. Mikheil Kurkhuli	Georgia
Mr. Junber Gulua	Georgia

3. TRANSBOUNDARY AND LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Ms. Nana Gogitidze, Coordinator	Georgia
Ms. Knarik Hovhannisyan	Armenia
Mr. Edgar Pirumanyan	Armenia
Mr. Eduard Mesropyan	Armenia
Ms. Asya Manafova	Azerbaijan
Mr. Shamil Husseynov	Azerbaijan
Ms. Maya Adigozalova	Azerbaijan
Mr. Mammad Asadov	Azerbaijan
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Mr. Malkhaz Adeishvili	Georgia

**OSCE/USAID REGIONAL WORKSHOP
Priority Issues in the Water Sector**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL WORKSHOPS





**Water Management in the South Caucasus
WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE WATER SECTOR**

SUMMARY

Yerevan, Armenia - February 7, 2003

MEETING

The OSCE Mission in Armenia and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored a Workshop on National Priority Issues in the Water Sector scheduled on Friday, February 7, 2003, at the Public Environmental Information Center in the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia in Yerevan. The attendees included fourteen participants from various national agencies addressing water resources in Armenia. In addition, there were seven observers from OSCE, USAID, and DAI. The meeting was conducted in Armenian and was facilitated by Mr. Hosnik Kirakosyan, Deputy Director of the Water Resources Management Agency from the Ministry of Nature Protection of Armenia.

PURPOSE

The Workshop focused on the water issues from a national perspective with the purpose of developing a priority of issues that will assist in addressing these issues in the water sector in Armenia. These issues were then discussed in a regional perspective but with the focus on the importance to Armenia.

DISCUSSION

Participants acknowledged the recent accomplishments in the water sector that provide a basis for Armenia to enter into practical relationships with its neighbours. Particularly, they emphasized the basin management approach adopted by the new Water Code, the Government Decree on the exchange of information, recent developments in the water monitoring, and the establishment of the Transboundary Water Resources Commission of the Republic of Armenia.

The participants discussed informational, economical, legal, and institutional aspects and identified issues and proposed improvements specifically related to the water resources management in the transboundary context. These items are summarized, as follows:

Information Aspects

Issues

- Lack of sufficient data about the water balance in the region,
- Lack of an adequate monitoring network for an exchange of information, and
- Lack of sufficient information for the formulation of national policies.

Suggestions

- Assessment of water resources in the region,
- Establishment of an operative database for the water quality and quantity data,
- Improvement of transboundary monitoring data network for exchange of information,
- Optimization of the monitoring network for the transboundary monitoring points,
- Development of electronic catalogues and water resource characteristics for the past 30 years,
- Zoning of river basins to provide information for tariff policy making, and
- Categorization of water basins according to their main usage types to provide information for development of adequate standards.

Economic Aspects

Issues

- Lack of actual economic mechanisms to enforce the economic provisions of the Armenian Water Code, and
- Lack of finances as well as mechanisms for funding the implementation of the Water Code.

Suggestions

- Valuation of water resources and development of a pricing system at the national level,
- Development of a basis for the export policy for water resources,
- Promotion and participation in the debt-for-nature programs,
- Involvement in international agreements to take advantage of the associated financial support, and
- Prioritization of wastewater treatment projects as international donor-funded regional initiatives.

Legal Aspects

Issues

- Disparate legal frameworks (including standards, methodologies, and technical regulations) in the countries of the South Caucasus, and
- Inadequate implementation of international agreements.

Suggestions

- Harmonization of the legal framework, including a joint study of legal documents and exchange of expertise; development of a common system of standards, methodologies, technical regulations;
- Analysis of the internal potential of countries in South Caucasus to enter into regional cooperation and development of recommendations for capacity building programs;
- Development of bilateral or multilateral agreements to provide grounds for regional cooperation;
- Participation in international agreements given the prospect for phased-in implementation process; and
- Ratification of the Water and Health Protocol (London, 1999) to guide the water accessibility, wastewater removal, and information exchange policies in the transboundary context.

Institutional Aspects

Issues

- Lack of the technical capacity of basin management authorities in Armenia; and
- Absence of bilateral/multilateral entities to implement/coordinate regional water management initiatives.

Suggestions

- Building the capacity of the river basin management entities at the central administration and local levels,
- Establishment of river basin councils to serve as consulting bodies and provide linkage between the state river basin management entities and water users,
- Establishment of bilateral/multilateral commissions for assessment of regional water resources, and
- Establishment of an advisory council for coordination of use and management of regional water resources.

Other Items

Issues

- Lack of integrated water resources management in Armenia,
- Poor public awareness and inadequate level of environmental education, and
- Lack of modern technologies for river basin management.

Suggestions

- Implementation of public awareness raising projects, particularly on the legal documents, integrated water management approaches and water use permitting; and
- Training of modeling specialists to support adequate planning of basin water resources.

One of the critical factors affecting national policies was recognized to be the approach of each country toward these issues. Participants distinguished the following approaches:

- Countries first develop their own strategies/programs for the water resources management and then enter into either bilateral or multilateral relationships with neighbors;
- National priorities in this case are divided into three levels (national, bilateral and regional) and the national positions developed for all these levels; and
- Countries first identify their issues in the transboundary context and then develop the national policies based on the acknowledgement of those issues.

In this case, the transboundary policy can be developed as a component of the national policy.

At the end of the meeting, the participants discussed the OSCE Draft Proposal from November 7, 2002 on Terms of Reference of the South Caucasus Water Management Co-ordination Group. They proposed to convene a meeting of delegates at the proposed international seminar to be held in Tbilisi in March or April 2003 in order to come up with a common national perspective on the respective issues.

SUMMARY

In general, the participants emphasized the importance of regional meetings, joint studies, and implementation of programs for confidence and security building in the region. A special emphasis was given to the importance of the international assistance in the development of the local potential for water resources management in the South Caucasus.



**Water Management in the South Caucasus
WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE WATER SECTOR**

SUMMARY

Baku, Azerbaijan - February 28, 2003 & April 2, 2003

MEETING

The OSCE Office in Baku and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored a Workshop on National Priority Issues in the Water Sector on February 28, 2003, at the Caspian Business Center in Baku. The attendees included thirteen participants from various agencies and other entities addressing water resources in Azerbaijan. In addition, there were four observers from OSCE and DAI. The meeting was conducted in Azeri and was facilitated by Professor Magbet Mammadov, Head of the Department of Hydrometeorology at Baku State University. The participants recommended a second National Workshop which was conducted on April 2, 2003.

PURPOSE

These Workshops focused on the water issues from a national perspective with the purpose of developing a priority of issues that will assist in the implementation of these issues in the water sector in Azerbaijan. These issues were then discussed in a regional perspective but with the focus on the importance to Azerbaijan. In this connection the April workshop participants mainly focused on the preparation for the Regional Workshop scheduled in Tbilisi, Georgia in May 2003.

DISCUSSIONS

The participants of the workshop addressed the following issues during discussions:

- General situation in water sector; and
- Legal, economical, social, and environmental aspects of water use and protection.

Since Azerbaijan restored independence, the country has addressed national water-related legislative acts, joined the international water conventions, and is undertaking institutional and methodological changes in water monitoring, management, and protection.

During the discussions, the participants addressed the following main issues:

Legal issues

The participants expressed the importance of improving the existing legislation by making changes and developing the mechanisms for implementation. For example, it was noted that although the Water Code of Azerbaijan considers the administrative and territorial water management principles, if offered a more practical approach by international organizations this may also be considered. The main suggestions were as follows:

- The harmonization of the Azerbaijan water legislation with those accepted at the International level could be achieved by instituting the required changes if necessary;
- In order to enable National laws to work more effectively, it is necessary to make additions and changes in related acts, (such as statutes, rules, water use permits and rates);
- The promotion of increased awareness of the population and agencies on water related National and International legislation; and
- The increased cooperation with the International agencies and donors in the water sector.

Water Management

State measures in the area of water management and protection were considered by participants as an important step in development of a national water strategy for Azerbaijan. Several agencies involved with natural resources were merged to form the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources in order to improve efficiency and increase coordination. The management of the Cities of Baku and Sumgait and the other districts of the Absheron Peninsula Water System were transferred from the State to the newly created Private Absheron Water Company. The activity of the Amelioration and Water Farm Committee was oriented to focus mainly on water regulation and irrigation.

During the discussions, it was noted that together with these positive changes still there are many water management issues in Azerbaijan that need to be addressed and the following suggestions were proposed by the participants:

- The necessity of close coordination among all water related organizations and the creation of a State Water Commission;
- Preparation of a National Integrated Water Use and Water Protection Strategy;
- Considering an integrated river basin planning approach more effective rather than administrative territorial water management;
- Strengthening the implementation mechanism of water management in different sectors; and
- Increasing the participation of water users in water management, the extension of Water User Associations, and ensuring the adherence of International standards.

Social and Economical Aspects

The participant noted the importance of water in the social and economical life of the country and focused on drinking water quality and quantity issues, irrigation issues, and other issues in the economy. Since Azerbaijan is downstream of the main transboundary river basins, it is faced with high water pollution and water scarcity problems. One of the main objectives is to meet the water demands of the population and the economy in accordance with the water quality standards and to protect water bodies from pollution.

In order to reach these goals the following proposals were proposed by the participants:

- In accordance to European Commission Global Water Initiative, it is necessary to publish booklets about water resources, situation with water use and protection and increase the access of safe drinking water for the population by 2015 by the implementation of projects for new fresh water sources;
- Water sector organizations are encouraged to prepare and submit proposals on water supply and waste water treatment, construction of water recycling plants, and projects related to the use of modern irrigation methods and technology;
- Development of required water use rates and standards;
- Strengthening and enforcing sanctions against water pollution;
- Informing the population about sanitary epidemiological conditions of water, promoting public participation in water management; and
- Strengthening environmental education in the Republic.

National Monitoring and Information System

Participants discussed the existing situation of water monitoring, registration, and information dissemination within the country. It was noted that due to absence of relevant equipment, reagents, and low level of communication with regions, it is not always possible to get the required information about the conditions of water bodies in the country. Participants expressed the concern that solving these problems may not be possible without support of donor organizations. They also stressed the importance of cooperation between all state agencies, NGOs, and the general population.

In order to improve the situation in this area, the following suggestions were proposed:

- The rehabilitation and development of the monitoring network, creation of database in proper format, and providing information exchange between the related organizations;
- The preparation and publishing of the State Water Register;
- The preparation of a surface and ground water inventory;
- The preparation of water pollution inventory;
- The development of a system of information dissemination for emergency situations; and
- The development of mechanisms to provide the general population with water information and increase the public awareness of these issues.

International and Regional Cooperation

Participants stressed the importance of International and regional (bilateral) cooperation in transboundary water resources, monitoring, management, and protection issues. In particular, they expressed the importance of Azerbaijan joining the International conventions on water issues (and the importance of the other countries of the basin joining as well). The participants stressed the importance of the support of International organizations and donors due to the regional economical situation to increase the level of transboundary cooperation in the region.

In connection to this the following proposals were made by the participants:

- Creation of a transboundary water monitoring network, the development of a hydrological and hydro geological database, and the initiation of information exchange;
- Execution of bilateral transboundary water agreements;
- Create national working groups to prepare the Kura River Convention based on world experience;
- Create information exchange mechanisms in the joint rivers basins; and
- Increase the cooperation with the donor organizations and solicit their support for water projects in the region.

SUMMARY

The participants expressed their appreciation of OSCE and USAID for organizing these important workshops in the water sector of Azerbaijan. They enabled specialists from different related agencies to share their experience and develop directions for activities required to address water problems in the country.

The participants at the first workshop recommended a second workshop to continue the discussion and finalize the issues to be presented at the proposed Regional Workshop. The Participants noted that the Regional Workshop to be held in Tbilisi, Georgia in May is an important step to address the problems facing transboundary river basin management.

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**Water Management in the South Caucasus
WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE WATER SECTOR**

SUMMARY

Tbilisi, Georgia - February 25, 2003

MEETING

The OSCE Mission to Georgia and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) sponsored a Workshop on National Priority Issues in the Water Sector on February 25, 2003, at the Tori Hotel in Tbilisi, Georgia. The attendees included fourteen participants from various agencies and other entities that are addressing water resources in Georgia. In addition, there were observers from OSCE, USAID and DAI. The meeting was conducted in Georgian and was facilitated by Mr. Malkhaz Adeishvili, Head of the Policy Department of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection in Georgia.

PURPOSE

The Workshop focused on the water issues from a national perspective with the purpose of developing a priority of issues that will assist in the implementation of these issues in the water sector in Georgia. These issues were then discussed in a regional perspective but with the focus on the importance to Georgia.

DISCUSSION

The participants discussed numerous issues related to water resources management, including institutional, political, legislative, and economic aspects. Special attention was paid to the trans-boundary issues.

During the workshop the following actions were prioritized by the participants:

- Examine the Georgian Legislation and prepare the changes in order to achieve harmonization with EU Water Framework directives and to correspond the legislations of the three countries of the South Caucasus;
- Define and prepare legislative acts that will develop water resources management from a river basin perspective, and prepare the draft regulation of institutional setting for the basin management approach;
- Support the development of the Monitoring System of Environment and Health Protection and to prepare the State Water Cadastre;
- Develop an inter-sectoral approach in the water resources management and establish a Consulting Council with participants from various governmental organizations;
- Establish a clearly-defined institutional framework in order to divide functions and responsibilities related to water resources management for governmental agencies by making corresponding changes in the Georgian Legislation;
- Assure the availability of the information in Georgia, as well as outside its borders, including the neighboring countries on the territories of Trans-boundary Rivers;

- Establish a Regional Coordinating Group in order to coordinate international support in the water sector with the main function of obtaining and sharing the information on existing projects, and assuring the participation of governmental agencies, non governmental organizations, and academic organizations in the process of planning and implementation of the existing and potential projects;
- Establish a Regional Consulting Group (or Groups) in order to avoid duplication of international assistance in the water sector (e.g., the basins of the Alazani-Agrichai, Ktsia-Khrami-Debeda, Kura, and the Tchorokhi Rivers);
- Complete all the necessary activities for Georgian participation in the international convention on trans-boundary waters;
- Discuss economic issues related to the use of water resources and establish a practical tariff system for water usage;
- Initiate the implementing of the rehabilitation of water supply, sewage systems, and treatment plants using modern water treatment technologies; and
- Initiate public awareness activities for informing the population on the proper use, utilization, and quality of water of the water resources.

SUMMARY

The participants of the workshop emphasized the importance of national meetings to provide better coordination among governmental agencies and prepare the background for an inter-sectoral approach for the water resources management. The participants also expressed their willingness to present the results of the national Workshop at the proposed international seminar in order to discuss common priorities with representatives of Armenia and Azerbaijan.