

CEE stakeholder meeting (Hague + 1)

22-23 March 2001, Budapest

A stakeholder meeting as a follow up event of the Second World Water Forum was organised 22-23 March 2001 in Budapest, Hungary. The objective of the meeting was to take stock of the results of the year elapsed since the Forum at the regional level. It also included a joint World Water Day celebration with the Hungarian water sector. In his inaugural speech the Slovakian Minister of Environment presented the regional aspects of "Water and Health" the special topic of World Water Day 2001. He emphasised the importance of both water and health, which are crucial factors in the development of the CEE countries facing the challenge of the EU accession.

The programme focused on specific issues such as:

- *The EU water framework directive and its implications in the accession countries.*

One of the most important driving forces of the region's development is the accession to the European Union. It offers a clear mechanism for institutional reform and restructuring through the recently adopted Water Framework Directive. The Directive has a major impact on water resource management throughout the Community and accession countries. Its overall objective is to achieve 'good status' for all waters, therefore it is of paramount importance to define the term 'good status' precisely and consistently. The Framework Directive is demanding as well as other still existing directives. A key immediate action for candidate countries is to establish regional discussion groups to develop appropriate water policies to comply with European Union rules, to define priorities in the implementation and to share knowledge and experience in 'east-to-east' dialogues.

- *Development of water clubs/partnerships (stakeholder platforms) in the region.*

The establishment of country water clubs or partnerships is underway in certain CEE countries under the GWP



umbrella. They are meant to be permanent non-political platforms to discuss hot topics, to foster cross-sectoral, multi-stakeholder dialogue on water issues, to facilitate the introduction of integrated water resources management and to serve as information centres. Their development is country specific, but they have a good potential to become nuclei of a future regional water partnership. Several participants spoke about the importance of education as a pre-requisite of development and to prepare humankind for the challenges of the XXIst century.

- *River basin organisations as promoters of IWRM idea (with special regard to shared basins).*

One of the great successes of the Framework Directive is the organization of water management by river basins, which concept is new to many Member States too. River Basin Organizations may play an important role in prevent-

ing water disputes and conflicts, especially in case of large transboundary catchment areas like the Danube, Odra or Nemunas. Although River Basin Organizations exist in the region, they should be better nested into the countries institutional arrangements and they need increased power and money to function to meet the needs of integrated water resources management. The French example presented here shows how much effort of committed water people is needed to set up efficient, transparent river basins organizations, which works on the basis of sustainable development, bringing together all concerned parties, who will have to deal with present and future water problems. An example within the region is the Danube River Protection Convention, which provides for the substantial framework and the legal basis of cooperation, including enforcement

- *Financial flows in the water sector.*

For most of the EU candidate countries municipal water issues form one of the key elements of the accession. Billions of US dollars are estimated in each country as cost requirements for water supply and sanitation. Assuming a 15 year transition period this corresponds to high, in some cases unaffordable values, which call for extremely careful planning and implementation of priority actions which can bring the highest benefits.

A ministerial declaration (see separately) was adopted at the meeting welcoming inter alia the initiative of the Global Water Partnership "to promote integrated water resources management in the region at a point of time when CEE countries facing the challenge of the EU integration need to address every aspect of water resources management".

The meeting offered an excellent opportunity to discuss the role and activity of the Global Water Partnership. Khalid Mohtadullah executive secretary of the Partnership delivered a speech from global perspective dealing with the post-Hague period. He touched upon the consultation exercise carried out after the Second World Water Forum as a follow-up and presented the post-Hague report to the Prince of Orange, chairman of the Forum and patron of GWP. The report entitled "Framework for Action: Responding to the Forum" gives a brief overview of the Forum and Ministerial Conference and presents discussions on both the substance of the Framework for Action and the process that led to its creation. It also gives examples of some initiatives that different groups around the world have started in response to the Forum.

The meeting was attended by 58 participants from the ten countries of the region including high level politicians. The representatives of strategic allies as well as of the Bonn conference (Dublin + 10) and the 3rd World Water Forum were also present providing a global character to the event.

József Gayer

Ministerial Declaration of the Central and Eastern European countries

The Ministerial Declaration of The Hague in 2000 on Water Security in the 21st Century recognised the need for action to implement the required changes in the way water is managed world wide.

Countries in Central and Eastern Europe¹ agree with the general approach formulated in the Ministerial Declaration to avoid water crisis in the future and to provide water security in the 21st Century. Our countries, however face region and country specific difficulties caused by historical circumstances. For several decades of the planned economy these countries focused on raising output through quantitative production targets, with not much regard for sustainability, resulting in the deterioration of freshwater quality. Even the transitional period brought examples of severe ecological endangering. Under the prevailing economic conditions the CEE countries are unable to resolve the many co-existing water problems accumulated since the Second World War. These can not be solved quickly. Like in the many western countries earlier a longer period of time (a decade or decades) will be needed to comply fully with the European Union's requirements, a common denominator for the CEE countries.

The Global Water Partnership's initiative to promote integrated water resources management in the region came at a point of time when our countries facing the challenge of the EU integration need to address every aspect of water resources management.

The EU accession process, the EU environmental legislation and especially the water framework directive present the most important driving force in our water related development including institutional issues. The dialogue among the CEE countries on fulfilment of the necessary criteria and the entailing tasks can contribute not only to the achievement of good water status but also to joining the European Union. We will utilise the forum offered by GWP to facilitate a dialogue within the region and to discuss the approximation and compliance of EU water related legislation.

We call upon the European Union to further strengthen the links with the accession countries on water issues and assist them with adequate technology and know-how transfer.

Country water clubs or partnerships promoted by GWP will be supported to develop into real stakeholder fora for public participation.

We will promote integrated water resources management with special regard to shared river basins.

To meet water security targets in the region we will jointly seek ways to improve investment processes.

We are aware that to meet these challenges require real commitment and determination from our side and we pledge to act accordingly.

We welcome the initiative of Global Water Partnership convening the regional stakeholder meeting on 22-23 March 2001 and the follow-up actions to be pursued.

Adopted on 23 March 2001, in Budapest

¹ Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia





WWF

Public Participation, NGOs and the Water Framework Directive in Central and Eastern Europe

CEE meeting – Budapest, 9-10 March 2001



The meeting was organized and facilitated jointly by WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme and GWP-CEE with the objective to identify obstacles hindering, and opportunities for enhancing, public participation in CEE countries' preparations for implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD).

Outputs included:

- a list of prioritised actions for ensuring NGO participation in the planning processes connected to Integrated River Basin Management (IRBM) and the Directive;
- heightened NGO awareness of the implications of the Directive;
- greater understanding of the relevant competent international bodies like the European Commission, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), Helcom and of the blockages to NGO involvement so far;
- an embryonic NGO network for the competent international bodies to draw upon for advice on public participation;

- and raised profile of the Global Water Partnership and its mission of promoting IRMB in CEE.

In total 43 participants, drawn from 40 organisations in 17 different countries attended the meeting in order to achieve the conference objectives. Presentations, discussion sessions, small groups work, film shows and informal social activities all featured in the event.

It was discussed and agreed that public participation is necessary for successful implementation of the Water Framework Directive, and indeed sustainable environmental management as a whole (including water resources).

Attention was paid, particularly during the group work, to the questions of when, at what geographical scale, and on what level public participation is required. Public involvement is needed now, immediately, as soon as possible ("yesterday"), in order to facilitate the process. Public involvement is appropriate and required at all geographical scales and at all decision-making levels.

For NGOs in CEE (as with elsewhere in Europe) to contribute effectively to these processes, certain needs and gaps must be filled. It must be recognised that if public participation is to be secured in a meaningful way, significant financial investments and changes in the nature of relationships between, for example, government and civil society, are required.

A number of possible developments, including both hydro-electric systems and canalisation projects, are being discussed in different parts of the region. The conference's attention was drawn to possible developments of this kind on the Drava river in Croatia and the Vistula and Odra rivers in Poland. This issue is also present in Bulgaria.

The proposed next steps for assisting with planning, implementation, and monitoring include:

- A "resource inventory" or analysis of existing CEE NGO expertise.
- A CEE "Expert Pool" should then be established and managed.
- Thus an informal CEE NGO network of interested and competent individuals and organisations should evolve.
- In particular, the EC-Member States' WFD Implementation Strategy working groups on Heavily Modified Waters, Economic Aspects (water pricing), Monitoring, and Best Practices for River Basin Management require and deserve significant CEE civil society inputs.
- There is currently no working group on "Public Participation" in the EC-Member States' WFD Implemen-

tation Strategy and this seems to be a significant omission.

- In the meantime, CEE NGOs should jointly and transparently initiate a process for drafting Guidelines on Public Participation.

• Pilot projects throughout the region, demonstrating participatory approaches and good practices, should be designed and funded and implemented.

• NGOs should take advantage wherever possible of existing or planned structures and seek (and be allowed to) contribute as actively as possible in the formation and activities of, for example, river basin councils, GWP-facilitated Water Clubs, stakeholder water parliaments, and others. For this to occur, there needs to be open access, transparent structures and processes, and a spirit of equality and cooperation.

• Reflecting the concerns in the region about possible hydro-electric projects, and their status vis-a-vis the "no deterioration" clause of the Directive, WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme and GWP CEETAC will together organise a regional stakeholder conference on dams later this year in Bulgaria.

To these ends, it was suggested that GWP support national NGO workshops in each (GWP-participating) country.

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WATER REUSE EXPERT TO RECEIVE 2001 STOCKHOLM WATER PRIZE

Professor Tashi Asano of the University of California at Davis (UCD), USA, has been awarded the 2001 Stockholm Water Prize for his outstanding contributions to efficient use of water in the domain of wastewater reclamation, recycling and reuse through theoretical developments, practical research and worldwide adaptation and promotion.

During the last 20 years, Professor Asano has been the world's foremost expert on the safe



and beneficial use of recycled water. Water recycling

means reusing treated wastewater instead of drinking-quality water

for purposes such as agricultural and landscape irrigation,

industrial processes, toilet flushing, environmental enhancement, and replenishing of depleted groundwater aquifers. Professor Asano has also contributed to the world's knowledge of water conservation and efficient use of water through active participation in international organizations, through the education of young water scientists and engineers, and by authoring more than 50 articles and books, including the edited book *Water Reclamation and Reuse*, the definitive reference work on the subject. His most notable contribution, however, was initiating the formation of the International Association on Water Quality's Specialist Group on Wastewater Reclamation, Recycling and Reuse in 1987, and the worldwide network for water reuse research and practice.

HM King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden is the Patron of the Stockholm Water Prize and will present it to Professor Asano on August 16 at a Royal Ceremony and Banquet in the Stockholm City Hall during the World Water Week in Stockholm.



CEETAC receives observer status with ICPDR



Co-operation between CEETAC and the International Committee

for the Protection of Danube River (ICPDR) started already prior to the Second World Water Forum and in the end of the last year CEETAC has applied for the status of observer to the Committee. The request was discussed at the 6th steering group meeting of ICPDR (June 6-10, 2001 in Lovran, Croatia), where CEETAC member Ms. Danka Thalmeinerova presented the objectives and activities of the GWP in the Central and Eastern Europe region, especially focussing on Danube river basin. Based on the discussion following the presentation the observer status was granted by the resolution of the ICPDR Steering Group.

There was a concerted agreement that the CEETAC should be an observer to the ICPDR as this body attempts to function on the principles of openness and transparency. Besides the shared values regarding integrated water resources management (IWRM) com-

mon interests have been found in two important factors: the accession process of the CEE countries to the EU, and the "acting area" of Danube countries. Considering in particular the economic situation of the countries in transition in the middle and lower Danube River Basin, the emerging responsibility of the international community should result in the participation in projects and programmes related to the basin and the Black Sea.

GWP regards ICPDR as a strategically in promoting integrated water resources management and is looking forward to the co-operation with this important international organization.

Danka Thalmeinerova



The Global Water Partnership and the Globalisation

Globalisation is not a new concept, but recently the idea is splitting into separate 'layers', and thus being investigated by different disciplines.

There are clearly very close inter-connections, interference between/among *water* resources (availability – quantity, quality) and meteorology/climatology, oceanography. Technology (satellites, informatics) enable meteorologists to rely on global data/information and to produce forecasts in a global sense on the long run. Global climatological trends can be detected (shift of meteorological phenomena toward extremities, global warming-up, desertification, el nino/la nina effect becoming more frequent...).

Other issues (like fast increase of population, expansion of cultivated land and built in/covered areas, erosion of soils, deforestation in the tropical belt...) can be exactly detected and reliably predicted by experts.

Recognition of the need for reliable data has led to the evolution of a system for studying global phenomena, called Global Observing System (GOS) including climate, ocean and global subsystems.

The Globe (the living part of which is considered as one single organism: Gaia) is rapidly changing. This is a result of technological advances, 'explosion' of information, political and economic restructuring. All these are still calling for more accurate and reliable forecasts of global changes and their consequences to be expected.

Planners and resource managers are seeking firm base for development policies and strategies in order to manage relevant programmes and strive for wiser use and management of renewable resources. Sectoral policies have to be integrated in order to act in accordance with the holistic approach.

But for sure there is still another aspect, which has to be emphasized – namely *global financial, socio-economical* etc developments, hopes, fears, which are less specified yet, but do and will have an expanding impact on *water resources*.

There are pros and cons about the benefits and/or catastrophic consequences of financial/economical globalisation. One thing seems to be doubtless: *Global Water Partnership* will soon face enormous difficulties without reliable forecasts in terms of financial globalisation – in the broadest sense.

Clearly, hydrologists, meteorologists/climatologists, oceanographers, experts in demography are the non-dispensable partners in most of the interrelated issues – but the question remains: who is to be approached in global financial/ economical matter?

The more: who will be able to tell us (involved in GWP) whether it is true that economical globalisation is able to take power from the hands of responsible (elected) governments and thus "put the fate of citizens on the mercy of a small group of multinational or supranational 'capitalists' who are only interested in short-range profit producing"? 'Capitalists' is not the proper expression, because some say: behind global financial actions not persons, but a phantom is hiding – it is invisible, it can not be seized, or touched upon (not even killed).

In case this threat is not (yet?) realistic: can we simply forget about the whole matter, or do we have to do certain steps in order to eliminate the danger of it in the future? Certainly the latter is the case which has to be considered!

Are we (those feeling responsibility for the future of water-related issues in a global sense, but "down"

to the local level) able to fight the expected theoretical battle, or do we have to find allies in order to hope victory?

If so, who are the necessary experts, the potential allies, and what are the most important and urgent measures to be done?

First of all let us see the roots of the problem (and the possible proofs for the existence thereof).

The problems stem partly from the fast growing economical performance; according to certain opinions. Since the 1950s production increased five times. The demand of the (fast growing) population exerted a heavy burden on the ecosystems of the World and this can be hardly tolerated by *Gaia*. Constant increase of productivity has accelerated the processes leading to the deterioration of the regenerative capacity of the ecosystems and the cohesion of human society has become less firm. In the mean time: gap between rich and poor became deeper. Money is often not acting in accordance with its "traditional" functions, as a promoter of production, instead it became an instrument of financial manipulation. In the mean time we have to face the possibility of becoming "environmental refugees" (because of global climate changes).

The barrier between sustainable and not sustainable use of natural resources is not determined by the non-renewable ones – instead the renewable resources are the critical items. Availability of renewable resources, first of all water, and the (contamination/pollution, waste) absorbing capacity of the environment are critical and will determine the future of mankind. Water is clearly the most important 'element', because it is the source of life (for human beings too) and at the

same time the mostly overloaded recipient of waste. Water resources are getting more and more scarce and there are pessimistic (?) opinions saying that military conflicts might be the consequences of not fulfilled water demands.



Globalisation and financial/economical actions and global conflicts induced by water demands, which can be hardly or not at all fulfilled, are challenges to be faced by the activists of GWP. In order to be able to solve these problems, representatives of GWP have to get well oriented in the "maze" of questions and be prepared in advance – on the base of reliable description of the recent situation – and acquire firm-base forecasts.

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Water Club in Blagoevgrad



The establishment of Water Clubs under the GWP umbrella in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe will be of vital importance for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive of the European Union. These clubs are intended to assure public information and discussion centers providing a link between the local and state authorities on the one hand and the public, on the other. This is an important step which will set the conditions for the participation of the public in the decisions making process and especially in preparing the Integrated River Basin Management Plans.

NGO Ecosouthwest organizes the activities of the Water Club in Blagoevgrad. The Club is located in the center of the town, easily accessible for the citizens. It is provided with all the laws and legal documents as well as GWP and EEA publications concerning the water management. Blagoevgrad is the seat of one of the four River Basin Administration, which are being established

in Bulgaria. The Regional Inspectorate of Environment, the Regional Hygienic Inspectorate, The Water Supply Company and the Irrigation Company have their headquarters here as well.

35 members of the club have been registered so far, including some of the former and current managers of the above mentioned institutions and companies, teachers, students, journalists, businessmen, etc. The members of the club have the advantage of being able to receive all the information materials to be issued by the Water Club and being invited to participate in the events organized by the Club.

Blagoevgrad is an academic center and young people will be given a priority in the programmes of the Water Club. The first discussion concerning the problems in the upper courses of the rivers Struma and Mesta was held recently with the participation of the students from the SouthWest University. They put forward interesting initiatives for keeping the public informed about water issues and engaging in sustainable use of water resources.

A panel of experts has also been established at the Water Club in Blagoevgrad whose purpose will be to prepare the future programme of the Club and its expert decisions. This group involves specialists, representatives of private business companies, state institutions and non-government organizations. The Water Club has also launched a writing contest for young people on the topic "My view of the active public participation in the decisions making process on water management". The three best papers will be specially awarded.

Kalin Anastasov
Water Club, Blagoevgrad

Changes in GWP structure

After five years of operation and experience there is a need to clearly define roles and the corresponding nomenclature of GWP units. This was the conclusion of careful investigations and fruitful discussion of the Steering Committee of Managing Partners involving reputed consultants. Keeping in mind the leading principle of minimum formality the following changes have been or are being made:

- The name of Consultative Group (CG) has been changed to Consulting Partners (CP) to recognize the group's advisory role;
- The name of the (global) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been changed to Technical Committee (TEC). TEC's primary focus should turn from global definer and evaluator of IWRM to on-the-ground facilitator for getting IWRM done;
- Regional Partnerships should be titled GWP-Central and Eastern Europe or GWP-West Africa and so on to be identified as part of the GWP family;
- The name of the Financial Support Group (FSG) has been changed to Financial Partnership Group (FPG);
- It is envisaged that the Secretariat will be qualified for an international legal status under Swedish law. This proposal is now being discussed with the Swedish authorities to ascertain that it meets their requirements. Hopefully the change will be implemented on January 1, 2002.

TEC meeting news

The first TEC Meeting of the year 2001 has been convened to San José, Costa Rica, 6-10 June. The agenda included the overview of the last half year's activity with special regard to GWP Comprehensive Work Programme 2001-2003, the inception report specifying in detail the work outlined in the work programme, the discussion of the IWRM toolbox under development, regional reports focusing on challenges and opportunities in implementing the work programme and other topical issues.

Two days have been devoted to present the progress of the host region Central America and the neighbouring South America. In Central America there has been a good potential support to the work of Central America Technical Advisory Committee (CATAC) and the programmes initiated by them – because of the CATAC's association with PACADIRH (Central American Water Resources Action Plan). The region has the advantage of a common language across the countries and similar socio-economic conditions.

In South America, the current focus is on the five topics identified as priority concerns – namely IWRM awareness raising, ground water management, valuation of water, multidisciplinary vision on mitigation of floods and the institutional framework for the water sector. A national strategic partner has been identified for every country.

As Margaret Catley-Carlson chair of GWP pointed out there is a need for cross-regional dialogue in addition to the communication between the regions and the secretariat,

because of the great potential for learning from each other's experience and for working together on topics of common interest.

Common organizational issues have been also discussed by the regional TAC chair's meeting. The most sensitive one has been the question of membership at different levels. It has been experienced that a large number of organizations are keen to join the Partnership. But they have different scales of capabilities and interests to participate effectively. It was therefore considered desirable to lay down specific criteria for partners at the global, regional, country and local levels.

The "IWRM toolbox" day proved to be an exciting event, since the Toolbox is in the forefront of GWP's activity. Its aim is to provide practical information and guidance on how to put integrated water resources management in place in the real world. Using the GWP TAC Paper No. 4 – Integrated Water Resources Management – as a template, the Toolbox is being developed as a core GWP activity over the coming two years – and as the mainspring of the output 'Promoting Good Practice for IWRM'.

The Toolbox has two main sections: at the heart is *Policy Guidance* which provides an 'entry point' for politicians and senior decision makers. The second section sets out the *Operational Tools* based on a series of chapters, broadly linked to the structure of TAC Paper No. 4. As envisaged an early draft of the Toolbox will be presented at the Stockholm Water Symposium, August and the launch of phase 1 (electronic and hard copy versions) will take place during a special session in Bonn at the International Conference on Freshwater, December 2001. A case study proposal for the Toolbox on capacity building for constructive public participation in the Kamniska Bistrica river catchment, Slovenia has been accepted for the Toolbox. Further suggestions with IWRM relevance are welcome.

During the week a special TEC session dealt with managing risk in the context of integrated water resources management.

The regional expansion of GWP has been also discussed at the meeting. This would be Central Asia including the Caucasus and Australia and the Southwest Pacific.

It has been acknowledged that Spain as new donor entered the Financial Partnership Group (FPG).

József Gayer



The 3rd World Water Forum

Kick-off meeting – KYOTO, June 3-5 2001

The 3rd World Water Forum Kick-off meeting was held at Kyoto International Conference Hall from June 3rd to June 5th, 2001. A number of animated discussions were developed, involving the 459 participants (342 from Japan and 117 from overseas) on the first day.

The first day of the meeting began with the opening address by H.E. Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Chairman of the National Steering Committee of the 3rd World Water Forum. Following that were keynote address by H.E. Dr. Mahmoud Abu-Zeid, the President of the World Water Council, a presentation by Mr. Loic Fauchon, Advisor to the President of WWC, a message from H.R.H. the Prince of Orange of the Netherlands presented by Mr. Bert Diphooorn, Chairman of the Organising Committee of the 2nd World Water Forum, and a presentation about the concept paper of the 3rd World Water Forum. In the afternoon of the first day, the Virtual Water Forum was opened to introduce its concept and functions. A networked computer room provided the many participants who visited with a live online experience of the Virtual Water Forum.



On the second day, brainstorming regarding the framework of the 3rd World Water Forum began. This meeting consisted of three sessions, each involving brainstorming by all participants. Participants' opinions concerning the general topics were simultaneously translated into both English and Japanese and projected on the screen. In Session 1, 234 participants were divided into groups of eight in order to discuss two themes: 1) Standards essential to the success of the 3rd World Water Forum and 2) Organisations and individuals to co-operate towards the success of the Forum. At the end of the session, each group's representative presented the outcome of that group's discussion. There were a large number of opinions to be presented, not only by the representatives of each group but also by other members of the groups. Time was too short to accommodate everybody who wanted to present his or her opinions.

In the session in the afternoon of the second day, dealing with thematic questions, each participant chose a group with a theme which he/she was interested in, exchanged opinions in that group and wrote a report about the group's theme. It is noteworthy that in this brainstorming style, Japanese people who spoke little English could join the discussion and exchange opinions with water experts and stakeholders from various countries around the world. This was possible thanks to the effort of the bilingual volunteers, who translated upon request. The session was scheduled to end at 5:00 p.m. but some groups were reluctant to finish their discussion at that time.

On the third day, the outcome of the discussions of the previous day was distributed to everybody. There was discussion on the outcome. People were active and eager regardless of language when they presented their opinions. There was a strong sense that everybody was seriously involved.

The results of this meeting are available on the WWF3 website <http://www.worldwaterforum.org/voice/>. The WWF3 organisers are expecting to receive various opinions about the WWF3 topics and the Forum organisational aspects from people around the world. Please do not hesitate to submit your opinion.

Marek Nawalany