



**Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
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Conference Services

Please find attached the presentation by Ms. Natalia Alexeeva, Peipsi Center for Transboundary Co-operation to the Plenary Session 2 - OSCE experiences in promoting transboundary co-operation on water management, Second Preparatory Conference to the 15th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, Zaragoza, Spain, 12 - 13 March 2007.

Public Participation in Chu and Talas Rivers



Second Preparatory Conference to the 15th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum “Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE area: Water Management”

Zaragoza, Spain, 12-13 March 2007

General information on the basins

- Chu and Talas river basins are shared by Kazakhstan (downstream) and Kyrgyzstan (upstream)
- Existing bilateral agreement(2000) and newly established Joint Commission (2006)
- The water management measures decided on by the bilateral Commission to be implemented by the riparian parties will directly affect the interests of the population living in the regions adjacent to the Chu and Talas rivers. A mechanism needs to be established to ensure a two-way communication between the Commission and the stakeholders.

Public participation component

- “Public participation in transboundary water management of Chu and Talas rivers” in the OSCE/UN ECE-supported project «Creation of a commission between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on the Chu and Talas rivers»
- Results of activities supported by the OSCE and Estonian MFA:
 - Operational project web-site <http://talaschu.org/>
 - Directory of stakeholders in English, Russian, Kazakh and Kyrgyz is compiled and available at <http://talaschu.org/db/index.php?IDLang=2&link=search>
 - Focus groups interviews aiming to assess local training needs and expectations carried out in both Kazakh and Kyrgyz parts of the river basins with the report available at http://www.talaschu.org/upload_files/Focus_groups_in_Talas_Ch_u.pdf
 - Capacity Building Plans for both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan
 - Several meetings/seminars were held to inform about the project and discuss possible follow up measures, as well as present available experience in the water management and public participation field
 - Established network for joint actions including relevant organizations and stakeholders.

Results of the 15 focus groups on both sides of the transboundary River basins

Opportunities and Challenges for public participation in Transboundary Water Management



Legal and economic environment

Opportunities to public participation

- Declared commitment to democratic development
- Local Laws designed
- Water Code
- Market-oriented development

Challenges to public participation

- Centralization of the decision making process
- Strong bureaucracy
- Lack of cross-ministerial relationships on WM

Social and cultural aspects

Opportunities to public participation

- Still high educational level of population
- Common cultural traditions for community mobilization: asar, Council of the Aksakals, murab
- Transboundary Kazakh and Kyrgyz communities have a long history of brotherhood relationships

Challenges to public participation

- Paternalism
- Social passiveness, apathy
- Poverty and lack of belief in themselves leads to social marginalization of population

Access to Information

Opportunities to public participation

- Government policy on water issues is covered by Mass Media
- IOs provide much information on websites

Challenges to public participation

- Information on water issues is scarce, not all aspects are covered
- Majority of Kazakh/Kyrgyz rural population have no access to Mass Media due to inability to get subscribed to the newspapers

Role of Government

Opportunities to public participation

- Local self-governing structures in KG
- Support to small business development

Challenges to public participation

- Lack of managerial skills, corruption
- Lack of transparency and accountability

Role of International Organizations

Opportunities to public participation

- On-going technical, educational and financial assistance to build capacity of CSOs
- Participatory and other innovative approaches in community development

Challenges to public participation

- Large international organizations focus on working on the government level
- Little cooperation and coordination between IOs (competition, duplication)

Public Associations

Opportunities to public participation

- 10 years of NGO development: (7000 registered in KZ, 8000 in KG)
- NGOs work in various areas: advocacy, building awareness, community development, etc.

Challenges to public participation

- Few NGOs are sustainable
- NGOs are donor-oriented, no strong ties with constituencies/communities, little experience, non-proactive

Conclusions

- The broad public cannot participate in the work of the Commission → increase public awareness through regular information in mass media
- Stakeholder groups should be involved in the Commission's work on a regular institutional basis, for example, through the establishment of a Basin Council
- Public participation in water management is a long-term process that cannot be realized within one campaign or a short-term project. It requires considerable and long-term financial resources → active fundraising or state build-in mechanisms
- Involvement of Kazakh and Kyrgyz researchers in the development of inter-state programs is important

Future steps

- To keep on-going public participation activities in the region for sustaining the project results
- To elaborate more concrete mechanisms under the Joint Commission for public involvement and oversight
- To reach more efficient public-state interaction in water management on transboundary level



Thank you
for your attention

Any questions?



