



GENDER and WATER in CENTRAL ASIA

Newsletter of GWANET Network

N° 1 - June 2007

ADB and SIC ICWC in Central Asia signed a Letter of Agreement to establish a Gender and Water Network in Central Asia

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed on 18 May a Letter of Agreement with the Scientific Information Center of the Central Asian Interstate Commission for Water Coordination to establish a Gender and Water Network (GWANET) in Central Asia Republics (CARs) to improve gender awareness among the water sector stakeholders at regional, national and local levels, and strengthen their capacity in incorporating gender issues into the decision-making process.

The objectives of the GWANET are to: (i) improved gender awareness among the water sector stakeholders at regional, national and local levels through establishment of GWANET; (ii) strengthened capacity of the water sector stakeholders for incorporating gender dimensions into the decision-making process.

Since ADB's assistance program in the CARs includes a number of water related loan and TA projects, it is expected that this project will help improve understanding of the stakeholders' needs, in particular, gender dimensions, in implementing national and regional water related activities.

The project will have two components: (i) Gender Awareness Promotion; and (ii) Capacity Building of Water Sector Organizations. The first

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Signing the Agreement between ADB and SIC ICWC of Central Asia;



Edited and published by the Scientific-Information Center ICWC within the framework of GWANET project under support of the Asian Development Bank



component will be implemented through existing water network of the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination (ICWC) and GWP CACENA with the gender focal points represented by one water specialist and one NGO in the CARs.

One-year activities will include a number focus group discussions and training of the water sector stakeholders at regional, national and local levels to raise gender awareness within water sector and reveal the most critical problems in the sphere. It is expected that by project completion a set of recommendations will be prepared and submitted to national and local governments on how to incorporate gender into the development agenda in the water sector and prepare gender related sector policies in the CARs.

The second component will include participatory workshops and hands-on training for water sector organizations in the CARs to mainstream gender at the decision-making level with the aim to achieving a 30% quota for women's participation in the water-related activities. The project activities will also be published and broadcasted in the local mass media and will be posted on the SIC-ICWC website www.gender.cawater-info.net

One of the main project results should be the establishment of informal network «GWANET Gender and Water in Central Asia», which will unite all concerned organizations and individuals to promote gender aspects in water resources management.

We call upon all concerned persons to join the Network in order to all together:

- Raise awareness and promote gender mainstreaming in the region
- Attain more knowledge and understanding of gender issues in water management
- Exchange experience and best practices on the matter, translate theoretical concepts on gender into action
- Build profile for the need of gender sensitization and a platform for women's voices within the governance structures of the region
- Lay the foundation of further cooperation leading to successful gender sensitive water management
- Create the network among concerned agencies and individuals to facilitate further cooperation both national and regional level

Since the very beginning

While implementing several regional projects in Central Asia, SIC ICWC came across an extraordinary activity of women in area of water use and management and in farming as a whole. As is well-known, women account for more than 60% of water users in the region; moreover, they are more disadvantaged due to the limited access and control over various resources and the deep-rooted stereotype of woman's role in the society. Such observations motivated SIC ICWC to get insight into the gender equality issue in water sector.

To this end, in May 2004, a first meeting on gender aspects of water resources management was organized during the International Scientific Conference "Water Partnership in Central Asia" with the support of the Asian Development Bank.

The participants of the session discussed gender problems in agriculture and water management sectors. Within these sectors gender disparities are seen in inheritance of land and the social reality of their claim to communal property, access to water, participation in carrying different responsibilities, control of resources, capacity and skill to participate in agriculture water management, access to markets and commercial linkages.

The participants of the session came to conclusion that to tackle gender issues in Central Asian Countries, the following need to be addressed:

Do you know?

Gender is a socially constructed definition of women and men. It is not the same as sex (biological characteristics of women and men) and it is not the same as women. Gender is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and roles attributed to women and men in society and in public and private life.

Gender in practice.
Swiss Agency for Development and
Cooperation

at the macro level:

- to raise the awareness of policy makers, water managers, water users and women and men themselves, of the fact that economic transition and economic development are not Gender neutral.
- to strengthen information and analytical capacity we need reliable information on baseline gender differentials and on the gender impact of policies, programs and reforms
- to support gender sensitive and participatory operations designed to address specific gender issues
- to foster greater collaboration between all stakeholders government, NGOs, civil society and communities in water management

*at the micro level:*

- to publicly recognize women as irrigators, through joint membership into Water User Associations and Canal Water Committees
- to set targets and quotas for women in representative structures of water management organizations
- to facilitate women landowners to formalize their land and water rights
- to build both male and female Awareness and Capacity on gender issues and its relation to water management
- to develop qualified extension services to farmers
- to increase the access of women to micro-credit facilities and financial sectors
- to challenge the rigid norm that irrigation is, only and exclusively, a male affair

Do you know?

The Gender approach is distinct in that it focuses on women and men and not on women in isolation. It highlights:

- *the differences between women's and men's interest even within the same household and how these interact and are expressed.*
- *the conventions and hierarchies which determine women's and men's position in the family, community and society at large, whereby women are usually dominated by men*
- *the differences among women and among men, based on age, wealth, ethnic background and other factors*
- *the way gender roles and relations change, often quite rapidly, as a result of social, economic and technological trends*

Wijk and Francis, 1999.

The participants of the gender and water session, representative of government, NGOs, international agencies, farmers, research institutes and universities of Central Asia recognize that gender is central to water management. Water and agriculture projects and programs have failed to incorporate gender issues within their operations and we have collectively agreed to form a network on an informal basis to undertake specific activities as a first step in changing this reality.

The objectives of this network will be to:

- raise awareness of the issues of gender in the region
- attain knowledge and understanding of gender issues in water management
- exchange experience and best practice of gender sensitive water management

The participants of the conference have agreed to further develop the initiative into a full project proposal. The network calls upon the GWP CACENA to play a coordinating role in

fundraising and SIC ICWC to act as the information sharing center.

Based on above priorities, SIC ICWC has developed this initiative in the region. Particularly, with the support of Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and GWP CACENA, sociological surveys were made in all CA and Transcaucasia countries in order to identify gender issues in water use and management in rural area. The survey's results were published in the book titled "Gender Aspects of Integrated Water Resources Management".

In September 2004, in followup of the sociological survey, a seminar "Gender Aspects in Water Supply and Water Management in Rural Area" was organized in the Ferghana city with participation of rural women.

In March 2005, a regional four-day training workshop on Fundamentals of Gender Theory and Methodology of Gender Analysis was held. Qualified experts in SE&GA methodology Alimdjanova D.I., Director of Gender Studies Center, and Gapparova Nigora, Director of Youth Center "Ikbol", held the training during the workshop.

In order to familiarize wide audience with a concept of gender and its relationship with the integrated water resources management, UNDP's Resource Guide: Mainstreaming Gender in Water Management was translated into Russian.

Moreover, a project website was created and supported: <http://www.gender.cawater-info.net>.

Gender Networking Experience in Central Asia: Central Asian Network for Gender Studies

The Central Asian Network for Gender Studies (CANGS) was established in July 2002 in the Summer school "Gender Studies: from West to East" upon initiative of the Gender Studies Center in the Almaty city. The mission of CANGS is to unite experts in gender issues, arrange a space for their communication and cooperation so that to ensure gender education and research. The members are teachers, researchers, NGO's representatives dealing with gender studies and promoting gender education

in institutes and schools. The total number of Network's members is 140 people (by October 2004).

For further information please follow this link <http://www.genderstudies.info/about.php>

Foreign Experience: Gender and Water Alliance

The Gender and Water Alliance (GWA) was established at the Second World Water Forum (WWF) in March 2000. The mission of GWA is to promote women's and men's equitable access to

Do you know?

The term gender was taken by John Money from grammatics and introduced in ethology by sexologist John Money, who while studying intersexuality and transsexuality in 1955 needed to differentiate the sex as phenotype from the genitalia and erotic sexual roles. Then this term became widely used by sociologists, lawyers, and American feminists. Moreover, it always had and still has many meanings.

Social sciences and especially feminism attribute to the term gender narrower meaning, marking "social gender", i.e. socially determinate roles, identities and scopes of activity of males and females that depend on social structure of society rather than on biological differences. The gender studies are focused on social inequality of males and females.

The term gender in English means distinct masculinity or femininity of a person, some behavior or non-human. Division into manlike and womanlike is similar to division into male sex and female sex in biology.

Wikipedia

and management of safe and adequate water, for domestic supply, sanitation, food security and environmental sustainability. The provision of sustainable water and sanitation services that incorporate an integrated water resources management approach requires a special emphasis and focus on gender, social justice and human rights. GWA believes that equitable access to and control over water is a basic right for all, as well as a critical factor in promoting poverty eradication and sustainability.

GWA is a global network dedicated to mainstream gender in water resources management. It is registered as an Association under Dutch law and has more than 600 members in 91 countries worldwide. Its membership is diverse and represents a wide range of capacities and expertise across all water sectors as well as from different stakeholder groups including government, grassroots organisations, NGOs, universities and research institutes, international agencies and individual consultants. More than eighty percent of the membership comes from a diversity of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The GWA is managed by an independent Steering Committee that is elected by the membership every two to three years. The Steering Committee is made up of ten members representing different regions and areas of gender expertise in the water sector.

The Secretariat of the GWA is supported by an Executive Director, a Programme Officer, an Administrative Financial Officer and an Environmental Officer. The office is in Dieren, the Netherlands.

GWA is an Associated Programme of the Global Water Partnership (GWP). The Alliance is and has been financed by the governments of the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, additional earmarked finance has been generated by projects implemented with partner organisations.

For further information please follow this link <http://www.genderandwater.org/page/121>

Do you know?

Gender equity requires equal enjoyment by women and men of socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards. Gender equity does not mean that women and men become the same, but that their opportunities and life chances are equal.

CIDA

Regional news

SCHOOL OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OPERATES IN SEMIPALATINSK

The project of the School for Women's Political Leadership is implemented in Semipalatinsk. It was developed according to Government order of the Internal Policy Department.

For more detailed information see: www.gender.cawater-info.net/news/07-06-2007.htm

PRESS CONFERENCE DEDICATED TO ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE FOR WOMEN IN UZBEKISTAN

A press conference dedicated to activities of the Committee for Women in Uzbekistan was held in light of the State Program "The Year of Social Protection". Journalists received answers to all their questions at the press conference.

For more detailed information see: www.gender.cawater-info.net/news/07-06-2007.htm

TODAY THE II NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN PUBLIC AGENCIES FOR 2007-2010 HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED IN THE HOUSE OF GOVERNMENT IN KYRGYZSTAN

Today, the National Council for Women, Family and Gender Development at the President of Kyrgyzstan together with Provincial Governors have discussed under the chairmanship of State Secretary Adakhan Madumarov the program II of the National Action Plan for gender equality in public agencies for 2007-2010 in Kyrgyzstan.

For more detailed information see: www.gender.cawater-info.net/news/07-06-2007.htm

UZBEK WOMEN ACHIEVE HIGHER STATUS IN FAMILY, SOCIETY AND BUSINESS

Uzbek women enjoy higher socio-political and economic status, and, as a result, increase their contribution to all spheres of human activity.

This is evident from activities of one of the largest non-governmental women's organizations Association of Business Women in Uzbekistan "Tadbirkor Ayol". The chairman of Association Dildora Alimbekova talks about major directions of their activities and new project priorities to UzA's reporter.

For more detailed information see:
www.gender.cawater-info.net/news/09-06-2007.htm

NEW WOMEN'S NEWSPAPER IN BATKEN

The public association "Ayalzat" published a first issue of new provincial women's social and legal newspaper "Datkayim" in Batken, Kyrgyzstan.

For more detailed information see:
www.gender.cawater-info.net/news/10-06-2007.htm

"WOMEN PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SPHERES IN KAZAKHSTAN" SAYS THE UN'S RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE BYRGANYMAITIMOVA

A briefing of the International Women's Forum "A role of women in emerging Central Asia" was held in UN Headquarters in New York. Byrganym Aitimova, the UN's resident representative in the Republic of Kazakhstan reported at this event.

She told the attendant representatives of diplomatic missions, officials of UN and non-governmental organizations, as well as spouses of diplomats about historical factors that influenced the present status and role of woman in Central Asia.

For more detailed information see:
www.gender.cawater-info.net/news/10-06-2007.htm

ZHALALABAD PROVINCE ADMINISTRATION TOLD ABOUT ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN TO PROMOTE GENDER BALANCE

As informed by Zhalalabad Province Administration, the actions are undertaken in the province to achieve gender balance in the management agencies. In particular, the Public Relations Officer of the Province Administration Mr. Orozaly Karasartov told that female candidates were considered to take posts of Deputy Heads of Suzak Rayon Administration and the Zhalalabad city.

For more detailed information see:
www.gender.cawater-info.net/news/11-06-2007.htm

ARIS DEVELOPS GENDER COURSE

Two-day workshop-trainings in development of a gender course during working with local communities are being conducted in the southern representation office of the Community Development and Investment Agency (ARIS).

For more detailed information see:
www.gender.cawater-info.net/news/12-06-2007.htm

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If you have any message or material you wish to post in the Newsletter or on the project web-site, please, send it on the following address:

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