



CEP E-Bulletin



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Since We Last Met:



Demise of Dr. Matkarim Rajpov, Minister of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan

Dr. Matkarim Rajapov, the Minister of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan and the CEP national Focal Point Caspian Environment Programme passed away on 25 October.

Dr. Rajapov was a great man of knowledge, leadership, intelligence, commitment, care and understanding. His contribution to the effective management and protection of natural resources in Turkmenistan and in the Caspian Sea was exemplary.

His outstanding partnership in the activities of the Caspian Environment Programme and in the process of the Caspian Framework Convention formulation and approval was most valuable and unique.

His death is a great loss to all of us. Caspian Environment Programme condolences his bereaved family members and the Caspian Team. May God rest his soul in eternal peace.

11th Session of the Caspian Working Group

According to Iranian Shargh Newspaper, the 11th session of the Caspian Working Group was held in Moscow last week where the special envoys of the five Caspian Littoral States, inter alia, discussed the Caspian legal issues. The meeting was considered a fruitful event with some agreements on fisheries issues while other topics such as security also being discussed. The next conference of the Caspian Heads of States was also discussed although no date was fixed. Moreover, I.R. Iran and Russian Federation emphasized once again on the importance of their cooperation on development of the Iran 's nuclear facilities and agreed to continue their dialogue to resolve the Caspian legal issues.

First Meeting of Combined Interim Pollution Regional Advisory Group and Emergency Response Regional Advisory Group held in Tehran , 13-15 October 2004

The first meeting of the Combined Interim Pollution Regional Advisory Group (PRAG) and the Emergency Response Regional Advisory Group (ERRAG) opened on 13 th October 2004 in the Caspian Environment Programme office in Tehran . The meeting discussed the chairmanship and hosting arrangements of the RAGs, approved the strategic work plan for the groups, and provided advice on the implementation mechanism. The meeting also reviewed the status of developments in the pollution monitoring, control and abatement and emergency response in the littoral countries as well as the ongoing related activities under the UNEP and EU supported initiatives.

Participants at this three-day meeting included the representative of the five coastal countries of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation and Turkmenistan as well as the representative of International Organizations of IAEA, UNEP, UNDP, WMC, AGIPKCO.



First Meeting of the Interim Fisheries Regional Advisory Group (FRAG), Baku ; 19 October 2004

The first meeting of the Interim Fisheries Regional Advisory Group (FRAG) was held on October 19, 2004 in Baku in conjunction with the Workshop on Strategic Fisheries Research Issues and their Impact on Management, Conservation and Development of Caspian Fisheries. The workshop was organized by the EU/Tacis supported Sustainable Fisheries Management Project from 19

through 21 October. The objective of the FRAG meeting was to discuss the strategic work plan for the fisheries and bio-resources component of the CEP projects and to provide advice on implementation mechanism with a view to ensure a cost effective modality while enhancing regional involvement in the project activities.

Acceptance of the Tehran Convention by Russian Federation

Last week, the Russian Embassy in Teheran handed in a note to the pertinent Iranian authorities as the Depository for the Framework Convention on the completion of the national procedures and acceptance of the Framework Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea . Russian Federation is the second country after Turkmenistan to ratify or accept the Tehran Convention. It is hoped that all the Caspian Littoral States could complete this process by the spring of 2005.

Reduction of Sturgeon Export and Catch Quotas

According to the recent interview of the Head of Iranian International Sturgeon Research Institute, the sharp decrease in the population of Sturgeons especially Beluga and *A. Persicus* has led to the decision of the five Caspian littoral states to limit and reduce the export of these species by 50% and 40%, respectively. Based on their new agreement, the share of Azerbaijan, I.R. Iran, Kazakhstan and Russian Federative on the export of sturgeon is 5.88%, 58.6%, 14.6% and 20.92%, respectively, where the quota of Turkmenistan is included in the shares of Russian Federative and Kazakhstan. The catch quotas are determined by the Joint Commission of Caspian Bio-resources, which is established by the fisheries organizations of the five Caspian littoral states. The latest decision of this Commission will become enforceable next January after the approval of the CITES Secretariat.

Waste Incinerators for Ramsar

According to Iran Newspaper, one of the main environmental issues of Iran 's coastal provinces is the sanitary disposal of urban and rural domestic wastes. Lack of adequate land and subsequent land-use alteration of forests for landfill sites as well as the contamination of surface and underground waters are threatening the fragile ecosystems of these provinces. Therefore, the local government officials are enforcing stricter regulations on deforestation and land-use alterations. Moreover, some of the experts are proposing to utilize incinerators as a mean to mitigate these environmental problems. In this regard, the Mayor of Katalam plans to carry out an ambitious incinerators project in Ramsar region and is seeking the financial assistance of the United Nations for its implementation. Currently, the Municipality of Katalam is tackling the bureaucratic formalities and trying to select an appropriate site for the project.

Upcommings:

Evaluation Committee Meetings for Caspian Environment Grants – Baku 14 – 15 November 2004

The Evaluation Committee Meeting for Caspian Environment Grants (Micro Environment Grants – MEG- and Matched Small Grants Programme -MSGP) will be held in Baku on November 14 and 15 with the participation of the National Focal Points of each Caspian countries, representative of international partners, CEP authorities and MSGP team including the national and international advisors of the Programme. About 60 MEG and 24 MSGP application forms from five littoral countries will be evaluated during the two days. The results of awarded applicants will be announced early December 04.

Caspian Environment Steering Committee Meeting – Baku – 17 November 2004

The Caspian Environment Steering Committee Meeting will be held on 17 November in Baku and hosted by the Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan Republic. The objectives of the meeting are to inform the SC members of the progress on projects and initiatives under the CEP and implementation of SAP and NCAPs in the littoral countries. The meeting will also decide on the selection of the CEP Programme Coordinator and the Assistant, as well as the chairs for the five interim Regional Advisory Groups (RAGs). The working arrangements and the regional support for the RAGs will also be discussed during the meeting. The agreement regarding the delay in Mnemiopsis Leidy, cooperation with the regional bodies and private sector and regional cooperation on Emergency Response are also the topics of the discussion for this meeting.

Biodiversity Protocol Technical Meeting – Baku – 18 November 2004

The Biodiversity Protocol Technical Meeting will discuss the technical scope of a Biodiversity Protocol to the Framework Caspian Convention. It will be participated by the two officials from each of the Caspian littoral countries and will be facilitated by the UNEP/ROE as the Interim Secretariat for the countries.

Land Based Sources of Pollution Protocol Meeting – Ashgabat-Turkmenistan - 18 November 2004

The Land Based Sources (LBS) of Pollution Protocol Meeting will be held in Ashgabat on 18 November to discuss the first draft of the LBS protocol to the Framework Caspian Convention. It will be participated by the two officials from each of the Caspian littoral countries and will be facilitated by the UNEP/ROE as the Interim Secretariat for the countries.

Caspian Environment Investment Forum – Baku – 19-20 November

The World Bank is organizing a Caspian Environment Program Investment and Donors' Forum, scheduled to take a place in Baku on November 19-20 this year. The main aim of the Forum is to give the Caspian states a platform for presenting to potential investors and donors the priorities identified in their National Caspian Action Plans (NCAPs) and the regional Caspian Strategic Action Program (SAP). The event is designed to help the states to establish partnerships to mobilize resources for implementation of the priority projects. These include public goods investments, commercial projects, and public-private partnership opportunities, as well as a number of small-scale actions appropriate for grant funding. The Forum is co-sponsored by Germany, and supported by the Project Preparation Committee (PPC) of the Environment for Europe program. Information on the investment priorities and specific projects may be downloaded from the Forum website: www.worldbank.org/caspianenvironmentforum. The Forum registration form and logistics information are available on the website.

CEP Media Database

CEP Media Database is now available on the CEP website. CEP Media Database is a new tool which provides information on media including press, TV, radio, ... in all the five Caspian littoral countries. Information is provided on name, country, language, type, contact person, and contact details. Please visit the CEP Media Database at www.caspianenvironment.org or <http://217.218.78.133/mediasite/ReportIndex.asp> (direct link).

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