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TRANSBOUNDARY ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION (TEC) Project.
Region: Ukraine – Republic of Moldova.

The introduction

The Organization "Gromadyanska Initsiatyva" International in partnership with the United Nations Development Program in Ukraine and under support of the International "Renaissance" (George Soros) Foundation: East - East Program holds two regional meetings "Transboundary environmental problems: achievement, needs, ways of resolving by common efforts" for regions Ukraine - Republic of Moldova and Ukraine - Russian Federation. The main objectives of these meetings are

- the development of recommendations on resolving transboundary environmental problems on the boundaries between Ukraine and Republic of Moldova (first meeting - on February 8-11, 1999, Kyiv) and between Ukraine and Russian Federation (second meeting - on March 29 - April 1, 1999, Kyiv) by common efforts;
- facilitating dialogue between the appropriate official institutions, local authorities of bordering territories, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) on issues of practical resolving of urgent transboundary environmental problems and related socio-economic problems as well.

The realization of similar meetings is planned also between Ukraine and other neighboring countries.

The meetings on transboundary environmental issues are the continuation of work started within the SOFIA+3 Project on the NGO evaluation of National Environmental Action Plans in the NIS, which was presented on the 4-th Environment Ministers Conference in Aarhus in June, 1998, where the nongovernmental organizations from the NIS have approved the results of the Project and have determined main directions of NGO common activity for the future.

The main directions of the NGO activity for the future were defined as the following:

1. Deepening of cooperation for economic gains without environmental losses between nongovernmental organizations, central governments and local authorities, scientific community, and other major groups of society, **because only a such cooperation provides prevention of the environmental problems or their resolving simultaneously with the structural reorganization of economy and within the framework of this structural reorganization.**

2. Promoting development and implementation of the Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs) with participation of Major Groups.
3. Promoting West-East experience exchange for more effective realization of the goal and objectives of "Environment for Europe" process in the NIS.
4. Continuing cooperation with the nongovernmental organizations of other countries, UN system organizations, EAP Task Force (OECD) and other intergovernmental bodies and international organizations.

The basis for the realization of above-stated NGO activity directions is the Convention on access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters, and also paragraphs 2, 43 and 44 of the 4-th Environment Ministers Conference Declaration.

Why have the nongovernmental organizations begun to promote the LEAPs development and implementation by carrying out the meetings with emphasize on transboundary environmental problems? There are a number of reasons:

1. According to results of the SOFIA+3 Project the coordination of Major Groups' activities on environmental issues and coordination of efforts between appropriate official institutions of Ukraine and neighbouring countries remains weak. Better coordination of efforts on resolving of common environmental problems is necessary to prevent or resolve common environmental problems more effectively.
2. The integration of common coordinated activities into LEAPs will essentially reduce expenses of the countries involved on implementation of LEAPs, what is not only economically beneficial. It will create a favorable political climate for partial involvement of external financial sources, what comes up from the articles 5 and 45 of the 4-th Environment Ministers Conference Declaration.
3. Similar activity stimulate the cooperation and participation of Major Groups of neighbouring countries in the decision making process and promote more effective realization of the Convention on access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters.

**Bilateral meeting on issues of transboundary environmental cooperation in region Ukraine -
Republic of Moldova**
(February 8 - 11, 1999, Kyiv)

From Republic of Moldova the Deputy Minister of Environment Valentin Bobejke, the representatives of appropriate Divisions of the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UN Development Program, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and local authorities participated in the **meeting**. The representative of the UN Economic Commission for Europe Andreas Kahnert took part in the meeting as well.

From Ukraine the Head of the Verkhovna Rada's Committee on the environmental policy, use natural resources and Chernobyl catastrophe consequences Yuriy Samojlenko, First deputy minister of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety of Ukraine Vladimir Bratishko, representative of the United Nations Development Program and Coordinator of the UN System in Ukraine Pedro Pablo Villanueva, experts from the UNDP in Ukraine, appropriate Divisions of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety, Administration of the President, National Academy of Sciences, representatives of local authorities and divisions of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Nuclear Safety from Vinnitsa, Chernovtsy and Odessa regions, and representatives of the nongovernmental organizations of Ukraine took part in the meeting.

During the meeting the urgent transboundary environmental problems, which take place on the border between Ukraine and Republic of Moldova were determined, and the recommendation on ways of practical resolving them by common efforts were developed. The questions related to possible forms of cooperation between Mayor Groups of Ukraine and Republic of Moldova to enable more effective resolving of these problems, and opportunities for integration of the recommendations into Local Environmental Action Plans and local programs on socio-economic development of territories had been also discussed at the meeting.

Results

TRANSBOUNDARY ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS in the Ukraine - Republic of Moldova region were determined and the ways of prevention and resolving of the transboundary environmental problems were suggested.

PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

1. Insufficient quality of drinking water.
2. Preservation and rational use of bioresources (basins of Dniester river and Danube river lakes).
3. Water resources management. Absence of the coordinated management system in the rivers' basins.

4. Absence of the coordinated normative and legislative basis for the transboundary cooperation. A discrepancy between national normative and legislative basis in Ukraine and Republic of Moldova and acting international standards.
5. Low effectiveness of the mutual informing and notification system.
6. Absence of effective mechanisms of environmental programs' integration into the state programs of socio-economic development.
7. Absence of the risk evaluation system (for example, risk of the unregulated arms accumulation).
8. Absence of effective management systems of the transboundary waste transfer.
9. Not effective planning of common actions on prevention and elimination of extreme situations' consequences.

Among the above mentioned problems were determined

URGENT PROBLEMS

1. Quality of drinking water.
2. Absence of the coordinated normative and legislative basis for the transboundary cooperation. A discrepancy between national normative and legislative basis in Ukraine and Republic of Moldova and acting international standards.
3. Preservation and rational use of bioresources (basins of Dniester river and Danube river lakes).
4. Absence of the coordinated management system in the rivers' basins.

Recommendations to prevent or/and resolve the transboundary environmental problems:

Establishing appropriate legal framework:

1. Mutual study of the environmental legislation, specifications, standards, methods of the evaluation of water quality etc. in each country.
2. Creation of common legal field and coordinated normative basis in the field of environmental protection in the region. Improving legislative and normative basis related to problems of the transboundary waste transfer.
3. Cooperation on the legislation improvement process within the framework of integration into European Union and on fulfilment of the international Conventions by Ukraine and Republic of Moldova accordingly. Experience exchange during the ratification and implementation of the Convention on access to information, public participation in decision making and access to justice in environmental matters.

Monitoring:

1. Working out jointly coordinated monitoring program for the transboundary water objects with regard for specificities of antropogeneous effect on the surface waters quality.
2. Information and data exchange for creation of data base and of the common analytical

information and measuring system.

3. To create the network of the water and air quality joint checkpoints.
4. Experience and methodology exchange on forecasting of the environmental condition.

Operations for maintenance of effective resource management:

1. Development of new regulations on use of the Dnestr river reservoirs' cascade with regard for the environmental priorities. To recommend the governments of Ukraine and Republic of Moldova to resolve by common efforts the questions of preventing negative consequences related to operations of Dniester river's hydroelectric power plant.
2. Experience exchange on the inventory of the contamination sources and on development of joint program on their influence reduction.
3. Development of cooperation between local authorities of Ukraine and Republic of Moldova on resolving of the transboundary environmental problems.
4. Conducting of joint environmental expertises of the projects on oil terminals' development etc. with the obligatory participation of local authorities and NGOs.
5. Drawing up of the biological diversity cadastre. Undertaking common coordinated measures on preservation of biodiversity.
6. Experience exchange on environmental damage prevention during conversion of the military industry enterprises, on carrying out of the environmental and economic damages evaluation and on mechanisms of their compensation.
7. Optimization of economic activity on territories of water sources.
8. Development of the effective mechanisms for integration of the LEAPs and of joint operations in field of the environmental protection into the programs of socio-economic development of bordering territories.

Public participation and access to the information:

1. To inform local authorities and NGOs concerning the environmental state in region. Forming public support of common activity.
2. Facilitating cooperation of the legislative and state environmental institutions of Ukraine and Republic of Moldova with NGOs, especially, on the questions related to development and implementation of the Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs) and on integration of the transboundary environmental problems into LEAPs of each country.
3. NGOs should be more active in promoting the ratification of the following Conventions:
 1. " Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters" (as of 10 February 1999 the Convention NOT ratified by Ukraine and Republic of Moldova);
 2. " Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watersources and International Lakes" (as of 10 February 1999 the Convention NOT ratified by Ukraine);
 3. "Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance" (as of 10 February 1999 the Convention NOT ratified by Republic of Moldova)
 4. Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (as of 10

February 1999 the Convention NOT ratified by Republic of Moldova and Ukraine).

4. Legislative and State environmental institutions in Republic of Moldova and Ukraine should:
 1. Support NGO initiatives on establishing cooperation between different sectors of society and appropriate official institutions aimed at resolving transboundary environmental problems.
 2. Include NGO representatives into existing and/or newly created working groups on interstate, national and local levels.
5. To create a forum of public organizations of the Dniester river and Danube river lakes basins.
6. To undertake measures on informing and coordination of efforts aimed at resolving of the transboundary environmental problems in the Ukraine - Republic of Moldova region within the framework of the existing projects. To ensure transparency within making decision process.

Forms of co-operation to resolve the problems:

1. Bilateral agreements (for example, interstate Agreement on cooperation in field of environmental protection).
2. Joint regional programs and regional environmental action plans. Coordination of activities within development and implementation of the Local Environmental Action Plans.
3. Joint environmentally sound investment projects.
4. Holding joint environmental actions in the near-boundary regions devoted to the Day of the Earth, the Environmental Protection Day etc. Development of joint environmental education initiatives.
5. Experience exchange on creation of Regional Environmental Centres in Ukraine and Republic of Moldova.
6. Creation of coordinating working group, which consist of representatives of the legislative and state environmental institutions from Ukraine and Republics of Moldova, local authorities of the near-boundary territories and nongovernmental organizations.
7. Development of joint environmentally sound investment projects in the partnership with NGOs taking into account the following priority regions: middle Dniester river and Danube river lakes, interstate protected territory in the bottom part of Dniester river.

Internal and external resources to resolve the transboundary environmental problems:

1. **Internal resources:**

1. Environmental funds.
2. The payment for use of natural resources.
3. The budgets on state, regional and local levels.
4. Charitable funds.

2. **External resources:**

1. International programs, grants, credits for the environmentally sound investment projects, resources of the created New Regional Environmental Centres.
2. The intergovernmental relations (including support from other states).

The measures suggested to ensure political support of the transboundary environmental problems resolving process in the Ukraine - Republic of Moldova region:

1. Lobbying the environmentally sound programs and investment projects in cooperation with different Major Groups.
2. Preparation and signing of bilateral interstate Agreement on cooperation in field of the environmental protection.
3. Raising population knowledge and creating public support of common operations on transboundary issues.
4. Improving the schemes of interaction between Local Authorities, NGOs, Business and Industry Group on incountry and interstate levels.

Necessary institutional changes:

1. Creating the Euroregions, Ecoeuroregions. Improving the coordination of common activities on environmental issues between local authorities in Ukraine and Republic of Moldova through more active work on creation of the Euroregion: Ukraine - Republic of Moldova - Romania.
2. Development of the institutional and organizational interstate structures; expansion of communication between NGOs and development of partnership between governmental institutions with NGOs.