

Dr. Ania Grobicki, Executive Secretary GWP (Sweden)

Neutral Platform of the Global Water Partnership for Capacity Building in Water Sector of the Countries of Caucasus and Central Asia

Your Excellency, Mr. Azimov, Deputy Prime-Minister of the Republic of Uzbekistan!
Your Excellency, Mr. Fauchon, President of the World Water Council!
Honorable Ministers, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Global Water Partnership, thank you for the opportunity to address you today, on the occasion of this illustrious conference hosted by the Government of Uzbekistan. I am very pleased that this Conference, which is an important step in the preparatory process for the 6th World Water Forum, is taking place in Uzbekistan – a country with a long history of water development. In the same way as water scarcity is an urgent day-to-day reality in South Africa, my home country, which has made water security and water development into high-level strategic issues of national concern, Uzbekistan together with many other countries in the world also now faces water scarcity as an inescapable reality. This is in spite of the fact that Central Asia as a whole still has enough available water resources to cover the water demands of the growing economies and populations of the region – even when taking the impacts of climate change into account.

I have noted that Uzbekistan has proved its respect and commitment to the principles of international water legislation, when the country joined the two relevant international conventions, namely “The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes” (UN Economic Commission for Europe, 1992) as well as “The UN Convention on the Law of Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses” (established in 1997). I am aware that Uzbekistan always advocates for cooperation and mutual understanding, and makes every effort to elaborate joint approaches and programmes of water resources development in the Aral Sea basin and Central Asia, reaching a consensus with all interested parties for mutual benefit.

I am convinced that the water policy of Uzbekistan is based on a proper balance among social equity, economic considerations, and also taking account of the need for ecological stability. Here I see a similarity with the vision of the Global Water Partnership for water security, which I am representing here today. In accordance with the GWP’s vision, those three “Es” – social equity, economic efficiency and environmental sustainability – are the keys for long-term water development in the global agenda, as well as in the regional agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

GWP’s vision is for a water secure world – a world where all people have sufficient water for their daily needs, where economies can flourish, and where natural ecosystems continue to provide humanity with vital life-giving services. At the same time a water secure world is a world where people have some protection against the risks of droughts, of floods- protection from the extreme climate events which the IPCC has warned us will become more frequent and more severe with increasing global warming. Water security is an ambitious long-term goal for all countries, which can be approached step-by-step through implementing integrated water resources management, and developing water resources in a harmonious and equitable way,

considering the needs of the various economic sectors, and taking into account the views of all the key stakeholders. To this end, GWP provides the intellectual resources and practical tools underpinning all the various aspects of integrated water resources management – namely the policy environment, the institutional roles and relationships, and the management instruments needed. This knowledge base supports the development of our global action network, working through our 2400 Partner organizations worldwide in 157 countries. Within this network there are now 79 countries which have been accredited as Country Water Partnerships, working to implement IWRM and making use of the GWP's neutral platform for dialogue and the credibility of GWP internationally.

GWP CACENA is an integral part of the global network of GWP, bringing together 8 Country Water Partnerships and 147 Partner organizations in total. Today GWP CACENA as a Regional Water Partnership is a well established regional player within Central Asia and the Caucasus region, helping the region to resolve difficult transboundary water resources issues, as well as helping the countries of the region to develop an Integrated Water Resources Management approach in policies and practices in order to :

- Determine the vital water requirements of the region and countries
- Support our Partners by linking water requirements with available water resources;
- Support the efforts aimed at introducing integrated water resources management at regional, national, local and basin levels;
- Develop the essential tools for information and sharing of knowledge and experiences in the region.

The concept of providing a neutral platform for dialogue on water issues has grown in significance since GWP CACENA was established in 2002.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I believe that all participants of today's Conference remember the decisions of the Summit of Heads of Countries-Founders of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, which was held on April 28 2009 in Almaty. One of the principal decisions of the State Presidents was the following:

"The Parties assign the Executive Committee of the IFAS together with the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, the Interstate Commission for Sustainable Development of IFAS, with the involvement of national experts and donors, to develop a Programme of Actions for support of the Aral Sea basin countries for 2011-2015."

This programme is known as the ASBP-3. Later the IFAS Board agreed the objectives and framework of the ASBP-3, which includes four main directions:

1. Integrated Water Resources Management with consideration of the interests of all states
2. Environmental issues
3. Socio-economic issues
4. Strengthening of institutional and legal mechanisms for water resources management

On behalf of the GWP family, today I would like to convey a proposal to the Executive Committee of IFAS, proposing the involvement of GWP CACENA as a neutral platform to support the capacity development component of the ASBP-3. The idea is to conduct capacity development together with information dissemination as a cross-cutting programme for the four above-mentioned Directions of the ASBP-3.

GWP in the role of a knowledge provider and capacity facilitator finds it essential to establish alliances with other key actors in the region, who would contribute to the above-mentioned cross-cutting programmes, including financial support. These important actors and partners include on the one hand, UNDP and UNECE, who already provide assistance to the countries on IWRM policy dialogues and IWRM national planning, and on the other hand, ADB, SDC and USAID, who provide financial and technical assistance to the countries on practical IWRM implementation.

Thank you for attention!