



## Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC)

### Regional South Caucasus Meeting

Hotel Ambasadori, Tbilisi, Georgia

17-18 January 2007

## MEETING REPORT

<b>OBJECTIVES AND OUTLINE OF THE MEETING .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>OPENING AND BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE ENVSEC INITIATIVE .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>COUNTRY PERSPECTIVES.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>UPDATE ON PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTH CAUCASUS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Cluster 1: Environmental degradation and access to natural resources in areas of conflict.....	5
Cluster 2: Management of cross-border environmental concerns: water and biodiversity management and industrial and military legacies .....	9
Cluster 3: Population growth and rapid development in capital cities.....	10
Cross-cutting issues .....	11
<b>FUTURE STEPS: DISCUSSION ON FUTURE PROJECTS AND IDEAS FOR INCLUSION INTO ENVSEC SOUTH CAUCASUS WORK PROGRAMME..</b>	<b>13</b>
Coordination and Communication: Introduction and Plan of Action of Regional Coordination Officer, Regional Coordination between National Focal Points, Communication .....	14
<b>CONCLUSION AND MAIN OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>ANNEX I: Meeting Agenda.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>ANNEX II: List of Participant .....</b>	<b>18</b>

## **Objectives and outline of the Meeting**

The overall objective of the meeting was to review the progress of the ENVSEC Work Programme in the South Caucasus during 2006 and discuss future activities under the auspices of the ENVSEC Initiative. The meeting offered the opportunity to ENVSEC partner organizations, national focal points (NFPs) from the South Caucasus countries and other relevant regional and international organizations to discuss together main environmental priorities and the road ahead for ENVSEC for 2007-2009. To this end, the national environmental priorities of the South Caucasus were reviewed and ways of how ENVSEC can respond best to the current and emerging environmental threats identified. The discussions were grouped according to the three clusters as identified by national stakeholders in previous assessment consultations:

- Environmental degradation and access to natural resources in areas of conflict.
- Management of cross-border environmental concerns: water and biodiversity management, and industrial and military legacies.
- Population growth and rapid development in capital cities.

In each cluster discussion, a series of presentations have been organized to present current and potential activities for the Work Programme.

The second day of the meeting enabled to summarize the thoughts from first day's presentations and to discuss the presented project proposals.

## **Opening and brief introduction to the ENVSEC Initiative**

### *Welcoming remarks by David Swalley, OSCE Secretariat*

David Swalley, ENVSEC Regional Desk Officer for the South Caucasus, started the meeting by welcoming all, especially the ENVSEC National Focal Points (NFPs) from the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Ministries of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and gave a short briefing on the development of the ENVSEC Initiative in the South Caucasus. The initiative in the region began in the summer of 2004 with a series of national consultations in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan with the participation of government officials, civil society and academic experts. The identified and prioritised environment issues which could impact on human security were compiled in the South Caucasus Assessment Report (can be downloaded at <http://www.envsec.org/southcauc/index.php>) and provided the basis for the development of a work programme of projects. All projects aim at achieving the main objective of the ENVSEC Initiative to raise awareness of environment and security issues and to the degree possible remediate these threats.

### *Opening speech by Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environment of Georgia, Mr. Zaal Lomtadze*

Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environment of Georgia, Mr. Zaal Lomtadze, mentioned that the South Caucasus has been facing numerous difficulties in terms of

environmental security. He highlighted that nevertheless, there is a lot of hope and enthusiasm to overcome these difficulties in order to improve the security within in the environmental sector. Looking back on the last three years since the launch of the ENVSEC Initiative, Deputy Minister Lomtadze stated that some of the goals that were set have been achieved as in terms of linking together institutions but it is important to establish new expectations in the areas of concern and to continue to strengthen the ENVSEC partnership.

***Opening speech by Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, Ambassador Roy Reeve***

Head of the OSCE Mission to Georgia, Ambassador Roy Reeve, remarked that the ENVSEC Initiative is unique twofold as firstly it brings together a variety of stakeholders as government representatives, International Organizations and NGOs and secondly it links environmental security and conflicts in the area. He expressed his support for the ENVSEC Initiative and hopes that new ideas and concrete plans will be adopted to bring this significant initiative further.

## **Country Perspectives**

Brief presentations were given by representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia on the respective national priorities in the environmental sector that threaten human security.

**Armenia: Ms. Ruzanna Davtyan, Head of International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Nature Protection**

Ms. Davtyan identified the need for establishing a network of NFPs in order to facilitate the regional cooperation and the development of the Workplan for 2007. Furthermore, Ms. Davtyan voiced objections that the countries should have been consulted prior to the selection of a regional coordinator for ENVSEC.

*Achievements:*

- Armenia appreciates the participation of the OSCE and the other involved organizations in the OSCE-led Environmental Assessment Mission (EIA) to the fire-affected areas and believes that the outcomes of the EIA will contribute to improving regional cooperation.
- The process on establishing Aarhus Centres is moving forward. In close cooperation with the OSCE Office in Yerevan six Aarhus Centres have been opened in Armenia.
- The pilot project on the strategic environmental assessment of the Yerevan Master Plan identified opportunities for the practical application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). A national strategy identified short-term priority actions to be undertaken in the period of 2006-2008 and longer-term actions. Armenia expressed its support of the Belgrade Initiative on the SEA (Belgrade Ministerial Conference 2007).
- Armenia supports the continuation of UNDP/GEF Reducing Transboundary Degradation of the Kura-Aras River Basin.

*Objectives for the future:*

- Join Belgrade Initiative of the SEA, (continues transboundary water management in the framework of GEF/UNDP against degradation )
- Armenia welcomes the work of UNEP and other organizations regarding the development of the regional project on cooperation and sustainable development in the mountainous region of the South Caucasus but calls for improved coordination of the efforts.
- The Eco-regional Conservation Plan was adopted by the Ministers of Environment at the Ministerial Council in Berlin (9-11 March 2006) as a general guiding document. Need for further activities aiming at conserving ecosystems and endangered species of the South Caucasus.
- Armenia highlighted that earthquakes pose severe environmental risks which lead economic and human losses and the destruction of infrastructure. The full support of Armenia was given to assess the impact of earthquakes in order to raise awareness and reduce seismologic risks.

**Azerbaijan: Mr. Imran Abdulov, Deputy Head of the Department of Environmental and Nature Protection Policy, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources**

Mr. Abdulov stated that finding solutions to environmental and ecological problems remains an important priority of the Republic of Azerbaijan and highlighted that among others national plans have been developed in following fields:

- Environmental protection of the Caspian Sea.
- Preventing oil spills and the dissemination of organic pollution.
- Clearance of polluted areas.
- Development of forest resources, reforestation work.
- Sustainable socio-economic development.
- Exploration of alternative renewable energy resources.
- Restoration of biodiversity (establishment of seven national parks and plans to increase the territory under protection).

*Environmental concerns that need intensified attention:*

- Pollution of soils due to oil spills and toxic waste.
- Combating land degradation through restoration of soil and reforestation.
- Poor economic state in the zone of conflict.
- Need for investment in cleaning-up pollution resulting from oil exploitation.
- Need for adequate technological equipment for the disposal of toxic waste.
- Inadequate water management and salination that leads to further pollution of the Kura-Aras. As the rivers constitute a substantial part of the drinking water for the population, cleaning up and ensuring good quality of the rivers is one of the top priorities of Azerbaijan.
- Protection of mountainous regions.
- Developing projects on SEA.

An additional challenge for Azerbaijan is the issue of environmental degradation in uncontrolled territories, in particular the increased deforestation and the poor economic state in the zone of conflict.

**Georgia: Mr. Giorgi Kolbin, Head of Department of International Relations and Conventions, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection**

The ENVSEC priorities for Georgia remain the same as identified in 2003. Georgia's top priority is the peaceful resolution of the so called "frozen conflicts" on its territory. ENVSEC projects meet this priority well. Environmental protection in Abkhazia and South Ossetia helps to find solutions to the conflict. However, the unilateral involvement of international organizations in Abkhazia and South Ossetia without the involvement of Georgian authorities is unacceptable.

Mr. Kolbin mentioned the OSCE/ NATO South Caucasus River Monitoring Project as an example of success and supports the development of following projects:

- Reduction of flood risks along the Kodori River.
- Development of a Caucasus Convention, suggests the need to organize a new meeting on Deputy Minister level with representatives from all South Caucasus countries and relevant international organizations in order to build political will.
- , Georgia welcomes the idea of conducting an assessment of the clean-up of the Alkhalkalaki military base in Georgia and understands that the OSCE has informally indicated its interest in developing a project.
- Interested in initiatives related to this year's OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum topic of improving the efficient management of soil.

## **Update on Project Implementation in South Caucasus**

### ***Cluster 1: Environmental degradation and access to natural resources in areas of conflict***

#### **Environment and Security Issues in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Mr. Otto Simonett (Director, UNEP GRID-Arendal)**

The Environment and Security Assessments in South Caucasus in 2004 have identified environmental degradation in the frozen conflict zones as a high priority. As environment is a rather non-political issue, it offers a window of opportunity for transboundary co-operation.

The resolution of environmental issues in the frozen conflict zones could be facilitated through both a political diplomatic approach and a more practical approach by conducting assessments in cooperation with local experts. Main focus: environmental governance.

Main environmental priorities assessed in Abkhazia:

- marine environment and fish, industrial activities put pressure on the marine and coastal ecosystems of the sea.
- surface water resources and quality (large seasonal variation in run-off, elevated levels of suspended soils and organics during floods, furthermore leaking pipes, unstable pumping).
- hazardous substances (coal mining, nuclear accidents).
- state and management of forests.
- biodiversity (resulting from the conflict, some former cultural landscapes are now abandoned).
- natural disaster (seasonal emergency situations with landslides, mudflows, floods).

Next steps:

- continuation of a diplomatic approach.
- move away from general assessment (requires too many resources and main areas of problems known on the superficial level) rather address concrete issues directly.
- link environmental issues to economic development issues.
- move away from just regional projects, as some issues can also be addressed on the national level.

Main environmental priorities assessed in South Ossetia:

- forest
- mountain
- likelihood pastures
- economic issues

Environmental Impact of Mining Production, Dr. Armen Saghatelyan (Director of the Centre for Ecological-Noosphere Studies, Armenia)

**Project:** “The assessment of the impact of mining production upon the environment”

**Countries:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

**Local partners:** local scientific institutes

**Duration:** 3 years

**Budget:** 810.000 EUR (270.000 per country for 3 years)

**Background:** Mining districts pose severe threats to the environment and human health. Since the dissolution of the USSR and the liquidation of single state property rights for mining plants, there exists no unified strategy in terms of environmental conservation. Ambiguous positions of local self-governing bodies lead to the realization of rather short-term economic interests than long-term sustainable development. In addition, decreased awareness of the population and decision-makers on the risk can be observed. The collected data on ecotoxicological risk assessment of environmental pollution in the three countries of the South Caucasus lack a unified compatible methodological approach and therefore hinder the cooperation and coordination between local scientists in finding solutions of urgent environmental issues characteristic of the South Caucasus.

In 2002 a regional meeting ecotoxicological risk assessment of environmental pollution in the South Caucasus identified three risk groups:

1. *Armenia*: a copper mining and smelting plant in the city of Alaverdi
2. *Azerbaijan*: an aluminum plant in the city of Gyanja
3. *Georgia*: a mining and dressing and group of plants in the city of Marneuli

**Objective:** Applying unified standardized sampling and analyzing methods shall help to assess the impact of mining production on soils, water and vegetation in the South Caucasus. The creation and maintenance of a unified database for ecological risk to the South Caucasus on the project website, based on research outcomes, relevant recommendations are to be developed for the reduction of environmental pollution.

**Discussion:** Armenia expressed its support for projects in the field of mining as the mining industry pose of the main sources for transboundary pollution and therefore more studies in this field are needed.

The question was raised whether the project would use the data provided by the OSCE/NATO River Monitoring Project. The presenter responded that due to the sedimentation, the analysis of mercury, for example, along the river system requires different monitoring stations as used in the NATO/OSCE River Monitoring project. But where overlap can be identified, the already existing equipment will be used. The project will strengthen the cooperation between the laboratories that already collaborated in the case of the OSCE/NATO river monitoring project.

Seismology Network Project, Dr. Avetis Araklyan (President of the Armenian Seismology Association)

**Project:** “Strong Motion Network of the Southern Caucasus. Assessment of Earthquakes’ Impact on Infrastructure and the Environment”

**Countries:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia

**Local partners:** local scientific institutes

**Duration:** 30 months

**Budget:** 516.600 EUR (172.200 per country for 3 years)

**Background:** The Southern Caucasus is one of the most vulnerable regions to strong earthquakes. In recent years, the disaster risk has increased due to faulty land-use planning. Outdated building codes lead to inadequate building construction. There is lack of real data on earthquakes and the impact of earthquakes on land-use planning and prompt actions after earthquakes. Therefore it is an important task to carry out vulnerability assessments of critical structures sensitive to earthquakes (dams, oil spills, pipelines, waste storage).

In order to be able to improve the seismic resistance of buildings and structures it is necessary to have data on their response to earthquakes. For filling this gap, it is critical to develop a regional digital strong motion network which will collect recordings of regional and local earthquakes. The results obtained from the analysis of the data will provide information crucial for developing tools of disaster responses and management plans in the South Caucasus. In addition, the project will extend the

cooperation between scientist in academic and private sectors and government policy-makers. The project would be in line with ENVSEC priorities in the South Caucasus as it touches upon cross-border environmental concerns and would be a practical continuation of the Regional NATO SFP Project Seismic Risk in Large Cities of the South Caucasus and the ISTC Project “Caucasian Seismic Information Network for Hazard and Risk Assessment.

**Objectives:**

- Develop a regional attenuation model for the purpose of seismic hazard assessment.
- Develop an online communication network for improved data acquisition and information exchange between the data acquisition centers of the South Caucasus countries.
- Assessment of the environmental impact of strong earthquakes and secondary hazards triggered by them. The data obtained shall allow objective analyses in order to increase the safety of population, infrastructure and environment.
- Training of young scientists on strong motion network installation, data processing and data analysis.
- Establish communication channel between scientists and local authorities in order to increase the knowledge of decision-makers on possible consequences of strong earthquake impact.
- Identify the critical sights that need to be protected from earthquakes (i.e. waste dumping sites).

**Discussion:** The question of funding was raised and it was proposed to divide funding between organizations. Whereas NATO might cover the technical part of the project, OSCE could provide funding for training, workshops and seminars. UNDP may engage both in the technical part and in providing training.

The willingness of the scientific organizations of the three countries to engage in the project was highlighted. Armenia expressed the full support of the government for this project. Also Georgia welcomed the project proposal but mentioned that the meeting is not the adequate place for a formal approval. Azerbaijan was also supportive but stated that no formal requests have yet reached Azeri government, just contact by research institutes.

The point was raised by Georgia that there is a need for formal mechanisms to approve project proposals as presenting them only at conferences is not sufficient but rather there is a need for a systematic approach for presenting project proposals.

The discussion stressed that the evaluation and assessment of possible hazardous consequences is prerequisite for adequate forecast, prevention and mitigation.

The presenter pointed out that involving local authorities in launching the project and the development of materials (mapping, scenario development) and publishing leaflets, brochures would contribute to increasing the disaster awareness of the population.



The discussion concluded that the project touches upon important environmental concerns in the region and pose potentials for transforming security risks into cooperation.

***Cluster 2: Management of cross-border environmental concerns: water and biodiversity management and industrial and military legacies***

UNDP/GEF Reducing Transboundary Degradation of the Kura-Aras River Basin, Mr. Malkhaz Adeishvili (National Co-ordinator in Georgia, UNDP/GEF Kura-Aras River basin Project)

**Project:** UNDP/GEF Project Reducing Transboundary Degradation of the Kura-Aras River Basin – PDF B Phase

**Countries:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran

**Background:** The project is currently in the preparation phase (PDF-B) with the project document to be finalized in early 2007. Efforts are being made to involve Turkey in the project. The project preparation phase began in September 2005 and has following main activities:

- A Transboundary Diagnostic Assessment (TDA) of the priority environmental problems in the Kura-Aras basin.
- Development of Kura-Aras Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and National Action Plans. (completed).
- A stakeholder analysis and the establishment of a NGO forum.
- Development of demonstration projects for implementation in the main project (under preparation).
- Agreement on an intern-governmental legislative and institutional mechanism for coordination and monitoring of SAP implementation (regional meetings planned in April, September 2007).
- Development of a full size project document (under preparation).
- Obtain country endorsement and submit to GEF Council (spring 2008).

**Objectives:**

- ensure that quality and quantity of the water throughout the Kura-Aras river systems meets the short and long term requirements for optimum ecosystem function and the needs of the communities.
- reduce the contaminated load into the Caspian Sea and improve its water quality.
- foster regional cooperation for river basin management.
- increase national and regional capacities to address water quality and quantity problems.
- to make key improvements to water quality and quantity at specific points on the rivers.

NATO/OSCE South Caucasus River Monitoring Project, Mr. Bahruz Suleymanov (Co-Director, Azerbaijan)

Continuation of the project “OSCE/ NATO SfP 977991 South Caucasus River Monitoring” (supported by Statoil), 2002-2007

**Background:** In contrast to the situation before the implementation of the project, now there is modern equipment in place and there exists reliable data on the pollution of the Kura-Araks. The obtained data enables researchers to make forecasts on the quality and quantity of water and in contrast to 2002, as now there is a structure for carrying out systematic scientific cooperation.

**Project tasks:**

- development of cooperative river monitoring infrastructure (carrying out of sampling, field tests, lab analyses procedures), 2003.
- Study of dissolved heavy metals in Kura-Araks and their tributaries, 2004-2007.
- Study of radionuclides in Kura-Araks and their tributaries, 2005-2006.
- Study of restricted POPs in Kura-Araks and their tributaries, 2006-2007.

Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Mountainous Regions in the Caucasus, Ms. Clara Nobbe (Consultant, UNEP Vienna)

All three countries of the South Caucasus have indicated that protection of mountainous regions as one of their priorities. UNEP is currently working in cooperation with REC on the development of a Mountain Partnership Convention. The main aim is to establish a legal instrument that enhances transboundary cooperation in protecting and maintaining the mountain eco-region of the South Caucasus. A prerequisite for the establishment of such a legal instrument is to achieve closer cooperation in the environmental sector. Regional cooperation between scientific communities, NGOs, governmental authorities provides the possibility to open up new channels of cooperation. In order to avoid duplications, no new programs and organizations shall be developed but rather cooperation with the existing ones should be enhanced (i.e. Alpine Convention and Carpathian Convention).

Road ahead:

- Finalizing the background paper on existing programmes and initiatives, circulate end of January 2007.
- mapping exercises.
- consultation meeting to discuss the scope of legal framework and areas of partnership (REC, stakeholders, NGO community).

***Cluster 3: Population growth and rapid development in capital cities***

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Ms. Henrieta Martonakova (Programme Manager, UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre for Europe and CIS)

**Project:** “Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – Promotion and Capacity Building”

**Countries:** Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus

**Organizations:** UNDP, REC for Central and Eastern Europe, UNECE

**Objectives:** The overall objective is to improve decision-making processes in selected NIS countries, by promoting the implementation of SEA as a key instrument for integrating environmental concerns into the development frameworks of the countries SEA with following ENVSEC objectives:

- integrating environmental issues and concerns into other sectoral policies and programmes through including the environmental assessment into national programmes.
- improving access to information and involving public participation in decision-making.
- capacity building on policy planning and policy integration and on integrated assessment methodologies.

**Discussion:** A representative of CENN underlined that the experience in EIA and SEA were successful. Legal and policy instruments are very important in the South Caucasus countries but it is in vain to invest in legal instrument as long as there exists no transparency in decision-making and public participation.

The representative of Azerbaijan mentioned that Azerbaijan is considering the submission of an official project approval for a SEA project in Azerbaijan. Armenia suggested to have a Ministerial Meeting in order enforce the political commitment and to bring the process further.

### ***Cross-cutting issues***

#### 1. Public Environmental Information Centres and Regional Aarhus Workshop

Under the ENVSEC initiative a number of Aarhus Centres have been established which proved to be viable instruments for improving public participation. The Regional Aarhus Centres/ Public Environmental Information Centres Meeting which was held in Gudauri, Georgia, from 26-27 September 2006, aimed at enabling an open discussion on the needs and gaps as well as on the best practices of various Centres from South Caucasus, Central Asia, and South Eastern Europe. The meeting concluded that there has been considerable improvements in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar of the Aarhus Convention but the 3<sup>rd</sup> pillar (access to justice) ought to be developed further..

The Georgian NFP asked the OSCE Mission to Georgia for support in organizing training for judges and organization of public meetings on legislation

The Armenian NFP stated that Armenia has established six Centres and three more are planned. It was highlighted that the Aarhus Convention is not solely an environmental convention but rather a political convention as it provides for a meeting place for democratic discourse on environmental concerns. A representative

of CENN called to bear in mind that Aarhus Centres are not just a meeting room but rather advocates on human rights and expressed skepticism on locating Aarhus Centres in governmental buildings.

During the discussion also the question of financial sustainability of Aarhus Centres was raised. In the Armenian example, Aarhus Centres were created with the support of the OSCE Office in Yerevan which provided funding mainly to infrastructure and equipment. It was suggested that the question of sustainability must be addressed on a case-by-case basis. In the case of Baku, the transition has already started and the Centre is in the hands of the Ministry. Jeannette Kloetzer highlighted that the MoU between the OSCE and the Armenian Ministry of Nature Protection obliges the Ministry to provide premises for the Centres without charge. In addition, UNDP and embassies are contributing to the funding of the Centres' operating costs.

## 2. Environmental Media Festival

A representative of CENN underlined the success of the 1<sup>st</sup> independent documentary film festival "Footprint – Festival" that took place in December 2006 in Tbilisi and gathered youth from all South Caucasus countries. Movies were subdivided in three categories: Man versus Nature, Heroes of Our Time and Cultural Identity and Globalization and thereby combined environmental issues with questions of marginalized groups etc. The festival showed the importance of involving young people as they have new ideas and are generally environmental sensitive.

## 3. Integrating Gender Perspective into Work Programme

With regards to gender mainstreaming of ENVSEC projects, it was mentioned that statistical studies should be carried out in order to identify the ratio of female and male staff in diverse organizations as well as the number of female staff in management position.

In addition, it was stressed that "counting heads" was not sufficient but that there is a need to consider and reflect the different concerns of women and men when it comes to designing and carrying out of projects.

## 4. 2007 OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

David Swalley gave a brief introduction on the annual OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum. He mentioned that this year's Forum will be held under the OSCE Spanish Chairmanship and will focus on environmental issues, specifically on "Key challenges to ensure environmental security and sustainable development in the OSCE area: Land degradation, soil contamination and water management". Part One of the Forum will be held in Vienna on 22 and 23 January 2007 and Part Two will be held in Zaragoza on the 12-13 March 2007 and Prague from 21 to 23 May 2007. David Swalley encouraged the participants to consider how synergies between the OSCE activities in promoting practices for improved land degradation and water management and ENVSEC projects could be established

## **Future Steps: Discussion on future projects and ideas for inclusion into ENVSEC South Caucasus Work Programme**

The idea of the session on future steps was to enable an open discussion on project proposals presented at the meeting and other priority issues.

During the discussion on the project proposal for assessing mining effects on the environment, Armen Saghtelyan stressed that the project is crucial for achieving long-term effects in field of health protection. Jeanette Kloetzer added that the project has also an important economic dimension as the closure of mining sites leads to economic losses. In order to compensate for this, there is a need for finding alternatives and providing adequate standards and legislation. Research and data are prerequisites for creating a legal framework that accounts for compensation of the economic loss of private companies.

The representative of Azerbaijan mentioned that the “polluter pays principle” has been inadequately introduced in the South Caucasus as the fines are too low and therefore do not provide incentives for installing treatment plants. There is a need for more efficient and innovative mechanisms and improved enforcement (awareness raising).

In the course of the discussion, the question was raised whether the focus of ENVSEC projects should be on risk assessment or rather on mitigation and cleaning-up of environmental threats. A general consensus was reached that obtaining objective scientific data was necessary for discussions, forecasts, early warning and assessing possible mitigation activities. Furthermore it offers a good opportunity for regional cooperation among scientific communities. Nevertheless, scientific monitoring is not sufficient. It is crucial to also consider entry points after the assessment how obtained data could be applied. The Georgian NFP highlighted that monitoring and cleaning-up activities need to go be carried out in parallel. Also the Azerbaijani NFP stated that collecting scientific data is not sufficient but that it is important to take concrete measures (planning to undertake a project on SEA). The Armenian NFP agreed that monitoring is crucial and mentioned the Melange project as an example where scientific and state monitoring have been successfully combined. Monitoring should be part of the ENVSEC projects but not be the only focus. In this context, the Armenian NFP highlighted that Armenia lacks well operable treatment plans and lacks investment in installing new plants. Furthermore, Armenia stressed that all ENVSEC projects should include a regional aspect in order to promote cooperation.

Nodar Kekelidze stressed that the joint-studies and measurements undertaken under the framework of NATO/OSCE project has resulted in objective data and a realistic picture of the condition of the Kura Aras Rivers.

## ***Coordination and Communication: Introduction and Plan of Action of Regional Coordination Officer, Regional Coordination between National Focal Points, Communication***

The session on coordination and communication started by clarification by David Swalley on the recently created position of an ENVSEC assistant located in the OSCE Mission to Georgia. The position was a reaction to the independent evaluation of ENVSEC in the South Caucasus, initiated by CIDA, which identified the need for better communication and coordination between the ENVSEC Partners.. As the field offices of the ENVSEC organizations are overloaded with additional work and do not have free capacity to constantly work on improving communication, regional meetings, and coordination, a new position, supporting the OSCE field missions, was created in order to ease information sharing and to serve the countries better. Since ENVSEC requires regional coordination and project meetings to be held, this position would be best located in Tbilisi to assist the OSCE Mission in organizing such events, and could be used to support OSCE Offices in Armenia and Azerbaijan. The current ENVSEC work programme in the South Caucasus is not large enough to justify the expense of hiring an assistant for each country, although this could be considered in the future as the work programme develops.

In order to prevent confusion, it was suggested to rename the position to something other than a Regional Coordination Officer.

Azerbaijan stated that it should have been informed of the new position beforehand. All the three countries of the South Caucasus should have been informed timely to allow each country to participate in the competition for the position.

The Georgian representative mentioned that the information on the new position was placed on the Georgian website so that Armenia and Azerbaijan could have obtained the information but added that it might have been better to inform the respective countries in another way.

The representative of Armenia referred to the MoU that was signed in 2003 and that no endorsement was received about the change in the management, therefore the new position was not approved by Armenia and unlawful. The representative called upon the ENVSEC partners to inform the respective governments by official letters about the change of management and the TORs of the position.

David Swalley expressed his readiness to rename the title of the position and prepare official letters clarifying the issue.

## **Conclusion and Main Outcomes of the Meeting**

The meeting welcomed the idea of presenting project proposals at the meeting and stressed the need for follow-up.

The Chairman of the meeting used this opportunity to once again underline the uniqueness of the ENVSEC Initiative as it builds on the combined strengths of the involved organizations comprising environmental assessments, security and environmental governance, economic development, scientific expertise and policies

and legislations. ENVSEC intends to provide a framework for co-operation on environmental issues across borders, and promote peace and stability through environmental co-operation and sustainable development.

**Key Outcomes:**

- Participating countries welcomed the progress of ENVSEC during the past year, but called upon the ENVSEC Partnership to strengthen the work programme and coordination further during the 2007-9 period.
- A high priority of the countries of the South Caucasus is addressing environment issues in zones of conflict..
- ENVSEC projects should combine monitoring and remediation activities in the forthcoming Work Programme..
- Regional meetings provide a good opportunity for presenting project proposals but there is a need for developing a more systematic approach for the approval of projects.
- Need for further clarification and follow-up on the newly created position of an ENVSEC Assistant and other coordination issues.
- ENVSEC Partners will continue work programme development in 2007 and will send project proposals to national focal points for country approval of any activities undertaken in the ENVSEC Initiative.

## **ANNEX I: Meeting Agenda**



### **Regional Meeting of the ENVSEC Initiative in the South Caucasus**

**January 17-18, 2007**  
**Ambadori Hotel - Tbilisi, Georgia**

#### **January 17**

**09:00 - 09:30 Registration**

**09:30 – 10:00 Opening Session: Welcome and Introductions**

- Deputy Minister Zaal Lomtadze, Ministry of Environment, Republic of Georgia
- Ambassador Roy Reeve, Head of Office, OSCE Mission to Georgia
- Mr. David Swalley, Economic/Environmental Officer, OSCE Secretariat

**10:00 – 11:00 Country Perspectives on ENVSEC Priorities and Work Programme by Environmental National Focal Points**

**Moderator:** Mr. David Swalley, Economic/Environmental Officer, OSCE Secretariat

- Armenia, Ms. Ruzanna Davtyan, Head of International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Nature Protection
- Azerbaijan, Mr. Imran Abdulov, Deputy Head of the Department of Environmental and Nature Protection Policy, Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources
- Georgia, Mr. George Kolbin, Head of Department of International Relations and Conventions, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection

**11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break**

**11:30 – 13:00 Update on Project Implementation in South Caucasus**

**Cluster 1:** Environmental degradation and access to natural resources in areas of conflict

**Moderator:** Ms. Jeannette Kloetzer, Economic/Environmental Officer, OSCE Office in Yerevan

- Environment and Security Issues in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Mr. Otto Simonett (Director, UNEP GRID-Arendal)
- Environmental Impact of Mining Production, Dr. Armen Saghatelyan, (Director of the Centre for Ecological-Noosphere Studies, Armenia)
- Seismological Network Project, Dr. Avetis Arakelyan, (President of the Armenian Seismology Association)

**13:00 – 14:30 Lunch**



**14:30 – 16:00 Update on Project Implementation in South Caucasus**

**Cluster 2:** Management of cross-border environmental concerns: water and biodiversity management, and industrial and military legacies.

**Moderator:** Mr. Otto Simonett, Director, UNEP GRID-Arendal

- UNDP/GEF Reducing Transboundary Degradation of the Kura-Aras River Basin, Mr. Malkhaz Adeishvili (National Co-ordinator in Georgia, UNDP/GEF Kura-Aras River Basin)
- NATO/OSCE South Caucasus River Monitoring Project, Mr. Bahruz Suleymanov, (Co-Director, Azerbaijan)
- Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Mountainous Regions in the Caucasus, Ms. Clara Nobbe, (Consultant, UNEP)

**Cluster 3:** Population growth and rapid development in capital cities

- Strategic Environmental Assessment, Ms. Henrieta Martonakova, (Programme Manager, UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre for Europe and CIS)

**16:00 – 16:30 Coffee Break**

**16:30 – 17:30 Update on Project Implementation in South Caucasus**

**Cross-cutting issues:**

**Moderator:** Mr. Bill Hanlon, Economic/Environmental Officer, OSCE Mission in Georgia

- Public Environmental Information Centres and Regional Aarhus Workshop
- Environmental Media Festival
- Integrating Gender Perspectives into Work Programme
- 2007 OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum

**17:30 – 18:00 Conclusion of First Day**

**20:00 Dinner**

**January 18**

**09:30 – 11:00 Future Steps: Discussion on future projects and ideas for inclusion into ENVSEC South Caucasus Work Programme**

**11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break**

**11:30 – 12:30 Coordination and Communication**

- Introduction and Plan of action for Regional Coordination Officer
- Regional Coordination between National Focal Points
- Communication

**12:30 – 13:00 Conclusion of Meeting**

## ANNEX II: List of Participant



# Regional Meeting of the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC) in the South Caucasus

## List of Participants

17-18 January 2007  
Hotel Ambadori, Tbilisi, Georgia

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