

Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions in the Caucasus

Background

The Caucasus is a unique region, rich in landscape, bio- and agro-diversity, and one of the twelve centers of the world's biodiversity. The region plays an important role in today's geopolitics and global economy. However, multidirectional trends in the economy and unsustainable management and use of natural resources have led to increasing undesirable changes in the use of the landscape, local water pollution, human-induced soil and forest degradation.

The Caucasus region is also vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which must be considered in the planning of almost any economic activity. The negative impacts of climate change may affect every sphere of economic development, from agriculture to tourism, and in particular the water sector. Common approaches towards solving environmental problems will strengthen early warning and facilitate information exchange, whereas uncoordinated decision-making in the area of resource management could lead to tensions.

As the European and global experience show, the challenges of sustainable development cannot be effectively solved without intergovernmental cooperation. Examples are the Alpine and Carpathian regions, where transnational cooperation have provided a solid base for measures to optimize development, environmental protection, and improve the living conditions of the population. Specific programs support networks of protected areas, transport, communications, forests, water, agriculture, support for joint monitoring networks preventing the risk of natural hazards (avalanches, floods, fires, etc.).

This ENVSEC project supports the process of regional cooperation and progressive dialogue on natural resources amongst the six countries of wider Caucasus. The cooperation will focus on strengthening partnerships for the protection and sustainable development of the mountain regions of the Caucasus.

Objectives

Enhance regional cooperation for the protection and sustainable development of the Caucasus mountain region and forests.

Highlights

- 1) "Paper on Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions of the Caucasus: A Case for Intergovernmental Cooperation" developed by UNEP and the REC Caucasus (2009) on the basis of the recommendations included in the Ministerial Statement which was agreed upon on 16 November 2007 in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, by the high level representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey.
- 2) Follow-up consultations to:
 - (i) Organise a High Level Caucasus Mountain Meeting;
 - (ii) Explore the development and adoption of appropriate mechanisms and instruments for cooperation in the region.



Implementing ENVSEC partner:

UNEP Vienna ISCC
in cooperation with: REC
Caucasus, EURAC, Alpine
Convention Secretariat

Duration:
November 2009- December
2013

Region:
Southern Caucasus (Armenia,
Azerbaijan, Georgia)

ENVSEC budget:
235,000 USD

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