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FORUM

Cross-border Cooperation in the Ferghana Valley

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The Ferghana Valley is divided among the three Central Asian Republics of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the three republics became independent and the internal boundaries transformed into international borders. The communities in the Ferghana Valley have been the biggest losers, as the massive transfer payments of the Soviet Union to the Central Asian republics dried up. In addition, important local economic links were disrupted because of the new borders. High unemployment, declining standards of living and deterioration of the infrastructure testify to the difficult economic situation. About 14 million people live in the Ferghana Valley today. Of these, over half live in Uzbekistan. The key problem in the Ferghana Valley, however, is not over-population but scarcity and mismanagement of the critical natural resources, land and water. Most densely populated regions in Europe are characterised by the presence of industry, while agriculture is the most important source of income in the Ferghana Valley. Within Central Asia the Ferghana Valley is considered to be a particularly conflict-sensitive region. Conflicts in the multi-ethnic Valley threaten the stability of the entire extended region.

The development of a cross-border partnership among local communities in the Ferghana Valley is taking place in the broader context of regional cooperation initiatives that address environmental and development concerns. Within such a regional programme, the Environment and Security Initiative ENVSEC, a "Cross-border cooperation between communities in the Ferghana Valley in the context of sustainable development" project was initiated in 2007 with financial assistance from the German Federal Environment Ministry (see www.envsec.org). Through the project, the local level has become the first stage of cooperation. This approach makes sense since local resource utilisation is ultimately the immediate level of natural resource use in Central Asia. Direct water use takes place at the local level, including irrigation. Community health, social security and, most of all, the rise in tensions between different ethnic and religious groups are all critical issues that arise at the local level. The author was able to interview local stakeholders at the village level as well as politicians and experts (including NGOs) about the perspectives for cross-border cooperation during a three-week field trip in the region.

Good examples of cooperation at the local level could be networks of NGOs and communities or even between companies, e.g. the Alliance of Central Asian Mountain Communities (AGOCA); "Valley of Peace" (Ferghana Valley NGO Network "Dolina Mira") comprising 26 NGOs from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan etc. Apart from these there are also traditional (non- or only partially formalised) networks. For the communities, seasonal grazing rights in the form of animal migration from mountainous to lower level pastures are the most important issue. Herds from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are driven to pastures in Kyrgyzstan in summer. Added to this are bazaars, which sprang up spontaneously along the borders. Community based tourism (CBT) represents a relatively new form of cooperation.

Not all countries have been equally active in such local partnerships. Kyrgyzstan has been the most active while local level cooperation is picking up steam in Tajikistan. Uzbekistan has so far not participated in this cooperation process due to a number of factors. For example, the events of 1999 – 2001 in the Batken area of Kyrgyzstan halted cross-border cooperation with Uzbekistan, as Kirgiz and Uzbek security forces fought with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), which had entered Kyrgyzstan from Tajikistan. Many important issues relating to the Ferghana Valley have only been partially included in development programmes, such as ENVSEC's, because of Uzbekistan's non-participation.

The unequal degree of involvement of communities in the Ferghana Valley in building the local partnership is a consequence of various social and economic factors in the Valley. Despite a shared history during the Soviet period, these countries have different legal and institutional structures for cooperation at the local level. The main point of difference is the depth and degree of state influence at the local level. This ranges from relatively strong influence in Uzbekistan to weak influence in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The process of decentralisation has been different in each of these countries. While in Uzbekistan the process is still weak, donors and the state have made resolute attempts at decentralisation in Kyrgyzstan. In Tajikistan decentralisation has been a "spontaneous" outcome of the state not having sufficient funds to resolve problems at the local level.

Amongst the numerous issues for the local partnership, the question of who would function as the official representatives and members of the local network assumed great importance. Local communities tend to be based on traditional structures (extended families, neighbourhoods - mahallyas, shared use of natural resources etc.). A further factor is that local governments still only have weak autonomy. The extremely slow pace of institutional change directed at building local self government is impeding the process. At the central government level the need for local cooperation is recognised and viewed positively. However, there is a lack of sustained support. The legal system and the mechanisms for law enforcement are not efficient enough to resolve the practical issues. A clear demarcation between the functions and jurisdiction of the state and local self government still does not exist. Budgets are prepared "top down". The local communities are too poor to fund their own budget plans.

Support to local networks in the Ferghana Valley is a requirement for sustainable cross-border development. It requires technical and financial assistance. The following thematic areas and projects can contribute to network-building in the Ferghana Valley: Assistance to local initiatives for sustainable development through a partnership in the Ferghana Valley; support for developing mechanisms for sustainable and conflict-free resource use; monitoring of the environmental situation in the Ferghana Valley.

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POLICY & RESEARCH

Ethiopia and the Nile: Dilemmas of National and Regional Hydro-politics

In his thesis "Ethiopia and the Nile", author Yacob Arsano discusses the national and regional dilemmas of hydro-politics in the Eastern Nile Basin countries of Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt and Eritrea. At the national level, the study highlights two issues: the dilemma between the need to develop the available water resources to overcome the debilitating poverty on the one hand, and the risk of limited institutional and financial capacity to develop such water resources on the other. At the regional level, the author states that the shared waters and common cultural heritage unify the peoples of the Eastern Nile basin, while the colonial legacy, vestiges of the Cold War era, and unilateral and nationalistic strategies over water resource development have led to regional tensions and incompatible legal doctrines. The study traces the historical development that explains the present day situation, in view to understanding the dilemmas and highlighting ways to overcome them. Against this backdrop, ECC editors asked the author about the unifying and divisive factors and the options for cooperation in this environmentally and politically important region.

ECC-Editors: Against the backdrop of your study, what are the key factors for a positive development in the Nile Basin and what are the major problems?

Yacob Arsano: The Nile Basin states have accepted a shared vision on the cooperative utilisation and management of the Nile waters. They have agreed to work out an action plan towards establishing and enhancing shared benefits through multi-purpose projects on the shared waters of the Nile. Quite a few rudimentary programs have been laid down and facilitation offices and organisational structures have been established. The above are the key factors for positive developments in the Nile Basin.

On the other hand, there is a lingering problem that the Nile basin states have not been able to establish a legal and institutional mechanism to support and give shape to the inter-riparian cooperative efforts. The riparian states will have yet to establish confidence and trust in one another to fully cooperate under a framework mutually accepted and safeguarded.

ECC-Editors: When you think of past and current trends in the Nile region, do you see any risks for "water wars" within or between states?

Yacob Arsano: I do not see any risk of "water wars" within and between states in the Nile Basin on account of shared waters of the Nile. Considering that the waters are shared and always will be, the riparian countries cannot afford to go to an unwinnable war. To the contrary, shared waters can better serve as catalyst for cooperation rather than conflict.

ECC-Editors: Do you think that the Nile River Basin Initiative (NBI) is an appropriate mechanism to defuse tensions on the national and regional level?

Yacob Arsano: The Nile Basin Initiative has been able to bring the riparian states on board for dialogue towards establishing plans for cooperative utilisation and management of the water resources, and to make an effort towards establishing a legal /institutional framework. The NBI can be an appropriate mechanism when it is 'owned' and financially supported by the riparian states. NBI's sustainability depends on its independence and internal dynamics.

ECC-Editors: Thank you very much for the interview.

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The paper "Ethiopia and the Nile" has been published as part of the Environment and Conflict Transformation series of the Center for Security Studies (CSS), ETH Zurich and is available for download at <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/pubs/ph/details.cfm?lng=en&id=14399>

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The Role of Oil in International Conflict

Increasing competition for oil does not automatically lead to "oil wars" – as Matthias Basedau from Hamburg's GIGA Institute claims. In his article, "Erdölkriege – Kriege der Zukunft?" (Wars over Oil – Wars of the Future?), he argues that international resource management failures have to merge with heavy dependency on oil before they develop the potential for conflict escalation. Larger oil importing countries, however, possess quite a few options to overcome (short-term) shortages, such as switching to alternative energy sources. Additionally, history has shown that the emergence of so-called international "oil wars" can not be traced back to the single factor oil, but rather to a whole conglomeration of influencing factors, which all come into play. Direct aggressive confrontation between the large oil importers, namely China and the US, is therefore unlikely to evolve.

Intra-state violence, in contrast, is more likely to increase. At present, armed conflicts between rebel groups and governments of oil exporting countries are the most common form of oil-related violent conflict. The expansion of oil exploitation might well contribute to a diffusion and expansion of such conflicts. The paper also highlights that several other multipliers play a key role in the emergence of inner state oil conflicts, such as bad or weak governance and a low overall level of development. As an increase in oil prices may also result in growing competition between importing countries, the diversification of economies and energy sources in both oil importing and exporting countries can contribute significantly to reducing such conflict potential. Besides, a stronger international legal framework and multilateral cooperation is required, not only to increase transparency in the oil business, but particularly to keep the likelihood of international wars over oil at the current low level. (*Achim Maas*)

The article is available in German at http://www.giga-hamburg.de/dlcounter/download.php?d=/content/publikationen/pdf/gf_global_0706.pdf

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About the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

On 13 September the General Assembly (GA) finally adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as a result of more than 22 years of debate among governments and indigenous peoples. In 46 articles, the declaration sets out the rights of indigenous peoples, including their rights to self-determination, land ownership, use of resources, identity, culture, education and legal and political institutions. The document, which is non-binding, outlaws discrimination against indigenous peoples and promotes their full and effective participation in all matters that concern them. It is regarded the most important instrument for the protection of indigenous rights worldwide. The declaration has been adopted by the Human Rights Council already in June 2006, but especially Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States have been lobbying against it, preventing its adoption in the GA. This year, however, they were the only opposing votes, with the majority of 143 countries voting in favour.

The major reason for the year-long dissensions is the right to self-determination, depicted in article 4. For the indigenous delegates this constitutes the fundamental cornerstone of the declaration, whereas governments consider it a threat to their national and territorial integrity. Hence, the Canadian government said it appreciates the "spirit" of the declaration, but refuses its support because it "contains provisions that are fundamentally incompatible with Canada's constitutional framework."

Another sensitive issue concerns the restitution or compensation for land and resources, "traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used" by native peoples, "and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior and informed consent." (Article 28). In the case of New Zealand, as the government stated, "this covers potentially the entire country." For the more than 370 million indigenous people worldwide the declaration marks a historic milestone for their rights – its effective national implementation, however, will be the test of commitment of the international community to actually fulfil those rights. (*Christiane Roettger*)

The whole text of the Declaration as well as the statements and press releases can be found at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/declaration.html>

Further information on the rights of Indigenous Peoples is available at <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/studyguides/indigenous.html>

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African Transboundary Aquifers: A Race to the Pump House?

Approximately 40 transboundary aquifer systems underlie the African continent. The considerable amounts of water stored underground provide significant opportunities for the social and economic development of many African countries. Its relevance is growing as high quality surface water resources become scarcer and less reliable with growing population, increasing pollution, and the effects of climate change.

By nature, most groundwater aquifers underlie more than one country. While transboundary river and lake basins have been studied extensively, information on Africa's groundwater resources is relatively scarce: What are typical riparian constellations and specific cooperation problems on transboundary aquifers? What are the incentives for the riparian states to cooperate? Are river/lake basin organizations

adequate forums for transboundary aquifer management? A new study prepared by the German Development Institute presenting the outcomes of the research project "Transboundary Groundwater Management in Africa" contributes to filling these knowledge gaps. Based on five detailed case studies, a literature-based screening of 40 African transboundary aquifer systems, as well as experiences in other parts of the world, the authors identify suitable cooperation mechanisms and recommendations for German development cooperation.

The project results were presented during a one day seminar dedicated to transboundary groundwater management in Africa at the World Water Week in Stockholm on August 16. In her presentation, Waltina Scheumann stressed that even though negative transboundary impacts deriving from national groundwater usage are rarely observed at present, they may well develop if national unilateral activities continue. If the potential of groundwater utilization is going to be realized, interstate cooperation will become imperative in order to prevent a race to the pump house. (*Annika Kramer and Waltina Scheumann*)

The project results will be published in the German Development Institute's "Studies" Series in November 2007 http://www.die-gdi.de/die_homepage.nsf/FSdpub?OpenFrameset

Further information can be obtained from Waltina Scheumann at waltina.scheumann@die-gdi.de

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CONFERENCE REPORTS

"Energy-Resources-Peace": Problems and Answers Remain Unclear

The degradation of natural resources and the impact of climate change together with increasing consumption, population growth and economic development pose serious threats to peace and stability – but a clear answer on how to react to this problem is still missing. Instead, a myriad of possible solutions and approaches exist, which have been discussed by nearly 100 participants during the conference "Energy-Resources-Peace", which took place on 17 September in Osnabruck. The event was organised by the German Peace Foundation, the German Environmental Foundation, the Right Livelihood Foundation and the North-Rhine-Westphalia Foundation. Speakers included several laureates of the Right Livelihood Awards as well as the German Environmental Award.

Several response strategies were mentioned during sessions, including enhanced energy efficiency, further advancements and transfer of technology, a change in lifestyle and a massive reallocation and restocking of funds for renewable energy sources. While those approaches were appreciated by most of the audience, their scope and feasibility were perceived very differently and in some parts heavily criticized. Focussing only on technological solutions, for instance, might have significant negative consequences. Several speakers highlighted bio or agro fuels in this connection. Those fuels contribute little to the reduction of carbon emissions and were even considered an "aggression against biodiversity", as Ernst-Ulrich von Weizsäcker stated. Furthermore, they could cause a sharp increase in food prices, as observed in spring 2007 in Mexico.

However, disagreement not only subsisted with regard to possible solutions, but also when it came to the identification of the core problem: While climate change was dominating the discussions in large parts, issues concerning energy (security), water (scarcity), (loss of) biodiversity and the current global trade system – such as agricultural subsidies – also featured highly during sessions. In the end, participants at least confirmed the fact that all issues require urgent action. (*Achim Maas*)

Further information is available at <http://www.dbu.de/012007> and at <http://www.bundesstiftung-friedensforschung.de/Aktuelles/dbuva/dbuva.html>

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Climate Change and Drought Took Centre Stage at Riversymposium

All water users, government, business, scientists and the general community, need to take urgent action if we are to save our dying rivers, according to participants at the 10th International Riversymposium & Environmental Flows Conference, which was held in Brisbane from 3 to 6 September 2007 in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. The forum covered topics including environmental flows, climate change, drought, water conservation, river dolphins, rivers and human health, and Government policy.

Environmental Flows (EF) is the quality, quantity and distribution of water required to maintain the compounds, functions and processes of aquatic ecosystems on which people depend. The Protection of EF plays for example an important role in climate change adaptation strategies. They are, however, often neglected when riparian states of a transboundary river negotiate water allocations.

The symposium unveiled a Plan of Action calling amongst others to exchange scientific and engineering expertise, incorporate EF in climate change adaptation strategies and in water planning and management, develop and enforce EF in laws and programs, and engage community and stakeholders in consultation on and implementation of EF. "Environmental Flows are necessary for healthy rivers to benefit people and nature. We have most of the science needed to get on with the job. The challenge now is gaining agreement from society, particularly governments, for implementation." concluded Dr Ger Bergkamp, Head of the IUCN Water Programme.

Climate change and drought also took centre stage at the Symposium. The contribution of dams to global warming was discussed by Patrick McCully from the International Rivers Network. He stated that in times of climatic uncertainty, dams face greater risk of both catastrophic breach due to floods, and failure to meet irrigation and energy production goals due to drought. Rotting vegetation in tropical reservoirs can emit more greenhouse gases than even fossil fuels. Despite their importance, these issues are receiving very little attention in international policy debates or in assessments of the viability of individual projects. Against this backdrop, Cullen promoted "soft path" approaches to water and energy management and supply, such as improved efficiency and conservation, decentralized supply technologies, and flood hazard management. (*Christiane Roettger*)

For the complete press releases, the Brisbane Declaration – Call for Action, and for further conference proceedings including the program and abstracts, please see <http://www.riversymposium.com>

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Transboundary Peace and Conservation

Over 175 delegates representing more than 30 countries recently convened in the beautiful Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park on the Rocky Mountain border between Canada and the United States. Participants gathered for 4 days (9-12 September 2007) at the "Peace, Parks and Partnerships Conference" to mark the 75th anniversary of the world's first Peace Park. Conference highlights included: a rare aboriginal ceremony wherein the Superintendents of the host national parks were made honorary chiefs, a full day fieldtrip to explore transboundary management in the Peace Park, the launch of a new book on peace parks, and over 50 presentations that highlighted successes and challenges in transboundary management for both ecological conservation and peace.

Conference presentations stressed the need to expand transboundary protection into new areas, including marine and aquatic realms, and to strengthen the management in existing areas. Delegates discussed the complexities of addressing political, economic, social, institutional and biodiversity issues across jurisdictional boundaries. There was clear agreement that a single establishment and management model was not possible, or even desirable, but that a common framework for designating, evaluating and reporting on effectiveness would be beneficial. Two specific needs identified throughout the conference were: 1) a need for diagnostic tools to aid decision making on when to promote transboundary initiatives and what processes to include, and 2) a need for supportive networks of practitioners. Participants were very interested in meeting again and discussions are already underway to hold a follow-up conference in 4 to 5 years.

The conference was followed by a productive meeting of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) – Transboundary Conservation Task Force. The meeting resulted in a call for greater participation in achieving the mandate of the Task Force. *(Michael Quinn)*

Further information about the conference, including a selection of presentation and papers, can be viewed at: www.peaceparks2007.org

The Transboundary Conservation Task Force hosts an informative Web site called the Global Transboundary Protected Areas Network: <http://www.tbpa.net/>

The book "Peace parks: Conservation and Conflict Resolution", edited by Saleem Ali and published by MIT press, was officially launched at the conference: <http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?ttype=2&tid=11250>

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UPCOMING EVENTS

"Green Wars? Environment between Conflict & Cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa" in Beirut (2-3 November 2007)

The Middle East Office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Beirut/Lebanon is organizing this two-day conference, which seeks to shed light on the high benefits of environmental cooperation between states in the MENA region and the necessity to improve and

intensify this cooperation, parallel to showcasing the high costs of inadequate joint efforts and of the absence of proper state handling of environmental malaise.

For more information, please visit the Middle East Office of the Heinrich Böll Foundation at <http://www.boell-meo.org/>

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EUROPE-INBO 2007: "International conference on the implementation of the European Water Framework Directive" in Rome (8-10 November)

The aim of the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) is to enable the Basin Organizations to regularly and informally meet in order to exchange their practical experiences. The meeting will be organized around three main current topics on the Framework Directive implementation in the European River Basin Districts in 2007: Cost of the Water Framework Directive, Consequences of global warming, and Public participation. Special attention will be paid to the issues specific to water management in the Mediterranean region.

Any useful information, programs and proposed papers is available on the website: www.inbo-news.org

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"From early warning to early Action - Developing the EU's Response to Crisis and longer term Threats" in Brussels (12-13 November)

The conference is intended to generate ideas on how to strengthen the European Union's capacity to respond to short term crises and long term threats. It will also look at the development of peace building partnerships and will analyse the role that technology and science can play in post-disaster/post-conflict assessments. One session is specifically dedicated to resource-based conflicts.

To register for the conference, please visit

<https://webgate.cec.eu.int/fmi/iwp/cgi?-db=stabinst07&-loadframes>

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"Environmental Peacebuilding - Managing Natural Resource Conflicts in a Changing World" in Berne (13 November)

The swisspeace Annual Conference 2007 is inviting international experts from scientific and development communities to explore links between renewable natural resources and conflicts. Acting as a platform of exchanges between researchers and practitioners, the conference will also look into challenges and best practices for the peaceful management of water and land in developing countries in Africa, South America and Central Asia.

For more information and to register, please see <http://www.swisspeace.ch/typo3/index.php>

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FOCUS

This section serves as a platform for Institutions and Initiatives to present their activities on Environment, Conflict, and Cooperation.

Global Environmental Flows Network

The Global Environmental Flows Network was officially launched during the 10th International River Symposium Conference in Brisbane, Australia. 'Environmental Flows' refers to water provided within a river, wetland or coastal zone to maintain ecosystems, and their benefits where there is competing use and demand.

To coordinate action for living rivers, a growing worldwide partnership consisting of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), Delft Hydraulics, DHI Water and Environment, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH), the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI), Swedish Water House, and the Global Water for Sustainability Program (GLOWS) have created The Global Environmental Flows Network.

The Network allows people to access and share the latest information from basic explanatory to detailed scientific knowledge on methods, case studies, links, contacts and literature on environmental flows. It connects water managers, NGOs, local communities, scientists and researchers, as well as governmental and intergovernmental agencies that are interested in sharing knowledge or experiences on environmental flows.

The newly created Network website will help open knowledge of environmental flows to new audiences by offering readily-available access to current practices and methodologies. Furthermore, the website acts as an information portal to gather and disseminate information and experiences on environmental flows, such as case studies, tools, methods for assessment and implementation, and an expert database.

Global Environmental Flows Network website: www.eflownet.org

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