

Assessment Programme with the World Water Development Report, The International Year of Sanitation (2008), The International Decade for Action "Water for Life" (2005-2015) and the annual World Water Day (23 March).

The coordination of UN-Water is under the responsibility of a Chair and Vice-Chair, elected among its members on a rotational basis and normally serving for 2 years. Since January 2007 FAO has been in charge of UN-Water Chair, while UNECA has the post of Vice-Chair. In addition, there is a permanent Secretariat for UN-Water at the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) in New York.

On July 2007 the Chairs for the UN-Water Associated Programmes new offices in Europe – the Water Decade offices in Zaragoza and Bonn and the World Water Assessment Programme office in Perugia – have been selected.



The World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP), building on the achievements of the many previous endeavours, focuses on assessing the developing situation as regards freshwater throughout the world. The primary output of the WWAP is the periodic World Water Development Report.

The Programme is intended to evolve with the WWDR at its core. Thus, there is a need to include:

- Data compilation (geo-referenced meta-databases);
 - Supporting information technologies;
 - Data interpretation;
 - Comparative trend analyses;
 - Data dissemination;
 - Methodology development and modelling.

The recommendations from the WWDR stress the importance of capacity building to improve country-level assessment, with emphasis on developing countries. This is mainly referred to education and training, monitoring, database science and technology, and institutional management with a special focus on assessment issues. The Programme identifies situations of water crisis for providing both guidance for donor Agencies and knowledge for further capacity building. The Programme focuses on terrestrial freshwater, but deals also with the marine near-shore environments as principal sinks for land-based sources of pollution and sedimentation and as areas where the potential impact of sea level rise on freshwater resources is particularly acute.

The Programme is undertaken by the UN Agencies concerned, aided by a Trust Fund and the donors support, brought through different ways.

The WWAP new office in Perugia (Italy), which is one of three that will implement UN-Water Associated Programmes, is not fully operational yet. On November 20th 2007 UNESCO's Director General and the Italian Minister of Environment made an inaugural visit to the new premises in Perugia. Currently the WWAP Secretariat is still housed within the Division of Water Sciences at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Staff is working to make the transfer happen in spring 2008. All the necessary agreements with the Italian national and regional authorities have been signed (the seat agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of

Environment was signed on November 21st 2007). The last step before the move to Perugia is the completion of the security work in the new premises, Villa La Colombella, which should be concluded by the first quarter of 2008. On the content side, the production of the third Edition of the World Water Assessment Report (WWDR-3) is currently ongoing.



The United Nations office to support the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" 2005-2015 opened in Zaragoza, Spain, on October 5th 2007. This office will focus on communication and advocacy of water and sanitation. It should contribute to meeting the "Water for Life" Decade's goals by promoting greater interaction between

governments, UN Agencies and non-UN partners to deliver a coordinated response. In particular it will:

- Mobilize resources, partners and other stakeholders;
- Promote and encourage partnerships at all levels; and
- Ensure coherence between the implementation of the water and sanitation agenda and other development goals.

The office is also in charge of co-ordinating UN activities at EXPO2008 in Zaragoza. It is hosted and managed by the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA) with oversight by UN-Water.



The UN Water Decade Programme on Capacity Development (UNW-DPC) is a joint programme of UN Agencies and Programmes cooperating within the

framework of UN-Water. It is hosted by the United Nations University and located at the UN Campus in Bonn, Germany. It started its work on 1 August 2007. The aim of the programme office is to strengthen the activities of the more than two dozen UN Organizations and Programmes already cooperating within the inter-agency mechanism of UN-Water, and to coordinate their activities and support them in their efforts to achieve the MDGs related to water. This is not just a matter of capacity development related to water, but also of education, training and institutional development. The Vice-Rectorate of the United Nations University in Europe (UNU-VIE) serves as the umbrella organization for the office.

For more info see:

- <http://www.unwater.org/flashindex.html>
- <http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/>
- <http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/>
- <http://www.unwater.unu.edu/>



EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds

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UN-Water and the Associated Programme Offices in Europe

In September 2003 The High Level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) established UN-Water as the inter-agency mechanism promoting coherence in, and coordination of, UN System actions aimed at the implementation of the objectives concerning water, defined by the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. What is UN-Water? Its scope of work is defined by the mandate of the 24 UN agency members and therefore encompasses all aspects of freshwater, including surface and groundwater, and the interface between fresh and sea water. It deals with freshwater resources, both in terms of quality and quantity, their assessment, management, monitoring and use (e.g. domestic uses, agriculture uses and ecosystems requirements). UN-Water also focuses on sanitation and the interactions between sanitation and freshwater. Moreover, water-related disasters, emergencies, extreme events and their impact on human security are some of the other challenges that UN-Water deals with.

UN-Water has grown out of many years of extensive collaboration and partnership among the UN Agencies. These efforts have contributed to the achievement of significant progress to date and have helped to bring water and water related issues to the top of the political agenda.

Advancing the implementation of this complex and ambitious international agenda on water related issues is a shared responsibility and challenge which calls for coordinated action – beginning with the UN System but also progressively involving other concerned partners and stakeholders, like organizations from public and private sectors and civil society – towards a global, comprehensive effort. The main purpose of UN-Water is thus to complement and add value to existing programmes and projects by facilitating synergies and joint efforts. A number of important international organizations are already partners to UN-Water.



In addition, UN-Water is interacting with other inter-agency mechanisms, including UN-Energy, UN-Oceans and the Environmental Management Group (EMG), on issues of common concern. It also collaborates with other relevant initiatives, like the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation. UN-Water seeks to enhance the coherence, credibility and visibility of UN System actions related to its scope of work and, in particular, to:

- Identify strategic issues and priorities for system-wide action and facilitate effective responses by the UN System and its partners at global, regional and country levels, in relation to both policy development and implementation;
 - Support the attainment and facilitate the dissemination of system-wide positions shared by UN-Water Members, in particular with regard to relevant MDG and JPOI targets;
 - Facilitate inter-agency information exchange, including sharing of experiences and lessons learned, and serve as a clearing house for policy-relevant information, assessment and advice on status and trends at global and regional levels. Therefore, it provides Member States with a collective point of entry to the system's initiatives and responses in areas within its purview;
 - Promote effective communication and collaboration between the UN System and partners from civil society and private sector;
 - Support the initiatives carried out at regional and sub-regional levels, both within the UN System and the partners network, working through the Regional Commissions and relevant inter-agency mechanisms;
 - Contribute to the coherence and impact of UN System actions at country level, in support of Resident Coordinators, country teams and theme groups, working in close collaboration with UNDG and holding a dialogue on policy and operational issues.
- Some ongoing UN-Water activities are the World Water

Finland enjoys some of the most extensive and unspoilt natural environments in Europe. Vast forests and thousands of lakes present a striking mixture of wooded hills and water bodies. Other outstanding features of Finland's scenery are its islands as well as large peatlands in the western and northern part of the country. Watersheds are large and flat and difficult to delineate near the Gulf of Botnia.

In terms of phytogeography, Finland is situated in the boreal coniferous zone being the most extensively forested country in Europe. Forests cover 86 percent of its land area.



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In addition to its northern nature, Finland is also a modern Nordic country. Total area is 330 000 square kilometres being the seventh largest country in Europe and the second most northern country in the world. Finland's land border with Russia forms the eastern border of the European Union. The population is 5,2 million, 65 percent of which lives in towns or urban areas. Within 50 years Finland has grown, from an agricultural country with a rather narrow industrial sector focusing on forest industry, to a complex market economy based country with a high standard of living.

Finland is a land of forests. The important principles of Finnish forest management are sustainability and closeness to nature. Sustainable forestry combines three

objectives:

- The ecological tolerance of nature must not be weakened;
- The social and cultural values of forests must be conserved;
- Forestry must be financially profitable to all partners involved.

It is emphasized that wood production and the biodiversity of forests are preserved in commercial forests by defining restrictions to the handling of particularly important small habitats, where silviculture should be done in a way that protects the distinctive characteristics of the habitat.



In State-owned forests the preservation of the natural values of forests is being promoted through regional ecological planning, the aim being to preserve sufficient habitats suitable for different species at all times over a large area. Also, in the local forest strategies, the measures for the development of sustainable use of forests are stressed.

Finland has the highest percentage of strictly protected areas in Europe. Most of these forests are located in Northern Finland where the State is the main land owner. That is why the Finnish Government launched a special Forest Biodiversity Programme in 2003 for Southern Finland (METSO).

METSO programme includes testing and developing new voluntary means for nature conservation, based on the recognised willingness of forest owners to safeguard biodiversity in their commercial forests. METSO Programme is one of the ways in which Finland is implementing the commitments it has made to international agreements. The most important of these are the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), held every five years (the last in November 2007 in Warsaw) within the EU framework; the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). Finland's National Forest Programme 2015 will soon be submitted for Government approval. At the same time, the preparation of the new METSO programme for the years 2008-2016 is going to be finalized.

There are 187 888 lakes in Finland and the network of rivers is very dense. Significant loads of pollutants enter water bodies because of runoff from farmland, managed forests, peat mining sites and wastewater from different sources. Significant quantities of sediments and nutrients

can also gradually leach into water bodies. Pollutants deposited from the atmosphere, such as acidifying substances, can also impair the state of water bodies. Discharges of significant point source activities must be monitored in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act. In November 2006, the Finnish Government approved a new set of national Water Protection Policy Outlines to 2015 in a decision-in-principle that also defines measures needed to improve water quality. The Government's decision-in-principle particularly stresses



the need to combat eutrophication, which today is the most serious ecological problem Finland's inland waters and the Baltic Sea are facing. Nutrient inputs into water bodies from all kinds of human activities must be reduced, but the greatest need for reduction concerns diffuse loads, especially from agriculture. Agricultural nutrient releases still account for more than half of all the nutrient discharges into water bodies, in spite of recent reductions in the use of fertilizers, the widespread establishment of buffer zones, and the adoption of farming practices that reduce erosion. Eutrophication is the consequence of decades of excessive nutrient loads. As part of an environmentally sound silviculture, special attention has been given to the effects on watercourses and the protection of water ecosystems. When forestry activities, like logging and forest regeneration, entail soil preparation, which can affect water quality, the threat to watercourses and aquatic organisms is kept below a minimum level. The central objective of the watercourse protection guidelines is to preserve water bodies in a good condition and also to protect the biodiversity of water ecosystems. These measures, to which attention is firmly paid, consist of preventing the leaching of nutrients and solid matter and of planning the use of machines. Thus, no harm is done to the ground and no oil, for instance, contaminates watercourses. Special attention has been given to forest management in ground water areas. Also, when soil preparation is aimed at regeneration, lighter methods must be favoured. Nowadays all these actions, as well as the protection of biodiversity and small upstream watercourses, are essential elements of practical forestry in Finland.

The next Session of the EFC Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds will be held in Oulu, in August 2008. The City of Oulu is the capital of Northern Finland. Oulu Region has more



than 200 000 inhabitants and it is the fastest growing region in Finland. There are good opportunities for studying and working in areas of research and development, especially in the hi-tech sector. Oulu has an international airport and there are about 20 flights to and from Helsinki each working day. The flight to Finland's capital takes about one hour. Oulu is also considered Northern Europe's most significant centre of competence. An important amount of high technology ability has been concentrated in the area. Oulu Region hosts many hi-tech companies like Nokia, and there are currently over 10 000 people employed by the hi-tech sector. The city of Oulu has also almost 100 different teaching establishments. The most significant of these is the University of Oulu, Finland's second largest university. The University of Oulu is an international scientific institution known for high-quality research and education that provides experts for demanding tasks at both national and international level.

The field excursion during the Working Party Session will be directed from Oulu to North-East Finland, from the uplifted coastal area to the water divide.

For more info see:

<http://www.metla.fi/index-en.html>

<http://www.ymparisto.fi/default.asp?node=4032&lan=en>

<http://www.mmm.fi/en/index/frontpage.html>

<http://www.forest.fi/>

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