



**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON WATER RELATED DISASTER REDUCTION  
(Dushanbe, Tajikistan, June 27-28, 2008)**

*Press release*

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has decided to hold in Dushanbe on June 27-28, 2008 the International Conference on Water Related Disaster Reduction.

The aim of the Conference is to discuss ways of development of cooperation, exchange of knowledge and experience, and raising public awareness on water related disaster reduction and contribution to implementation of the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES //58/217 of 23 December 2003 on International Decade for Actions «Water for Life» 2005-2015 declared by the United Nations General Assembly on the initiative of H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan, President of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea.

During the last decade the international community has been paying great attention to the issue of reduction of disasters. Nevertheless, in many parts of the world disaster prevention and readiness to it is still unsatisfactory. Reaction mechanisms are focused only on elimination of consequences of disasters. The urgent actions on prevention of negative influence and mitigation of consequences of disasters are necessary.

Importance of this question is recognized at the international, regional, national and local levels and fixed in number of multilateral documents. In particular, in the Millennium Declaration Heads of States and the Governments expressed serious concerns on increasing number of disasters and their grave consequences and called for active cooperation on disaster reduction. The document also reflects intentions to spend more efforts to ensure necessary assistance and protection for victims of such disasters.

At the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, the Hyogo Framework for Actions 2005-2015 on disaster prevention issues has been adopted. The program goes in parallel with the International Decade of Actions “Water for life”, and is aimed, inter alia, on social, economic and ecological rehabilitation of damages caused by disasters.

With the purpose of mobilization of efforts of the governments, UN institutions, regional organizations, private sector and civil society on disaster prevention and preparedness to disasters in 2000 the Economic and Social Council and UN General Assembly adopted the International Disaster Reduction Strategy. Taking into account the importance of this document, the issue of water related disaster reduction has been included in the Concept of new regional partnership network – Asia-Pacific Water Forum as one of the priority themes.

Central Asia, owing to seismic and geographical conditions, more than other regions is subject to disasters. The countries of the region periodically face more than 20 various types of the dangerous natural disasters, including earthquakes, high waters, landslips, avalanches and floods caused by break of glacial lakes, etc. Any of these threats – especially their combination – may put under danger the life of thousands of people and leave millions of people without shelter and means of survival. Besides large scale of human victims, these disasters may negatively influence the economic development of the region.

As the water related disasters, as well as anthropogenous accidents and catastrophes cause huge damage to the economy, social and political stability active steps for their prevention and preparedness to them have to be taken. Many of these threats have regional character and cooperation in the field of preparation, prevention and reactions to them would contribute to adoption of concrete and practical actions at local, national, regional and international levels.

The International Conference on Water Related Disaster Reduction will contribute to the efforts of governments, UN organizations, international and regional organizations, private sector and civil society for prevention natural disasters. It is expected that the results of the First Asia-Pacific Water Summit, one of priority themes of which is «Water Disaster Management», will be widely discussed at the Conference.

The main topics of the Conference are as follows:

1. Disaster reduction and MDGs;
2. Glaciers melting under global warming;
3. Priority subject of the Asian Pacific Water Forum: Disasters management;
4. Degradation of the Aral Sea;
5. Desertification issues;
6. Monitoring of breakdown lakes;
7. Cooperation on dams' safety;
8. Flood control and management;
9. Capacity building of the national and regional organizations on disasters management;
10. Public participation in reduction of water related disasters;
11. IWRM as a tool for reduction of natural disasters' impact;

The Conference will be organized in cooperation with various international organizations, in particular UNDP, UN International for Disaster Reduction? International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, etc. Representative of governments, international and intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, financial institutions, educational and scientific institutions, and private sector are invited to take part in the Conference. At the opening ceremony H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan, is expected to address the participants of the Conference. The Organizing Committee of the Conference is led by H.E. Mr. Okil Okilov, Prime Minister of Tajikistan. H.E. Mr. Hamrokhon Zarifi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, is appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Organizing Committee. Apart from the participation in the Conference, the participants will be provided with a unique opportunity to enjoy beautiful nature of Tajikistan, and to get familiarized with culture, history and life of Tajik people.

Vienna, January 22, 2008