

**Coordinating Committee on Hydrometeorology and
Pollution Monitoring of the Caspian Sea (CASPCOM)**

8th Session

Ashgabat, 4-5 September, 2003

Final report

1. Organization of the Session

On the kind invitation of the National Committee on Hydrometeorology under the Turkmenistan Cabinet of Ministers, the 8th session of the Coordinating Committee for Hydrometeorology and Pollution Monitoring of the Caspian Sea (CASPCOM) was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on 4-5 September, 2003.

The Session opened at 9:30 local time on 4 September 2003. Mr. T.K. Kudekov, the Vice-Chairman of CASPCOM, the General Director of the RSE “Kazhydromet” (Republic of Kazakhstan) welcomed the participants of the Session (the welcoming address is given in Annex 1).

He noted that the WMO Secretariat had done a considerable work in collaboration with CASPCOM, CEP, various donor agencies and funds. The CASPCOM activity was an important element of the regional co-operation in hydrometeorology and environmental monitoring and it contributed much to solving the WMO tasks (E. I. Sarukhanyan’s statement is given in Annex 2).

The session participants warmly congratulated the Head of Roshydromet, the CASPCOM Vice Chairman Mr. A. I. Bedritskii on his election as the President of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). Satisfaction was expressed on the fact that this high – level position was held by a person who was well aware of the problems which the NHMS of the Caspian states were facing. This, no doubt, would contribute to further WMO attention to activities in the field of hydrometeorology and pollution monitoring in this part of the World.

The WMO President A.I. Bedritskii expressed his appreciations to the Session organizers and confirmed WMO readiness to render a further support to CASPCOM.

Dr. E.I. Sarukhanyan, Acting Director of WMO WWW Department read a welcome address by the WMO Secretary General Prof. G.O.P. Obasi which, in particular, called for an early signing of the Agreement between the Caspian States on Cooperation in the Field of Hydrometeorology and Monitoring of the Natural Environment of the Caspian Sea. This would attribute even more authority to CASPCOM at both international and regional levels. The address also underlined the willingness of the CASPCOM participants to enhance activities in the field of hydrometeorology and pollution monitoring in the Caspian Sea region regardless of degree of progress in implementation of the Integrated Programme on Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring in the Caspian Sea region (CASPAS, the address of the Secretary General is given in Annex 2)

Brief welcome addresses to the 8th Session were also given by the heads of delegations of Azerbaijan Republic Mr. S. Shaliev and Islamic Republic of Iran Mr. Delju

The Session adopted the agenda (Annex 3) and schedule.

Since Mr. H. Gafarzade, the Caspian Environment Programme Coordinator, was short of time, he asked the Session to hear his report in the afternoon 4 September and shift discussions on item 5.2 “*Co-operation between CASPCOM and CEP. CASPCOM Proposals to CASPCOM/CEP regional programme on monitoring the state and pollution of the Caspian Sea*” from 5 September to 4 September. The participants adopted this proposal.

The list of participants are given in Annex 4.

2. Report by the CASPCOM Chairman

Mr. T. Kudekov , the CASPCOM Chairman Mr. T. Kudekov , Kazhydromet General Director submitted the “Report on the CASPCOM activities and implementation of the CASPCOM-7 decisions” (Annex 5). The report noted that the NHMS of the Caspian states had performed a lot of activities aimed at accomplishment of measures approved by the CASPCOM 7th Session (Almaty, 3-4 September 2002). It was emphasized that these activities were funded exclusively from the national budgets since no funds from the international sponsoring organizations could be secured. This was largely due to a delay with signing the Agreement between the Caspian States in the Field of Hydrometeorology and Monitoring of the Natural Environment of the Caspian Sea.

3. Reports of the NHMS/NMS on the national activities in the field of hydrometeorology and pollution monitoring of the Caspian Sea and the CASPAS Programme Coordinator

The heads of delegations presented reports of the national hydrometeorological/meteorological services of the Caspian states:

on behalf of the Azerbaijan Republic the report was given by Mr. S. Shiraliev (Annex 6);

on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran the report was given by Mr. A. Delju (Annex 7);

on behalf of the Russian Federation the report was given by Mr. Bedritskii (Annex 8);

on behalf of Turkmenistan the report was given by S. Bairamov, while Mr. A. Durdyev, Director of the National Centre for Ecological Monitoring informed the Session on the activities on the environmental monitoring in Turkmenistan (Annex 9);

on behalf of Republic of Kazakhstan the report was given by Mr. T. Kudekov (Annex 10);

The copies of national reports were distributed among the participants of the Session.

The CASPAS Programme Coordinator Mr. A. Postnov provided the Session with a report “*On the progress in CASPAS programme implementation*” (Annex 11). It was stated that a progress had been made in virtually all components of CASPAC Programme which was due to research and operational activities of NHMS of the Caspian states.

The Session participants took into consideration the information given in the reports and statements on Items 3.1-3.6 of the Agenda and decided to come over to a report by the Caspian Environment Programme Coordinator.

4. Report by the Caspian Environment Programme Coordinator.

Mr. H. Gafarzade , the Caspian Environment Programme Coordinator presented a report “The Caspian Environment Programme – a road to future” (Annex 12)

The report covered the former and present CEP structure and the results of the First Phase of the Programme implementation. It was emphasized that the Second Phase would focus on a direct application of the developed recommendations in fish stock management, pollution abatement and monitoring, biodiversity protection and sustainable development of coastal communities.

After the presentation, Dr. E. Sarukhania, the WMO representative observed that a cooperation between WMO and CEP within a joint Programme was possible and desirable. UNEP could also be involved. Mr. Gafarzade confirmed that such a cooperation was possible.

In addition, WMO President Mr. A. Bedritskii expressed an opinion that NHMS played a significant role in the country’s economies and improvement in the social well-being.

However, there were a lack of understanding of the NHMS role in the national development. In this connection, the NHMS themselves were to use every opportunity in bringing to the governments the necessity to support the NHMS effective activities.

In conclusion, WMO President expressed his appreciation to the Caspian Environment Programme Coordinator for his readiness to cooperate with CASPAS.

5. Report by WMO representative

Dr. E.I. Sarukhanyan, Acting Director of WMO WWW Department presented a report "On rehabilitation and development of the observational network in the Caspian states". He reviewed the existing observational network of the Caspian states and showed the results of the GTS data monitoring for a period 1-15 July 2003 (Annex 13). It was noted that the existing aerological network did not completely meet the requirements to aerological data collection. The NHMS were called upon to take their own measures to maintain the existing observational network and develop it as much as possible.

(The session is chaired by the CASPCOM Vice-Chairman, Head of Roshydromet A. Bedritskii).

6. Progress in solution of the priority problems in the field of hydrometeorology and pollution monitoring of the Caspian Sea in the Caspian states

The second meeting began with discussions on item 4.1 of the Agenda "*Towards improvements in operation of the marine, coastal and river mouth observation (including satellite observations) in the Caspian Sea region*". Members of all delegations provided their comments. Reviewed were the state of the observational network, changes in the types of observations, and governmental measures on the network rehabilitation and development

In particular, in Azerbaijan Republic, a "National programme on development of hydrometeorological activities in the Azerbaijan Republic for 2003 – 2010" was elaborated and agreed upon with the Cabinet of Ministers.

As a principal issue, the programme envisaged rehabilitation and updating of the marine hydrometeorological network, resumption of the expedition observations at "secular" sections, widening of hydrometeorological services to the marine industries, an effective participation in the CASPAS Programme. The Specialized Sea Mouth Hydrometeorological Station Neftchala in the Kura River mouth was rehabilitate in its full structure, the Mashtaga aerological station, near Baku was under reconstruction.

Positive changes occurred in the Islamic Republic of Iran. There, the hydrometeorological situation and pollution of the Caspian Sea were monitored using satellite data.

In the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kazhydromet employed the current data from the state hydrometeorological network and satellite data. There were 19 acting meteorological stations in the Caspian region, 6 of them being the stations whose data were being exchanged internationally.

An automatic meteorological station was established near Atyrau in 2002. In the same year, 3 marine hydrometeorological posts were opened, thus bringing the number of marine observation sites to 7. The hydrological observations were performed at 5 sites on Ural and Emba Rivers. In view of high priority attached to the Caspian region, the Kazakhstan NHMS increased the number of sites with meteorological observations by 5%, with coastal hydrometeorological observations by 75%, and with the river mouth hydrological observations by 66%.

The observation network at the coastal zone of the Russian Federation consists of 8 hydrometeorological stations and 25 observation sites in the river mouth areas. The observation programme is being accomplished in full but difficulties in raising funds for their

updating still remain. In 2002, a large help in funding the purchase of equipment was rendered through the Federal Target Programme “World Ocean” and its subprogramme “Establishing an Integrated System of Information on the World Ocean”. Besides the proper observation network, the programme funds also covered updating of the navigation equipment aboard the Roshydromet survey ship. In developing the coastal observation network at the Caspian Sea coast, the major emphasis is laid on creation and deployment of the observation and information systems capable of making automatic meteorological and hydrological observations, forming reports and sending them to the collection centers. With the ship-borne observations in the Caspian Sea diminishing, a satellite monitoring of the open sea areas has assumed a special role. In this connection, a large attention is paid to a wider use of space data in forecasting and, especially, monitoring of state and pollution of the open sea and river mouths.

In Turkmenistan, the coastal observations have been retained at all sites, but no expansion has occurred. Due to shortage of expendables for rawinsond launching, the temperature-wind soundings at Turkmenbashi is being performed only once a day, under complex weather conditions. Turkmenhydromet pays a special attention to Garabogargol Bay, located at the Turkmenistan territory, which constitutes a major loss in the Caspian Sea water balance. Observed are the water discharge rate from the sea to the bay, rapa level, temperature and meniralization. Turkmenhydromet also plans to open a marine observation site in Okarem and starting the hydrometeorological observations on ships-of-opportunity.

During discussions the NHMS representatives pointed to unresolved problem with making the level positioning of the sea level observation sites which had been earlier marked by the CASPCOM 6th and 7th Sessions.

Speaking on Item 4.1 of the Agenda, the WMO representative underlined that the NHMS activities, being part and parcel of the WMO activities, have made a significant progress in observation system development. In turn, WMO supports the observation system programmes like Space Programme, Voluntary Observation Ship Programme (VOS), and moored buoy programme.

Based on results of discussions, the CASPCOM 8th Session made the following recommendations on development of the Caspian Sea observation system:

- To improve the coastal observation network based on automatic technologies of observations and data transmission
- To accomplish leveling of the sea level observation sites
- To widen use of data from satellites both operational and research ones whose on-board instruments are better
- To resume meteorological observations on voluntary observation ships (VOS), including ships serving the open-sea activities on oil search and extraction

Under Item 4.2 “ *Oceanographic observations and studies in the Caspian Sea and its river mouths* ” the Session highly appreciated the activity of Roshydromet and Kazhydromet on organization of integrated marine and river mouth observations in 2002 which were made using an agreed programme and compatible methods of observations and analysis.

In further discussions, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed to establish an international project to perform ship surveys in the open Caspian Sea. This proposal was supported by the Session.

The attention of the Session was drawn to the fact that the necessity for better coordination of oceanographic studies and monitoring between the Caspian states had been stressed in Resolution 12 of the XII Assembly of IOC of UNESCO “On IOC activity in the Caspian Sea region (Annex 14). The Resolution instructed the IOC Executive Secretary to organize a

regional meeting in 2004 to work out a mechanism for such coordination. CASPCOM could become a part if not a basis of this mechanism.

It was also noted that a closer cooperation between CASPCOM and WMO-IOC Joint Commission on Oceanography and Marine Meteorology (JCOMM) would be most helpful.

The Session took the following decisions on item 4.2

- To request the CASPAS Coordinator to draft a list of objectives of oceanographic observations and studies in various regions of the Caspian Sea for meeting the CASPAS Programme requirements with an account of the Caspian state requirements of data on the state and pollution of the Caspian Sea
- To consider participation of the Caspian states in organization of the regional workshop to identify a coordination mechanism as a high priority and describe the CASPCOM activities in this field.
- To request the CASPCOM Chairman to take steps to establish closer contacts between CASPCOM and WMO-IOC JCOMM.

Under Agenda Item 4.3 “ *Towards improvements in the regional exchange of data and information on the state and pollution of the Caspian Sea natural environment* ” the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed that at least one open sea long-term station should be established and maintained by each country, the data being exchanged between countries. The Turkmenistan representative proposed to equip commercial ships with automatic meteorological stations (within VOS Programme) , exchange the observed data between the regional hydrometeorological administrations (centers) and form the databases. To maintain these stations, qualified personnel is required. Its training could be a matter of international cooperation, including a help from WMO through capacity building programmes as a JCOMM structural component.

The Session took the following decisions in Agenda Item 4.3

- To continue compiling of observation data and database formation
- To maintain contacts between the NHMS for personnel training in various fields including automatic observation systems
- NHMS of the Caspian states to participate in WMO VOS Programme for obtaining experience in ship-of-opportunity observations and their data exchange

Under Agenda item 4.4 “*Scientific and operational activities on forecasting the Caspian Sea state and pollution with various lead time*”, the participants of the session exchanged information on the activities being conducted in this field in the Caspian Sea countries. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed to organize training courses for the experts of NHMSs of the Caspian Sea countries, which would be conducted in the countries by rotation principle. During the discussion it was stressed that the recommendations set in the previous CASPCOM sessions on these issues retained their urgency.

5. Development of international cooperation in hydrometeorology and environmental monitoring in the Caspian Sea region.

Under item 5.1 of the Agenda “*Progress in national agreeing upon and preparation for signing the draft Agreement between the Caspian States on cooperation in the field of hydrometeorology and monitoring of the natural environment of the Caspian Sea in*

the Caspian states”, the participants of the Session informed each other of the position of the Caspian Sea governments on signing of that Agreement.

The representative of the Azerbaijan Republic informed the Session that his Foreign Ministry in his country continues to insist on excluding Article 10 from the text of the Agreement.

The Islamic Republic of Iran was still prepared to sign the Agreement after some editing.

The Republic of Kazakhstan was ready for final co-ordination and preparation for signing the Agreement at the level of the Caspian Sea Foreign Ministries.

Turkmenistan believed that as disagreements on Article 10 continued and signing of the Agreement postponed, it was advisable to develop cooperation on the basis of bilateral agreements, existing between all NHMSs. At the same time, in view of the necessity for signing the Agreement by all countries, Turkmenistan proposed to continue agreeing upon the Agreement between the national hydrometeorological / meteorological organizations and its further coordination by the national Foreign Ministries.

The Russian Federation called for urgent signing of the Agreement, since it would form a basis for the whole CASPCOM activity. An absence of the signed Agreement had a negative impact on CASPCOM relations with international organizations and projects, in particular the Caspian Environment Program (CEP) and donor agencies. In spite of the progress in bilateral cooperation, the scope of the problems in the Caspian region required that data were received from all countries in the region, something that could not be achieved in bilateral cooperation. Unless the Agreement on Cooperation between the Caspian Sea states in hydrometeorology and monitoring of the environment in the Caspian Sea came into force, the CASPCOM members would not be able to employ its provisions, including those necessary for implementation of the CASPAS program. Since the Agreement had been already agreed upon on the professional level, it was expedient to request the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Caspian Sea countries to continue discussions on the Agreement through diplomatic channels.

Reviewing discussions on **item 5.1**, the WMO representative supported the arguments of the Russian delegation and emphasized that conclusion of the Agreement would form a legal basis for regional data exchange. Within WMO framework, the basic data were subject to exchange being only a part of the collected information. The IOC ocean data exchange schemes were also not applicable since they required a consent of the countries. Absence of the CASPCOM legal status made its formal relations with WMO impossible (e.g., in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding between CASPCOM and WMO), resulting in difficulties in attracting funds for CASPAS Programme implementation.

On Item 5.1 of the Agenda, the Session took the following decision:

- To ask the heads of the Caspian Sea countries NHMSs to forward the text of the “Agreement on Cooperation between the Caspian Sea states in the field of hydrometeorology and monitoring of the environment in the Caspian Sea” to their relevant Foreign Ministries, asking them to continue agreeing upon the related political issues (in particular, Article 10).

When considering the **item 5.2** of the Agenda « *Co-operation between CASPCOM and CEP. CASPCOM Proposals to CASPCOM/CEP regional programme on monitoring the state and pollution of the Caspian Sea*” the Session noted the report of the CASPAS Program Coordinator Mr. A. Postnov. He informed the Session on progress in cooperation with the Caspian Environment Program and on the main provisions of the CASPCOM proposals to the regional monitoring program (Annex 15). Importance of cooperation between CASCOM and CEP was stressed, especially in the field of sea pollution monitoring. Remarks were made to the draft project document of the CEP Second Phase relating to organization of such a monitoring. Disagreements between CEP and CASPCOM in approach to this issue were analyzed. It was stressed that some statements in the CEP documents (in particular, on the governing impact of

Volga River on the Caspian Sea contamination) contradicted the results of long-term observations by NHMSs.

The CASPCOM Proposals to regional CASPAS/CEP program on monitoring of the state and pollution of the Caspian Sea environment (for the period 2003-2006) presented for consideration by the Session, were based on the principles approved by the 7th CASPCOM Session, and included a description of the NHMSs potential which could form a basis for establishing a regional monitoring system in the Caspian Sea.

Mr. H. Gafarzade, the Caspian Environment Program Coordinator took the floor with explanation of CEP position. He expressed the CEP readiness to cooperate with NHMSs of Caspian Sea countries, which could be contractors in implementation of sampling and, partially, chemical analysis of samples. At the same time, he stressed, participation of NHMSs in implementation of the Second Phase was possible only on competitive, market principles.

During the discussion on this matter, the Roshydromet representative expressed his regret that CEP, in fact, ignored the NHMSs of the Caspian Sea countries as authorized state agencies in the field of environment pollution monitoring. Such approach could play a negative role in the future national approval of the project results.

An opinion was expressed that the starting time of CASPCOM Proposal implementation should be shifted from 2003-2004 to 2004-2005.

Mr. H. Gafarzade, the Caspian Environment Program Coordinator presented a report "The Caspian Environment Program – a road to future" (Annex 12 in English).

The report described the former and present structure of CEP, as well as, results of the First Phase of the Program implementation. It was specially emphasized that the CEP Second Phase would be focused on implementation of the earlier developed recommendations on fish stock management, pollution abatement and monitoring, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of coastal communities.

Discussing the report, the WMO representative, Dr. E.I. Sarukhanyan stressed that cooperation between WMO and CEP within a joint Program was desirable and even essential. An agreement on that was reached at the Meeting of the High-Level Representatives of WMO, IOC-UNESCO, EU-TACIS, CASPCOM and CEP (Paris, February 2002). This agreement, unfortunately, was reflected neither in the report of the CEP Coordinator nor in the project documents of the CEP Second Phase. Mr. Gafarzade confirmed the possibility of cooperation between CASPCOM and CEP.

WMO President Mr. A.I. Bedritsky expressed an opinion that hydrometeorological/meteorological services (NHMSs) played a significant role in the economy and improvement of social well-being of their countries through provision of hydrometeorological data and information on the environment pollution. However there was a lack of understanding of the NHMSs' role in the national development. In this connection, the national services themselves were to use every opportunity in bringing to the governments the necessity to support the NHMSs effective activities.

In conclusion, WMO President expressed his appreciation to the Caspian Environment Program Coordinator for his readiness to cooperate with CASPAS.

Having discussed Agenda item 5.2, the Session adopted the following decision:

- To ask NHMSs of Caspian Sea countries to consider and forward within a month their comments and amendments to the text of CASPCOM Proposals to the CASPAS/CEP regional program on monitoring of the state and pollution of the Caspian Sea (for period 2003-2006). The CASPCOM Chairman and CASPAS Programme Coordinator should follow the Proposals in cooperation with the Caspian Environment Program.

Under item 5.3 of the Agenda "*Major results of the integrated sea expedition (within a framework of the joint Russian – Kazakhstan programme) for evaluation of pollution*

of the sea water and bottom sediments in the Northern Caspian Sea in 2002”, the reports of Roshydromet and Kazhydromet representatives were presented to the Session (Annex 16). Having appreciated the results of the expedition, the participants of the Session took the following decision:

- To ask the Roshydromet and the Kazhydromet to prepare a joint review on pollution of the North Caspian based on the results of the 2002 integrated expedition.

When considering **item 5.4** of the Agenda “*Measures towards harmonization of the national guidelines on procedures for hydrometeorological observations and pollution monitoring at the sea and river mouth areas*”, the Session's participants confirmed the need for such harmonization. It was decided to carry out this activity as a part of the CASPCOM Action Plan implementation.

Under **item 5.5** “*Measures to encourage exchange of summarized information (yearbooks, monthlies, bulletins, etc.) published by NHMS/NMS of the individual Caspian states and a possibility for preparation of reference materials describing the state of the Caspian Sea as a whole*”, the participants of the Session expressed the willingness for organization of such an exchange. The representatives of Roshydromet and Azhydromet expressed the readiness of their agencies to summarize the reference materials from the Caspian Sea countries and, on that ground, to assess the state of the Caspian Sea environment as a whole. A representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran proposed to establish a CASPCOM web site, where the information on the regime-reference materials issued by NHMSs of the Caspian Sea countries should be placed.

As a result of discussing item 5.6 of the Agenda, the Session adopted the following decisions:

- To ask NHMSs of the Caspian Sea countries to forward an information on reference materials on the state and pollution of the Caspian Sea, issued by NHMSs on a regular basis (bulletins, year-books, monthlies, reference books, etc.) to the CASPCOM Secretariat.
- To ask the CASPCOM Secretariat to consider a possibility to establish a CASPCOM web site in Internet.

In discussing Agenda **item 5.6** “*On participation of the CASPCOM representatives in the First International Conference on Caspian Ecology*” the participants of the Session expressed their great interest in the Conference and regretted that not all the Caspian countries had been properly informed of this event.

The Session took the decisions:

- To ask the CASPCOM Chairman to forward an additional information concerning the Conference to the NHMSs of Caspian Sea countries
- To ask the CASPCOM Chairman to take part in the Conference and report on the CASPCOM activity in monitoring of the state and pollution of the Caspian Sea environment.

6. CASPCOM Action Plan for 2004-2006

The CASPAS Program Coordinator, Mr. A. Postnov informed the participants of the Session on the draft CASPCOM Action Plan for 2004-2006. He also made a suggestion to establish a Working Group of experts with a mission to coordinate the Action Plan implementation.

As a result of the discussion the Session adopted the following decisions:

- To approve the draft CASPCOM Action Plan; within a month, the delegations of countries were requested to make their remarks and amendments to the Plan and forward them to the CASPAS Programme Coordinator to finalize the CASPCOM Action Plan for 2004-2006.
- To shift commencement of the Action Plan implementation from 2003 to 2004.
- To establish a Working Group of experts, consisting of 10 persons (1-2 experts from each country) to coordinate the Plan implementation.
- To ask the NHMSs of the Caspian Sea countries to forward information on their representatives in the Working Group to the CASPAS Programme Coordinator within a month after the Session .

7. Place and Date of the 9th Session of CASPCOM

Under **item 7** of the Session's Agenda the floor was given to the head of the Azerbaijan delegation Mr. S. Shiraliev. He proposed the next 9th Session of CASPCOM to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan Republic. Later, he would inform the NHMS on the final decision on this matter. The head of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr. A. Delju stated that in case of any difficulties with arrangement of the 9th CASCOM Session in Azerbaijan Republic , it would be possible to hold the Session either in Tehran or in one of the coastal cities in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

8. The official closure of the 8th Session of CASPCOM

The 8th Session of CASPCOM was formally closed on 5th September 2003 at 13:30 local time.