

June 14-17, 2005

GENDER, WATER, AND AGRICULTURAL IN CENTRAL ASIA

by

Galina Stulina¹, Catherine Senecal²

(1) Interstate Commission for Water Coordination, 11 Karasu-4, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 700187

Phone: 998-712-65-16-58, email: stg@hoibox.ru

(2) McGill University, Brace Centre for Water Resources Management, 21 111 Lakeshore Road, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, QC, H9X 3V9, phone: 514-398-7834, fax: 514-398-7767, email: Catherine.senecal@mcgill.ca

Abstract

The world over, greater attention is being paid to gender issues. That is, to issues of equal rights and opportunities for men and women. Humanity is aiming towards development and towards improved standards of living, and in doing so, tries to identify and remove obstacles to these goals. From global experience, solutions to various gender-related problems depend on the degree of the development of equal rights for men and women, as well as the culture of gender relations. Gender inequality is still an unresolved issue for many developing countries, especially in the East where Muslim traditions and customs are prominent. The coordinated work of local specialists and a Canadian team of water and agricultural experts permitted gender issues the sector to be addressed. These issues have been raised for several years in Central Asian Region (CAR) without being practically addressed until now. These issues are identified in all sectors, but in the agriculture and water sector, where traditions and prejudice are stronger than in any other area, the above-mentioned problems are insufficiently dealt with. The relationship between agro-socio-economic indicators and poverty in CAR is shown. As well, women's status under existing conditions is described. A survey titled "Gender Aspects Relating to Access to and Management of Water Resources" was conducted by the Interstate Commission for Water Coordination together with McGill University Canada, in the Republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. From the conducted survey, it was concluded that the problems of rural women are very critical and these include limited access to water, land, financial and physical resources, as well as to education and culture. Most rural women have certain limitations in the realization of available opportunities due to insufficient skills and non-awareness of women in the field of water and land resources management. The study showed that gender roles in the rural family are changing. Severe financial situation in rural families force women to do hard low-paid day-work for more prosperous farmers. It was determined that there is a considerable difference in the gender balance between the three Republics.