



Meeting within the Framework of the Project for Sustainable Land Management for Mitigating Land Degradation and Reducing Poverty in the South Caucasus Region

June 3, 2009

The initial working meeting of the Armenian expert group involved in implementation of the regional environmental project for **Sustainable Land Management for Mitigating Land Degradation and Reducing Poverty in the South Caucasus Region** was held at the REC Caucasus Armenian Branch Office in Yerevan.

The project initiated by REC Caucasus in partnership with Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN) in April 2009 and financially supported by the European Union brings together experts from three South Caucasus countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, and aims to develop a common regional strategy for sustainable land-use management in the transboundary river watersheds of Khrami-Debeda and Alazani-Iori.

At the meeting, the Director of the REC Caucasus Armenian Branch Office Ms Nune Harutyunyan presented the project goals and objectives as well as the coordinating role to be played by REC during its implementation.

“Green Lane” Agricultural Assistance NGO is taking part in the project as an associated partner in Armenia.

At the meeting, Ms Nune Sarukhanyan, the President of Green Lane, emphasized that this new trilateral environmental initiative is of great significance and urgency to the region. She stressed that many years' experience the Green Lane specialists and experts have in the field of agriculture and farming development comes to prove that the land degradation resulting in drastic drop in soil fertility contributes significantly to the high level of poverty in rural communities. In addition, she mentioned that participation of the Green Lane NGO in this project significantly results from the fact that, although, for the most part, this is an environmental initiative, the main addressees and beneficiaries of the project are farmers and peasants who derive livelihoods from agricultural activities.

The participants of the meeting discussed a number of practical issues and steps to be taken at the initial stage of the project implementation dedicated mainly to comprehensive analysis of the trends and dynamics of land degradation in the target regions.

As a result of discussions, comments and recommendations on the ToRs for the experts involved in the project have been made. The participants also discussed the general schedule for project activities and upcoming working meetings.

It was emphasized that success in implementation of this initiative strongly depends on coordination and all-embracing cooperation between both the national specialists and the expert groups of all three participant countries.



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