

Celebration of wetland events in Moldova in 2011 – 40 years of the Ramsar Convention

Celebration events were organized in different educational institutions of Moldova during February 2011.

First event had place on 2nd February in the in the Free International University of Moldova. Total around 60 students and professors took part in the event. In the frame of this activity students prepared a number of presentations on wetland functions and theirs' importance for development of different practices in agriculture, rural development etc. Special attention was given to the discussions on wetland management in urban areas – Chisinau, capital town of Moldova.

During the students event, which had place in the Free International University of Moldova, 4 presentations were prepared by students on the topics related to restoration of the Bic river. Proposals were aimed at development of river restoration activities through returning of river in former bed and thus restoration of meanders, which were destroyed in 70th, selection of potential sites for wetland restoration, identification of measures needed for these activities and cooperation with relevant stakeholders, which could be involved in improvement of state of wetland areas. Evaluation of the state of wetlands in the capital town was developed based on the studies of archive materials on the state of flooded areas before 70th, maps and evaluation of potential sites for wetlands restoration in the valley of the Bic river.

Another issue for discussion during student conference was public involvement in the wetland restoration activities. As practice showed there is a small experience in Moldova in attraction of public institutions in wetland management. In the frame of the conference students presented summary of theirs' experience from theirs' localities (predominantly rural areas from different parts of the country) on practices for nature restoration with particular regard to wetlands restoration. In this context during January a number of studies were organized in the Lower Prut region with the professors of the University. In the frame of these activities mayors of the villages presented actions they undertaken under rural magistrates in their regions in order to contribute to wetland restoration. Summary and evaluation of these activities were made by students during the conference. On the base of this summary next issues were identified on the conference:

- Local authorities have strong commitment for wetland restoration activities. Actually in the agreements on cooperation between rural magistrates from Moldavian and Romanian localities actions on wetland restoration are mentioned in the text of agreements. The point is that there is a poor experience and also opportunities to implement measures for performing of these agreements.
- Rural councils expressed commitment to allocate lands, which belong to rural public administration for creation of the biosphere areas. There is a good understanding in rural communities that wetland restoration could create new opportunities for local development. At the same time propaganda of good practices of wetland management is needed in the regions of Moldova in order to enforce wetland restoration in practice.

- Participants of the student event expressed commitment to organize annual conference on wetlands in order to discuss achievements and good practices happened in the country in order to extend this experience on the national scale.

As a result of the conference wetland management issues will be presented in special courses taught at the University in the frame of the specialty "Ecology". Special attention will be given to public participation in the wetland management and incorporation of wetland management issues in elaboration of local plans for social and economic development.

Another event was organized in the lyceums in capital town. Total 3 schools participated in the conference. Pupils prepared 6 presentations on wetlands functions, its contribution to the greenhouse emission reduction, habitat functioning, development of local trades and traditions, tourism issues etc. During event they presented their visions on reduction of greenhouse emissions through wetland restoration and increasing of river flood plains restored areas, increasing of biomass due to wetland restoration etc. Special topic was discussion on climate change and wetland functions. In presentations prepared by pupils they identified main issues leading to reduction of greenhouse emissions due to the stock of organic carbon in vegetation biomass. They also presented their opinion on reasons for climate change caused by destroying of wetlands and proposed concrete actions for restoration of lake and adjacent area in the park located near school. They decided to organize this action in April together with the trees planting campaign. This action will be realized in cooperation with municipal authorities, who expressed support to this initiative and procurement of trees for planting.

Total around 70 pupils and school teachers participated in the event.

Celebration of wetland day was organized in cooperation with Ministry of Environment of Moldova, Lyceum "Milescu-Spataru", National Commission of the Republic of Moldova for UNESCO, Institute of Ecology and Geography of the Academy of Sciences, Global Water Partnership Moldova and Free International University of Moldova.

