On Wednesday 23 November 2011, the Tian Shan Policy Center (TSPC) organized its first scientific practical conference at AUCA. The main objective of the conference was to discuss land and water management issues, especially as they are affected by the changing climate. New strategies for water and land management are needed to protect Kyrgyz communities and livelihoods. Over 30 representatives of different government and international agencies as well as universities attended the conference. This summary was compiled by the conveners of the Conference and Roundtable, Rodger Dillon, Michelle Leighton, and Martin Ossewaarde.[i]

Please see our website for participants list, conference presentations, and other materials, www.auca.kg/en/tspc.

Daniyar Ibragimov, head of UNDP's Environmental Unit first gave an overview of his organization's work with Kyrgyzstan on issues of climate, land, and water management. He stated that Kyrgyzstan is exposed to negative aspects of the growing climate change problem. "If the necessary measures are not taken, it will negatively affect the economy and health", he said. He described a number of UN-financed projects in this area including the Climate Risk Management regional project, which has created special groups to analyze gaps in legislation, and which favors the adoption of a national strategy on climate change. Mr. Ibragimov pleaded for stronger cooperation between state agencies, scientists, civil society a

remedy land, water, and energy problems in all spheres. For example, it lacks scientific capacity and laboratories to test water samples for contamination from pesticides; if it did, the country wouldn't need to send samples abroad for costly analysis. Another response was that international organizations should better take into consideration the local population's interests, while building strategies on preventing the climate change impacts on water and land.

Also participants discussed how Kyrgyzstan could better address land and water management issues to assist communities in context of Climate Change predictions—that is, how to help local agricultural communities better adapt to the changing environment. Forests are decreasing at a time that they should actually increase in order to sustain livestock and crop productivity, and to prevent hazards such as landslides and mudflows.

Some said that those under threat from climate-related disasters should organize themselves to lobby for solutions, because climate disasters might also cause political problems. The issue of land degradation was discussed as another reason why increased extreme weather events might aggravate soil erosion, land slides and flooding. Several participants suggested that the introduction of sustainable development thinking in schools and universities should be speeded up with special emphasis for fieldwork and case studies of real life situations. Participants were reminded that the Kyrgyzstani government is involved in UN efforts to boost Education for Sustainable Development in this decade from 2005 till 2014. While the government and UNESCO provide a fair deal of support for schools, universities are left to fend for themselves. Nevertheless, several universities have begun collaboration. The American University is among the leaders in this field, as it is developing new curriculum in sustainability and is planning to build its new campus according to strict energy efficiency standards and using geothermal energy for space heating. NGOs such as MoveGreen will be implementing an educational program to involve youth in sustainable development.

Are regional land and water management institutions useful and feasible? Many of the participants who responded to questions provided examples and specific issues.

There is a need for the

policies and practices on a consistent basis. Establishing such a framework would provide the ,

inefficient use of resources.

struggling to address land and water management issues.