



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

MP.WAT/2003/5
5 September 2003

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

**MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION
ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY
WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES**

Third meeting,
Madrid, Spain, 26-28 November 2003
Items 4 to 11 of the provisional agenda

ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER THE CONVENTION'S WORK PLAN 2000-2003

Prepared by the secretariat

1. The document informs the Meeting of the Parties about the implementation of the work plan 2000-2003 (see ECE/MP.WAT/5, paragraph 42, and annex II) which has been updated with the approval of the Bureau at meetings of the: (a) governing bodies of the Water and Industrial Accidents Conventions (first joint special session); (b) Working Group on Legal and Administrative Aspects (programme area I, lead country: Greece); (c) Working Group on Water Management (programme area II, lead country: Slovakia); (d) Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (programme area III, lead countries: Finland and Netherlands); and (e) Working Group on Water and Health (programme area IV, lead country: Hungary) to respond to changing needs and priorities. The document is also intended to provide guidance to the Meeting of the Parties to review the activities of the Working Groups as decided by the Parties at their second meeting (ECE/MP.WAT/5, paragraph 43 (e)).
2. Changing needs and priorities particularly arose from the preparations and outcomes of global conferences, such as the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (August/September 2002) and the Third World Water Forum (March 2003), and regional meetings and conferences, such as the Second International Conference on Sustainable Water

Management in Europe (April 2003) and the Kiev Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (May 2003).

3. When reviewing the achievements under the Convention, the status of the ratification process should also be examined; the more so as the Second International Conference on Sustainable Water Management in Europe in April 2002 recommended that “More should be done so that countries that are not yet Parties to the Convention and its Protocol, particularly newly independent States and Balkan States, ratify these legal instruments. They face serious problems with the management of their transboundary waters and need to be able to take advantage of achievements of this cooperative work (ECE/MP.WAT/8, para.33 (a)). This statement applies, *mutatis mutandis*, also to the status of signature of the Protocol on Civil Liability.

4. The Meeting of the Parties, when addressing the ratification status under items 2, 4 and 5 of the provisional agenda, may wish to note that: (a) the ratification status (as of 1 September 2003) is as follows: Convention (34 Parties), Protocol on Water and Health (8 ratifications), Protocol on Civil Liability (23 signatures); and (b) only one more country (Belarus) ratified the Convention and Azerbaijan, which was already a Party to the Convention, ratified the Protocol on Water and Health after adoption of the above recommendation in April 2002.

Draft decisions

5. The Meeting of the Parties may wish to:

(a) Endorse the report of the secretariat (annex) on the implementation of the work plan 2000-2003;

(b) Commend the members of the Working Groups, expert groups and other ad hoc bodies for their excellent work to prepare new binding instruments, guidelines, reports and studies under the Convention and for their assistance in the organization of workshops, conferences, training courses and other meetings;

(c) Express its gratitude to Governments - both Parties and non-Parties to the Convention - that have provided human and financial resources to implement the work plan;

(d) Request its Bureau to seek ways and means of implementing the recommendations of the Second International Conference on Sustainable Water Management in Europe, particularly the recommendation related to the ratification status, as the draft work plan for 2004-2003 does not yet foresee a specific activity on this matter.

Annex**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PLAN 2000-2003****I. PROGRAMME AREA “IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE”**

Work under this programme area has been carried out under the auspices of the Working Group on Legal and Administrative Aspects, chaired by Mrs. Phani DASKALOPOULOU-LIVADA (Greece) and Prof. Attila TANZI (Italy). The Chairpersons of the Working Group, together with Mr. Jürg BALLY (Switzerland) and Mr. Jürgen WETTIG (European Commission) also acted as the Chairpersons of the negotiation meetings on the civil liability protocol.

The Working Group held its first meeting in January 2001. In addition, the Working Group and/or the Chairpersons provided guidance to: (a) expert group meetings, held in 2000, to prepare studies and reports on liability in relation to accidental water pollution; (b) the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) in November 2000; (c) the joint meeting of the Bureaux of the governing bodies of the Water Convention and Industrial Accidents Convention in February 2001 to prepare the joint special session of these two bodies to start the negotiation process on the civil liability instrument; and (d) the ad hoc Working Group on Civil Liability, which was entrusted with the negotiation of the civil liability instrument.

The four programme elements under this programme area have been implemented as follows:

1.1 Review of policies and strategies for the protection and use of transboundary waters

The secretariat further developed the Convention’s web site to provide information on activities under the work plan, including bilateral and multilateral agreements that fall under the Convention and activities of joint bodies.^{1/} The web site also contains the full text of meeting documents as well as guidelines and background reports prepared under the Convention.

As concerns the work plan 2004-2004, the secretariat has proposed to lead work on a follow-up activity on the subject (see MP.WAT/2003/6, annex I).

1.2 Strategy and framework for compliance with the Convention

Based on the strategy and framework for monitoring compliance with agreements on transboundary waters (MP.WAT/2000/4, 5 and Add.1) and documents drawn up under other multilateral environmental agreements, a draft study on establishing a compliance review mechanism under the 1999 Protocol on Water and Health ^{2/} was prepared by a consultant

^{1/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/partnership/part.htm>

^{2/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/spwh/2meeting/wp1e.pdf>

(Prof. A. Tanzi) to facilitate the work of the Signatories to the Protocol on Water and Health, following its article 15.

As concerns the work plan 2004-2004, the Chairpersons of the Working Group, following the outcome of the second meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol on Water and Health, have drawn up a follow-up activity on the subject (see MP.WAT/2003/6, annex I). At the time of writing, Italy was considering leading this programme element.

1.3 Advisory service on legal instruments

At the request of countries, the secretariat provided assistance to draw up multilateral agreements on the Daugava and Nemunas river basins and to assist countries to set up joint bodies for the Sava River basin as well as the Chu and Talas river basins. Sweden, the United Kingdom and the UNECE programme of operational activities have supported these activities.

As concerns the work plan 2004-2004, the secretariat has drawn up a follow-up activity on the subject (see MP.WAT/2003/6, annex I), but could not yet identify a lead Party.

1.4 Responsibility and liability

The Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention and the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention have jointly drawn up the Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters (ECE/MP.WAT/11-ECE/CP.TEIA/9), which was adopted at the second joint special session of the governing bodies to both Conventions on 21 May 2003 on the occasion of the Kiev Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (ECE/MP.WAT/12-ECE/CP.TEIA/10).^{3/}

As concerns the work plan 2004-2004, the Chairpersons of the Working Group, following the decisions of the second joint special session, have drawn up a follow-up activity on the subject (see MP.WAT/2003/6, annex I). Greece expressed its readiness to act as lead country for the new programme element.

II. PROGRAMME AREA “INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND RELATED ECOSYSTEMS”

Work under this programme area has been carried out under the auspices of the Working Group on Water Management, chaired by Mr. Milan MATUSHKA (Slovakia) and co-chaired by Mrs. Bernadetta CZERSKA (Poland). The programme element 2.8.1 has been carried out under the guidance of the joint ad hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents, established under the governing body of the Water and Industrial Accidents Conventions and co-chaired by Mr. Peter KOVACS (Hungary) and Mr. Martin SCHIESS (Switzerland).

^{3/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/civil-liability/welcome.html>

The Working Group, which is mainly composed of senior ministerial staff, was already established at the first meeting of the Parties. The Working Group's activities mainly aimed at providing overall council to the various teams responsible for programme implementation and advising the Bureau on the Convention's activities as a whole.

After the second meeting of the Parties, the Working Group has held its third and fourth meetings in 2001 and 2003, respectively. To facilitate dialogue among senior officials of the working group and water management experts, two workshops were organized back-to-back with these working group meetings, one on public participation (as foreseen in the work plan, see programme element 2.2) and the other on floods and dam safety issues (as an additional initiative by Finland).

Particularly in the preparations for the fourth meeting of the Working Group, and following the outcome of the Second International Conference on Sustainable Water Management in Europe, a number of countries were developing proposals for the work plan 2004-2006. The proposals by Germany on flood issues, Slovakia on joint bodies, and Switzerland on the ecosystem approach have already been included in the draft work plan (see document MP.WAT/2003/6).

The eight programme elements under this programme area have been implemented as follows:

2.1 Public participation in water management

Based on the draft guidelines on public participation in water management (MP.WAT/2000/4, 6 and Add.1), a workshop was held at the invitation of the Government of the Netherlands on 18 September 2001 in The Hague in conjunction with the third meeting of the Working Group on Water Management.^{4/}

To avoid duplication with similar activities under other multilateral environmental agreements and ongoing work under the EU Water Framework Directive related to public participation, work on this programme element was temporarily discontinued. The Netherlands are now developing a follow-up activity and expressed their readiness to act as lead country.

2.2 Strengthening the capability of joint bodies to comply with the obligations under the Convention

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe jointly with the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Office for Europe, the Ministry for Natural Resources of the Russian Federation, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, and the Agency for Environmental Assessments "Ecoterra" carried out, at the request of the Russian Federation, the project "Transboundary water cooperation in the newly independent States" under which measures for strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation have been identified. These activities became part of work on integrated water resources management in a transboundary context under the Partnership on water for sustainable development (see

^{4/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/wgwm/4meeting/wp7e.pdf>

document MP.WAT/2003/13). Consequently, the secretariat has drawn up a new programme element for the 2004-2006 work plan (see MP.WAT/2003/6, annex II, programme element 2.7)

2.3 Ecosystem approach in water management

At the joint invitation of the Governments of Germany and Slovakia the workshop on approaches and tools for river basin management and experience drawn from the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive (MP.WAT/WG.1/2001/8) took place in Bratislava on 15-16 October 2001 ^{5/}, where the participants particularly examined the implications of the Framework Directive for countries on the fringe on an enlarged EU area.

The Parties at their third meeting are expected to endorse the conclusions and recommendations of this workshop.

In the meantime, two proposals for follow up activities have been drawn up: one by Switzerland on the theme “ Ecosystems approach in water management”, whereby Switzerland expressed its readiness to act as lead country, and the other by the Working Group on Water Management on the theme “Implementation of the Water Framework Directive”. On the latter topic, a lead country could not yet be identified.

2.4 Management of transboundary waters in the UNECE region

At the invitation of the Government of Poland, the Second International Conference on Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters in Europe, which marked the tenth anniversary of the Water Convention, took place in Miedzzydroje (Poland) from 21 to 24 April 2002. The conference proceedings have been issued in January 2003 and are also available from the Convention’s web site.^{6/}

At the Conference, the participants examined achievements under the Convention and drew up conclusions and recommendations, including proposals of new directions of work (ECE/MP.WAT/8), which are subject to endorsement by the Parties at their third meeting.

At the time of writing, Poland is considering convening the third conference in 2006/2007 and will inform the Parties at their third meeting accordingly.

2.5 Groundwater management

At the invitation of the Government of Hungary, the second international groundwater workshop on the protection of groundwaters used as a source of drinking-water supply took place in Budapest (Hungary) from 8 to 10 November 2001. The workshop proceedings have been issued as IWAC publication. They are also available at the Convention’s web site.^{7/}

^{5/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/documents/2001/wat/wg1/mp.wat.wg.1.2001.8.e.pdf>

^{6/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/conf2.htm>

^{7/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/groundwater01.htm>

Follow-up activities on groundwater issues will be considered by the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment at its forthcoming fourth meeting, and will be included, as appropriate, in the work plan for 2004-2006 (see MP.WAT/2003/6/Add.1).

2.6 Interstate distribution and rational use of water resources of transboundary rivers in water-deficient regions

At the invitation of the Government of the Russian Federation, a workshop was held in Yekaterinburg on 4-6 December 2002 to draw up recommendations on the interstate distribution of water resources of transboundary watercourses and their rational use with due regard for water quality aspects. The draft recommendations and other workshop documents, considered by the Working Group on Water Management at its fourth meeting, are available as working papers of the Working Group on the Convention's web site.^{8/}

The final version of the recommendations will be made available to the Parties for consideration and endorsement at their third meeting (see MP.WAT/2003/8), including a follow-up activity, which is included in the draft work plan 2004-2006 (MP.WAT/2003/6, annex II) as a new programme element 2.7.

2.7 Management and sustainable development of international lakes

Agreement was reached at the third meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Helsinki, 3-5 October 2002) and the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Water Management (Helsinki, 28-29 April 2003) that relevant issues of the present programme element would be covered by the work under programme element "Pilot programme on international lakes", as Switzerland was not in the position to lead work under programme element 2.7.

2.8 Water and industrial accidents

2.8.1 Water and industrial accidents: joint measures

The first part of the programme element was carried out under the responsibility of the joint ad hoc expert group on water and industrial accidents, following a specific plan of activities.^{9/} This plan included the drawing up/adaptation of safety guidelines for various types of installations, warning and alarm systems, contingency planning and joint exercises to prepare for and respond to industrial accidents. Assistance was also provided to the negotiation process of the Civil Liability Protocol, particularly regarding its annexes I and II. The Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention, when examining the work of the joint group, made proposals for the group's future composition and role (ECE/CP.TEIA/7, paragraphs 37-41; CP.TEIA/2002/11).^{10/}

^{8/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents.htm>

^{9/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/welcome.html> and select "Water and Industrial Accidents"

^{10/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/teia/doc.htm>

In consultation with the Chairpersons of the ad hoc working group and the Chairman of the Bureau of the Industrial Accidents Convention, the secretariats of the Water and Industrial Accidents Conventions have developed a proposal for follow-up activities, which is included in the draft work plan 2004-2006 (see MP.WAT/2003/6, annex II).

2.8.2 Water and industrial accidents: measures to be undertaken by each Party

As decided by the Parties at their second meeting, the second part of the programme element, which relates to the decisions of the 1999 Hamburg Seminar on the prevention of chemical accidents and limitation of their impact on transboundary waters (MP.WAT/SEM.1/3), will be implemented by the Parties under the work plan 2004-2006. The joint expert group on water and industrial accidents is expected to commence work on a reporting scheme at its fourth meeting (Kaliningrad, 30-31 October 2003).^{11/}

In consultation with the Chairpersons of the ad hoc working group and the Chairman of the Bureau of the Industrial Accidents Convention, the secretariats of the Water and Industrial Accidents Conventions have revised the draft work plan 2004-2006 (see MP.WAT/2003/6, annex II), accordingly.

III. PROGRAMME AREA “MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT”

Work under this programme area has been carried out under the auspices of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, chaired by Prof. Wim COFINO (Netherlands) at the first meeting (September 2000) and Mrs. Lea KAUPPI (Finland) from the second to the fourth meetings (September 2001, October 2002, September 2003). Mrs. Zsuzsa BUZAS (Hungary) acted as Vice-Chairpersons for all four meetings. Prof. Wim COFINO also headed the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC).

The particular strength of the Working Group and its various programme-specific core groups was due to: (a) its longstanding teamwork among representatives of Ministries, environmental protection agencies, research institutions and environmental inspectorates; most of them joint monitoring activities under the Convention already in the mid-1990s; (b) the established networking arrangements with governmental organizations, both within and outside the UN system, and non-governmental organizations; and (c) the targeted approach towards application of the Working Group's products in field projects. The Working Group also could rely on and benefit from the assistance by the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC).

The successful work under this programme area is also due to the continued work to draw up and implement, step-by-step, a long-term strategic programme of activities, both under the Working Group and IWAC.

^{11/} See document ECE/CP.TEIA/7, paragraph 40.

The various programme and sub-programme elements under this programme area have been implemented as follows^{12/13/}.

3.1 Strategies for monitoring and assessing transboundary waters

3.1.1 Monitoring and assessment of international lakes

The Core Group on Lakes, lead by Finland, finalized the Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary and International Lakes for endorsement by the Parties at their third meeting. The guidelines consist of a strategy part and a technical document and take into account the results of the Common Implementation Strategy for the EU Water Framework Directive. Background documentation on the current monitoring and assessment practices used in 21 transboundary and international lakes (including reservoirs) in the UNECE region was also prepared.

3.1.2 Monitoring and assessment of transboundary estuaries

An inventory of the transboundary estuaries in the UNECE region and their monitoring practices was prepared by the Finnish Environment Institute and submitted to the third meeting of the Working Group, which on the basis of the reported information decided that there was no need to develop specific guidelines on estuaries.

3.1.3 Updating of the guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters

The Working Group prepared two questionnaires on experience of Parties with the implementation of the guidelines on monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers and groundwaters, in order to evaluate the effectiveness as well as the need for updating of the guidelines. Moreover, the participants in the rivers pilot projects discussed the need to review ways and means to improve the rivers guidelines during a workshop organized in the Netherlands (9-10 May 2003). At its fourth meeting (12-13 September 2003), the Working Group will review the report of the secretariat on replies by the Riparian Parties to the questionnaires (MP.WAT/2003/9) as well as conclusions and recommendations drawn from the implementation of the rivers pilot projects and other monitoring activities (MP.WAT/2003/10 and 11). Conclusions and recommendations of the Working Group will be reflected in the report (MP.WAT/WG.2/2003/3) for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties.

^{12/} As the Working Group will have its fourth session after the deadline for submission of the current document, possible follow-up activities are not mentioned in the present document.

^{13/} The documents referred to in this chapter can also be downloaded from the homepage of the International Water Assessment Centre at www.iwac-unece.org.

3.2 Pilot programmes on monitoring and assessment

3.2.1 Pilot programme on transboundary rivers

Within the pilot programme, five projects have been undertaken directly by the Core Group on the River Pilot Projects (Bug, Morava, Mures/Maros, Ipel/Ipoly and Latorica/Uzh).

The Core Group, through a series of meetings and workshops, finalized and published the synthesis reports, "Identification and Review of Water Management Issues", for the Rivers Bug, Morava and Mures/Maros and presented the results to the Second International Conference on Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters in Europe (Miedzyzdroje, 21-24 April 2002). The recommendations reports for the Bug, Morava and Mures/Maros are in their final stage of issuing, as it is the case with the combined reports on water management issues and recommendations for the Ipoly and Latorica/Uzh.

Furthermore, the Core Group held an evaluation workshop (Netherlands, 9-10 May 2003) to bring forward and discuss the lessons learnt in the pilot programme, including an assessment of the rivers guidelines. The results of the workshop will be presented at the conference Monitoring Tailor-Made IV (Netherlands, 12-18 September 2003) and will provide guidance to the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and to the Meeting of the Parties for the definition of the future work plan (MP.WAT/2003/10).

The Core Group also continues to provide advice to four additional projects (Kura, Serverski Donets, Tobol and Pripyat), which are funded through the European Union's TACIS programme and commenced in January 2002. An inception report has been prepared for the four river basins and the final project report is expected to be ready by October 2003. The final project conference is scheduled for October 2003 and UNECE and IWAC proposed to have a joint conference presenting the results of the 9 pilot projects.

3.2.2 Pilot programme on transboundary groundwaters

The programme covers the Aggtelek - Slovak Karst (Hungary-Slovakia) and part of the Bug groundwaters (Belarus-Poland). For both projects, kick-off meetings have been organized and inception reports are being finalized.

Work on the initially planned pilot project on the Cetina River basin (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia) ceased due to political circumstances; and work on the Vechte groundwaters (Germany-Netherlands) was postponed due to new priorities set by one of the participating countries.

3.2.3 Pilot programme on international lakes

At the third meeting of the Working Group, after completion of the lake monitoring guidelines, the Core Group on Lakes presented a proposal for a pilot

programme on two transboundary lakes, Lake Peipsi (Estonia/Russian Federation) and Lake Pyhäjärvi (Finland/Russian Federation). The projects' aim is to implement and test the lakes guidelines and, at the same time, develop information systems needed for water management, also in the light of the EU Water Framework Directive.

3.3 Laboratory quality management and accreditation

A task force with Hungary as lead country and with the support of IWAC finalized the work on laboratory quality management and accreditation in September 2002. The task force's technical report was posted on the Convention's web site.^{14/}

3.4 International Water Assessments Centre

For technical reasons, the review of IWAC activities under the work plan 2000-2003 is presented in document MP.WAT/2003/12.

IV. PROGRAMME AREA "WATER AND HUMAN HEALTH"

Work under this programme area has been carried out under the auspices of the Working Group on Water and Health, which has held two meetings in 2001 and 2002. Overall guidance on the interim implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health was given by the Meeting of the Signatories to the Protocol, which has held two meetings in 2000 and 2003.

Achievements under this programme area are examined in the document "General overview on the interim implementation of the Protocol (MP.WAT/AC.2/2003/3 - EUR/03/5041120/3) and the report of the second meeting of the Signatories (MP.WAT/AC.2/2003/2 - EUR/03/5041120/2).

^{14/} See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/documents/guidancelaboratories.pdf>.