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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

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

Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management

Third meeting
Rome, 22–24 October 2008

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE THIRD MEETING

To be held at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Philippines Room (C277/281), C building, 2nd floor, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, starting on Wednesday, 22 October at 9.30 a.m.¹

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.
2. Progress in the ratification process.
3. Support for ratification and implementation of the Water Convention².
4. Water and adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins, including flood and drought risk management.

¹ The morning of Thursday, 23 October, there will be a special session on forests and water as part of the official agenda of the European Forest Week.

² Convention of the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes.

- (a) Water and adaptation to climate change;
 - (b) Transboundary flood management.
5. Water and industrial accidents:
- (a) Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents;
 - (b) Protocol on Civil Liability.
6. Ecosystem services and payments for such services in integrated water resources management.
7. Capacity for Water Cooperation project.
8. European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues.
9. Second Assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in the UNECE region.
10. Management of transboundary groundwaters in the UNECE region.
11. Promoting transboundary water cooperation and integrated water resources management in Central Asia.
12. Third International Conference on Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters in the UNECE Region
13. Contribution of the Water Convention to activities of United Nations agencies and other organizations:
- (a) UN-Water and the United Nations World Water Development Report;
 - (b) Environment and Security Initiative.
14. Ongoing workplan for 2007–2009 on integrated water resources management.
15. Workplan on integrated water resources management for 2010–2012 and beyond.
16. Other business.
17. Closing of the meeting.

II. BACKGROUND AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

1. The third meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resource Management will be held in Rome at the premises of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

(FAO), in parallel with the European Forest Week (more information on the European Forest Week is available at: <http://www.europeanforestweek.org/home/en/>).

2. The meeting of the Working Group will start at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 22 October 2008, and will close at 10.30 a.m. on Friday, 24 October 2008.
3. The morning of Thursday, 23 October 2008, there will be a special session on forests and water as part of the official agenda of the European Forest Week. The session is being organized by the secretariats of the UNECE Water Convention and the FAO Working Party on Mountain Watersheds, together with the Liaison Unit Oslo of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). The session will aim to present the linkages between forests and water, to promote the implementation of MCPFE Warsaw Resolution 2 “forests and water,”¹ and to contribute to closer interaction between the forest and water communities. Topics covered will range from financial instruments and economic incentives such as payments for ecosystem services to forests and water-related risk management in the context of climate change and transboundary forest and water-related issues.
4. The working languages of the Working Group will be English, French and Russian. The working languages of the special session on forests and water will be English, French, Russian and Spanish.
5. All relevant documentation for the meeting of the Working Group will be made available in due course at: http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_WGIWRM.htm.
6. **Participants are requested to complete the registration form** (available online at: http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/documents_WGIWRM.htm), **and to transmit it** to the e-mail addresses indicated in the form **no later than 1 October 2008**. For further information on registration, participants may contact EFW-Registration@fao.org.
7. **Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition may apply for financial support** to facilitate their participation in the workshop. Requests for financial support should be submitted to UNECE by e-mail (olga.carlos@unece.org) as soon as possible, but **not later than 15 September 2008**.
8. Practical information on the meeting venue, transport and hotels in Rome will be made available at: <http://www.europeanforestweek.org/home/en/>.

III. ANNOTATIONS TO THE AGENDA

Day One

Item 1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

(9.30 a.m.–9.40 a.m.)

9. Ms. Sibylle Vermont (Switzerland), Chairperson of the Working Group, will open the meeting.

¹ See: http://www.mcpfe.org/files/u1/warsaw_resolution_2.pdf.

10. The Working Group will adopt its agenda as set out in the present document.

Item 2. Progress in the ratification process

(9.40 a.m. – 9.50 a.m.)

11. Since the fourth meeting of the Parties and as of July 2008, Uzbekistan has ratified the Convention; Czech Republic and Moldova have ratified the amendment of the Convention's articles 25 and 26; and Croatia, Germany, Portugal and Switzerland have ratified the Protocol on Water and Health to the Convention.

12. Representatives of other countries will report on their progress towards ratification. When discussing the workplan for 2010–2012, the Working Group will agree on activities to foster the ratification process (see agenda item 3).

Item 3. Support for ratification and implementation of the Water Convention

(9.50 a.m. – 11 a.m.)

13. Following the formal expression of the intention to ratify the Convention at the fourth meeting of the Parties, Georgia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia approached the secretariat with requests for support to facilitate ratification of the Convention. The requests underlined the need to concretely address the legal, technical and economic implications of ratification.

14. To implement this new task for the Convention, the Bureau, consulted by the secretariat, agreed that the most effective way to address these and possible future requests would be through the development of a practical guidance designed to support both ratification and implementation of the Convention to provide direction for the work at the national level. This document should substitute a strategic guidance on integrated management of transboundary water resources, originally included in the workplan as programme element 2.1.1.

15. The Bureau agreed that this activity should be a multilateral activity with the close involvement of the Legal Board and the Working Group. In fact, the activity entailed an interpretation of the Convention's provisions – which should be the role of the Legal Board – as well as technical advice for their implementation, to be provided by the Working Group.

16. Ms. Attila Tanzi, the Chairperson of the Legal Board, will be invited to introduce a first draft of the guidance, as discussed at the fifth meeting of the Legal Board (Geneva, 2–3 October 2008,).

17. The Working Group will be invited to provide its comments on the draft guidance and on the future work arrangements.

Coffee break: 11 a.m. – 11.15 a.m.

Item 4. Water and adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins, including flood and drought risk management

(11.15 a.m. – 12.30 a.m.)

(a) Water and adaptation to climate change

18. The Chairperson of the Task Force on Water and Climate will introduce the draft guidance (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/7) and will report on the progress achieved thus far in this area. He will also recall the decision of the joint meeting of the Bureaux of the Convention and of the Protocol on Water and Health (13 September 2007), which requested close cooperation and integration of the results of activities carried out by the Task Force on Water and Climate and the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events established under the auspices of the Protocol, and also that the guidance should be the joint product of both Task Forces for possible adoption by both Meetings of the Parties to the Convention and to the Protocol. Furthermore, he will inform the Working Group about the outcomes of the workshop on water and adaptation to climate change held on 1 and 2 July 2008 in Amsterdam.

19. The Working Group will be invited to comment the draft guidance and provide its views on the future work arrangements for elaborating the document.

(b) Transboundary flood management

20. Germany, the lead country, will report on the outcomes of the first meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate and will provide its view on how to best accomplish the needs identified in this area.

21. The Working Group will discuss and agree on future activities in this area.

Lunch: 12.30 p.m.–2.30 p.m.

Item 5. Water and industrial accidents

(2.30 p.m.–3.30 p.m.)

(a) Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

22. The Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management will be informed about the progress made by the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents. In particular, the Working Group will examine the results of activities of the Joint Expert Group that are to be presented at the fifth meeting of the Parties: the draft safety guidelines/best practices on tailing management facilities (ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/9 -ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/5) and the progress report of the Joint Expert Group (ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/8 - ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/6). The Working Group will also provide its comments on the draft outline of the guidance on contingency planning in a transboundary context (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/4).

23. The Working Group will be invited to have a strategic discussion on the future of the Joint Expert Group, taking into account challenges encountered with respect to the latter's

activities thus far. The Working Group will discuss and agree on needs for further work in this area, future activities to address these needs as well as specific working arrangements for the Joint Expert Group.

(b) Protocol on Civil Liability

24. Hungary will be invited to report on the outcome of the workshop on “Transboundary accidental water pollution, liability and compensation: Challenges and opportunities”, held on 21 and 22 May 2007 in Budapest (ECE/BELGRADE.CONF/2007/INF/2). The workshop was organized jointly by Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention and the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents.

25. Delegations will be invited to share information on the latest developments in transboundary environment/water pollution and relevant issues of liability. Countries will be invited to identify needs for further work in this area and to discuss future activities to address these needs.

Item 6. Ecosystem services and payments for such services in integrated water resources management

(3.30 p.m. – 4 p.m.)

26. At their fourth meeting, the Parties to the Water Convention agreed to support the implementation of the Recommendations on payments for ecosystem services in integrated water resources management (ECE/MP.WAT/22, also available at <http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub74.htm>), through capacity-building, awareness-raising activities and pilot projects.

27. Delegations will be invited to report on progress made with respect to implementation in this area, and to share experience related to the issue of payments for ecosystem services, their specific needs, and possible future activities to address these needs.

28. The Working Group will discuss how to best address country needs to implement the programme of work in this area.

Item 7. Capacity for Water Cooperation project

(4 p.m. – 4.15 p.m.)

29. The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the outcomes of the fourth and fifth workshops under the Convention’s Capacity for Water Cooperation project: the workshop on “River basin commissions and other institutions for transboundary water cooperation” (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 23–25 October 2007) and the workshop on water and health (Bucharest, 14–16 May 2008).

30. The Working Group will be invited to share its view on possible thematic focuses of future workshop(s) as well as options for the continuation of the Capacity for Water Cooperation project and for the follow-up activities identified in the project.

Item 8. European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues

(4.15 p.m.–5.30 p.m.)

31. The Working Group will be informed about the recent developments under the European Union (EU) Water Initiative related to the National Policy Dialogues (NPD) programme in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, in particular progress achieved with regard to the NPD programme in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan Moldova and Ukraine (see also ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/8).

32. The Working Group will discuss lessons learned, added value and possible further strengthening of the dialogues, in particular through the direct support of other EU countries.

Day Two

Session on forests and water

(9.30 a.m. – 12.30 p.m.)

33. This session will provide an opportunity for the forest and water communities to share experience relating to a wide range of topics of common interest, including financial instruments and economic incentives such as payments for ecosystem services to forests and water-related risk management in the context of climate change and transboundary forest-water related issues (see ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/3). The programme of the session will be distributed separately.

Lunch 12.30 p.m. – 2.30 p.m.

Item 9. Second Assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in the UNECE region

(2.30 p.m. – 3.45 p.m.)

34. The Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007), highly valued the first *Assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in the UNECE region* and invited the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention to prepare the second Assessment for their next Conference, scheduled to take place in Kazakhstan. The Convention secretariat will report on the outcome of the ninth meeting of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, (Geneva, 17–18 June 2008), where a number of decisions were taken on how to prepare the second Assessment.

35. In particular, Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment agreed that in addition to updates of available information, the second Assessment should present the progress achieved in

the implementation of legal and institutional arrangements for transboundary water cooperation. It will have a subregional focus with much attention devoted to the Central Asian subregion, including its neighbouring non-UNECE countries (e.g. Afghanistan, China and the Islamic Republic of Iran). Furthermore, the study will assess the progress in implementation of measures to improve the status of waters, and will have a more integrative nature. It will be enriched with some overarching thematic issues specific for different subregions (e.g. climate change impacts, impacts on human health, water allocation and ecosystems). A special challenge for the second Assessment will be to present in an integrated manner surface water and groundwater in the same basin, as a significant contribution to implementation of an integrated water resources management approach (see ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2008/2).

36. The Working Group will be invited to provide its views on how to contribute to the preparation of the second Assessment, including through (a) the activities carried out under its framework, and (b) mobilizing relevant experts in their respective countries.

Item 10. Management of transboundary groundwaters in the UNECE region

(3.45 p.m. – 4 p.m.)

37. The secretariat will report on the outcome of the workshop on the protection of groundwater as a source of drinking water in karst areas (Malinska, Krk Island, Croatia 14–15 April 2008). Countries will be invited to share their experiences and express their views on further needs in this area.

Coffee break: 4 p.m. – 4.15 p.m.

Item 11. Promoting transboundary water cooperation and integrated water resources management in Central Asia

(4.15 p.m. – 5.30 p.m.)

38. Water management and cooperation in Central Asia has recently garnered an increasing attention in the international arena. This interest has been accompanied by the development of several new initiatives and projects.

39. The Working Group will be informed about the activities carried out by UNECE in this region as well as future plans and synergies with other initiatives.

40. The Working Group will discuss the future strategic role of UNECE and the Water Convention in the subregion, taking into account Central Asian countries' needs, the specific added value and comparative advantage of UNECE and opportunities for cooperation with other organizations.

Day Three

Item 12 Third International Conference on Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters in the UNECE Region

(8.30 a.m. – 9 a.m.)

41. Poland, lead country, will provide its views on how to best accomplish the identified needs in this area, including through organization of the third International Conference on Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters in the UNECE Region. Countries will be invited to put forward proposals on the format and themes of the Conference.

Item 13. Contribution of the Water Convention to activities of other United Nations agencies and other organizations

(9 a.m. – 9.30 a.m.)

(a) UN-Water and the United Nations World Water Development Report

42. The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the contribution of UNECE to the activities of UN-Water and in particular to the United Nations Water Task Force on Transboundary Waters and the organization of World Water Day 2009, which will be devoted to transboundary water cooperation.

(b) Environment and Security Initiative

43. The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the contribution of UNECE to the Environment and Security Initiative, jointly carried out by UNECE, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Organization for Security and Co-operation, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe. The Working Group will provide its comments and offer guidance on future cooperation under the Environment and Security Initiative.

Item 14. Ongoing workplan for 2007–2009 on integrated water resources management

(9.30 a.m. - 9.45 a.m.)

44. Taking into account discussion under the previous agenda item, and in particular that the Strategic guidance on integrated management of transboundary water resources (activity 2.1.1) has been revised in light of countries' requests and that the synergies between the Water Convention and the EU Water Framework Directive (activity 2.2.2) have mostly occurred through the development of a guidance for ratification and implementation of the Water Convention and through the National Policy Dialogues, the Working Group will examine the progress in the implementation of the ongoing workplan under programme area II.

Item 15. Workplan on integrated water resources management for 2010–2012 and beyond

(9.45 a.m. – 10.20 a.m.)

45. Taking into account the outcomes of discussion under previous agenda items, the Working Group will discuss future priority areas of work for the period 2010–2012 as well as relevant activities, potential lead countries and the resources required. It will also consider opportunities for extending its mandate to guide implementation of the 2010–2012 workplan.

46. The Working Group will make work-sharing arrangements, with a view to preparing a workplan on integrated water resources management for presentation at its next meeting and with the further aim of its submission to the Parties at their fifth meeting (Geneva, 10–12 November 2009).

Item 16. Other business

(10.20 a.m. – 10.25 a.m.)

47. At the time of writing, the secretariat had no points to propose under this item.

Item 17. Closing of the meeting

(10.25 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.)

48. The Chairperson will close the meeting of Working Group on Friday, 24 October at 10.30 a.m..
