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

**REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES
HELD FROM 20 TO 22 NOVEMBER 2006 IN BONN, GERMANY**

Part One: Proceedings

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**Part Two: Declaration of Bonn, rules of procedure for meetings of the Parties and
Model Provisions on Transboundary Flood Management**

*For practical reasons, part two of the present report is issued in a separate addendum
(ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.1).*

Part Three: Programme of work for 2007–2009

*For practical reasons, part three of the present report is issued in a separate addendum
(ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.2).*

INTRODUCTION

1. The fourth meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) took place in Bonn from 20 to 22 November 2006, at the invitation of the Government of Germany.
2. The fourth meeting was attended by delegations from the following Parties to the Convention: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine. The Commission of the European Community was also represented.
3. Delegations from the following UNECE member States which had not yet ratified the Convention were also present: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.
4. Representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe (WHO-Europe), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention¹ also attended the meeting.
5. Representatives of the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, the International Meuse Commission, the International Sava River Basin Commission as well as the Scientific Information Center of the Interstate Coordination Water Commission (SIC-ICWC), the UNESCO Centre for Water Law, Policy and Science, and the WHO Collaborating Centre Institute for Hygiene and Public Health were present.
6. The following regional environmental centres were represented: the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC-CEE), the Regional Environmental Center for Central Asia (CAREC), the Regional Environmental Center for Moldova and the Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus.
7. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were also present: the Conservation Council of Western Australia, ECORES, the International Environmental Association of River Keepers (ECO-TIRAS), the Global Nature Fund-International Foundation for Environment and Nature, the Global Water Partnership (GWP), the International Council of Environmental Law, the International Network of Basins Organizations (INBO), the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), Women in Europe for a Common Future (WECF), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

¹ Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat.

8. To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention, a poster session was organized during the meeting. Through this session, Parties, non-Parties, international organizations, NGOs and other partners shared experience, success stories and lessons learned as well as different aspects of the Convention's implementation (e.g. legal aspects, integrated management of water and related ecosystems, monitoring and assessment, public participation, transboundary flood management, water and industrial accidents).

I. OPENING CEREMONY

9. A welcome address on behalf of the Federal Minister of the Environment of Germany, Mr. Sigmar Gabriel, was given by Ms. Astrid Klug, Parliamentary State Secretary. Ms. Klug highlighted the important impetus that the Convention had provided, in the 10 years since its entry into force, in the development of the legal framework and cooperation on transboundary waters in the UNECE region.

10. Mr. Marek Belka, Executive Secretary of UNECE, addressed the meeting. In his statement, he reflected on the main achievements of the Convention, the main issues at stake at the meeting, and the future challenges.

11. The following delegations made statements during the opening ceremony: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, the Republic of Moldova, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine. INBO, the International Sava River Basin Commission, OSCE, REC-CEE, REC-Caucasus, on behalf of all Regional Environmental Centres in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and WHO-Europe also made statements. These opening statements are available on the Convention website.²

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

12. The Meeting of the Parties adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WAT/18, but decided to proceed with the election of its officers before discussing its future workplan and the declaration.

III. CONSTITUTION OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES

13. In accordance with the Convention's rules of procedure, the meeting was chaired by Mr. Manuel Varela (Spain), Chairperson of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties, and by Ms. Heide Jekel (Germany) on behalf of the host country.

14. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the report of the officers, which set out that the credentials submitted by the Parties to the Convention were in good order.

15. The secretariat reported to participants on the status of ratification of the Convention, the Protocol on Water and Health, and the Protocol on Civil Liability.³ Thirty-four UNECE member

² www.unece.org/env/water/mop4/highlights.htm

³ The Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters.

States and the European Community were Parties to the Convention by the time of the meeting. The Protocol on Water and Health, which entered into force on 4 August 2005, had been signed by 36 countries and ratified, accessed, accepted or approved by 20 Parties. The Protocol on Civil Liability had been signed by 24 countries and ratified only by one.

16. The Chairperson invited delegates from States not yet Party to the Convention and/or the Protocols to briefly inform the Meeting of the Parties of their plans to ratify, accept, approve or accede. Three countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, indicated their intention to ratify the Convention, at the latest by the next meeting of the Parties.

17. The secretariat reported that Serbia had also announced its intention to ratify the Convention.

18. The Meeting of the Parties established three ad hoc groups: one on the draft workplan, chaired by Ms. Sybille Vermont (Switzerland); the second on the draft declaration, chaired by Ms. Jekel; and the third on the draft model provisions on transboundary flood management, chaired by Mr. Thomas Stratenwerth (Germany).

IV. ADOPTION OF REVISED RULES OF PROCEDURE

19. The Meeting of the Parties adopted the revised rules of procedure prepared by the Bureau as contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/1, with the following two amendments:

(a) The third sentence of paragraph 3 of rule 17 shall read: "In electing the officers, due account shall be taken of the need to ensure a balanced representation of the different geographical subregions of ECE.";

(b) Paragraph 3 of rule 21 shall read: "To promote harmonious cooperation, the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention shall make arrangements with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health regarding the terms of reference of working groups and other bodies established under the Convention and the Protocol".

20. As requested by the Meeting of the Parties, the new consolidated rules of procedures are contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.1.

V. AMENDMENT TO ARTICLES 25 AND 26 TO OPEN THE CONVENTION TO COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

21. At the time of the meeting, the amendments to articles 25 and 26 opening the Convention to non-UNECE countries had been ratified or accepted by six Parties. The Chairperson invited those Parties to the Convention which had not yet ratified the amendments to report on their progress. Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland and Switzerland announced their intention to ratify by 2008.

22. The Meeting of the Parties stressed the importance of the entry into force of the amendments and urged Parties to ratify them. It also invited States outside the UNECE region – especially but not only those sharing waters with UNECE countries – to cooperate within the framework of the Convention. Further to this aim, it decided to include in its programme of work specific demand-driven activities targeting other regions (see Part Five of the present report: ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.2).

VI. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND RELATED ECOSYSTEMS

23. Ms. Vermont, Chairperson of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, gave a quick overview of the activities implemented in the last three years by the Working Group as set out in the report on implementation (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/2). Following this overview, each programme element carried out in accordance with the programme of work for 2003–2006 (ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.5) was presented to the Meeting of the Parties along with proposals on the way forward for the period 2007–2009 (see sections A to H below).

A. Flood prevention, protection and mitigation

24. Mr. Stratenwerth, Chairperson of Task Force on Flood Prevention, Protection and Mitigation (Flood Task Force), presented the activities carried out by the Task Force, in particular the Seminar on Flood Prevention, Protection and Mitigation (Berlin, 21–22 June 2004) and the draft model provisions on transboundary flood management (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/4) developed in cooperation with the Legal Board.

25. The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the conclusions of the Seminar on Flood Prevention, Protection and Mitigation (see MP.WAT/SEM.3/2004/3).

26. An ad hoc group revised the draft model provisions on transboundary flood management.

27. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Adopted the Model Provisions on Transboundary Flood Management and their commentary as revised during the meeting (see part two of the present report: ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.1);

(b) Invited Parties and non-Parties to the Convention to apply these model provisions when entering into or reviewing bilateral or multilateral normative instruments on transboundary water issues or flood-specific ones;

(c) Commended the Flood Task Force and the Legal Board for their excellent work;

(d) Expressed its gratitude to the Governments of Germany and Greece for their leadership and financial support in the development of the model provisions and their commentary;

(e) Requested the secretariat to publish the model provisions and distribute them as widely as possible.

28. Looking at the future, the Parties decided to focus their work on: (a) water and adaptation to climate change, with a view to developing a guidance on water and climate adaptation for possible adoption at the fifth meeting of the Parties; and (b) on the transfer of experience gained in the European Union (EU) within the framework of the Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks to non-EU countries. To this aim, the Meeting of the Parties decided to transform the Flood Task Force into a Task Force on Water and Climate (see Part Three of the present report: ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.2).

B. Payments for ecosystem services

29. Ms. Vermont introduced the preparatory work that led to the development of the draft rules on payments for ecosystem services in integrated water resources management (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/5), in particular the Seminar on the Role of Ecosystems as Water Suppliers (Geneva, 13–14 December 2004) and the Seminar on Environmental Services and Financing for the Protection and Sustainable Use of Ecosystems (Geneva, 10–11 October 2005) as well as the two brochures produced with recommendations from the two seminars (“Water for nature – protecting water-related ecosystems for sustainable development”⁴ and “Nature for water – innovative financing for the environment”⁵).

30. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Decided to rename the “Rules on payments for ecosystem services in integrated water resources management” contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/5. The new name is “Recommendations on payments for ecosystem services in integrated water resources management”;

(b) Adopted the Recommendations on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management;

(c) Expressed its gratitude to the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment for its leadership in the development of the Recommendations and for the financial contributions made;

(d) Expressed its appreciation to the representatives of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment; the designated experts from Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy and the Netherlands; the representatives of the UNECE Timber Committee secretariat; the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP); FAO; the Ramsar Convention secretariat; IUCN; the Liaison Unit of MCPFE; CAREC; WWF; and the Convention secretariat for the substantive work done;

(e) Invited relevant organizations and forums, such as the UNECE Timber Committee, UNEP, FAO, OECD, the Ramsar Convention, MCPFE, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Council of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity

⁴ See: http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/ecosystem/Brochure_final.pdf

⁵ See: http://www.unece.org/env/water/meetings/payment_ecosystems/brochure.pdf

Strategy (PEBLDS), the RECs, IUCN, WWF and other NGOs, to consider the Recommendations as a tool for the implementation of the relevant parts of their programmes of work;

(f) Considered the adoption of the Recommendations as a first step and agreed that future work should focus on their practical implementation and on the assessment of their applicability and effectiveness;

(g) Decided to review at its fifth meeting the experience in the application of the Recommendations, and decided, if need be, to update these Recommendations in the light of the practice and lessons learned;

(h) Requested the secretariat to print and distribute this document as widely as possible.⁶

31. In the discussion on future work, Georgia expressed its interest in the organization of a regional workshop for the Caucasus on the application of the Recommendations. Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine expressed their interest in the development of pilot projects.

C. Synergies between the Convention and the European Union Water Framework Directive

32. A representative of Poland presented the outcome of the workshop on “Transboundary Water Management at the North-Eastern Border of the European Union: the Complementary Roles of the EU Water Framework Directive and the UNECE Water Convention” (Debe, Poland, 18–19 October 2005). The workshop had been organized by the Government of Poland in cooperation with the European Commission (see MP.WAT/SEM.6/2005/2). She also presented the planned follow up activities for 2007–2009.

33. A representative of Italy presented the outcome of the workshop, “Transboundary Water Management in South-Eastern Europe: the Complementary Roles of the EU Water Framework Directive and the UNECE Water Convention” (Belgrade, 2–3 March 2006; MP.WAT/SEM.6/2006/2). He also introduced some ideas for follow-up activities in 2007–2009 and called for a dialogue with countries in the region to identify specific needs. In the ensuing discussion, the Greek delegate clarified that no official representative from Greece had attended the workshop and expressed reservations concerning the conclusions and recommendations in the workshop report.

34. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the outcome of the two workshops on transboundary water management and the complementary roles of the EU Water Framework Directive and the Convention;

(b) Amended document ECE/MP.WAT/SEM.6/2006/2, as follows:

⁶ The Recommendations have been published as ECE/MP.WAT/22.

- (i) Deleted Greece from the list of participants and included GWP-Mediterranean;
 - (ii) Amended paragraph 8 to read as follows: “The negotiations on a new agreement for transboundary river management between Romania and Serbia to replace the 1955 agreement between Romania and Yugoslavia should start and the new agreement should be signed”;
- (c) Took note of the reservation of the Government of Greece on conclusions and recommendations in document ECE/MP.WAT/SEM.6/2006/2;
- (d) Expressed its gratitude to Italy, Poland and the European Commission for their leadership in these activities.

35. The Meeting of the Parties reaffirmed the synergies and complementary roles of the Convention and the EU Water Framework Directive for integrated management of transboundary waters in the European region; it underlined the importance of sharing experience between these instruments and between EU and non-EU countries to promote harmonization and joint implementation. The Meeting therefore decided to pursue further work in this area in 2007–2009 (see part three of the present report: ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.2). Several partners (e.g. the RECs, GWP and INBO) expressed their interest in cooperating in these activities.

D. European Union Water Initiative

36. A representative of the European Commission presented the EU Water Initiative launched by the European Union at the World Summit on Sustainable Development with the aim of contributing to achievement of the water-related Millennium Development Goals, especially targets 9 and 10 of Goal 7, and the targets on sanitation set at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. He reported on the progress achieved under the component for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), which included two pillars: (a) strengthening capacity in the water supply and sanitation sector, including financing of water infrastructure; and (b) promotion of integrated water resources management, including transboundary river management and regional seas issues. He also illustrated the approach of the National Policy Dialogues – the main mechanism for implementing the work programme of the Water Initiative’s EECCA component – and presented the role of the UNECE secretariat in facilitating the development of National Policy Dialogues on integrated water resources management (see ECE/MP.WAT/2006/6).

37. Mr. Bo Libert, Regional Advisor on Environment, UNECE, presented the progress achieved vis-à-vis development of a National Policy Dialogue in the Republic of Moldova, where a country steering group and a multi-stakeholder forum had been established. He also reported on the initial steps undertaken in Armenia to establish a second National Policy Dialogue and on plans to present the results at the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007). He underlined the importance of coordination with other actors present in the countries.

38. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the achievements under the EU Water Initiative and the organization of National Policy Dialogues in Armenia and the Republic of Moldova;

(b) Decided to include a workplan element on the EU Water Initiative and the National Policy Dialogues in its programme of work for 2007–2009 (see part three of the present report: ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.2) and called on Parties and other partners to ensure that the needed resources be mobilized to support this activity up to 2009 and beyond;

(c) Encouraged the Republic of Moldova to carry out, Armenia to initiate, and Tajikistan and Ukraine to make appropriate preparations for National Policy Dialogues in the framework of the EU Water Initiative;

(d) Invited Parties that are EU Member States to assist the secretariat in carrying out the National Policy Dialogues through, inter alia, designation of national experts on the legal, institutional and economic aspects of establishing and operating river basin management authorities, and participation in country missions;

(e) Invited countries and donor organizations to adapt, to the extent possible, existing assistance programmes to respond to the identified needs of National Policy Dialogues in Armenia, the Republic of Moldova and other EECCA countries;

(f) Invited countries and donor organizations to launch new assistance programmes to support implementation of countries' "policy packages".

E. Water and industrial accidents

Progress report of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

39. Mr. Peter Kovacs (Hungary), Co-Chairperson of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents, informed participants about progress achieved by the Joint Expert Group. Major accomplishments had included a report on the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the seminar on the prevention of chemical accidents and limitation of their impact on the transboundary waters in Central and Western Europe (Hamburg seminar), as well as safety guidelines and good practices for pipelines. He also reported on the difficulties encountered by the Joint Expert Group and presented the proposed future workplan (ECE/CP.TEIA/2006/9 - ECE/MP.WAT/2006/7).

40. On behalf of Ms. Giuliana Gasparrini, Chairperson of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention), Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy) reported on the conclusions and decisions of the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to that Convention (Rome, 13–15 November 2006). He highlighted the important results accomplished by the two Conventions through their joint efforts, and expressed concern about the inadequate participation in the Joint Expert Group, in particular from the water sector, as well as about the limited financial resources available for the Joint Expert Group's work.

41. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its appreciation to the Joint Expert Group for its work. It then endorsed the progress report and adopted the Group's future programme of work as set out in document ECE/CP.TEIA/2006/9 - ECE/MP.WAT/2006/7.

Implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar on the Prevention of Chemical Accidents and Limitation of Their Impact on Transboundary Waters

42. Mr. Kovacs presented the results of the review of the implementation of the Hamburg recommendations in Central and Western Europe, underlining the difficulties encountered in receiving replies to the questionnaire.

43. The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the report on the implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar on the Prevention of Chemical Accidents and Limitation of Their Impact on Transboundary Waters (ECE/CP.TEIA/2006/10 - ECE/MP.WAT/2006/9).

Safety guidelines and good practices for pipelines

44. Mr. Kovacs provided information about the process of drafting the safety guidelines, which included establishing a steering group with experience on pipelines and two workshops. The first workshop, organized by Germany (Berlin, 8–9 June 2005; CP.TEIA/2005/3 - MP.WAT/WG.1/2005/3), focused on exchange of information on existing legal frameworks and best practices to prevent, control and reduce the impact of oil pipeline failures and accidents on the terrestrial and aquatic environment, including transboundary waters. The second workshop, organized by the Netherlands (The Hague, 8–9 March 2006; ECE/CP.TEIA/SEM.1/2006/2 - ECE/MP.WAT/SEM.7/2006/2), had as its key objective the exchange of information on national and international developments in the field of gas pipeline safety. This workshop had focused mainly on risk assessment, land-use planning and information policy. Both workshops had provided a forum for discussion and wide consultation on the guidelines, in which UNECE member countries and the representatives of the private sector, in particular some pipeline operators, had taken part.

45. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its appreciation to the steering group and the Joint Expert Group for developing the Safety Guidelines and Good Practices for Pipelines, and endorsed them (ECE/CP.TEIA/2006/11 - ECE/MP.WAT/2006/8). It invited Parties and non-Parties to implement them.

Protocol on Civil Liability

46. A representative of Hungary expressed concerns about the low number of ratifications to the Protocol on Civil Liability, which three years after its adoption had only been ratified by Hungary. She proposed to include in the future programme of work an activity to review progress towards ratification among Signatories and other countries, to investigate obstacles and to propose solutions.

47. Mr. Cozzone articulated the position of the Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention on this issue. The Conference of the Parties suggested the organization of

a consultation to be jointly prepared by the Bureaux of the two Conventions. The Meeting of the Parties, taking into account this proposal entrusted its Bureau to decide in cooperation with the Bureau of the Industrial Accidents Convention, on the date, venue and format of the workshop on “Transboundary Waters, Transboundary Accidental Pollution, Liability – Challenges and Opportunities”. The workshop would be held at the kind invitation of Hungary and would aim at the sharing of information on the latest developments with respect to critical issues regarding transboundary environment/water pollution and relevant issues of liability in the UNECE region. The workshop would also allow for analysing obstacles to the ratification of the Protocol on Civil Liability and for proposing future steps.

48. The Meeting of the Parties recognized the need to discuss problems encountered with the Protocol and the importance to comply with the decisions taken at the Fifth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Kiev, 2003) – including the commitment to report on the steps taken to ratify the Protocol at the next Ministerial Conference in Belgrade in 2007. The Meeting of the Parties urged the two Bureaux to make all appropriate arrangements as soon as possible with the objective of providing an input to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference.

F. Technical assistance and implementation projects

49. Mr. Libert presented progress and achievements under the UNECE technical assistance and implementation projects on dam safety in Central Asia; the establishment of a river basin commission by Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan on the Chu and Talas Rivers; the promotion of cooperation on the Dniester River; the establishment of the Central Asian Regional Water Information Base (CAREWIB); the implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan; and a project to support transboundary water cooperation in South-Eastern Europe (see ECE/MP.WAT/2006/10).

50. Several delegations remarked on the strength of the technical assistance projects, which, despite the fact that they relied on only modest resources, had been able to make a real difference, catalysing political support and building a solid cooperative framework.

51. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Noted the report with appreciation, stressed the usefulness of technical assistance and implementation projects to support the implementation of the Convention in countries with economies in transition, and commended the UNECE Regional Advisor on Environment for the work undertaken;

(b) Expressed its gratitude to Parties and other partners that had sponsored UNECE operational activities in support of the Convention’s implementation, and invited others – Parties and partners – to also provide funds in support of UNECE operational activities.

G. Capacity for Water Cooperation project

52. The Secretary to the Convention introduced the outcome of the first three workshops organized under the Capacity for Water Cooperation (CWC) project in EECCA as well as their conclusions and recommendations as set out in document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/11.

53. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Recognized the usefulness of the CWC project to strengthening transboundary water management in EECCA, promoting the Convention's products, testing their usefulness, and identifying gaps and needs to be addressed in future work under the Convention;

(b) Endorsed the outcome of the three workshops carried out under the CWC project and expressed its gratitude to the secretariat for its leadership in this activity;

(c) Agreed to continue the CWC project in its programme of work for 2007–2009;

(d) Invited relevant Parties, non-Parties, international organizations and other partners to cooperate with the secretariat in preparing the future workshops under the CWC project.

H. International Conference on Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters in Europe

54. A representative of Poland informed the Meeting about the preparations for the third International Conference on Sustainable Management of Transboundary Waters in Europe, to be held in Poland in 2007. She explained that the preparations were still at an early stage of development because of the establishment of a new water authority in Poland. For this reason, the Conference would be organized in the second half of 2007, pending availability of resources.

VII. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS

55. Ms. Lea Kauppi (Finland), Chairperson of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, reported on the progress achieved by the Working Group in the implementation of its programme of work for 2004–2006 (see ECE/MP.WAT/2006/2) and introduced the draft programme of work for 2007–2009 (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/3). After a general introduction, the discussion focused on the following specific activities developed under this programme area.

A. Strategies for monitoring and assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters

56. The Chairperson introduced the Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes, and Groundwaters (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/12) developed by the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, which built on the experience gained from previous guidelines for rivers (MP.WAT/2000/10); lakes (MP.WAT/2003/10); and groundwaters (ECE/MP.WAT/2000/9) published under the Convention. The Strategies took into account the

lessons learned from pilot projects most notably in Central Europe and EECCA. The Strategies (ECE/MP.WAT/20) had been published in both English and Russian.

57. The Chairperson thanked UNESCO for making the Guidelines on Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Groundwaters available in Portuguese and Spanish.

58. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Adopted the Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters;

(b) Invited Parties and non-Parties to the Convention to apply the Strategies in the framework of cooperation on transboundary water management and, as appropriate, in the national context;

(c) Requested the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, with the assistance of the International Water Assessment Centre, to promote the implementation of the Strategies, for example through the development of capacity-building and awareness-raising activities;

(d) Decided to consider at its sixth meeting the need for updating the Strategies on the basis of the experience gained in their implementation.

B. Technical guidance for monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters

59. A representative of the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), introduced the inventory of technical guidance for monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/13), including its online version. He stressed that the inventory should be considered as a living document and that its usefulness would depend on updates and information received by Parties and non-Parties.

60. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the inventory of technical guidance and of its online version;

(b) Entrusted IWAC with the task of keeping the inventory up to date, including guidelines developed in Russian;

(c) Invited Parties, non-Parties, international organizations and other partners to inform IWAC of additional existing guidelines to be included in the inventory.

C. International Water Assessment Centre

61. A representative of IWAC introduced a progress report on activities since 2000 and future strategy and directions of work (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/14). He highlighted the strengths of IWAC, in particular the fact that it offered a fertile framework for coordination, networking and development of new ideas and the important support to the Convention's implementation,

especially through pilot projects. He also underlined the vulnerability of IWAC – which was linked to its dependency on the host country and to the small dimension of the network.

62. A representative of Slovakia informed the Meeting of the offer of Slovakia to host IWAC from 2008 at the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute and to provide core human and financial resources to operate the Centre. He outlined IWAC priorities for next biennium, in particular related to pilot projects. He informed participants of the intention to devote the transition year of 2007 to the hand-over from the Netherlands and the further definition of the IWAC workplan and its terms of reference, in close cooperation with the secretariat, the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and the Netherlands.

63. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Thanked the Dutch Government for the support it had provided to IWAC since the latter's establishment;

(b) Expressed its appreciation to the Government of Slovakia for its offer to host IWAC from 2008 at the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute and to provide the core human and financial resources to operate the Centre;

(d) Entrusted the Netherlands and Slovakia to make all needed arrangements to ensure a smooth transition in the transfer of IWAC to Slovakia;

(c) Requested the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute, in consultation with the IWAC Steering Group, to draw up a revised plan of activities for the Centre, including an assessment of the human and financial resources;

(d) Invited Parties to make voluntary contributions to IWAC activities;

(e) Requested the Bureau to supervise the implementation of the revised plan of activities.

D. Pilot programme on monitoring and assessment

64. A representative of Slovakia presented the progress achieved within the pilot projects on transboundary rivers and groundwaters, including recommendations for future pilot project. He introduced the proposed activities under the workplan for 2007–2009 as set out in document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/15.

65. The Chairperson of the Working Group presented progress achieved in the pilot projects on transboundary lakes, lessons learned and the proposed activities under the workplan for 2007–2009 (see ECE/MP.WAT/2006/15).

66. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Endorsed the recommendations for future monitoring and assessment pilot projects in document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/15;

(b) Requested the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and IWAC to take the analysis and recommendations presented in document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/15 into account in the design and implementation of new pilot projects.

E. Assessment of the status of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

67. The Chairperson of the Working Group introduced the Assessment of the status of transboundary waters in the UNECE region (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/16). She explained the process put in place for its preparation under the leadership of the Finnish Environment Institute, and highlighted the crucial importance of the Assessment as a basis to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the Convention in the region. The Assessment report, which was endorsed by the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment at its last meeting, would be further developed and launched at the Belgrade Ministerial Conference in October 2007.

68. Mr. Rainer Enderlein, UNECE consultant, presented the findings of the Assessment (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/16/Add.1–Add.6), in particular the results of the preliminary assessment of surface water in the EECCA subregion. He reported on progress made regarding the preparation of two more chapters of the Assessment report. These would focus on transboundary groundwaters in South-Eastern Europe and in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

69. A representative of EEA reported on the background and progress in the preparation by EEA of the “Belgrade report” on the state of the environment in the pan-European region. She introduced the chapter on water and anticipated some of the report findings.

70. The importance of coordination and reinforcement of the political messages of the EEA report and the UNECE Assessment was stressed.

71. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the draft assessment presented in documents ECE/MP.WAT/2006/16 and ECE/MP.WAT/2006/16/Add.1–Add.6;

(b) Expressed its gratitude to the Government of Finland for its leadership in the development of the draft Assessment and the financial contributions made;

(c) Expressed its appreciation to the representatives of the Finnish Environment Institute; to the designated experts from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan; and to the Convention secretariat for the substantive work done;

(d) Agreed on a clear programme of work and time schedule for the preparation of the assessment for the Belgrade Ministerial Conference, including deadlines for submission of: (a) comments with respect to the inventory of transboundary rivers and lakes; (b) amendments and additions to the preliminary assessment of transboundary rivers and lakes (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/16 and ECE/MP.WAT/2006/16/Add.1–Add.6), and (c) missing

information from EU and non-EU countries on transboundary rivers and lakes not yet covered and on transboundary groundwaters in the Caucasus, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe;

(e) Requested the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment to make arrangements to prepare the assessment report on the status of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. The Assessment report should include an executive summary for submission to the Belgrade Ministerial Conference, with a clear, action-oriented political message highlighting the needs for integration of water management issues in the development of related sectors, e.g. agriculture, energy and industry. Arrangements should include the designation of an ad hoc expert group and the convening of subregional workshops to complete the Assessment report. The Meeting of the Parties also requested the Working Group to prepare a contribution on the Assessment for the EEA Belgrade report;

(f) Decided that the second Assessment report should be published either in connection with the Seventh Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” or with the sixth meeting of the Parties, and entrusted the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment with its preparation. The Working Group should inform the Parties at their fifth meeting in 2009 about progress made towards the completion of this second Assessment.

F. Database on transboundary waters in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

72. Mr. Enderlein introduced the background and rationale for the establishment of a database on transboundary waters in the UNECE region, together with its possible scope and use, based on the discussion within the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and on a consultation carried out among Parties and non-Parties through a questionnaire (see ECE/MP.WAT/2006/17).

73. A representative of EEA presented the organization, the structure and the catalogue of data stored in the Water Information System for Europe (WISE), a coordinated database supporting the EEA Belgrade report.

74. The Meeting of the Parties discussed pros and cons of the establishment of the database and stressed the need to avoid duplication, in particular the duplication of reporting. The idea of a metadata database therefore seemed the most appropriate avenue to pursue.

75. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/17 and acknowledged the work undertaken by the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment under the leadership of the Finnish Environment Institute;

(b) Decided to establish, in a phased and modular approach, a metadata database on transboundary waters in the UNECE region, which would be linked to the existing databases of Parties, joint bodies and relevant international organizations dealing with transboundary water management;

(c) Entrusted the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment to oversee the development of the metadata database and take a lead in developing and populating the database's part related to two subject areas: (a) protection of surface water resources from pollution and overuse; and (b) protection of groundwaters from pollution and overuse;

(d) Invited the Chairperson of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and relevant task forces and expert groups to assist in the design of the metadata database with respect to such issues as accidental pollution, flood management and the protection of water-related ecosystems, and any other issues that could also become part of the database after 2009 (e.g. economic and social aspects, water basin management plans);

(e) Invited the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health to provide its advice to the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment on the structure of the metadata database and the storage of water- and health-related information, which are related to water management issues under article 6 of the Protocol and which could also become part of the database after 2009;

(f) Invited the Chairperson of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment to inform the Parties at their fifth meeting about the progress achieved and the steps to be undertaken after 2009.

VIII. WATER AND HUMAN HEALTH

76. Mr. Roger Aertgeerts, Co-Secretary of the Protocol on Water and Health (WHO-Europe Centre for Environment and Health), introduced the activities of WHO-Europe under the water and sanitation programme, and in particular under the Special Programme on Health and Environment.

77. Mr. Thomas Kistemann, Germany, Vice-Chairperson of the Working Group on Water and Health, reported on the preparations for the first meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health, to be held from 17 to 19 January 2007 in Geneva. He introduced the preliminary programme of work under the Protocol and noted areas where cooperation between the Protocol and the Convention could be developed.

78. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Called upon Signatories to the Protocol that had not yet done so to speed up their ratification processes, and urged other countries to also ratify the Protocol on Water and Health;

(b) Acknowledged the importance of cooperation with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, and decided to include joint activities in its workplan for 2007–2009, focusing on target-setting for issues related to environment and water management, i.e. targets according to article 6, paragraphs 2 (f) to 2 (n) of the Protocol, and on assessing progress towards these targets' achievement.

IX. LEGAL BOARD

79. Mr. Attila Tanzi, Chairperson of the Legal Board, reported on the activities under the workplan for 2004–2006 (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/2) and introduced the activities planned for 2007–2009 (see ECE/MP.WAT/2006/3).

80. The Meeting of the Parties commended the Legal Board for the work done and requested its further assistance for legal issues in the programme of work for 2007–2009.

81. The Meeting of the Parties also called upon Parties, non-Parties, international organizations and other partners to actively contribute to the future work of the Legal Board.

X. PARTNERS IN COOPERATION

A. UN-Water and the World Water Development Report

82. The secretariat informed the Meeting about UNECE contribution to the activities of UN-Water, in particular to the second edition of the World Water Development Report.

83. A representative of UNESCO introduced the findings of the second World Water Development Report, “Water a shared responsibility”. He conveyed the gratitude of UNESCO for the Convention’s contribution to the report and expressed the intention of the organization to continue working in cooperation with the Convention.

84. Parties commended the work done by the secretariat and reaffirmed the importance of contributing to the UN-Water initiative as well as to the World Water Development Report.

85. The Meeting of the Parties entrusted the Bureau to support the secretariat in preparing its input to UN-Water and the World Water Development Report.

B. Environment and Security Initiative

86. Mr. Libert introduced the Environment and Security Initiative, launched in 2003 to increase knowledge and improve understanding and management of environmental and security risks. UNECE, together with OSCE, UNDP, UNEP and REC-CEE was a partner to the Initiative, carried out in association with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He highlighted the mutual benefits of cooperation between the Convention and the Environment and Security Initiative (see ECE/MP.WAT/2006/18).

C. Cooperation with the governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements, other United Nations bodies and other partners

87. The Meeting of the Parties discussed its cooperation with governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements, other United Nations bodies and other partners, noting the many benefits and the possibility of reciprocal strengthening of activities.

88. Many representatives of international organizations and NGOs concurred on the usefulness of the cooperation with the Meeting of the Parties and repeated their intention to cooperate in the implementation of the programme of work for 2007–2009.

89. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Noted with appreciation the cooperation with the established partners, and decided that joint work should continue;

(b) Thanked these partners for their support to date, and invited them to continue cooperating actively in the work under the Convention;

(c) Decided to seek new partners relevant to the activities under the workplan, including NGOs and the private sector.

XI. WORKPLAN FOR 2007–2009 AND RESOURCES NEEDED FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION

90. Ms. Vermont, Chairperson of the ad hoc group on the programme of work, presented the draft programme of work, as agreed upon by the ad hoc group on the basis of document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/3.

91. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Adopted the workplan, finalized by its ad hoc group on the basis of the relevant meeting documents discussed under the various items of the agenda, and requested the secretariat, with the assistance of the Bureau, to finalize it, including the costs estimate, by streamlining it and excluding activities without a lead Party or financial support (see Part Five of the present report: ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.2). The Meeting of the Parties considered that, if needed, additional activities could be included upon request of the working groups and endorsement by the Bureau;

(b) With this aim, it requested Parties and invited non-Parties, in particular those that had expressed an interest in being confirmed, to send to the secretariat by the end of 2006 consolidated information on the possibilities of financing activities under the workplan or of leading or co-leading specific activities;

(c) Expressed its appreciation to Parties and organizations which had already agreed to take a lead in or contribute to the workplan's implementation, through the provision of in-kind resources or contributions to the Convention's trust fund;

(d) Invited all Parties and non-Parties to participate in the various working groups and programme elements.

XII. DECLARATION OF BONN

92. Ms. Jekel, Chairperson of the ad hoc group on the declaration, presented the draft declaration agreed upon by the ad hoc group on the basis of the draft text in document ECE/MP.WAT/2006/19.

93. The Meeting of the Parties adopted its Declaration of Bonn, which sets out the Convention's major medium- and long-term goals (see Part Two of the present report: ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.1).

XIII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES

94. The Meeting elected its Bureau as follows:

- (a) Ms. Jekel (Germany), Chairperson;
- (b) Ms. Vermont (Switzerland), Vice-Chairperson and Chairperson of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management;
- (c) Mr. Cozzone (Italy), Vice-Chairperson;
- (d) Ms. Kauppi (Finland), Chairperson of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment;
- (e) Mr. Nikola Babich (Ukraine), member of the Bureau;
- (f) Ms. Adriana Dembowska (Poland), member of the Bureau;
- (g) Ms. Maria Galambos (Hungary), member of the Bureau;
- (h) Mr. Rafiq Vedyev (Azerbaijan), member of the Bureau;
- (i) Mr. Harry Liiv (Estonia), member of the Bureau;
- (j) Mr. Peter Roncak (Slovakia), in his capacity of future Head of IWAC.

95. The two members of the Bureau in charge of the two Working Groups would remain in office until those Working Groups officially elect their own officers.

96. The Chairperson of the Legal Board and the Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health would be non-voting participants at the Bureau's meetings.

97. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its great appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing Chairman, Mr. Varela, for the services that he had provided during his chairmanship, and its continuing support to the Convention. The Parties also expressed their appreciation and thanks to the Chairpersons of the bodies established under the Convention, Ms. Vermont, Ms. Kauppi, Mr. Kadar and Mr. Tanzi for their excellent work.

XIV. DATE AND VENUE OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES

98. The Meeting of the Parties welcomed with appreciation the offer of Switzerland to host the fifth meeting of the Parties in 2009.

XV. ALMATY GUIDELINES ON PROMOTING THE APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE AARHUS CONVENTION IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS

99. Mr. Jeremy Wates, Secretary of the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) introduced the Almaty Guidelines on Promoting the Principles of the Aarhus Convention in International Forums. He informed the Parties about the consultation process launched to assess the current degree of implementation of the principles of the Aarhus Convention within existing multilateral environmental agreements, including the Water Convention.

100. The Meeting of the Parties took note of the information and requested the Bureau to submit a response to the questionnaire on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

XVI. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

101. The Parties reviewed the decisions taken during the meeting and entrusted the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, with the task of finalizing the report of its fourth meeting.

XVII. CLOSING OF THE MEETING

102. Mr. Varela, previous Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties, thanked all participants for the very fruitful deliberation. He expressed appreciation for the work of the secretariat in preparing and servicing the meeting. He thanked in particular Mr. Enderlein, former Secretary to the Convention, for the great commitment and professionalism always displayed in his years of office. Mr. Varela recalled the success achieved during the first 10 years of implementation of the Convention, and symbolically handed over this ten-year heritage to the newly elected Bureau members.
