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

Fifth session
Geneva, 10–12 November 2009

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES ON ITS FIFTH SESSION

Part One: Proceedings

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	1-9	3
A. Attendance	2-9	3
B. Opening ceremony and organizational matters	10-20	3
II. Amendments to articles 25 and 26 to open the Convention to countries outside the region	21-24	5
III. Integrated management of water and related ecosystems.....	25-76	6
A. Guide to implementing the Convention.....	26-29	7
B. Reviewing and promoting implementation and compliance	30-33	8
C. Application of the principles of the Convention to transboundary Groundwaters.....	34	8
D. Payments for ecosystem services	35-38	9
E. Water and climate adaptation in transboundary basins, including flood and drought risk management	39-53	10
F. European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues	54-62	13

CONTENTS *(continued)*

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
G. Water and Industrial Accidents.....	63-73	15
H. Capacity for Water Cooperation project.....	74-76	17
IV. Monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters	77-87	18
A. Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters.....	78-84	18
B. Strengthening capacity for data administration and exchange for monitoring and assessment of transboundary water resources in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia.....	85-87	20
V. Proposed programme of pilot projects for 2010-2012	88-89	20
VI. International Water Assessment Centre	90-92	21
VII. Technical assistance and implementation projects.....	93-94	22
VIII. Cooperation with the Protocol on Water and Health	95-97	22
IX. Partners in cooperation.....	98-100	22
X. Promotion of the Convention and the role of focal points	101-102	23
XI. Workplan for 2010-2012 and resources needed for its Implementation	103-105	24
XII. Election of officers	106-109	25
XIII. Date and venue of the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties.....	110	25
XIV. Adoption of the decisions.....	111	26
XV. Closing of the session.....	112	26

Part Two: Workplan for 2010–2012

**For practical reasons, part two of the present report is issued in a separate addendum
(ECE/MP.WAT/29/Add.1).**

**Part Three: Chair's summary of the high-level segment and other documents adopted by
the Meeting of the Parties**

**For practical reasons, part three of the present report is issued in a separate addendum
(ECE/MP.WAT/29/Add.2).**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was held in Geneva from 10 to 12 November 2009 at the invitation of the Government of Switzerland.

A. Attendance

2. The fifth session was attended by delegations from the following Parties to the Convention: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The Commission of the European Union and the Council of the European Union were also represented.

3. Delegations from the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States which had not yet ratified the Convention were also present: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and United States of America.

4. Delegations from the following non-UNECE member States took part in the session: Afghanistan and Mongolia.

5. Representatives of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) secretariat, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA), the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the UNESCO/WMO International Groundwater Resources Assessment Centre (IGRAC) attended the meeting.

6. Representatives of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Executive Committee of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea (EC-IFAS), the European Environment Agency (EEA), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the Scientific Information Centre of the Inter-State Commission for Water Coordination (SIC-ICWC), the secretariat of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) and the secretariat of the Alpine Convention also attended the meeting.

7. Representatives of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine, the International Meuse

Commission, the International Sava River Basin Commission, the International Scheldt Commission and the Bilateral Secretariat of the Lake Ohrid were also present.

8. 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) and the Regional Environmental Center for the Caucasus.

9. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academic institutions were present: CARNet, Compass Foundation, Ecospectrum-Bender, International Environmental Association of River Keepers (ECO-TIRAS), the Global Institute for Water, Environment and Health, the Global Water Partnership (GWP), the Global Water Fund, Green Cross International, International Council of Environmental Law, International Office for Water, MAMA-86, Moscow State University, PeaceNexus Foundation, Union for the Defence of the Aral Sea and Amudarya, the University of Geneva, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Women in Europe for a Common Future and World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

B. Opening ceremony and organizational matters

10. The Vice Director of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment delivered a welcome address on behalf of the host country, highlighting the main achievements under the Convention in the past three years. He stressed the Convention's role as a catalyser of joint efforts and partnerships, and affirmed the commitment of Switzerland to ensuring the implementation of the future programme of work.

11. The Director of the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division addressed the meeting on behalf of UNECE. In his statement, he reflected on the main achievements of the Convention, the main issues at stake at the session, and the future challenges.

12. The following delegations made statements during the opening ceremony: Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.¹

13. The Meeting of the Parties adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WAT/28.

14. The session was chaired by Ms. Heide Jekel (Germany), Chair of the Bureau of the Meeting of the Parties.

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

16. The Convention secretariat reported on the status of ratification of the Convention, the Protocol on Water and Health, and the Protocol on Civil Liability², as well as of the amendments to articles 25 and 26 of the Convention. Thirty-five UNECE member States and the European

¹ Many of the statements delivered at the fifth session under this and other agenda items can be found on the Convention website.

² The Protocol on Civil Liability and Compensation for Damage Caused by the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents on Transboundary Waters.

Union were Parties to the Convention at 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 23 Parties. The Protocol on Civil Liability had been signed by 24 countries and ratified only by 1. The amendments to articles 25 and 26 had been ratified by 14 Parties.

17. A representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina informed the Meeting of the Parties that his country had completed national procedures regarding ratification.³ The secretariat reported that Georgia, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had also announced their intention to accede to the Convention.

18. The Meeting of the Parties established an ad hoc group on the draft workplan, chaired by Ms. Sibylle Vermont (Switzerland).

19. During the session, a high-level segment on transboundary water cooperation in Central Asia and the role of the Convention was held on 12 November 2009. The high-level segment discussed the needs of Central Asian countries with regard to cooperation and sustainable management of transboundary water resources as well as the role that permanent cooperation under the Convention can play in meeting these needs and in bringing the different partners together. The summary of the Chair of the high-level segment, Ms. Hannele Pokka (Finland), is contained in part three of the present report (ECE/MP.WAT/29/Add.2).

20. Four side-events were organized during lunchtime on the following themes: (a) managing transboundary rivers—the work of river basin commissions in Europe; (b) the National Policy Dialogue Process under the EU Water Initiative: learning from experience—shaping the future; (c) the Environment and Security Initiative (ENVSEC); and (d) the Petersberg Phase II Process/Athens Declaration Process: Facilitating transboundary cooperation for the management of shared water bodies and their basins in South-Eastern Europe. Through these events, Parties, non-Parties, international organizations, NGOs and other partners shared experiences, success stories and lessons learned relating to different aspects of the Convention's implementation. Programmes of the side-events can be found on the Convention's website⁴.

II. AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLES 25 AND 26 TO OPEN THE CONVENTION TO COUNTRIES OUTSIDE THE REGION

21. A representative of Switzerland introduced document ECE/MP.WAT/2009/1. This document illustrated the political significance of the entry into force of the amendments to the Convention's articles 25 and 26, which would open the Convention to countries outside the UNECE region (see ECE/MP.WAT/14) and potentially promote peace and the achievement of international commitments. The document contained arguments that might be used by national focal points and other country representatives with respect to national ratification of the amendments as well as the next steps. She also presented the activities planned for promoting the amendments' ratification and supporting implementation of the Convention and its soft law tools

³ Bosnia and Herzegovina deposited its instrument of accession to the Convention on 3 December 2009, making it the thirty-seventh Party to the Convention.

⁴ <http://www.unece.org/env/water/mop5.htm>

outside the UNECE region, contained in the draft workplan for 2010–2012 (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/L.1).

22. Representatives of Mongolia and Afghanistan expressed their interest in participating in the activities under the Convention. They voiced their expectation that entry into the force of the amendments would help their countries to join the cooperative framework and that it would eventually assist them to strengthen cooperation with their neighbours. The representative of GWP-Mediterranean informed the session about the interest of Mediterranean countries in the work of the Convention, and offered to assist UNECE in efforts to involve them.

23. The representative of UNSGAB confirmed that organization's willingness to cooperate closely with UNECE to promote the Water Convention and the 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (New York Convention), thereby reinforcing the two instruments' complementarity. The representative of WWF expressed that organization's support for the two Conventions, and called upon countries to ratify them.

24. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Urged Parties to ratify the amendments to articles 25 and 26 of the Convention as soon as possible, in order to make sure that the amendments were in force by the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2012;

(b) Prompted non-Parties that were in the process of ratifying, accepting or approving the Convention to simultaneously ratify, accept or approve the above amendments;

(c) Encouraged focal points, relevant national authorities and concerned international organizations and NGOs to make use of the arguments in document ECE/MP.WAT/2009/1, to foster ratification and entry into force of the amendments;

(d) Supported application of the Convention and its soft law tools in countries outside the region;

(e) Invited States outside the UNECE region—especially but not only those sharing waters with UNECE countries—to cooperate within the framework of the Convention;

(f) Decided to include an item related to promotion of the ratification of the amendments in the next workplan for 2010–2012 (see part two of the present report, ECE/MP.WAT/29/Add.1, programme areas I and VIII).

III. INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND RELATED ECOSYSTEMS

25. The Chair of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management provided an overview of the Working Group's activities in the past three years as set out in the report on implementation (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/2). Following this overview, each programme element carried out in accordance with the 2007–2009 workplan (ECE/MP.WAT/19/Add.2) was

presented to the Meeting of the Parties, along with proposals for the way forward for 2010–2012, contained in the draft workplan for 2010–2012 (see sections A–H below).

A. Guide to implementing the Convention

26. The Chair of the Legal Board presented the draft Guide to implementing the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/L.2). The Guide constituted a comprehensive commentary to the Convention's provisions, providing explanations of the procedural, legal, administrative, technical and practical aspects of the Convention's requirements for appropriate implementation. These explanations were coupled with illustrative examples of good practices in the UNECE region.

27. The Meeting of the Parties welcomed the fact that the Guide had already been used in draft form in national-level activities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (in particular during the workshop on the Convention held in Skopje on 28 October 2009) and in Georgia. The draft Guide had also been used in the Central Asian context at the seminar on "International Water Laws and Negotiations of Mutually Beneficial Multilateral Water Agreements in Central Asia" (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 19–21 April 2009) organized in cooperation with the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

28. Delegations highly valued the Guide and stressed that it was a needs-driven product that would be an important tool for Parties in terms of implementing the Convention and that it would inspire non-Parties to accede. Delegates also underlined that the draft Guide was a living document and that experience with its use could help determine future revisions.

29. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Thanked Italy for leading and partly funding the activity, Germany and Switzerland for providing the needed additional funds, and those Parties and non-Parties who had strongly supported it;

(b) Expressed its appreciation to the Chair of the Legal Board, the members of the drafting group and all the other experts who had contributed to the Guide's development;

(c) Adopted the Guide as contained in the annex to document ECE/MP.WAT/2009/L.2, recognizing its strategic importance for the implementation of and compliance with the Convention;

(d) Called on Parties and non-Parties to use the Guide in their work on transboundary water cooperation, and to commit to promoting it widely in the region and beyond;

(e) Agreed that the Guide should be a key reference document for activities included in the workplan for 2010–2012, and requested the secretariat to print it, to develop an interactive online version and to prepare promotional material on it;

(f) Decided to review, at its sixth session, experience with the Guide's use, and to decide, if necessary, to update the document in the light of the lessons learned and the experience of Parties and non-Parties.

B. Reviewing and promoting implementation and compliance

30. The Chair of the Legal Board presented a proposal aiming to establish a mechanism to facilitate and support implementation of and compliance with the Convention (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/3).

31. The Meeting of the Parties agreed on the need for a specific mechanism under the Convention through which problems related to implementation and possible differences on the Convention's interpretation could be addressed, recognizing at the same time the Convention's distinctive cooperative spirit, which requires riparian Parties to work together. This mechanism could serve as a platform for dialogue of a non-confrontational nature, in which countries might seek advice and address possible disputes, thereby facilitating the Convention's implementation. The Guide would be a key reference document for this activity.

32. A number of countries, including Finland, Greece and the Netherlands, expressed their interest in participating in this activity. Switzerland made a pledge to support it financially.

33. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Restated its commitment to pursue implementation of and compliance with the Convention;

(b) Entrusted the Legal Board with the following tasks:

- (i) To study possible options for assisting Parties with solving implementation problems and preventing or settling differences regarding the interpretation and application of the Convention, taking into account countries' needs and the Convention's distinctive cooperative spirit;
- (ii) On the basis of such a study, to prepare a proposal on the objectives, structure, tasks, functions, measures and procedures of an institutional and procedural mechanism to facilitate and support implementation and compliance, for possible adoption at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2012.

C. Application of the principles of the Convention to transboundary groundwaters

34. The Meeting of the Parties discussed a proposal by the Chair of the Legal Board related to the application of the principles of the Convention to transboundary groundwaters. It agreed to entrust the Legal Board, jointly with the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, with the task of preparing a preliminary study of the application of the Convention's principles to transboundary groundwaters, to be submitted to the sixth session of

the Meeting of the Parties. The sixth session would consider whether further action would be needed.

D. Payments for ecosystem services

35. The Chair of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management presented the activities in this programme area under the workplan for 2007–2009. She recalled the outcomes of: (a) the special session on forests and water, jointly organized by Switzerland, FAO, the Liaison Unit Oslo of MCPFE and UNECE, back to back with the Working Group on Integrated Water Resource Management's third meeting (22–24 October 2009, Rome); (b) the session on water and ecosystems jointly organized by Switzerland and UNECE at the fifth World Water Forum (Istanbul, Turkey, March 2009); and (c) the workshop on forests and water (Antalya, Turkey, 12–14 May 2009), jointly organized by Switzerland, Turkey, FAO, the Liaison Unit Oslo of MCPFE and UNECE.⁵

36. Delegations shared their experiences with the subject. Many underlined that payments for ecosystem services (PES) were an innovative approach to managing ecosystems and promoting sound environmental management. At the same time, PES should not be seen as the only solution, and other instruments should be promoted equally.

37. A representative of CAREC reported on the progress achieved with a project to establish PES in the Lake Issyk Kul basin. A representative of Switzerland confirmed the willingness of her country to continue supporting the pilot project and, as a follow-up to the Antalya workshop's recommendation, to organize under the Convention's next workplan a workshop on forest and water in low forest-cover countries. Switzerland was also planning to organize a workshop on forest and water next year under the auspices of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) through a UNFF country-led initiative. A representative of the Liaison Unit Oslo of MCPFE called for strengthening collaboration between the water and forest sectors and reiterated her organization's willingness to cooperate with all partners in implementing the Convention's future workplan.

38. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Thanked the Government of Switzerland for leading this activity and for organizing workshops and promotion activities;

(b) Welcomed the cooperation in this area of work with important partners such as the UNECE Timber Committee, FAO, the Ramsar Convention, the Liaison Unit Oslo of MCPFE and CAREC;

(c) Recognized the importance of work in this area, especially in relation to the forthcoming Seventh Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Astana, 2011), and decided to include activities in this area in its workplan for 2010–2012 (see part two of this report);

⁵ See:

http://www.foresteurope.org/forests_and_water/workshop/eng/Commitments/Documents/Meetings_2009/Workshop+on+Forests+and+Water.9UFRjWZf.ips.

(d) Decided to take stock of experience with application of the *Recommendations on Payments for Ecosystem Services in Integrated Water Resources Management*, for consideration at its sixth session.

E. Water and climate adaptation in transboundary basins, including flood and drought risk management

1. Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change

39. The Dutch Co-Chair of the Task Force on Water and Climate informed the session about activities under this area of work carried out since the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/4). He introduced the draft *Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change* (ECE/MP.WAT/30), developed by the Task Force on Water and Climate in cooperation with the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events under the Protocol on Water and Health. The Guidance had been prepared for decision makers in the water and health fields as well as water managers. It described in a step-by-step manner how to develop an adaptation strategy. Its special focus on transboundary waters and health aspects made it unique.

40. Delegations welcomed the Guidance, highlighting that it was a much needed and timely document. They also praised the Guidance's high quality and innovative nature.

41. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Adopted the *Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change* (ECE/MP.WAT/30);

(b) Invited the Parties and non-Parties to the Convention to implement the Guidance in the framework of cooperation on transboundary water management and to the extent appropriate in the national context, in particular through the development of pilot projects;

(c) Decided to review, at its sixth session, experience with the Guidance's implementation and, if need be, to update the Guidance in the light of practice and lessons learned;

(d) Expressed its gratitude to the Governments of the Netherlands and Germany for their leadership in the development of the Guidance and the financial contributions made, and thanked Switzerland and Italy for their support;

(e) Commended members of the drafting group and especially the lead authors of the Guidance, the Task Force on Water and Climate and the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events, as well as all the reviewers and all other persons who contributed to the Guidance, for their excellent work.

2. Transboundary flood management

42. The German Co-Chair of the Task Force on Water and Climate presented the outcomes of the workshop on transboundary flood risk management (Geneva, 22–23 April 2009) and

introduced the new publication on the topic (ECE/MP.WAT/31). He also introduced the proposed activities on transboundary flood management for 2010–2012, including pilot projects for transboundary basins addressing flood risk management (within the framework of water and adaptation to climate change) as well as capacity-building and training activities.

43. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the outcome of the workshop on transboundary flood risk management (Geneva, 22–23 April 2009) and welcomed the publication *Transboundary flood risk management in the UNECE region* (ECE/MP.WAT/31);

(b) Thanked the Governments of Germany and of the Netherlands for their leadership in this activity and WMO for its essential cooperation and support, as well as the experts who contributed case studies to the workshop and to the publication;

(c) Recognized that transboundary flood risk management was a priority, and decided to include activities in this area in the workplan for 2010–2012.

3. Future activities on water and adaptation to climate change, including flood and drought risk management

44. The Dutch Co-Chair of the Task Force on Water and Climate presented the proposed future activities in this area, including: (a) promotion of the Guidance and capacity-building activities to foster its implementation; (b) pilot projects aiming to implement the Guidance in transboundary basins in the UNECE region (see ECE/MP.WAT/2009/5); and (c) establishment of a platform for the exchange of experience on adaptation to climate change in the UNECE region.

45. A representative of the Commission of the European Union (EU) informed the session about the Commission's activities in this area, including those taking place under the auspices of the Common Implementation Strategy of the EU Water Framework Directive. He informed the session about the White Paper on adaptation to climate change approved in April 2009 and work arrangements to implement the document. He also reported on the development of a Guidance for implementing the Water Framework Directive under the conditions of changing climate. He stated that the Guidance was expected to be soon endorsed by the EU Water Directors, and that it was a complementary product to the UNECE Guidance.⁶ Furthermore, he confirmed the Commission's readiness to cooperate on and coordinate pilot projects so as to avoid overlap and build synergies. He also informed the session of plans to establish a Web-based clearing house on climate change issues.

46. A representative of Italy, which chairs the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events confirmed that country's commitment to cooperate on future activities relating to water and adaptation to climate change.

⁶ *River Basin Management in a Changing Climate - A Guidance Document* was adopted at the Meeting of the EU Water Directors at the end of November 2009.

47. A representative of the UNFCCC secretariat presented the Nairobi Work Programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. She stated that the Water Convention's Guidance was an important contribution to the Nairobi Work Programme and invited the Convention to become formally a partner of the Programme in view of planned future activities. She also confirmed the willingness of UNFCCC to cooperate in future activities under the Convention in the area of water and adaptation to climate change.

48. A representative of WMO confirmed his organization's commitment to cooperate in future activities on water and adaptation to climate change.

49. Representatives of Ukraine and of the Republic of Moldova expressed their willingness to implement a pilot project in the Dniester River basin on adaptation to climate change.

50. The representative of Kyrgyzstan expressed the willingness of his country to participate with Kazakhstan in a pilot project in the Chu and Talas basins.

51. Representatives of Switzerland and Finland confirmed their intention to support pilot projects in the region.

52. The secretary to the Sava River Commission informed the session of plans to submit a proposal for pilot project on adaptation to climate change or transboundary flood risk management.

53. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Requested the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Task Force on Water and Climate to promote application of the Guidance, including through capacity-building and awareness-raising activities;

(b) Discussed the proposed programme of pilot projects on adaptation to climate change, including its support structure, and agreed to include it in the Convention's workplan for 2010–2012;

(c) Recognized that this new structure to promote the exchange of experience and lessons learned on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins would be a useful contribution to the Nairobi Work Programme of UNFCCC, and encouraged countries, organizations and other actors to actively take part in it;

(d) Invited interested countries sharing transboundary basins in the UNECE region to submit proposals for pilot projects by the end of 2009;

(e) Invited Parties and other partners to support the pilot projects programme by providing expertise and financial resources;

(f) Entrusted the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management to oversee implementation of the pilot projects programme, and the Task Force on Water and Climate to guide and facilitate

implementation of pilot projects on water and adaptation to climate change (see part two of this report).

F. European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues

54. The secretariat reported on the progress achieved under the EU Water Initiative and its National Policy Dialogue (NPD) process regarding integrated water resources management (IWRM) facilitated by UNECE in countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/6), and also presented the planned follow-up activities for 2010–2012.

55. A representative of the European Commission expressed appreciation to the partners in the process, in particular UNECE, OECD and Romania, for the results achieved. He confirmed the Commission's commitment to continue supporting the activity, and called upon other countries and organizations to join in supporting the programme.

56. A representative of Romania, which chaired the EU Water Initiative's Working Group for countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, expressed appreciation for the tangible results achieved thus far and his confidence in the successful continuation of the work. He also expressed his appreciation to UNECE, as a strategic partner in the process.

57. A representative of OECD expressed his organization's commitment to continue being a partner to NPD in the area of water supply and sanitation, and praised the effective cooperation established with UNECE, which would be further reinforced through implementation of the Protocol on Water and Health.

58. The representatives of Kyrgyzstan and the Republic of Moldova valued the results achieved so far in implementing NPD and noted their expectation that the programme would continue. The representative of Kyrgyzstan underlined the important support that NPD has provided to his country vis-à-vis preparations for ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health, and informed participants that Kyrgyzstan would start the national ratification procedure.

59. Delegations also underlined the link between the NPD process and the UNECE Environmental Performance Review (EPR) programme, noting that EPR recommendations could be applied on the ground through the NPDs. Delegations welcomed the adoption of the EPR on Uzbekistan, which contained recommendations for an NPD and for ratification of the Protocol on Water and Health. Uzbekistan confirmed its commitment to implementing the EPR recommendations, including those related to IWRM, and the fact that it would consider ratifying the Protocol. Switzerland recommended including Uzbekistan in the NPD process, and affirmed its readiness to provide funds to this end. Georgia recalled its formal commitment to initiate a NPD in 2010.

60. The Meeting of the Parties considered NPDs to be one of the most important activities under the Convention, as they were an excellent example of how the expertise and resources of the European Commission and UNECE could be coupled. Estonia, Finland and Hungary confirmed their readiness to continue supporting the programme. A representative of the Republic of Moldova also offered to share experiences with implementing an NPD in her

country. GWP-Central and Eastern Europe offered to support the NPD process through both its expertise and financial means.

61. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its gratitude to Mr. Rainer Enderlein, the programme manager of NPD in UNECE, who would leave the secretariat at the end of 2009, for his dedication and professionalism, which had contributed significantly to the success of the programme.

62. In addition, the Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Recognized that the NPDs gave added value to the Convention's ongoing activities on IWRM, and that they provided an excellent opportunity for furthering implementation of the Convention and the Protocol;

(b) Acknowledged the strong commitment and ownership of countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, which was shown in the participation of high-level officials from different sectors in the NPD process;

(c) Agreed to continue with the NPD process beyond the fifth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, and to include relevant activities in the workplan for 2010–2012;

(d) Welcomed the intention of more countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to join the process, and noted that this would require extra resources for the activities, in addition to available extrabudgetary contributions from the European Commission;

(e) Expressed its gratitude to the European Commission and to EU Member States for the financial contributions already made and foreseen for 2010–2012;

(f) Invited the European Commission and Parties to the Convention to consider providing additional funding for the activities, including in-kind contributions by experts and cooperation agreements, if appropriate, or other kinds of arrangements for assistance, stressing the high cost-efficiency of the NPDs;

(g) Acknowledged the UNECE secretariat's important responsibility in providing key services to its partners in countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, and mandated it to continue its role as a key strategic partner of the NPD process;

(h) Encouraged other Parties to the Convention to consider co-chairing, together with Romania, the EU Water Initiative Working Group of countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia in 2010–2012.

G. Water and industrial accidents

1. Draft safety guidelines and good practices for tailing management facilities

63. The Hungarian Co-Chair of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents introduced the draft Safety guidelines and good practices for tailing management facilities (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/5 - ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/9) elaborated by the Joint Expert Group. The Guidelines had already been endorsed by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) at its fifth meeting (Geneva, 25–27 November 2008) and had been approved by the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management at its third meeting.

64. The Meeting of the Parties endorsed the safety guidelines and good practices for tailing management facilities without amendment, and invited Parties and non-Parties to implement them.

2. Progress report of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents and the new Strategy for the Joint Expert Group

65. The Co-Chair of the Joint Ad Hoc Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents introduced the progress report and the challenges encountered by the Joint Expert Group (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2008/6 - ECE/CP.TEIA/2008/8). He expressed concerns 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 Group's work.

66. The Co-Chair presented the draft Strategy for the work of the Joint Expert Group (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/L.3), jointly elaborated by the Bureaux of the Water Convention and the Industrial Accidents Convention as a response to the difficulties encountered. He also introduced activities aiming to define the future areas of the Group's work: a questionnaire to identify needs of countries in the area of water and industrial accidents, and the conclusions of the technical workshop on joint management of transboundary emergencies involving international waterways (Slubice, Poland, 9–10 September 2009), organized under the Industrial Accidents Convention.

67. The secretariat of the Industrial Accidents Convention, on behalf of the Chair of the Bureau of that Convention, presented views and expectations regarding the Group's future work.

68. A representative of the Czech Republic informed the Meeting of the Parties of its intention to nominate a water expert for future Joint Expert Group activities.

69. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the Joint Expert Group's report and expressed its appreciation for the work done and results achieved during the past three years, recognizing at the same time the lack of support from the water sector, which posed challenges for the Group's work;

(b) Thanked Hungary and Germany for leading this activity and for providing the resources that had enabled the Group's work;

(c) Confirmed its commitment to cooperate with the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention to prevent, control and reduce the effects of industrial accidents on transboundary waters;

(d) Endorsed the Strategy for the Joint Expert Group (see part three of this report, ECE/MP.WAT/29/Add.2) and entrusted its Bureau, in cooperation with the Bureau of the Industrial Accidents Convention, to implement the Strategy and report on the progress achieved at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties;

(e) Underlined the importance of tailoring the future work of the Joint Expert Group to the needs of countries, including from the perspective of the water sector, and agreed to participate actively in the survey to identify one or more priority activities for 2010–2012;

(f) Urged both Parties and non-Parties to support the Joint Expert Group by providing the required expertise and by actively participating in its activities.

3. Protocol on Civil Liability

70. A representative of Hungary updated the Meeting of the Parties on the progress made and challenges faced since the Protocol's adoption, in particular the findings of the workshop on "Transboundary Accidental Water Pollution, Liability and Compensation: Challenges and Opportunities" (Budapest, 21–22 May 2007) and the subsequent discussion and conclusions of the Bureau and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management.

71. The secretariat of the Industrial Accidents Convention updated the session on related discussions in the Bureau of the Industrial Accidents Convention.

72. The Republic of Moldova made a proposal for a joint pilot project with Ukraine, in cooperation with Romania and Hungary, aimed at preparing the countries for ratification of the Protocol. Representatives of Ukraine, Romania and Hungary indicated general interest in the project, but requested time for internal consultations about the proposal.

73. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the outcomes of the Budapest workshop on challenges and opportunities of transboundary accidental water pollution, liability and compensation, and expressed its gratitude to Hungary for organizing the workshop in cooperation with Greece and Switzerland;

(b) Recognized that some countries, particularly in the EU, faced difficulties in ratifying the Protocol, and at the same time reiterated the importance of continuing work in this area;

(c) Agreed that the focus of activities for 2010–2012 should be on building the necessary capacity in administrative bodies, in particular in countries with economies in transition, to develop good administrative and legislative practices and to assist them with taking

the necessary steps to ratify the Protocol. In this regard, the Meeting of the Parties welcomed the proposal for a joint pilot activity in the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine, to be developed in cooperation with Hungary (subject to further consideration);

(d) Urged all countries, including those outside the UNECE region, to consider ratifying the Protocol.

H. Capacity for Water Cooperation project

74. The secretariat introduced the outcomes of the fourth and fifth workshops under the Convention's Capacity for Water Cooperation project: "River basin commissions and other institutions for transboundary water cooperation" (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 23–25 October 2007), together with the related publication⁷, and "Water and health" (Bucharest, 14–16 May 2008). It also presented some ideas on possible themes for continuation of the project, including transboundary groundwater management and adaptation to climate change, including floods and droughts management.

75. A representative of OSCE expressed appreciation on the cooperation with UNECE in the Capacity for Water Cooperation project, and reaffirmed the commitment of OSCE to support the project. She also indicated her preference for transboundary groundwaters as the subject for the next Capacity for Water Cooperation workshop.

76. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Recognized the usefulness of the Capacity for Water Cooperation project in terms of strengthening transboundary water management in countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, promoting the Convention's products, testing their usefulness and identifying the gaps and needs to be addressed in future work under the Convention. It expressed its appreciation to OSCE, UNDP and other partners for their support to the project;

(b) Endorsed the outcomes of the two workshops carried out under the Capacity for Water Cooperation project in the past workplan, and expressed its gratitude to the secretariat for its leadership in this activity and to the host countries for their effective cooperation;

(c) Agreed to include the Capacity for Water Cooperation project in the workplan for 2010–2012, and also agreed that the project should continue to support and be linked to other activities in the programmes of work under the Convention and the Protocol;

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

⁷ *River basin commissions and other institutions for transboundary water cooperation*, ECE/MP.WAT/32.

IV. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERS

77. The Chair of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment reported on the progress achieved by the Working Group in implementing its programme of work for 2006–2009 (see ECE/MP.WAT/2009/2) and introduced relevant activities in the workplan for 2010–2012 (ECE/MP.WAT/2006/L.1). After a general introduction, the discussion focused on the following specific activities under this programme area.

A. Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters

1. Developments since the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties

78. The Chair of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment presented the *First Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters* (ECE/MP.WAT/25), which had been released at the Sixth Ministerial Conference “Environment for Europe” (Belgrade, 10–12 October 2007). She recalled the Conference’s request to the Meeting of the Parties to prepare a second Assessment for the next Ministerial Conference, scheduled to be held in 2011 in Astana. She presented plans for the development of the second Assessment and the progress made since the start of preparations in 2008 (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/7). She also informed the session about cooperation with the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy, the body responsible for preparations for the next “Environment for Europe” Ministerial Conference, and with EEA on the preparation of the input to the Ministerial Conference.

79. A representative of EEA expressed appreciation for the first Assessment and welcomed the second Assessment. He affirmed the availability of EEA to cooperate in preparing the second Assessment by sharing the information it had available. He also informed the session that a proposal for the preparation of an “Assessment of Assessments” for the Astana Conference, led by EEA and based on available data and reports, was being discussed by the Committee on Environmental Policy. In this regard, the Meeting of the Parties stressed the importance of coordination in preparing the “Assessment of Assessments”, so as to avoid duplication between different assessment reports submitted to Conference, and the resulting importance of cooperation between UNECE and EEA vis-à-vis preparation of the second Assessment.

80. A number of partners, including the Ramsar Convention, the International Sava River Basin Commission, UNCCD and GWP-Central and Eastern Europe, expressed their appreciation of the First Assessment and their readiness to cooperate in preparing the second Assessment.

81. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Welcomed the *First Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters* as an impressive, pioneering work and acknowledged the importance of regular assessments for providing an authoritative picture of the state of the transboundary water resources in the UNECE region, and thereby for benchmarking progress achieved in implementing the Convention;

(b) Thanked Finland for its leadership and for the substantive and financial support it had provided to this activity, and for continuing to lead this area of work in the future;

(c) Thanked all the Parties, non-Parties and international organizations that had contributed substantively and provided resources for the work;

(d) Noted with satisfaction the progress achieved in preparing the second Assessment, recognizing at the same time the challenges that lay ahead and the need for strong commitment and timely contribution of relevant, high-quality information to secure the activity's success;

(e) Entrusted the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment, in cooperation with the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management, to finalize the second Assessment in time for its submission to the Seventh Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe", and to prepare an analysis of the need to prepare a third Assessment and, if applicable, a strategy for its preparation, for consideration at the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties (see also part two of this report);

(f) Agreed to make all efforts to ensure that the second Assessment was recognized in the "Environment for Europe" process as the key document on transboundary waters for the ministers' consideration;

(g) Called upon donors to mobilize the funds needed to support this important area of work.

2. Assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in South-Eastern Europe

82. A representative of GWP-Mediterranean presented the findings of the assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in South-Eastern Europe (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/8, ECE/MP.WAT/2009/9, ECE/MP.WAT/2009/10 and ECE/MP.WAT/2009/11).

83. The secretariat presented the difficulties encountered in preparing the assessment for South-Eastern Europe, the lessons learned for the project's continuation and the proposed next steps to finalize the assessment of South-Eastern Europe.

84. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters in South-Eastern Europe presented in documents ECE/MP.WAT/2009/8, ECE/MP.WAT/2009/9, ECE/MP.WAT/2009/10 and ECE/MP.WAT/2009/11;

(b) Expressed its appreciation to the designated experts from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the International Sava River Basin Commission secretariat, GWP-Med and the Convention secretariat for the substantive work done;

(c) Expressed its concern regarding the fact that not all countries in SEE had contributed to the assessment's preparation, and that the information provided was in some cases insufficient;

(d) Invited Parties and non-Parties to provide amendments and additions to the information contained in documents ECE/MP.WAT/2009/8, ECE/MP.WAT/2009/9, ECE/MP.WAT/2009/10 and ECE/MP.WAT/2009/11 by 31 January 2010.

B. Strengthening capacity for data administration and exchange for monitoring and assessment of transboundary water resources in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia

85. A representative of France together with a representative of the International Office for Water introduced a project to be funded by the French Global Environment Facility. Its aim was to strengthen capacity for data administration and exchange for monitoring and assessment of transboundary water resources in countries in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/12).

86. During the session and at a side meeting to the session, a number of countries and international organizations expressed their willingness to participate in or cooperate with the project. The next step would include an analysis of the challenges and opportunities of the various possibilities as well as two missions to discuss and define the basins the project would focus on and the specific objectives and aims for each basin.

87. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Restated the importance of effective data and information management for water governance, particularly in the context of transboundary cooperation;

(b) Thanked France for supporting this activity, and invited it to continue supporting it in future;

(c) Thanked the International Office for Water for leading efforts in this important area of work, and entrusted it to undertake, as appropriate, the future project in cooperation with IWAC;

(d) Called upon candidate countries for the project to strongly commit to the work foreseen, and to ensure good results for this important exercise.

V. PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF PILOT PROJECTS FOR 2010–2012

88. The secretariat introduced a proposal on a programme of pilot projects. These aimed to gather under a common framework the activities on the ground under the Convention workplan that endeavoured to implement the Convention and its soft law tools (guidelines and recommendations) (see ECE/MP.WAT/2009/5).

89. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Welcomed the proposed programme of pilot projects, including its support structure, and agreed to include it in the Convention's workplan for 2010–2012;

(b) Invited countries sharing transboundary basins in the UNECE region to submit proposals for pilot projects by the end of 2009;

(c) Invited Parties and other partners to support the programme of pilot projects by providing expertise and financial resources;

(d) Entrusted the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management to oversee implementation of the programme, and the Task Force on Water and Climate to guide and facilitate the pilot projects on water and adaptation to climate change.

VI. INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSESSMENT CENTRE

90. The Director of the International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC), the Convention's collaborative centre, informed the session about the work of IWAC since the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties, in particular the transfer of IWAC to the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute and its formal inauguration on 7 April 2009. He also introduced the proposed strategy and workplan for 2010–2012 for IWAC (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/L.4).

91. The representative of IGRAC expressed its readiness to cooperate with IWAC, including on pilot projects.

92. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Reiterated the importance of IWAC for translating the obligations of the Convention and its Protocols into concrete action on the ground;

(b) Thanked Slovakia for the work done and for providing the resources that had enabled the effective start of IWAC work, and invited it to continue allocating resources to support IWAC;

(c) Adopted the IWAC Strategy and workplan for 2010–2012 (see part three of this report);

(d) Agreed that IWAC should give priority in 2010–2012 to supporting new pilot projects and providing inputs to the preparation of the second Assessment of transboundary rivers, lakes and groundwaters;

(e) Encouraged Governments and stakeholders to join in IWAC activities, and called upon donors to mobilize needed funds to support the work.

VII. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION PROJECTS

93. The UNECE Regional Advisor on Environment presented achievements under technical assistance and implementation projects, including ENVSEC Initiative projects, based on the report on the implementation of the 2007–2009 workplan (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/2). He also presented planned future directions for assistance and specific activities for 2010–2012.

94. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note of the report on technical assistance and implementation projects. It stressed their usefulness in terms of supporting the Convention's implementation 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 support of the Convention's implementation, and invited others—Parties and partners—to also provide funds in support of such activities.

(c) Agreed to include proposed activities in the workplan for 2010–2012.

VIII. COOPERATION WITH THE PROTOCOL ON WATER AND HEALTH

95. A representative of Romania, which chairs the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health, briefed participants on progress achieved under the Protocol since the first session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol (Geneva, 17–19 January 2007), as well as on cooperation between the Protocol and the Convention.

96. The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention underlined the importance of cooperation between the Protocol and the Convention and stressed that activities under the two frameworks should strengthen each other, while avoiding duplication.

97. 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 called other countries to accede to the Protocol;

(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 2010–2012, focusing on: (a) adaptation to climate change; (b) the setting of targets and target dates according to article 6 of the Protocol; and (c) reviewing progress and reporting according to article 7 (see part two of this report).

IX. PARTNERS IN COOPERATION

98. The Meeting of the Parties discussed its cooperation with various partners, including governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements, other United Nations bodies, other

intergovernmental organizations and NGOs, noting the many benefits and the possibility of mutually strengthening activities.

99. Many partners, including UNDP, FAO, GEF and Mama-86, underlined the usefulness of cooperation with the Meeting of the Parties and reconfirmed their intention to cooperate in the implementation of the 2010–2012 workplan.

100. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Acknowledged that cooperation with partners was a great strength of the work under the Convention, and that it enhanced the quality of products and the impact of actions at the local, national and international levels, and also multiplied the effectiveness of activities. It therefore decided that joint work should continue;

(b) Thanked partners in cooperation 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 2010–2012 workplan.

X. PROMOTION OF THE CONVENTION AND THE ROLE OF FOCAL POINTS

101. The Chair of the Meeting of the Parties introduced the guide for focal points to support promotion of the Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/13), jointly prepared by the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health. A representative of Romania, speaking on behalf of the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, called upon Parties and other countries to use it to promote both instruments.

102. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Recognized the importance of effectively promoting the Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health in order:

(i) To raise awareness about the importance of transboundary water cooperation and human and health issues;

(ii) To foster better understanding of the opportunities offered by the two treaties;

(iii) To support their implementation in the region and beyond;

(b) Reaffirmed that promotion of the Convention and the Protocol was a major responsibility of focal points, and urged them to intensify efforts in this area;

(c) Welcomed the guide for focal points (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/13) as a valuable advocacy manual, and required focal points to use it effectively in their promotional work;

(d) Thanked the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health for preparing the guide;

(e) Entrusted the Convention's Bureau with overseeing the promotion of the Convention, and agreed that promotional activities at the national and regional levels should be regularly reviewed at meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management.

XI. WORKPLAN FOR 2010–2012 AND RESOURCES NEEDED FOR ITS IMPLEMENTATION

103. The Chair of the ad hoc group on the workplan presented a revised draft workplan, as agreed upon by the ad hoc group on the basis of document ECE/MP.WAT/2009/L.1 and the discussions under previous agenda items.

104. 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 two of this report);

(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 2009 consolidated information on the possibility of financing activities under the workplan and/or of leading or co-leading specific activities;

(c) Expressed its appreciation to Parties and organizations that 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.

105. The Meeting of the Parties also adopted the following guiding principles for financial assistance for experts' participation in activities under the Convention, on the basis of the document presented by the secretariat (ECE/MP.WAT/2009/L.5):

(a) Experts from national authorities and NGOs whose work has a direct relevance to the activity from the following UNECE countries with economies in transition are eligible to receive financial support: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan;

(b) Experts from national authorities from non-UNECE countries are eligible to receive financial support when their participation is decisive for the success of the activity. Parties can make earmarked contributions to the trust fund to broaden the participation of experts from outside the UNECE region;

(c) Provision of financial support is subject to the availability of funds. In the case of limited funds being available, priority will be given to experts from the national authorities of Parties to the Convention and to experts making a direct, substantial contribution to the activity. In addition, taking into consideration the different capacities of countries with economies in transition, only partial support may be provided.

XII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

106. The Meeting elected its Bureau as follows:

- (a) Ms. Sibylle Vermont (Switzerland), Chair;
- (b) Mr. Massimo Cozzone (Italy), Vice-Chair;
- (c) Mr. Harry Liiv (Estonia), Vice-Chair;
- (d) Ms. Maria Galambos (Hungary), member of the Bureau;
- (e) Ms. Lea Kauppi (Finland), Chair of the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment;
- (f) Ms. Heide Jekel (Germany), Chair of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management;
- (g) Mr. Mykola Babich (Ukraine), member of the Bureau;
- (h) Mr. Rafiq Verdiyev (Azerbaijan), member of the Bureau;
- (i) Ms. Doubravka Nedvedova (Czech Republic), member of the Bureau;
- (j) Mr. Serik Akhmetov (Kazakhstan), member of the Bureau.

107. The two members who are in charge of the two Working Groups will remain in office until the Working Groups officially elect their own officers.

108. The Director of IWAC, the Chair of the Legal Board, the Co-Chairs of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents and the Chair of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health will be non-voting participants at the relevant Bureau's meetings.

109. The Meeting of the Parties expressed its great appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Ms. Jekel, for the services she provided during her chairmanship and for her continuing support to the Convention. The Parties also expressed their appreciation and thanks to the Chairs of the bodies under the Convention for their excellent work.

XIII. DATE AND VENUE OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES

110. The Meeting of the Parties warmly welcomed the offer of Italy to host the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2012.

XIV. ADOPTION OF THE DECISIONS

111. The Meeting of the Parties reviewed and adopted the decisions taken during the session and entrusted the Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau, with finalizing the report of its fifth session.

XV. CLOSING OF THE SESSION

112. Ms. Jekel thanked all participants for the very fruitful deliberations. She also expressed appreciation for the work of the secretariat in implementing the previous workplan and in preparing and servicing the session.
