

The UNECE Water Convention: potential and opportunities for enhancing transboundary water cooperation

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WORKSHOP ON TRANSBOUNDARY WATER COOPERATION
LATIN AMERICAN AND PAN-EUROPEAN REGIONS: SHARING EXPERIENCES AND LEARNING FROM EACH OTHER
Buenos Aires, 11-12 June 2013

Benefits offered by the UNECE Water Convention

- Catalyst of cooperation: crucial role played in the UNECE region in supporting cooperation
- Support to implementation through assistance and capacity building activities
- Model for many of the existing agreements (Danube, Sava, Bug, Kazakh-Russian, Lake Peipsi, also the EU Water Framework Directive)
- Influence on river Commissions
- Sound legal framework
- Strong ownership by Parties
- Continuously evolving - response to new challenges
- Work in partnership: UN agencies, NGOs, etc.
- Cooperative spirit between all involved stakeholders

Concrete work on the ground: practical support to establish cooperation

- Adaptation to climate change pilot projects
- PES (Payments for Ecosystem Services) pilot projects
- Joint Monitoring and assessment (Aral Sea, Dniester)
- National Policy Dialogues
- „Drin Dialogue“
- Dniester Agreement (Moldova - Ukraine)
- Dam safety in Central Asia
- Chu-Talas Commission
- Upper Amu Darya (Afghanistan - Tajikistan)
- Kura basin (Georgia - Azerbaijan)

Payments for Ecosystems Services

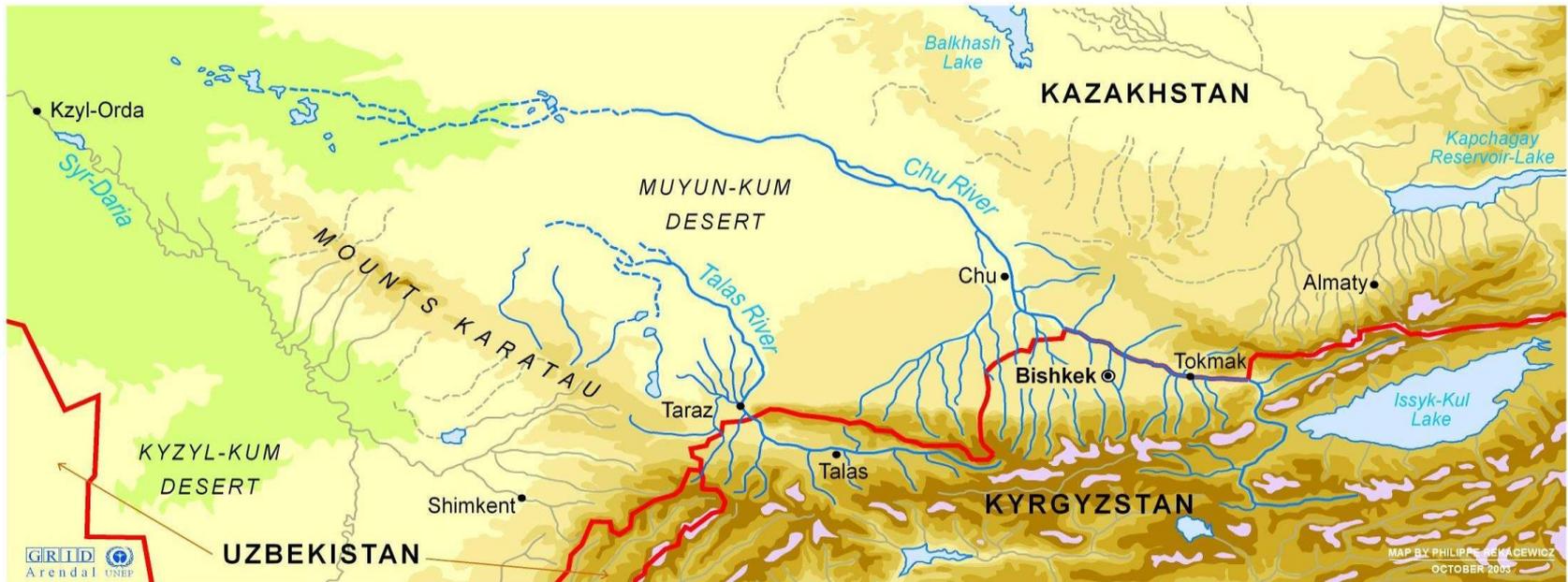
- Lake Issyk Kul (Kyrgyzstan): PES signed and operating (CAREC)
- Capacity building on PES in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan (CAREC)
- Water quality PES for Hrazdan basin in Armenia
- Restoration of Vecht river (Germany, Netherlands)

Practical support to establish cooperation - example of the Drin

- Drin river basin (Albania, Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo (under UN SC resolution 1244))
- Launch of “Drin Dialogue” in 2009
- MoU “Shared Vision for the management of the Drin Basin” - 2011

Practical support to establish cooperation - Chu-Talas rivers

- Transboundary basins between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan
- Technical assistance to Chu-Talas Rivers Commission



Intergovernmental bilateral Dniester Basin Treaty
between Republic of Moldova and Ukraine:
Co-operation on Conservation and Sustainable Development
of the Dniester River Basin
(signed in Rome, 29 November 2012)



The Convention becomes global



Opening up the Water Convention to all UN Member States => the Convention becomes a global instrument

Amendments adopted in 2003:
entered into force on
6 February 2013

6th Meeting of the Parties (Rome, 28-30 November 2012)

- Unanimous decision to grant the approval of all future requests for accession from non-UNECE countries



Global accession to the Convention

- Accession might be possible late 2013 - early 2014 (a few ratifications still needed for practical application of the amendments)
- Aims:
 - Apply the principles and provisions worldwide
 - Share the experiences of the Convention
 - Learn from other regions of the world
 - Broaden political support for transboundary cooperation

Message by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to the Rome Meeting of the Parties

“Soon the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes will become open for accession to all Member States. Your experience and the lessons you have learned will be invaluable. I encourage countries outside the UNECE region to join the Convention and contribute to its further development.”

Working with non Parties

- The Convention has long since tried to involve also non Parties in its activities
- More focus until now given to neighbouring countries, sharing water with countries of the region
- Different perspective from now on, Strategy on globalization of the Convention under preparation, **will depend also on response/interest from your countries**

Working with non-Parties: Tajik-Afghan example

- Establishing cooperation on hydrology and environment in upper Amu Darya between Tajikistan and Afghanistan (2012-2013):
 - bilateral working group
 - exchange of hydrological data
 - visits to hydrological monitoring stations
 - cooperation with border guards
 - first steps: cooperation in flood management and emergency situations, agreeing on compatible hydrological monitoring equipment, methods and models
 - vision for the future: integrating Afghanistan in the Aral Sea cooperation (IFAS)

Providing a platform for other actors: example of Kura (Georgia-Azerbaijan) bilateral negotiations under OSCE

- Legitimacy of OSCE intervention based on international water law
- Water Convention's strong cooperative pillar (Art.9) supports intervention
- Parallel to the process of accession by Georgia to Water Convention
- Support from Parties available (experts, financial)
- Support and knowledge of UNECE available

Outreach

- International Conference on Europe-Asia Transboundary Water Cooperation (Geneva, Dec. 2011): many Asian Countries participated
- International Roundtable on Transboundary Water Resources Management in the Southern Mediterranean (Rome, Nov. 2012)
- International Workshop in Islamic Republic of Iran - (Teheran, Jan. 2013)
- Post 2015 Water Consultation in Geneva - Febr.2013

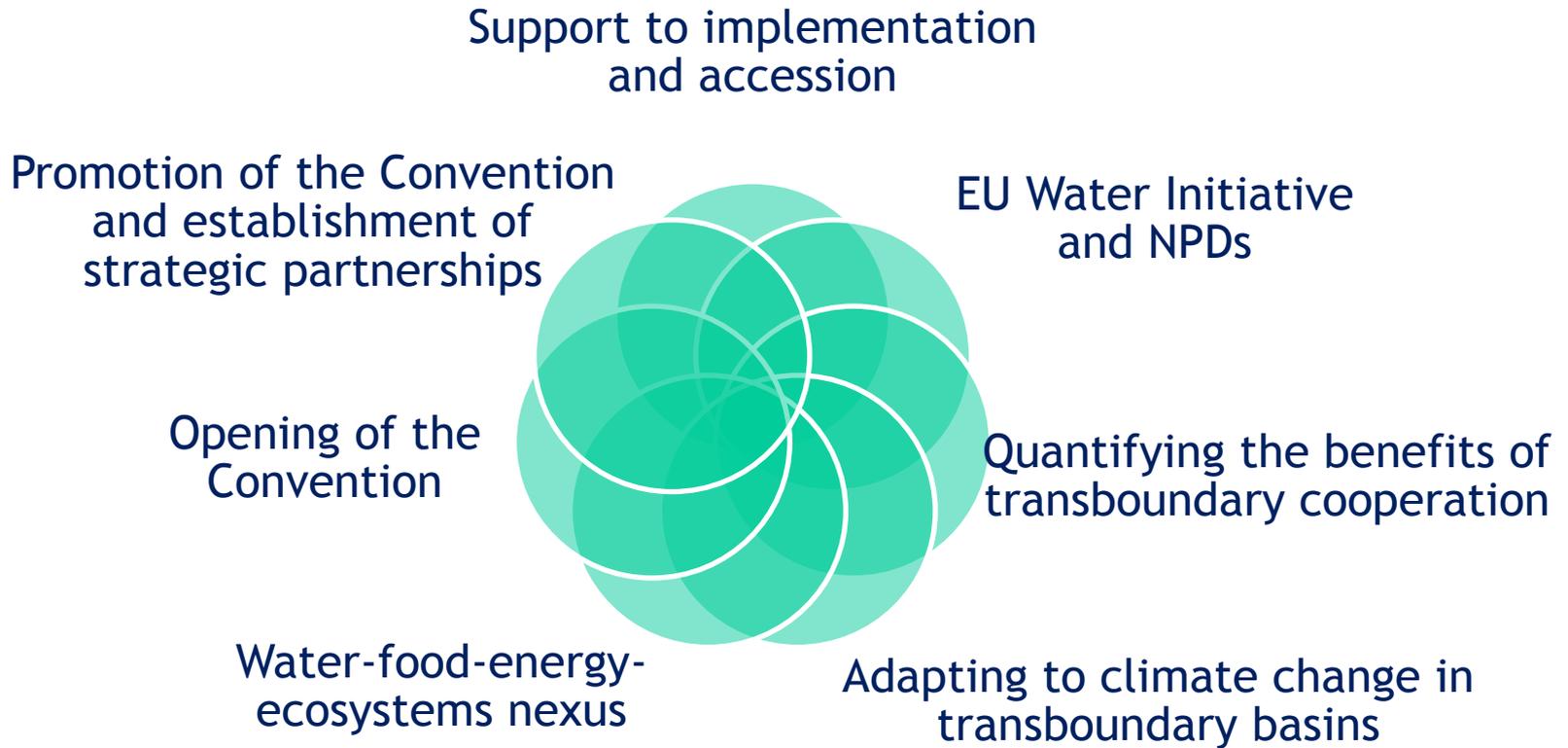
Where Latin American Countries are already involved or expressed interest

- Three countries from the region participated to the Rome MoP in Nov. 2012: Nicaragua, Honduras, Colombia
- A few countries already participating in technical activities (Yearly Workshops on Adaptation to Climate Change and Task Force on Climate and Water). The next meeting is in Geneva on 25-27 June 2013 and some LAC countries participate

How Latin American Countries can accede to the Convention

- Interministerial preparations + national adoption
- Refer to MoP6 decision in the instrument of ratification to the New York depositary
- When countries outside ECE become Parties there are no difference of rights and obligations compared to ECE countries

New Programme of Work 2013-2015



How can Latin American Countries further engage?

- Participate in activities under the Convention (joint bodies, climate change, nexus assessment, benefits of cooperation, etc.)
- Build capacity on the Convention nationally
- Cooperation with other partners active in Latin America to support implementation of the Convention (UNESCO, IUCN, UNDP, GEF, bilateral donors,)
- Discuss/prepare for accession
- In case of clear request for accession, the Bureau and the secretariat will offer support in cooperation with partners

Why the Water Convention

- It is an opportunity and a useful tool
- Becoming a Party = joining an institutional framework
- Forum for dialogue, sharing of experience and mutual support
- Focus on implementation, not a bureaucratic burden
- Assistance to Parties in dealing with the other riparians

From trouble to solution



and THANK YOU for your interest!