



FIFTH WORKSHOP ON WATER AND ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN TRANSBOUNDARY BASINS

Adaptation strategies: which measures for which outcomes at transboundary level?

To be held in Geneva, 14-15 October 2014
Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland,
starting at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 14 October 2014

INFORMATION NOTICE

I. Objectives

This workshop will bring together professionals from all over the world working on adaptation to climate variability and change, with a special, but non-exclusive focus on transboundary basins. The workshop aims to provide an opportunity to:

- Share experience on the latest methodologies, approaches, lessons learnt and tools for addressing and anticipating climate impacts in transboundary basins, through joint vulnerability assessments, developing basin-wide adaptation strategies, selecting and implementing adaptation measures of basin-wide relevance;
- Identify, collect and analyze good practices and lessons learnt on adaptation to climate change, with a particular focus on transboundary basins, as a basis for the collection of lessons learned and good practices to be prepared by 2015 for the seventh World Water Forum;
- Present and discuss the progress of the global network of basins working on climate change adaptation under the UNECE Water Convention, as well as other similar initiatives by partners;
- Provide input to debates on water and climate as well as water and disasters, for example under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN ISDR).



This workshop is the fifth workshop on Water and Climate Change in Transboundary Basins in the framework of the platform for exchanging experience under the UNECE Water Convention. It will build on the discussions and results of previous workshops organized since 2008 and present progress in this area. Information on the previous workshops can be found at: http://www.unece.org/env/water/water_climate_activ.html

II. Topics of the workshop

The overall focus of this fifth workshop will be on developing and implementing **climate change adaptation strategies and measures, looking into expected outcomes at the transboundary level**

The 5th IPCC Assessment report, published in 2013/ 2014 has shown once again the centrality of water for both adaptation and mitigation. It also warns that conflicts over scarce resources could increase in the future, such as water managed across political boundaries. Successful adaptation is challenged by the transboundary nature of many watercourses (with 276 transboundary basins), while most adaptation efforts under UNFCCC are focused on the national level. Stakeholders in a number of transboundary basins have already developed transboundary adaptation strategies using a wide variety of different methodologies, while others are in the process of preparing or exploring. But even less basins have actually started to implement any measures. This workshop aims at exchanging experience to support and stimulate countries with transboundary basins to develop and implement adaptation measures at the transboundary level.

The following themes will be covered by this workshop:

- Development and implementation of transboundary adaptation strategies and / or mainstreaming of such aspects into basin-wide planning processes: What patterns are emerging for methodologies in assessment, implementation, and evaluation and what is their efficacy?
- Effects of adaptation measures, including costs and benefits, Prioritization, selection and implementation of adaptation measures which are of basin-wide relevance in different areas such as joint monitoring, ecosystem restoration and ecosystem services, role of “natural infrastructure” landscape (such as aquifer storage or riparian wetlands) for adaptation,
- Adaptive water management: How to develop flexible basin/transboundary governance institutions, particularly for water allocation in the context of increasing variability?
- Linkages between adaptation at the regional, transboundary, national and local level as well as between climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction,
- Development of scenarios for water (floods, droughts and seasonal) and future water use, taking into account socio-economic and demographic aspects,
- Adaptation and mitigation: synergies and trade-offs: With pressure increasing for “cleaner” but water-intensive energy sources such as hydropower, hydrofracking, nuclear power, biofuels, and shale gas, how to ensure that climate mitigation efforts are climate-ready as well?

All presentations and discussions will as much as possible focus on transboundary issues of climate change adaptation as well as on situations of water scarcity and drought. A detailed programme will be issued in September 2014.

III. Organization of work

The workshop will be organized on 14 to 15 October 2014, back-to-back with the seventh meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (13 October 2014), under the leadership of the Governments of the Netherlands and Switzerland, with the support of the UNECE secretariat. It is organized in partnership with



the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA), GIZ, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN). Funding for the workshop and the pilot projects programme is provided by Finland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Austria and the European Commission.

The workshop is addressed to all those who are responsible for, or involved in the process of developing an adaptation strategy and addressing climate change impacts, at the national and transboundary levels: first and foremost governmental representatives, but also water and health managers, local authorities, and representatives of academia, research institutes, international and non-governmental organizations.

The workshop will be organized in a way that sharing of experience will be optimized and will consist of an interesting combination of plenary presentations and discussions, smaller group discussions and exercises, including role-plays. Working languages will be English, French, Russian and Spanish.

IV. Background

Changes in the hydrological cycle due to climate change can lead to diverse impacts and risks, and they are conditioned by and interact with non-climatic drivers of change and water management responses (IPCC 2014). Water is the agent that delivers many of the impacts of climate change to society, for example to the energy, agriculture, and transport sectors.

Anthropogenic climate change is one of many stressors of water resources. Non-climatic drivers such as population increase, economic development, urbanization, and land-use or natural geomorphic changes also challenge the sustainability of resources by decreasing water supply or increasing demand. In this context, adaptation to climate change in the water sector can contribute to improving the availability of water.

The fact that at least 276 rivers and even more groundwater bodies cross boundaries implies that risks and challenges are shared between countries and that solutions need to be coordinated. Unilateral adaptation measures in one country, especially structural measures can have significant negative effects on other riparian countries. Cooperation on adaptation, however, can help to find better and more cost-effective solutions, by considering a larger geographical area in planning measures, by broadening the information base, by exchanging data and by combining efforts, e.g. of scientists. Still very little is done at the transboundary level and few concrete actions are implemented at basin scale.

Recognizing the urgency of this, the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) have developed a range of activities on adaptation to climate change in a transboundary context, including a Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change, a programme of pilot projects and a platform for exchanging experience on adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins. The programme of pilot projects was transformed into a global network of basins in 2013, in cooperation with INBO, as an outcome of the sixth World Water Forum in 2012 (target 3.3.2).

The start of the global network also supports the global opening of the Water Convention: in February 2013 the UNECE Water Convention turned into a global convention which will allow accession by all United Nations Member States as of end of 2014. This 'going global' was driven by the aim to share the Water Convention's experience worldwide.

In 2014, in addition to the network of basins and global platform, a collection of good practices and lessons learnt is being prepared by a drafting group coordinated by UNECE and the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO). It is expected to be launched at the seventh World Water Forum (Daegu/ Gyeongbuk,



Republic of Korea, 12-17 April 2015) and will serve as a complement to the Guidance on Water and Adaptation to Climate Change.

The following organizations are partners in organizing this workshop:

- Deutsche Gesellschaft für international Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GIZ, acting on behalf of the German Federal Government and other clients, supports partners in implementing the Framework Convention on Climate Change and developing and implementing climate policy guidelines as well as adaptation strategies and measures. This includes support to transboundary river and lake basins and joint bodies working on climate change adaptation in the context of shared water resources: <http://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2011-en-transboundary-water-resources-management.pdf> and <http://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2011-en-144-climate.pdf>
- International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) which is gathering at world level basin organisations in order to exchange good practices for better water resource management at basin scale, including the constraints related to the global changes, namely climate change: <http://www.inbo-news.org>
- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO): is the UN specialized agency in the areas of meteorology, climatology and hydrology, furthering the application of meteorological, climatological and hydrological data and information for the overall benefit of the society. WMO has launched the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) as a global partnership of governments and organizations that produce and use climate information and services, water has been identified as one priority area for GFCS implementation: www.wmo.int
- The Alliance for Global Water Adaptation (AGWA) is a network of development banks, governments, civil society organizations, and for-profit institutions that are focused on developing the best practices for implementing and operationalizing climate adaptation through the lens of water. <http://www.alliance4water.org>
- The IUCN is the world largest environmental organization composed by government and non-government organizations focused on demonstrating how biodiversity is fundamental to addressing some of the world's greatest challenges such as climate change, through innovative approaches like ecosystem-based adaptation – www.iucn.org
- The GEF Project International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) exists to strengthen Transboundary Waters Management (TWM) by facilitating portfolio learning and information management amongst GEF IW projects and partners: <http://iwlearn.net/>

V. Practical information

The workshop will start at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, 14 October and end at 5.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 15 October 2014. It will be held in the Palais des Nations, Geneva. The workshop will be preceded by the seventh meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate, which will be held on 13 October 2014 in Geneva. The working languages will be English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition and developing countries may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the meeting using the financial support request form available on the meeting website. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat (cammile.marcelo@unece.org) as soon as possible, but not later than Wednesday 3 September 2014. No application will be accepted after this deadline.

Participants requiring entry visas should inform the UNECE secretariat as soon as possible. Since Switzerland is part of the Schengen Zone, obtaining a visa might take up to 5 weeks. Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to submit their application as soon as possible and initiate visa procedures at least four weeks before the meeting.



Delegates attending the meeting are requested to register by 1 October 2014 using the new electronic procedure. Registration is available through the following link: <https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=zQd2vF>. In case of difficulties please contact the secretariat by e-mail (Cammile.marcelo@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, participants should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section located at the Pregny Gate, 14 Avenue de la Paix (see map on the UNECE website). Please allow enough time for this.

Practical information on the Palais des Nations, as well as on transport and accommodation in Geneva, is available online at: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>

Further information and relevant material will be made available on the following website in due course: http://www.unece.org/env/water/transboundary_adaptation_workshop_2014.html For the Task Force: http://www.unece.org/env/water/7th_meeting_task_force_water_climate_2014.html

