



National workshop on frameworks for transboundary water cooperation: Focus on the UNECE Water Convention

Amman, Jordan, 10 March 2015
Hotel Le Méridien, Shmeisani

Background

Recently, major steps forward in international water law have been made. The 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses (UN Watercourses Convention), which Jordan has ratified in 1999, entered into force in 2014. The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (known also as the Helsinki or 1992 Water Convention) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) became a global multilateral legal framework for transboundary water cooperation in 2013, open to accession by all United Nations Member States.

The UNECE Water Convention has provided, since its entry into force in 1996, an important legal and institutional framework for improving the management of transboundary surface water and groundwater resources in the pan-European region. With its globalization, the UNECE Water Convention could be a source of inspiration for progress in the management of shared surface waters and groundwaters for Jordan and could offer a solid cooperation framework.

Since 2011, representatives from the Ministry of Water and Irrigation of Jordan have regularly participated in activities implemented under the UNECE Water Convention, in particular events related to water and adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins, river basins commissions for transboundary water cooperation and integrated water resources management. On several occasions, Jordan has expressed interest in the UNECE Water Convention.

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation recently requested UNECE to organize a workshop in Jordan to present the UNECE Water Convention into details in order to facilitate the national process of reflection about possibly joining the Water Convention.

Objectives of the workshop

The workshop aims to:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the different legal frameworks for cooperation on shared waters resources (surface water and groundwater);
- Detail the guiding principles and general provisions of the UNECE Water Convention, its main obligations, their potential relevance to the specific situation of Jordan and possible benefits of joining the UNECE Water Convention;
- Describe the institutional arrangements under the UNECE Water Convention;

- Present the thematic work within the framework of the UNECE Water Convention, including technical and strategic guidance documents on issues of interest for Jordan, as well as intergovernmental platforms for exchanging experience e.g. in the areas of water and adaptation to climate change, benefits of cooperation, transboundary groundwater management...;
- Inform the national process of reflection about possible accession to the UNECE Water Convention.

A national inter-ministerial Committee will be created before the workshop to make a preliminary study of the applicability of the UNECE Water Convention in Jordan. After the workshop, if agreed upon, the Committee will be in charge of studying the implications of acceding to the UNECE Water Convention further, preparing a roadmap towards accession to the UNECE Water Convention and following up with the accession process.

Organization of work

The workshop will combine keynote presentations, panel discussions and facilitated plenary discussions to allow exchanges between participants.

All participants will be encouraged to contribute actively to the discussions.

Participation

Representatives of institutions and other stakeholders that play a (direct or indirect) role in transboundary water cooperation are expected to attend the workshop, in particular representatives from:

- Ministry of Water and Irrigation
- Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ)
- Jordan Valley Authority (JVA)
- Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Members of the Parliament
- Others: advisor of HRH Prince El-Hassan, representatives of international organizations, donor organizations, cooperation agencies, universities, research institutes, NGOs, as well as international experts.

Partners and venue

The workshop is organized by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation of Jordan and UNECE, in partnership with the International Hydrological Programme (IHP) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and GWP-Med, under the Patronage of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation and with financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

The workshop will be held in Amman, Hotel Le Méridien, Shmeisani.

Participants are kindly requested to confirm their participation by 2 March 2015 to Chantal Demilecamps, UNECE (Chantal.demilecamps@unece.org) and Varvara Vasilaki (varvara@gwpmmed.org).

Practical information

The workshop will take place from 8:30 till 15:00 on Tuesday 10 March 2015.
Coffee breaks will be provided. A lunch will be offered after the workshop.
Simultaneous interpretation English – Arabic will be provided.

Website of the workshop

More information on the workshop can be downloaded from the following webpage:

www.unece.org/env/water/workshop_Jordan2015_WaterConvention

It includes background documents such as the brochure *The Global Opening of the 1992 UNECE Water Convention* and the publication *Guide to Implementing the Water Convention*.

Presentations will be made available on the website at the end of the workshop.