



NATIONAL WORKSHOP

**THE UNECE CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES
AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES
KEY ASPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IRAQ**

13-14 JANUARY 2016

AMMAN, JORDAN

INFORMATION NOTICE

Background

Water is an increasingly scarce resource in Iraq. Balancing water consumption for industrial, energy, agricultural and domestic uses, as well as preserving water-related ecosystems, pose major challenges. Water quantity is diminishing while water quality is deteriorating. In addition, the impacts of climate change are expected to seriously reduce the flow in the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Transboundary cooperation therefore becomes increasingly important to guarantee the sound management of the transboundary surface water and groundwater resources and to contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) has provided, since its entry into force in 1992, an important framework for improving the management of transboundary surface and groundwater resources in the pan-European region. The UNECE Water Convention turned into a universally open multilateral legal framework for transboundary water cooperation in 2013, open for accession by all United Nations Member States. The UNECE Water Convention can offer a solid cooperation framework for progress in the joint management of shared water resources for Iraq.

Since 2012, Iraq has become particularly active in activities implemented under the framework of the UNECE Water Convention. Iraq, which is already a Party to the 1997 United Nations Convention on Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses since 2001 (the United Nations Watercourses Convention, which entered into force in 2014), has repeatedly expressed its intention to become a Party to the UNECE Water Convention. In 2014, Iraq created a joint committee to study and discuss accession to the UNECE Water Convention and requested UNECE to support the organization of a dedicated workshop for Iraq to clarify the provisions, benefits and obligations for Iraq deriving from the UNECE Water Convention as well as the modalities of the accession process.

This workshop is organized in response to the request for a national workshop on the UNECE Water Convention and will be under the Patronage of the Minister of Water Resources of Iraq.

Objectives of the workshop

The workshop aims to contribute to the comprehensive understanding by the Iraqi competent authorities of the UNECE Water Convention, its provisions and obligations, its work on the ground as well as the benefits and possible challenges for Iraq to accede to it, in order to facilitate the preparation for accession.

In particular, the workshop will:

- Present current status, progress achieved and prevailing challenges for cooperation on transboundary water resources in Iraq, as well as selected on-going initiatives supporting national capacity building on transboundary water cooperation;
- Increase awareness and understanding of the different legal frameworks for cooperation on transboundary water resources (surface water and groundwater);
- Detail the guiding principles and general provisions of the UNECE Water Convention, its main obligations related to domestic legislation and bilateral and multilateral agreements, and their potential relevance to the specific situation of Iraq;
- Describe the institutional arrangements under the UNECE Water Convention;
- Describe how the UNECE Water Convention has promoted cooperation in transboundary basins, based on concrete examples;
- Present the thematic work within the framework of the UNECE Water Convention, including technical and strategic guidance documents on issues of interest for Iraq;
- Provide a forum for discussion and facilitation of the national process of preparations for the accession of Iraq to the UNECE Water Convention.

Expected outcomes

A report with the main conclusions of the workshop will be produced.

Main recommendations will be translated into a national road-map towards accession to the UNECE Water Convention.

Organization of work

Introductory speeches, several technical and legal presentations and interactive discussions will allow for an open exchange of information and for a debate on the benefits and possible challenges for Iraq of becoming a Party to the UNECE Water Convention.

Target audience

Representatives of institutions and other stakeholders that are involved, directly or not (but still play a relevant role), in transboundary water management in Iraq, in particular from:

- Ministry of Water Resources
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Agency of consultants of Prime minister's office
- General Secretariat for the Council of Ministries
- Ministry of Health and Environment
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Construction, Housing and Municipalities
- Ministry of Oil
- Ministry of Industry

- Parliamentarians
- Ministry of Water Resources & Agriculture of the Kurdistan Regional Government
- Mayoralty of Baghdad

Experts on international water law and water practitioners from the pan-European region will contribute to the workshop. International organizations and donor representatives will also be invited.

The target number of participants is around 40-45.

Partners

The workshop is co-organized by the Ministry of Water Resources of Iraq and UNECE, with logistical support from UNDP country office in Jordan. Funding for the workshop is provided the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Practical information and contact information

Venue

Hotel Le Méridien, Shmeisani, Amman, Jordan
<http://www.lemeridienamman.com/>

Schedule

The workshop will take place on 13-14 January 2016, from at 8:30 am on 13 January till 3:00 pm on 14 January 2016.

Coffee breaks and lunches will be provided during the meeting.

A light dinner will be served on 12 January at the Hotel Le Méridien. A reception dinner will be offered on Wednesday 13 January in Sufra restaurant, Amman.

Working language

Simultaneous interpretation English-Arabic will be provided.

Participation

Participants who are not yet confirmed should confirm their participation **by 4 January 2016** by writing to:

- Mr. Luay Hussein, Senior Researcher at the Ministry of Water Resources, luaykurd_77@yahoo.com
- Ms. Chantal Demilecamps, Water Convention secretariat, UNECE, Chantal.demilecamps@unece.org

Website of the workshop

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

www.unece.org/env/water/workshop_Iraq2015_WaterConvention

It includes background documents such as the text of the Convention, 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 after the workshop.