



Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

MEETING OF THE PARTIES

Eighth session

Astana, 10-12 October 2018

**DRAFT UNEDITED LIST OF DECISIONS ADOPTED BY
THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES AT ITS EIGHTH SESSION**

Item 1: Opening of the session and adoption of the agenda

1. The Meeting of the Parties adopted its agenda as set out in document ECE/MP.WAT/53.

Item 2: Status of ratification of the Convention and its protocols and report on credentials

2. 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.

Item 3: Adoption of revised rules of procedure

3. The Meeting of the Parties adopted the revised rules of procedure of the Convention as contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2018/1.

Item 4: Special session– Transboundary water cooperation: sharing water for people, planet, prosperity and peace

Part 1 – Transboundary water cooperation and water allocation: Preventing conflict and ensuring peace and stability

4. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Emphasized the importance of transboundary water cooperation for social, economic and environmental development, and peace, both in terms of conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction;
- (b) Recognized that transboundary water cooperation generates multiple benefits to basins' countries and underlined the importance of enabling equitable sharing of such benefits, while ensuring ecosystem protection;
- (c) Expressed concern for the fact that in most transboundary basins, cooperation is not fit to deal with the growing water crisis;
- (d) Underlined the importance to take advantage of the global opening of the Water Convention, and the momentum in support of the Convention and of transboundary water cooperation, including in the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, to accelerate progress and foster the establishment and reinforcement of cooperation arrangements;
- (e) Stressed the need for political will, readiness to compromise and solidarity to ensure long-term, sustainable cooperation;

- (f) Reiterated the key role of joint bodies, such as river basin commissions, to promote regional development, stability and integration;
- (g) Emphasized the key role played by the Water Convention with its political platform, its normative value and its technical cooperation, and called upon Member States to join the Convention and to strive for its full implementation;
- (h) Also emphasized the key role of the different actors promoting water diplomacy and welcome the many emerging initiatives by countries and organizations in this area;
- (i) Stressed the importance of financing sustainable basin development. It welcomed the outcomes of the high-level workshop on financing transboundary basin development (Astana, 9 October 2018) and called upon governments, donors and other actors to implement the recommendations emanating from the workshop.

Part 2 - Sharing waters in the context of growing water scarcity: How can transboundary water cooperation make a difference?

5. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Noted with concern that water scarcity was increasingly affecting all regions of the world, due to growing water demands and climate change impacts. Growing scarcity can undermine development, inflame latent conflicts and drive migration, especially in already fragile countries.
- (b) Stressed the importance to develop and implement plans and measures to reduce water demand and increase water efficiency, which could in turn generate significant co-benefits in the efficiency of use of other resources and in mitigating climate change impacts;
- (c) Also stressed the relevance of nature-based solutions to enhance water availability, improve water quality, and reduce risks associated with water-related disasters and climate change;
- (d) Emphasized that jointly addressing water scarcity at the regional and basin level through transboundary cooperation could lead to increased resilience of all riparian countries and better and more cost-effective solutions;
- (e) Recognized the importance of frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Water Convention to develop cooperative and integrated solutions to addressing water scarcity.

Item 5: Reporting under the Convention and on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2

6. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Adopted the decision on reporting, as contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2018/5, and the revised template for reporting under the Convention as contained in Annex II of the document;
- (b) Expressed appreciation for the work of the UNECE secretariat in analysing the reports submitted by Parties under the Convention;
- (c) Also expressed appreciation for the work of UNECE and UNESCO in analysing the reports submitted on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2;
- (d) Decided to include reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention as one of the programme areas in the future programme of work for 2019-2021.

Item 6: Opening of the Convention, promotion and partnerships

Item 6 (a): Part 1 – Assistance with countries' accession to and implementation of the Convention through projects on the ground and capacity development

7. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Welcomed Chad and Senegal as the first Parties from outside the pan-European region since the operationalization of the amendment to the Convention, opening it to for accession by all United Nations Member States;
- (b) Called upon donors, international financial institutions, international organizations and other actors involved in transboundary water cooperation to support implementation of the Convention in the new Parties;
- (b) Also welcomed the progress towards accession by several countries from different regions of the world;
- (c) Encouraged other countries to explore accession to the Convention and start national dialogues on the derived benefits and implications;
- (d) Thanked the lead Parties for this area of work, namely Hungary, France, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands, and the secretariat for the support provided to countries interested in acceding to the Convention;
- (e) Commended the efforts by other Parties to support accession by interested countries;
- (f) Reaffirmed its commitment to support accession processes through the provision of technical and legal assistance, including by sharing Parties' expertise in implementation;
- (g) Decided to include *Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and application of its principles drawing on the benefits of cooperation* as one of the programme areas in the future programme of work for 2019-2021.

Item 6 (b): Part 2 – Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level

8. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Adopted the strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level as contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2018/6;
- (b) Thanked the Bureau and secretariat for the development of the strategy;
- (c) Called upon Parties, other countries, partners, and the secretariat to implement the strategy;
- (d) Entrusted the Bureau and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management to regularly review the strategy's implementation and to report to the Meeting of the Parties at its ninth session;
- (e) Adopted the decision on the designation and responsibilities of focal points as contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2018/7.

Item 6 (c): Cooperation with partners

9. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Reaffirmed that cooperation with partners was a great strength of the work under the Convention, enhancing the quality of products, the impact of actions at the local, national and international levels, and the effectiveness of activities;

(b) Emphasized that cooperation with partners would become even more important with the globalization of the Convention and with the needs for intersectoral cooperation deriving from the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other global commitments;

(c) Recalled Decision VII/4 on cooperation with partners for the implementation of the Convention, as well as key role of partners in the strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/2018/6) and therefore decided that partnerships should continue and be further expanded, among others, with regional and sub-regional organizations, joint bodies, international organizations - in particular UN-Water members - and non-governmental organizations;

(d) Expressed its appreciation for the results of the cooperation with GEF following Decision VI/4 and decided to continue cooperating closely with GEF, coordinate activities and exchange experience, in particular between the GEF International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) and the different bodies and activities under the Convention;

(e) Recalling Decision VII/4, entrusted the secretariat and the Bureau to further strengthen the cooperation with GEF on different levels, including discussing modalities for formalizing the cooperation, the preparation and submission of project proposals according to GEF procedures and their implementation, and the use by GEF of the Convention and its tools in its interventions. The Meeting of the Parties requested the secretariat and the Bureau to report on this cooperation at the next meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and at the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention;

(f) Welcomed the recently started cooperation between the Convention and financial institutions and banks, and invited such institutions to support the implementation of the Convention through their projects and to cooperate in the implementation of the future programme of work, in particular the new programme area on facilitating financing of transboundary water cooperation;

(g) Reiterated the importance of cooperation between the Water Convention and the Protocol on Water and Health, expressed appreciation for the past cooperation and decided to further strengthen cooperation between the two instruments, in particular in the activities linked to the European Union Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues, climate change adaptation, and the consideration of health issues in transboundary water cooperation;

(h) Recalled the mandate to the secretariat and the Bureau in Decision VII/4 to further develop and formalize the modalities of existing and future partnerships, as appropriate and needed;

(i) Decides to include *Partnerships, communication and knowledge management* as one of the programme areas into the future programme of work for 2019-2021.

Item 7: Implementation and compliance

10. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note with appreciation of the report on the work of the Implementation Committee in 2016-2018 (ECE/MP.WAT/2018/8);

- (b) Encouraged Parties and other stakeholders to seek the Committee's assistance, support and facilitation to address difficulties in implementing and complying with the Convention;
- (c) Adopted the decision on general issues of implementation as contained in the Annex to document ECE/MP.WAT/2018/8;
- (d) Elected as members of the Implementation Committee for a full term:
 - Mr. Pedro Cunha Serra
 - Mr. Kari Kinnunen
 - Mr. Stephen McCaffrey
 - Mr. Martins Paporinskis
 - Mr. Ivan Zavadsky.

Item 8: Supporting implementation and application of the Convention through projects on the ground and capacity development

11. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Recognized the crucial importance of capacity-building and assistance projects on the ground to support implementation of the Convention;
- (b) Expressed appreciation for the progress achieved under the different projects and for the cooperation with partners;
- (c) Thanked the Regional Advisor for her support, together with all the partners that had made the implementation of the projects possible;
- (d) Invited donors and partner organizations engaged in transboundary water cooperation to systematically promote through their activities the implementation of the Water Convention as the basis for collaborative, sustainable and rule-based solutions for the management of transboundary waters;
- (e) Decided to include *Supporting the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies* in the future programme of work for 2019-2021.

Item 9: European Union Water Initiative and National Policy Dialogues

12. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Reconfirmed the important role of National Policy Dialogues in fostering the implementation and application of the Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health, the progressive approximation to European Union legislation and the enhancement of transboundary cooperation;
- (b) Highlighted that the cross-sectoral work in the framework of the National Policy Dialogues was extremely useful to support countries in their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals; and also supported implementation of several programme areas of the Convention's work programme;
- (c) Expressed appreciation for the strong commitment to and ownership of the National Policy Dialogues process among countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and encouraged continued exchange of experiences between the countries;
- (d) Thanked Romania and the European Commission for their leadership and support to that area of work, as well as other partner countries and organizations for their support to the Dialogues process;

- (e) Agreed to continue with the policy dialogue process on integrated water resources management and decided to include relevant activities in the programme of work for 2019–2021;
- (f) Welcomed the progress in the implementation of the EUWI Plus programme for the countries of Eastern Partnership and encouraged the European Commission to consider the continuation of the programme beyond 2020;
- (g) Encouraged the European Commission and other donors to continue to support financially the work of the European Union Water Initiative National Policy Dialogues in the countries of Central Asia.

Item 10: Water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins

13. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Welcomed progress with applying the nexus assessment methodology and invited representatives of the basins concerned to make use of the nexus assessment results in developing policies and interventions and to implement the solutions identified;
- (b) Encouraged interested countries and organizations to apply and use the methodology;
- (c) Welcomed the cooperation with other sectors, in particular the energy sector, and encouraged them to also use the methodology and to contribute to refining and implementing the solutions identified, as appropriate;
- (d) Thanked Finland for leading this area of work;
- (e) Endorsed the *Methodology for assessing the water-food-energy-ecosystem nexus in transboundary basins and experiences from its application: Synthesis* (ECE/MP.WAT/55) and its summary *A nexus approach to transboundary cooperation: The experience of the Water Convention* (ECE/MP.WAT/NONE/12);
- (f) Entrusted the secretariat, in cooperation with the lead Party and based on the comments received and additional inputs from the basin nexus assessments, in particular the on-going ones, to finalize, publish and print a synthesis of solutions to the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish, by the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- (g) Decided to include *Supporting intersectoral dialogues and assessments through the application of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach* in the programme of work for 2019-2021;
- (h) Welcomed the outcomes of the Global Workshop on Water Allocation in transboundary basins (Geneva, 16–17 October 2017), and decided to include *Supporting equitable and sustainable water allocation in the transboundary context* in the programme of work for 2019-2021.

Item 11: Identifying, assessing and communicating the benefits of transboundary cooperation

14. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Welcomed progress in applying the *Policy Guidance Note on the Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation: Identification, Assessment and Communication*, and encouraged other interested basins and partners to consider applying and using the Policy Guidance Note, including to support dialogues about possible accession to the Water Convention, the development of agreement and the establishment of joint bodies;
- (b) Thanked Estonia and Serbia for leading this area of work;

- (c) Took note of the brochure *Identifying, assessing and communicating the benefits of transboundary water cooperation - Lessons learnt and recommendations* (ECE/MP.WAT/NONE/11) and encouraged its use by countries, basins and organizations;
- (d) Decided to include *Promoting and communicating the benefits of transboundary cooperation* in the programme of work for 2019-2021.

Item 12: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

15. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Adopted *the Words into Action - implementation guide on addressing water-related disasters and transboundary cooperation* (ECE/MP.WAT/56) and recommended countries, basins and partners to use it in their efforts to reduce water-related disaster risks and when implementing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Water Convention;
- (b) Thanked the drafting group, led by the Netherlands, the secretariat and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, for the Words into Action and welcomed the very fruitful cooperation between UNISDR and the secretariat;
- (c) Requested the secretariat, in cooperation with UNISDR, to publish and print the Words into Action-implementation guide in English, French, Russian and Spanish;
- (d) Expressed appreciation for the progress in the pilot projects on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins;
- (e) Welcomed the newly started work on financing climate change adaptation in transboundary basins, including the organization of a training on the preparation of bankable projects on 21-23 June 2017, in Dakar, and expressed appreciation for the fruitful cooperation with the financial institutions involved in this area, such as the World Bank, the African Development Bank and European Investment Bank;
- (f) Requested the secretariat, in cooperation with the other partners, to publish and print the publication on preparing bankable projects for climate change adaptation in transboundary basins in English, French, Russian and Spanish;
- (g) Thanked the two co-Chairs of the Task Force, the Netherlands and Switzerland, for their leadership of this area of work;
- (h) Decided to include *Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins* in the future programme of work for 2019-2021.

Item 13: Water and industrial accidents

16. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Commended the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents for its significant achievements in the last 20 years in reducing risks from accidental water pollution and thanked the lead countries and all experts who had contributed to the many useful products, exercises and other activities;
- (b) Recommended countries and joint bodies to use the numerous guidelines prepared by the Joint Expert Group since 1998;

(c) Requested the secretariat to translate into French and print the following safety guidelines and good industry practices:

- Safety guidelines and good industry practices for Oil Terminals;
- Safety guidelines and good practices for Pipelines;
- Safety guidelines and good practices for Tailings Management Facilities;

(d) Took note of the *Safety guidelines and good practices for the management and retention of firefighting water: general recommendations and technical recommendations* (ECE/MP.WAT/2018/9-ECE/CP.TEIA/2018/12 and ECE/MP.WAT/2018/10-ECE/CP.TEIA/2018/13) and recommended their use and implementation in order to prevent accidental pollution of soil and water, including pollution causing transboundary effects;

(e) Expressed its appreciation to the lead Parties and the Joint Expert Group for preparing the safety guidelines and good practices;

(f) Endorsed the workplan for the Joint Expert Group for 2019-2021 as included in the programme of work for 2019-2021 (ECE/MP.WAT/2018/4).

Item 14: International Water Assessment Centre

17. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Congratulated Kazakhstan for the opening of IWAC in December 2017 and for all the arrangements made;

(b) Adopted the work programme for IWAC for 2019-2021 as contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2018/11 and called upon countries, partners and donors to support its implementation;

(c) Requested IWAC to regularly report on the implementation of its activities to the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and to the Meeting of the Parties at its ninth session;

(d) Requested Kazakhstan to prepare, in consultation with the Bureau and the secretariat, a draft programme of work for IWAC for 2022-2024, aligned to the corresponding draft programme of work under the Convention, for submission to the Meeting of the Parties at its ninth session.

Item 15: Programme of work for 2019–2021, terms of reference of the bodies established to implement it and resources needed for its implementation

18. The Meeting of the Parties:

(a) Took note with appreciation of the report on the implementation of the programme of work for 2016–2018, including partnerships (ECE/MP.WAT/2018/2);

(b) Thanked the Parties and organizations that had provided leadership and support to the activities that formed the basis for the programme of work for 2019–2021;

(c) Took note of the overview of contributions and expenditures in 2016–2018 (ECE/MP.WAT/2018/3) and thanked all countries and organizations that had provided the financial resources to ensure the implementation of the 2016-2018 programme of work;

(d) Conveyed its appreciation to the Parties and organizations that had expressed their readiness to take a lead role in the implementation of the programme work for 2019–2021 and to those that offered to finance parts of it;

- (e) Adopted the programme of work for 2019–2021, the bodies established to implement it and the relevant budget, as contained in document ECE/MP.WAT/2018/4 as amended during the session;
- (f) Recognized that, due to the operationalization of the amendment to the Convention in 2016 allowing accession to all United Nations Member States, future programmes of work would require additional extra-budgetary resources, as already reflected in the increase of extrabudgetary resources in the programme of work for 2019-2021;
- (g) Called on Parties, non-Parties and partners to provide the required extra budgetary resources to implement the programme of work. Such resources should be, whenever possible, unearmarked, so to ensure the full implementation of the programme of work;
- (h) Requested the secretariat in cooperation with the Bureau to prepare options for a more sustainable and predictable funding of the work under the Convention for discussion at the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties;
- (i) Recognized that due to operationalization of the amendment to the Convention in 2016, future programmes of work under the Convention would also require additional regular budget resources;
- (j) Requested the secretariat to take all necessary measures, including the provision of human and financial resources from the regular budget, to ensure the implementation of the programme of work.

Item 16: Election of officers

19. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Elected its Bureau as follows:
- Mr. Ardak Zebeshev (Kazakhstan), Chair;
 - Mr. Peter Kovacs (Hungary), Vice-Chair;
 - Mr. Harry Liiv (Estonia), Vice-Chair;
 - Ms. Heide Jekel (Germany), co-Chair of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management;
 - Ms. Lea Kauppi (Finland), co-Chair of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and assessment;
 - Ms. Leyla Aliyeva (Azerbaijan), member of the Bureau;
 - Mr. Salvatore d'Angelo (Italy), member of the Bureau;
 - Mr. Bosko Kenjic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), member of the Bureau;
 - Ms. Marie-Flore Michel (France), member of the Bureau;
 - Ms. Sibylle Vermont (Switzerland), member of the Bureau;
 - Ms. Ekaterina Veselova (Russian Federation), member of the Bureau;
- (b) Agreed that the Bureau members in charge of the Working Groups on Integrated Water Resources Management and on Monitoring and Assessment would remain in office until the Working Groups officially elect their own chairs;
- (c) Expressed its great appreciation and gratitude to the outgoing Chair, Mr. Peter Kovacs, for his wise leadership of the Meeting of the Parties and his significant support to the Convention in the past three years;
- (d) Also expressed its appreciation and thanks to the other Bureau members and to the chairs of the bodies under the Convention for their excellent work.

Item 17: Date and venue of the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties

20. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Thanked Kazakhstan, in particular the Kazakh Ministry of Agriculture, for the great hospitality extended to all delegates;
- (b) Welcomed the offer by Estonia to host the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties in 2021;
- (c) Requested the secretariat in cooperation with the Bureau to formalize the procedure for proposing the hosting of future sessions of the Meeting of the Parties and to disseminate this on time for the ninth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

Item 19: Presentation of the main decisions:

21. The Meeting of the Parties:

- (a) Reviewed and adopted the decisions taken during the session; and
- (b) Entrusted the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, with finalizing the report of its eighth session.
