



WATER
CONVENTION

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Transboundary water
cooperation and COVID-19:
the role of the
Water Convention

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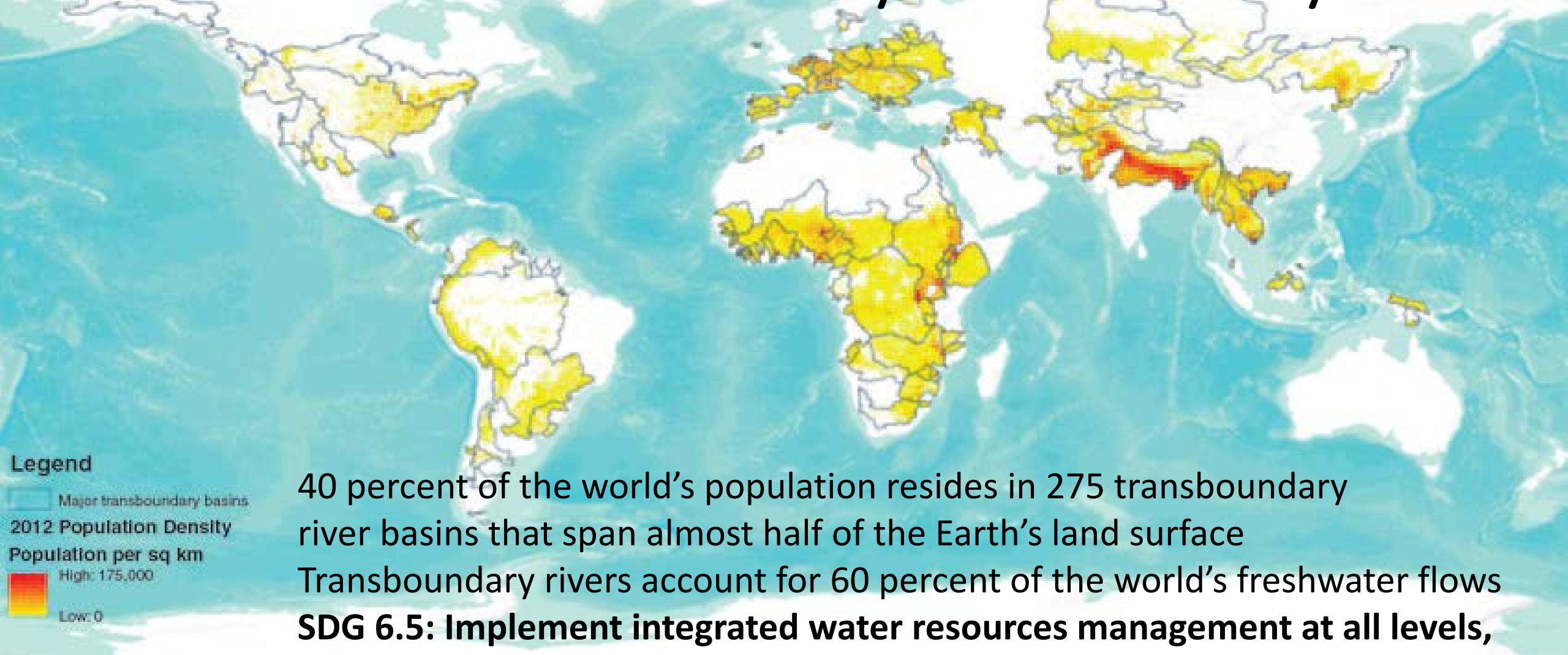




What role for transboundary water cooperation?

- Timely and sufficient availability of water is needed for the provision of safe water, sanitation and hygiene
 - Water is needed to tackle other possible impacts of COVID-19 (e.g. poverty, economic downturn, food & energy insecurity)
- ⇒ Water is essential for recovery and prevention
- 60% of global freshwater flow comes from transboundary basins

Water resources are essentially transboundary



40 percent of the world's population resides in 275 transboundary river basins that span almost half of the Earth's land surface
Transboundary rivers account for 60 percent of the world's freshwater flows
SDG 6.5: Implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation, as appropriate



Transboundary water cooperation increases resilience and stability by

- Preventing conflicts and consolidating peace
- Generating benefits which stabilize societies
- Making climate change adaptation more efficient through wider knowledge base and larger planning
- Reducing sectoral trade-offs and conflicts
- Building regional organizations that reinforce regional stability and integration



What is the Water Convention?

- Legal framework for peaceful management of transboundary waters
- Unique intergovernmental platform to exchange experience and prevent disputes
- Practical instrument for day-to-day cooperation in transboundary basins
- Global instrument since 2016

Transboundary water agreements and institutions

- COVID-19

=> May increase pressures on transboundary water resources

=> May lead to local/cross-border tensions

- Water Convention supports the creation of joint institutions (river basin organizations) which can support and coordinate actions by riparian countries for COVID-19 recovery and prevention
- 2020-2021: development of a *Checklist for developing transboundary agreements* and a *Handbook on water allocation in transboundary context*



Strengthened resilience

- Climate change may aggravate the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis in transboundary basins
- The Convention helps transboundary basins to adapt to climate change and strengthen resilience (development of basin specific transboundary adaptation strategies, capacity building, exchange of experience, guidance tools)
- (Postponed to 2021) Workshop on water, climate change, health and disasters



Performant monitoring and effective information exchange

- COVID-19 => importance of performant, up-to-the-standards monitoring (flow, water quality)
- COVID-19 => importance of early warning and alarm systems
- Water Convention supports joint or coordinated monitoring
- Water Convention supports harmonized approaches to monitoring (measuring, sampling) through several guidance tools



Integrated water resources management (IWRM)

- COVID-19 recovery requires effective cooperation across different sectors (energy, agriculture, transport, water...)
- At global and basin level: Water Convention works on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus (nexus assessments) => ensure that post-crisis strategic decisions exploit to the maximum possible synergies (Task Force October 2020)
- At national level: supporting intersectoral dialogue e.g. through National Policy Dialogues and other activities



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For more information:

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