

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement

by

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at

**6th meeting of the Task Force on Water, Food, Energy and Environment Nexus under
the Water Convention**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a distinct pleasure to address you on the occasion of this 6th meeting of the Task Force on Water, Food, Energy and Environment Nexus under the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes - the Water Convention for short.

The global crisis from COVID-19 and the recovery make the need for a nexus approach more pressing than ever. The evolution of the energy and food markets, as well as changes in production, lead governments to prioritize securing the supply and affordability of shared water resources. And this of course impacts the way these resources are used. However, we cannot **return to the unsustainable practices** of the past. Transboundary and regional cooperation across sectors can ensure that these strategic decisions come with minimal trade-offs and exploit synergies.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an integrated one and requires a nexus approach. Cooperation between countries can lead to more effective, accelerated progress towards the SDGs. Let me ask you now: With regional and transboundary cooperation and intersectoral coordination, what MORE can be achieved? Which trade-offs can be avoided? Can we find even more opportunities for cooperation?

The **Water Convention** and its secretariat will continue to **assist countries** in tackling the nexus challenges. We are ready to put all our tools and instruments, our standard setting and our convening power at your service. But I should highlight the regional or transboundary

levels where various are where benefits from applying a nexus approach can be reaped. For example: Populations of neighbouring countries could benefit from better energy security when countries with different energy mixes are well connected and actively trading. The impacts from such developments are commonly transmitted by water.

UNECE spearheaded the debate on the nexus at the transboundary level back in 2013, when this Task Force met for the first time. Since then, a **methodology for participatory assessments of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins** has been designed, building on international experience and benefitting from a broad involvement of government officials and experts across sectors. Applying the methodology, **nexus assessments** have been carried out in seven transboundary basins, in close cooperation with the riparian countries. This has facilitated intersectoral transboundary dialogue. The assessments have also led to **identifying concrete ways towards more sustainable management of basin resources**. The most recent example of this is in the nexus assessment of the North-West Sahara Aquifer System, shared by Algeria, Libya and Tunisia. This was carried out in cooperation with the Global Water Partnership Mediterranean and the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS). One of the solutions proposed consists of upscaling the use of non-conventional water resources using desalination, wastewater treatment, and drainage water treatment or reuse. In this context, the concurrent deployment of renewable energy – solar power in particular – could help create major benefits for both the water and energy sectors.

Various other organizations, notably other UN Regional Economic Commissions, have undertaken nexus dialogues, studies and projects. Now, **the time has come to take stock of these experiences, to demonstrate what is the added value of such integrated approaches, and to reflect on the implementation challenges.** We were happy to work on this synthesis of experiences from around the world with the International Union for Conservation of Nature. The synthesis seeks to demonstrate how the nexus approach **to natural resource management** translates into “nexus solutions and investments”, which directly or indirectly provide transboundary benefits. A survey and this meeting will allow us to look at factors of success; map financing opportunities; and reflect on regional differences. I encourage you all to contribute to this survey by filling out the questionnaire on nexus solutions.

Cross-sectoral policy and technical measures can deliver tangible benefits for sustainable development and climate action. The nexus approach considers both adaptation and mitigation aspects. In fact, UNECE’s multi-sectoral structure allows us to address SDG implementation in an integrated manner. **Cooperation between the Water Convention and the UNECE Sustainable Energy Division led to the publication of a «tool-kit for policy makers».** It is **intended to support the sustainable development of renewable energy** at different levels. I hope you can all make use of this unique product and also further disseminate it.

To step up this kind of work across Divisions, I have established in UNECE four **Nexus Cluster areas** where multiple SDGs converge. The UNECE Environment Division plays an active role in the nexus “Sustainable management of natural resources”. Under this nexus, a cross-sectoral, inter-divisional team is carrying out an analysis of current and future challenges and needs and identifying ways to

address them. This will help design and implement integrated policies. The findings and corresponding policy recommendations are set out in a series of four flagship publications. One of these draft publications proposes **Pathways to integrative natural resource management**. This is an approach for identifying, assessing, and classifying synergies and trade-offs between the natural resources. The proposed step-by-step process is based on the Transboundary Nexus Assessment Methodology developed under the Water Convention.

The draft Flagship Publication recognizes Natural Resource Use in Transboundary Basins as a hotspot for potential progress. It thus recommends **to use this Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus for identifying nexus solutions and investments, sharing of experience and capacity building**.

To conclude, I encourage you to use this global intersectoral platform to share your experience on transboundary cooperation. I also encourage you to apply the nexus approach in your countries and basins, using the UNECE tools such as the nexus assessment methodology and the renewable energy toolkit.

I wish you fruitful discussions.