



Convention of the Protection and Use of
Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes
Task Force on Water and Climate
First meeting
Bonn, Germany, 22–23 November 2007

ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE FIRST MEETING

To be held at the Federal Ministry for the Environment,
Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Bonn,
starting on Thursday, 22 November 2007 at 9 a.m.

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Opening statements
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Mandate of the Task Force
4. Transboundary flood management
5. Guidance on water and climate adaptation
6. Preparations for a workshop on water and climate adaptation
7. Questionnaire on adaptation measures
8. Cooperation with the Task Force established under the Protocol on Water and Health
9. Future work
10. Other business
11. Closing

II. BACKGROUND AND PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Background

1. The fourth meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) (20–22 November 2006, Bonn) decided to transform the Flood Task Force into a Water and Climate Task Force, to be jointly led by Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland in cooperation with Hungary and Greece (for legal aspects). The Water and Climate Task Force was entrusted with activities in two main areas of work: transboundary flood management and water and climate adaptation.
2. In the area of transboundary flood management, the Task Force should support the transfer of the experience and results of the European Network of Expertise on Flood Risk Management to non-European Union (EU) countries. To this end, within the Workplan for 2007–2009 two workshops should be organized on flood forecasting and flood risk mapping.

Furthermore, the Task Force and the Legal Board should assist Parties to the Convention as well as non-Parties in using the model provisions for transboundary flood management. On the basis of legal developments in the region and experience gained, the two bodies should further develop the provisions and their supporting commentary, as needed.

3. In the area of water and climate adaptation, the Task Force should prepare a Guidance on Water and Climate Adaptation for presentation to the fifth Meeting of the Parties in 2009. The Guidance should support cooperation and decision-making, in particular in transboundary basins, on relevant or emerging issues related to climate change, including issues not covered by the 2000 Guidelines on Sustainable Flood Prevention¹. It should address possible impacts of climate change on flood and drought occurrences, health related aspects as well as practical ways to cope with the transboundary impacts through adaptation, inter alia, by integrated management of surface and groundwater for flood and drought mitigation and response, including the benefits of floods in increasing water availability and improving the ecological status of waters. Land use, regional and spatial planning, and land use management, and their role in reducing flood and drought risks and damage potential, in particular in the transboundary context, should also be considered. The Guidance should make use of the analysis of successful cases and/or ongoing transboundary cooperation projects. In its work, the Task Force should closely cooperate with the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Water and Health regarding health-related aspects, as well as other important actors in this area (e.g. the World Meteorological Organization; the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Development Programme; the United Nations Environment Programme; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; the EU; the Directorate General DG Research; the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction; the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands; and Global Water Partnership).

4. To prepare the first meeting of the Task Force, a Core Team of representatives of the lead Parties held an informal meeting on 4 June 2007 in Geneva. Participants' discussions of a number of related issues led to the preparation of background material to be submitted for discussion at the Task Force's first meeting.

Practical information

5. The first meeting of the Task Force will be hosted by the Government of Germany in the premises of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, Robert-Schuman-Platz 3, Bonn.

6. The meeting will be organized back to back with the meeting of the Working Group on Climate Change of the Common Implementation Strategy for the EU Water Framework Directive, which will take place on 20 and 21 November 2007. This arrangement aims to transfer relevant experience gained by EU member countries to non-EU states. Therefore, delegates participating in the Working Group are encouraged to take part in the Task Force meeting.

7. The meeting will start at 9 a.m. on Thursday, 22 November 2007, and will close at 4 p.m. on Friday, 23 November 2007.

¹ Available at: <http://www.unece.org/env/water/publications/documents/guidelinesfloode.pdf>.

8. The working languages will be English and Russian.
9. The meeting will be jointly chaired by Germany and the Netherlands.
10. The meeting is open to experts from UNECE member States representing governmental authorities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations as well as other interested stakeholders. In this respect, focal points are requested to facilitate nomination of relevant experts from their respective countries.
11. Each participant should complete a registration form (attached, and also available at www.unece.org/env/water/water.and.climate.htm) and return it to both secretariats at the e-mail addresses indicated on the registration form as soon as possible, but not later than **20 October 2007**. Registered participants will receive a confirmation in early November 2007, together with other necessary information.
12. Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the workshop. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the Water Convention secretariat as soon as possible, but not later than **9 October 2007**.
13. Participants requiring entry visas should inform the host country as soon as possible. To facilitate the process of obtaining visas, the host country will provide those participants requiring a visa with a personal invitation letter. Participants should arrange visas through the nearest diplomatic representation of Germany.
14. For questions related to organizational matters, including visa arrangements, the representative of the host country, Elfriede Ariza y Ramos, can be contacted as follows:
Tel: ++49 228-305 2518
Fax: ++49 228-305 2396
E-mail: elfriede.arizayramos@bmu.bund.de

III. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1: Opening Statements

15. A representative of the host country will open the meeting.

Item 2: Adoption of the agenda

16. The Task Force will adopt its agenda as set out in this document.

Item 3: Mandate of the Task Force

17. A representative of the Netherlands will bring to the attention of the Task Force its mandate as agreed at the fourth meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention and stipulated in the Work Plan for 2007–2009 (TFWC/2007/2).

Item 4: Transboundary flood management

18. Since the fourth Meeting of the Parties, the European exchange circles on flood forecasting (EXCIFF) and flood mapping (EXCIMAP) have completed further work on the following documents: (a) a guide of good practice on flood risk mapping with the annexed atlas of floods risk maps, of which a consolidated version will be presented to the European Water Directors in November 2007; and (b) a guide on “good practice for delivering flood forecasting”. Both documents will be available through the Internet shortly. New mandates for the circles are to be decided by the meeting of the Working Group on Floods under the Water Framework Directives' Common Implementation Strategies in November 2007.

19. As agreed at the last Meeting of the Parties, the Task Force will promote the experience gained within these circles to other UNECE countries, in to particular countries with economies in transition. It is planned to hold a workshop to present, illustrate and discuss the results and products of EXCIFF and EXIMAP (date to be defined). The workshop will be structured in two parts: the first presenting EU results on mapping and forecasting, and possibly drought issues; and the second focusing on those issues most relevant to countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA) and South-eastern Europe (SEE)². This will allow identifying specific needs in EECCA countries, which could be the theme of a second workshop, under the Capacity for Water Cooperation (CWC) project³.

20. The CWC workshop for EECCA countries could allow for the presentation, in a comprehensive way tailored to the needs of EECCA countries, of all experience gained under the Convention regarding transboundary flood management (e.g. guidelines, model provisions, etc.).

21. The Task Force will be informed about the new mandates of the exchange circles and will examine progress made to date and future planned activities.

22. The Task Force will discuss and make arrangements for the first workshop to be organized, including the agenda, possible speakers and other organizational aspects.

Item 5: Guidance on water and climate adaptation

23. The Task Force is expected to discuss the draft guidance based on the proposal prepared by the Core Team (TFWC/2007/3). In particular, the Task Force should discuss and agree on:

- (a) The objectives of the Guidance;
- (b) Its scope;
- (c) Its target group;
- (d) Issues to be covered and specific recommendations.

² Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

South-Eastern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

³ See <http://www.unece.org/env/water/cwc.htm>.

24. The Guidance preparation could benefit from the existing experiences in the subject. The Task Force should therefore identify the countries that can provide experiences (ongoing or implemented case studies) as an input to the next draft of the Guidance.

Item 6: Preparations for a workshop on water and climate adaptation

25. The Task Force will discuss and agree on preparations for a workshop, including the agenda and possible speakers. The workshop will aim to share the experiences available in the subject area. It will also allow the presentation of the Guidance to a wider audience and support its further development.

Item 7: Questionnaire on adaptation measures

26. To collect information and best practice from countries in transition on implemented and planned adaptation measures as well as on country-specific needs, it is proposed to carry out a survey through a specific questionnaire (TFWC/2007/4). The questionnaire will be addressed to non-EU countries in the UNECE region (for EU countries, information has already been collected at the EU level). The results of the survey will serve as a substantive input to the workshop (agenda item 6) and will be taken into consideration in the drafting of the Guidance.

27. The Task Force will discuss and finalize the questionnaire. The Task Force will also make arrangements on the realisation of the survey.

Item 8: Cooperation with the Task Force established under the Protocol on Water and Health

28. Under the Protocol on Water and Health, a specific activity related to climate and adaptation will be carried out under the Programme of Work for 2007–2009. This activity will focus on water supply and sanitation in short-term critical situations as well as adaptation to climate change. In particular, it will address: (a) the safe operation of facilities for, and maintenance of, adequate water supply and sanitation in short-term critical situations (e.g. floods and extreme – given prevalent local conditions – temperatures); and (b) strategies to satisfy water supply and sanitation needs in the long term, given the potential impacts of climate change and the need for adaptation and mitigation programmes. This activity will be carried out by the Protocol’s Task Force on Extreme Weather Events, led by Italy.

29. The scope and the work of the two Task Forces are extremely related and the two Task Forces will thus work in close cooperation, hold back-to-back meetings, and integrate their work and results.

30. The Task Force on Water and Climate will be informed about future plans of the Task Force on Extreme Weather Events. A clear definition of responsibilities will be also agreed upon, as well as ways and means to ensure coordination and integration of future work.

Item 9: Future work

31. The Task Force will consider and adopt a plan for its future work, including deadlines for deliverables, sharing of responsibilities, and tentative dates for future events (TFWC/2007/5).

Item 10: Other business

32. At the time of writing, the secretariat had no points to propose under this item.

Item 11: Closing

33. The Chairperson will close the meeting at 4 p.m. on Friday, 23 November 2007.
