Water Convention: new developments

Iulia Trombitcaia
Water Convention Secretariat, UNECE
The Water Convention history

- 1960s-1970s: over 30 decisions, guidelines, recommendations on water and environment by UNECE Committee on Water Problems
- Convention negotiated 1989-1992
- Signed 1992, in force 1996
The Water Convention – from regional to global

Amendments

• Build on the success achieved
• Apply the principles worldwide => broaden political support for transboundary cooperation
• Interest from countries outside the region
• Willingness to learn from other regions

Entered into force in 2013
Operational since 2016
The Water Convention

**Main objective**
Foster cooperation over transboundary waters in order to ensure that they are sustainably and equitably managed.

**Water Convention Key Principles**
- Principle of prevention of transboundary impact
- Principle of equitable and reasonable utilization
- Principle of cooperation
The Water Convention obligations

Obligations for all Parties (Part I)

- Licensing of waste-water discharges and monitoring of authorized discharges
- Setting emission limits based on BAT
- Application of best environmental practices
- Minimization of the risk of accidental pollution
- Application of EIA and other assessments
- Exchange of information
The Water Convention obligations

Obligations for Riparian Parties (Part II)

- Conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements and creation of joint bodies
- Joint monitoring and assessment
- Common research and development
- Exchange of information between Riparian Parties
- Consultation
- Warning and alarm systems
- Mutual assistance
- Public information
Institutional framework
Globalization guided by the **Strategy for the implementation of the Water Convention at global level**

- **Parties to the Convention (44): newest Party – Ghana (2020)**
- **Countries very close to accession: Iraq, Guinea Bissau, Togo**
- **Countries in the process of accession (>10)**
“The global opening of the Water Convention, the accession of the first countries from outside the UNECE region -- namely Chad and Senegal -- and the momentum in support of the Convention are promising developments. Along with the Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses, the world has the ability to strengthen the rule of law in transboundary cooperation worldwide. I call on Member States to join both Conventions and to strive for their full implementation.”
Water Convention Programme of Work 2019-2021

Delivering at different levels:
- National
- Basin
- Regional
- Global
Programme area: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

- Task Force on Water and Climate since 2006
- Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation: Chu Talas, Congo, Danube, Dauria, Dniester, Drin, Lower Mekong, Meuse, Neman, Niger, North Western Sahara Aquifer System (NWSAS), Rhine, Sava, Senegal, Sixaola, Lake Victoria, Volta
- Guidance documents
- Projects on the ground
- Input to global processes on CC and DRR
- Preparation of bankable projects
Protocol on Water and Health

Pan-European legally binding agreement aimed at protecting human health and well-being through sustainable water management and by reducing water-related diseases

Obligation to set targets to ensure access to drinking water and sanitation for everyone (special focus on access for all and human rights)

27 countries are Parties to the Protocol, 50 participate in activities

UNECE and WHO/Europe provide joint secretariat services
For more information:
https://www.unece.org/env/water/

water.convention@un.org

Twitter: @UNECE_Water
Facebook: @UNECEWater