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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Ninth session

Geneva, 29 September–1 October 2021

Item 19 of the provisional agenda

Promotion and partnerships

Draft decision on partnerships for the global implementation of the Water Convention

Submitted by the Bureau in cooperation with the secretariat

Summary

Cooperation with partners has always been important for the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and has become even more important with the global opening of the Water Convention and the accession thereto by several new Parties. More than 50 partners, in particular intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, have already contributed to the implementation of the Water Convention's programmes of work.^a At its eighth session (Nur-Sultan, 10–12 October 2018), the Meeting of the Parties adopted the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2).

Recognizing the importance of partnerships and the need to further strengthen these strategic partnerships in the future, the third Joint Meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva (hybrid), 26–28 April 2021) entrusted the Bureau with the tasks of reviewing the Strategy, in particular the role of partners in achieving its objectives, and of preparing a draft decision on cooperation with partners for the global implementation of the Convention for consideration by the Meeting of the Parties.

The Meeting of the Parties is invited to consider and adopt the draft decision proposed in the present document.

^a For more information on partnerships, see the report on the implementation of the programme of work for 2019–2021, including partnerships (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/2).



The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes,

Recognizing the significant progress made since the entry into force in 1996 of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), which has provided a sound legal framework and an effective intergovernmental platform for the promotion of cooperation and the sustainable management of water resources at the basin, regional and international levels that are key for peaceful and sustainable development,

Recognizing also that such progress has only been possible due to the cooperation and contribution of many partners from around the world,

Recognizing further the increasing momentum within the United Nations system for its collective role in fostering transboundary cooperation as a driver of peace, regional cohesion and sustainable development,

Recalling its decision III/1¹ opening the Water Convention to accession by all United Nations Member States and the significant global progress made since these amendments to the Convention became operational in 2016, turning the Water Convention into a global intergovernmental framework with worldwide participation, and with accessions increasing from outside the ECE region, in particular from Africa,

Welcoming the call by the United Nations Secretary-General for all United Nations Member States to accede to both the 1992 Water Convention and the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Watercourses Convention) and to strive for their full implementation,

Recalling the Strategy for the implementation of the Water Convention at the global level² aimed at increasing the Convention's impact at the global level, including through increased partnerships and synergies with other actors,

Recalling also Sustainable Development Goal 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", with target 6.5 thereof calling for transboundary cooperation,

Welcoming the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework launched by UN-Water in 2020,

Expressing concern that the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6, and particularly its target 6.5 on integrated water resources management and transboundary water cooperation, is, as demonstrated by the second reporting exercise on indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, lagging significantly behind,

Affirming the need to further strengthen partnerships in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention at the global level, including the strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation,

Welcoming the motion adopted in October 2020, by electronic vote, by the members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on "Cooperation on transboundary fresh waters to ensure ecosystem conservation, climate resilience and sustainable development" that underlines the importance of international commitments related to freshwater cooperation and conservation, particularly the Water Convention and the Watercourses Convention,

Recalling its decision VI/4 on cooperation with the Global Environment Facility³ (GEF) and its decision VI/5 on cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),⁴

¹ ECE/MP.WAT/14.

² ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2.

³ ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2.

⁴ Ibid.

Recalling also its decision VII/4 on cooperation with partners for the implementation of the Convention⁵ at its seventh session (Budapest, 17–19 November 2015),

1. *Emphasizes* the importance of, and appreciation for, partnerships with international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia and the business sector to strengthen transboundary water cooperation, by contributing to the Water Convention's programme of work and by supporting its implementation;

2. *Welcomes* the fact that several partners are seizing the opportunity of the Convention's global opening, and have included the Water Convention in their own strategic documents and contribute to its activities, and calls on other partners to do the same, if possible;

3. *Affirms* that strengthening partnerships is crucial for the Water Convention, its Parties and partners to accelerate progress on transboundary water cooperation in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 and its target 6.5, as well as other water-related Sustainable Development Goals;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* for partnerships that have been developed and strengthened with regional organizations to support awareness-raising, capacity-building, implementation and further accessions to the Water Convention, particularly through enhanced collaboration and coordination with United Nations regional commissions, as well as other regional and subregional organizations, some of which have started to promote the Convention through their own means, and encourages such organizations to continue and further strengthen related efforts, which can be mutually beneficial;

5. *Recognizes* the vital role that joint bodies and river basin organizations play in promoting the work of the Convention at the transboundary level and in contributing to its implementation among riparian Member States, while furthering transboundary cooperation in their regions;

6. *Expresses its appreciation* for the ongoing and strengthened cooperation between international financial institutions and the Water Convention, and welcomes initiatives to further extend and develop joint efforts on the funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development;

7. *Affirms* the role of United Nations country teams and resident coordinators in supporting national engagement with, implementation of, and, in particular, in assisting with accession processes to the Water Convention, to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 and all water-related Sustainable Development Goals;

8. *Recognizes* the importance of academia and international organizations in sharing information and building capacity regarding the Water Convention and its practical implementation;

9. *Expresses its appreciation* for the cooperation with the Global Environment Facility following decision VI/4;

10. *Decides* to continue cooperating closely with the Global Environment Facility, coordinate activities and exchange experience, in particular between the Global Environment Facility International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) and the different bodies and activities under the Convention;

11. *Entrusts* the secretariat to further strengthen the cooperation with the Global Environment Facility on different levels and to report on this cooperation at the next meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and at the tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention;

12. *Expresses its appreciation* for the cooperation with UNESCO following decision VI/5 and decides to continue with, and further strengthen, this cooperation, in particular regarding UNESCO/ECE co-custodianship of indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals;

⁵ ECE/MP.WAT/49/Add.2.

13. *Decides* to develop and further enhance cooperation with existing and new partners, in particular in the light of the global opening of the Water Convention and of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Paris Agreement;

14. *Invites* relevant international organizations, United Nations regional commissions and other UN-Water members, financing institutions, joint bodies, the business sector, academia, civil society and other potential future partners to join the activities of the Water Convention;

15. *Entrusts* the secretariat and the Bureau with the task of further developing and formalizing the modalities of existing and future partnerships, as appropriate and needed;

16. *Decides* to regularly review progress and gaps in the development of partnerships and invites partners to report on their related efforts at the next meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention.
