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## Economic Commission for Europe

### 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 4 (a) of the provisional agenda

**Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and application of its principles drawing on the benefits of cooperation: progress in national processes towards accession and implementation of the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level**

### **Review of the implementation of the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level**

**Prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau**



## *Summary*

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), aiming to make the Convention's implementation more effective and fit for purpose and to accelerate its impact at the global level.

The Meeting of the Parties called upon Parties, other countries, partners and the secretariat to implement the Strategy and entrusted the Bureau and the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management with the tasks of regularly reviewing the Strategy's implementation and reporting to the Meeting of the Parties at its ninth session.<sup>a</sup> Progress in the implementation of the Strategy was regularly reviewed by the Bureau and reported to the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management.

On that basis, the secretariat prepared the present document to review the progress made in implementing the Strategy in 2019–2021. The document does not pretend to represent an exhaustive analysis of all activities implemented during that period, but rather aims to highlight some concrete achievements and effective new approaches, through initiatives by the secretariat, the Bureau, countries and partners, that contribute to the implementation of the Convention at the global level.

As the Strategy is complemented by the programme of work under the Convention, this document is to be read in conjunction with the Report on the implementation of the programme of work for 2019–2021 (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/2). This document aims to facilitate the discussion by the Meeting of the Parties on progress in national processes towards accession and on promotion and partnerships.

The Meeting of the Parties may wish to:

- (a) Commend the Parties, the Bureau, other countries, partners and the secretariat for their contribution to the implementation of the Strategy through numerous concrete actions that supported the implementation of the Convention at the global level;
- (b) Invite Parties, the Bureau, other countries, partners and the secretariat to consider successful actions and approaches that contributed to the Convention's globalization process to further accelerate progress in national processes towards accession and inspire the strengthening of partnerships.

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<sup>a</sup> ECE/MP.WAT/54, para. 43 (c) and (d).

## I. Introduction

1. The Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2), adopted by the Meeting of the Parties in 2018, is the first strategy for the implementation of the Water Convention at the global level and establishes the basis for the evolution of the Convention.
2. The Strategy is built around five strategic objectives for the Convention by 2030:
  - (a) *Objective 1*: Increased awareness of and political support for the Convention and transboundary water cooperation;
  - (b) *Objective 2*: Increased accession to the Convention;
  - (c) *Objective 3*: Increased support for implementation of the Convention and for transboundary water management;
  - (d) *Objective 4*: Increased support for implementation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 6.5, through the Convention;
  - (e) *Objective 5*: Increased partnerships and synergies with other actors.
3. The Strategy defines 20 concrete actions and identifies means and approaches in order to ensure that the globalization process proceeds rapidly and that the Convention's framework, work modality and mechanisms are fit for promoting global implementation, able to respond to the related challenges, and support implementation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly target 6.5 on transboundary water cooperation. In particular, the Strategy focuses on ensuring that partners and stakeholders can best contribute to and benefit from this process so that forces are joined, synergies built upon and duplication avoided.
4. The Bureau, at its twenty-eighth meeting (Geneva, 27 and 28 February 2019), identified concrete activities and responsibilities for implementing specific actions of the Strategy, especially those not already included in the Convention's programme of work. Several Bureau members then implemented specific activities, individually and collectively. The Bureau ensured a close follow-up of the Strategy's implementation by regularly reviewing progress and reported thereon to the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management.
5. The present report focuses on activities carried out by the Bureau, countries, partners (international organizations, international financial institutions, bilateral and multilateral development partners, civil society and non-governmental organizations) and the secretariat in 2019–2021.

## II. Progress made in the implementation of the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level

### A. Overall progress

6. Overall, significant progress had been made in the implementation of the Strategy, for all of the 20 actions identified in the Strategy (compare with table below). Numerous actions were focused on communication and awareness-raising on the Convention and transboundary water cooperation, combined with actions contributing to the concrete implementation of the Convention and progress on transboundary water cooperation worldwide. This was achieved through carrying out "traditional" activities, but also by developing new approaches and types of communications materials, and by reaching out to new partners. Bureau members, partners and other stakeholders largely contributed to the implementation of such actions, joining forces with the secretariat, which made it possible to build upon synergies and avoid duplications.

7. As a result, the implementation of the Strategy in 2019–2021 contributed to:
- (a) Increased awareness of and political support for the Convention and transboundary water cooperation, for example with more than 20 countries highlighting the importance of transboundary water cooperation and 5 countries mentioning the role of the Water Convention in the statements at the High-level meeting on Water “Implementation of the Water-related Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda” organized by the President of the General Assembly (New York, hybrid, 18 March 2021);
  - (b) Increased accession to the Convention, with two additional Parties since 2019 (Ghana and Guinea-Bissau), 2 countries very close to accession and more than 15 countries advanced in their process of accession;
  - (c) Increased support for implementation of the Convention and for transboundary water management, for example with an increase in financial contributions by Parties and partners from \$9,749,285 in the period 1 July 2015–31 May 2018 (compare with ECE/MP.WAT/2018/3) to \$11,582,580 in the period 1 June 2018–31 May 2021 (compare with ECE/MP.WAT/2021/7), as well as through valuable in-kind support;
  - (d) Increased support for implementation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 6.5, through the Convention, with 129 out of 153 countries submitting reports on indicator 6.5.2 in the second reporting cycle in 2020–2021 (compared to 109 in 2017–2018). Reporting triggered follow-up actions in several countries and transboundary basins to improve cooperation;
  - (e) Increased partnerships and synergies with other actors, including through the strengthening of existing partnerships with regional and global financial institutions, the establishment of new partnerships with several regional organizations (such as the Central American Commission for Environment and Development (CCAD) and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development) and greater coordination and articulation with activities of partners, including with United Nations regional commissions and country offices.

## **B. Progress in actions and by strategic objectives of the Strategy**

8. The review of progress made in implementing the various actions and achieving the five strategic objectives of the Strategy (see table below) does not represent an exhaustive list of activities implemented, but rather aims to highlight the achievements of some of the prioritized actions, and/or effective new approaches, through initiatives by the secretariat, the Bureau, countries and partners. It must be read as a complement to the summary of concrete activities contained in the Report on the implementation of the programme of work for 2019–2021 (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/2).

## Overview of progress made in actions contributing to the Strategy's strategic objectives

*Actions identified in Strategy*

*Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy*

*Good practice examples of actions implemented*

### Strategic objective 1 - Increased awareness of and political support for the Convention and transboundary water cooperation

1.1 Involving high-level and prominent actors in promotion of Convention and of transboundary cooperation

*Significant progress achieved.*

Statements of high-level actors referred to Convention as a key framework for strengthening transboundary water cooperation at more than 15 high-level global events and numerous bilateral meetings (focal points and bureau members inserted specific speaking points).

The secretariat, bureau members and regional partners built knowledge of identified possible Convention “champions” in at least 4 river basin organizations and 2 regional economic communities, promoting accession to, and the benefits of implementing, the Convention at the country, basin and regional levels.

Focal points of Parties and Bureau members briefed their ministers and other high-level representatives, who acted as “ambassadors” for the Convention, promoting it together with the importance of transboundary cooperation at numerous high-level events, including global events:

- on water, climate change and/or the environment, such as: the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (Nairobi, 11–15 March 2019), the high-level event on water and climate (New York, 28 March 2019), Stockholm World Water Weeks in 2019 and 2020, the Budapest Water Summit (15–17 October 2019), events on the occasion of World Water Days in 2020 and 2021;

- on Sustainable Development Goals, such as: the high-level webinar on the Decade of Action on Water “Accelerating implementation of the 2030 Agenda through water, sanitation and climate action” (29 May 2020), the high-level political forum special event for the launch of SDG6 Global Acceleration Framework (9 July 2020), the high-level meeting on the “Implementation of the Water-related Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda” organized by the President of the General Assembly (18 March 2021). A dedicated side event on the Convention for diplomats in New York was organized on 25 June 2019. In addition, the European Union invited ECE to organize a high-level session on transboundary watersheds during the European Development Days (online, 15 and 16 June 2021).

“Champions”, in particular in river basin organizations (such as LCBC, NBA, OMVS, OMVG, VBA, etc.) and regional economic communities, as well as key stakeholders in countries and/or regions increased their knowledge of the Convention. They then promoted accession to and the benefits of implementing the Convention at the

Actions identified in Strategy	Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy	Good practice examples of actions implemented
1.2 Increasing awareness among “multipliers”	<p data-bbox="501 308 1223 395"><i>Progress achieved but more efforts needed to work with parliamentarians, youth, civil society organizations, and to develop tailored communication materials, in particular for diplomats.</i></p> <p data-bbox="501 419 1223 639">The secretariat and Bureau members reached out and initiated discussions with IPU to identify possible concrete joint activities with a view to raising awareness and strengthening capacity of parliamentarians on the Convention. Members of parliaments and regional networks of parliamentarians were invited to participate in national events on the Convention and regional events on cooperation.</p> <p data-bbox="501 663 1223 911">Focal points contributed to reaching out to diplomats in their Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, to raise awareness and strengthen capacity of diplomats on the Convention, either to support accession to the Convention (for non-Parties), or to promote the benefits of the Convention through their diplomatic representation in countries interested in the Convention (for Parties).</p>	<p data-bbox="1249 220 2007 276">basin or subregional level, which resulted in new countries expressing interest in the Convention.</p> <p data-bbox="1249 308 2007 560">For example, OAS invited the secretariat to present the Convention as a tool to promote stability and development at the Joint Session of the Inter-American Council for Integral Development and the Permanent Council in celebration of World Water Day (Washington, D.C., 19 March 2019), which made it possible to raise awareness of diplomats from the Latin America and the Caribbean region of the benefits of the Convention. It triggered interest in the Convention by a number of countries and national discussions.</p> <p data-bbox="1249 584 2007 671">“Champions” in river basins organizations supported the organization of events focusing on the benefits of the Convention in their basins, for example through:</p> <ul data-bbox="1249 695 2007 1023" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the organization of a regional workshop for parliamentarians, counsellors of Head of State, ambassadors and focal points of the Niger River basin by NBA in cooperation with ECE (April 2019). Chad has been a Party since 2018, other countries, including Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, the Gambia, the Niger and Nigeria, are studying possible accession to the Convention;</li> <li>- the Convention was presented at a meeting of the Council of Ministers of VBA (May 2019). Ghana has been a Party since 2018 and Togo is very close to acceding to the Convention. See more information under action 2.4 below.</li> </ul>
1.3 Strengthening the role of focal points	<p data-bbox="501 1054 1223 1142"><i>Progress achieved, but more focal points need to be aware of their roles and responsibilities. There is also a need to regularly update focal points, given changes in administrations.</i></p> <p data-bbox="501 1166 1223 1286">41 Parties and 58 countries that are not Parties have nominated focal points to the Convention as of June 2021. A specific session on the role and responsibilities of focal points was organized during the fifteenth meeting of the WG IWRM (Geneva, 30 September–2</p>	<p data-bbox="1249 1054 2007 1270">For example, in Slovenia (Party to the Convention), the focal point raised awareness of relevant national stakeholders on the usefulness of the Convention, building up political support for its implementation at the national level and the promotion of its globalization. It successfully resulted in: (a) a proposal to host the tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties; and (b) the mobilization of possible financial resources to contribute to the Convention annual donations and the</p>

Actions identified in Strategy	Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy	Good practice examples of actions implemented
	October 2019), which facilitated the exchange of experiences and lessons learned amongst focal points by regions.	trust fund. In Spain, the focal point promoted the Convention among Latin American countries.
1.4 Organizing awareness-raising events	<p><i>Significant progress achieved.</i></p> <p>Bureau members, Parties' focal points, partners and the secretariat promoted the Convention at various national events (4 workshops and several virtual sessions) organized at the request of countries interested in accession to raise awareness of the Convention, its principles and benefits. In addition, they contributed to events and sessions on the Convention and its activities at international events (Stockholm World Water Weeks in 2019, 2020 and 2021, Budapest Water Forum in 2019, World Water Days events), conferences of the Parties to global conventions and events under the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028.</p>	<p>In Mexico (not a Party to the Convention), the focal points efficiently coordinated the nomination of relevant national experts to participate in the various Convention workshops and intergovernmental meetings. They also took the initiative to convene an online briefing on the Convention, its activities and tools for relevant national stakeholders with responsibilities in the area of transboundary water cooperation, with the secretariat's support.</p> <p>The secretariat and Bureau members promoted the Convention at various national workshops on the Convention and regional events (European Union Water Directors meetings, workshops and webinars discussing transboundary water cooperation in the Middle East and North Africa, West Africa, Latin America, Asia and Southern Africa, and training sessions and capacity-building events organized by partners). This resulted in an increased interest in the Convention, its activities and tools.</p>
1.5 Preparing innovative promotional and communication materials	<p><i>Progress achieved, additional products planned to be produced</i></p> <p>The secretariat developed tailored communication materials (website, video statements, maps, social media, short film, Frequently Asked Questions...) and promoted them widely. Those materials are among the most commonly consulted tools of the Convention.</p>	<p>The secretariat developed tailored communication materials on the Convention, for different target audiences, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Map of activities created, as part of brochure on the 2019–2021 programme of work;</li> <li>- Convention website regularly updated, with dedicated web pages for each of the programme areas;</li> <li>- Convention Facebook and LinkedIn pages launched in August 2020, in addition to regular posting on Twitter;</li> <li>- 13 newsletters published, as well as numerous articles;</li> </ul>

Actions identified in Strategy	Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy	Good practice examples of actions implemented
<b>Strategic objective 2 - Increased accession to the Convention</b>		
2.1 Involving Parties in support for accession processes at the technical and political levels	<p data-bbox="501 475 1196 564"><i>Progress achieved, planned twinings between “old” and recent Parties, and between new Parties and countries in the process of accession.</i></p> <p data-bbox="501 587 1227 903">Representatives of Parties, including Bureau members, contributed to presenting the Convention and the benefits of acceding to it and implementing it during national events on the Convention: such exchange of experience was highly appreciated, as it answered several questions of prospective future Parties on the interpretation of the Convention, the process of accession and transboundary integrated water resources management practices, based on concrete experiences of current Parties. In some cases, it also paved the way for the establishment of a trusted relationship between a Party and a prospective future Party for longer-term cooperation, or “twinning”.</p>	<p data-bbox="1249 225 2007 347">- Publication <i>Frequently Asked Questions on the 1992 Water Convention with the Road map to facilitate accession processes</i> published in 4 languages and promoted, including through the creation of a dedicated web page and dedicated webinars;</p> <p data-bbox="1249 370 1738 394">- Video on the Convention under preparation.</p> <p data-bbox="1249 475 2007 695">Focal points of Parties to the Convention, or representatives of Parties, through their diplomatic representations in countries, shared their experience and advice during national workshops in countries in the accession process. For example, Slovenia shared experience with Cameroon (national workshop in Yaoundé, 2019), Estonia with Lebanon (briefing in Beirut, 2019), Hungary with Ghana, Finland with Viet Nam, France with Togo, etc.</p> <p data-bbox="1249 718 2007 807">Recent Parties also shared their experiences with interested countries – for example, Chad presented its experience at a national workshop for Cote d’Ivoire in April 2019.</p> <p data-bbox="1249 829 2007 1082">The European Union, as a Party, made significant efforts to promote accession, for example through financial and political support, namely by mentioning the Convention in high-level statements, involving the European Union delegations and by involving the secretariat in the organization of important events, such as the conference “Water and Beyond - EU transformative approaches for international partnerships” (Brussels, 18–21 January 2021) and the European Development Days in June 2021.</p> <p data-bbox="1249 1104 2007 1158">Kazakhstan promoted accession by sending letters to 29 countries worldwide that had shown possible interest in accession.</p>
2.2 Creating a pool of experts on the Convention	<p data-bbox="501 1187 1227 1244"><i>Progress achieved in conceptualizing the needs, creation of the pool of experts still pending.</i></p>	



Actions identified in Strategy	Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy	Good practice examples of actions implemented
2.3 Exchanging experience and mutual learning between countries working towards accession	<p>The secretariat and the Bureau developed terms of reference for creating such a pool of experts to facilitate both accession and implementation.</p> <p><i>Progress achieved.</i></p> <p>Countries in the process of accession reported on progress, challenges faced, and lessons learned at annual meetings of WG IWRM. Countries advanced in the accession process also shared their experiences with countries starting the process, providing advice on how to address possible institutional, technical and administrative challenges during regional workshops or through bilateral exchanges.</p>	<p>For example, Lebanon, a country engaged in the accession process, invited Tunisia and Iraq, also in the process of accession but at a more advanced stage, to attend a national high-level consultation “The Water Convention: an opportunity for Lebanon?” (Beirut, 11 April 2019). Iraq and Tunisia exchanged experience on doubts and questions raised during their accession processes, challenges faced, and shared solutions to and lessons learned regarding these challenges. This was particularly useful in identifying possible next steps in the accession process in Lebanon. Similarly, Uganda invited Ghana to present its experiences in a national briefing on the Convention in November 2019.</p>
2.4 Promoting regional and basin-wide approaches towards accession	<p><i>Significant progress achieved.</i></p> <p>Several regional organizations and river basin commissions recognized the potential acceleration role that the Convention could play in supporting transboundary water cooperation in regions and basins. They integrated the promotion of the Convention into their programme of activities, and worked, together with the secretariat, towards increasing understanding of the benefits of the Convention and its implementation among their member States. Some organizations mobilized funds from their core budget or projects they implement to support the promotion of the Convention.</p> <p>This complemented the actions taken by several “champions” in river basin organizations and regional economic communities (as described under action 1.1 above).</p>	<p>Benin and Togo are Parties to the Convention on the status of the Mono River and the establishment of the Mono Basin Authority (ABM), aiming at promoting cooperation between Benin and Togo and ensuring the integrated and sustainable development of the Mono basin. Both countries have shown an interest in acceding to the Convention (Togo since 2017). In January 2021, through its resolution No. 11 on the accession of ABM member countries to the Water Convention, the ABM Council of Ministers invited ABM member States to continue the process of accession to Water Convention, prompting further efforts in Benin.</p> <p>In 2008, ECOWAS member States adopted the West African Water Resources Policy, one of the areas of intervention of which is the promotion of regional cooperation and integration, principles advocated by the Water Convention. Convinced that ECOWAS member States could better cooperate by implementing the principles of the Water Convention, the ECOWAS Water Resources Coordination Centre included in its work programme activities to amplify the accession process in other ECOWAS member States (at different levels of the accession process), to support the adoption of</p>

Actions identified in Strategy	Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy	Good practice examples of actions implemented
3.1 Strengthening capacity to accede to and implement the Convention	<p data-bbox="499 719 1144 778"><i>Progress achieved; more efforts needed to achieve a similar capacity on the Convention in all regions.</i></p> <p data-bbox="499 799 1232 954">Several national events on the Convention were organized, in different formats (national workshops, multi-stakeholder briefings, webinars) bringing together the different concerned authorities in the countries and, where relevant, other stakeholders (civil society representatives, technical partners).</p> <p data-bbox="499 975 1193 1098">Regional and basin workshops and webinars were also organized (see also actions 1.4 and 2.1 above), which resulted in enriching exchanges at the regional level among countries facing similar challenges.</p> <p data-bbox="499 1118 1232 1276">The organization of a “Train-the-trainer” event (Dakar, 18 and 19 June 2019) built knowledge and capacity of key stakeholders on the Convention in francophone Africa. This contributed to the emergence of “champions” of the Convention in river basin organizations and regional organizations (see action 2.4 above).</p>	<p data-bbox="1249 220 2000 375">the Regional Directive on the Management of Shared Water Resources, and to prevent conflicts in the region, and allocated funding for that purpose from its budget. Senegal, Ghana and Guinea-Bissau have already completed their accession processes to the Water Convention (between 2018 and 2021).</p> <p data-bbox="1249 395 2022 639">On 10 May 2019, the Council of Ministers of VBA recommended to the member States to continue the process of accession to the two United Nations water conventions. It was recognized as an activity to be carried out by the six riparian states with the support of VBA. Support by VBA was instrumental in Ghana's accession and progress towards accession in Togo and Burkina Faso. This complements effort made towards the adoption of the Water Charter of the Volta Basin by the Summit of Heads of State and Government.</p> <p data-bbox="1249 719 2000 970">In addition, partners contributed to the strengthening of capacity on the Convention through their activities. For example, the Global Water Partnership (GWP) organized a massive open online course on “Governance for Transboundary Freshwater Security” and invited the secretariat and some focal points of Parties to the Convention to contribute to the course by presenting the Convention, some of its tools and activities and the benefits of its implementation. The course, launched in August 2020, reached out to a broad audience.</p> <p data-bbox="1249 991 2000 1214">The African Ministers’ Council on Water invited the secretariat to present the Convention at the Seventh Africa Water Week in 2018, and the African Union Commission invited the secretariat to speak at their Partners’ Coordination Platform on Water and Sanitation Programme in Africa in 2019. This contributed to increased capacity on the Convention of both countries and developments partners in the region.</p>

### Strategic objective 3 - Increased support for implementation of the Convention and for transboundary water management

<i>Actions identified in Strategy</i>	<i>Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy</i>	<i>Good practice examples of actions implemented</i>
3.2 Using the reporting mechanism under the Convention to support implementation	<p><i>Progress achieved on using the reporting outcomes to highlight the need to accelerate progress, more work needed to tailor support activities to needs identified through the reports.</i></p> <p>While preparing for basin and regional activities, reports were exploited to identify challenges faced and needs for support. In particular, the reporting outcomes were used to guide the development of the 2022–2024 programme of work of the Convention.</p>	<p>In the period 2017–2020, at least 10 new agreements and other arrangements were concluded by Parties and another 5 agreements entered into force. Many new strategies, programmes or action plans were adopted by Parties at basin, sub-basin and bilateral levels.</p> <p>In Senegal, reporting under the Convention highlighted the lack of data and cooperation for the management of transboundary groundwater resources. To address this challenge, Senegal, with support of partners, prompted the initiation of a dialogue among riparian states of the Senegalo-Mauritanian aquifer system.</p>
3.3 Enhancing the impact of guidance materials under the Convention	<p><i>Progress achieved, more dissemination and promotion of guidance documents is needed.</i></p> <p>Several publications developed under the Water Convention were translated into various languages (particularly Arabic, French and Spanish), which enabled a wider application of the guidance.</p>	<p>Among other results of awareness-raising and capacity-building activities at the national, regional and global levels, guidance documents developed under the Water Convention were applied by countries – for example, Tanzania applied the <i>Policy Guidance Note on the Benefits of Transboundary Water Cooperation: Identification, Assessment and Communication</i> – and partners – for example, GIZ Bolivia used the <i>Methodology for assessing the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins and experiences from its application: synthesis</i>.</p>
3.4 Support for the negotiation of new agreements and improved implementation of existing ones through the Convention’s network	<p><i>Progress achieved, with the development of new tools, but more support needed at basin level (pending availability of funds)</i></p> <p>The secretariat, through basin projects and based on demand from countries, provided assistance to the negotiation of agreements to a limited number of basins. In addition, a practical guide on the development of agreements and other arrangements for transboundary water cooperation was developed.</p>	<p>For example, upon invitation by ECCAS, the secretariat provided support in 2016–2017 to the process of negotiation of the draft Convention for the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts related to the management of shared water resources in Central Africa, in particular by organizing a training session on international water law in 2017. In July 2020, the above-mentioned Convention was adopted by the Heads of State of the region.</p> <p>The secretariat also shared the experience of the Convention and its application in the process of consultation prior to the revision of the 1994 Agreement on the establishment of a Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission.</p>
3.5 Exploring new financing models for	<p><i>Progress achieved but more efforts needed.</i></p>	<p>Several new Parties have contributed financially to the Water Convention for the first time, such as Azerbaijan, North Macedonia</p>

Actions identified in Strategy	Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy	Good practice examples of actions implemented
supporting implementation of the Convention	Draft targets for financial sustainability of the Convention were developed and a draft decision on targets for a more sustainable and predictable funding of the work under the Convention was prepared for adoption by the Meeting of the Parties at its ninth session. However, the Convention's financing mechanism was not substantially revisited. Various options could be explored, such as strengthening the Convention's role as a broker for direct financing by development partners and international financing institutions.	and Poland. Other Parties have announced that they will do so, such as Slovenia.
<b>Strategic objective 4 - Increased support for implementation of water-related Sustainable Development Goals, in particular target 6.5, through the Convention</b>		
4.1 Monitoring and review of progress towards SDG target 6.5	<p data-bbox="501 555 824 580"><i>Significant progress achieved.</i></p> <p data-bbox="501 603 1223 852">ECE and UNESCO provided technical advice to countries on reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and therefore built capacities, prepared analyses of progress in transboundary water cooperation and provided other input to the high-level political forum on sustainable development. In the second reporting cycle in 2020–2021, all Parties to the Convention reported and the number of countries reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 reached 129 (compared to 109 in 2017–2018).</p> <p data-bbox="501 874 1223 967">Regional partners facilitated regional analysis of the outcomes of SDG indicator 6.5.2 reporting to review progress towards SDG target 6.5 in their regions.</p>	<p data-bbox="1249 555 2002 676">ESCWA developed a regional report on <i>Progress on Shared Water Resources Management in the Arab Region: Regional baseline for SDG Indicator 6.5.2</i>, based on the results of the first reporting exercise on SDG indicator 6.5.2.</p> <p data-bbox="1249 699 2002 791">ECA, ESCWA and CODIA are preparing regional reports for Africa, the Arab region and Ibero-America, based on the results of the second reporting exercise on SDG indicator 6.5.2.</p>
4.2 Supporting the achievement of SDG target 6.5	<p data-bbox="501 995 931 1021"><i>Progress achieved, more efforts needed.</i></p> <p data-bbox="501 1043 1223 1324">The publications <i>Progress on transboundary water cooperation under the Water Convention: Second report on implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes</i> and <i>Progress on transboundary water cooperation: Global status of SDG indicator 6.5.2 and acceleration needs 2021</i> show that the Convention and the activities set out in its programme of work supported the achievement of SDG target 6.5, and particularly its transboundary cooperation dimension.</p>	<p data-bbox="1249 995 2002 1276">With a view to defining specific lines of work for CODIA to support countries in achieving Sustainable Development Goals target 6.5, CODIA, ECE and UNESCO co-organized a high-level seminar on progress and challenges in transboundary water cooperation in Latin America in the framework of the SDGs and their indicator 6.5.2 (virtual, 23 and 24 February 2021). A regional report on the status of transboundary water cooperation in Latin America is currently being elaborated, based on the analysis of SDG indicator 6.5.2 national reports in order to guide future action and support.</p>

<i>Actions identified in Strategy</i>	<i>Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy</i>	<i>Good practice examples of actions implemented</i>
	Partners, such as CODIA, ESCWA and regional offices of GWP, facilitated regional discussions on possible actions to be implemented to address the challenges identified through reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2.	ESCWA facilitated discussions on opportunities for improving transboundary water cooperation among Arab countries at the Expert Group Meeting on Pursuing Improved Shared Water Resources Cooperation within the Framework of Global and Regional Agreements (Beirut, Lebanon, 6-7 December 2018) on the basis of the regional report mentioned above.

### **Strategic objective 5 - Increased partnerships and synergies with other actors**

5.1 Promoting a regional approach to global implementation of the Convention

*Progress achieved, more efforts needed.*

The secretariat built on the expertise and networks of experts from river basin organizations and regional economic communities to help identify important issues and priorities in regions and basin when planning regional/ basin events, as entry points to possible accession. Some river basin organizations organized at their own initiative an event on the Convention to promote accession among riparian countries and provide support to their interested members States to accede to the Convention.

ECA, ESCWA, ESCAP and ECLAC increasingly engaged in promoting the Convention and/or its activities, including through in-kind and financial support. For example, ECA supported the accession process of the Niger. United Nations resident coordinators and their office supported some of the countries in their accession process, for example in Botswana, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Iraq and Togo.

Regional economic communities (ECCAS, ECOWAS, CCAD, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development) also contributed to raising awareness and knowledge of the Water Convention and its benefits in their respective regions.

The secretariat and focal points to the Convention supported the promotion of concrete initiatives at the regional level to show the added value of accession to and implementation of the Convention.

For example, NBA organized, at its own initiative and using its funds, a meeting of ambassadors in February 2019, and produced a video on the Convention's benefits.

CCAD invited the secretariat to present the Convention and its activities during a meeting of a technical committee of water directors in February 2021. Possible synergetic activities under the CCAD Regional Environmental Framework Strategy for the period 2021–2025 and the Convention's programme of work were identified and presented. In the Framework Strategy, ECE was included as partner for the implementation of the strategic objective on IWRM, especially its expected outcomes on the establishment and operationalization of a regional framework for the management of international watercourses, transboundary basins and aquifers. Several countries expressed an interest in the Convention as a possible framework to strengthen cooperation in Central America.

See also examples of actions implemented by ECOWAS, ABM and VBA under action 2.4 above.

Actions identified in Strategy	Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy	Good practice examples of actions implemented
5.2 Strengthening the cooperation with GEF	<p>Some regional organizations (for example, CCAD) got a stronger mandate to support transboundary water cooperation and approached the Water Convention to provide support.</p> <p>Several countries currently not interested in acceding to the Convention got involved in activities of the Convention and shared their experiences.</p> <p><i>Progress achieved, more efforts needed.</i></p> <p>The secretariat regularly communicated with the GEF secretariat and GEF implementing agencies on opportunities for cooperation with the Water Convention's activities and on the benefits the Convention can offer to GEF projects (including sustainability of project results). An official visit was arranged to the GEF secretariat in March 2019.</p> <p>Parties to the Convention advocated for support to transboundary water cooperation (pillar on International Waters) in GEF future strategies and replenishments, including by stressing the synergies with other GEF focal areas</p>	<p>GEF actively engaged in and supported the virtual workshop on financing transboundary water cooperation (16 and 17 December 2020) as well as the World Bank, which also mentioned ECE as one of its partners. Close cooperation continues with GEF IW:LEARN.</p>
5.3 Consolidating cooperation with long-established partners and enhancing their use of the Convention's framework	<p><i>Progress achieved.</i></p> <p>In order to consolidate cooperation with global and regional organizations (INBO, GWP, river basin organizations), the secretariat, Bureau members and partners worked together on identifying a common field for cooperation, understanding and identifying alignments of work cultures and approaches, including through attending and contributing to partners' events.</p>	<p>The motion on "Cooperation on transboundary fresh waters to ensure ecosystem conservation, climate resilience and sustainable development", which had been developed by WWF and several countries of the Water Convention Bureau as co-sponsors, was adopted by the members of IUCN in October 2020 by electronic vote. It gives a stronger mandate to the IUCN secretariat to contribute to strengthening the governance of transboundary waters, in particular by disseminating information on the role of the global water conventions, and by building capacity for acceding to and implementing them.</p> <p>Also within the United Nations system, the importance of the Water Convention and the Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses was increasingly recognized, for example with the publication by UN-Water of a policy brief on the</p>

Actions identified in Strategy	Progress made in implementing actions identified in Strategy	Good practice examples of actions implemented
5.4 Reaching out to new partners: international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector	<p><i>Progress achieved; more efforts needed.</i></p> <p>Cooperation with development banks (such as AfDB, ADB and IDB) was further strengthened, in particular through activities on financing transboundary water cooperation and basin development. The secretariat arranged several meetings with the World Bank, ADB and EIB in 2019–2021 to discuss future cooperation.</p>	<p>two United Nations water conventions in January 2021, and with the call by the Secretary-General to United Nations agencies to promote accession to and implementation of the two water conventions.</p> <p>In November 2018, AfDB and the secretariat co-organized a training session on the Water Convention and on preparing bankable projects for climate change adaptation for Chad and neighbouring countries with the aim of promoting accession among riparian neighbours of Chad. In addition, AfDB contributed as a partner for the event with NBA mentioned above.</p> <p>A new partner was the Geneva Environment Network, with which the secretariat organized three webinars in 2020-2021: one to discuss transboundary water cooperation and coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in May 2020, and two others to launch the publication <i>Frequently Asked Questions on the 1992 Water Convention with the Road map to facilitate accession processes</i> in English and French.</p>

*Abbreviations:* ADB, Asian Development Bank; AfDB, African Development Bank; CCAD, Central American Commission on Environment and Development; CODIA, Conference of Ibero-American Water Directors; ECA, Economic Commission for Africa; ECCAS, Economic Community of Central African States; ECE, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe; ECLAC, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean; ECOWAS, Economic Community of West African States; EIB, European Investment Bank; ESCAP, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific; ESCWA, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; GEF, Global Environment Facility; GIZ, German Agency for International Cooperation; GWP IW:LEARN, Global Water Partnership International Waters: Learning Exchange and Resource Network; IDB, Inter-American Development Bank; INBO, International Network of Basin Organizations; IPU, Inter-Parliamentary Union; IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature; IWRM, integrated water resources management; LCBC, Lake Chad Basin Commission; NBA, Niger Basin Authority; OAS, Organization of American States; OMVG, Gambia River Basin Development Organization; OMVS, Organization for the Development of the Senegal River; SDG, Sustainable Development Goal; UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme; UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; VBA, Volta Basin Authority; WG IWRM, Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management; WWF, World Wildlife Fund.

### **III. Lessons learned and future implementation of the Strategy**

9. The Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level has been useful in guiding efforts for the implementation of the Convention at the global level.

10. While major progress was achieved in implementing some of the actions of the Strategy, other actions are less advanced and additional effort is needed. Implementation of the Strategy will therefore continue in the next triennium and beyond. Among other things, it is important to make sure that no region is left behind. While all country-specific interventions are based on demand, awareness-raising efforts can be prompted by interest of regional partners, and such efforts need to be continued also in regions that might be less aware of the Convention, and its activities and tools.

11. The numerous contributions of various stakeholders to support the promotion and implementation of the Convention were key in accelerating the globalization process, the accession of new countries and the implementation of the Convention's principles and tools in various basins. Such progress was only made possible thanks to the tireless efforts of Bureau members, focal points, regional and global partners, in addition to the secretariat. These efforts were even more important considering that due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, secretariat staff have been unable to travel since spring 2020. It is particularly noteworthy that several new partners promoted the Convention, sometimes on their own initiative. Additional efforts are however needed to cooperate with academia, which can play an important role by building strong experts who can support the Convention's implementation and transboundary cooperation and provide a critical reflection on the Convention.

12. The ever growing importance of strengthening partnerships for the globalization of the Convention prompted the development of a draft decision on partnerships for the global implementation of the Water Convention (see ECE/MP.WAT/2021/11) submitted to the Meeting of the Parties for possible adoption at its ninth session, which aims to facilitate the further strengthening of these strategic partnerships in the future.

13. Strengthening partnerships also takes up the secretariat's time but, eventually, such efforts result in better knowledge, awareness and improved implementation of the Water Convention.

14. The further implementation of the Strategy is even more important in view of the upcoming United Nations water decade conference in 2023 and considering that progress needs to be quadrupled to meet target 6.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

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