

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE TO NINTH MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE WATER
CONVENTION**

Geneva, 29 September 2021

Transboundary water cooperation is vital for promoting peace and sustainable development, and crucial for realizing the human right to safe, sufficient, and affordable water.

However, Sustainable Development Goal 6 on Water is badly off track – and so is its target of implementing integrated water management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation. Only 24 countries worldwide have all their transboundary waters covered by cooperative arrangements.

My report on *Our Common Agenda* highlights the urgent need to strengthen the governance of our global commons and global public goods. Transboundary waters are a crucial example. Their protection and sustainable management require concerted action to ensure food security for all, prevent the collapse of water-dependent ecosystems and protect against water-related disasters while adapting to climate change.

The 1992 Water Convention is a powerful tool to advance cooperation, prevent conflicts and build resilience. I welcome its growing membership and call on all Member States to join both the 1992 Water Convention and the 1997 Watercourses Convention and ensure their full implementation. International and regional organizations and financial institutions should support governments in accession and implementation.

We need greater commitment, courage and solidarity to move forward together in four areas:

First, riparian countries should establish cooperation where it does not yet exist, including on groundwaters.

Second, we must do more to elevate the voices of women and youth, recognizing their role in natural resource management and as key agents to build and sustain development and peace.

Third, we need to scale up finance for sustainable development of shared basins.

Fourth, we should fully leverage the institutional framework and tools of the Water Convention in our response to the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

As we gear up for the 2023 United Nations Conference on the Water Decade, let us work together to advance transboundary water cooperation, for our planet and all people.