

MOP Dario intervention
29th October, the Water Convention MOP

Proposed questions for the contribution of Mr. Darío Soto-Abril to the panel discussion, elaborated jointly with the moderator, are:

- **Question 1 (3 min):** According to you, what are the most pressing challenges that might exacerbate security-related challenges affecting transboundary water basins, and what would be some of your recommendations to address them?
- Sharing of transboundary water can often be a source of contention, affecting regional stability and peace. At times, water could be used as a security threat or weapon. It is important to ensure water security at transboundary levels, for human security and peace.
- Key challenges we are facing include:
 - Lack of proper management mechanisms and cooperation: While progress has been made, the recent report from SDG 6.5 survey on measuring level of IWRM implementation in the transboundary context still shows that the world still needs to pay a lot of attention to this important topic.
 - Climate change bringing stress to watercourses, both too much and too little water, directly affecting people's livelihoods and security
 - Regional geopolitical context and lack of willingness to collaborate is also another challenge.
- Our recommendations in addressing the challenges are:
 - Turn the 'challenges' into 'opportunities': for example, climate challenge can be also an opportunity to bring countries and stakeholders together to overcome the common challenges.
 - Need for dialogue: Management of transboundary water takes a long time: cooperation among sovereign states is not only affected by the availability of water, but also affected by geopolitical environment, socio-economic context, cultural and historical relationships, hydrological and geographical settings etc. Relationship and trust building through dialogues and exchanges, as well as involvement of multiple stakeholders in the process can enhance building resilient cooperation.
 - Need for more investments: both in human and natural capitals to enhance cooperation. Investment to strengthen capacity of institutions managing transboundary water for improved governance is critical.
- Working in areas that have experienced regional and national political instability and tensions – such as the Western Balkans- to foster cooperation over shared waters can greatly contribute to security. GWP has assisted in its initial steps the joint mechanism created through the Framework Agreement on the Sava River Basin in the area of stakeholders engagement. Building transboundary mechanisms of cooperation – as we are doing in the Drin Basin in cooperation with the UNECE- or supporting them -as we did in the Ohrid Basin- are additional concrete examples.
- Regional transboundary dialogue in Central America that GWP and CCAD (Central American Commission on Sustainable Development) are jointly convening, is another example where countries are shifting from conflict to cooperation through shared water resources.

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- Further, GWP is fostering transboundary water cooperation in different parts of the world, through neutral multi-stakeholder platforms that exist at local, national, regional levels that are connected to the global network. Together with key partners such as GEF IW:LEARN, the Water Convention, and many others, GWP developed Massive Open Online Course on Governance for Transboundary Freshwater Security, which is open to all, for a wider capacity building purposes. We are currently translating this product into various languages to facilitate this important investment in human capital.
- We also have very close collaboration with the Water Convention and its work, engaged in actively contributing to all of its work programs, as we highly value this important community of practice of countries and partners engaged in improved management of transboundary waters around the world.
- **Question 2 (2 min): What can be done to help address the trade-offs related to competing use of water resources by the various sectors in transboundary basins, in some cases source of conflicts?**
 - Using the Water-Food-Energy-Environment nexus approach is a tested tool to understand the trade-offs and benefits that arise from different water uses in transboundary basins.. Jointly understanding the best way to utilize the resources, and to bring co-benefits among sectors is a key to addressing this competition. GWP has tested this in the Drin Basin along with UNECE where we are close in substantiating the optimisation of hydropower production and flood management. Related work is done also in the Drina Basin as well as in Southern Africa.
 - There was an online event on the topic of nexus approach in transboundary water's context this Monday, as part of side event on the Water Convention's Meeting of Parties. Practitioners engaged in this topic have confirmed indeed, nexus approach can be a vehicle to address trade-offs between different water users, which has a potential to turn conflict into cooperation.
 - One needs to go outside of the 'water box' to find cross-sectoral co-benefits. We also need to go beyond our 'usual' sectors to work with. Power of multi-stakeholder is huge, in concretely progressing on integrated management of this shared resources and resolving conflict. We often neglect the power of private sector, and stakeholders such as youth and women who can really be the key vehicle and a game changer.
 - Again, I emphasize on the importance of dialogues, across boundaries: international boundaries, as well as sectoral boundaries, to maximize the benefit for all.
 - There are various mechanisms to find 'win—win' solution among sectors and actors: shared visioning is one effective entry point. Regional or basin level dialogues are also important in bringing the actors to the table and have common understandings of the issues. Strategic Action Programs based on Transboundary Diagnostic Analyses is another key approach.
 - Important to ensure enabling environment allowing cooperation to happen in a long term. This is why GWP, in its currently strategy, have ambitious goals to support more than 20 transboundary agreements, commitments and arrangements, as well as to support establishment/strengthening of more than 20 transboundary institutions. The work cannot be done alone and requires collaboration with many partners. GWP look forward to continuing collaboration with all partners to advance the agenda in the coming period.