

9. session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

Special session of high-level segment “Water and Peace”

Panel 3: Accelerating progress on transboundary water cooperation

to be held on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, between 15.00 and 16.00 pm

Questions for special session “Water and Peace” Panel 3 “Accelerating progress on transboundary water cooperation” of the high-level discussion:

- 1. What is needed to accelerate progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6, and in particular its target 6.5, a requirement for sustainable development and a key to ensuring peace and stability?*
- 2. What is needed to support States Members of the United Nations in acceding to, implementing and complying with the two global United Nations water conventions?*

Statement of Mr. Marek Gróbarczyk, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland

Dear Excellences, Respected High Representatives of the Parties to the Water Convention, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to stand before you today to talk about the important issues of the Agenda for Sustainable Development. Let me share some observations resulting from Polish experience in conducting international water cooperation.

Water sustainability requires meeting all water needs of the society, environment and economy, while ensuring economic viability. This task is constantly hampered by various constraints and pressures on water resources. I can say with a high degree of certainty that all of you, the Honorable Representatives of the Parties to the Water Convention are facing difficult water management challenges.

In Poland, water management have to cope with relatively small water resources, a small amount of retained water and the occurrence of both extreme of negative phenomena: flood and drought. In addition, providing access to collective water supply and sewage disposal in the rural areas is also a challenge. Only comprehensive measures taken simultaneously in many dimensions can help to overcome difficulties.

Poland has introduced the water basin management system, taking as a foundation the division of the country into the river basin districts, water regions and sub-basins. Nine river basin districts have been designated, all with the international character.

The western border of Poland is established on Oder and Lusatian Neisse - the rivers of the International Oder River Basin District. Riparian states of the basin conduct cross-border cooperation based on international agreement and, additionally, bilateral agreements. All remaining Polish border waters are covered by bilateral agreements exclusively.

Water management tasks for the Oder river basin are carried out by the International Commission for the Protection of the Oder River against Pollution, as well as by bilateral commissions. Cooperation between the joint bodies covers all key water management activities, such as hydrometeorological monitoring, strategic planning and investments.

The eastern border of Poland runs largely on the Bug and San rivers, located in the Vistula river basin district. Development of cooperation on the bilateral level, which has been progressing for more than two decades, opens the way for potential talks on creating tripartite coordination mechanisms at the level of Bug river sub-basin, which would be beneficial for the condition of the Vistula river basin, as well as the Baltic Sea region.

Water connects independent states in conducting activities that transcend national borders. The increasingly difficult world around us is forcing people to work even more closely together, including the demanding areas. Water security is a motivation for neighboring countries to cooperate not only for economic growth, but also for people-friendly and environmentally sound activities.