

9th session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention
High-level Segment - Special session on "Water and Peace" (29 September 2021)

Panel 3: Accelerating progress on transboundary water cooperation to achieve sustainable development

GREECE

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Speaking Notes

Guiding questions:

- 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?*

Colleagues, distinguished delegates,

It is my pleasure, and an honour, to participate in this high-level special session on the issue of accelerating progress on transboundary water cooperation to achieve sustainable development.

As an EU member-state following the requirements of the Water Framework Directive since 2003, Greece is well advanced in water governance. We have, recently, successfully concluded our participation in the global effort for measuring SDG indicator 6.5.1 with a high national score of 86 in a scale 0-100, indicating our progress in implementing Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approaches.

Moreover, Greece, as a country sharing waters with its neighbours, gives particular emphasis to cross-border cooperation and the respect of IWRM principles at transboundary level. Our cooperation schemes with our neighbouring countries are captured in detail in our recently completed detailed national reporting for SDG indicator 6.5.2.

With regard to transboundary cooperation at the sub-regional level, I would like to make analytical reference to an important positive development regarding the Agreement on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Prespa Park Area between Greece, Albania, North Macedonia and the EU that has been recently operationalized.

Following the entry into force of the Agreement in May 2019, the three Ministers of Environment and the representative of the EU Commission, held the first virtual Meeting of the High-Level Segment of the Agreement on 29 June 2021 providing political guidance to the Joint Bodies to initiate practical work.

This successful inaugural Meeting helped further enhance the ties between the three neighboring countries and their firm commitment to collaborate for the protection of the unique ecosystem of the Prespa Lakes Area that faces serious pressures induced by climate change impacts and biodiversity loss.

On our behalf we are convinced that by working together more ambitious goals can be set and achieved than by working alone.

Moreover, the Parties renewed their commitment to EU integration, to sustainable solutions that can boost growth and sustainable livelihoods for local populations based on the conservation and wise management of the unique ecosystem, and to multi-stakeholder management approaches as the success to the protection and development of the area should be based on a truly participatory engagement of all local actors and stakeholders.

The Prespa example will hopefully be a successful case and provide a model of transboundary cooperation in the field for other areas in the world.

Thank you for your attention.