

Proposta de Intervenção da Senhora Secretária de Estado do Ambiente no
Segmento de Alto Nível da 9.ª Reunião das Partes da Convenção da Água
da UNECE

Panel III – Accelerating progress on Transboundary Water Cooperation

Virtual, 29 de setembro de 2021, 14.30-15-30 (hora PT)

Tempo de intervenção: 3 minutos

Honourable Mr. Chair of this Meeting of the Parties,

Distinguished members of this Panel,

Excellencies,

Allow me to start this intervention by congratulating the Government of Estonia and the Secretariat of the Water Convention for being able to organize such a relevant Meeting of the Parties, despite all the uncertainties of this unstable pandemic period.

A word must also be addressed to the distinct members of this Panel on accelerating progress on transboundary water cooperation, for their valuable contributions and inspiration for our global reflection.

Transboundary water cooperation must be a topic at the top of our agendas and is a crucial topic if we want to speak about Peace.

Water is a source of life and, therefore, it should also be a guarantee of Peace and Stability between populations, basins, regions, and countries.

As the situation of scarce water resources is projected to aggravate in the coming decades, this theme assumes even more relevance and needs to be fully addressed at the highest political level.

There are many experiences around the World showing that water cooperation in a transboundary context has contributed in a decisive manner as an instrument to reduce tensions and antagonisms and to promote Peace and development.

But is also true that a lot of examples continue to exist where this cooperation has not yet been possible and work still needs to be done.

Even these negative experiences need to be shared, as they can help us to better understand what went wrong and how we can avoid such problems in the future.

Enlarging the number of Parties to this Water Convention and trying to bring those involved in dispute to become Parties of the Convention, or, at first, to approach their envisaged principles and instruments of cooperation, is the most valuable contribute we can do for Peace and Stability.

This Convention offers an operational framework to implement integrated water resources management in practice and, at both, national and transboundary levels, that can help to prevent potential tensions and differences, contributing to maintain international and regional peace, stability, and security.

But it is in our hands to better advocate for the benefits of accession to this Convention.

Becoming a Party to the United Nations two global water Conventions is a sovereign decision of each Member State.

So, it is essential that all Member States of the United Nations are well informed about the benefits generated by the accession.

Involvement in the various activities and structures of the Convention, even before the accession process, can be a decisive step for more countries to adhere in a committed manner.

We cannot ignore that, according to the second reporting progress on SDG Indicator 6.5.2 only 18% of the reporting countries have expressed to have fully operational transboundary agreements.

Portugal strongly considers the development of operational agreements and the establishment of transboundary water resources management, based on mutual trust and respect between the involved Parties, as a fundamental step to improve communication and cooperation. This includes formal communications between riparian regions or countries in the form of meetings (either at political level or technical level), joint objectives, common strategies or coordinated plans. A regular and transparent exchange of data and information is also fundamental.

Only by working closely, in a coordinated and continuous way over time it will be possible to implement true and effective water cooperation in a transboundary context, solving and avoiding water-disputes.

Excellencies,

Portugal devotes particular attention to water management policies, and we do recognize the need to accelerate progress on Transboundary Water Cooperation.

It is therefore, with enthusiasm that I share with all of you that, at the margins of the UN Oceans Conference, scheduled to take place in Lisbon in July 2022, we will organize a UN High Level Symposium, as a contribution to the upcoming UN Water Conference in 2030.

Transboundary Water Cooperation is certainly part of this event.

Thank you!