

UN-Water Chair's talking points

9th Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention – 29 September 2021

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I would like to thank our hosts from UNECE and the Government of Estonia for convening this important meeting, and our co-Chairs for facilitating this session.
2. I am here to update you on the ongoing efforts to accelerate achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6, the provision of sustainable water and sanitation for all, and explain how this fits with transboundary water issues.
3. The Water Convention has strengthened transboundary water cooperation among signatories for over 25 years.
4. Today, with a fast-growing global population, worsening climate change, and an ongoing pandemic, the Convention has a critical role in protecting life and promoting peace.
5. Water is a finite resource with infinite value to every single aspect of our lives. Where there is inequity or threat at any point in the water cycle, there is danger and suffering for people and often damage to the natural environment.
6. Unfortunately, we are seriously off track to meet SDG 6 by 2030. Only through international partnership and cooperation can we build our way out of this crisis. Turning inwards will provide no protection from the water related threats we face. As more than 150 countries share water resources across international boundaries, the Water Convention's importance to global stability cannot be overstated.
7. However, despite the Water Convention's many success stories, too few water courses, lakes and aquifers are being managed in an integrated way across national and sub-national boundaries. Let me remind you that Sustainable Development Goal target 6.5 is to achieve "*integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate*" by 2030. We will only achieve that if we work a lot harder.
8. The good news is that we have a better picture than ever of what we need to do and the SDG 6 Global Acceleration Framework shows us how to do it.
9. As custodians of target 6.5, UNECE and UNESCO's activities have helped inform UN-Water's Integrated Monitoring Initiative for SDG 6, helping to steer interventions to where they are most needed and exposing the data gaps that remain.
10. One of the Framework's priorities is to improve governance. And that means better collaboration across boundaries and sectors.
11. We must work at this as never before. We must cooperate with our neighbours – and do so with the speed and priority that matches the urgency of the crisis.
12. The next milestone is the 2023 UN Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, 'Water for Sustainable Development'. This will be a watershed moment of accountability for all of us.

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13. Let us ensure that in 2023 we can show that progress towards SDG 6 is firmly on track.