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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
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联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**Address by Mr Xing Qu,  
Deputy Director-General of UNESCO,  
at the Meeting of the Parties to the Water Convention**

**“Progress in transboundary water cooperation  
(indicator SDG 6.5.2)”**

**Geneva and online  
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**400 words – 4 minutes**

**[I. Introduction: finite water, infinite demand]**

When it comes to water, the world is facing a paradox.

On the one hand, water is finite. The resources we have today will not increase.

On the other hand, human demand for water is far from finite – and rising. The number of people on Earth is projected to exceed 8 billion by 2030, and 9 billion by 2040.

We cannot increase the water we have. But we can improve the way we manage it. This is the conviction behind Sustainable Development Goal 6, and especially indicator 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation.

## **[II. UNESCO and UNECE: lead agencies for indicator 6.5.2]**

This is an essential issue for UNESCO and UNECE, as the lead agencies for this indicator.

And, as you all know, we just launched our second progress report on this topic.

It offers signs for hope, as the Executive Secretary has underlined: more countries are engaged in monitoring transboundary water cooperation.

However, the report also identifies areas for progress: for example, many countries highlighted the need for further study on transboundary groundwater systems.

## **[III. Transboundary groundwater: findings of the report]**

Indeed, aquifers are no less important for being underground – and largely invisible. Some can supply water to entire regions for many years.

This is essential when it comes to satisfying the world's water needs.

However, while knowledge on international rivers and lakes has progressed, knowledge on transboundary groundwater has stagnated.

The second progress report identifies many of these data gaps and needs.

It also sets out opportunities to accelerate cooperation, in line with the Global Acceleration Framework for SDG 6.

As co-leader of the capacity-building component of this Framework with UNDESA, UNESCO stands ready to play its part.

Whether by capitalizing on the two global water conventions, contributing to national capacity-building efforts, or developing training programmes, UNESCO is fully committed to the goal of “water for all”.

#### **[IV. Conclusion]**

Ladies and gentlemen,

At UNESCO and UNECE, we will continue our work to improve knowledge of transboundary groundwater resources worldwide.

The second International Conference on Transboundary Aquifers, which we are jointly organizing from 6 to 9 December 2021, is central to these efforts.

Because, to quote oceanographer Dr Sylvia Earle, “with knowing comes caring”.

And we look forward to building on our fruitful cooperation to deepen knowledge and build tools for countries worldwide.

In monitoring indicator 6.5.2, we are not only taking stock of progress made to date. We are paving the way for future action.

Thank you.