

**9<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE  
PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL  
LAKES (WATER CONVENTION)**

**HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT**

**STATEMENT BY GHANA (NEW PARTY TO THE CONVENTION)**

**BY**

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**(MINISTER FOR SANITATION AND WATER RESOURCES)**

**29 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Chairperson of the Meeting of the Parties

Her Excellency, President of the Republic of Estonia

The United Nations Secretary-General

Parties to the Convention

Representatives of Interested States

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to express Ghana's sincere gratitude to the Parties to the Water Convention for the warm official welcome as a new Party and for the invitation to make a brief statement at this 9<sup>th</sup> session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention.

A year ago, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 to be precise, Ghana officially became a Party to the Water Convention – the 3<sup>rd</sup> country after Chad and Senegal from outside the European region to be a Party. I wish to share the successful experience of Ghana, reiterate Ghana's support and encouragement for other countries that have expressed interest in joining the Water Convention and, as a Party, to pledge our contribution towards advancing transboundary water cooperation.

Ghana's transboundary river basins cover over 75% of the total land surface, with about 30% of the freshwater flowing from outside of the country's international borders. The population in the entire Volta basin shared by Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Togo, which is projected to be 33.9 million by 2025, is predominantly rural with strong and direct dependence on the natural resource base for sustenance. The Volta basin also provides substantial domestic water supply, hydropower, irrigation and

industrial needs; and links the populations within the riparian countries. Furthermore, frequent extreme events, especially flooding; pollution occurrences; deforestation; and reduced surface waters and aquifer recharge, which adversely affect the provision of water and ecosystem services, have also been of serious concern.

The country therefore has developed the position of pursuing practical solutions based on negotiations and dialogue and to strengthen Ghana's cooperation with her riparian neighbours and other global watercourse countries. However, we recognise the need for international legal agreements, specifically the 1992 Water Convention and the 1997 Watercourses Convention, to serve as vital tools to guide and advance the required transboundary water cooperation.

Ghana's accession journey commenced in 2016, after the amendments to the Water Convention became operational and accessible to all United Nations Member States. In January 2018, the National Level Learning Alliance Platform for the water sector, which is a well patronized platform for learning and sharing in Ghana, with the support of World Wildlife Fund, Green Cross International, and the Water Convention Secretariat hosted the major national consultative action to inform as well as seek general consensus on the two Conventions. The consensus was that Ghana needed to ratify the international conventions to benefit directly from the existence of a stronger legal framework.

The next significant steps included the development and submission of an accession toolkit to key decision makers, including Cabinet and Parliament; meeting with the relevant Cabinet committee; engagement with the two relevant Parliament select committees; and sustained education and dissemination of the Convention to the larger population.

The accession would not have been completed without some pertinent initiatives and lessons that need to be shared:

- Key to the accession process was the commitment of the President of the Republic at the highest level and the support of a willing and dedicated Ministry in charge of water to lead and coordinate the entire process.
- It was significant to adequately engage the key decision-making institutions – Cabinet and Parliament – as well as to ensure effective collaboration with relevant

ministries including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Justice. The result of the engagements and collaboration was evident in the unanimous adoption of the ratification bill by Parliament.

- Conscious effort was also made to promote the obvious linkage of the Water Convention with other major global initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with particular emphasis on the Water Convention as a primary instrument and support for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation.
- Another critical element was the accession toolkit which was packaged as a simple document with all relevant information including the benefits of the conventions to the country that was handy and disseminated in educating the general public.
- Collaborative arrangements were established with the Coalition of NGOs in the Water and Sanitation sector and the Media who took charge of the communication and advocacy on the relevance and ratification of the Water Convention as part of their outreach programs.
- The push from the transboundary basin organisation was critical. The accession of the Water Convention has been central within the Volta Basin Authority (VBA) and the six riparian states have been encouraged and agreed to proceed with the accession. Accession of the Water Convention is recognised as an activity to be carried out by the riparian states with the support of the VBA in order to strengthen international cooperation and national measures for the utilization, management and development of transboundary water resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen, other players were very supportive along the way and need special mention. May I express our sincere gratitude to the Secretariat of the Water Convention for their immense encouragement, support, and insightful contributions that were very helpful.

Chairperson of the Meeting of Parties, we acknowledge that being a Party to the Convention is just one key step towards achieving the desired cooperation for the protection and sustainable use of our shared water resources. We wish to assure Parties to the Convention of our contribution to the execution of the Water Convention towards

advancing global transboundary water cooperation. Indeed, as a first step, Ghana as a Party has developed an Implementation Plan timeously as a requirement to the 1992 Water Convention, to serve as the blueprint to guide the country's drive and efforts to enhance transboundary cooperation.

Once again, I take this opportunity to entreat other interested countries particularly, the VBA member states, and our West Africa neighbours not to hesitate to join the global Water Convention.

Thank you.