



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

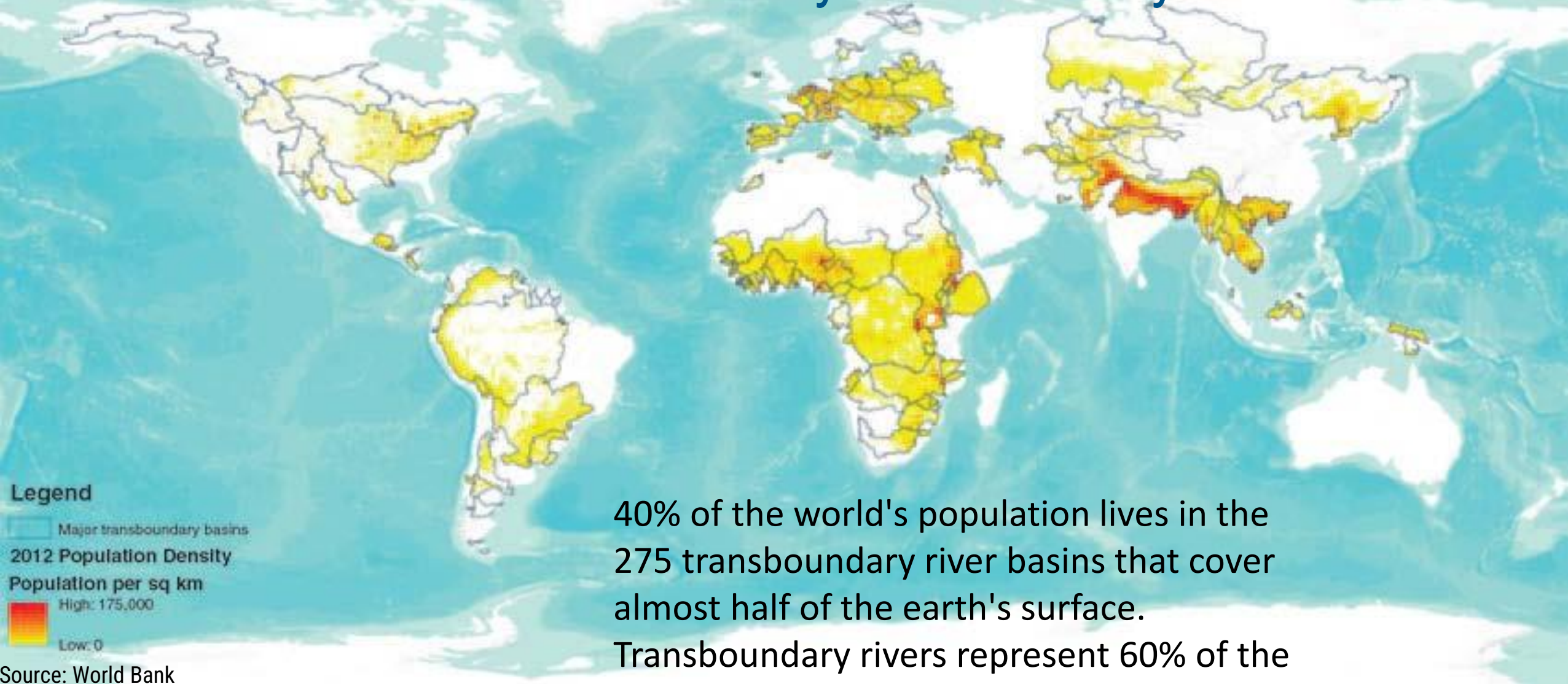
General introduction to the Water Convention, including its ties to the 2030 Agenda

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*Regional Workshop „Strengthening Transboundary Cooperation in the Senegal and Gambia, Koliba Corubal and Kayanga-Geba River Basins:
Opportunities and Challenges Related to Accession to the United Nations Water Conventions“ 14-15 December 2021 Gambia*

Freshwater resources are essentially transboundary in nature



40% of the world's population lives in the 275 transboundary river basins that cover almost half of the earth's surface. Transboundary rivers represent 60% of the world's freshwater flows.

Importance of Transboundary Water in West Africa



Why are global framework instruments needed?

- For the continuity and sustainability of transboundary cooperation on the basis of a common language and mutual understanding
- Support cooperation when it is not established:
- When there is no specific legal and institutional mechanism at basin level, i.e. for more than 60% of all basins
- When the existing legal and institutional arrangements at the basin level are weak, eg. many agreements do not provide for data sharing, provision for dispute resolution
- When all the basin states are not party to the basin agreement, i.e. for more than 80% of the basins
- Promote the gradual improvement of cooperation when it is established and strengthen implementation, for example, through a platform to share experiences and good practices
- Support ≠ replace because basin agreements are to be created and the Conventions facilitate negotiations and cooperation
- Strengthen the profile of 'transboundary waters' at national and international political level, and foster synergies with other global initiatives, for example for climate change

The Water Convention



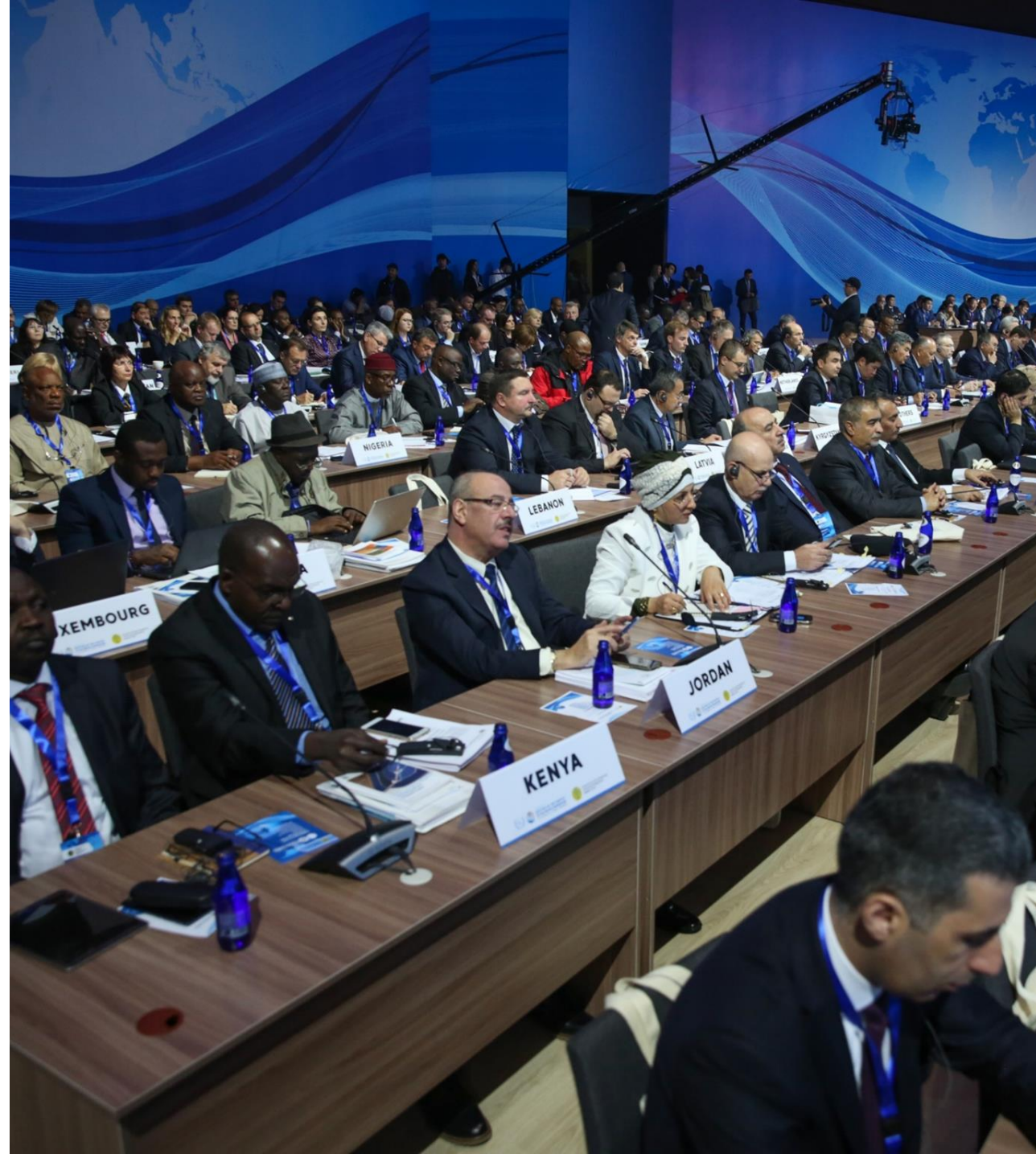
A legal and institutional framework for **transboundary water cooperation** contributing to **sustainable development**, international **peace and security**.



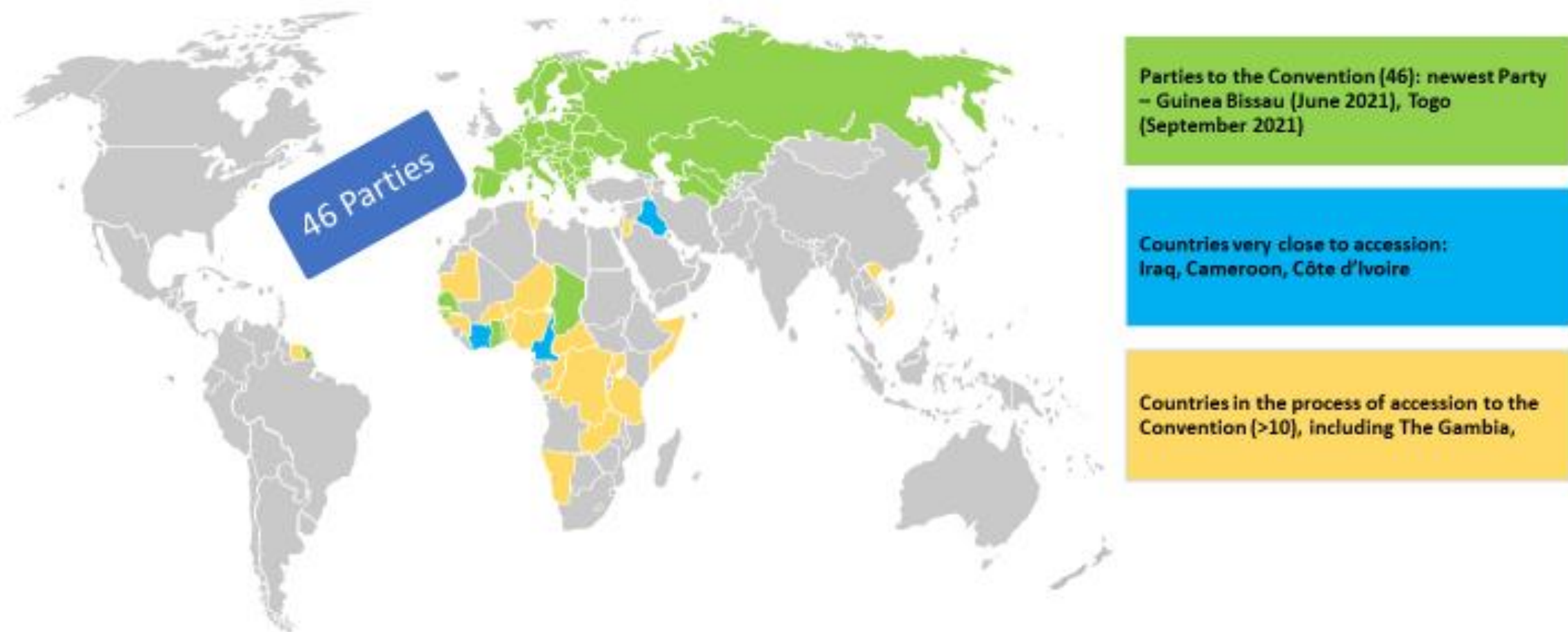
A **unique platform** to discuss progress of **transboundary water cooperation** worldwide under the umbrella of the **United Nations**



Opened to all interested countries, with **more than 130 countries** exchanging experiences and knowledge to prompt progress in cooperation



GLOBAL MOMENTUM: Parties to & interest in the Convention



Globalization guided by the **Strategy for the implementation of the Water Convention at global level**

The Water Convention:

Main objective:

Foster cooperation over transboundary waters in order to **ensure** that they are **sustainably and equitably managed**



Water Convention Key Principles

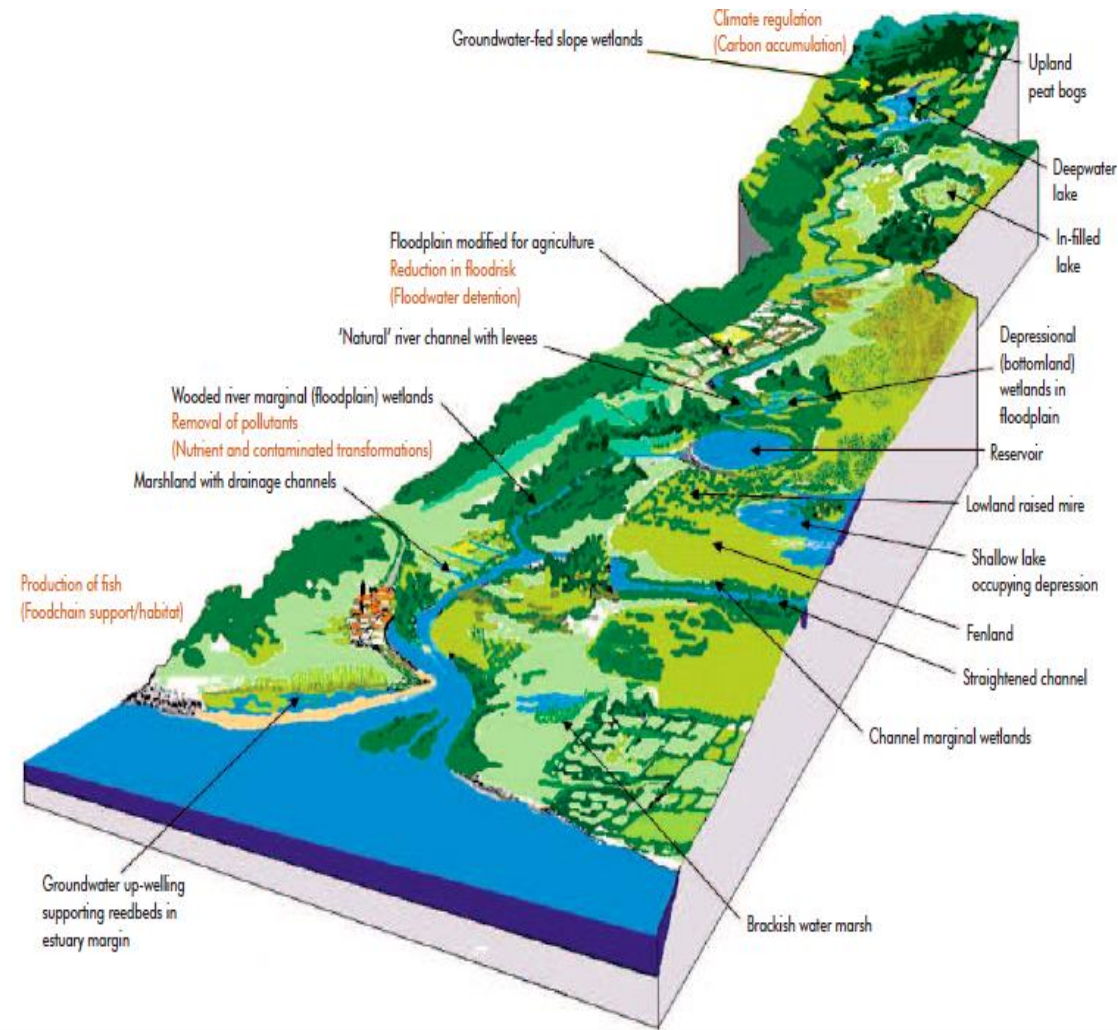
Principle of prevention

Principle of equitable and
reasonable utilization

Principle of cooperation

Scope of Application of the Convention

- "Transboundary waters": all surface and underground waters which mark the borders between two or more States, cross them or are located on these borders (Art1 (1))
- Transboundary impacts included: harm to human health and safety, flora, fauna, soil, air, water, climate, landscape and historical or other monuments constructions, or interaction of several of these factors; it may also be an attack on cultural heritage or socio-economic conditions resulting from changes in these factors
- The Riparian Parties shall cooperate [...] with a view to developing harmonized policies, programs and strategies applicable to all or part of the hydrographic basins concerned (Art 2 (6))





Main provisions of the Water Convention (1)

General obligations for Parties:

Parties shall implement all appropriate measures to **prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact:**

- Waste water treatment, licensing of discharges and monitoring of authorized discharges
- Best environmental practice for non-point pollution sources
- Minimization of the risk of accidental pollution
- Protection of groundwaters
- Application of Environmental Impact Assessment
- Monitoring and assessment of water resources

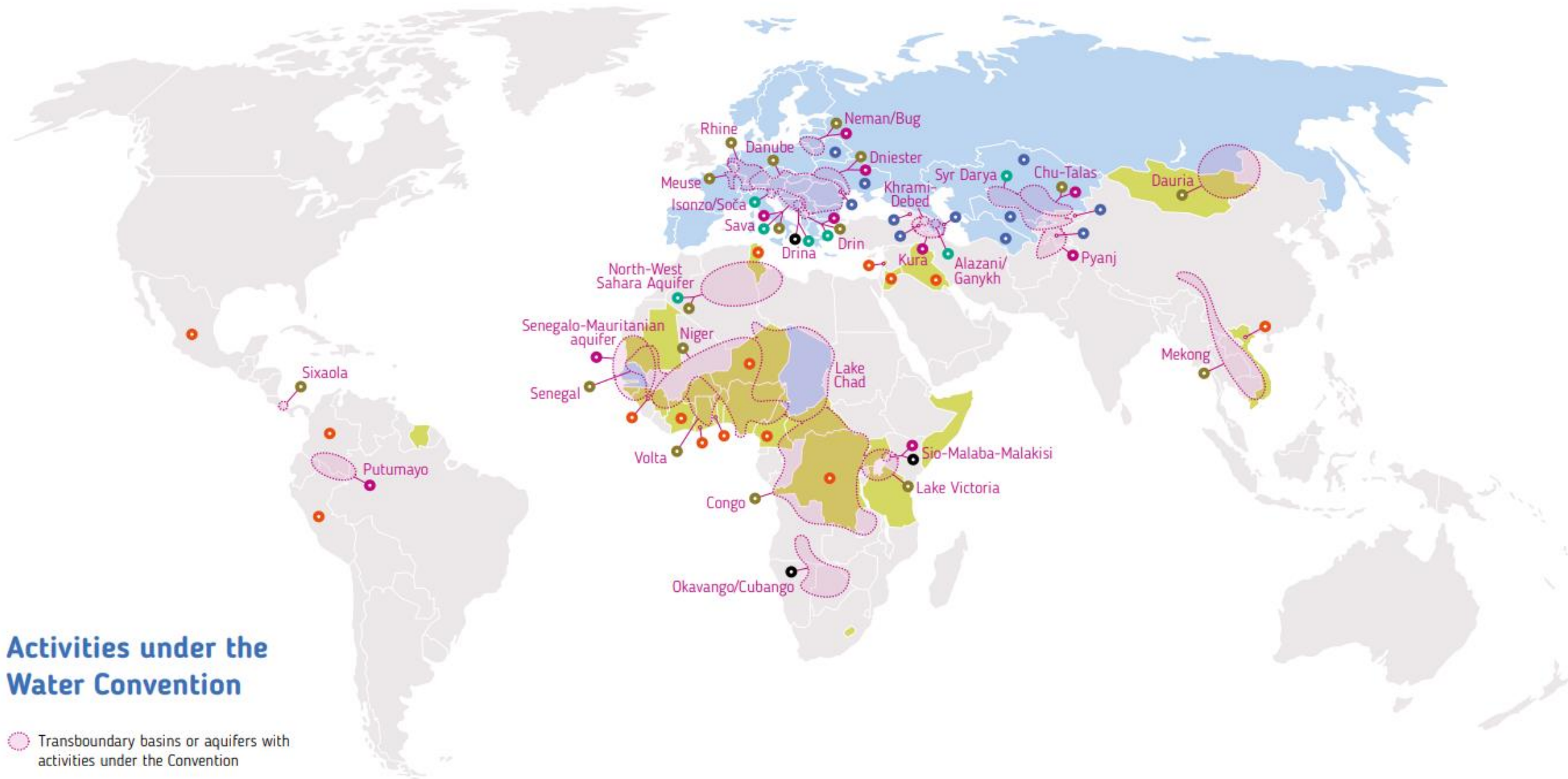


Main provisions of the Water Convention (2)

Specific provisions for riparian countries:

- Conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements and creation of joint bodies
- Consultation between Riparian Parties
- Joint monitoring and assessment
- Common research and development
- Exchange of information between Riparian Parties
- Warning and alarm systems
- Mutual assistance
- Public information





Areas of work

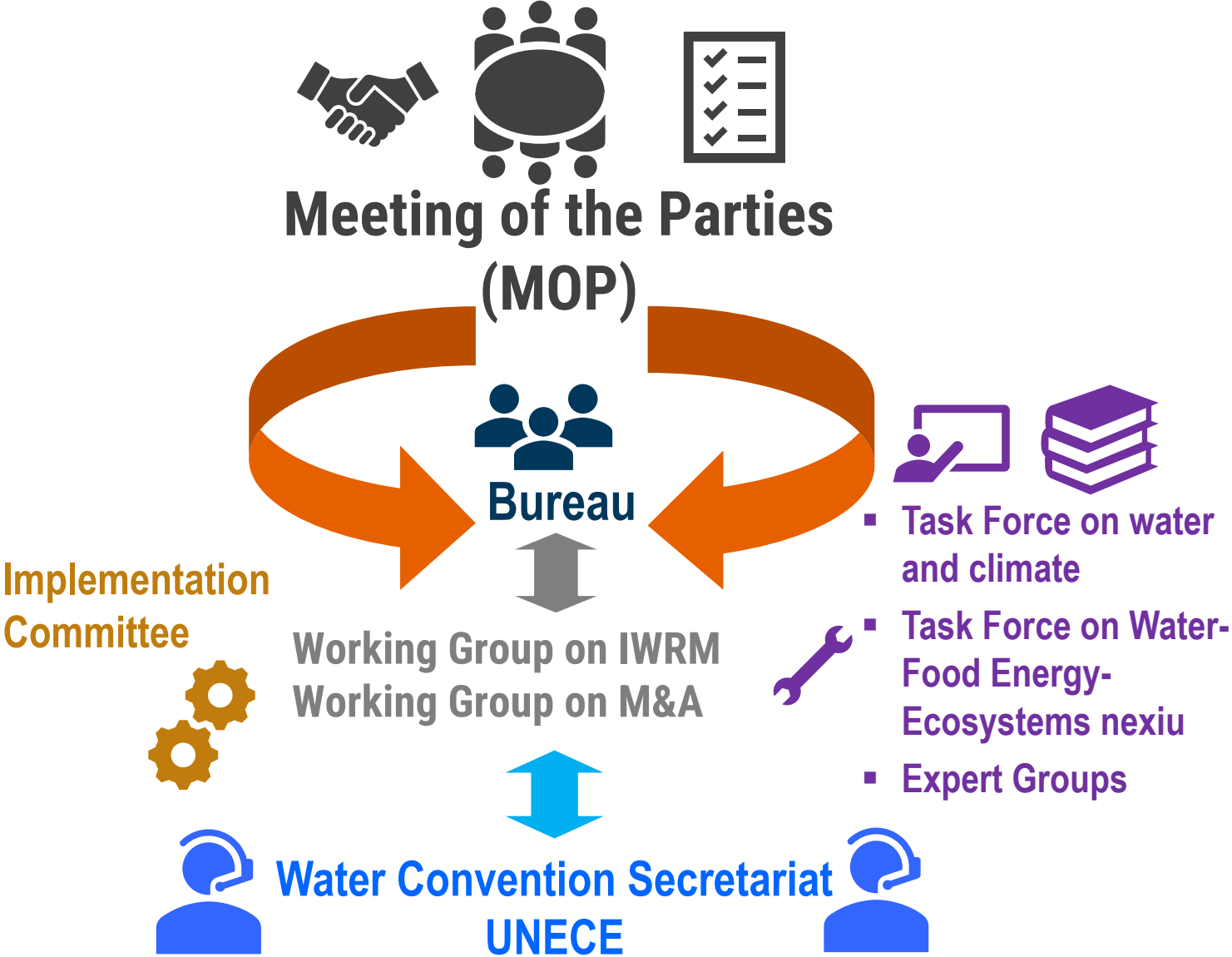
- Support to the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies
- Identification, assessment and communication of the benefits of transboundary water cooperation
- Assessment and promotion of the Water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins

- Adaptation to climate change in transboundary basins
- Opening of the Convention, promotion and partnerships
- National Policy Dialogues on IWRM under the European Union Water Initiative

Country Status

- Parties
- Countries which have started a discussion on accession

The living Water Convention : institutional mechanism



BENEFITS

- Take decisions at the meeting of the Parties and the Working Group
- Shape the Programme of Work (activities and topics covered)
- Take on formal roles in bodies of the Convention (Vice Chair, Lead Party for the work on Benefits..)
- Work closely with secretariat, receive support for implementation
- Exchange of experience, foster collaboration with other Parties and Non-Parties

Water Convention Programme of Work 2022-2024

Delivering at different levels:



Programme area 1: Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and application of its principles drawing on the benefits of cooperation



Programme area 2: Supporting monitoring, assessment and information sharing in transboundary basins



Programme area 3: Promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water management at all levels



Programme area 4: Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins



Programme area 5: Facilitating financing of transboundary water cooperation



Programme area 6: Reporting on SDG indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention



Programme area 7: Partnerships, communication and knowledge management

The Water Convention & 2030 Agenda

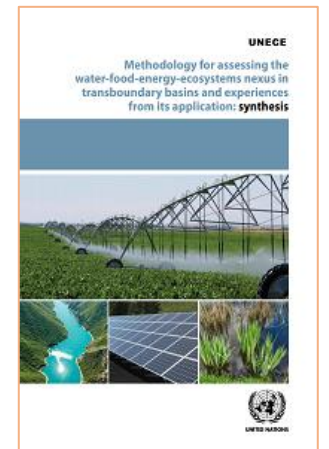
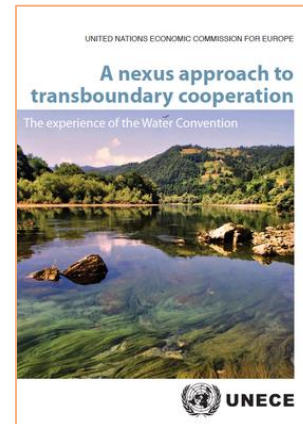
- Transboundary Water Cooperation is a Global Agenda
- Agenda 2030 and the SDGs
 - Transboundary waters are relevant for each one of the five cross cutting areas of agenda 2030: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships.
 - **SDG 6 addresses the whole hydrological cycle; especially 6.5:** to implement IWRM at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate by 2030.
 - **Target 6.5.2 – proportion of transboundary area covered by an operational arrangement**
- The Water Convention is thus key to achieving SDG6 and all water-related SDGs.



SDG 6 = currently significantly lagging = Needs accelerated actions to be achieved by 2030!

The Water Convention and the SDGs

- Convention supports countries in achieving the 2030 Agenda, for example:
 - SDG 6 and esp. target 6.5.2 on IWRM and transboundary cooperation
 - SDG 13 and 11 through its activities on climate and disasters: pilot projects, workshops, capacity-building, e.g. on preparing bankable projects, guidance preparation, e.g. words into action guidelines on water and disasters together with ISDR (2018)
 - SDG 7 and 2 through its activities on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus: Basin assessments, synthesis methodology (2018), in cooperation with Energy sector/division: policy brochure on renewable energy and nexus and multi-stakeholder “Hard Talks” on Renewable Energy Investment
- Convention also supports SDGs 16, 15, 3,17



SDG Indicator 6.5.2

SDG Target 6.5: By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

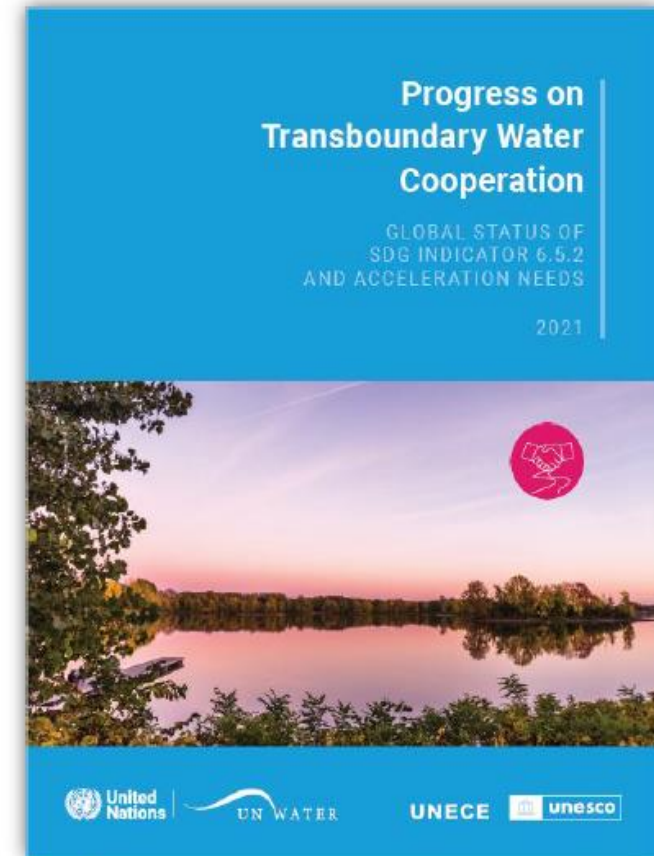
Indicator 6.5.2 Proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation

Only indicator on transboundary cooperation => Catalytic role across multiple SDGs and targets

Custodian agencies: UNECE and UNESCO

Results of the second reporting exercise in 2020

- **High level of engagement** => in 2020: 129 out of 153 countries submitted reports
- However, only **24** countries report all transboundary waters covered by operational arrangement. Additional 22 countries with > 70% and < 100%
- Europe, North America and Sub-Saharan Africa show greatest levels of Cooperation. In Latin America and Asia, much more progress is needed for water Cooperation
- At least 128 reported basins lack agreements
- Insufficient knowledge on groundwater systems





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Thank you!

