

THE EXPERIENCE OF GHANA: CONTEXT OF ACCESSION TO BOTH UN GLOBAL WATER CONVENTIONS, THE VALUE ADD FOR GHANA, AND DEVELOPING A ROAD MAP TO ACCEDE TO THE WATER CONVENTION

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Context of Accession to Both UN Global Water Conventions -2

Ghana's Transboundary Water Resources Concerns:

- About 30% of the freshwater flows from outside of Ghana's international borders
- Provide substantial water supply, hydropower, irrigation and industrial needs; link the populations - Creates socioeconomic interdependencies between the riparian countries
- Recent extreme events (floods) and pollution occurrences in the transboundary basins (Volta, Tano and Bia) have been of grave concern.

Her Position:

- Ensure pragmatic solutions anchored on negotiations and dialogue
- Cooperate fully with her riparian neighbours and other global watercourse countries.

The Needs:

- Need for international legal agreements, to serve as vital tools
 - guide, foster and secure the required transboundary water cooperation
- Ghana the 1992 Water Convention and 1997 Watercourses Convention as the vital tools to promote her position on transboundary cooperation.

Context of Accession to Both UN Global Water Conventions -2

- Both Conventions cover international watercourses - surface and underground freshwater, and serve as mechanisms to strengthen international cooperation.
- The Conventions embody a number of principles on: equitable and reasonable utilization; obligation not to cause significant harm; general obligation to cooperate; etc.
- They are compatible, not contradictory, and in many ways complementary:
 - 1997 Watercourses Convention complements the 1992 Water Convention by detailing the factors relevant to equitable and reasonable utilization (article 6).
- Differences between the two conventions on the same subject matter are of greater or lesser stringency or detail rather than a matter of conflicting prescriptions.
 - 1997 Watercourses Convention leaves confined groundwater outside its scope, 1992 Water Convention covers all transboundary groundwater, including confined aquifers.
- The differences are rather a strength since the more detailed provisions in one instrument can inform the implementation of the other.
- Hence, Ghana's accession to both Conventions.

The Value Add For Ghana: The Benefits -1

- The conventions have proven their effectiveness as an international legal regime that provides benefits for Ghana as a member.
- Water convention provides Ghana with:
 - Platform for enhancing international cooperation for shared rivers and aquifers.
 - Framework and support in establishing agreements and bodies for specific basins - the ongoing case of the Bia and Tano basins
 - Specific timeframes, standards and procedures for Ghana in developing single and joint trans-border water infrastructure.
 - Developing single and joint trans-border water infrastructure such as the Sogakope-Lome water supply, and the Pwalugu Multipurpose Dam projects.
 - Applicable provisions to promote data exchange and information sharing as well as joint training programmes and relevant seminars and meeting on data exchange.
 - Developing agreement on obligatory minimum amount of water that should flow into Ghana from Burkina Faso for use especially in the dry season.

The Value Add For Ghana: The Benefits -2

- Step by step mechanisms to pursue conflict prevention and resolution.
 - Creates room for Ghana to engage its neighbours on activities inimical to us as the downstream country.
- Provisions for implementing obligations, especially the obligation aimed at prevention, control and reduction of significant transboundary impacts.
 - Addressing impacts – the perennial spillage from Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso into Ghana and pollution of Bia River in Cote d'Ivoire from mining activities in Ghana.
- Enhancing Good Governance and Investment:
 - Accession has signalled to other countries, international organizations, financial institutions and other actors the willingness to cooperate on the basis of transboundary norms and standards.
 - Enhancing the trust of international investors in terms of good governance (clear processes, rules, standards and norms).
 - Provides the necessary framework - international principles, standards and practices to enhance sound management of international watercourses and contribute to the implementation of SDG target 6.5.

The Value Add For Ghana: The Benefits -3

- Technical Assistance and Support:
 - Ghana as a party to the 1992 Water Convention could benefit from the use of the Convention's trust fund –
 - Technical assistance to parties on studies and pilot projects; and support for capacity building (priority is given to parties).
 - Benefits from existing experiences, such as guidance documents, activities and projects on the ground.
 - E.g. the Water Convention's activities on adaptation to climate change and on transboundary flood management.
- Support from the Community of Parties
 - The water convention is a collective forum. Ghana as a party may bring its needs and expectations to the attention of all other parties - a party is not left alone in its dealings.
- Contribution to International Peace and Security
 - Participation in and cooperation through the Water Convention intergovernmental platform reduces uncertainty and builds relationships - contributing to international peace and security.

Developing a Road Map to Accede to the Water Convention

- Key to the Accession is a clear Roadmap to be followed through.
- Developing the Roadmap involved the following:
 - Lead institution to lead the process
 - Developing a Ratification Toolkit
 - Identification of Key Stakeholders
 - Engagement/Consultation of the Stakeholders
 - Materials and platforms for communication
 - Timelines for the accession
 - Resources and Support Required (Internal and External).

THANK YOU