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Report of the Meeting of the Parties on its ninth session

Addendum

Programme of work of the International Water Assessment Centre for 2022–2024 and decisions

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Programme of work of the International Water Assessment Centre for 2022–2024

I. Rationale and objectives of the programme of work

A. Background

1. The International Water Assessment Centre (IWAC) is a collaborative centre for integrated water resources management established by the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) (The Hague, Netherlands, 23–25 March 2000).¹

2. Initially, IWAC operated in The Hague (Netherlands), and later in Bratislava, on the basis of the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute with the support of the Government of Slovakia. In 2015, the Meeting of the Parties at its seventh session (Budapest, 17–19 November 2015) welcomed the offer of Kazakhstan to host IWAC.² On the basis of a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Government of Kazakhstan, signed on 30 May 2017,³ the IWAC office was opened in Nur-Sultan in July 2017.⁴

3. In accordance with the Centre's terms of reference (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2017/4), the main purpose of IWAC is to support the implementation and application of the Convention and, as relevant, its Protocol on Water and Health, and their respective programmes of work. In its activities, IWAC should focus on countries neighbouring Kazakhstan, Central Asian countries and other countries inside and outside the ECE region, as appropriate.

4. The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention at its eighth session (Nur-Sultan, 10–12 October 2018) adopted the programme of work of the International Water Assessment Centre for 2019–2021 (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2).

5. IWAC has progressed in implementing its programme of work for 2019–2021 to a significant extent. In particular, it has, among other things, carried out activities on identification of transboundary water allocation practices, dam safety and consolidation of countries' efforts to develop a strategy for the use of water and energy resources in Central Asia.

6. While implementing its programme of work for 2019–2021, IWAC has become a centre for cooperation on water resource management for Central Asian countries, as well as for the countries neighbouring the region, such as Afghanistan, China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia and the Russian Federation (hereinafter referred to as the "Eurasian region").

7. This is the second programme of work of IWAC in Nur-Sultan. Its draft was submitted to and discussed at the third joint meeting of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment (Geneva, 26–28 April 2021) as well as the thirty-second meeting of the Bureau (29 and 30 April 2021). Activities of the draft programme of work were considered at the meeting of the Working Group on the Presidency of Kazakhstan at the Bureau (20 April 2021), the regional Workshop on Green Recovery and Technologies in Central Asia organized by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic (28 April 2021), and the Regional Meeting on Dam Safety in Central Asia (23 June 2021). Consultations on the programme of work

¹ ECE/MP.WAT/5, para. 40.

² ECE/MP.WAT/49, para. 79 (a).

³ Available at

https://unece.org/DAM/cefact/mou/MoU_with_Kazakhstan_IWAC_Eng_30_May_2017.pdf.

⁴ International Water Assessment Centre, "History of creation", 2017. Available at <https://iwac.kz/index.php/en/bout-us/history-of-creation>.

activities have been held with Slovak organizations such as the Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute and Vodohospodárska výstavba.

B. Objectives

8. The main objective of the programme of work of IWAC is to support implementation of the Convention's programme of work for 2022–2024 (ECE/MP.WAT/2021/3), which aims to promote transboundary water cooperation and the sustainable management of shared water resources.

9. The IWAC programme of work also aims to support the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2), adopted at the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties.

10. The activities in the IWAC programme of work are structured according to the programme areas of the Convention's programme of work. The programme of work includes new projects and activities, as well as some activities from the previous IWAC programme of work that have been postponed owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic or must be continued.

11. IWAC will contribute to the implementation of the respective programme areas under the Convention's programme of work, for example, by communicating with the lead Parties and consulting the Convention's Bureau and secretariat, as appropriate.

II. Areas of work and activities

A. Activities related to programme area 2 of the Convention's programme of work: Supporting monitoring, assessment and information-sharing in transboundary basins

12. Water resources management in transboundary basins requires the exchange of data and information. Reliable information is necessary for decision-making and taking action on the ground.

13. Joint monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters and information exchange are among the key obligations under the Water Convention. IWAC will assist countries in developing coordinated monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters and data exchange.

Planned activities

1.1. Assistance in updating the Convention's guidelines on monitoring, assessment and data exchange

IWAC will assist in updating the guidance materials on monitoring, assessment and data exchange. In particular, it will assist in defining the current practice in monitoring, assessment and data exchange in the transboundary basins of the Eurasian region. A regional workshop will be held to discuss proposals for the guidance materials on monitoring, assessment and data exchange, to gather and document experience about data and information exchange, and, notably, to discuss the *Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Rivers, Lakes and Groundwaters*.⁵

1.2. Assistance in developing joint actions to prevent water pollution in transboundary basins

Activity on assistance to interested riparian countries in developing coordinated actions to prevent accidental water pollution in the Syr Darya River basin will be continued.

⁵ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/20.

Possible partners: The Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union and others.

B. Activities related to programme area 3 of the Convention’s programme of work: Promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water resources management at all levels

14. Integrated water resources management is the most effective method of water resources management, contributing to the protection of the environment and prevention of water degradation. Sustainable water resources management is one of the main objectives of the Water Convention. In addition, target 6.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals requires the application of integrated water resources management at all levels.

15. IWAC activities related to this area are aimed at assisting in the implementation of integrated water resources management in the transboundary basins of the Eurasian region.

Planned activities

2.1. Promoting intersectoral solutions based on the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus

IWAC will assist in strengthening intersectoral dialogue on the use of water resources, including dissemination of the findings of the publication *Solutions and investments in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus: a synthesis of experiences in transboundary basins*.⁶ It is planned to carry out a case study aimed at assessing the role of water in the development of the economies of Central Asian countries based on the example of Kazakhstan.

2.2. Promoting integrated water resources management in transboundary basins

In order to build capacity on water allocation in a transboundary context, a regional meeting will be organized on the application of the *Handbook on water allocation in a transboundary context*.⁷

IWAC will provide support to the operation of the National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resources Management in Kazakhstan, and promotion of intersectoral cooperation in the region.

In the framework of the National Policy Dialogue in Kazakhstan, IWAC will assist in implementing activities of the Protocol on Water and Health in Kazakhstan. In particular, thematic sessions will be organized on the application of the guidance tool *Protocol on Water and Health and the 2030 Agenda: A Practical Guide for Joint Implementation*,⁸ as well as promotion of target-setting in accordance with the Protocol.

2.3. Assistance in the safe management of hydraulic structures

Building on the results of the ECE project “Capacity-building for cooperation on dam safety in Central Asia”, IWAC will organize training sessions on exchange of experience in the safe management of hydraulic structures with the participation of partner organizations from Slovakia.

Possible partners: Slovakia, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), OSCE, the European Union and others.

⁶ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/66.

⁷ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/64.

⁸ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.II.E.15.

C. **Activities related to programme area 6 of the Convention’s programme of work: Reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention**

16. In 2015, a regular reporting mechanism was introduced under the Convention. In 2017, the General Assembly adopted the Global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including indicator 6.5.2 (proportion of transboundary basin area with an operational arrangement for water cooperation).⁹ Two reporting exercises undertaken so far have shown the significance and necessity of transitioning from reporting to action. The willingness of countries to use the reports and move from reporting towards actions to address the identified gaps is heavily reliant on the accuracy of the reports and the availability of consistent data.

17. IWAC efforts in this area will aim at assisting countries in developing road maps on indicator 6.5.2 and taking concrete steps to facilitate the achievement of target 6.5.

Planned activities

3.1. Facilitating the use of reports to improve transboundary water cooperation

To assist the joint efforts of ECE and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in promoting achievement of target 6.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, IWAC will organize a regional workshop on sharing experiences in using reports as a tool for developing transboundary cooperation and developing road maps on indicator 6.5.2.

Possible partners: UNESCO, OSCE, the European Union, Global Water Partnership and others.

III. Overview of resource requirements

18. The implementation of the IWAC programme of work will depend on the availability of resources. The amount of \$248,000 is required for its implementation, particularly for the preparation of analytical reports and materials, translation services (English and Russian) and support of participants in workshops, training sessions and meetings.

19. IWAC will endeavour to attract funding for the programme of work through ongoing and new programmes related to water resource management and environmental protection in the Eurasian region. Some activities of the programme of work will be implemented jointly with Slovak organizations.

20. In connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the IWAC events will be carried out via videoconference, while some will be organized with in-person participation.

21. IWAC will aim to enhance cooperation and coordination of its activities with relevant initiatives on transboundary waters in the Central Asian region and neighbouring countries in order to increase the effectiveness of the planned activities.

22. Based on the programme of work for 2022–2024 approved by the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, IWAC, in consultation with the Bureau and the secretariat, will develop a work plan for the implementation of the programme of work for 2022–2024.

⁹ See General Assembly resolution 71/313 on work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/71/313).

Decision IX/1

General issues of implementation

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes,

Having regard to its decision VI/1 on support to implementation and compliance,¹⁰

Taking note of the report of the Implementation Committee to the Meeting of the Parties at its ninth session¹¹ and endorsing its findings,

Appreciating the progress made by the Implementation Committee in promoting the mechanism to support implementation and compliance and the Committee's support to other activities under the Convention,

1. *Welcomes* the first advisory procedure before the Implementation Committee and the facilitative, non-confrontational and results-oriented approach taken by the Committee;

2. *Recalls* that transboundary cooperation is a key principle of the Convention, as it supports the achievement of the Convention's object and purpose; however, the principles of reasonable and equitable use and of prevention, control and reduction of transboundary impact are equally important;

3. *Recognizes* that the establishment of joint bodies and the procedural obligations laid down in the Convention are essential to give effect to its substantive obligations, irrespective of the likelihood of the occurrence of transboundary impact, and that the implementation of the procedural obligations can facilitate the implementation of the obligation to prevent, control and reduce transboundary impact;

4. *Welcomes* the contribution of the Implementation Committee and its members to support awareness of the Convention among countries interested in accession;

5. *Stresses* the importance of the reporting mechanism for effective fulfilment of the Implementation Committee's mandate;

6. *Expresses its appreciation* for the general progress achieved by the Parties in implementing the Convention, as reflected in the second reporting exercise;

7. *Notes with concern* that certain common challenges to implementation and compliance remain and that some Parties appear to face specific challenges in implementation and compliance;

8. *Encourages* Parties to seek the Committee's assistance, support and facilitation to address difficulties in implementing and complying with the Convention, so as to ensure that the object and purpose of the Convention are advanced, and to prevent water-related disputes;

9. *Draws the attention* of Parties and non-Parties to distinct opportunities provided by the advisory procedure in this respect, as shown by the outcomes of the first advisory procedure;

10. *Recalls* the possibility that information may be submitted to the Committee by any stakeholders with a view to assisting the Committee in fulfilling its mandate.

¹⁰ See ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2.

¹¹ ECE/MP.WAT/2021/5.

Decision IX/2 Reporting

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes,

Determined to facilitate the implementation and application of and compliance with the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention),

Recalling article 17, paragraph 2 (f), of the Convention, which states that the Meeting of the Parties shall consider and undertake any additional action that may be required for the achievement of the purposes of the Convention,

Recalling also article 17, paragraph 2, of the Convention, which states that, at their meetings, the Parties shall keep under continuous review the implementation of the Convention,

Recalling further its decision VII/2,¹² through which it introduced a regular reporting mechanism under the Convention, and its decision VIII/1,¹³ through which it adopted a revised reporting template,

Recognizing that reporting is key for reviewing and enhancing national implementation of the Convention as well as accession thereto,

Recognizing also that reporting provides a means to enhance basin-specific cooperation,

Noting that regular reporting may also serve as a means to keep the public informed of measures taken to implement the Convention,

Underlining that reporting provides information that helps to identify the specific needs of basins, and thereby supports the mobilization of resources, for example, for capacity-building and technical assistance activities,

Noting that reporting also allows for the identification of emerging issues and difficulties in the implementation of the Convention, and so can inform the development of future programmes of work under the Convention and the work of the Implementation Committee,

Recognizing that reporting promotes the accumulation and exchange of lessons learned, good practices and experience to enhance implementation of the Convention,

Recalling the adoption by the international community of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the establishment of Sustainable Development Goal 6 to “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all”, with a target calling for transboundary cooperation to implement integrated water resources management (target 6.5),

Recalling also the adoption by the General Assembly, in July 2017, of the Global indicator framework for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,¹⁴ which includes indicator 6.5.2 on transboundary water cooperation for which the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have been entrusted as custodian agencies,

Recalling further that reporting contributes to the delivery of the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework as part of the Secretary-General’s International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030,

Recognizing the relevance of the Water Convention as an instrument that can help countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 on clean water and sanitation,

¹² ECE/MP.WAT/49/Add.2.

¹³ ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2.

¹⁴ See General Assembly resolution 71/313 on work of the Statistical Commission pertaining to the 2031 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/71/313), annex.

Emphasizing the role of reporting under the Convention as a useful means for reviewing countries' progress towards achieving target 6.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Expressing its appreciation for the outcomes of the first and second reporting exercises under the Water Convention and on indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals carried out in 2017–2018 and 2020–2021, respectively,

Recognizing the many benefits of the first and second reporting exercises highlighted by countries, such as improved cooperation at the national level, increased political attention to transboundary water cooperation and exchange of experience with other countries and, when templates have been filled out together or in coordination, discussion and agreement on issues and problems with other riparian countries, especially in the framework of existing joint bodies,

1. *Welcomes* the submission of reports by all Parties on the implementation of the Convention during the second reporting exercise;

2. *Also welcomes* the 129 responses by countries in the second reporting exercise on indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals;

3. *Further welcomes* the publication *Progress on transboundary water cooperation under the Water Convention: Second report on implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes 2017–2020*,¹⁵ prepared by the secretariat, and the second report *Progress on transboundary water cooperation: Global status of SDG indicator 6.5.2 and acceleration needs 2021*,¹⁶ prepared by ECE and UNESCO;

4. *Welcomes* the development and publication of the *Guide to reporting under the Water Convention and as a contribution to SDG indicator 6.5.2*,¹⁷ which provides support for countries in preparing their national reports;

5. *Calls upon* countries to make use of the reports in order to improve their transboundary cooperation, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework, for example by setting national or basin-wide targets or by implementing “quick wins” in order to achieve target 6.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030;

6. *Reiterates* the need to set up an online reporting system for future reporting exercises under the Convention and on indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals in order to facilitate the filling of the template by countries, and data verification and analysis by the co-custodian agencies;

7. *Takes note* of the indicative requirements and characteristics for the future online reporting system as contained in the annex to the present decision;

8. *Requests* the secretariat, in cooperation with UNESCO, to introduce the online reporting system, to the extent possible, by the third reporting exercise, taking into account the indicative requirements;

9. *Entrusts* the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, with the task of adjusting the reporting template as needed to respond to the functionalities of the online reporting;

10. *Requests* all Parties to submit to the secretariat their completed templates for the third reporting exercise by the set deadline;

11. *Strongly encourages* all countries sharing transboundary waters to report on indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals in the third reporting exercise;

12. *Encourages* countries to cooperate when preparing their national reports with riparian neighbours and/or in the framework of joint bodies, for example by coordinating the

¹⁵ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/67.

¹⁶ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/65.

¹⁷ United Nations publication, ECE/MP.WAT/60.

responses to the template, in particular on the identification and sharing of data and information on transboundary aquifers;

13. *Also encourages* countries to prepare their national reports in an inclusive manner in coordination with all relevant national authorities and stakeholders, including youth and indigenous people, and ensuring a gender-balanced participation;

14. *Encourages* the United Nations regional commissions and other partner organizations to promote the findings of the reports, consider preparing regional analysis and make use of the reports in designing their activities in support of transboundary water cooperation, and expresses appreciation to those who have already done so;

15. *Requests* the secretariat to carry out capacity-building activities, pending availability of resources. Such activities should, among other things, promote the findings of the national reports and the setting of national or basin targets, help countries address identified data gaps, such as regarding transboundary aquifers, enhance the quality of future reports, promote broad participation in future reporting exercises, and contribute to the increased role of transboundary water cooperation in policymaking;

16. *Invites* ECE, UNESCO and UN-Water to closely cooperate in the development of the online reporting system and on capacity-building activities;

17. *Invites* ECE and UNESCO to explore opportunities for mainstreaming a gender perspective in the upcoming reporting exercises;

18. *Requests* the secretariat to regularly include exchange of experiences on reporting in the agenda of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment.

Annex

List of indicative requirements and characteristics for the online reporting system

The development of an online platform seeks to support the long-term sustainability of reporting as an important means by which to help advance transboundary water cooperation. For the system to be used efficiently, a number of aspects are important, such as the type of functions the system should have, the types of analysis planned, interoperability with other platforms, data access, as well as the modalities of data entry. The most important aspects, which should guide the development of an effective system, are set out below:

A. Technical requirements:

- The system should allow country representatives to enter the responses directly into the online system interface; to account for different capacities, countries could still have the option to submit responses in Word/PDF formats.
- The system should entail a delegation function, which would allow different country representatives to access the system to split the work among themselves during the filling process, to coordinate among different authorities, or to use the system for demonstration purposes to explain the methodology.
- The system should support all types of questions present in the reporting template (for example, multiple choice, tables, yes/no questions) and allow direct connection between cells with related answers, to avoid inconsistencies (see point below). The system should also provide for the possibility to include attachments or weblinks with relevant supporting information.
- The system should allow respondents to submit draft versions and preliminary submissions of the report to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- There should be the possibility to download draft and final versions in Word and PDF formats for sharing outside the platform (especially to allow national coordination when countries work on draft versions).
- As countries can submit their national reports in English, French, Russian and Spanish, the system interface should be available these four languages of the United Nations.
- The system interface should include the possibility to make references to the guidance documents to facilitate the input of the information by countries, for example, by providing links to reference documents, or through pop-up explanatory text, such as definitions.
- It should be easy to extract data from the data-collection system in frequently used formats (extensions) for further analysis by country, basin, agreement, reporting exercise or question.
- Any future changes and redevelopments of the provider of the online platform should come with a guarantee that new and old reporting systems will remain compatible for future analysis.

B. Organizational requirements:

- The organization/software developer contracted for the provision of an online reporting system should ideally be a reliable and well-established institution, with a good reputation for delivering similar online systems, and should be able to demonstrate the potential to support the reporting process over the next 10 to 20 years.
- The software developer should assist with the adaptation of the reporting template to the online format.

- The developer should provide ongoing assistance to countries, ECE and UNESCO after the initial setting up of the system.
- In case some aspects of the system need to be reworked, the developer should assist in implementing these changes.

C. Additional useful characteristics:

- To facilitate the input of the information by countries and the validation, review and analysis of the reports by ECE and UNESCO, the system should allow for automatic checks and controls. For instance, the system should include in-built prompts to provide an answer to an empty field (where appropriate), or auto-generate sums, such as in the calculation of the Sustainable Development Goal indicator value, or criteria for operationality.
- The system should allow ECE and UNESCO to provide comments and suggestions for countries and highlight areas for improvement directly in the system.
- The system should provide an overview of the status of the responses received, allowing ECE and UNESCO to monitor the progress of countries in their reporting efforts.
- The system should be accessible with a limited bandwidth and be mobile-friendly to allow for the entry of responses from a smartphone or tablet.
- The system should allow countries to choose basins and agreements from an indicative lists compiled by ECE and UNESCO, to facilitate the entry of the information by countries and to facilitate the analysis of responses and support validation of the reports by ECE and UNESCO, ensuring that countries respond regarding all relevant basins.
- The developer should provide data analysis and visualization tools, for example, via an application programme interface, to allow for the presentation of the collected data and its analysis.
- The data should be compatible with the UN-Water Sustainable Development Goal 6 Data Portal and be able to feed information to the United Nations Statistical Division Global Sustainable Development Goal Indicators Database, the UN-Water Sustainable Development Goal 6 Data Portal and other regional or global databases.

Decision IX/3

Targets for a more sustainable and predictable funding of the work under the Convention

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes,

Recalling decision III/2,¹⁸ which established a trust fund under the Convention for voluntary contributions to support the promotion and effective implementation of the Convention and its Protocols and invited Parties to make voluntary contributions,

Recalling also that all Parties commit to financing the programme of work when adopting it and its budget at the triennial sessions of the Meeting of the Parties,¹⁹

Recalling further that the Meeting of the Parties at its eighth session (Nur-Sultan, 10–12 October 2018) requested the secretariat, in cooperation with the Bureau, to prepare options for a more sustainable and predictable funding of the work under the Convention,²⁰

Noting that effective implementation of the programme of work is challenged by the limited number of Parties contributing financially to the trust fund and the resulting uncertainties for planning and implementation,

Recognizing that, in the light of the recent transformation of the Convention into a global legal and institutional platform for transboundary water cooperation, the effective and comprehensive implementation of the programmes of work under the Convention requires a more predictable and sustainable funding of its work,

Recognizing also the many benefits of financing the programme of work of the Water Convention,

Determined to ensure a more sustainable and predictable funding of the work under the Convention,

1. *Decides* to adopt targets for financial sustainability of the work under the Water Convention, as contained in the annex to the present decision;
2. *Urges* all Parties to provide regular and unearmarked financial contributions to the trust fund in accordance with the adopted targets;
3. *Encourages* Parties to make in-kind contributions to the implementation of the programme of work;
4. *Invites* non-Parties and partners to contribute to the implementation of the work under the Convention;
5. *Entrusts* the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management with the task of regularly reviewing progress in the achievement of the targets;
6. *Decides* to review the targets, in the light of the progress accomplished, at its tenth session.

¹⁸ ECE/MP.WAT/15/Add.1, annex II.

¹⁹ See ECE/MP.WAT/54, para. 103 (g), and Add.1.

²⁰ See ECE/MP.WAT/54, para. 103 (h).

Annex

Targets for a more sustainable and predictable funding of the work under the Water Convention

Objective 1: Achieve a fairer share of the burden of financing the implementation of the programme of work

Rationale: Given that it is adopted by the Meeting of the Parties, all Parties should be responsible for financially supporting the programme of work and for its implementation. However, currently, fewer than half of the Parties finance the programme of work.

Indicator: Percentage of Parties financing the programme of work.

Baseline in 2016–2018: 38 per cent of the Parties financed the programme of work (16 out of 42 Parties).

Targets: By 2024, at least 50 per cent of all Parties finance the programme of work. By 2030, at least 66 per cent of all Parties finance the programme of work.

Objective 2: Improve reliability and predictability of funding

Rationale: Without mandatory contributions, the lead Parties for programme areas of the Convention programme of work and the secretariat need to have a regular, reliable and predictable cash flow to be able to plan activities. It is therefore important that Parties contribute regularly, normally each year (see exceptions in next paragraph), to the implementation of the programme of work. It is also important that they announce such contributions at the beginning of the triennium, ideally at or before the session of the Meeting of the Parties at which the programme of work is adopted.

However, considering the administrative costs incurred by the United Nations when receiving contributions, some countries, especially those with economies in transition, developing countries or countries with small populations, making contributions of less than \$5,000 per triennium, are invited to bundle and provide multi-annual contributions combined for several years at the outset of the triennium, if possible.

Indicator: Percentage of Parties contributing regularly (normally every year, see exceptions above) to the implementation of the programme of work.

Baseline in 2016–2018: 26 per cent of the Parties regularly contributed (11 out of 42 Parties).

Targets: By 2024, 50 per cent of all Parties contribute regularly to the implementation of the programme of work. By 2030, 66 per cent of all Parties contribute regularly to the implementation of the programme of work.

Objective 3: Support a balanced implementation of all programme areas and simplify donors' requirements to increase efficiency

Rationale: Many financial contributions to the Convention's trust fund are earmarked for specific activities, programme areas or projects. This implies a risk of unbalanced implementation of the programme of work, depending on funds received, and increases the administrative burden for the secretariat. It is therefore important to increase the share of overall funding that is unearmarked, i.e. that can be used in a flexible way for all programme areas, as needed. Recently, more and more donors have agreed to provide unearmarked funding.

Unearmarked funding should go together with removing donors' requirements for reporting on the use of specific contributions. While the bodies under the Convention are briefed on a yearly basis on the advancement of activities through detailed substantial and financial reports (reports are submitted yearly to the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and triennially to the Meeting of the Parties), a number of donors require in addition separate reports for their contributions. This increases the workload of the secretariat and decreases its efficiency. As for other trust funds, including under some multilateral environmental agreements serviced by the United Nations Economic

Commission for Europe (ECE), Parties should progressively move towards using the above-mentioned annual reports to the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Meeting of the Parties for their internal accounting.

Indicator: Percentage of contributions that are unarmarked and do not require individual financial or narrative reports.

Baseline in 2016–2018: 17 per cent of all contributions were unarmarked and did not require individual reports.

Targets: By 2024, 50 per cent of all contributions are unarmarked and do not require individual reports. By 2030, 66 per cent of all contributions are unarmarked and do not require individual reports.

Decision IX/4

Procedure for proposing to host future sessions of the Meeting of the Parties

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes,

Recalling article 17, paragraph 2, of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), which describes the role of the meetings of the Parties in keeping under continuous review the implementation of the Convention,

Recalling also article 17, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which provides that the ordinary meetings of the Parties shall be held every three years,

Recalling further that the General Assembly, in its resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, decided that the United Nations bodies may hold sessions away from their established headquarters when a host government agrees to defray the additional costs directly or indirectly involved,

Taking note of rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Meetings of the Parties, which states that the meetings of the Parties shall be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva unless other appropriate arrangements are made by the Parties and/or the Bureau in consultation with the secretariat,

Emphasizing that hosting of the Meeting of the Parties is an important instrument for the promotion of the Convention and transboundary water cooperation at the national, transboundary/basin, regional and global levels,

Recalling the recent opening of the Convention for accession by all States Members of the United Nations, which makes its Meeting of the Parties a global intergovernmental platform for exchange and debate on transboundary water issues,

Recognizing the many benefits associated with the hosting of the Meeting of the Parties in terms of the political prestige, increased visibility and extensive networking and alliance building opportunities,

Emphasizing that the hosting of the Meeting of the Parties offers a unique opportunity for showcasing the knowledge, practices and experience accumulated by the host country regarding water resources management and transboundary water cooperation and, at the same time, for learning of the knowledge, practices and experience in these areas available in other regions of the world,

Recalling the responsibilities associated with the hosting of the Meeting of the Parties in terms of the practical and logistical arrangements and the associated financial implications,

Emphasizing that the financial implications should be commensurate to the level of economic development of a host country but that the requirements set out in General Assembly resolution 40/243 for holding sessions away from headquarters are to be complied with in all cases,

Recalling also the responsibilities associated with the political leadership expected from the host country in substantive preparations of the session,

Determined to continue the existing practice under the Convention whereby the host country takes over the chairmanship of the Convention for the following intersessional period,

Emphasizing the fundamental role of the chairmanship for promotion of and support to the Convention worldwide and the positioning of transboundary water cooperation on the international agenda,

Recognizing the importance of holding the Meetings of the Parties in different geographic regions of the world, in particular in view of the Convention's globalization,

Committed to harmonizing and formalizing the procedure for proposing to host a session of the Meeting of the Parties in order to allow for improved planning of activities under the Convention and enable timely and effective preparations by the host country, as well as efficient use of the benefits associated with hosting,

1. *Decides* to establish a procedure for proposing the hosting of sessions of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention, as contained in the annex to the present decision;
2. *Urges* all Parties to consider hosting a session of the Meeting of the Parties;
3. *Decides* to review the procedure, in the light of experience gained, at its eleventh session.

Annex

Procedure for proposing the hosting of sessions of the Meeting of the Parties

1. Twenty months after the last session of the Meeting of the Parties, the secretariat shall disseminate by electronic means to all focal points of Parties a call for proposals to host the following after the next session of the Meeting of the Parties.
2. The call for proposals should:
 - (a) Recall the benefits for and obligations of the host country and explain the financial implications associated with hosting;
 - (b) Describe the elements to be included in the proposal, such as possible venue, possible level of representation by the host country, motivation of the country to host the session of the Meeting of the Parties, support to be provided and specific ideas, if any, on the organization of the session and relevant side events and back-to-back or side meetings;
 - (c) Encourage potential host countries to consider ways to reduce the environmental footprint of the session.
3. Any proposal to host the following after the next session of the Meeting of the Parties shall be submitted to the secretariat no later than 30 months after the last session of the Meeting of the Parties.
4. For any proposal that requires clarifications, the secretariat may get back to the Party concerned with a view to clarifying the essential aspects of the proposal.
5. The Bureau shall monitor the proposals received on the basis of information provided by the secretariat. Should no proposal be received, the Bureau can decide to reach out to one or more Parties to encourage them to consider hosting.
6. No later than six weeks before the next session of the Meeting of the Parties, the secretariat shall submit an overview of the proposals received, for consideration and decision by the Meeting of the Parties.

Decision IX/5

Partnerships for the global implementation of the Water Convention

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes,

Recognizing the significant progress made since the entry into force in 1996 of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), which has provided a sound legal framework and an effective intergovernmental platform for the promotion of cooperation and the sustainable management of water resources at the basin, regional and international levels that are key for peaceful and sustainable development,

Recognizing also that such progress has only been possible due to the cooperation and contribution of many partners from around the world,

Recognizing further the increasing momentum within the United Nations system for its collective role in fostering transboundary cooperation as a driver of peace, regional cohesion and sustainable development,

Recalling its decision III/1²¹ opening the Water Convention to accession by all United Nations Member States and the significant global progress made since these amendments to the Convention became operational in 2016, turning the Water Convention into a global intergovernmental framework with worldwide participation, and with accessions increasing from outside the ECE region, in particular from Africa,

Welcoming the call by the United Nations Secretary-General for all United Nations Member States to accede to both the 1992 Water Convention and the 1997 Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Watercourses Convention) and to strive for their full implementation,

Recalling the Strategy for the implementation of the Water Convention at the global level²² aimed at increasing the Convention's impact at the global level, including through increased partnerships and synergies with other actors,

Recalling also Sustainable Development Goal 6 "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all", with target 6.5 thereof calling for transboundary cooperation,

Welcoming the Sustainable Development Goal 6 Global Acceleration Framework launched by UN-Water in 2020,

Expressing concern that the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 6, and particularly its target 6.5 on integrated water resources management and transboundary water cooperation, is, as demonstrated by the second reporting exercise on indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, lagging significantly behind,

Affirming the need to further strengthen partnerships in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention at the global level, including the strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation,

Welcoming the motion adopted in October 2020, by electronic vote, by the members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on "Cooperation on transboundary fresh waters to ensure ecosystem conservation, climate resilience and sustainable development" that underlines the importance of international commitments related to freshwater cooperation and conservation, particularly the Water Convention and the Watercourses Convention,

²¹ ECE/MP.WAT/14.

²² ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2.

Recalling its decision VI/4 on cooperation with the Global Environment Facility²³ (GEF) and its decision VI/5 on cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),²⁴

Recalling also its decision VII/4 on cooperation with partners for the implementation of the Convention²⁵ at its seventh session (Budapest, 17–19 November 2015),

1. *Emphasizes* the importance of, and appreciation for, partnerships with international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia and the business sector to strengthen transboundary water cooperation, by contributing to the Water Convention's programme of work and by supporting its implementation;

2. *Welcomes* the fact that several partners are seizing the opportunity of the Convention's global opening, and have included the Water Convention in their own strategic documents and contribute to its activities, and calls on other partners to do the same, if possible;

3. *Affirms* that strengthening partnerships is crucial for the Water Convention, its Parties and partners to accelerate progress on transboundary water cooperation in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 and its target 6.5, as well as other water-related Sustainable Development Goals;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* for partnerships that have been developed and strengthened with regional organizations to support awareness-raising, capacity-building, implementation and further accessions to the Water Convention, particularly through enhanced collaboration and coordination with United Nations regional commissions, as well as other regional and subregional organizations, some of which have started to promote the Convention through their own means, and encourages such organizations to continue and further strengthen related efforts, which can be mutually beneficial;

5. *Recognizes* the vital role that joint bodies and river basin organizations play in promoting the work of the Convention at the transboundary level and in contributing to its implementation among riparian Member States, while furthering transboundary cooperation in their regions;

6. *Expresses its appreciation* for the ongoing and strengthened cooperation between international financial institutions and the Water Convention, and welcomes initiatives to further extend and develop joint efforts on the funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development;

7. *Affirms* the role of United Nations country teams and resident coordinators in supporting national engagement with, implementation of, and, in particular, in assisting with accession processes to the Water Convention, to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 and all water-related Sustainable Development Goals;

8. *Recognizes* the importance of academia and international organizations in sharing information and building capacity regarding the Water Convention and its practical implementation;

9. *Expresses its appreciation* for the cooperation with the Global Environment Facility following decision VI/4;

10. *Decides* to continue cooperating closely with the Global Environment Facility, coordinate activities and exchange experience, in particular between the Global Environment Facility International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW:LEARN) and the different bodies and activities under the Convention;

11. *Entrusts* the secretariat to further strengthen the cooperation with the Global Environment Facility on different levels and to report on this cooperation at the next

²³ ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ ECE/MP.WAT/49/Add.2.

meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and at the tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention;

12. *Expresses its appreciation* for the cooperation with UNESCO following decision VI/5 and decides to continue with, and further strengthen, this cooperation, in particular regarding UNESCO/ECE co-custodianship of indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals;

13. *Decides* to develop and further enhance cooperation with existing and new partners, in particular in the light of the global opening of the Water Convention and of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Paris Agreement;

14. *Invites* relevant international organizations, United Nations regional commissions and other UN-Water members, financing institutions, joint bodies, the business sector, academia, civil society and other potential future partners to join the activities of the Water Convention;

15. *Entrusts* the secretariat and the Bureau with the task of further developing and formalizing the modalities of existing and future partnerships, as appropriate and needed;

16. *Decides* to regularly review progress and gaps in the development of partnerships and invites partners to report on their related efforts at the next meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention.
