

## Session 3B2

### *Promoting peace by developing and implementing legal frameworks for transboundary water resources*

Tuesday 22 March

13:30 – 15:00 (UTC / Dakar time)

Room 4

Co-Convenors:



**UNECE**



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## CONTEXT

Transboundary water cooperation is crucial for international stability and peace since it has proven spill-over economic and peace benefits beyond the water sector. It is thus important to advance cooperation on shared water resources to promote peace. One of the well-tested and tried ways of advancing water cooperation is through the establishment and implementation of legal frameworks for transboundary water resources. This session is aimed at highlighting the tools and instruments for advancing such cooperation available for policy and decision-makers, including the United Nations global Water Conventions.

## KEYWORDS

- transboundary water, peace, international law, legal frameworks, capacity building

## DESCRIPTION OF THE SESSION

The session will start with an analysis on how the legal and institutional frameworks at the global, regional, and basin level foster transboundary water cooperation, and discuss the gaps and challenges to cooperation based on the results of the second reporting exercise on SDG indicator 6.5.2. Session participants will then be introduced to the existing international processes, tools, and guidance materials, fostering transboundary water cooperation at the global level. These include: the accession to the global United Nations Water Conventions and the assistance provided by the Convention secretariat in acceding to the Water Convention, including from the perspective of a new Party; the tools and instruments available to different water management actors, such as the recent publication *Agreements for Transboundary Water Cooperation: A Practical Guide* that serves as an agreement-builder. Lastly, the session will proceed to the discussion of the examples of the application of international water law principles in practice at basin and regional levels. This session will thus provide an overview of how to advance transboundary water cooperation through the development of legal frameworks from the initiation to implementation stages.

### ***Key objectives:***

- Highlight the role of legal frameworks in providing an enabling environment for sustainable and integrated water resources management and conflicts prevention, and present concrete tools and instruments that support the development and implementation of such legal frameworks
- Present the experience of the new Parties to the Water Convention, latest developments regarding transboundary water cooperation at the sub-regional and basin level, and analyse the challenges, taking into account the basins with tensions over shared waters;
- Highlight the role the stakeholders can play in fostering progress towards the development and implementation of operational arrangements

### *Guiding questions:*

- How can the development and implementation of legal frameworks for transboundary water resources prevent conflicts and contribute to their sustainable management? What are the challenges ahead? Which processes, tools, and guidance materials are available at the global level for accelerating the progress towards the development and implementation of operational arrangements?
- What are the recent developments and examples of the successful application of international water law principles at the regional and basin level?

### Contacts – lead organisers:

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## PROGRAMME (90 mins)

### Opening

- Introduction by UNECE: overview of the session programme, key topic, and questions
- Opening remarks: **Ms Olga Algayerova, Executive Secretary, UNECE** (4 min)
- Keynote speech: **Mr. Virginijus Sinkevičius, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries, European Union** (5 min)

### Introductory presentation

The state of transboundary water cooperation in light of the results of the monitoring exercise under SDG indicator 6.5.2: **Ms. Sonja Koepfel**, Secretary, Water Convention, UNECE and **Ms Alice Aureli**, Chief of Section, Groundwater Systems and Settlements, UNESCO (4 min)

### Panel I (25 min)

#### Tools for accelerating the progress towards the development of operational arrangements and their successful applications

**Moderator: Mr. Bougonou K. Djeri–Alassani**, Ag. Director, ECOWAS Water Resources Management Center (EWRMC)

*Presentations on the following questions:*

- Which processes, tools, and guidance materials are available at the global level for accelerating the progress towards the development and implementation of operational arrangements?
- What are the recent developments and examples of the successful application of international water law principles at the regional and basin level?

*Panel Interventions:*

- Accession to the UN global framework conventions: country perspective  
**Ms. Cecilia Abena Dapaah, Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ghana**
- Practical Guide for the Development of Agreements or Other Arrangements for Transboundary Water Cooperation  
**Mr. Peter Kovacs, Water Director, Ministry of Interior, Hungary, Chair of the Practical Guide Drafting Group**
- Revising an Agreement on a Transboundary Basin  
**Mr. Phera Ramoeli, Executive Director, Okavango River Basin Water Commission**
- Application of Water Utilization Rules and Procedures: Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA) for mainstream hydropower projects in the Mekong River Basin  
**Mr. Sophearin Chea, Regional Water Policy Consultant, Secretariat of the Mekong River Commission**

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- Lessons from World Bank support to the development and implementation of operational arrangements

**Mr. Anders Jägerskog, Senior Water Resources Management Specialist, World Bank Water Global Practice**

*Interactive discussion (9 min)*

## **Panel II (25 min)**

### **Progress, gaps and challenges in the development and implementation of legal and institutional frameworks for transboundary water cooperation**

**Moderator: Ms. Sibylle Vermont**, Deputy Head of Section, Global Affairs, International Affairs Division, Federal Office for the Environment, Switzerland

*Panel discussion based on the results of the second reporting exercise on SDG indicator 6.5.2:*

- Progress, gaps, and challenges in the MENA region: the Case of Iraq  
**H.E. Mr. Mahdi Rashid Al Hamdani, Minister of Water Resources, Iraq**
- Progress, gaps, and challenges in the Latin American region: the case of the La Plata River basin  
**Mr. Juan Carlos Alurralde, Secretary General, Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee for the La Plata River**
- Progress, gaps, and challenges in Africa  
**Mr. Christophe Brachet, Deputy-Secretary General, International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO)**
- Progress, gaps, and challenges: perspective of youth  
**Ms. Lyazzat Syrlybayeva, Central Asia Youth for Water Network**
- Progress, gaps, challenges, and the way forward: donor perspective  
**Mr. Steffen Hansen, Environmental Specialist, Global Environment Facility (GEF)**

*Interactive discussion (9 min)*

## **Take away and concluding remarks**

**H.E. Danilo Türk**, Former President of Slovenia, Chair of the Global High-Level Panel on Water and Peace, Lead Political Advisor of the Geneva Water Hub