



National Workshop

National workshop related to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes: Zambia's accession process

26 & 27 May 2022
Lusaka, Zambia

1. Background

Zambia has taken numerous measures to promote cooperation with neighbouring States in the management and development of its shared waters, in accordance with the provisions of international law. The transboundary Zambezi and Congo River Basins each cover approximately 75% and 25%, respectively, of Zambia's territorial area. Zambia is a party to basin agreements and is a member state of basin organisations including the Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM) with all riparian states, the Zambezi River Authority (Zambia & Zimbabwe) and the Lake Tanganyika Authority (Zambia, Burundi, Tanzania, Congo DR). Zambia has also initiated the process to become a party to the Commission Internationale du bassin Congo-Oubangui-Sangha (CICOS) and is planning to develop an agreement and river basin authority for the Luapula River shared between Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Zambia is a party to the 2000 SADC Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses at regional level.

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) is a global legal and inter-governmental framework which aims to strengthen cooperation in the field of transboundary waters and to promote protection and sustainable use of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. Adopted in 1992 and initially limited to the UNECE region, the Convention has been open for accession by all United Nations Member States since 1 March 2016. Five African countries have already acceded to it and many others are in various stages of the process of accession. The Convention continually engages states, basin organizations and other stakeholders on practical activities, global meetings and projects on the ground.

The 1992 Water Convention, whose Secretariat is hosted by UNECE, and the 1997 Watercourses Convention are vital global legal frameworks, and the Water Convention a crucial institutional platform, to support cooperative development and prevent conflicts related to shared waters. The UN Secretary-General encourages states to accede to and implement both conventions as mutually complementary.

With a view to possible accession of Zambia to the Water Convention, the relevant ministries have been engaging regularly with Convention's secretariat since August 2021 in order to assist the ministries involved in preparing for the formal accession process. On 31 March this year, the Minister of Water Development and Sanitation, Hon. Mike Elton Mposha, sent a letter stating Zambia's interest in accession. A national workshop is now being convened to raise broader awareness of the Convention and develop a road map for accession.

2. Purpose

The general objective of the workshop is to inform stakeholders about the Water Convention, to share about the processes initiated by Government of Zambia to become party to the Water Convention and to discuss the next steps in the accession process.

- Specifically, the workshop will allow to:
- Inform stakeholders about the Water Convention;
- Identify the benefits, possible advantages and strategic objectives of a possible accession to the Convention for Zambia;
- Inform about the accession process, benefits and implementation by new African Parties;
- Discuss the practical implementation of the Water Convention to meet the challenges of water resource management in Zambia, based on the experience of existing Parties;
- Present the initiatives started by the Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection as part of Zambia's accession process to the Water Convention;
- Arrange a Question and Answer session on frequently asked questions from stakeholders about the Water Convention;
- Discuss the next steps and road map in the accession process and the contribution of this process to Zambia's transboundary and national water management.

3. Expected results

The expected results pursued through this workshop are:

- Stakeholders are informed about the cooperation framework of the Water Convention at the global level and discuss the future engagement of Zambia with the Convention's Programme of Work 2022-24;
- The advantages for States to become party to the Water Convention are presented;
- Update on the efforts initiated for Zambia's accession to the Convention is presented;
- The actors are informed on the next steps of the accession process and the contribution of this process to Zambia's national water management and transboundary water cooperation are discussed;
- Actors define a roadmap, with key milestones agreed, for accession to the Water Convention.

4. Participation

The workshop will bring together representatives from:

- Relevant ministries in Zambia regarding transboundary water resources, including Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Environment, parliamentarians;
- Relevant basin organizations pertaining to Zambia's shared waters, including ZAMCOM, CICOS, Zambezi River Authority and the Lake Tanganyika Authority;
- Relevant diplomatic missions, including the European Union;
- Relevant international and regional organizations, including AMCOW, GIZ, World Bank, African Union, SADC, UNECA, IWMI, GWPSA;
- Relevant academia, civil society and independent national and international experts.