

Experience of a new party to the Convention – opportunities and interests

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*“Lessons and Perspectives on Water Cooperation For Africa and Europe:
From the 2022 Dakar Forum to the 2023 UN Water Conference”*

Ghana's experience with transboundary arrangements

- Ghana is a downstream state drained by three Transboundary rivers, namely: Volta, Tano and Bia.
- Approximately 30% of Ghana's surface water resources comes from riparian countries.
- Transboundary aquifers shared by Ghana and Burkina Faso, Ghana and Ivory Coast and Ghana and Togo.
- Ghana is committed to the establishment of permanent mechanisms for cooperation in the management of international river basins.
- Currently member of three transboundary arrangements – the Volta Basin Authority (regional - 2006) and the two global UN transboundary water agreements (1992, 1997).

Regional and Sub-regional arrangements (1)

- Volta Basin Authority (VBA) formally established and operational in August 2009 by the six riparian countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, and Togo).
- Oversee all arrangements to develop, manage, and share the potential benefit of the basin's resource.
- Promotes cooperation between countries on issues relating to water resources and related disasters.
- Tano/Bia Basin arrangements are still under development in a process driven by the ECOWAS Water Resources Coordination Centre.

Regional and Sub-regional arrangements (2)

- Ghana-Burkina Faso Joint Technical Committee for IWRM, - set up in 2005 and operational since 2007.
- JTC-IWRM serves as technical advisor on matters concerning WR programs/projects in their shared basins.
- Promoting data and information sharing and conflict management (Bagre Dam spillage flooding control).
- Collaboration at the sub-basin level with Burkina Faso :
 - White Volta Basin Secretariat and Nakambe Basin Authority.
 - Black Volta Basin Secretariat and Mohuon Basin Authority.

Motivation for Accession (1)

- **Enhancing Good Governance & Investment**

-Accession to the Global Water Conventions signals to other countries, international organizations, financial institutions and other actors the willingness to cooperate on the basis of transboundary norms and standards. It will also enhance the trust of international investors in terms of good governance (clear processes, rules, standards and norms).

- E.g. Currently, Ghana is the chair of the Council of Ministers of the Volta Basin Authority, our only international platform for transboundary water cooperation. Accessing to these conventions provides Ghana the strength and footing to lead actions and negotiations. Enhanced platform for enhancing International Cooperation for Shared Rivers and Aquifers.

- **Availability of specific standards & procedures for proposed developments**

- The Conventions provide specific timeframes, standards and procedures for riparian states proposing either single or joint transboundary projects. E.g. Ghana has an interest in developing single and joint trans-border water infrastructure such as the Sogakope-Lome Water Supply, the Pwalugu Multipurpose Dam, and the Water Transport Infrastructure projects.

- **Framework for data exchange and information sharing**

-E.g. Currently, there is an arrangement between Ghana and Burkina Faso for data on water discharges on the Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso and on planned measures/developments. On the other hand, there is no agreement on the obligatory minimum amount of water that should flow into Ghana for use especially in the dry season. Applicable provisions of the Water Conventions could resolve this critical issue to Ghana.

-Burkina Faso ratified the 1997 Watercourses Convention, Ghana has ratified both the 1992 Water Convention and the 1997 Watercourses convention. With the co- riparians being encouraged to do same a good international platform for cooperation is formed.

Motivation for Accession (2)

- **Attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

- Governance in the context of transboundary waters is a major impediment to achieving the SDGs especially targets 6.5 (implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate).
- The UN Conventions provide the necessary framework in terms of international principles, standards and practices for Ghana to enhance the sound management of her international watercourses and contribute to the implementation of SDG target 6.5.

- **Technical Assistance and Support**

- A country as a Party to the 1992 Water Convention may benefit from the use of the Convention's trust fund. The trust fund provides for technical assistance to Parties on studies and pilot projects; and support for capacity building. While non-Parties can also benefit from the convention's trust fund, priority is given to Parties.
- The 1992 Water Convention also provides benefits from existing experiences, such as its guidance documents, activities and projects on the ground. For example, Ghana will benefit from the Convention's activities on adaptation to climate change and on transboundary flood management.

- **Dispute avoidance and dispute resolution**

- The UN Global Water Conventions have step by step mechanisms (such as negotiation, mediation, and arbitration) which States can choose to pursue conflict prevention and resolution.
- In this way, it creates room for Ghana to engage its neighbours on activities inimical to us as the downstream state. Fortunately, Ghana's riparian neighbours - Benin, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire - have ratified the 1997 Watercourses Convention and seeking to do same with the 1992 Water Convention. It inures to the benefit of Ghana to do the same.

Experiences so far...

- **Launch of Implementation Plan in 2021**

- Strengthening of the policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks for managing and protecting water resources;
- Strengthening financing of water resources management to enhance transboundary cooperation
- Improving the knowledge base to facilitate water resources planning and decision making;
- Enhancing participation of all stakeholders, public awareness and education in water resources management;
- Improving IWRM at the river basin level for water security and enhance resilience to climate change.

- **Annual Work Programmes and Projects**

- Improving the knowledge base to facilitate water resources planning and decision making
 - UNECE accession road shows
 - Local and national public awareness
- Improving IWRM at the river basin level for water security and enhance resilience to climate change
 - Project funded by the World Bank on flood control in the Oti Basin Ghana and Togo
 - Buffer Zone protection , regenerate and maintain the native/established vegetation along river banks and generally in catchments of water bodies – Ghana and Burkina Faso communities.

THANK YOU