

**Opening and welcome by Mr. Meelis Münt, Secretary General of  
the Ministry of the Environment, Estonia  
at the special event marking the 30th anniversary of the Water  
Convention  
Tallinn Creative Hub and online, 30 June 2022**

Excellencies, ministers, colleagues

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to all the organisers and contributors of the special event marking the 30th anniversary of the Water Convention.

As we all know, there are more than 600 aquifers that are shared. These shared waters create environmental, social, economic and political interdependencies. Transboundary water cooperation is therefore vital for sustainable management of shared water resources and for preventing conflicts, promoting sustainable development and increasing climate change resilience. The Water Convention is a key here.

Initially negotiated as a regional instrument, it was opened up globally for accession to all UN Member States in 2016. We need such a global framework for several reasons: for example, for the continuity and sustainability of transboundary cooperation on the basis of a common language and mutual understanding; for the support of cooperation; for setting up or updating legal and institutional mechanism at basin level; and for promoting the gradual improvement of cooperation and for strengthening implementation. Transboundary water cooperation supports development and stability by reducing

sectoral trade-offs and conflicts of use, generating economic and social benefits that stabilize societies, making planned measures more effective, creating regional organizations that strengthen regional stability, integration and prevent conflicts.

A growing number of countries have realised the importance of transboundary water cooperation and are in the process of accession to this global instrument for benefitting from it and the numerous activities under the Convention that are implemented worldwide.

This year, 2022, marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Water Convention, which was adopted in Helsinki in 1992. Over the 30 years the Water Convention has been supporting basins and countries fostering transboundary water cooperation.

Today with this special event the achievements of the Convention will be highlighted. We are here to look back to the three decades of successful implementation of the Water Convention and to discuss economic, social and environmental benefits through the implementation of the Convention as well as regional integration, peace and stability generated by the implementation of the Convention. We are also looking forward and discussing the future challenges of the Convention.

I wish you all a fruitful meeting, deep discussions on achievements so far and on future challenges!

Thank you!