

## Opening of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary seminar of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

30 June 2022, Creative Hub Tallinn (Kultuurikatel)

### Speaking points for Ms. Jaana Husu-Kallio, Permanent Secretary of MoAF

- It is a great pleasure address this prestigious audience on this festive occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Water Convention. It is **the warm, cooperative spirit of the Water Convention** that makes it such a special instrument, facilitating dialogue, sharing knowledge and experience as well as seeking consensus.
- **Cooperation is needed more than ever in the current political, economic and sanitary situation.** Cooperation on water in fact goes **beyond water**: it is also about, for example, energy generation, food security, disaster management, environment protection and about transport (navigation). Water cooperation is at best **resilient**, with a high potential to endure and to continue even under difficult circumstances.
- In Finland, we highly esteem and have close to our hearts the international water law. **Finland** in fact **was active in initiating the two global water conventions**, and already in the ground work, namely on the development of the Helsinki Rules in the 1960s. **The Water Convention was adopted in Helsinki in 1992**, just across the Gulf of Finland.
- Finland has special ties with Estonia, and I am very happy that Estonia as the current Chair of the Water Convention Bureau is hosting this celebration.
- Having reached 30 years of age, the **Water Convention has clearly “grown up”** in many ways and has proven its worth:
  - o The scope of **work has evolved and broadened**, from quite technical topics such as monitoring and assessment, to equally fundamental governance issues and tackling cross-sectoral impacts.
  - o The **participation has increased**: from pan-European to world-wide, and the partnership between Governments and various organizations has expanded and become rich and diverse.
  - o **Impressive, concrete results have been achieved** and we will hear testimonies about these in the course of today.
- **So congratulations to the whole community that makes the Convention work!**
- **At the global level, political support to transboundary water cooperation is high**, and the Water Convention has made a huge contribution to that progress. At the same time, cooperation is **still commonly challenged** and it cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, everybody’s continuous **efforts are needed** to be able to enjoy those various benefits, not least the **peace and security**.
- **Promoting and supporting the implementation and application of the global water conventions of the United Nations is a part of the Finnish water way, the International Water Strategy of Finland.** This common framework of five Finnish ministries provides for a coordinated annual planning and regularly taking stock of the work.
- Representing several ministries and institutions in Finland, **WE look forward further sharing of our practical experience and learning from practices and solutions of other countries all over the world on the Water Convention’s platform. This joint work**, involving all of you, and fruitfully bringing together both legal and technical knowledge and means, **makes a real difference on the ground**. Common challenges get addressed in a multitude of ways, and water diplomacy can facilitate deploying these management solutions and add to their impacts.
- I trust that the same **enthusiasm as well as progress and innovation** that have carried forward the work under the Convention for these 30 years **will continue in the decades to come!** Finland will continue to make a strong contribution to the work under the Water Convention also in the future.