



Ministry of Infrastructure
and Water Management



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Bundesamt für Umwelt BAFU
Office fédéral de l'environnement OFEV
Ufficio federale dell'ambiente UFAM
Uffizi federal d'ambient UFAM



GLOBAL WORKSHOP ON WATER, AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

17-18 October 2022, hybrid

Palais des Nations, Geneva, and online starting at 10.00 a.m. on Monday, 17 October 2022 and ending at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, 18 October 2022

INFORMATION NOTE

I. Background

Interactions between climate change, water and agriculture are many, complex and region-specific. Climate change can impact water resources in different ways, for instance, through changes in the amount and patterns of precipitations and through extreme water events like floods and droughts. Water quality is adversely affected, among others, as a result of changes in river flows and nutrient and sediment run offs leading to higher water temperatures, reduced dissolved oxygen and loading of nutrients. Agricultural fertilizer use and overexploitation of (ground)water can aggravate the decreasing water quality. Hydrological changes can in turn deeply affect agricultural production and have destabilising impacts for agricultural markets, food security and non-agricultural water uses.

Thus, climate change impacts on the water cycle and the subsequent consequences on agriculture but also non-sustainable agricultural practices are increasingly affecting people's livelihoods, emphasizing the urgency to step-up adaptation and maximize mitigation co-benefits.

The interlinkages among climate change, water and agriculture are being recognised as key also in the preparation process for COP 27, in the framework of which two dedicated Presidency's flagship initiatives have been identified: "Action for Water Adaptation and Resilience (AWARE)" and "Food and Agriculture for Sustainable Transformation (FAST)".

By 2050 some 60 percent more food - up to 100 percent in developing countries - is expected to be needed in order to feed the world while agriculture will continue to be the largest user of water globally, accounting in many countries for around two-thirds or more of supplies drawn from rivers, lakes and aquifers. This has important implications for the adaptation of water systems at the watershed and basin levels, both in terms of water allocation between agriculture and other water uses and of environmental externalities. Next to that, adaptation of agricultural practices are needed to account for the reduced water availability.

Understanding intersectoral impacts opens crucial opportunities for cooperation benefits that transboundary water cooperation can leverage.

Cooperation over shared waters helps to improve adaptation to water-related climate risks (for example through the development of shared information systems or data exchange across sectors, enlarging the range and location of available measures, and sharing the costs and benefits). It prevents maladaptation that might unfold through unilateral measures and their potential negative impacts.

More broadly, it also brings an essential contribution to climate resilience, sustainable development, food and energy security, peace and regional integration. Planning for climate change adaptation at the level of transboundary basins can deliver benefits to and boost the resilience capacities of billions of people and species at the global scale.

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) serviced by UNECE addresses the impacts of climate change as well as application of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach as a part of its programme areas on climate change adaptation in transboundary basins and integrated and intersectoral approach to water resources management.

In the 2022-2024 work programme, the Water Convention is focusing on climate change adaptation as part of the mandate of its Task Force on Water and Climate and within the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation. The Water Convention, together with partners, supports countries in transboundary basins and river basin organisations in developing and implementing transboundary adaptation strategies and plans which address priorities and challenges for agriculture under changing climate, and mobilizing financing for realization of these strategies and plans. In addition, it also addresses equitable and sustainable water allocation and supports the application of the nexus approach in the framework of the activities of its Task Force on the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus.

II. Objectives and topics of the workshop

The workshop will build on the current and past work under the Water Convention to bring together water and agriculture communities as well as climate change experts to jointly discuss best practices and lessons learned in addressing water scarcity and water quality through improving climate adaptation and equitable and sustainable water allocation on the national and transboundary levels.

More specifically, the workshop will try to answer the following questions:

- Which are effective measures to mitigate effects of climate change and related extreme weather events on water quantity and water quality and consecutively on agriculture production? Are such measures already implemented at transboundary/basin level?
- How to accelerate action towards increasing climate resilience of water and agriculture? How to develop and implement climate change adaptation strategies in transboundary basins to ensure sustainable agriculture?
- How to consider and integrate equitable and sustainable water allocation and water use efficiency into transboundary agreements, transboundary adaptation strategies and activities of the transboundary basin organizations?
- How can agricultural practices be improved to reduce water demand and water quality impacts?
- How to better promote integration of the nexus approach in transboundary basins into national climate policies such as NDCs and NAPs?
- How can ecosystem-based adaptation measures support adaptation of agriculture and water management? What are the linkages with mitigation?
- What are the trends and measures taken to ensure food security in transboundary basins considering global challenges such as climate change and conflicts?

- How to advance this topic further? Which actions are possible and needed at national and international level and in the framework of the Water Convention? Which commitments can be mobilized on this topic in advance of COP27 and the 2023 UN water conference?

Take away messages from the workshop will possibly constitute discussion material at dedicated sessions/side events organised during the upcoming COP 27 in Egypt.

III. Partners

The global workshop is organized under the auspices of the Water Convention serviced by UNECE, under the leadership of the Netherlands and Switzerland, in cooperation with the International Network of Basin Organisations (INBO).

IV. Target audience and organization

The global workshop will be organised in a hybrid format both in presence at the Palais des Nations, Geneva and online with interpretation into English, French, Russian and Spanish.

It will gather experts from the water, climate change, agriculture, environment communities as well as from transboundary basin organisations with the aim to strengthen cooperation, identify links and synergies between their activities and to share good practices in policy making and implementation. The target audience includes representatives of governments, non-Governmental and intergovernmental organizations, international financial institutions, academia, the private sector and other experts.

The workshop will consist of a combination of plenary presentations and discussions. It will include interactive elements, for example, regional and thematic discussions in break-out groups.

The workshop will be followed by the meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate under the Water Convention on 19 October 2022, which will review all climate change activities as well as plans for the future under the Convention.

For content-related issues regarding the workshop, please contact by e-mail: Ms. Veronica Girardi veronica.girardi@un.org.

All workshop-related documents will be available on the meeting's web-page in due course: [Global Workshop on Climate Change and Water | UNECE](#)

V. Practical information

To attend the workshop, whether virtually or in-person, please create an account in indico and register for the event using the following link by 10 October 2022: <https://indico.un.org/event/1002378/>

Please kindly find some links with instructions on:

- 1) How to create an indico account: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeZuft5xQ4U>
- 2) How to register for an online meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaEj3hShn6U>

For assistance with registration and other organisational issues, please see the instructions on the meeting's web-page: [Global Workshop on Climate Change and Water | UNECE](#) or contact the secretariat by e-mail: water.convention@un.org

Eligible participants from countries with economies in transition and developing countries may apply for financial support to facilitate their participation in the meeting using the financial support request form attached to the invitation email. Requests for financial support should be submitted to the UNECE secretariat (water.convention@un.org) as soon as possible, but **not later than 7 September 2022**. No application will be accepted after this deadline.

Participants requiring entry visas should inform the UNECE secretariat as soon as possible. Since Switzerland is part of the Schengen Zone, obtaining a visa might take up to 5 weeks. Participants needing a visa are therefore requested to submit their application as soon as possible and initiate visa procedures at least four weeks before the meeting.

On their way to the meeting, participants should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva Security and Safety Section located at the Pregny Gate, 14 Avenue de la Paix ([Map of Palais des Nations | UN GENEVA](#)). Please allow enough time for this.

Practical information on the Palais des Nations, as well as on transport and accommodation in Geneva, is available online at: <http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm>