



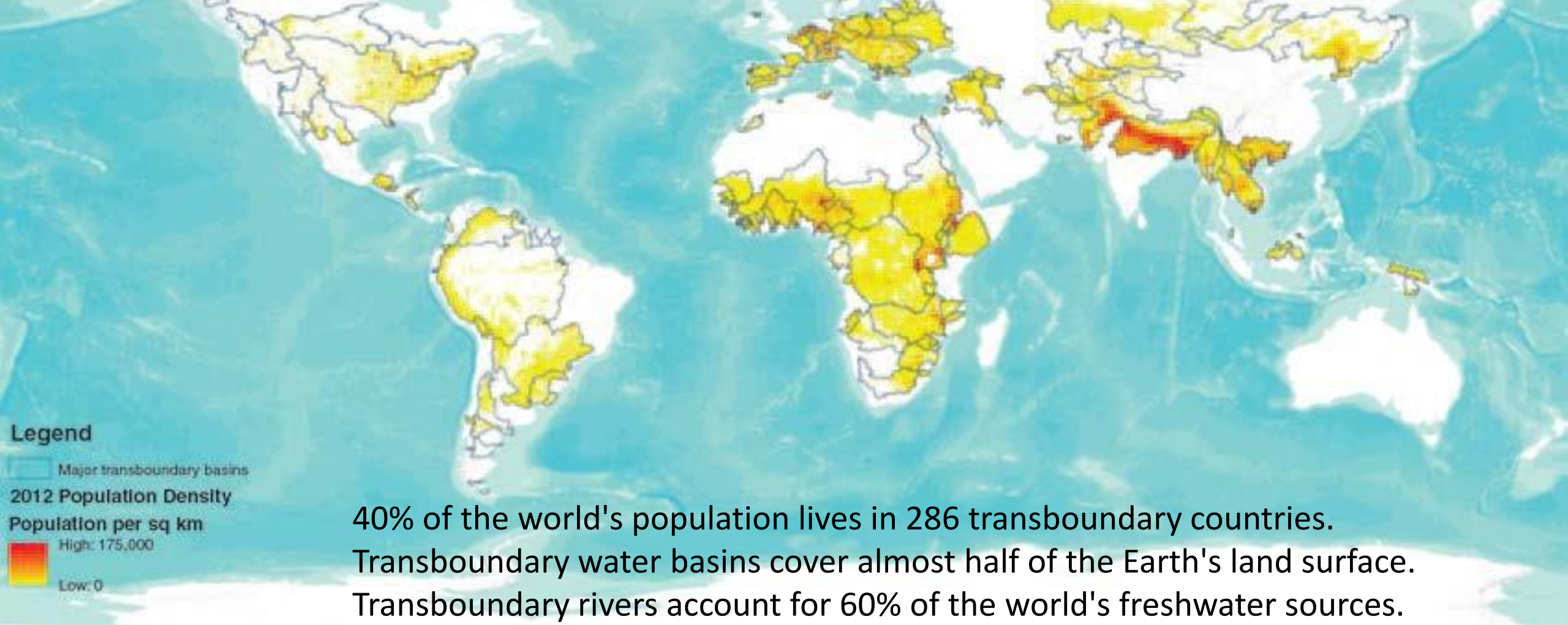
WATER
CONVENTION

Why acceding to the Water Convention? Issues at stake and benefits

Harry Liiv

Chair of the Bureau of the Water Convention

Water resources are mainly transboundary



40% of the world's population lives in 286 transboundary countries.
Transboundary water basins cover almost half of the Earth's land surface.
Transboundary rivers account for 60% of the world's freshwater sources.

Source: World Bank

SDG 6.5: Implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation

Transboundary water cooperation: what for?

- ✓ **Contributes to cooperation and peace** (inspires cooperation even in fragile areas where there is competition/war history)
- ✓ **Supports the creation of basin organizations to strengthen regional stability and integration**
- ✓ **Helps countries in adapting to climate change through a basin wide approach** (more efficient, joint measures)
- ✓ **Supports the reduction of trade-offs and cross-sectoral conflicts** (optimize the use of resources through cross-border cooperation)

The Water Convention: what is it?



A legal and institutional framework for **transboundary water cooperation** contributing to **sustainable development**, international **peace** and **security**.



A **unique platform** to discuss progress of **transboundary water cooperation** worldwide under the umbrella of the **United Nations**



Opened to all interested countries, with **more than 130 countries** exchanging experiences and knowledge to prompt progress in cooperation



The Water Convention: key principles and main objective



Water Convention Key Principles

Principle of prevention of transboundary impact

Principle of equitable and reasonable utilization

Principle of cooperation

Main objective



Foster cooperation over transboundary waters in order to **ensure** that they are **sustainably and equitably managed**

How the Water Convention help to prevent conflicts and resolve disputes over transboundary waters?

- ✓ Daily cooperation (agreements and joint bodies) increases trust => instrumental for preventing conflicts and wars
- ✓ Institutional framework assists to set up agreements and joint bodies (projects in Drin, Kura, Dniester and Chu-Talas basins, Senegal-Mauritania aquifer cooperation)
- ✓ **Advice and assistance from the Implementation Committee**

First Advisory Procedure: Albania & Montenegro



Impacts of the Water Convention on the ground

The Convention has also contributed to the continued advancement of cross-border cooperation:

- ✓ Promoting the **broadening of the cooperation scope**
- ✓ Promoting **good practice's adoption**
- ✓ Encouraging to **address emerging issues**
- ✓ Strengthening **national governance**
- ✓ Supporting **progress at both technical and political levels**
- ✓ Assessing **impacts on water status and level of implementation**



85 countries participated in activities on the ground under the programmes of work under the Water Convention in the period 2015–2022.

Note: based on activities indicated on Map 1.

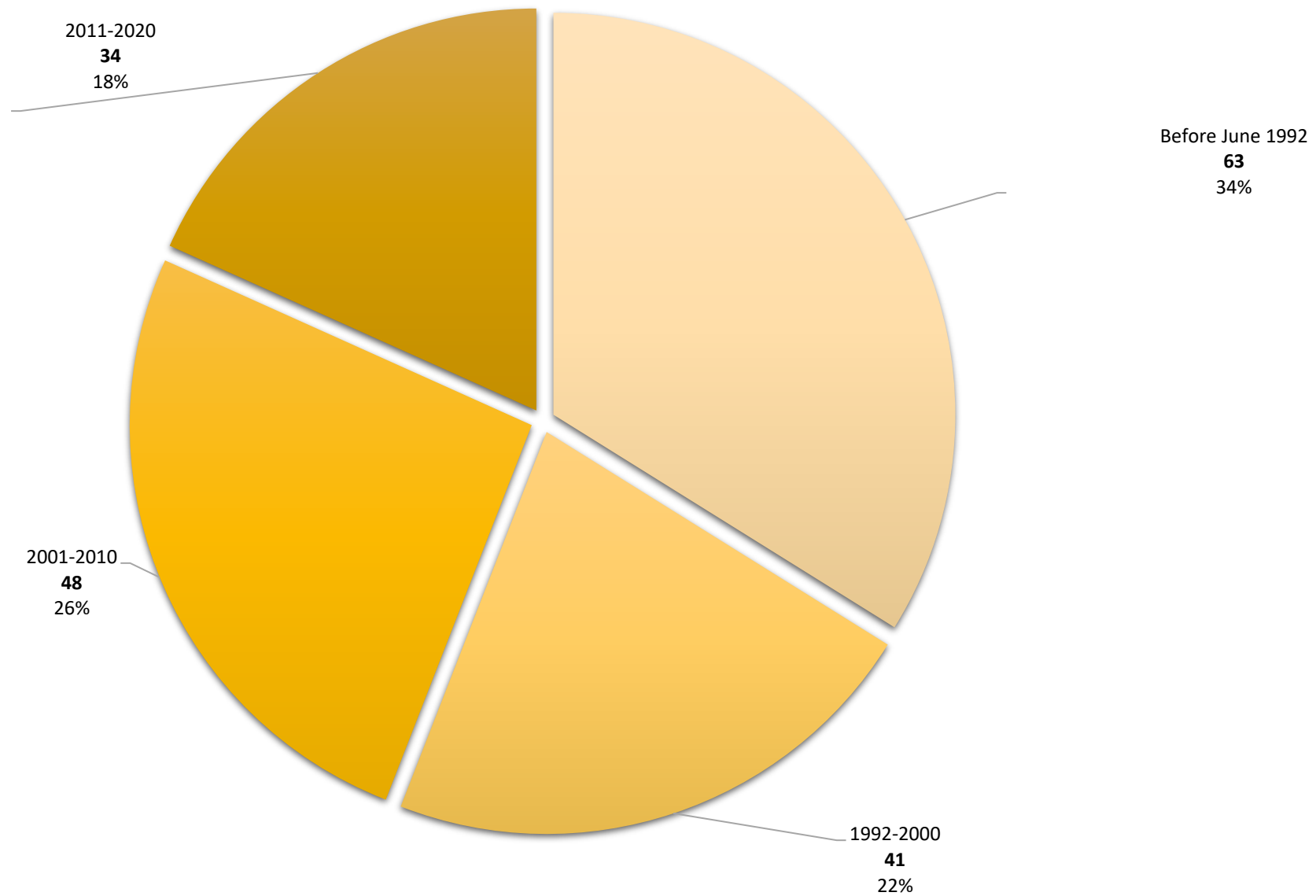
98 international organizations and NGOs are partners to the Water Convention.

Note: Based on programmes of work for 2019–2021 and 2022–2024.

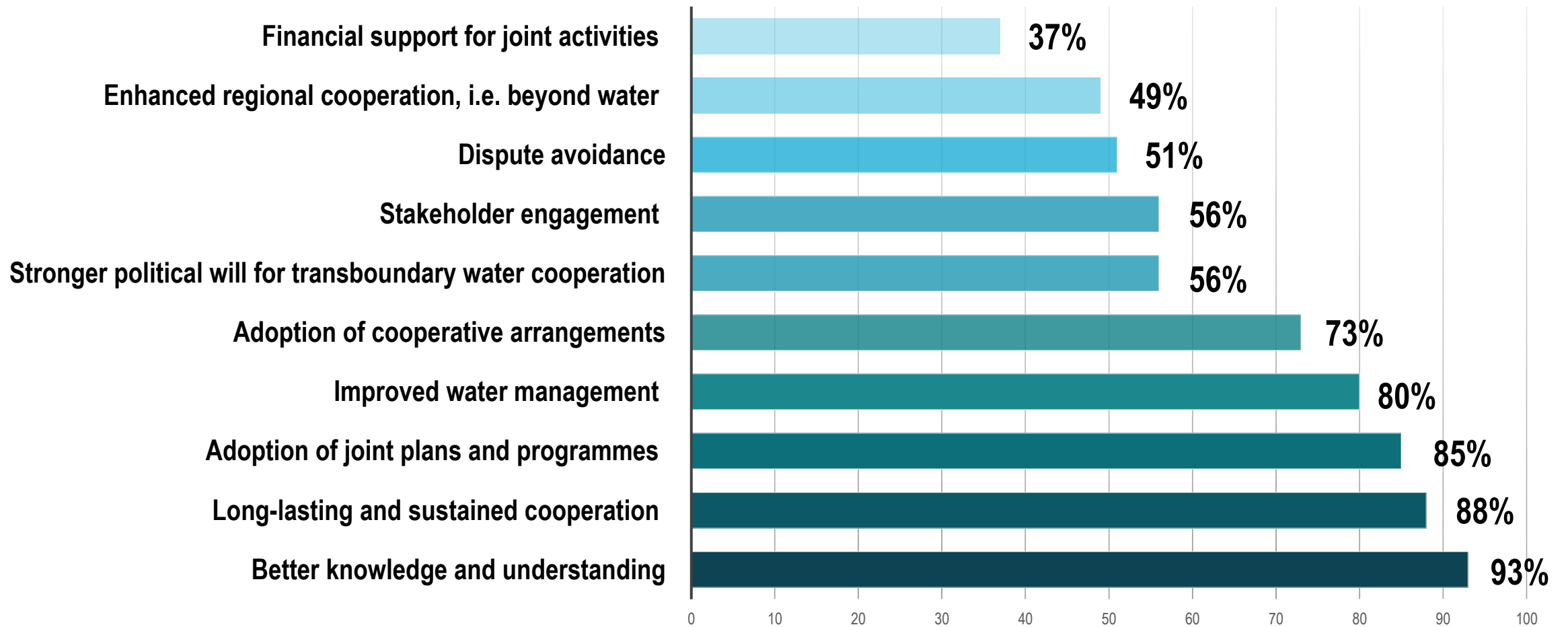
In 2011–2021, about **6,000 experts** were trained on international water law, water management, climate change adaptation, the nexus approach, dam safety and other areas through the capacity-building activities led by the Water Convention.

Note: Meetings of Convention bodies not included.

Number of agreements reported as valid by at least one Party in 2020, by date of adoption



What do Parties to the Water Convention achieve through transboundary cooperation?



WHAT DOES MY COUNTRY ACHIEVE BY BECOMING A PARTY TO THE WATER CONVENTION?



The Water Convention: How did it help Estonia to improve collaboration with neighbouring countries over shared resources?

- The Water Convention helped to compose main topics in bilateral agreement with Russia, and cooperation agreement was signed in 1997
- The Water Convention indicated to main water management elements: quality, quantity, joint monitoring programs
- The Water Convention indicated to relevant joint commission working groups, we followed Convention working groups as IWRM and monitoring and assessment
- Water management safety issues we elaborated were based on Convention principles

Other concrete use of the Water Convention for Estonia:

Benefits of cooperation - not only economical, but also environmental, cultural and social network

Convention helped to share knowledge about Estonian water worldwide,
World Water Forums, World Water Development Report, Panel Water and Peace

For more information:

<https://www.unece.org/env/water/>

Resources:

www.unece.org/env/water/publications/pub.html

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