



National Workshop

National workshop related to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes: Tanzania's accession process

1 & 2 December 2022
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

1. Background

The United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania) has nine major hydrological drainage and is riparian to 14 transboundary water bodies with neighbouring countries, including six lakes and eight rivers. According to the national report submission for the 2nd monitoring exercise in 2020 of SDG Indicator 6.5.2, for which United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and UNESCO are co-custodian agencies, these transboundary water bodies include: Lakes - Victoria, Tanganyika, Nyasa, Natron, Chala and Jipe; Rivers - Kagera, Mara, Malagarasi, Momba, Mwiruzi, Ruvuma, Songwe and Uмба; Transboundary aquifers - Kagera (Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda), Kilimanjaro (Tanzania, Kenya), Coastal Sedimentary Basin (Tanzania, Kenya), Karoo Sandstone (Tanzania, Mozambique), Weathered Basement (Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia), Tanganyika Aquifer (Tanzania, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda), Rift Aquifer (Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda) and Coastal Sedimentary Basin (Tanzania, Mozambique). As Tanzania shares the Lake Victoria Basin, it is thus also a riparian of the Nile River Basin.

Tanzania has a history of transboundary water cooperation whereby it has ratified basin agreements and is a member state of basin organisations, including: Zambezi Watercourse Commission (ZAMCOM); Nile Basin Initiative (NBI); Lake Tanganyika Authority (LTA); Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC); Ruvuma River Joint Water Commission and Songwe River Commission. These multilateral agreements to establish basin commissions with its co-riparians aim to promote joint management and sustainable development of the associated shared waters and generally strive towards equitable utilization, joint planning, sustainable development and protection of the environment. Furthermore, Tanzania is a party to the SADC Revised Protocol on Shared Watercourses (SADC Revised Protocol) of 2000 at regional level.

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) of 1992 is a global legal and inter-governmental framework which aims to strengthen cooperation in the field of transboundary waters and to promote protection and sustainable use of transboundary surface waters and groundwaters. Adopted in 1992 and initially limited to the UNECE region, the Convention has been open for accession by all United Nations Member States since 1 March 2016. Five African countries have already acceded to it and many others are in various stages of the process of accession. The Convention continually engages states, basin organizations and other stakeholders on practical activities, global meetings and projects on the ground, such as the participative benefits opportunities assessment dialogue process which was undertaken with government officials, partners and other stakeholders on the Sio Malaba Malakisi River Basin (Kenya, Uganda) during 2017-18.

The 1992 Water Convention, which has a crucial institutional platform and whose Secretariat is hosted by UNECE, and the 1997 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses (Watercourses Convention) are vital global legal frameworks to support cooperative development and prevent conflicts related to shared waters. The UN Secretary-General encourages states to accede to and implement both conventions as mutually complementary.

By acceding to the Water Convention, Tanzania stands to gain new prospects for enhanced transboundary cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa, conflict prevention and regional stability, currently enjoyed by other African countries such as Ghana, Senegal and Chad that have acceded to the Water Convention. The Convention does not replace bilateral and multilateral agreements on transboundary basins and aquifers. Instead, it fosters the establishment and implementation of such agreements, as well as their further development. The Convention establishes principles and rules that form the basis for countries working together to protect and sustainably use their shared freshwater resources.

With a view to possible accession, a letter expressing Tanzania's interest in accession to the Water Convention and requesting Secretariat support to the accession process was delivered to the Secretariat on 26 August 2022. A national workshop is now being convened in country to raise broader awareness and understanding of the Convention with officials, including those from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, and Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, as well as other relevant stakeholders and to develop a road map for accession.

2. Workshop objectives

The general objective of the workshop is to inform stakeholders about the Water Convention, to share about the processes initiated by Government of Tanzania to become party to the Water Convention and to discuss the next steps in the accession process.

Specifically, the workshop will allow to:

- Inform stakeholders about the Water Convention;
- Identify the benefits, possible advantages and strategic objectives of a possible accession to the Convention for Tanzania;
- Inform about the accession process, benefits and implementation by new African Parties;
- Discuss the practical implementation of the Water Convention to meet the challenges of water resource management in Tanzania, based on the experience of existing Parties;
- Present the initiatives started by the Ministry of Water as part of Tanzania's accession process to the Water Convention;
- Hold a Question and Answer session to respond to questions from stakeholders about the Water Convention;
- Discuss the next steps and road map in the accession process and the contribution of this process to Tanzania's transboundary and national water management.

3. Expected results

The expected results pursued through this workshop are:

- Stakeholders are informed about the cooperation framework of the Water Convention at the global level and discuss the future engagement of Tanzania with the Convention's Programme of Work 2022-24;
- The advantages for States to become party to the Water Convention are presented;

- Update on the efforts initiated for Tanzania's accession to the Convention is presented;
- The actors are informed on the next steps of the accession process and the contribution of this process to Tanzania's national water management and transboundary water cooperation are discussed;
- Actors define a roadmap, with key milestones agreed, for accession to the Water Convention.

4. Participation

The workshop will bring together representatives from:

- Relevant ministries in Tanzania regarding transboundary water resources, including Ministry of Water, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs, and Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, parliamentarians;
- Relevant basin organizations pertaining to Tanzania's shared waters, including LVBC, LTA, NBI, ZAMCOM, Joint Songwe River Basin Commission and Ruvuma River Joint Water Commission;
- Relevant diplomatic missions, including the European Union;
- Relevant international and regional organizations, including AMCOW, GIZ, World Bank, African Union, SADC, EAC, UNECA, GWPEA;
- Relevant academia, civil society and independent national and international experts.