



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

NEW YORK
22-24
MARCH
2023

Side event at UN 2023 Water conference Speeding up transboundary water cooperation: the value of the Water Convention

22nd March 2023 – 9:30 - 10:45 am

ECOSOC Chamber – UN HQ

Co-organizers: Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Senegal, Slovenia, Switzerland, UNECE (Water Convention secretariat)

More than 60% of freshwater resources worldwide are shared by two or more countries. Climate change, population growth, urbanization and unsustainable economic development are negatively impacting such rivers, lakes and groundwaters. Transboundary water cooperation is therefore crucial for peace, sustainable development and climate action.

Nevertheless, only 24 countries out of the 153 countries sharing transboundary waters have all their transboundary basins covered by operational arrangements for water cooperation. Progress on SDG indicator 6.5.2 (transboundary cooperation) is too slow and must be accelerated to achieve the goal. The two United Nations global Water Conventions have advanced transboundary water cooperation worldwide. In particular the 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), a unique global legal instrument and intergovernmental platform for transboundary water cooperation, has facilitated development of numerous transboundary agreements, reduced pollution and promoted ecosystem conservation, prevented conflicts, facilitated joint climate action and promoted sustainable development. Many countries are linking their accession to and implementation of the Water Convention to the Water Action Agenda when developing their commitments on water cooperation.

More than 20 countries are in the process of accession to the Water Convention and several aim to finalize the process by the time of the conference. Building on this momentum, the side event will welcome new Parties, discuss benefits of joining the Convention and the next steps in implementing the Convention for existing and new Parties.

The side event will also discuss how new Parties to the Water Convention and countries in the accession process plan to advance transboundary water cooperation through the application of international water law principles at basin and regional levels.



REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



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Programme

Moderator: Mr. Harry Liiv, Chair of the Water Convention

Opening speeches

- **H.E. Mr. Meelis Münt**, Secretary General of the Ministry of the Environment, Estonia
- **H.E. Ms. Olga Algayerova**, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

Panel one: Impacts and benefits of the Water Convention

- **H.E. Mr. Christophe Bechu**, Minister of Ecological Transition, France
- **H.E. Ms. Steffi Lemke**, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, Germany
- **H.E. Ms. Cecilia Abena Dapaah**, Minister of Sanitation and Water Resources, Ghana
- **H.E. Ms. Zulfiya Suleimenova**, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources, Kazakhstan
- **H.E. Alio Abdoulaye Ibrahim**, Minister of Water and Sanitation, Chad
- **H.E. Mr. Serigne Mbaye Thiam**, Minister of Water and Sanitation, Senegal (tbc)
- **H.E. Mr. Uroš Brežan**, Minister of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, Slovenia
- **Ms. Florika Fink-Hooijer**, Director General, DG Environment, European Commission

Panel two: Future perspective of the global implementation of the Convention

- **H.E. Ms. Janaina Tewaney Mencomo**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Panama
- **H.E. Mr. Laurent Tchagba**, Minister of Water and Forests, Côte d'Ivoire
- **H.E. Mr. Musa S. Drammeh**, Minister of Fisheries, and Water Resources and National Assembly Matters, The Gambia
- **H.E. Mr. Aoun Dhiab Abdullah**, Minister of Water Resources, Iraq (tbc)
- **H.E. Mr. Calle Schlettwein**, Minister of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform, Namibia
- **H.E. Mr. Adamou Mahaman**, Minister of Hydraulics and Sanitation, Niger
- **H.E. Eng. Suleiman H. Adamu**, Minister of Water Resources, Nigeria (tbc)
- **H.E. Sam Cheptoris**, Minister of Water and Environment, Uganda

Conclusions

Mr. Juhani Damski, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Finland



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