

## Seventh meeting of the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation

“Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins: linkages to global processes and actions on-the-ground on climate, droughts and wetlands”

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> – Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 10:00 am - 12:00 pm – 14:30 - 16:30 pm (CET)

Geneva, Palais de Nations – Room IX  
& Online, Zoom

With simultaneous interpretation into English, French, Russian and Spanish



Ministry of Infrastructure  
and Water Management



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### INFORMATION NOTE

#### Background

According to the recent *Synthesis Report of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report* climate change has caused substantial damages, and increasingly irreversible losses, to freshwater ecosystems. In addition, changes in heavy precipitation and droughts have further strengthened. Overall, around 3.6 billion people live in contexts that are highly vulnerable to climate change and many of them are in transboundary basins.

Continued global warming will further intensify the global water cycle, including its variability, and very wet and very dry weather. Every region in the world will face further increases in climate extremes which will bring multiple risks such as flooding; biodiversity loss in land, freshwater and ocean ecosystems; and a decrease in food production in some regions.

Droughts and water scarcity became one of the biggest challenges leading to food insecurity in 2022 in different regions and transboundary basins across the world. For instance, according to the WMO report *Provisional State of Global Climate in 2022*, in East Africa, home to such transboundary basins as the Nile, the Shebelle, Lake Victoria and Lake Tanganyika, rainfall has been below average for four consecutive wet seasons, the longest sequence in 40 years. Across the region, an around 19 million people were facing acute food insecurity. In Asia, China had the second-driest summer on record and the Yangtze River at Wuhan reached its lowest recorded level for August. In Europe drought conditions were also at their most severe in August, when rivers including the Rhine, the Loire and the Danube fell to critically low levels.

While most climate change impacts are transmitted through the water cycle as indicated above, water became more prominent in climate change discussion and negotiations only recently. For instance, it was included into the decisions of the Conferences of the Parties of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(COP 27\)](#), [the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance \(COP14\)](#), and [the Convention on Biological Diversity \(COP 15\)](#) last year. As an example, [the decision on Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan](#) emphasizes the importance of protecting, conserving and restoring water and water-related ecosystems, including river basins, aquifers and lakes, and integration of water into countries adaptation efforts.

Wetlands can play an important role in mitigating the effects of floods and droughts by acting as sponges, and at the same time preserve the biodiversity. Also, wetland can store more carbon than forests. Unfortunately, wetlands are disappearing at a high pace, thereby aggravating the impacts of floods and droughts. Drainage of wetlands are also responsible for increased greenhouse gas emissions. Preservation and restoration of wetlands is therefore a win-win for both climate adaptation and mitigation and should be a natural part of water management. This also underpins the fact that the different global processes as mentioned are interlinked and can reinforce each other.

Although there is more attention to water in global climate processes, it is still not sufficient, and the transboundary dimension of the climate issue is often not adequately addressed. At the same time, not only water is crucial for climate change adaptation and mitigation, but also transboundary cooperation in adaptation makes adaptation more effective and efficient through reducing uncertainties by sharing data and knowledge, enlarging the planning space, better prioritization of measures and sharing costs and benefits, as underlined in a recent [Adaptation Fund study](#).

Even if, there are few successful examples supported by the Adaptation Fund, Green Climate Fund and other donors, such as the projects in the Drin, Lake Victoria, the Niger and the Volta, overall, the situation with financing transboundary climate change adaptation remains one of the biggest challenges for countries and transboundary basin organisations. Thus, it requires additional efforts, including capacity building, from international community.

Based on the above, the seventh meeting of the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation will provide an occasion to share experiences, updates, progress, lessons learned and best practices in developing, financing and implementing transboundary adaptation strategies and plans - with particular attention to:

- reducing drought risk by integrating drought management into adaptation strategies and river basin management plans as well as action on-the-ground in transboundary basins;
- linkages between global processes on water, climate, environment and biodiversity under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance;
- contribution of transboundary basins organisations to development and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) as well as to the Global Stocktake and Global Goal on Adaptation;
- management, conservation and restoration of wetlands in transboundary basins under changing climate; and
- financing transboundary climate change adaptation.

The meeting will also discuss future activities within the Global network incl. the on-line Compendium of good practices and lessons learnt in climate change adaptation in transboundary basins.

The meeting will be organised by the secretariat of the Water Convention serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in cooperation with the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) and under the leadership of the Netherlands and Switzerland.

The Global network was created in 2013 and it includes, at present, 18 basins. It is jointly coordinated by INBO and the Water Convention with the aim to promote cooperation on adaptation in transboundary basins, to compare different methodologies and approaches for adapting to climate change and to promote a shared vision between the participating basins. In the past years, activities of the network focused on increasing the capacity of basins in addressing water-related disasters, applying ecosystem-based adaptation and raising funds for climate change adaptation.

### [Preliminary topics of the sessions and questions to be discussed](#)

As a meeting approach, the discussion will be focused on the expertise of the basin organizations, which will have a central role. The proposed topics will be adjusted based on the information to be provided by the Global network.

#### **Introduction (10:00 – 10:20), 25 May**

- Welcome remarks and short introduction

#### **First session**

##### **Climate and transboundary water cooperation (10:20 – 12:00), 25 May**

- Intervention from UNFCCC on the opportunities for mainstreaming water and transboundary aspects into global climate processes
- General updates of the network members about respective climate change adaptation actions, including links to NDCs and NAPs and their implementation as well as to the Global Stocktake and the Global Goal on Adaptation

#### **Lunch-break (12:00 – 14:30), 25 May**

##### **Second session, (14:30 – 16:30), 25 May**

###### **Biodiversity, wetlands and transboundary water cooperation**

- Intervention from CBD on integrating water and transboundary approaches into Global Biodiversity Framework and other activities under CBD
- Intervention from the Ramsar Convention on management, conservation and restoration of wetlands in transboundary basins
- Adaptation of wetlands at transboundary level to climate change: examples from basin organisations

##### **Third session (10:00 – 12:00), 26 May**

###### **Drought management in transboundary basins**

- Interventions on the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and other instruments for drought risk management in transboundary basins
- Plans and actions on-the-ground: examples from basin organisations

**Lunch-break (12:00 – 14:30), 26 May**

**Fourth session (14:30 – 15:30), 26 May**

**Financing climate change adaptation in transboundary basins**

- Interventions from donors and partners on opportunities for financing climate change adaptation in transboundary basins
- Mobilizing funding for adaptation in transboundary basins: examples from basin organisations

**Fifth session (15:30 – 16:15), 26 May**

**Future activities and needs of the Global network**

**Closure (16:15 – 16:30)**

Wrap-up and closing remarks

### Practical information

The meeting of the Global network of basins working on climate change adaptation will take place on **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and from 14:30 to 16:30 p.m.**

The meeting will be organised in a **hybrid format**. It will be held in the Palais des Nations – room IX, Geneva and virtual participation in all sessions will be arranged for through Zoom.

Interpretation will be provided into English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Further information and background materials will be made available at: <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Water-Convention/events/374647>

The meeting is open to representatives of the members of the Global network and selected other invited experts and will be designed in an interactive way. Experiences from different regions and by different partners will be shared to draw lessons learned and best practices. For this reason, we kindly ask you to inform us, by **21<sup>st</sup> April 2023**, on your progress and future plans by **filling out the attached template**. The compiled report with your input will serve as a background document for the meeting and will help design the programme.

Invitees planning to attend the meeting, whether virtually or in-person, are kindly asked to register by **11<sup>th</sup> May 2023** using the following link <https://indico.un.org/event/1002159/>, as only registered participants will get access to the meeting. Participants are requested to indicate whether they intend to participate remotely or in person.

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=WaEi3hShn6U>

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 ([john.sasuya@un.org](mailto:john.sasuya@un.org)) as soon as possible, but **not later than 14 April 2023**. No application will be accepted after this deadline.

For those planning to join the meeting virtually, please note that the connection details and further guidance on how to use the virtual platform will be shared with registered participants a few days ahead of the meeting.

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. The Secretariat will provide participants with an invitation letter, which should be used to apply for a visa at the nearest consular office of Switzerland. For requesting visa letters, please contact the Secretariat as early as possible. You can also visit the Swiss Government Travel Check Website to verify which entry requirements apply to your entry to Switzerland: <https://travelcheck.admin.ch/home>.

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**, in front of International Committee of the Red Cross.

Please allow **at least one hour** time for this.



Practical information on the Palais des Nations, as well as on transport and accommodation in Geneva, is available online at: <https://unece.org/practical-information-delegates>

For assistance with registration and other organisational issues, please contact Mr. John Sasuya [john.sasuya@un.org](mailto:john.sasuya@un.org), +41 22 917 2305.

For content-related issues please contact Ms. Hanna Plotnykova [hanna.plotnykova@un.org](mailto:hanna.plotnykova@un.org) (Secretariat of the Water Convention) and Mr. Edouard Bionet [e.boinet@inbo-news.org](mailto:e.boinet@inbo-news.org) (INBO).