



UN
2023 WATER
CONFERENCE

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UN 2023 Water Conference Side Event

Committing to advance transboundary water cooperation worldwide for sustainable development, climate action, stability and peace

23 March 2023, 6:30 pm – 7:45 pm, ECOSOC Chamber

Organized by: Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Slovenia on behalf of the Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition

Background on the event

Transboundary waters account for 60 per cent of the world's freshwater flows. More than 3 billion people depend on them. Cooperation on shared resources is therefore essential to promote sustainable economic development, human and environmental health, biodiversity, climate action and resilience, disaster risk reduction, and peace. Unfortunately, cooperation in most transboundary basins is not fit to deal with future challenges and progress is too slow. To sustain and advance cooperation, the Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition, a diverse, multi-stakeholder coalition of actors from around the world was formed. In preparation to the Conference, the Coalition has provided a catalysing framework for the submission of voluntary commitments on transboundary water cooperation as part of the Water Action Agenda. The side event highlighted commitments by countries and organizations, including basin organizations, aiming to advance transboundary water cooperation.

Water Action Agenda

[Transboundary Water Cooperation Coalition](#): A diverse, multi-stakeholder coalition of actors from around the world with a wide range of functions and capacities, the Coalition will inspire and foster equitable and sustainable cooperation on transboundary waters and provide support through its members. The coalition will provide a catalysing framework for commitments and progress on transboundary water cooperation, especially linked to the UN 2023 Water Conference and the call for voluntary commitments that will comprise one of the outcomes of the Conference, the Water Action Agenda. The Coalition objective is to promote and support both the sustaining and the advancement of transboundary water cooperation in the context of the Water Action Agenda and SDG 6, in light of growing risks, including those linked to climate change.

Key Issues discussed

The side event provided examples and commitments on

- The benefits of effective and sustainable transboundary water cooperation, including for upstream countries and in the adaptation to new climate challenges, and how to overcome bottlenecks to cooperation
- How to provide impetus for concrete actions related to equitable and sustainable transboundary water cooperation and to “push” progress towards mutually beneficial outcomes
- How to catalyze financial and technical support to initiate dialogue, support and advance cooperation efforts and assess their impacts
- Advancing cooperation in transboundary aquifers, which is particularly needed as it lags with respect to international rivers and lakes

Key recommendations for action

- Take better advantage of the economic, social, environmental and political benefits of transboundary cooperation, and build on them to develop sustainable and resilient cooperation and overcome bottlenecks towards mutually beneficial outcomes, including beyond water per se
- Create enabling legal, policy and institutional environments as well as economic, financial and political incentives for cooperation, across borders and sectors, over transboundary surface and groundwater, from source to sea
- Improve the governance framework for transboundary water cooperation by developing or strengthening agreements between riparian States, which respond to changing pressures, such as climate change, by setting up and increasing the impact and effectiveness of existing basin and aquifer organizations, and, as appropriate, by fostering accession and use of the 1992 UN Water Convention and the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention, and the use of the Draft Articles on the Law of Transboundary Aquifers
- Strengthen the scientific and information base for decision-making by improving the technical-political interface, enhancing hydrometeorological monitoring networks, supporting data, information and knowledge generation, and adopting open data and information exchange policies
- Enhance capacity at all levels to manage shared water resources in an integrated, sustainable and inclusive manner by increasing education and training, as well as through technical assistance and the sharing of best practices
- Increase international and national financing for transboundary water cooperation, strengthen the financial resilience of transboundary basin organizations, and increase public and private investments in transboundary basins which combine regional and national benefits, such as investments in joint investment plans, cooperative infrastructure, and nature-based solutions.