



**Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes**

Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management

Eighteenth meeting

Geneva, 19 - 21 June 2023

UNEDITED LIST OF DECISIONS

ADOPTED BY THE WORKING GROUP ON INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Items 1, 2 and 3: Opening of the session; Adoption of the agenda; Adoption of the report of the previous meeting

1. The Working Group:

- (a) Adopted the agenda (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2023/1)
- (b) Adopted the Report of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment on their fourth joint meeting (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2022/2-ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2022/2).

Item 4: Status of ratification

2. The Working Group:

- (a) Welcomed Cameroon, Nigeria, Iraq and Namibia, respectively as the 47th, 48th, 49th and 50th Parties of the Water Convention.
- (b) Called upon Parties, technical and financial partners and international financial institutions to support new Parties in implementation.

Item 5: Recent developments related to transboundary water cooperation at the global level and under the Convention

3. The Working Group:

- (a) Welcomed the remarkable visibility given at the UN Water Conference to transboundary water cooperation;
- (b) Reconfirmed the role of the Water Convention as an essential intergovernmental platform and a forum within the United Nations system for dealing with transboundary water issues;
- (c) Called upon Parties and other countries and partners to follow up on the implementation of commitments in the Water Action Agenda related to transboundary water cooperation, and to include the need for increased transboundary water cooperation in subsequent political declarations such as for the SDG summit.

Item 6. Increasing awareness of and accession to the Convention and application of its principles drawing on the benefits of cooperation

6(a) Increasing capacity for implementation of the Convention and supporting national processes towards accession

4. The Working Group:

- (a) Welcomed the growing interest in the Water Convention and significant progress in accession by a large number of countries in various regions;
- (b) Encouraged the countries close to accession to finalize the process as soon as possible;
- (c) Encouraged other countries to start or progress in their national processes of accession.
- (d) Reaffirmed its commitment to support accession processes through the provision of technical and legal assistance, including by sharing Parties' expertise in implementation;
- (e) Expressed appreciation for the assistance provided by existing Parties to support accession and gratitude to donors;
- (f) Expressed appreciation for the support by global and regional organizations and river basin organizations, including the United Nations system, contributing to awareness raising and increasing capacity for accession to and implementation of the Convention;
- (g) Called upon Parties and technical and financial partners to support new Parties or those close to accession, for example through twinning etc.

6(b) Supporting the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies

5. The Working Group:

- (a) Welcomed progress achieved in different projects supporting the development of agreements and the establishment of joint bodies, including through applying the *Practical Guide for the Development of Agreements or Other Arrangements for Transboundary Water Cooperation*;
- (b) Encouraged countries, interested basins and partners to use and disseminate the *Practical Guide for the Development of Agreements or Other Arrangements for Transboundary Water Cooperation* to support the development or revision of agreements, which promotes implementation of the Convention and achievement of SDG target 6.5.

6(c) Implementation Committee

6. The Working Group:

- (a) Welcomed the progress made in the first advisory procedure carried out by the Implementation Committee;
- (b) Invited Parties and relevant organizations to provide financial assistance to Albania and Montenegro, as needed, for bringing in additional monitoring and modeling capacities;
- (c) Encouraged Parties and other stakeholders to seek the Committee's assistance, support and facilitation to address difficulties in implementing and complying with the Convention, for example, by using the advisory procedure.

Item 7. Supporting monitoring, assessment and information-sharing in transboundary basins

7. The Working Group:

- (a) Welcomed the publication *Updated Strategies for Monitoring and Assessment of Transboundary Lakes, Rivers and Groundwaters* (ECE/MP.WAT/70) and encouraged countries, interested basins and partners to use and disseminate them;

- (b) Encouraged interested countries and organizations to contribute to the new publication on good practices and lessons learned in transboundary data sharing by providing additional case studies;
- (c) Thanked IWAC and GIZ for co-organizing the regional workshop in Central Asia and ESCWA and UNESCO for co-organizing the regional workshop in the Arab region to support the development of the publication on good practices and lessons learned in transboundary data sharing;
- (d) Invited interested countries and partners to organize similar regional workshops, subject to available resources;
- (e) Thanked the Netherlands for expert support provided to the development of publications under this programme area.

Item 8. Promoting an integrated and intersectoral approach to water management at all levels

8(a) Source-to-sea management

8. The Working Group:

- (a) Welcomed the organization of the Global Workshop on Source-to-Sea Management in December 2022, recognized the successful collaboration with partners, and took note of the workshop's outcome document (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2023/5);
- (b) Entrusted the secretariat, together with the co-lead Parties Slovenia and Estonia, to develop a guidance note on source-to-sea management and encouraged partners to cooperate on this effort.

8(b) Promoting integrated water resources management in transboundary basins

9. The Working Group:

- (a) Underlined the importance of sustainable groundwater management, and transboundary cooperation on shared aquifers, also as follow-up to the year on groundwater in 2022;
- (b) Invited countries to take part in the global workshop on conjunctive surface and groundwater management and encouraged donors to support it.

8(c) Supporting intersectoral dialogues and assessments through the application of the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach

10. The Working Group:

- (a) Encouraged countries participating in nexus projects to make use of the nexus assessment results in developing policies and interventions and to explore operationalizing nexus and investments, and mobilizing resources for implementing them, in collaboration with other sectors;
- (b) Encouraged partners to apply the methodology for assessing the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus in transboundary basins, including by using the guidance of the related leaflet available in English, French, Spanish and Russian;
- (c) Invited countries to use and disseminate the *publications Solutions and investments in the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus: a synthesis of experiences in transboundary basins* (ECE/MP.WAT/66) and *Towards sustainable renewable energy investment and deployment: Trade-offs and opportunities with water resources and the environment* (ECE/ENERGY/127).

8(d) Supporting equitable and sustainable water allocation in a transboundary context

11. The Working Group:

- (a) Thanked Finland, Switzerland and the International Water Assessment Centre for supporting the regional workshop “International experience related to transboundary water allocation and prospects for the development of cooperation on the joint use of water resources in Central Asia” (Astana, 2–3 November 2022), and invited interested countries and partners to organize similar regional workshops, where relevant;
- (b) Entrusted the co-lead Parties and the secretariat to finalize the draft summary handbook on water allocation in a transboundary context (ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2023/INF.2) for publication;
- (c) Invited countries and partners to use and disseminate the publication *Handbook on Water Allocation in a Transboundary Context* (ECE/MP.WAT/64) including, where relevant, in conjunction with the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus approach and publications.

8(e) Supporting National Policy Dialogues on Integrated Water Resources Management under the European Union Water Initiative

12. The Working Group:

- (a) Welcomed the progress in the National Policy Dialogues (NPDs) in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, in particular the enhanced intersectoral cooperation they have driven, their contribution to advancing integrated water policies, as well as transboundary cooperation;
- (b) Expressed appreciation for the support provided by the European Union, through the programme EU4environment in Eastern Partner Countries: Water Resources and Environmental Data and National Policy Dialogues in Central Asia;
- (c) Encouraged the European Union and other donors to continue supporting the work of the National Policy Dialogues.

Item 9. Adapting to climate change in transboundary basins

13. The Working Group:

- (a) Expressed concern on the impacts of the numerous recent water-related extreme weather events in many parts of the world on water quantity and quality, and encouraged countries to cooperate across borders in addressing them and to use relevant tools of the Water Convention in this regard;
- (b) Welcomed the outcomes of the Global workshop on water, agriculture and climate change (17-18 October 2022), the thirteenth meeting of the Task Force on Water and Climate (19 October 2022) and the seventh meeting of the Global Network of Basins Working on Climate Change Adaptation (25-26 May 2023);
- (c) Encouraged more transboundary basins to join the global network;
- (d) Encouraged countries to mainstream water and transboundary cooperation into climate change and disaster risk reduction processes and plans at national level, e.g. in implementing nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans, as well as at global level, for example in the discussions on the Global Goal on Adaptation, Global Stocktake, COP28 and other processes under UNFCCC and UNDRR.

Item 10. Facilitating funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development

14. The Working Group:

- (a) Welcomed the new publication *How to Accelerate the Funding and Financing of Transboundary Water Cooperation and Basin Development? Opportunities and Challenges* (ECE/MP.WAT/72), encouraged countries and basins to use and disseminate it and requested the secretariat to prepare and publish it in French and Russian, as well as, subject to the availability of resources, in Spanish.
- (b) Recalled the importance of i) creating an enabling environment to mobilize resources through sound legal and institutional frameworks and strong governance; ii) sustaining the funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development processes and projects, firstly from national domestic budgetary resources, but also from both public and private international sources, including through climate finance and innovative finance;
- (c) Encouraged countries to take part in the second global workshop on financing transboundary water cooperation and basin development (Geneva, 5-6 December 2023) and donors to support it.

Item 11. Reporting on Sustainable Development Goal indicator 6.5.2 and under the Convention

15. The Working Group:

- (a) Requested all Parties to submit their national reports in the third reporting exercise by 30 June 2023 and invited all countries sharing transboundary waters to submit their third reports on the SDG indicator 6.5.2 by the same date to UNESCO and UNECE;
- (b) Encouraged countries to coordinate their responses to their national report at basin level with riparian countries, in the framework of joint bodies or regional organizations, as far as possible;
- (c) Called on countries to make use of their national reports in order to improve their transboundary cooperation, for example by setting national or basin-wide targets, addressing knowledge gaps e.g., on aquifers etc.;
- (d) Called on river basin organizations, regional economic communities and other partners to make use of data collected through the national reports in order to support transboundary water cooperation;
- (e) Requested ECE, in cooperation with UNESCO, to prepare the third report on SDG indicator 6.5.2;
- (f) Requested the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, to develop the third progress report on implementation of the Water Convention in 2024.

Item 12. Partnerships

12(a) Cooperation with UN-Water, global and regional partners and other multilateral environmental agreements

16. The Working Group:

- (a) Reconfirmed that partnership and cooperation with different global and regional partners remained key to raising awareness and implementation of the Convention and its principles;

- (b) Encouraged partners to further identify possible synergies and join efforts with the Water Convention to support a better understanding and implementation of the Convention and its activities worldwide.
- (c) Encouraged further cooperation between the Water Convention and Protocol on Water and Health, including use of each other's tools, joint events etc.

12(b) Contribution to global events

17. The Working Group encouraged countries and partners to promote transboundary water cooperation and the Water Convention at global events, such as the tenth World Water Forum (Bali, Indonesia, 20-24 August 2024), whenever possible.

12(c) Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents

18. The Working Group:

- (a) Took notes of the outcomes of the seminar "Emerging risks in accidental water pollution: focus on natural hazard-triggered accidents" organized by the Joint Expert Group meeting (Budapest, 5–6 October 2022);
- (b) Encouraged countries and river basin organizations to take part in the next meetings of the Joint Expert Group on Water and Industrial Accidents and make use of its products.

Item 13. Thematic session on public participation in river basin management in transboundary basins

19. The Working Group:

- (a) Underlined that public participation is important to make transboundary river basin management more effective and sustainable;
- (b) Called for integration of public participation methods, approaches and activities in preparation of transboundary river basin management plans;
- (c) Encouraged non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders groups to contribute actively, including in shared basins where operational arrangements for water cooperation are still lacking.

Item 14. Communication and knowledge management

20. The Working Group:

- (a) Requested Parties that had not yet officially nominated a focal point to do so in accordance with decision VIII/2 as soon as possible;
- (b) Encouraged non-Parties that had not yet officially nominated a focal point to do so as soon as possible.

Item 15. International Water Assessment Centre

21. The Working Group welcomed the activities carried out by the International Water Assessment Centre in 2022-2023 and thanked Kazakhstan for the support provided to the Centre.

Item 16. Resources for the implementation of the programme of work

22. The Working Group:

- (a) Expressed gratitude to all donors supporting the implementation of the Conventions programme of work as well as thanks to lead Parties, those providing in-kind contributions, etc.;
- (b) Expressed concern that while there had been some progress with implementation of decision IX/3 on Targets for a more sustainable and predictable funding of the work under the Convention, several of its targets are off-track;
- (c) Recognized that certain costs for the programme of work implementation have increased, which required adapting the planning of activities to ensure savings;
- (d) Urged Parties and invited non-Parties and other donors to provide extrabudgetary financial resources for the implementation of the programme of work, if possible unearmarked, in line with decision IX/3 on Targets for a more sustainable and predictable funding of the work under the Convention.

Item 17. Ongoing programme of work for 2022–2024 and future programme of work for 2025–2027

23. The Working Group:

- (a) Invited all Parties and non-Parties, as well as partners, to answer the survey on priorities of work under the Water Convention for 2025-2027 to be shared in December 2023;
- (b) Entrusted its Co-Chairs, in cooperation with the Bureau, with preparing a proposal for the future programme of work for consideration at its next meeting (Geneva, 3–5 June 2024), based on the upcoming survey on priorities of work for 2025-2027.

Item 19. Call for hosting of the eleventh session of the Meeting of the Parties

24. The Working Group invited interested Parties to submit proposals to host the 11th session of the Meeting of the Parties by 30 April 2024.