

GHANA'S EXPERIENCES ON THE ACCESSION TO AND INVOLVEMENT WITH THE UN GLOBAL WATER CONVENTIONS

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GHANA

NATIONAL WORKSHOP RELATED TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND USE OF TRANSBOUNDARY WATERCOURSES AND INTERNATIONAL LAKES: BOTSWANA'S ACCESSION PROCESS

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OUTLINE

- Overview of Ghana's transboundary water situation, concerns and existing cooperation frameworks
- Motivation, benefits and transboundary cooperation needs for Ghana in becoming a party to the Water Conventions
- Process/timelines, milestones, and challenges in the accession process
- Current activities and engagement with the Water Convention and future plans under the Programme of Work

OVERVIEW OF GHANA'S TRANSBOUNDARY WATER SITUATION, CONCERNS AND EXISTING COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS

Ghana's Transboundary Water Resources Concerns:

- About 30% of the freshwater flows from outside of Ghana's international borders
- Provide substantial water supply, hydropower, irrigation and industrial needs;
- Links the populations - Creates socioeconomic interdependencies between the riparian countries
- Recent extreme events (floods) and pollution occurrences in the transboundary basins (Volta, Tano and Bia) have been of grave concern.

Existing Cooperation Frameworks:

- Ghana is a member of the Volta Basin Authority for the management of the Volta River under the Volta Basin Convention (2006). Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Togo.
- Ghana is a member of the two global water conventions – the 1992 UN Water Convention and the 1997 UN Watercourses Convention (2020).
- A cooperative relationship with co-riparians on the Comoe, Tano, and Bia transboundary basin

Aims of transboundary cooperation:

- To be part of the international community in the management of shared watercourses using legal agreements to serve as vital tools - **to guide, foster and secure the required transboundary water cooperation.**
- Ghana sees the 1992 Water Convention and 1997 Watercourses Convention as vital tools to promote transboundary cooperation.

CONTEXT OF ACCESSION TO THE UN GLOBAL WATER CONVENTIONS

- Both Conventions cover international watercourses - surface and underground freshwater and serve as mechanisms to strengthen international cooperation.
- The Conventions embody a number of principles: *equitable and reasonable utilization*; *obligation not to cause significant harm*; *general obligation to cooperate*; etc.
- They are compatible, not contradictory, and in many ways complementary:
 - The 1997 Watercourses Convention complements the 1992 Water Convention by detailing the factors relevant to equitable and reasonable utilization (article 6).
- Differences between the two conventions on the same subject matter are of greater or lesser stringency or detail rather than a matter of conflicting prescriptions.
 - The 1997 Watercourses Convention leaves confined groundwater outside its scope, 1992 Water Convention covers all transboundary groundwater, including confined aquifers.
- The differences are rather a strength since the more detailed provisions in one instrument can inform the implementation of the other.
- It's good to sign up for both hence, Ghana's accession to both Conventions.

MOTIVATION, BENEFITS AND TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION NEEDS TO ADDRESS (1)

- The Conventions have proven their effectiveness as an international legal regime that provided the motivation to accede and the benefits for Ghana as a member.
- Water Convention provides Ghana with:
 - A platform for enhancing international cooperation for shared rivers and aquifers.
 - Framework and support in establishing agreements and bodies for specific basins - the ongoing case of the Comoe, Bia and Tano transboundary basins
 - Specific timeframes, standards and procedures for Ghana in developing single and joint trans-border water infrastructure.
 - Developing single and joint trans-border water infrastructure such as the Sogakope-Lome water supply, and the Pwalugu Multipurpose Dam projects.
 - Applicable provisions to promote data exchange and information sharing as well as joint training programmes and relevant seminars and meetings on data exchange.
 - Developing an agreement on an obligatory minimum amount of water that should flow into Ghana from Burkina Faso for use, especially in the dry season.

MOTIVATION, BENEFITS AND TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION NEEDS TO ADDRESS (2)

- Step-by-step mechanisms to pursue conflict prevention and resolution:
 - Creates room for Ghana to engage its neighbours on activities inimical to us as the downstream country.
- Provisions for implementing obligations, especially the obligation aimed at prevention, control and reduction of significant transboundary impacts:
 - Addressing impacts – the perennial spillage from Bagre Dam in Burkina Faso into Ghana and pollution of Bia River in Cote d'Ivoire from mining activities in Ghana.
- Enhancing Good Governance and Investment:
 - Accession has signalled to other countries, international organizations, financial institutions and other actors the willingness to cooperate on the basis of transboundary norms and standards.
 - Enhancing international investors' trust in good governance (clear processes, rules, standards and norms).
 - Provides the necessary framework - international principles, standards and practices to enhance sound management of international watercourses and contribute to the implementation of SDG target 6.5.

MOTIVATION, BENEFITS AND TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION NEEDS TO ADDRESS (3)

- In Enhancing Good Governance, regional bodies have given transboundary cooperation key importance:
 - At the ECOWAS level: the ECOWAS WRCC has been key in galvanizing the countries in the region to enter into management arrangements for transboundary water governance where none exists and improve the existing ones.
 - The promotion of an infrastructure Master Plan that has identified 15 water projects of a transboundary nature is a key trigger for cooperation on joint projects.
 - At the VBA level: the development of a Water Charter that embodies the principles of the global water conventions and goes further to ensure equitable and reasonable uses of shared water has put the riparian states to the table on the basis of trust to negotiate flows.
- Support from the Community of Parties:
 - The Water Convention is a collective forum. Ghana as a party may bring its needs and expectations to the attention of all other parties - a party is not left alone in its dealings.
 - Assisting in spreading the accession message and sharing experiences

MOTIVATION, BENEFITS AND TRANSBOUNDARY COOPERATION NEEDS TO ADDRESS (4)

- Technical Assistance and Support:

- Ghana as a party to the 1992 Water Convention could benefit from the use of the Convention's trust fund –

- Technical assistance to parties on studies and pilot projects; and support for capacity building (priority is given to parties).

- Benefits from existing experiences, such as guidance documents, activities and projects on the ground.

- E.g. the Water Convention's activities on adaptation to climate change and on transboundary flood management.

- Contribution to International Peace and Security

- Participation in and cooperation through the Water Convention intergovernmental platform reduces uncertainty and builds relationships - contributing to international peace and security.

PROCESS/TIMELINES, MILESTONES, AND CHALLENGES IN THE ACCESSION PROCESS

- Key to the Accession is a clear Roadmap to be followed through.
- Developing the Roadmap involved the following:
 - Lead institution to lead the process
 - Developing a Ratification Toolkit
 - Identification of Key Stakeholders
 - Engagement/Consultation of the Stakeholders
 - Materials and platforms for communication
 - Timelines for the accession

Challenges in the Accession Process

- Resources and support required (Internal and External). The initial lack of dedication from the lead Ministry was missing and had to be worked on.
- Creating stakeholder interest and understanding takes time to be created – requires zeal and tact.
- Sustained financial support through the accession process
- Flexibility should be factored into the timing of the process – Timely approvals required from key decision-makers were missed.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WATER CONVENTION - PROGRAMME OF WORK AND FUTURE PLANS (1)

Engagements/Involvements with the Water Convention:

- Ghana is a co-lead in Programme area 1.1.1:
 - Contributing to the promotion of the Convention – country level: Uganda, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and Zambia.
 - Virtual engagements such as the **Event for Ambassadors as follow** up to the WWF, June 2022 (co-organized by Senegal, EU Delegation, UNECE, with contributions from Togo, Finland, Chad, Ghana, Gambia, France, Netherlands, Tadjikistan, Slovenia, and OMVS)
 - Presentation of Ghana's transboundary water cooperation activities at the UN water conference in New York (March 2023)
 - The GWP MOOC to promote transboundary cooperation
- Serving on the 1992 Water Convention Bureau, Programme of Work areas (focus area 1), upcoming Twinning initiatives – Sierra Leone, Zambia, Hungary)

CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE WATER CONVENTION - PROGRAMME OF WORK AND FUTURE PLANS (2)

- Current Programme of Works and Future Plans focus on the Implementation Plan:
- The Implementation Plan provides a step-by-step process for implementing the Water Convention considering the technical, economic, human, and financial capacities of Ghana.

The Plan's Focus Areas include:

- Strengthening of the policy, regulatory and institutional frameworks for managing and protecting water resources;
- Strengthening financing of water resources management to enhance transboundary cooperation;
- Improving the knowledge base to facilitate water resources planning and decision-making;
- Enhancing participation of all stakeholders, public awareness, and education in water resources management
- Improving IWRM at the river basin level for water security and enhancing resilience to climate change.

THANK YOU