



National Workshop

National workshop related to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes: South Sudan's accession process

18-19 July, 2024
Juba, South Sudan

1. Background

South Sudan shares all her perennial rivers with neighboring countries and has already entered into bilateral and is in process of acceding into multilateral Agreement to establish river basin commission, aimed at promoting joint management and sustainable development of the shared waters. Examples of these agreements include an agreement with Egypt and Sudan. The other is the multilateral agreement for the Nile Basin known as the Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA). Both these instruments strive towards equitable utilization, joint planning, sustainable development and protection of the environment.

South Sudan is both an upstream and downstream country on its transboundary waters. The country is a member of the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) and is in process to join Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) given that it is heavily affected by heavy floods when Lake Victoria discharges its water downstream. The country is also a member of regional inter-governmental organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East Africa Community (EAC).

The Convention on the Protection and Use of Trans-boundary Watercourses and International Lakes (UN Water Convention) of 1992 is a global legal and inter-governmental framework which aims to strengthen cooperation in the field of trans-boundary waters and to promote protection and sustainable use of trans-boundary surface waters and groundwater. Adopted in 1992 and initially limited to the UNECE region, the Convention has been opened for accession by all United Nations Member States since 1 March 2016. Nine African countries have already acceded to it and many others are in various stages of the process of accession. The Convention continually engages states, basin organizations and other stakeholders on practical activities, global meetings and projects on the ground.

The 1992 UN Water Convention, which has a crucial institutional platform and whose Secretariat is hosted by UNECE, and the 1997 Watercourses Convention are vital global legal frameworks to support cooperative development and prevent conflicts related to shared waters. The UN Secretary-General encourages states to accede to and implement both conventions as mutually complementary.

By acceding to the Water Convention, South Sudan stands to gain new prospects for enhanced transboundary cooperation in Sub-Saharan Africa, conflict prevention and regional stability, currently

enjoyed by other African countries such as Ghana, Senegal and Chad that have acceded to the Water Convention. The Convention does not replace specific bilateral and multilateral agreements on transboundary basins and aquifers. Instead, it fosters the establishment and implementation of such agreements, as well as their further development. The Convention establishes principles and rules that form the basis for countries working together to protect and sustainably use their shared freshwater resources.

The Ministry for Water Resources and Irrigation has been actively participating in the Convention's meetings and workshops since the end of 2022. With a view to possible accession of South Sudan to the Water Convention, in January 2023, the Ministry sent a letter stating South Sudan's interest in accession and series of inter-ministerial preparatory meetings have been conducted since then, organized by South Sudan of Ministry Water Resources and Irrigation and the Water Convention secretariat, to increase awareness and understanding of the Convention with officials, including those from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Livestock, Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism and various UN Agencies, International Organizations, Civil Society and Community Based Organizations. A national workshop is now being convened to raise broader awareness of the Convention and develop a road map for accession.

2. Workshop objectives

The general objective of the workshop is to inform stakeholders about the Water Convention, to share about the processes initiated by Government of South Sudan to become party to the Water Convention and to discuss the next steps in the accession process.

Specifically, the workshop will allow to:

- Inform stakeholders about the Water Convention;
- Identify the benefits, possible advantages and strategic objectives of a possible accession to the Convention by South Sudan
- Inform about the accession process, benefits and implementation by new African Parties;
- Discuss the practical implementation of the Water Convention to meet the challenges of water resource management in South Sudan, based on the experience of existing Parties;
- Present the initiatives started by the Ministry of Water and Irrigation as part of South Sudan's accession process to the Water Convention;
- Hold a Question and Answer session to respond to questions from stakeholders about the Water Convention;
- Discuss the next steps and road map in the accession process and the contribution of this process to South Sudan's trans-boundary and national water management.

3. Expected results

The expected results pursued through this workshop are:

- Stakeholders are informed about the cooperation framework of the Water Convention at the global level and discuss the future engagement of South Sudan with the Convention's Programme of Work 2022-24;
- The advantages for States to become party to the Water Convention are presented;
- Update on the efforts initiated for South Sudan's accession to the Convention is presented;

- The actors are informed on the next steps of the accession process and the contribution of this process to South Sudan's national water management and transboundary water cooperation are discussed;
- Actors define a roadmap, with key milestones agreed, for accession to the Water Convention.

4. Participation

The workshop will bring together representatives from:

- Relevant Ministries in South Sudan regarding trans-boundary water resources, including Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Livestock, Ministry of Wildlife, Parliamentarians;
- Relevant basin organizations pertaining to South Sudan's shared waters, including NBI and LVBC;
- Relevant Diplomatic Missions, including the European Union;
- Relevant international and regional organizations, including EAC, IGAD, AMCOW, GIZ, World Bank, African Union, UNECA, SDC, IWMI, GWPEA;
- Relevant academia, civil society and independent national and international experts.