International financial institutions are recognized as important enablers of transboundary water cooperation and basin development, providing essential financial and technical support. Legal and institutional frameworks for cooperation, such as the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), facilitate the establishment of an enabling environment for investments in shared basins. Therefore, strong cooperation between international financial institutions and the Water Convention is mutually beneficial and important for sustainable transboundary cooperation.

Since the early years of the Convention, there has been cooperation with international financial institutions. However, the globalization of the Convention, with 13 countries joining from Africa, Latin America and the Middle East since 2018, has created additional opportunities for and increased the relevance of this cooperation.

The cooperation between the Water Convention and international financial institutions has increased in recent years – as demonstrated by the successful completion of numerous joint actions and activities. However, additional efforts and a more systematic approach are needed to further strengthen this partnership.

Consequently, the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the Working Group on Monitoring and Assessment at their fifth joint meeting (Geneva, 6–8 May 2024) entrusted the Bureau, in cooperation with the secretariat, to develop specific partnership decisions with particular organizations for adoption at the tenth session of the Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.WAT.WG.1/2024/2-ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2024/2, forthcoming). The Bureau subsequently decided to prepare a draft decision on cooperation with international financial institutions.

The Meeting of the Parties is invited to consider and adopt the draft decision proposed in the present document.
Draft decision on cooperation with international financial institutions

The Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes,

Recognizing the significant achievements in the sustainable management of transboundary water resources made since the entry into force in 1996 of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention), which has since provided a sound legal framework and an effective intergovernmental platform for the advancement of transboundary water cooperation and for the sustainable management of water resources at the national, regional and international levels,

Welcoming the increasing worldwide interest in acceding to the Water Convention following its global opening in 2016, with 13 new accessions from Africa, Latin America and the Middle East since 2018,

Recognizing the need across transboundary basins for long-term, sustainable and predictable funding to enable robust, effective and efficient transboundary water cooperation and management,

Recognizing also that legal and institutional frameworks for transboundary water resources management and cooperation are crucial to realize common development objectives and therefore provide an enabling environment in which to raise funding or financing for cooperation on shared water resources and basin development,

Recalling the crucial role of Governments in securing domestic budgets to support transboundary water cooperation and basin development in shared basins,

Highlighting the important role also played by international financial institutions in the funding and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development,

Recalling its decisions VI/4 on cooperation with the Global Environment Facility\(^1\) and IX/5 on partnerships for the global implementation of the Water Convention,\(^2\)

Appreciating the key role played by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), through its International Waters focal area, in supporting countries in their efforts towards sound governance and management of transboundary freshwater ecosystems – rivers, lakes and aquifers – and coastal and marine ecosystems worldwide,

Appreciating also the key role played by the World Bank in supporting countries requiring assistance and financial support for transboundary water cooperation and basin development,

Appreciating further the important support provided by regional development banks across the world, such as the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Investment Bank or the Inter-American Development Bank, in supporting countries in enhancing transboundary waters cooperation and management though technical and financial support,

Welcoming the strengthened cooperation between international financial institutions and the Water Convention in recent years, as demonstrated, among other things, by the joint organization of global workshops on funding and financing transboundary water and basin development in 2020 (online, 16–17 December 2020) and 2023 (Geneva (hybrid), 5–6 December 2023, respectively),

Recognizing the many benefits that closer cooperation between the Water Convention and international financial institutions could offer to all Parties and non-Parties to the Convention, for example, in facilitating the matching of transboundary water cooperation and management needs with existing financial and technical support opportunities and for creation of future technical or financial opportunities, as demonstrated through the event on

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\(^1\) ECE/MP.WAT/37/Add.2.

\(^2\) ECE/MP.WAT/63/Add.2.
“Accelerating transboundary cooperation and the implementation of the Water Convention in new Parties through increased support and partnership” (Ljubljana, 22 October 2024),

1. **Decides** to establish and enhance collaboration with pertinent international financial institutions and further strengthen existing cooperation with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the World Bank;

2. **Resolves** to work closely with international financial institutions through the different bodies and activities under the Convention, for example, on the development of knowledge and exchange of experience within the framework of the Global Environment Facility International Waters Learning Exchange and Resource Network (IW: LEARN);

3. **Calls upon** Parties to proactively engage with international financial institutions to leverage available financial and technical resources for transboundary water cooperation and also with climate funds, considering that transboundary water resources increasingly suffer from climate change;

4. **Also calls upon** international financial institutions to provide increased technical and financial support to transboundary water cooperation processes and projects in general, and in particular to those related to the implementation of the Water Convention, with a special focus on new Parties with developing economies or economies in transition;

5. **Encourages** international financial institutions to refer to the Water Convention and its work in their relevant strategies, activities, projects and meetings;

6. **Also encourages** the use, in transboundary cooperation projects financed by international financial institutions and other technical and financial partners, of the thematic guidance documents and tools developed under the Convention, as relevant, on topics such as climate change adaptation, water allocation, disaster risk reduction, the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, financing transboundary water cooperation, development of agreements, monitoring, assessment and data-sharing;

7. **Invites** international financial institutions to consider involving, when appropriate, the Water Convention Bureau or secretariat to their relevant meetings, workshops or conferences, among other things, to share experiences and identify synergies;

8. **Also invites** international financial institutions to use the results of triennial reporting under the Water Convention and on indicator 6.5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals in their work and projects, for example, as a measurement and accountability tool;

9. **Further invites** international financial institutions to contribute to the Water Convention’s programme of work 2025–2027, for example, by contributing substantially and financially to the development of Convention tools, to Convention meetings, workshops and capacity-building activities, as well as to specific projects, as relevant and within their respective mandates;

10. **Encourages** international financial institutions, as well as implementing agencies of the Global Environment Facility, within their mandates, to support the implementation of the Water Convention in new Parties, many of which are developing national implementation plans;

11. **Encourages** the World Bank to consider providing technical and financial support for priority actions identified by new Parties to implement the Water Convention, for example, in the framework of the Global Facility for Transboundary Waters Cooperation;

12. **Encourages** regional development banks to actively participate in and contribute to activities organized under the Water Convention, particularly in new Parties, and to seek synergies with the current and future work of the Water Convention;

13. **Encourages** climate funds, such as the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund, to consider financing transboundary climate adaptation and mitigation projects and to strengthen their collaboration with the Convention, particularly under the programme areas dedicated to adapting to climate change in transboundary basins and to facilitating funding
and financing of transboundary water cooperation and basin development within the Water Convention’s programme of work for 2025–2027;

14. *Entrusts* the Bureau, with the support of the secretariat and on the basis of good practices and lessons learned, with the task of defining modalities for further strengthening cooperation with international financial institutions, in a mutually beneficial way;

15. *Decides* to regularly review progress and invites relevant international financial institutions to report on their cooperation with the Convention at the meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the next sessions of the Meeting of the Parties.