



Economic Commission for Europe**Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on
the Protection and Use of Transboundary
Watercourses and International Lakes****Tenth session**

Ljubljana, 23–25 October 2024

Item 16 of the provisional agenda

Partnerships and contribution to global processes**Draft decision on cooperation with regional organizations for
the implementation of the Water Convention****Submitted by the Bureau in cooperation with the secretariat***Summary*

Regional partners play a key role in the global implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention). Several regional partners such as basin organizations, regional economic commissions and other regional and subregional organizations, as well as regional non-governmental organizations and regional offices of global organizations working on transboundary water cooperation, have contributed to the implementation of the Water Convention's programmes of work,^a in line with the Strategy for the implementation of the Convention at the global level (ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2), which emphasizes the importance of partnerships with regional organizations and their potential role as "champions" of the Water Convention.

Recognizing the need to further strengthen cooperation with partners in the future, 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.^b The Bureau subsequently decided to prepare a draft decision on cooperation with regional organizations.

The Meeting of the Parties is invited to consider and adopt the draft decision proposed in the present document.

^a For more information on partnerships, see the report on the implementation of activities under the Water Convention in 2022–2024 (ECE/MP.WAT/2024/1).

^b See meeting report, ECE/MP.WAT/WG.1/2024/2–ECE/MP.WAT/WG.2/2024/2, forthcoming.



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

Recognizing the significant progress 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 provided a sound legal framework and an effective intergovernmental platform for the promotion of cooperation and the sustainable management of water resources at the basin, regional and international levels that are key for peaceful and sustainable development,

Recognizing also that such progress has only been possible due to the cooperation and contributions of many partners from around the world, including regional partners such as basin organizations, United Nations regional commissions and other regional and subregional organizations, as well as regional non-governmental organizations and regional offices of global organizations working on transboundary water cooperation,

Affirming that strengthening partnerships with regional organizations is crucial to accelerate progress on transboundary water cooperation in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 and its target 6.5, as well as other water-related Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling its decision III/1¹ on amendments to the Water Convention, opening the Convention to accession by all United Nations Member States,

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

Recalling also paragraph 4 of its decision IX/5 on partnerships for the global implementation of the Water Convention,² adopted at its ninth session (Geneva, 29 September–1 October 2021), expressing its appreciation for partnerships that have been developed and strengthened with regional organizations to support awareness-raising, capacity-building, implementation and further accessions to the Water Convention, including through their own means,

Recalling further paragraph 5 of its decision IX/5 recognizing the vital role that river and aquifer basin organizations, as well as joint bodies, play in promoting the work of the Convention at the transboundary level and in contributing to its implementation among riparian member States, while furthering transboundary cooperation in their regions,

Recalling the Strategy for the implementation of the Water Convention at the global level,³ aimed at increasing the Convention's impact at the global level, including through increased partnerships and synergies with other actors,

Recalling also its decision VII/4 on cooperation with partners for the implementation of the Convention,⁴ adopted at its seventh session (Budapest, 17–19 November 2015),

Reaffirming the need to further strengthen partnerships in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention at the global level, including the strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation,

1. *Decides* to further strengthen cooperation with regional partners that are supporting the promotion of the Water Convention and its implementation at the national, basin and regional levels;
2. *Reiterates* its appreciation for, and the importance of, partnerships with river, lake and aquifer basin organizations, as well as other joint bodies for transboundary water cooperation that implement the Water Convention through their work, raising awareness, building capacity, and supporting its application on the ground;

¹ ECE/MP.WAT/14, annex.

² ECE/MP.WAT/63/Add.2.

³ ECE/MP.WAT/54/Add.2.

⁴ ECE/MP.WAT/49/Add.2.

3. *Emphasizes* its appreciation for, and the importance of, cooperation with United Nations regional commissions, which has proved to significantly increase awareness of the Water Convention;
4. *Reiterates* its appreciation for, and the importance of, cooperation with other regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations, such as the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW), the Central American Commission on Environment and Development (CCAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which promote the Convention, for example, by encouraging their member States to join it or by building capacity for its implementation;
5. *Emphasizes* the key role of regional non-governmental organizations, such as the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum and the Eco-TIRAS International Environmental Association of River Keepers, as well as regional offices of global organizations working on transboundary cooperation, such as the Global Water Partnership (GWP) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in increasing awareness of and capacity on the Water Convention and its tools;
6. *Welcomes* the fact that some regional partners are seizing the opportunity of the global opening of the Water Convention, have included the Convention in their own strategic documents and contribute to its activities, and encourages other regional partners to do the same, if possible;
7. *Encourages* regional partners to refer to the Water Convention and its work in their relevant strategies, respective activities and projects and meetings;
8. *Also encourages* relevant regional partners to use in their respective projects the thematic guidance documents and tools developed under the Convention, on topics such as climate change adaptation, water allocation, disaster risk reduction, the water-food-energy-ecosystems nexus, financing transboundary water cooperation, assessing the benefits of transboundary water cooperation, development of agreements, monitoring, assessment and data-sharing, as relevant;
9. *Invites* regional partners 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;
10. *Also invites* regional partners to contribute to the Water Convention's programme of work for 2025–2027,⁵ for example by contributing to the development of Convention tools, publications, meetings, workshops, capacity-building activities, as well as specific projects, as relevant;
11. *Encourages* the adoption of innovative approaches to cooperation and joint fundraising, where appropriate, to support the implementation of the Convention and the promotion of transboundary water cooperation;
12. *Decides* to regularly review progress and gaps in the development of cooperation with regional organizations and invites regional partners to report on their efforts to promote accession to or implementation of the Water Convention at the next meetings of the Working Group on Integrated Water Resources Management and the eleventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention.

⁵ ECE/MP.WAT/2024/2.