

## **Droughts in Transboundary Basins: Insights from the 3<sup>rd</sup> SDG 6.5.2 Report and beyond**

**1 October 2024, 12:25 -13:25 (CET)**

Venue: WMO Headquarters, salle Obasi (A), Geneva, Switzerland

**For online participation register at:**

<https://www.droughtmanagement.info/hmndp10/registration/participants/>

(select “salle Obasi” during the event)

### **Background**

Transboundary waters are of great significance globally. An estimated 313 rivers and lakes, and 468 aquifers, are shared by two or more countries, and a total of 153 UN Member States are reliant on waters that either flow from or flow to another country. Transboundary rivers account for 60% of the world’s freshwater flows, and river and lake basins are home to more than three billion people. The impacts of drought could be particularly severe in transboundary basins, where water resources cross political borders, making coordinated management efforts not just beneficial but essential.

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 6.5.2 measures progress towards cooperation in transboundary water basins, specifically the proportion of transboundary basin area within a country with an operational arrangement for water cooperation. In 2023-2024, the third reporting exercise under this indicator was conducted, with 129 countries responding. The 3<sup>rd</sup> progress report on transboundary water cooperation was subsequently prepared with a thematic focus on climate change and disaster risk reduction, including droughts.

According to the report, only 43 countries (28%) currently have operational arrangements covering at least 90% of their transboundary basin area. If current trends continue, barely one-third of countries sharing rivers, lakes and aquifers will have adequate co-management arrangements in place for most of their basin area by 2030. This will delay the adoption and implementation of joint climate adaptation strategies to cope with intensifying drought and flooding.

The side-event will launch the 3<sup>rd</sup> progress report on SDG indicator 6.5.2, highlighting its key findings and focusing on how droughts exacerbate water scarcity in transboundary basins and how cooperation among riparian states increases resilience. The session will also present examples of cooperation to combat these challenges, showcasing successful initiatives and strategies implemented by various countries. This will be followed by a panel discussion on challenges and possible solutions ranging from political strategies such as incorporating drought considerations into transboundary water agreements, joint body mandates, data exchanges, and joint strategies to other frameworks and programmes (i.e. Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP)).

The expected outcome is increased awareness of efficient drought governance and management actions in transboundary basins.

### **Target audience**

This event targets government officials, policymakers and technical experts involved in water resources management and planning, representatives of international organizations, NGOs, academia and other stakeholders with an expertise in climate change, drought management and sustainable development.

## Agenda

| Time                    | Agenda item   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 12:25-12:35<br>(10 min) | <p><b>Welcome and Introduction with opening remarks by UNECE and UNESCO:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ms Francesca Bernardini, Chief of Transboundary Cooperation Section, UNECE</li> <li>- Mr Abou Amani, Director of the Division of Water Sciences, Secretary of IHP, UNESCO</li> </ul> <p>Objectives and importance of integrating droughts consideration into transboundary water cooperation</p> <p>Overview of the agenda</p>  |
| 12:35-12:50<br>(15 min) | <p><b>Launch of the Report "Progress on Transboundary Water Cooperation Mid-term status of SDG Indicator 6.5.2, with a special focus on climate change, 2024" by UNECE and UNESCO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mr Abou Amani, Director of the Division of Water Sciences, Secretary of IHP, UNESCO</li> <li>- Ms Sonja Koeppel, Secretary of the Water Convention, UNECE</li> </ul> <p>Main findings and key messages, relevance of SDG indicator 6.5.2 monitoring for drought management in transboundary basins, including examples of cooperation in different regions as mentioned in the 3<sup>rd</sup> 6.5.2 report.</p>  |
| 12:50-13:20<br>(30 min) | <p><b>Panel discussion - Introduction and moderation by Mr Roger Pulwarty (NOAA)</b></p> <p><b>Panelists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ms Conchita Marcuello (Ministry for the Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge, Spain), <i>online</i></li> <li>- Mr Peter Gibba (Department of Water Resources, the Gambia)</li> <li>- Mr Rysbek Apasov (Ministry of Agriculture, Kyrgyz Republic)</li> <li>- Mr Nathan L. Engle (World Bank)</li> </ul> <p><b>Discussion points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• challenges in addressing drought and water scarcity risk management, collaboration, financing, and adaptive management in transboundary settings</li> <li>• challenges and opportunities in incorporating drought considerations into transboundary water agreements, joint body mandates, data exchanges and joint strategies, as well as strategies for leveraging SDG 6.5.2 process and data to improve drought resilience</li> </ul> |
| 13:20-13:25<br>(5 min)  | <p><b>Concluding remarks by UNESCO and UNECE</b></p>  |